



THE PRESIDENT OF MALTA

President signs embryo Act solely out of loyalty to Constitution

The proposed amendments to the Embryo Protection Act have sparked a national debate in the past week.

I wholeheartedly appreciate the contribution of civil society and understand the concerns expressed by certain groups on ethical, moral, social, psychological and legal issues.

I also fully understand and empathise with the heartache faced by childless couples and their legitimate wish to become parents using today's technological advances associated with assisted procreation, and to be given continuous assistance and support by all of society.

Now that the proposed amendments have been channelled through our democratic process and approved by Parliament, the law — as with all other legislation — has been handed over to me for the formal assent of the President of Malta.

After seeking ethical, moral and legal advice from several experts in the field and following a long period of reflection and personal discernment, I have taken the decision to sign the Act.

I want to make it clear that this decision in no way compromises my firm views and ethical values on human life, the family and the wellbeing of the unborn child from the moment of conception.

I am signing the Act, in the form it was presented to me by the Government, solely out of respect and loyalty to my country's democratic process and to the Constitution, which does not confer upon me legislative functions except that of assenting to Bills when these are already approved by the House of Representatives.

Moreover, I am bound to act on the advice of the Government of the day or of a Minister of Government and, in the case of Bills approved by the House of Representatives, to assent thereto without delay.



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I could have taken the option, mooted in the press, to absent myself from the country while this Bill received its third reading in Parliament. However, I have never been one to shirk my responsibilities or my duties as President of Malta and I will not do so now.

I have always believed that every human being's dignity and physical integrity should be respected from the moment of conception to the grave. Never should any human being, including embryos, be treated as an object or intentionally put at risk.

The challenge we face as a society is to continue protecting the weak, including vulnerable embryos. Our island's moral fibre is at risk of disintegrating if we disrespect human life at any stage of development.

This statement is being sent to Parliament as per Standing Order 184, which provides for the President to communicate with the House of Representatives.