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PRESS RELEASE BY THE OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

Speaker Anġlu Farrugia participates in the Conference of Speakers of the European Union in Prague

Speaker Anġlu Farrugia has participated in the Conference of Speakers of the European Union organised in Prague on April 24 and 25, 2023, as the final event of the parliamentary dimension of the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The conference was divided into two sessions. Session 1 dealt with the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the EU response in a broader geopolitical context. The main themes that were discussed in this session were EU enlargement, energy security, and the post-war reconstruction of Ukraine. Session 2 discussed the role of the EU in the global cooperation of democracies and the issue of EU member states' dependence on totalitarian regimes, and in this context, the debate centred around information warfare, disinformation, security of supply chains, and strategic autonomy, amongst others.

Speaker Farrugia took the floor during the debate, which followed the keynote addresses in Session 1. In his address, Speaker Farrugia noted with regret that after more than a year of the invasion of Ukraine, the conflict is still ongoing and resulting in unrelenting losses and hardships for the Ukrainian people, adding that the impact is being felt in Europe and beyond. He added that parliaments are best placed to promote a healthy dialogue, including further diplomatic efforts and dialogue with all the stakeholders, with the aim of finding a lasting and acceptable solution to end the war.

Speaker Anġlu Farrugia argued that any sanctions that are imposed need to be targeted at ensuring that sanctions and restrictions meant to cripple the Russian economy and the war effort do not also result in the unintended consequence of jeopardising domestic security in the EU as well as the wellbeing of other nations. Additionally, Speaker Farrugia called for an immediate ceasefire to enable both sides to take a step back and seize the opportunity to chart a way towards a lasting peace framework, and he expressed his disappointment that Malta's amendment to this effect to the Presidency Conclusions was not brought for debate and excluded from the final text adopted by the conference.

In the margins of the conference, Speaker Farrugia had bilateral discussions with various participants, including President of the European Parliament Roberta Metsola, Speaker of the Icelandic Althingi Birgir Ármannsson, and President of the Italian Senate Ignazio La Russa.

The next conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments will be held in Madrid in April 2024.