GOVERNMENT OF MALTA
DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION

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Speaker Carmelo Abela participates in the European Conference of Presidents of Parliaments of the Council of Europe in Rome

Speaker calls on parliaments to counter threats to democracy, set clear policies on AI use and uphold international law to help resolve conflicts peacefully

Speaker of the House of Representatives Carmelo Abela emphasised the need for stronger parliamentary cooperation in addressing shared challenges during his participation in the conference.

The conference brought together Speakers and Presidents of Parliaments from the 46 member states of the Council of Europe, alongside representatives of partner, observer and neighbouring countries and heads of interparliamentary assemblies.

Addressing the first theme, *'Resilient Democracies: United Against Hybrid Threats',* Speaker Abela said strong institutions, informed citizens, and international cooperation are essential to countering disinformation, foreign interference, and cyberattacks. He stressed that efforts to address these threats must safeguard democratic freedoms. He added that cooperation with European partners is particularly important for smaller states such as Malta.

Speaking on the second theme, *'AI and the Labour Market'*, Speaker Abela emphasised the importance of parliaments developing clear policies to guide the use of AI. These policies should support innovation, protect workers and fundamental rights, and ensure that AI is used transparently and responsibly. He highlighted AI's potential to improve productivity and create employment opportunities, while stressing that people must remain at the centre of decisions about its use.

In his intervention on the third theme, '*Renewing the Rule-Based International Order: The Role of Parliaments in Addressing and Responding to Contemporary Crises',* Speaker Abela called for the defence and renewal of the rules-based international order amid growing geopolitical tensions, conflicts and humanitarian emergencies. He underlined parliaments' responsibility to uphold international law, protect human rights, and hold governments accountable. He said parliamentary diplomacy plays an important role in promoting dialogue and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

Speaker Abela met at Palazzo Montecitorio with Lorenzo Fontana, President of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, and with Italian Members of Parliament Ciro Maschio, Chair of the Justice Committee, and Giulio Tremonti, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee. A bilateral meeting was held with Shalva Papuashvili, Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia.

He also met with Mr Abdelaziz Al Asim, Head of the Political Department at the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Italy, and with Cardinal Mario Grech at the Cardinal's office.

Speaker Abela was accompanied by Daniel Azzopardi, Ambassador of Malta to Italy, and two members of the delegation.