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September 2013

PARLAMENT TA' MALTA

mill-PARLAMENT

Perjodiku maħruġ mill-Uffiċċju tal-i*Speaker*

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Is-Sala tal-Arazzi: Post ta' ħidma tal-Kunsill tal-Gvern mid-dħul fis-seħħ tal-Kostituzzjoni tal-1849. Din is-Sala serviet ukoll biex fiha Itaqa' l-Parlament Malti bejn l-1921 u l-1976.

Tapestry Chamber: Meeting place of the Council of Government since the entry into force of the 1849 Constitution. This Chamber was also used by the Maltese Parliament between 1921 and 1976.

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Settembru 2013/*September 2013*

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Ritratti/*Photos*: DOI

DAĦLA

Għaddew tliet xhur mill-ewwel ħarġa ta' din il-pubblikazzjoni f'Ġunju li għadda. Għaddew ukoll sitt xhur mill-ftuħ uffiċjali tat-Tnax-il Parlament li matulhom il-Kamra tad-Deputati, fost xogħol ieħor:

- approvat l-estimi ġenerali għas-sena 2013 f'ħames seduti;
- approvat l-estimi tad-dħul u nfiq għas-sena 2013 ta' għaxar korporazzjonijiet u awtoritajiet;
- għaddiet għaxar Atti Parlamentari mill-istadji kollha tagħhom; u
- Approvat, b'mod unanimu, l-ħatra mill-ġdid tal-Awditur Ġenerali u d-Deputat Awditur Ġenerali għal perjodu ieħor ta' ħames snin bl-appoġġ ta' aktar minn żewġ terzi tal-Membri kollha tal-Kamra, kif mitlub mill-Kostituzzjoni.

Sar ukoll xogħol importanti fejn jidħlu l-kumitati permanenti tal-Kamra fejn rajna t-twaqqif ta' Kumitat ġdid għall-Affarijiet Ekonomiċi u Finanzjarji, u kumitati oħra li baqgħu jiltaqgħu wkoll fiż-żmien meta l-Parlament kien wieqaf għas-sajf. Għaddew ukoll emendi għall-Ordnijiet Permanenti sabiex numru ta' dispożizzjonijiet jkunu japplikaw għall-kumitati kollha tal-Kamra, kemm dawk permanenti kif ukoll dawk magħżula. L-istess Ordnijiet Permanenti ġew ippubblikati mill-ġdid, bl-emendi kollha inkorporati.

Minbarra tagħrif dwar il-ħidma kollha tal-Membri Parlamentari f'dawn l-aħħar sitt xhur, f'din il-ħarġa inkludejna wkoll kontribuzzjoni mill-Prof. Ian Refalo dwar l-Uffiċċju Nazzjonali tal-Verifika u l-Kumitat Permanenti dwar il-Kontijiet Pubbliċi fil-kuntest tal-awtonomija tal-Parlament, kif ukoll artiklu qasir biex, kif suġġerit mill-Unjoni Inter-Parlamentari, nikkommemoraw il-Jum Internazzjonali tad-Demokrazija.

Irrid nistqarr li bir-riżorsi limitati li għandu għad-dispożizzjoni tiegħu l-Parlament, l-appuntament ta' kull tliet xhur għal din il-pubblikazzjoni mhix sfida żgħira. Iżda d-diversi reazzjonijiet pożittivi li rċevejna wara l-ewwel ħarġa ta' "*mill-Parlament*", kienu inkoraġġanti u ħeġġuna nagħmlu l-almu tagħna biex immexxu 'l quddiem din l-inizjattiva li kont ħadt jiena bħala Speaker fil-bidu ta' din il-Leġiżlatura.

Anġlu Farrugia
Speaker

FOREWORD

Three months have passed since the first issue of this publication last June. It is also six months from the official opening of the 12th Parliament, during which time the House, amongst others:

- *approved, over five sittings, the general estimates for the year 2013;*
- *approved the income and expenditure estimates for the year 2013 of 10 corporations and authorities;*
- *passed ten Acts of Parliament from all stages; and*
- *unanimously confirmed the appointment of the Auditor General and the Deputy Auditor General for a further period of five years with the support of more than two thirds of all the Members of the House, as required by the Constitution.*

Important work was also carried out by the standing committees of the House, including the setting up of the new Economic and Financial Affairs Committee, and also by the other committee which also met during the summer parliamentary recess. The Standing Orders of the House were also amended to make a number of provisions applicable to all committees of the House, both standing and select committees. These Standing Orders were reprinted, incorporating all amendments to date.

In addition to information about the work carried out by the Members of Parliament in the past six months, this issue also includes a contribution by Prof. Ian Refalo concerning the National Audit Office and the Standing Committee on Public Accounts in the context of the autonomy of Parliament, as well as a short article to commemorate the International Day of Democracy, as requested by the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

I have to admit that with the limited resources at the disposal of Parliament, the quarterly appointment of this publication is no easy task. However, the various positive reactions which were received following the first issue of "mill-Parlament" were very encouraging and motivated us to do our utmost to take forward this initiative which I had launched at the start of this Legislature.

Anġlu Farrugia
Speaker

ATTIVITAJIET TAL-ISPEAKER

Fis-17 ta' Ġunju l-iSpeaker, l-Onor. Anġlu Farrugia, flimkien mal-Onor. Charlò Bonnici, l-Onor. Deo Debattista u l-Onor. Michael Falzon, ilkoll membri tad-delegazzjoni Maltija għall-Assemblea Parlamentari tal-Kunsill tal-Ewropa, iltaqgħu mas-Segretarju Ġenerali tal-Kunsill tal-Ewropa, is-Sur Thorbjorn Jagland u d-delegazzjoni tiegħu fil-Palazz, il-Belt Valletta.

Waqt id-diskussjonijiet, l-iSpeaker tkellem dwar il-parteċipazzjoni attiva tal-Membri Maltin fl-istrutturi tal-Assemblea Parlamentari tal-Kunsill tal-Ewropa, bħal pereżempju l-monitoraġġ ta' jekk pajjiżi kandidati sabiex jingħaqdu jew li għadhom kif ingħaqdu mal-Kunsill tal-Ewropa humiex jonoraw l-obbligi tagħhom, kif ukoll l-osservazzjoni ta' elezzjonijiet f'pajjiżi membri. Huwa spjega kif Malta tikkondividi b'mod sħiħ l-ideali li jippromwovu l-Kunsill tal-Ewropa, kif din dejjem irrispettat id-deċiżjonijiet tal-Qorti Ewropea dwar id-Drittijiet tal-Bniedem u kif Malta taqbel mar-riforma tal-Kunsill tal-Ewropa sabiex tkun istituzzjoni dejjem aktar relevanti u f'pożizzjoni li tilħaq l-għanijiet tagħha.

