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The Maltese Parliament participates in the Orientation Programme organised by the NATO Parliamentary Assembly

Carmelo Abela is currently participating in the NATO Orientation Programme organised by the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA). The Programme is organised on 4 and 5 November in the NATO Headquarters, Brussels.

This programme, organised in cooperation with NATO's Public Diplomacy Division, provides an in-depth overview of the processes and policies of NATO PA and NATO as well as the Alliance's evolving relationships with its partners. The programme also provides an important forum for the building of contacts between parliamentarians. The programme started with an introduction by Ms Ruxandra Popa, Secretary General of the NATO PA and an introductory speech was delivered by Mr. Jacques Pitteloud, Ambassador and Head of the Swiss Mission to NATO.

During the Orientation Programme, a number of introductory topics will be covered. These include the Role of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and its relations with NATO; NATO's Political Agenda after the Washington Summit and NATO's response to Russia's War against Ukraine; an update on NATO's current operations and Missions, Public Diplomacy Challenges.

During the first session covering the role of NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Carmelo Abela enquired what the role of the Associate Members such as Malta entails and what is expected out of the Associate members in the Assembly, considering the fact that Malta is not a member and is not seeking NATO membership. Ms Popa remarked that the NATO PA provides a platform of sharing of experience and best practices whilst respecting each member's defence policy. It examines security threats and challenges and provides a platform to address such challenges in a collective manner. Abela further asked what the objectives of the Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group are. Ms Popa, replied that all members of the Assembly are invited to this group and all the member countries are invited to address the security threats the region presents.

The NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA) is an inter-parliamentary organisation established in 1955 to engage parliamentarians in transatlantic issues and help build parliamentary and public consensus in support of Alliance policies, independent of the larger North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. It brings together legislators from NATO member countries to consider security-related issues of common interest and concern. Since the 1980s, it has assumed additional roles by integrating into its work parliamentarians from NATO partner countries in Europe and beyond.