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

***The Speaker of the House of Representatives receives the Ambassador of the Republic of Panama to Malta***

During the courtesy call, Speaker of the House of Representatives Anġlu Farrugia congratulated His Excellency Ambassador Spadafora Franco on his appointment and welcomed the opportunity to further strengthen the cordial relations that exist between Malta and Panama since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1976.

The discussion focused on the positive cooperation between the two countries in international fora, particularly within the United Nations and maritime institutions such as the International Maritime Organisation. Both sides acknowledged the shared interests of Malta and Panama as maritime nations with globally connected economies. Speaker Anġlu Farrugia and Ambassador Spadafora Franco also exchanged views on opportunities to enhance bilateral cooperation in areas such as education, maritime affairs, trade, and English language training. Reference was made to the potential for greater academic exchanges, including through institutions such as the International Maritime Law Institute.

Regional and international developments were also discussed, including maritime security and the importance of safeguarding key global trade routes such as the Panama Canal. Speaker Farrugia reiterated Malta's support for continued dialogue and cooperation aimed at ensuring stability and the smooth functioning of global maritime trade.

The meeting concluded with both sides expressing their commitment to further strengthening the friendly relations between Malta and Panama, both bilaterally and within the multilateral sphere.