Min-naħa tiegħu, is-Segretarju Ġenerali saħaq dwar l-isforzi kontinwi li qed isiru sabiex jinqata' x-xogħol b'lura tal-Qorti Ewropea dwar id-Drittijiet tal-Bniedem, u qal ukoll li jħoss li hu importanti li l-Kunsill tal-Ewropa jaħdem flimkien mal-Unjoni Ewropea sabiex ikunu msaħħa r-rispett għad-drittijiet tal-bniedem u l-prinċipji demokratiċi tal-Membri taż-żewġ għaqdiet.

Photo - DOI - Jeremy Wonnacott

L-iSpeaker jiltaqa' mas-Segretarju Ġenerali tal-Kunsill tal-Ewropa

Id-Deputy Speaker Ċensu Galea ħa sehem fit-Tmien Konferenza tal-Presidenti ta' Parlamenti tal-Istati Żgħar Ewropej li tlaqqgħet ġewwa Rejkjavik, l-Iżlanda, bejn is-27 u t-30 ta' Awwissu, taħt il-Presidenza tas-Sur Einar K. Guðfinnsson, Speaker tal-Althingi Iżlandiż. F'wieħed mill-interventi tiegħu, l-Onor. Galea tkellem dwar id-diversi materji li ġew diskussi matul l-ewwel xhur tat-Tnax-il Leġiżlatura tal-Parlament ta' Malta, u kkummenta b'mod pożittiv dwar il-fatt illi ġeneralment il-Gvern u l-Oppożizzjoni jaqblu bejniethom biex il-parti l-kbira tal-liġijiet jgħaddu mingħajr ma jkun hemm bżonn li jittieħed vot dwarhom. Id-Dikjarazzjoni Konġunta li ġiet adottata fi tmiem il-Konferenza inkludiet proposta Maltija li tħeġġeġ lill-"istati żgħar Ewropej ħalli jkomplu jiddiskutu u jaqsmu bejniethom l-esperjenzi, is-suċċessi u l-fallimenti partikolari li jkollhom, sabiex b'hekk jitgħallmu minn xulxin u jkunu jistgħu jippreżentaw forum omoġenju u magħqud ta' stati li għandhom fehmiet u karatteristiċi komuni fi ħdan l-ambjent ekonomiku globali."

Bejn id-29 ta' Awwissu u l-5 ta' Settembru l-iSpeaker mexxa delegazzjoni parlamentari magħmula mill-Whips taż-żewġ naħat, għad-59 Konferenza tal-Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) li nżammet ġewwa Johannesburg, l-Afrika ta' Isfel, bit-tema "Soluzzjonijiet Effettivi għall-Isfidi tal-Iżvilupp ġewwa l-Commonwealth". L-Onor. Farrugia indirizza *workshop* dwar "L-Isfidi sabiex jintlaħqu l-Millennium Development Goals (MGDs) sal-2015" fejn ħeġġeġ li delegati japprezzaw li kulħadd għandu jkun konxju mir-responsabiltajiet tiegħu u għandha ssir pressjoni fuq il-gvernijiet sabiex iżidu r-riżorsi allokati għall-MDGs. Huwa qal li:

'L-għan tal-miri tal-2015 hu li tintlaħaq edukazzjoni primarja universali, sabiex kemm is-subien kif ukoll il-bniet ikunu jistgħu jagħmlu kors kollu ta' skola primarja. Bil-għan li tiġi promossa l-ugwaljanza bejn is-sessi u tingħata aktar saħħa lin-nisa, il-mira hi li jiġu eliminati differenzi abbażi ta' sess fl-edukazzjoni primarja u sekondarja sal-2015.'

Fi tmiem il-Konferenza, l-Onor. Carmelo Abela u l-Onor. David Agius ġew appuntati membru u membru sostitut rispettivament fil-Kumitat Eżekuttiv tas-CPA għal tliet snin. Huma se jkunu qed jirrappreżentaw il-Gżejjer Brittanniċi u r-Reġjun tal-Mediterran (BIMR).

L-iSpeaker, l-Onor. Anġlu Farrugia, għamel żjara uffiċjali fl-Awstralja bejn is-6 u t-13 ta' Awwissu. Matul din il-laqgħa huwa kellu laqgħat ma' Membri u *staff* tal-Parlament ta' New South Wales u mad-Deputy Speaker tal-Assemblea Leġiżlattiva ta' Victoria. L-iSpeaker kellu wkoll l-opportunità li jiltaqa' mal-komunitajiet Maltin ta' New South Wales u ta' Victoria

Iż-żjara tal-iSpeaker ġiet irrapurtata fil-faċċata ta' quddiem tal-ħarġa ta' Settembru tal-perjodiku taċ-Ċentru Soċjali La Vallette bl-isem *Iċ-Ċentru*.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SPEAKER

On 17 June Speaker Anġlu Farrugia, together with Hon. Charlò Bonnici, Hon. Deo Debattista and Hon. Michael Falzon, members of the Maltese delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, had a meeting with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr Thorbjorn Jagland, and his delegation, at the Palace in Valletta.

Mr Speaker spoke about the active participation of the Maltese Members in the various structures of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, for example the monitoring of whether candidate countries and countries which have newly joined the Council of Europe are honouring their commitments, along with election monitoring in the member states. He also spoke about the fact that Malta fully shares the ideals promoted by the Council of Europe, has always respected the judgements of the European Court on Human Rights and is in favour of a reform of the Council of Europe in order for it to remain a relevant institution and able to reach its goals.

On his part, the Secretary General spoke about the efforts that are being made to cut back on the pending work of the European Court of Human Rights, and also said that he feels that it is essential that the Council of Europe works closely with the European Union in order to strengthen the respect for human rights and democratic principles of the members of both organisations.

Between 29 August and 5 September the Speaker led a parliamentary delegation, comprising both parliamentary Whips, to the 59th CPA Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa, on "Effective Solutions to Commonwealth Development Challenges".

Hon. Farrugia addressed the workshop on "The Challenges of Attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MGDs) by 2015" where he urged delegates to appreciate that people everywhere need to be conscious of their responsibilities and should press governments to augment resources dedicated to the MDGs efforts. He said that:

'The rationale behind the 2015 goals is to achieve universal primary education, to ensure that by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. With the goal of promoting gender equality and empowering women the target is to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education by all levels of education no later than 2015.'

At the end of this conference, the Hon. Carmelo Abela and Hon. David Agius were appointed member and substitute member respectively on the Executive Committee of the CPA for a three-year period representing the British Islands and Mediterranean Region (BIMR).

