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

***Speaker Carmelo Abela receives the High Commissioner of the Republic of Cyprus on a Farewell Call***

Speaker of the House of Representatives Carmelo Abela received the High Commissioner of the Republic of Cyprus to Malta Mr Yiorgos Christofides on a farewell courtesy call at Parliament.

During the meeting, Speaker Abela reaffirmed the excellent and longstanding friendship between Malta and Cyprus, founded on shared Mediterranean values, common historical experiences, and close cooperation within the European Union, the Commonwealth and other regional and international fora.

The discussion highlighted the strong bilateral relationship between the two island states and the importance of maintaining regular political dialogue. Both sides expressed their satisfaction with the continued cooperation between Malta and Cyprus across a wide range of sectors, including education, research and innovation, culture, tourism, trade and investment.

Speaker Abela welcomed the growing collaboration in scientific research and innovation, noting the opportunities created by the recently concluded Memorandum of Understanding in this field. He also referred to the expanding educational and cultural exchanges between the two countries, which continue to strengthen the longstanding ties between the Maltese and Cypriot peoples.

The meeting also focused on the positive development of bilateral economic relations. Speaker Abela noted the increasing engagement between the business communities of both countries and underlined the potential for further cooperation in areas such as digital innovation, financial services, life sciences, maritime industries and advanced manufacturing.

The importance of enhanced air and maritime connectivity between Malta and Cyprus was also discussed, with both sides recognising its contribution to increased tourism, trade, business exchanges and people-to-people contacts.

Regional developments in the Mediterranean and the European Union also featured during the exchange of views. Speaker Abela reaffirmed Malta's commitment to working closely with Cyprus in addressing common challenges and promoting stability, prosperity and cooperation throughout the Mediterranean region.

Speaker Abela expressed his appreciation to High Commissioner Christofides for his contribution to strengthening the close and constructive relations between Malta and Cyprus during his tenure. He also conveyed

his best wishes for the High Commissioner's future endeavours and expressed confidence that bilateral relations would continue to deepen in the years ahead for the mutual benefit of both countries.