



PR240244

16.02.2024

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PRESS RELEASE BY THE OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

Speaker Anġlu Farrugia addresses the 8th Summit of Speakers in Rabat, Morocco

On February 16 and 17, members of national parliaments from the European Union and the Mediterranean region are coming together for the 17th plenary session and the 8th Speakers' Summit. The main theme of this event is the role of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union of the Mediterranean in Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation in the 21st century, and it is intended to reiterate the collective commitment of the participating states to consolidate peace, security, and cooperation in the Mediterranean region.

Speaker Farrugia addressed the Speakers' Summit, stating that the Mediterranean basin has been intrinsically linked with Europe for centuries. These relations do not exist in a political vacuum, as there are global as well as regional imperatives for revamping the ties that bind the two regions. This has become increasingly evident as the region faces uncertain times in its joint challenges: security, environmental protection, and climate change; the secured supply of sustainable energy resources; respect for human rights and democratic governance; the fight against terrorism and migration; the insidious spread of organised crime; and the global financial and economic crises.

Speaker Farrugia pointed out that Malta has always advocated and worked for improving relations between the two shores of the Mediterranean, and therefore the role of a union in this region is important. However, in order for such a parliamentary branch to be effective, it needs to be backed up by a strong administrative structure.

He stressed that this cooperation is particularly vital during this period, in which the Mediterranean is once again facing the challenges of a renewed conflict in the Middle East. Malta has consistently highlighted the position that peace and stability in Europe require peace and stability in the Mediterranean, and therefore it is vital that all parties cease hostilities and return to the negotiating table to agree on a lasting truce in line with the provisions of the Malta-led UNSC Resolution 2712. He reiterated Malta's call that a just and long-lasting peace in the region can only be made by a permanent ceasefire. While condemning the horrific events of October 7 last year, he also stressed that the humanitarian situation in Gaza is desperate. It is thus imperative that all parties comply with international law, including international humanitarian law.

Speaker Farrugia stated that all parties, including the EU, must work together with regional and global partners to promote a genuine political horizon that safeguards a two-state solution based on pre-1967 borders, addressing the legitimate concerns and aspirations of both sides in line with relevant United Nations Security Council.



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Speaker Farrugia concluded that it would be wrong to assume that the Middle East conflict has been the only source of severe tension in the Mediterranean and noted that the tendency to think that way may have contributed as much to inflame the problem as have the difficulties on the ground.

The Speakers' Summit was concluded with the adoption of a declaration focusing on the present and future role of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean and showing commitment to consolidate peace, security, and cooperation in the Mediterranean region.

Carmelo Abela and Anthony Bezzina are accompanying the Speaker in Rabat and will be participating in the 17th plenary session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union of the Mediterranean.