The Speaker, Hon. Anġlu Farrugia, went on an official visit to Australia between 6 and 13 August. During this visit he had talks with Members and staff of the New South Wales Parliament and with the Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Victoria. The Speaker also had the opportunity to meet the Maltese communities of New South Wales and Victoria.

Notice of the Speaker's visit appeared on the front page of the September issue of the periodical of the La Valette Social Centre Iċ-Ċentru.

Deputy Speaker Ċensu Galea participated in the Eighth Conference of Presidents of Parliaments of Small European States convened in Reykjavik, Iceland, between the 27 and 30 August 2013, under the chairmanship of Mr Einar K. Guðfinnsson, Speaker of the Icelandic Althingi. In one of his interventions, Honourable Galea outlined the various issues which had been discussed during the first months of the Twelfth Legislature of the Parliament of Malta, commenting favourably on the fact that the Government and the Opposition generally agreed to approve the majority of the laws passed without the need of taking a vote. The Joint Declaration issued at the close of the Conference included a Maltese proposal calling for "small European States to continue discussing and sharing their particular experiences, success and failures amongst themselves in order to learn from each other and to present a homogenous and cohesive forum of like-minded and like-characterized states in a global economic environment."

The Deputy Speaker participates in the Eighth Conference of Presidents of Parliaments of Small European States

ATTIVITAJIET TAL-ISPEAKER

Fl-għeluq tal-*International Parliamentarians Coalition for North Korean Refugees and Human Rights*, li nżammet fil-Polonja bejn l-1 u t-3 ta' Awwissu, id-delegati adottaw dokument finali wara li aċċettaw emenda proposta mill-iSpeaker tal-Parlament ta' Malta, l-Onor. Anġlu Farrugia, li kien qiegħed imexxi delegazzjoni parlamentari magħmula mill-Onor. Chris Agius u mill-Onor. Claudette Buttigieg. Il-paragrafu konklussiv ta' dan id-dokument għalhekk ġie jaqra hekk: 'Il-Konferenza ħeġġet lis-Segretarju Ġenerali tal-Ġnus Magħquda biex, flimkien ma' organizzazzjonijiet internazzjonali kif ukoll ma' organizzazzjonijiet reġjonali, b'mod speċjali l-Kunsill tal-Ewropa u l-Unjoni Ewropea, iżżid b'kull mezz u b'mod kollettiv il-ħidma internazzjonali biex tiġi indirizzata t-traġedja dwar il-ksur ta' drittijiet tal-bniedem fil-konfront tar-refuġjati tal-Korea ta' Fuq'.

Fid-9 ta' Lulju l-iSpeaker tal-Kamra tad-Deputati, l-Onor. Anġlu Farrugia, kellu żjara ta' korteżija mis-Sur Martin Bugelli, Kap tar-Rappreżentanza tal-Kummissjoni Ewropea f'Malta. Fil-laqgħa ħadu sehem ukoll l-Onor. Carmelo Abela, *Whip* Parlamentari għan-naħa tal-Gvern u l-Onor. David Agius, *Whip* Parlamentari għan-naħa tal-Oppożizzjoni.

Is-Sur Bugelli stieden lill-iSpeaker sabiex imexxi delegazzjoni ta' 20 persuna fuq żjara fi Brussell organizzata mir-Rappreżentanza tal-Kummissjoni Ewropea f'Malta. L-iSpeaker laqa' din l-istedina, u b'hekk delegazzjoni komposta minn Membri Parlamentari miż-żewġ naħat tal-Kamra kif ukoll minn uffiċjali tal-Parlament ser iżżur Brussell f'Settembru 2013. L-għan ta' din iż-żjara huwa biex id-delegati jkollhom l-opportunità li jsiru jafu aktar dwar il-ħidma tal-istituzzjonijiet ewlenin tal-UE.

Bejn l-10 u l-11 ta' Ġunju l-iSpeaker l-Onor. Anġlu Farrugia mexxa delegazzjoni parlamentari fl-Alġerija, magħmula minn żewġ Membri Parlamentari eletti għall-ewwel darba f'din il-Leġiżlatura, l-Onor. Anthony Bezzina u l-Onor. Etienne Grech. Id-delegazzjoni ħadet sehem fil-kollokju internazzjonali dwar ir-riformi politiċi fl-Alġerija organizzat mill-Assemblea Popolari Nazzjonali tal-Alġerija.

Fil-kollokju d-delegazzjoni ltaqgħet mal-ET Abdelmalek Sellal, Prim Ministru tar-Repubblika Demokratika tal-Alġerija, mal-ET Mohamed Larbi Ould Khelifa, Speaker tal-Assemblea Nazzjonali u mal-ET Abdelkader Bensalah, President tal-Kunsill Nazzjonali (Kamra Superjuri) Alġerina. Matul dawn il-laqgħat tqajmu diversi suġġetti, fosthom:

- It-tisħiħ tar-relazzjonijiet interparlamentari;
- In-nomina ta' ambaxxatur mhux residenti għall-Alġerija;
- Il-proposta għal ftehim ta' ħelsien mit-taxxa doppja bejn Malta u l-Alġerija;
- Il-proposta tal-Air Malta għal uffiċċju ġewwa Alġeri;
- Koperazzjoni fil-qasam tal-enerġija;
- Il-ftehim propost dwar il-ġlieda kontra l-kriminalità organizzata u t-traffikar ta' sustanzi illegali; u
- Sostenn għat-tisħiħ tal-Politika Ewropea tal-Viċinat.

L-iSpeaker jippreżenta kopja tal-ewwel ħarġa ta' mill-Parlament lill-iSpeaker tal-Assemblea Leġiżlattiva tal-Alġerija

Fi tmiem il-laqgħa mal-iSpeaker tal-Assemblea, intlaħaq qbil li jitwaqqaf grupp interparlamentari ta' ħbiberija Malta-Alġerija bil-għan illi jiġu mistħarrġa oqsma li jistgħu jibbenefikaw minn ħidma mill-qrib u koperazzjoni bejn iż-żewġ naħat.

L-iSpeaker Farrugia indirizza lill-Kollokju dwar il-proċess ta' żvilupp u bidla ta' Malta matul is-snin u r-relazzjonijiet bejn Malta u l-Alġerija, u fi tmiem id-diskors tiegħu ħeġġeġ lill-Alġerija ssaħħaħ il-proċess ta' riformi sabiex dawn ikunu tassew demokratiċi u komprensivi, kif ukoll favur il-poplu kollu Alġerin.

