



Press Release

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Delegation of the Maltese Parliament participates in the 14th PAM Plenary Session

A delegation of the Maltese Parliament, led by Etienne Grech and comprising Ivan Bartolo and Mario Galea, participated in the 14th Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly for the Mediterranean (PAM), which took place in Athens on the 20th and 21st of February 2020.

The Plenary Session was opened by Constantine An. Tassoulas, Speaker of the Hellenic Parliament, and Senator Alia Bouran, PAM President. Speaker Tassoulas spoke about the role that Greece has played over the centuries at the heart of the Mediterranean, as well as its commitment towards the setting up of the PAM. The Speaker also referred to the challenges that the Mediterranean is facing, including climate change and migration. He remarked that these issues need cooperation and a coordinated approach to be managed. The PAM President remarked that the issues raised by the Greek Speaker are all embodied in the work of PAM, which provides a platform which brings together the actors from both shores of the Mediterranean and works to further the peace, security and prosperity of the Mediterranean people.

During the Plenary Session, the chairpersons of the three PAM standing committees presented the work of their respective committees in the previous year. Rapporteurs from the committees presented their reports on the political and security developments in the MENA region, on countering the evolving threat of terrorism in the Mediterranean region, as well as on climate change, effective legislation in support of SMEs in the Mediterranean, migration governance and human rights. Resolutions on each of the themes were adopted during the Plenary Session.

Taking the floor during the debate on the activities and resolutions of the 3rd Standing Committee on Dialogue among Civilisations and Human Rights, MP Etienne Grech spoke about the planned PAM event to be held this year on the role of parliamentarians in preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence in the Euro-Mediterranean region. He remarked that the statistics relating to gender-based violence remain worrisome, not least because a large number of cases go unreported as they remain shrouded in silence. He spoke about the progress Malta has made in legislation in the area of gender-based violence in the framework of the Istanbul Convention, arguing that this convention needs to be extended beyond the Council of Europe members to include the countries of the Mediterranean region. He concluded his intervention by stating that this is where PAM can play an instrumental role.

MP Ivan Bartolo also took the floor during the session to speak about the challenges that the Mediterranean region and Malta face in the management of migration flows from North Africa to the European continent. He argued that no country should be left to face this challenge alone. He recalled

the 2015 Valletta Declaration, wherein EU and African leaders agreed that the first priority is to save lives and do everything necessary to rescue and protect the migrants whose lives are at risk. He also referred to the duty of legislators is to ensure that all workers, being local or migrant, are treated with dignity and that their rights are protected at all times.

At the end of the Plenary Session, the 2019 PAM Prize awards were distributed to a number of persons in recognition of individuals whose work made a difference in the Mediterranean region, as well as inspires the work of its parliamentarians. Martin Micallef, former PAM Communications Officer, was awarded the prize posthumously.

The PAM Presidency was handed over from Jordan to Egypt, and the 15th PAM Plenary Session will be held in Cagliari, Sardinia, in February of 2021.