



# PRESS RELEASE

PR231961

12.12.2023

NONE 

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

***MP Omar Farrugia participated in an Inter-parliamentary meeting on the Situation of the Rule of Law in the EU.***

On 4 December 2023, MP Omar Farrugia participated in an Inter-parliamentary meeting on the Situation of the Rule of Law in the EU, organised by the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) with the support of the Directorate for relations with National Parliaments.

The interparliamentary committee meeting, which was chaired by the Mr Lopez Aguilar, was dedicated to an assessment of the fourth Commission's rule of law report with a specific emphasis on combating corruption. The meeting served as a follow up on previous such interparliamentary meetings, including the Rule of Law meeting which took place in December 2022, as well as on the Parliament's resolution of 30 March 2023 on the Commission's 2022 Rule of Law Report. The meeting provided the occasion for an in-depth exchange of views on the rule of law situation in the EU and on the role of National Parliaments in the context of the EU efforts to protect and enforce the Union values.

During the exchange of views on the situation of the Rule of Law in 2023, which focused on the annual Rule of Law report by the Commission and the European Parliament resolution, MP Farrugia delivered a keynote address, stating that “with the support and guidance of a number of EU and international partners, including the Venice Commission, GRECO and the OSCE, the Government managed to carry out reforms that went to the core of the constitutional arrangements, laws that had never been reviewed since Malta’s independence”.

On the protection of journalists, MP Farrugia stressed the “importance that the Maltese Parliament attaches to the protection and safety of journalists who play a vital role in our society as watchdogs and human rights defenders. Indeed, in Malta the Government has shown full commitment to this subject and has also sought to put forward important legislation to this effect, which is a key component of the continued reform”. These bills<sup>1</sup> aim to protect journalists from SLAPP lawsuits and other forms of intimidation, recognise media freedom and the role of the media as a public watchdog in the Constitution, and establish a new authority to regulate and support the media sector. While the legislative process for these Bills has been halted to hold a wider public consultation, the Government is in the process of issuing a White Paper shortly to have a comprehensive and fine-tuned legislative framework that protects journalists from harm or impediment to carry out their duties effectively.

<sup>1</sup> Media Actors and Persons in Public Life (Establishment) Bill (Bill No. 17), Constitution of Malta (Amendment) Bill (Bill No. 18); and Protection of the Media and Journalists (Various Laws) (Amendment) Bill (Bill No. 19).