Fit-23 ta' Lulju l-i*Speaker* għamel żjara lill-Ombudsman, il-Prim Imħallef Joseph Said Pullicino, li hu uffiċjal awtonomu tal-Parlament, u l-i*staff* tal-uffiċċju tiegħu.

Matul il-laqgħa ġiet diskussa l-importanza tal-Uffiċċju tal-Ombudsman li, kif saħaq l-i*Speaker*, flimkien mal-ħidma mwettqa mill-Uffiċċju tal-Awditur Ġenerali, jassiguraw li l-amministrazzjoni u l-finanzi tal-pajjiż jibqgħu dejjem suġġetti għall-verifiki neċessarji fl-interess tal-pajjiż u taċ-ċittadin Malti.

Fl-istess jum tat-23 ta' Lulju l-i*Speaker* żar l-Uffiċċju Nazzjonali tal-Verifika fejn ġie milqugħ mill-Awditur Ġenerali, is-Sur Anthony C. Mifsud, u mid-Deputat Awditur, is-Sur Charles Deguara, flimkien mal-i*staff* tal-Uffiċċju.

Fid-diskors tiegħu l-i*Speaker* enfasizza l-apprezzament tiegħu għar-rapporti li regolarment jiġu ppreżentati lilu biex jitqiegħdu fuq il-Mejda tal-Kamra u li wara jiġu diskussi fil-Kumitat Permanenti dwar il-Kontijiet Pubbliċi.

Activities of the Speaker

At the end of the International Parliamentarians Coalition for North Korean Refugees and Human Rights which was held in Poland between 1 and 3 August, the delegates adopted a final document after accepting an amendment proposed by Speaker Anġlu Farrugia, who was leading a parliamentary delegation made up of Hon. Chris Agius and Hon. Claudette Buttigieg, to the Conference.

The concluding paragraph of the adopted document was then changed to read: 'The conference urged the United Nations secretary general, so that, together with international organisations and regional ones, especially the Council of Europe and the European Union, increases by every means and in a collective manner, international work to address the human rights tragedy being faced by North Korean refugees'.

On 9 July the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. Anġlu Farrugia met with Mr Martin Bugelli, Head of the European Commission Representation in Malta. The Government Parliamentary Whip, Hon. Carmelo Abela, and the Opposition Parliamentary Whip, Hon. David Agius were also present during the meeting.

Mr Bugelli invited the Speaker to lead a delegation to Brussels on a visit organised by the European Commission Representation in Malta. The Speaker welcomed the invitation, and will be leading a 20-person delegation comprising Members of Parliament from both sides of the House and parliamentary officials to Brussels in September 2013. The aim of this visit is for delegation members to have the opportunity to discover how the institutions of the European Union function.

On 10 and 11 June Speaker Anġlu Farrugia led a parliamentary delegation to Algeria, comprising two newly elected Members of Parliament, Hon. Anthony Bezzina and Hon. Etienne Grech. The delegation participated in an international colloquy on the political reforms in Algeria, organised by the People's National Assembly of Algeria.

During the colloquy the delegation formally met with HE Abdelmalek Sellal, Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Algeria with HE Mohamed Larbi Ould Khelifa, Speaker of the National Assembly, and with HE Abdelkader Bensalah, President of the National Council (Upper Chamber) of Algeria. Various issues were raised during the meetings, including:

- *The strengthening of interparliamentary relations;*
- *The appointment of a non-resident ambassador to Algeria;*
- *The proposed double taxation treaty between Malta and Algeria;*
- *The proposal to open an Air Malta office in Algiers;*
- *Cooperation in the field of energy;*
- *The proposed agreement on the fight against organised crime and trafficking in illegal substances; and*
- *Support for the European Neighbourhood Policy.*

At the end of the meeting with the Speaker of the Algerian National Assembly, it was agreed that an interparliamentary friendship group between the National Assembly and the Maltese Parliament be formed in order to identify those areas which could benefit from closer cooperation between the two sides.

Speaker Farrugia addressed the Colloquy on the process of development and change that Malta underwent over the years, and the relations between Malta and Algeria. Hon. Farrugia concluded his address by enouraging Algeria to strengthen the reform process so as to make it truly democratic and comprehensive, resulting in added value for all Algerians.

On 23 July the Speaker called on the Ombudsman, Chief Justice Joseph Said Pullicino, and his staff. The Ombudsman is an autonomous parliamentary official.

The importance of the office of the Ombudsman was discussed during this meeting. The Speaker said that this office, along with the work of the Office of the Auditor General, ensure that the administration and finances of the country are always subjected to the necessary checks in the interest of the country and of its citizens.

Also on 23 July, the Speaker officially visited the National Audit Office, where he was welcomed by the Auditor General, Mr Anthony C. Mifsud, by the Deputy Auditor General, Mr Charles Deguara, and the staff.

In his address, the Speaker emphasised his appreciation of the reports that are presented to him regularly to be tabled in the House, which are subsequently discussed in the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Laqgħat Interparlamentari barra minn Malta

Bejn it-23 u l-25 ta' Ġunju, l-Onor. Chris Fearne, President tal-Kumitat dwar l-Affarijiet Barranin u Ewropej, u l-Onor. Carmelo Mifsud Bonnici, Membru tal-istess Kumitat, attendew għad-XLIX Laqgħa Ordinarja tal-COSAC li nżammet ġewwa Dublin. Is-suġġetti fuq l-aġenda ta' din il-laqgħa kienu l-futur tal-integrazzjoni Ewropea, l-Iżvilupp, il-futur Ewropew għaż-żgħażagħ u ż-żamma u t-tkabbir tal-Politika Ewropea tal-Viċinat.

L-Onor. Fearne pparteċipa wkoll fil-Laqgħa taċ-Chairpersons tal-COSAC bejn is-7 u t-8 ta' Lulju ġewwa Vilnius. Din kienet l-ewwel laqgħa interparlamentari taħt il-Presidenza tal-Kunsill Litwana. F'din il-laqgħa kien hemm diskussjoni dwar il-prijoritajiet tal-Presidenza u l-passi li jmiss lejn Unjoni Politika u Ekonomika. F'intervent qasir, l-Onor. Fearne tkellem dwar il-problema tal-immigrazzjoni illegali f'Malta u dwar il-bżonn li l-Ewropa turi solidarjetà ma' Malta sabiex ma titħalliex waħedha f'din is-sitwazzjoni.

