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PRESS RELEASE BY THE OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

Speaker of the House of Representatives meets the Ambassadors of Egypt and the Netherlands, the High Commissioner of India, and the President of the Global Council for Tolerance and Peace

The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Carmelo Abela, held separate courtesy meetings with the Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Dr Shaymaa Badawi, the Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Divera Gerritdina Anna Afra El Adimi-Koekkoek, the High Commissioner of the Republic of India, Rachita Bhandari, and the President of the Global Council for Tolerance and Peace (GCTP), Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Jarwan, as part of the House of Representatives' ongoing programme of parliamentary diplomacy aimed at strengthening Malta's bilateral and international relations.

During his meeting with Ambassador Badawi, Speaker Abela reaffirmed the longstanding and friendly relations between Malta and Egypt, underlining the strategic importance of cooperation across the Mediterranean. Discussions focused on regional developments, security, migration, economic cooperation, and opportunities to further strengthen parliamentary exchanges between the two countries. The Speaker also acknowledged Egypt's important role in promoting regional stability and welcomed continued dialogue on issues of mutual concern.

In his meeting with Ambassador of the Netherlands, Speaker Abela highlighted the excellent bilateral relations between Malta and the Netherlands, founded on shared European values and close cooperation within the European Union. The discussion covered current European affairs, economic cooperation, maritime issues, climate action, innovation, and parliamentary collaboration. Both sides also exchanged views on regional security, migration, and developments affecting Europe and the wider Mediterranean region.

During his meeting with the High Commissioner of India, Rachita Bhandari, Speaker Abela reaffirmed the strong and growing friendship between Malta and India, noting the excellent state of bilateral relations and the increasing scope for cooperation in trade, education, innovation, digital technologies, healthcare, maritime affairs, and people-to-people exchanges. The Speaker welcomed the continued strengthening of political dialogue between the two countries and highlighted the important role parliamentary diplomacy can play in supporting wider bilateral cooperation.

Speaker Abela also expressed Malta's appreciation for India's growing engagement with Europe and welcomed the progress being registered in negotiations towards a comprehensive European Union–India Free Trade Agreement. The discussion also covered regional and global developments, multilateral cooperation, and opportunities for enhanced collaboration in international fora.

Speaker Abela also received the President of the Global Council for Tolerance and Peace (GCTP), Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Jarwan, on a courtesy visit. The meeting provided an opportunity to reaffirm the shared values of dialogue, mutual respect and peaceful coexistence, while exploring avenues to further strengthen cooperation between the House of Representatives of Malta and the Global Council for Tolerance and Peace. Discussions focused on identifying opportunities for enhanced institutional collaboration and initiatives that promote parliamentary engagement, tolerance, peace and intercultural dialogue at both the regional and international levels.

The Speaker reiterated the House of Representatives' commitment to maintaining close engagement with the diplomatic community and international organisations, emphasising that parliamentary diplomacy remains an important instrument in promoting Malta's foreign policy objectives, strengthening bilateral partnerships, fostering dialogue, and contributing to peace, stability, and international cooperation.