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# Press Release

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**PRESS RELEASE BY THE OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER**

*The Speaker attends the 48<sup>th</sup> British Isles and Mediterranean Region Conference in Guernsey*

The Speaker of the House of Representatives is currently attending the 48<sup>th</sup> BIMR Conference in Guernsey between 19 and 22 May. The theme of the conference is 'Fake News and Digital Disinformation: the challenges for parliamentarians and democracy'.

The conference is divided into several sessions which tackle fake news from different perspectives namely: 'Fighting Fake News and Digital Disinformation vs Solving Real Problems'; 'Policy Responses to Disinformation: a public health approach to preserving democracy'; 'Fake News and the Impact on Media Freedom'; 'The Importance of Quality Journalism in a World of Fake News and Social Media'; and 'Fake News and No Platforming'.

Speaker Farrugia participated in the first workshop which discussed fighting fake news and digital disinformation where he argued that during a parliament sitting, members could use their parliamentary privilege to propagate fake news and cause strong ripple effects in the public perspective. He emphasised that although there is a remote remedy for fake news, parliaments should be able to provide new procedural remedies to mitigate this growing issue. He also raised the issue whether it would be the Speaker's role to investigate the veracity or otherwise of such news.

The annual general meeting of the region took place on Monday afternoon where one of the items on the agenda was an update on the activities of the work within the Small Branches of the CPA, of which Speaker Farrugia is Chairperson. This update was given ahead of the Annual Conference of Parliaments of the Commonwealth, which will be held in Kampala, Uganda, in September 2019.

Speaker Farrugia also confirmed that the 2020 49<sup>th</sup> British Isles and Mediterranean Region Conference will be held in Malta.