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PRESS RELEASE BY THE OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

The Speaker of the House of Representatives meets US Ambassador Somers Farkas

The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Carmelo Abela, held a bilateral meeting with the United States Ambassador to Malta, Somers Farkas, at Parliament on Thursday afternoon.

Discussions focused on the positive, multifaceted relationship between Malta and the United States, with particular emphasis on maintaining dialogue between the two countries and further strengthening bilateral ties and cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

The main message emerging from the meeting was that the excellent bilateral relations between the Governments of Malta and the United States should also translate into closer cooperation between their respective legislatures. In this regard, the Speaker welcomed the establishment of the Congressional Friends of Malta Caucus in the US Congress and reiterated his interest in setting up a Malta–US Parliamentary Friendship Group.

Such a group could provide a platform for regular exchanges between parliamentarians, sharing legislative experiences, and discussing matters of mutual interest. The Speaker also welcomed the possibility of a visit to Malta by members of the Congressional Friends of Malta Caucus, which is currently being planned, possibly for the first quarter of 2027. Ambassador Farkas indicated that she would raise the proposed visit during her expected stay in Washington in December.

The Speaker highlighted the importance of parliamentary diplomacy as a practical way to strengthen institutional relations between the two countries. He also expressed the hope that the proposed parliamentary initiatives would deepen mutual understanding and create new opportunities for cooperation. Ambassador Farkas also highlighted opportunities for Maltese parliamentarians to participate in US leadership and exchange programmes.

The meeting also provided an opportunity to exchange views on international security and current geopolitical developments. The Speaker outlined Malta's experience as an observer in the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, drawing on his experience as head of the Maltese delegation. He noted that observer status provides Malta with a valuable forum in which to present its views and perspectives as a neutral country.

Discussions also addressed EU–US relations in the context of Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine. The Speaker stressed the importance of ensuring that the European Union has a seat at the negotiating table, particularly given that the conflict is taking place on European soil.

He also outlined Malta's position on Ukraine and highlighted the country's contribution to humanitarian efforts supporting the Ukrainian people. In discussing assistance to Ukraine, Ambassador Farkas referred to the Prioritised Ukraine Requirements List and suggested that this mechanism could also support humanitarian assistance.

The Speaker also expressed an interest in further expanding opportunities for collaboration between Maltese and American businesses.

The meeting further touched on the educational and cultural ties between the two countries. The Speaker stressed the importance of continuing to promote academic exchanges, research, youth initiatives and links between educational institutions.

Concluding the meeting, the Speaker reaffirmed Malta's commitment to further strengthening its relations with the United States through parliamentary dialogue, cooperation, and people-to-people contacts, and expressed his hope that the discussions would lead to closer institutional ties and tangible opportunities for collaboration, to the benefit of both countries.