Il-President tal-Kumitat għall-Affarijiet Ekonomiċi u Finanzjarji, l-Onor. Silvio Schembri, ipparteċipa f'konferenza organizzata mill-Kummissjoni Ewropea ġewwa Brussell fis-7 ta' Mejju. Din il-konferenza ttrattat il-futur ekonomiku, finanzjarju u politiku tal-Unjoni Monetarja Ewropea, suġġett importanti ħafna għal Malta fid-dawl ta' regoli ġodda li qegħdin jiġu diskussi u li jaffettwaw b'mod dirett lil Malta speċjalment fil-qasam bankarju.

Fl-intervent tiegħu, l-Onor. Schembri saħaq fuq l-importanza li l-Kummissjoni ma tħarisx esklussivament lejn l-interessi tal-pajjiżi l-kbar, u li l-interessi ta' pajjiżi oħra, fosthom Malta, jiġu salvagwardjati kontinwament. L-Onor. Schembri enfasizza wkoll il-punt li r-regoli l-ġodda proposti għal Unjoni Bankarja għandhom jinbnew anke fil-kuntest tar-realtà Maltija, għaliex jekk ma jsirx hekk l-impatt ta' din l-Unjoni fuq Malta jista' jkun kbir.

Huwa għalhekk ippropona li dawn ir-regoli ġodda jiġu diskussi fid-dettall u bir-reqqa ma' kull Stat Membru.

Il-laqgħa taċ-Chairpersons tal-COSAC - Vilnius 7-8 ta' Lulju 2013

Id-delegazzjoni Maltija fl-Assemblea Parlamentari tal-Mediterran ħadet sehem f'konferenza inter-governattiva konġunta bejn l-istess Assemblea u l-Inter Agency Cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity tal-Ġnus Magħquda f'Ġinevra bejn it-30 u l-31 ta' Mejju bit-tema *'Harnessing Trade for Growth in the Mediterranean'*. Id-delegazzjoni Maltija kienet komposta mill-Kap tad-Delegazzjoni, l-Onor. Justyne Caruana, l-Onor. Silvio Schembri u l-Onor. Stephen Spiteri. F'din il-konferenza, id-delegazzjoni Maltija kellha rwol prominenti ħafna fejn il-kap tad-delegazzjoni mexxiet ukoll is-sessjoni dwar iż-żieda fl-investiment fir-reġjun tal-Mediterran li jolqot lil Malta mill-qrib.

L-Onor. Caruana ppreżentat lill-Konferenza żewġ dokumenti, wieħed li jittratta t-tisħiħ tas-sistemi tal-enerġija b'rilevanza partikolari għal Malta u l-progress li qed isir f'dan il-qasam, u l-ieħor dwar titjib tal-kapaċità produttiva li ġie trattat mil-lenti ta' ugwaljanza bejn is-sessi u opportunitajiet indaqs billi wkoll jirrifletti r-realtajiet, problemi, limitazzjonijiet u sfidi li għandna f'pajjiżna.

Laqgħa oħra fil-qafas tal-Assemblea Parlamentari tal-Mediterran saret f'Ruma fis-6 ta' Ġunju u fiha ħadu sehem id-Deputy Speaker, l-Onor. Ċensu Galea, flimkien mal-Onor. Justyne Caruana, Kap tad-delegazzjoni tal-Parlament Malti għall-Assemblea Parlamentari tal-Mediterran, u President tal-Kumitat *ad hoc* dwar il-Lvant Nofsani tal-istess Assemblea. F'din il-laqgħa speċjali tal-Bureau tal-Assemblea ġew ittrattati suġġetti varji, u b'mod speċifiku s-sitwazzjoni inkwetanti tal-kunflitt ġewwa s-Sirja.

Parliamentary Meetings Abroad

Between 23 and 25 June, Hon. Chris Fearne, Chairman of the Foreign and European Affairs Committee and Hon. Carmelo Mifsud Bonnici, Member of the same Committee, participated in the XLIX Ordinary Meeting of COSAC in Dublin. The items on the agenda of this meeting were the future of European integration, delivering on development, a European future for young citizens and maintaining momentum of the enlargement of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

Hon. Fearne also participated in the COSAC Chairpersons' Meeting of 7-8 July in Vilnius. This was the first interparliamentary meeting of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council. The priorities of the Lithuanian Presidency and the next steps towards a political and economic union were discussed. In a brief intervention Hon. Fearne spoke about the problem of illegal immigration in Malta and the need for Europe to show solidarity with Malta and not leaving it alone to handle this situation.

On 20 June Hon. Michael Falzon took part in an interparliamentary meeting in Brussels organised by the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee of the European Parliament on police and judicial cooperation in criminal and civil matters, in the framework of the Stockholm Programme. During the meeting Hon. Falzon said that Malta cannot but agree on the need for international cooperation in criminal matters like arms, drugs and human trafficking, however there should be more factual solidarity in the area of illegal immigration, such as a permanent and obligatory relocation programme.

On 20 and 21 June Hon. Charles Buhagiar attended the 13th Meeting of the European Union Forum for Renewable Energy Sources (EUFORES) organised together with the Irish Presidency of the Council and the Irish Parliament. A declaration was adopted at the end of the meeting concerning the need for greater cooperation between its Member States and better implementation of the Directive on renewable energy sources and suggests binding targets by 2030 as direction to investors. The declaration recognises as well the potential of wind energy in the North Sea region.

The Maltese delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean participated in a joint inter-governmental conference between the same Assembly and the Inter Agency Cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity of the United Nations held in Geneva on 30 and 31 May with the theme 'Harnessing Trade for Growth in the Mediterranean'.

The Maltese delegation was composed of the Head of Delegation, Hon. Justyne Caruana, Hon. Silvio Schembri and Hon. Stephen Spiteri. The Maltese delegation had a very prominent role where the head of delegation led the session on growth in investment in the Mediterranean region, which is of direct relevance for Malta.

Hon. Caruana presented two documents to the Conference, one concerning the strengthening and the progress of energy systems with particular reference to Malta and another concerning improvements to productive capacity from the perspective of equal opportunities and non-discrimination between men and women, by highlighting the realities, problems, limitations and challenges in Malta.

Another meeting in the framework of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean was held in Rome on 6 June. The Deputy Speaker Hon. Ċensu Galea, together with Hon. Justyne Caruana, Head of Delegation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean and Chair of the ad hoc Committee on the Middle East of the same Assembly, took part in this special meeting of the Bureau where various issues were discussed, including specifically the worrying situation in Syria.

Hon. Justyne Caruana, Hon. Silvio Schembri and Hon. Stephen Spiteri in Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean meetings

LAQGĦAT INTERPARLAMENTARI BARRA MINN MALTA (KONT.)

