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## **PRESS RELEASE BY THE OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER**

### ***Speaker Farrugia participates in the European Conference of Presidents of Parliament in Strasbourg, France on 20-21 March 2025***

Speaker of the House of Representatives Anġlu Farrugia attended the European Conference of Presidents of Parliament organised by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) in Strasbourg, commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the inaugural conference.

In his address, Speaker Farrugia underscored the essential role of democracy in empowering every citizen's voice as well as the principles of equality and non-discrimination, encouraging open dialogue, cooperation, and commitment to lasting peace. He emphasised that national parliaments and interparliamentary assemblies have a role to serve as platforms for representation and to act as guardians of Human Rights, Democracy, and the Rule of Law, particularly in today's ever-changing and complex environment.

Speaker Farrugia elaborated on Malta's recent judicial and institutional reforms undertaken by the Maltese Parliament and its commitment to continue building on this progress. He stressed the importance of parliamentary diplomacy in reinforcing the core principles upheld by the Council of Europe.

Speaker Farrugia referred to Malta's significant international roles over the past years, including Malta's term as an elected member of the United Nations Security Council and chairing the OSCE. Looking ahead, Malta will assume the Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in May, coinciding with the Malta's 60-year anniversary as a proud member of this Organisation.

During the Presidency, Malta's priorities will focus on empowering youth, protecting children, combating violence and discrimination, and safeguarding the European Convention on Human Rights System.

Concluding his remarks, Speaker Farrugia called upon all members to embrace the collective responsibility of building a fair, inclusive, and resilient society founded on dialogue and mutual understanding - a society that not only upholds these values, but also serves as a foundation for citizen-centred policies and actions.

Earlier in the day, Speaker Farrugia, visited the Permanent Representation, where he was welcomed by Francesca Camilleri Vettinger and met with staff members to discuss the work of the House of Representatives in hosting the meetings of the Bureau and the Standing Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.