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

### ***Speaker Anġlu Farrugia leads a Parliamentary Delegation to Hungary***

On the invitation of Mr Laszlo Kover, Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly, Speaker Anġlu Farrugia led a Parliamentary Delegation to Budapest on 12 to 14 April 2023. The delegation was composed of Dr Deo Debattista MP, Dr Katya Degiovanni MP, Mr Toni Bezzina MP, and Ambassador Joseph Cole.

During its stay in the Hungarian capital, the Maltese delegation had meetings with Laszlo Kover, Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly, Peter Szijjarto, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Sandor Pinter, Minister of the Interior, and Deputy Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly Istvan Jakab. The delegation also had the opportunity to meet with the Maltese community in Hungary. In addition, the Speaker gave interviews to three media outlets.

At the official meetings, the delegations discussed various issues, namely the bilateral relations between Malta and Hungary, topics relating to the European Union, Security Policy, and bilateral relations between respective Parliaments. Speaker Anġlu Farrugia cited the strong and cordial relationship that existing between both countries and the opportunity to further enhance the political contacts at parliamentary level. Dr Farrugia also referred to the solid commercial and trade relations between Malta and Hungary and encouraged both sides to continue to work hard with the aim of finding other economic sectors which can be developed for the mutual benefit of both countries.

The Speaker emphasised that neutrality is the main guiding principle in Malta's foreign and security policy. However, Malta's neutrality has not precluded it from showing its support to Ukraine and ensuring that the EU is able to take a strong and united action to help Ukraine to defend itself and protect its population from aggression. Malta has, within its limits, shown its solidarity with Ukraine by directing its voluntary contributions to the non-lethal equipment support.

Both sides recognised that there is scope for Malta and Hungary to work together within the multilateral structure, especially in the EU and United Nations, and continue to explore possibilities on how to enhance the bilateral relations between both countries. They also agreed that it is imperative to have a European common security policy to have a clear direction and the achievement of peace. The role of Parliaments is an essential medium to find the necessary solutions to European challenges and current issues, like the Ukrainian situation and the phenomenon of migration.

Prior to the delegation departure from Budapest, the Speaker gave three interviews to the 'Diplomacy and Trade' magazine, two online platforms (mfor.hu/privatbankar.hu) and HIR TV. In the interviews, Dr Farrugia spoke



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about the tourist industry in Malta and the industry's recovery after the COVID 19 pandemic, the commercial ties between Malta and Hungary, the fruitful discussion he had with Hungarian high officials and his tenure as Speaker of the House of Representatives of Malta.