Id-delegazzjoni tal-Parlament Malti għall-Assemblea Parlamentari tal-Kunsill tal-Ewropa ġiet appuntata permezz ta' mozzjoni numru 16 li ġiet approvata mill-Kamra f'Seduta numru 7 fil-15 ta' April 2013. L-ewwel laqgħa li pparteċipat fiha d-delegazzjoni l-ġdida kienet il-Laqgħa tar-Rebbiegħa li nżammet fi Strażburgu bejn it-22 u s-26 ta' April.

Il-kredenzjali tal-Onor. Joe Debono Grech, Kap tad-Delegazzjoni, dawk tal-Membri l-Onor. Beppe Fenech Adami u l-Onor. Deborah Schembri, u dawk tal-Membri sostituti, l-Onor. Charlò Bonnici, l-Onor. Deo Debattista u l-Onor. Michael Falzon, intbagħtu lill-President tal-Assemblea, u, wara li ġew eżaminati, ġew ratifikati mill-Assemblea mingħajr kontestazzjoni. Il-Membri tad-delegazzjoni Maltija ġew ukoll magħżula jservu fuq id-diversi kumitati tal-Assemblea kif ġej:

Kumitat għall-Affarijiet Politiċi u d-Demokrazija – Onor. Debono Grech u Onor. Fenech Adami (Sostitut)
Kumitat għall-Affarijiet Legali u tal-Bniedem – Onor. Falzon u Onor. Schembri (Sostitut)
Kumitat għall-Affarijiet Soċjali, Saħħa u Żvilupp Sostenibbli – Onor. Debattista u Onor. Bonnici (Sostitut)
Kumitat dwar il-Migrazzjoni, Rifuġjati u Persuni Spostati – Onor. Fenech Adami u Onor. Debono Grech (Sostitut)
Kumitat dwar il-Kultura, ix-Xjenza, l-Edukazzjoni u l-Media – Onor. Bonnici u Onor. Debattista (Sostitut)
Kumitat dwar l-Ugwaljanza u n-Non-Diskrimazzjoni – Onor. Schembri u Onor. Falzon (Sostitut)
Kumitat ta' Monitoraġġ – Onor. Debono Grech

L-Onor. Debono Grech ġie approvat b'mod unanimu mill-Assemblea bħala Viċi President tal-Assemblea sabiex iservi matul l-2013, u b'hekk ikun Membru kemm tal-Bureau kif ukoll tal-Kumitat Permanenti tal-Assemblea.

Minbarra l-Plenarja, l-Membri tad-delegazzjoni Maltija pparteċipaw fid-diversi laqgħat ta' kumitati li huma membri tagħhom flimkien ma' dawk tal-gruppi politiċi. Fil-Plenarja ġew diskussi l-monitoraġġ tat-Turkija, vjolenza kontra komunitajiet reliġjużi, vjolenza sesswali fuq it-tfal, l-immaniġġjar tal-immigrazzjoni mħallta, in-nanoteknoloġija, l-etika fix-xjenza u t-teknoloġija u l-15-il Protokoll li jemenda l-Konvenzjoni għall-Protezzjoni tad-Drittijiet tal-Bniedem u l-Libertajiet Fundamentali.

Fl-24 ta' Mejju l-Onor. Deborah Schembri u l-Onor. Michael Falzon ipparteċipaw f'laqgħa tal-Kumitat dwar l-Ugwaljanza u n-Non-Diskrimazzjoni fi ħdan l-Assemblea Parlamentari tal-Kunsill tal-Ewropa li nżammet ġewwa Pariġi.

Is-suġġetti fuq l-aġenda tal-Kumitat kienu jinkludu abbozz ta' rapport, abbozz ta' riżoluzzjoni preliminari u abbozz ta' rakkomandazzjoni dwar id-diskriminazzjoni fuq bażi ta' orjentazzjoni sesswali u identità tal-ġeneru, mozzjoni dwar is-sitwazzjoni tal-persuni *transgender* fl-Ewropa sabiex tiġi mressqa mill-Kumitat, emendi għal riżoluzzjoni tal-Kumitat dwar l-Affarijiet Soċjali dwar il-*leave* parentali, it-tisħiħ tal-parteċipazzjoni tan-nisa fil-politika, qafas għal rapport dwar reati fil-Caucasus tat-Tramuntana u skambju dwar x'attivitajiet jistgħu jkunu ppjanati biex jikkommemoraw il-Jum Internazzjonali għall-Eliminazzjoni tal-Vjolenza kontra n-Nisa.

Fis-27 ta' Ġunju l-Onor. Justyne Caruana, Kap tal-Delegazzjoni Maltija tal-Assemblea Parlamentari tal-Mediterran u *rapporteur* tat-Task Force dwar il-Lvant Nofsani u Rapporteur tal-Kumitat dwar id-Drittijiet Umani, irrappreżentat lill-Assemblea Parlamentari tal-Mediterran f'konferenza li saret f'Barċellona. Din il-laqgħa ttrattat l-inklużjoni soċjali fl-isfond tal-iżviluppi li seħħew f'diversi pajjiżi u kif, permezz tal-Euromed, tista' tiġi promossa l-inklużjoni soċjali b'politika effettiva.

Fl-intervent tagħha l-Onor. Caruana tkellmet dwar il-faqar u kif dan jista' jiġi eradikat, dwar politika aktar effettiva u effiċjenti biex in-nefqa tal-gvernijiet fuq benefiċċji soċjali, sussidji u għajnuniet tħalli riżultati aħjar, dwar governabbiltà tajba u trasparenza biex jiġi assigurat li l-flus allokati għal persuni vulnerabbli jintużaw tassew u jaslu għand dawn il-persuni. Hi tkellmet ukoll dwar il-bżonn ta' politika bbażata aktar fuq il-bżonnijiet tan-nies u li tkun aktar miftuħa u inklussiva biex in-nies iħossuhom parti mit-tħaddim ta' din l-istess politika.

Parliamentary Meetings Abroad (Cont.)

The Maltese delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe was appointed by way of motion 16 which was approved by the House in Sitting 7 of 15 April 2013. The first meeting in which the newly appointed delegation took part was the Second Part Session which was held in Strasbourg between 22 and 26 April.

The credentials of Hon. Joe Debono Grech, Head of Delegation, Members Hon. Beppe Fenech Adami and Hon. Deborah Schembri, and substitute Members Hon. Charlò Bonnici, Hon. Deo Debattista and Hon. Michael Falzon, were sent to the President of the Assembly, and after they were examined they were uncontestedly ratified by the Assembly. The Members of the Maltese delegation were also appointed to serve on the various committees of the Assembly as follows:

Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy – Hon. Debono Grech and Hon. Fenech Adami (Substitute)
Committee on Legal and Human Affairs – Hon. Falzon and Hon. Schembri (Substitute)
Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development – Hon. Debattista and Hon. Bonnici (Substitute)
Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons – Hon. Fenech Adami and Hon. Debono Grech (Substitute)
Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media – Hon. Bonnici and Hon. Debattista (Substitute)
Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination – Hon. Schembri and Hon. Falzon (Substitute)
Monitoring Committee – Hon. Debono Grech

Hon. Debono Grech was unanimously approved by the Assembly as Vice President of the Assembly for 2013, thereby becoming Member of the Bureau of the Assembly as well as of the Standing Committee of the Assembly.

