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

### ***Maltese Parliamentary delegation participates in the 18<sup>th</sup> Plenary of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean in Malaga, Spain***

A Maltese Parliamentary delegation led by Mr Speaker Anglu Farrugia and composed of Carmelo Abela and Anthony Bezzina participated in the plenary of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PA UfM) which includes member Parliaments from the European Union and from the littoral Mediterranean states. The aim of the plenary was to conclude the work of the thematic committees with the adoption of the Committees' reports and recommendations. The plenary was held on 26 and 27 June.

Carmelo Abela who heads the Maltese Parliamentary delegation of the PA UfM participated in the meeting of the Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights Committee. The committee adopted a recommendation on how to ensure better cooperation between the two shores of the Mediterranean on migration policy. In a brief intervention following to adoption of the recommendation, Abela stated that while migration is a crucial topic which needs to be tackled properly, the relationship between the two shores should not only be based on this issue. He pointed out that the relationship should be wider and different levels such as economy, cultural and social. Another important aspect mentioned by Abela was about the way to achieve peace in a region which is volatile in its relations. He stressed that we need to give more space to diplomacy while the current ceasefire between Israel and Iran is a step in the right direction.

Anthony Bezzina participated in the Committee on Energy, Environment and Water. The Committee debated and later adopted a recommendation on promoting effective cooperation on climate change amid changing policy priorities in the Mediterranean region. The Committee recognised that the Mediterranean region is extremely vulnerable to climate change, with temperatures rising faster than the global average. The Committee called all parties to achieve political and operational convergence to accelerate the transition of the Mediterranean region towards a green, circular and inclusive economy.

Carmelo Abela stated that the Mediterranean region is unfortunately marked by the shadow of enduring conflict and human suffering. He emphasised that the suffering of women, children, and the most vulnerable compels us to act with determination and compassion. He pointed out the importance to return to the negotiating table and place diplomacy above confrontation and dialogue above division. Therefore, it is imperative to empower youth to participate in peacebuilding efforts. Abela outlined the numerous challenges that the Mediterranean region faces such as migration, climate change, unemployment and gender inequality. However, he remarked that open conflict and violence erode trust, solidarity and ambition needed to tackle these challenges. Abela stated that it is only through dialogue that political solutions durable enough to deliver security and prosperity for our peoples



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This plenary marked the end of term of the Spanish Presidency of PA UfM. During the closing session the handing over took place to the Parliament of Egypt which will preside over the PA-UfM during the next 2 years.