I assent.

(L.S.) **MYRIAM SPITERI DEBONO**
President

29th July, 2025

ACT No. XXII of 2025

AN ACT to amend various laws on child marriage and forced marriage and to provide for matters which are ancillary and consequential thereto.

BE IT ENACTED by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the House of Representatives, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:-

Short title and commencement.

1. (1) The short title of this Act is the Various Laws relating to Child Marriage and Forced Marriage (Amendment) Act, 2025.

(2) This Act shall come into force on such date or dates as the Minister responsible for equality and the Minister responsible for social policy and the rights of minors, may by notice in the Gazette establish, and different dates may be so established for different provisions and, or purposes of this Act.

PART I
AMENDMENT TO THE CRIMINAL CODE

Amendment to the Criminal Code. Cap. 9.

2. This Part amends the Criminal Code and shall be read and construed as one with the Criminal Code, hereinafter in this Part referred to as the "Code".

Amendment of article 251G of the Code.

3. In the proviso to article 251G of the Code the words "effect at law." shall be substituted by the words "effect at law:" and immediately thereafter there shall be added the following new provisos:

"Provided further that for the purposes of this article, marriage shall mean any religious or civil ceremony of marriage, whether or not legally binding:

Provided further that for the purposes of this article, when the marriage is not legally binding, the marriage shall be socially recognised as having similar effects as a marriage.".

Amendment of article 251GA of the Code.

4. In article 251GA of the Code the words "four to six years." shall be substituted by the words "four (4) to six (6) years:" and immediately thereafter there shall be added the following new provisos:

"Provided that for the purposes of this article, marriage shall mean any religious or civil ceremony of marriage, whether or not legally binding:

Provided further that for the purposes of this article, when the marriage is not legally binding, the marriage shall be socially recognised as having similar effects as a marriage.".

PART II
AMENDMENTS TO THE CIVIL CODE

Amendments to the Civil Code. Cap. 16.

5. This Part amends the Civil Code and shall be read and construed as one with the Civil Code, hereinafter in this Part referred to as the "Code".

Amendment of article 189 of the Code.

6. In sub-article (4) of article 189 of the Code the words "1035, 1036 and 1241" shall be substituted by the words "1035 and 1036".

Deletion of article 1241 of the Code.

7. Article 1241 of the Code shall be deleted.

Amendment of article 1744 of the Code.

8. Paragraph (c) of article 1744 of the Code shall be substituted by the following new paragraph:

"(c) minors.".

Deletion of article 1807 of the Code.

9. Article 1807 of the Code shall be deleted.

PART III
AMENDMENT TO THE MARRIAGE ACT

Amendment to the Marriage Act. Cap. 255.

10. This Part amends the Marriage Act and shall be read and construed as one with the Marriage Act, hereinafter in this Part referred to as the "principal Act".

Substitution of article 3 of the principal Act.

11. Article 3 of the principal Act shall be substituted by the following new article:

"Age for marriage.

3. Marriage contracted between persons either of whom is under the age of eighteen (18) years shall be null and void.".

Amendment of article 18 of the principal Act.

12. In paragraph (b) of article 18 of the principal Act the words "capable of contracting marriage." shall be substituted by the words "capable of contracting marriage:" and immediately thereafter there shall be added the following new proviso:

Cap. 16.

"Provided that notwithstanding the provisions of article 244 of the Civil Code, no marriage shall be valid for all purposes of law in Malta if contracted between persons either of whom is under the age of eighteen (18) years.".

PART IV
AMENDMENT TO THE COHABITATION ACT

Amendment to the Cohabitation Act. Cap. 614.

13. This Part amends the Cohabitation Act and shall be read and construed as one with the Cohabitation Act, hereinafter in this Part referred to as the "principal Act".

Amendment of article 4 of the principal Act.

14. Article 4 of the principal Act shall be amended as follows:

(a) in paragraph (a) of sub-article (1) thereof the words ", unless that person is so authorised by law in terms of sub-article (3)" shall be deleted; and

(b) sub-article (3) thereof shall be deleted.

A 534

Passed by the House of Representatives at Sitting No. 369 of the 23rd July, 2025.

ANĠLU FARRUGIA
Speaker

ELEANOR SCERRI
Clerk of the House of Representatives

VERŻJONI ELETTRONIKA

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