

Alessandro Mangion
85-90, Sqaq il-Loġġa,
Haż-Żabbar ŻBR 1771
Malta

Thursday, 11th April 2019

Ms Sarah Clarke
ARTICLE 19
Free Word Centre,
60 Farringdon Rd,
Clerkenwell, London EC1R 3GA
United Kingdom

Dear Ms Clarke,

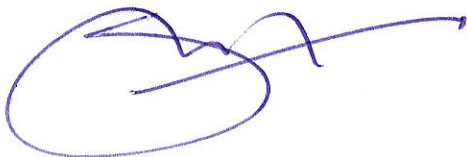
The Commissioner for Standards in Public Life has shared with me your statement of the 8th March 2019 apropos of the incident that occurred in Marrakech last December.

As I am sure you are aware, I made a public apology as soon as I was approached by the media and asked to react to your tweet on the matter. Through this letter, I am once again offering my unreserved apologies, this time to you in person, for having responded emotionally to what I felt, at that moment in time, was a situation demanding a defence of my country and my Minister. I sincerely regret my choice of words, and I am truly sorry that I have caused offence.

Without attempting to justify my reaction, though, I wish to clarify that verbal abuse has never been my thing, as all who know me can affirm. It happened to be a very bad period for me – as happens to every human being, at times – and, regrettably, I became emotional. My response was not against you personally - I do not know you, and I did not even know your name or your background until the Press drew my attention to your tweet on the morrow. Neither was my reaction a reprisal against civil society engaging in human rights advocacy. I have been a member of civil society, and a human rights activist and advocate, since my student days. For years I chaired the Malta Gay Rights Movement at a time when Malta was still not very keen on civil liberties. I lost friends and opportunities, and put my very livelihood on the line for what I believe in. Furthermore, I was a journalist for about 20 years, and my work was evaluated as worthy of the national prize of the 'For Diversity. Against Discrimination.' journalism award, an EU initiative aimed at promoting and awarding excellence in journalism that explores the benefits of diversity and the fight against discrimination throughout the bloc.

Most certainly, there is much more on which we see eye to eye than on which we disagree. It is in this spirit that I have written this note.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Sandro