

## Resumé

### Legal position of the Sovereign Order of the Knights from Malta

The Order of St. John was established as a crusaders' organization in 1099 and at its beginning there was a hospital for the pilgrims in Jerusalem under the protection of St. John the Baptist. Its founder and the first superior of the Order was Frá Gérard – died 1120- of Italian or French origin. After establishing the Latin kingdom in Jerusalem this small community gained the assent of the pope Paschalis II by his bull of February 15, 1113, which placed the hospital under the protection of the papacy and thus placed the hospital out of any interference from the lay or church authorities. About 1136 under the

second Master the activities of the Order had been largely extended, the state of things so typical for the centuries to come. The need of military protection and defence of the sick and the pilgrims and later the protection of the Kingdom against the Muslims led to the adopting of military and chivalrous functions besides hitherto social and health-caring tasks. Having the right of the Order regardless of its territory were the seed of the later Orders international sovereignty. The main purpose of the Order was characterized by the Order's motto: „Tuitio Fidei – Obsequium Pauperum“.

#### Key words:

Order, superior, hospital, independence, sovereignty