

It is important to remember the two main values that any interpretation of democracy embraces - **equality** and **freedom**. In a democratic country all citizens are equal in the eyes of the law and have equal access to power. The **majority rule** is often the most important characteristic of democracy but this has to go hand in hand with an extremely responsible government and the protection of individual liberties. It is essential that citizens are not oppressed by the **tyranny of the majority** which creates various problems and inconveniences to a number of citizens. The problem of minorities is one of the biggest threats to any democracy. One good example of this is what has been happening in Malta for the past years. I am referring to the divorce issue. It is continuously being threatened by a majority. Actually It is being threatened by the State itself. It is being threatened by The Pn and the PL who are not capable of taking a stand. Divorce is a basic civil right. A right every citizen should have in a **democratic** country. A civil right which exists even in non-democratic countries like Iraq, Iran, Uganda but not in Malta . It is the State's responsibility to provide this legal space where all individual citizens can make their choice. Even if the majority of the Maltese oppose the introduction of divorce on moral grounds the majority should never impose its morals on a minority. Certain decisions should not be subject to the electorate's approval. The outlook is grim for Maltese and Gozitan citizens who are in favour of this civil right.

So I implore the PNPL to stop beating around the bush. The discussion on divorce will continue in merry-go-round fashion unless concrete political action is taken.

We have every day proof of this in our newspapers. But the PNPL have chosen to continue to ignore all those people who desperately need this civil right. Only Alternattiva Demokratika has been crystal clear and frank with the electorate and has proposed a divorce provision to the Marriage Act in all its electoral programmes and manifestos since 1992. It seems that the PNPL prefer the prevailing social chaos and even mount a defence of the right to cohabit while not addressing the real issue of the right to remarry. I repeat- Divorce is a basic civil right. A right every citizen should have in a **democratic** country.

The introduction of divorce legislation will not cure all society's ills but it will definitely put an end to the discriminatory state of affairs where only divorce obtained in another country is recognised. It is unacceptable that the Maltese state discriminates against Maltese couples who are unable to seek divorce overseas but, even more so, because divorce is a basic civil right which will also allow those who want to show their commitment to the formation of a new family to exercise their civil right to do so.

Together with the introduction of other measures to strengthen the family unit, divorce legislation will put an end to the prevailing injustices and chaos. The right to divorce in Malta is another instance of treating people as grown-ups, giving them the right to choose the best way how as to run their lives without political interference in one's private matters.

Divorce legislation will put an end to the pain and humility many individuals have to go through. Divorce legislation will restore back dignity to those who are oppressed because of lack of this legislation.

Dignity is a human right – denying people the right to determine their own relationships, to start anew, to love and be loved, to respect and to share ones life, to deny people of a sense of belonging is to deprive people of their dignity.

Civil rights should never be forsaken in the name of votes. Civil rights are not for sale. The truth is that this country needs the legislation of divorce so hundreds of individuals can live their lives as they so desire. And the lack of real political commitment from the PNPL on this matter that one can regularly witness is the reason that strengthens my resolve to put civil rights at the forefront of my political platform

