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Maltese Delegation participates in Inter-Parliamentary Conference on Agriculture in Dublin

Ramona Attard and Toni Bezzina participated in the Inter-Parliamentary Conference on Agriculture, held on 26 and 27 July 2026 in Dublin, Ireland. The conference, organised within the parliamentary dimension of Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union, brought together Members of national parliaments and the European Parliament to discuss the future of farming in Europe.

The conference was titled "Securing the future of farming, from policy to practice. Generational renewal, women in agriculture and food security." Discussions focused on policies to support young farmers, encourage women's participation in agriculture, promote generational renewal, and strengthen Europe's food security in the face of economic, demographic and climate-related challenges.

During the session titled "Lived experience, how generational renewal and involvement of women in agriculture is vital to EU food security," Attard and Bezzina spoke on behalf of the Maltese delegation, focusing their interventions on food security from the perspective of a small island Member State.

Attard underlined that for Malta food security is a daily question of resilience rather than an abstract policy concept. She highlighted that Malta's agricultural sector is made up largely of small and family-run farms, often operating on fragmented parcels of land. She noted that Maltese farmers face limited land availability, high input costs, water scarcity, and strong competition from imports. These challenges, she stated, are being made more urgent by climate change, including higher temperatures, longer dry periods and growing pressure on groundwater resources.

In her intervention, Attard emphasised that for Malta, generational renewal is inseparable from climate adaptation. She stated that young farmers will not enter or remain in the sector if farming is seen as economically insecure, administratively burdensome or environmentally unsustainable. She therefore called for practical support, modern irrigation, digital tools, training, and investment that reflect the realities of small farms and island agriculture.

Attard also referred to the important role of women in agriculture, particularly in small farming communities where women are often central to family farms and local food production. She stressed that their contribution must be more visible and better supported, not only as a matter of equality, but also as a matter of food security.

Bezzina focused on food security as a specific case point for Malta. He stated that, for a small island Member State, food security is not only about production levels at European level, but also about vulnerability. He noted

that Malta's limited agricultural land, fragmented holdings, water scarcity, high input costs and strong dependence on imports make the country more exposed to external shocks, including supply-chain disruption, climate change, transport costs and market instability.

Bezzina emphasised that Europe needs strong agricultural production and that large-scale operations have an important role. However, he stressed that EU policy must also provide more directed, practical and accessible support to small farmers, family farms and island agriculture. Such support, he noted, should help farmers invest in water efficiency, technology, training, quality production and climate adaptation.

Both Members reiterated that the future of European agriculture must remain sensitive to different national realities. Food security cannot be measured only by overall production figures. It must also include the capacity to keep farming alive in vulnerable regions, including islands, where climate change, water scarcity and limited land create specific pressures.

The conference served as an important platform for national parliaments to exchange experiences on how best to support young farmers, women farmers, family farms and rural communities. It also contributed to the wider debate on the future of the Common Agricultural Policy and on the need to ensure that European agriculture remains resilient, sustainable and capable of meeting the food security needs of all Member States.