

**10<sup>th</sup> August 2021**

Dear Deaf Sports` community & friends,

As you know, soon I am participating in the next World Deaf Athletics Championships in Lublin, Poland to be held from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> August 2021.

Prior to this event, it is with a heavy heart that I am announcing my retirement from representing Malta in Deaf Sports events soon after this International event organized by Deaflympics.

After 20 years, since Deaflympics 2001 in Italy, I have dealt with too much mental and physical stress around competing every event. Also struggling for Sports Equality locally, is and still a very tough challenge for a Maltese Deaflympian from a small country.

I represented 4 times in editions of Deaflympics, got a Silver medal in 2015 European Deaf Marathon Championships, held in Lublin too. Also, I represented in various tracks and road races events where I put Malta in good reputation with my ethical responsibilities as athlete and Deaflympian with resiliency, competitiveness and pride.

Like the Olympic Games, it was honour and privilege to represent a small country, more the Maltese Deaf community while running in Maltese red kit during the Deaf sanctioned events of both Deaflympics and European Deaf Sports Organization. This community together with local Interpreting service of *Lingwa tas-Sinjali Maltija*, has been part of spirit of fair play, accessibility and value the chance to integrate with Deaf athletes from other countries.

However, I am not stopping! I will still contribute development of Deaf Sports locally, and volunteering the same local Deaf community on Deaf issues for our Human Rights. While I will continue practice sports locally afterwards, rest assured that I will do my utmost to participate and run for last time, in both events of 10,000m and 5,000m on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> August respectively.

At last, I would like to thank you for your unconditional support, I wish you all the best and good health.

Yours sincerely in Sports,  
George Vella.



**Deaflympian 2001, 2009, 2013 & 2017.  
Silver Medallist Deaf European Marathon Championships 2015**