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## **PRESS RELEASE BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

### ***Maltese parliamentary delegation participates in the Autumn Meeting of the OSCE PA***

The Maltese delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly within the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE PA), comprising MP Amanda Spiteri Grech and MP Alex Muscat participated in the 21<sup>st</sup> Autumn Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly which took place between 18 and 20 November in Yerevan, Armenia.

The session started with a meeting of the Standing Committee, which consists of Heads of Delegations of participating states, and discusses the activities and the administrative issues of the Parliamentary Assembly. Mr Alen Simonyan, President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia and Mr Nikol Pashinyan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia then officially opened the Parliamentary Conference.

Several subjects were discussed during the three ensuing sessions, including the OSCE's role in an era of conflict, corruption as a threat to peace and security, and the protection of minorities and people affected by conflict. Many interventions during these sessions discussed the recent events in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, the war in Ukraine and the developing situation in the Middle East.

The Parliamentary Conference was followed by a meeting of the Mediterranean Forum which focused on the situation in the Middle East and which was addressed by a number of delegations from the OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation.

The Maltese delegation intervened in this forum and both MP Amanda Spiteri Grech and MP Alex Muscat centred their speech around the situation in Gaza and unequivocally condemned the terrorist attack by Hamas on Israel. The MPs also mentioned the resolution calling for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages held by Hamas, which Malta tabled at the UN Security Council and which was overwhelmingly approved.

MP Amanda Spiteri Grech went on to say how Israel has responded with numerous strikes on Gaza and how the Palestinian citizens who were already living in a dire humanitarian situation, were being killed, injured and left in great suffering without basic needs. She spoke of the situation for civilians on both sides of the conflict and stated that offering words of sympathy is not enough – there is an unequivocal need to help the victims of this conflict and to do so on a practical level that will alleviate their hardships, including through financial contributions for humanitarian aid.

MP Alex Muscat reaffirmed the need for Israel to protect its population in full respect of international law. He mentioned the disproportionate effect that the conflict is having on civilians, particularly children, also stating



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that patients in Gaza had to undergo serious operations, including amputations without any anaesthesia. He also mentioned the urgent need for humanitarian aid for the people of Gaza and spoke of the duty of politicians to use all their power to stop this conflict.

During the Autumn meeting and the discussions held on the future of the OSCE, Malta was given significant consideration as possible Presidency Chair for 2024.