

President of Malta, H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca

Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca was elected President of the Republic of Malta on the 4th April 2014. A Parliamentary resolution on 1st April 2014, approved her nomination as the ninth President of Malta.

At the age of 55, Coleiro Preca is the youngest serving President of Malta and only the second woman to hold the post of Head of State.

Her nomination marked another development in the constitutional history of Malta, as the President was elected with the unanimous approval of all Members of Parliament.

Coleiro Preca was born in Qormi on 7th December 1958. She was educated at St. George's Primary School in Qormi, Maria Regina Girls' Grammar School at Blata l-Bajda and at the Polytechnic, Imsida. Later she graduated with a BA in Legal and Humanistic Studies (International Studies) and obtained a Diploma Notary Public from the University of Malta.

She has been active in national politics for the past forty years, since the age of sixteen.

Within the Partit Laburista she has served as a member of the National Executive, Assistant General Secretary and General Secretary.

As General Secretary (1982-91), she was the only woman to have served in such a senior post of a Maltese political party.

Coleiro Preca has also been a member of the National Bureau of Socialist Youths, President of the Women Section of the Party, founder member of the Guze Ellul Mercer Foundation and publisher of the Party's weekly newspaper, Il-Helsien.

She served as MP in the Maltese Parliament from 1998 to 2014. In the 2008 General Election she was the first elected MP.

Coleiro Preca has served on the board of directors of Maltacom plc (now known as GO) and Libyan Arab Maltese Holding Company. She was a member of the National Commission for Fiscal Morality.

As an Opposition MP, Coleiro Preca served as Shadow Minister for Social Policy, Shadow Minister for Tourism, Shadow Minister for Health and also as member of the Parliamentary Permanent Committee for Social Affairs and another for the Family Affairs. She was also a member of the Delegation for the Council of Europe.

On 13th March 2013 Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca took the oath as the Minister for the Family and Social Solidarity.

Throughout her year in office she embarked on a series of reforms and strategies in the social sector.

The main reforms were related to social housing and an integrated ICT strategy aimed at bringing simplification to the social benefits process. Infact by the end of 2014, the

retirement and widower's pension, marriage grant and children's allowance will be issued automatically.

As Minister she started working on a single-means testing mechanism and on a welfare reform. She also introduced an effective system against benefit fraud. Throughout her year in office she started developing a pensions' strategy and addressed a number of anomalies faced by retired dockyard workers.

The number of social measures taken while in office includes a full widower's pension and the rescheduling of the children's allowance payments to help families in their budgeting.

As Minister, Coleiro Preca proposed in Parliament a number of legislations, including the Child Protection Act. She also set up Malta's first sexual assault crisis centre known as SART.

In December 2013, with the European Union Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, László Andor, Coleiro Preca launched the LEAP project. This project, co-financed by the European Social Fund, is part of the setting up of Family Resource Centres that will offer services in the heart of the community.

In January 2014, together with the Prime Minister of Malta, Coleiro Preca launched a Green Paper: A Framework for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion. Furthermore, she introduced a number of measures to address poverty including a child supplement aimed at 22,000 children at risk of poverty.

Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca is married to Edgar Preca and has a daughter.