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“Too often, youth are told they are the leaders of tomorrow. The truth is: they are already shaping our societies today.” – Speaker of the House of Representatives

This afternoon, the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Malta, Anġlu Farrugia, addressed participants at the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) Roundtable “Young People: Seen, Heard, and in Charge”. The event gathered parliamentarians, youth leaders, and senior officials to focus on effective and lasting youth engagement in democratic life.

In his opening remarks, Speaker Farrugia spotlighted Malta’s leading role in youth empowerment—highlighting the lowering of the voting age to 16, granting 16-year-olds the right to contest local elections, and the election of six MPs under 30, making up over 10% of the national legislature.

“Too often, youth are told they are the leaders of tomorrow. The truth is: they are already shaping our societies today – in climate action, digital innovation, and peacebuilding. Our duty is to ensure institutions create the conditions for meaningful youth participation,” he stated.

Speaker Farrugia warned against tokenism, calling instead for authentic intergenerational collaboration. “We cannot empower one generation by discarding the experience of another. The goal is not to replace one voice with another, but to harmonise them,” he said.

Speaker of the House of Representatives Anġlu Farrugia concluded with a call to responsibility and vision, stating: “The worth of a state in the long run is the worth of the individuals composing it,” quoting John Stuart Mill.

The roundtable featured contributions from prominent participants including Mr. Theodoros Rousopoulos, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe; Clifton Grima, Malta’s Minister for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation; Ms. Cherise Sultana, President of the Maltese National Youth Council; Ms. Yevheniia Kravchuk, Chairperson of the PACE Sub-Committee on Youth and the Society of the Future; Ms. Miriam Teuma, Chair of the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ); Ms. Despina Chatzivassiliou, Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Ms. Naomi Cachia, Chairperson of the Maltese Delegation to PACE, moderated the roundtable.