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PRESS RELEASE BY THE OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

From conscience to commitment: Speaker of the House of Representatives encourages the PA-UfM to strengthen leadership in the Mediterranean region during a time of global uncertainty

During the 18th plenary session of the Union for the Mediterranean (PA-UfM), held in Málaga, the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Malta, Dr Anġlu Farrugia, addressed those present prior to adoption of recommendations submitted by the respective committees on the Assembly. The five themes discussed were: political affairs and human rights, women's rights in Euro-Mediterranean countries, energy, environment and water, civil society and culture, and economic, financial and social affairs including education.

On political affairs, security and human rights, Speaker Farrugia underlined that while the region possesses strong institutional frameworks, it often lacks the moral leadership to act. He stated that our peoples are not asking for speeches, but demanding action. He proposed the establishment of a PA-UfM Human Rights Monitoring Mechanism to produce independent annual reports, and a Mediterranean Pact for the Protection of Political Prisoners and Journalists, both aimed at safeguarding fundamental rights and democratic credibility.

In addressing energy, environment and water, he emphasised that nearly half the global population experiences water scarcity at least once a year, and that within five years, global freshwater demand is projected to exceed supply by over forty percent. He referred to the leadership of Maltese MEP Thomas Bajada through the Water Resilience Strategy, which includes binding efficiency targets, urgent action on toxic PFAS contamination, and public investment in water-saving infrastructure. Bajada has made it clear that water is not optional — it is life — and that it is the duty of legislators to protect it.

On civil society and culture, he reaffirmed the importance of civic participation while cautioning against the abuse of freedom through misinformation. He called for legal safeguards to protect genuine civic space and for action to address the deliberate spread of falsehoods that undermine institutional trust and public cohesion.

In the area of economic and social affairs, he proposed the creation of Mediterranean Innovation and Skills Hubs, the introduction of Social Justice Impact Assessments on public budgets, and a binding Youth Guarantee to ensure that young people are offered employment, training, or further study within a defined timeframe.

In conclusion, Speaker Farrugia reaffirmed Malta's belief in conscience-led diplomacy and called upon the Assembly to advance from principle to practice in building a more united, secure, and just Mediterranean.

The Speaker-led delegation is composed of the Carmelo Abela MP, Toni Bezzina MP, and Mr Ian Bajada.