**Protection of the Environment**

The State has the obligation to restore and maintain ecological balance in the atmosphere, water and land, as well as to protect the natural and historical environment. The State shall ensure the rational use of the land, fresh water and of all the natural resources, so as to guarantee a befitting quality of life for all, including that of the future generations,

**Right to Fresh Water**

Everyone has the right to access to drinking water.

The State shall ensure that all fresh water resources shall be a public good managed by the State. As a priority and in a sustainable manner, the State shall protect and restore the water table levels. In this respect, fresh water derived from the water table shall not be a market commodity.

REASON:

Given the limited natural resources, the increasing strain on the natural environment by a growing population, and the current ecological crisis, the State needs to protect and guarantee the sustainable management and access to the natural and historical environment for the present and future generations. In particular, given the value and limited availability of fresh water and the desertification of Islands, the State needs to commit itself to protect and restore the water table and guarantee the right to drinking water. The wordings of the suggested articles have been adapted from the Constitutions of Andorra and Slovakia

CHILDREN

The State shall guarantee and promote the respect and the right to the social, moral, physical, mental and spiritual development of children and young people.

Every child has the right to express his or her views in all matters affecting him or her; the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with his or her age and maturity. A child’s best interests are of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child.

Each child has the right to benefit from measures and facilities which promote his or her holistic development.

REASON

Children are amongst the most vulnerable group in society. Even though the Maltese state is one of the signatories of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, the constitution should still ensure that the holistic rights of children are protected. Just as the Maltese constitution enshrines the basic human rights, in a similar manner the Constitution should enshrine the rights of every child to a holistic development and the right to be listened to. The wordings of the suggested articles have been influenced by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and by the Constitutions of Belgium, Bellarus and South Africa.