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## **BILATERAL TIES BETWEEN MALTA AND MONTENEGRO RESULTING IN NEW MUTUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

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Economic cooperation between Malta and Montenegro was discussed during a bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Joseph Muscat and Prime Minister Duško Marković, a statement issued by the Department of Information said. The two sides agreed that bilateral relations are on excellent terms and can result in more opportunities of mutual benefit.

The Prime Minister described the first investment by state-owned Enemalta in another country as a strong vote of confidence in Montenegro. Other options where to take this project did exist, but Malta opted for Montenegro as a safe partner in which to invest. Collaboration should not stop at this first project but must continue to grow with innovative ideas in other crucial areas.

Prime Minister Marković said this constructive bilateral visit comes at the right time when relations have started to deliver good results, but can develop many other. Marković stated that the investment by Malta in Montenegros energy sector is just the beginning. Other sectors, such as tourism, healthcare and culture, can mark new ventures between the two countries.

The Prime Minister of Montenegro described how the country has surpassed all economic forecasts and grew by an average of 4.9%. Marković said this trend must continue and Montenegro will be a reliable, strong partner which will welcome investors from Malta which, he said, is a classic example of a successful country.

Another issue discussed in detail was Montenegros accession to the European Union. Muscat said that Malta officially supports the legitimate European aspirations of Montenegro. The Prime Minister remarked that he has publicly expressed disagreement with the decision of the European Council not to give a European perspective to the accession of North Macedonia and Albania. This was a strategic mistake, historically and politically, if Europe really wants to be a world actor and have a sphere of influence.

Muscat said the attitude of Montenegro is the correct one by sticking to the technical evaluations of the European Commission. The Prime Minister commended the positive approach of Montenegro and encouraged the country to keep implementing changes and negotiating timelines as this is the best way forward to have enough time to ensure a smooth accession.

Duško Marković expressed his gratitude for the support of Malta towards the aspirations of Montenegro to be part of the European community and European values. As one of the most

successful European Union countries, the backing of Malta is of tremendous importance. Marković said that Montenegro is obliged to implement reforms and understand the European process for enlargement. He concluded by emphasizing that he is willing to keep achieving positive results and join the European Union when the country is ready.

<https://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2019-11-18/local-news/Bilateral-ties-between-Malta-and-Montenegro-resulting-in-new-mutual-opportunities-6736216373>

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