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# Press Release

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

*The Speaker of the House of Representatives participates in the 45<sup>th</sup> session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO*

The Speaker of the House of Representatives represented the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) in the 45<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organisation (WTO) hosted by the European Parliament, held in Brussels on 20 February. The discussion focused on the recent developments at the WTO, including the preparations for the 12<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference in Kazakhstan and the 2020 Annual Session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO.

Speaker Farrugia also participated in an exchange of views on the reform of the WTO held within the International Trade Committee of the European Parliament. The discussion touched upon the major challenges that are increasingly threatening its existence, in the light of the critically important role of the WTO in regulating international trade.

In his intervention, the Speaker, on behalf of the CPA, referred to the fisheries subsidies negotiations that have been ongoing for the past twenty years. While recognising the difficulties in these negotiations, he stressed on the importance of reaching an agreement in this sector which is so crucial for our economies. The Speaker also stressed the importance of tackling the problem of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing which is a threat to the existing fishing stocks in our seas, making reaching an agreement on fisheries subsidies within WTO more urgent.