In addition to the Plenary meetings, the Members of the Maltese delegation also took part in a number of meetings o the committees and political groups to which they belong. The items on the agenda of the Plenary were the monitoring of Turkey, violence against religious communities, sexual abuse of children, managing mixed migration, nanotechnology, ethics in science and technology and the 15th Protocol amending the Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

On 24 May Hon. Deborah Schembri and Hon. Michael Falzon participated in a meeting of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe which was held in Paris.

The items on the agenda of the Committee included a draft report, a preliminary draft resolution and a draft recommendation on discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, a motion on the situation of transgender persons in Europe to be moved by the Committee, amendments to a resolution of the Committee on Social Affairs on parental leave, the strengthening of female participation in politics, a framework for a report on crimes in the Northern Caucasus and an exchange on possible events to commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

On 27 June Hon. Justyne Caruana, Head of Delegation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterrean and rapporteur of the Task Force on the Middle East and rapportuer of the Committee on Human Rights, represented the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean in a conference that was organised in Barcelona. The items on the agenda of the meeting included social inculsion in the context of developments in various countries and how the Euromed can promote social inclusion as an effective policy.

Hon. Caruana spoke about poverty and the elimination of poverty, a more effective and efficient policy for the reduction of government expenditure on social benefits, subsidies and help that give better results, good governance and transparency to ensure that money allocated to vulnerable persons actually reaches the intended persons. Hon. Caruana also spoke about the need for policies to be based on the needs of people and be more open and inclusive to ensure that the people feel at the centre of these policies.

Parliametary Assembly of the Mediterranean

LAQGĦAT INTERPARLAMENTARI BARRA MINN MALTA (KONT.)

Fl-20 ta' Ġunju l-Onor. Michael Falzon ipparteċipa f'laqgħa interparlamentari ġewwa Brussell organizzata mill-Kumitat dwar il-Libertajiet Ċivili, Ġustizzja u Intern tal-Parlament Ewropew dwar il-koperazzjoni tal-pulizija u ġudizzjarji f'materji kriminali u ċivili, fil-qafas tal-programm ta' Stokkolma. F'intervent matul il-laqgħa l-Onor. Falzon saħaq illi filwaqt li Malta ma tistax ma taqbilx dwar il-bżonn ta' koperazzjoni internazzjonali f'materji kriminali bħal traffikar ta' armi, droga u bnedmin, hemm bżonn ta' aktar solidarjetà fattwali fejn tidħol l-immigrazzjoni illegali, bħal pereżempju sistema permanenti u obligatorja ta' rilokazzjoni.

Bejn il-15 u s-16 ta' Mejju, il-Whip min-naħa tal-Gvern, l-Onor. Carmelo Abela ppparteċipa fit-XVIII Konferenza Interparlamentari tal-EUREKA Network għall-futur tar-riċerka u l-innovazzjoni. Din il-Konferenza ġiet organizzata mill-Presidenza Torka tal-EUREKA fil-Parlament Ewropew ġewwa Brussell, u ttrattat is-sostenn għall-innovazzjoni bħala opportunità għall-irkupru ekonomiku globali.

Malta ngħaqdet fil-EUREKA Network fl-2006 u fl-2010 saret membru tal-programm Eurostars, li hu programm konġunt mal-Kummissjoni Ewropea u l-ewwel wieħed li l-għan tiegħu hu li jħeġġeġ negozji żgħar u ta' daqs medju sabiex imexxu proġetti ta' riċerka u innvoazzjoni internazzjonali konġunti billi jiffaċilita s-sostenn u l-aċċess għal fondi Ewropej. L-għan ta' din il-laqgħa kien biex iservi ta' forum fejn Membri Parlamentari minn pajjiżi membri tal-EUREKA, Membri Parlamentari Ewopej, rappreżentanti mill-Kummissjoni Ewropea u *stakeholders* oħra jiddiskutu l-istatus, l-opportunitajiet u l-ostakli għas-sostenn li hemm fil-preżent għall-innovazzjoni fl-Ewropa, b'mod partikolari s-sinerġiji li jista' jkun hemm bejn is-sistemi differenti fil-pajjiżi membri.

KONT TAF LI ... l-Assemblea Parlamentari tal-Kunsill tal-Ewropa tlaqqa' flimkien Membri Parlamentari eletti demokratikament mis-47 Stat Membru tal-Kunsill tal-Ewropa u tiltaqa' erba' darbiet fis-sena ġewwa Strażburgu?

Is-setgħat tal-Assemblea huma dawk li jinvestigaw, jirrakkomandaw u jagħtu parir, filwaqt li r-rakkmandazzjonijiet tagħha f'ċerti oqsma, pereżempju dak tad-drittijiet tal-bniedem, huma ta' importanza kbira fil-kuntest politiku Ewropew. L-istituzzjonijiet Ewropej spiss jirreferu għall-ħidma ta' din l-Assemblea, speċjalment fl-oqsma tad-drittijiet tal-bniedem, koperazzjoni legali u koperazzjoni kulturali. L-Assemblea għandha 10 kumitati permanenti li jiltaqgħu matul is-sena biex jippreparaw rapporti u abbozzi ta' riżoluzzjonijiet fl-oqsma ta' speċjalizzazzjoni tagħhom.

L-Assemblea tiddetermina hi stess l-aġenda tagħha; tiddiskuti avvenimenti Ewropej u internazzjonali u teżamina suġġetti kurrenti li huma ta' interess għall-popli tal-pajjiżi Ewropej u li għandhom x'jaqsmu mad-drittijiet tal-bniedem, id-demokrazija, il-ħarsien tal-minoritajiet u l-istat tad-dritt.

PARLIAMENTARY MEETINGS ABROAD (CONT.)

The Chairman of the Economic and Financial Affairs Committee, Hon. Silvio Schembri, took part in a conference organised by the European Commission in Brussels on 7 May. The subject on the agenda of the meeting was the economic, financial and political future of the Economic and Monetary Union. This subject is considered to be very important for Malta in the light of new rules that are being discussed and that will have a direct impact on Malta, especially its banking sector.

During the conference Hon. Schembri said that the European Commission should not just be taking into account the interests of the larger Member States; the interests of smaller Member States, like Malta, also have to be safeguarded at all times. Hon. Schembri emphasised also that the new rules concerning the Banking Union should be drawn up in the context of the Maltese reality, as otherwise the impact on Malta could be significant. He therefore suggested that these new rules be discussed in detail with every Member State.

Hon. Silvio Schembri at the European Commission Conference in Brussels

Between 15 and 16 May, the Government Whip, Hon. Carmelo Abela, participated in the XVIII EUREKA Network Interparliamentary Conference on the future of research and innovation. This Conference was organised by the Turkish EUREKA Presidency in the European Parliament in Brussels on support for innovation as an opportunity for global economic recovery.

Malta joined the EUREKA Network in 2006 and in 2010 Malta became member of the Eurostars, which is a joint programme with the European Commission. This is the first programme aimed at stimulating SMEs to lead international collaborative research and innovation projects by easing access to support and funding.

The aim of this meeting was to serve as a forum where Members of Parliament from EUREKA member states, Members of the European Parliament, representatives from the European Commission and other stakeholders meet to discuss the status, the opportunities and the obstacles of the current support for innovation in Europe, particularly the synergies that there could be between different systems in the member states.

DID YOU KNOW THAT ... the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) brings together democratically elected Members of Parliament from the 47 Member States of the Council of Europe and meets four times a year in Strasbourg?

The powers of the Assembly extend only to the ability to investigate, recommend and advise. Nevertheless, its recommendations on issues such as human rights have significant weight in the European political context. The European institutions often refer to the work of the PACE, especially in the fields of human rights, legal cooperation and cultural cooperation. The Assembly has 10 permanent committees that meet throughout the year to prepare reports and projects for resolutions in their respective fields of expertise.

The Assembly sets its own agenda; it discusses European and international events and examines current subjects which interest the populations of the countries of Europe covering issues related to human rights, democracy, protection of minorities and the rule of law.

IL-JUM INTERNAZZJONALI TAD-DEMOKRAZIJA

Il-Jum Internazzjonali tad-Demokrazija ġie istituzzjonalizzat min-Nazzjonijiet Uniti fl-2007. F'Settembru tal-1997, l-Unjoni Inter-Parlamentari (IPU) kienet ġa adottat Dikjarazzjoni Universali fuq id-Demokrazija li tafferma l-prinċipji tad-demokrazija, l-elementi u l-eżerċizzju ta' ggvernar demokratiku, u l-iskop internazzjonali tad-demokrazija.

Il-Jum Internazzjonali tad-Demokrazija jagħti opportunità sabiex iċ-ċittadin jiġi mħajjar jieħu sehem attiv fil-parlament tiegħu. It-tema għal din is-sena hija 'Insaħħu l-Vuċijiet għad-Demokrazija'.

L-għan aħħari tad-demokrazija hu li jissalvagwardja u jippromovi d-dinjità u d-drittijiet fundamentali tal-individwu, li tintlaħaq ġustizzja soċjali u li jissaħħaħ l-iżvilupp ekonomiku u soċjali tal-komunità kif ukoll il-koeżjoni tas-soċjetà filwaqt li jinbena ambjent propizju għall-paċi internazzjonali. Id-demokrazija, l-iżvilupp u d-drittijiet umani huma għaldaqstant inter-dipendenti.

Id-demokrazija tfisser id-dritt li kulħadd isemma' leħnu u dan id-dritt jista' jiġi eżerċitat grazzi għal u permezz tal-Parlament, li jiżgura li l-Istat jimxi skont ir-rieda tal-poplu permezz ta' djalogu effettiv mas-soċjetà ċivili.

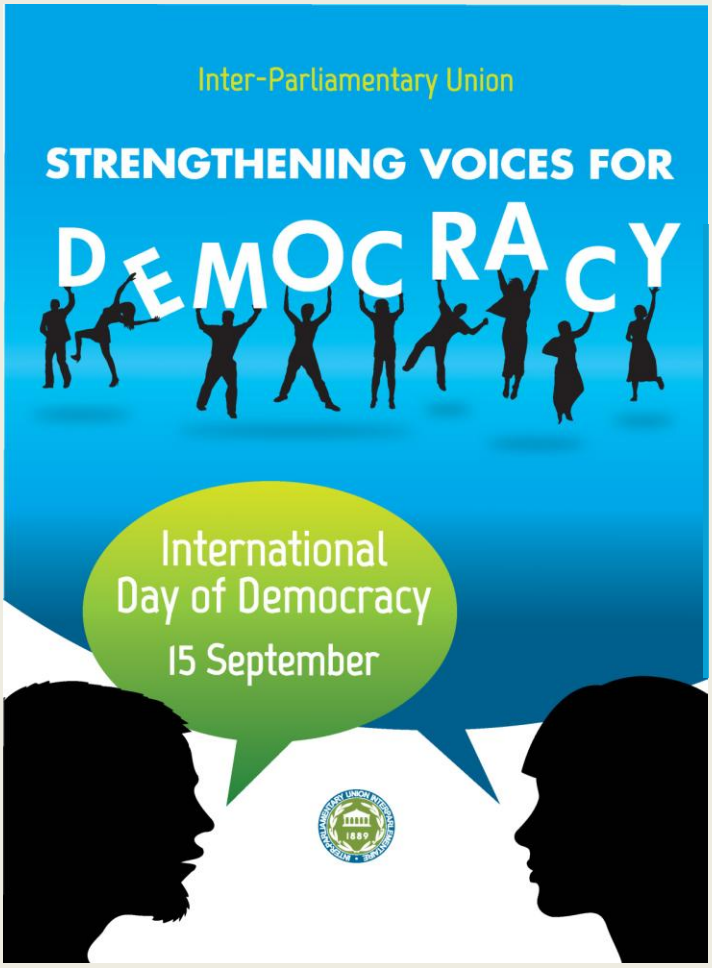
Id-djalogu bejn il-Parlament u ċ-ċittadini huwa essenzjali biex jgħaqqad l-istituzzjonijiet parlamentari u l-parlamentari nfushom mal-kostitwenti tagħhom u mas-soċjetà ċivili in ġenerali. Huwa fl-interess ta' kulħadd li jsir midħla tal-mekkaniżmi li permezz tagħhom iċ-ċittadini jistgħu jipparteċipaw fil-proċess demokratiku. Dan huwa l-uniku mod kif nistgħu niżguraw li d-demokrazija taħdem sew.

Il-Jum Internazzjonali tad-Demokrazija jipprovdi opportunità biex nagħrfu l-potenzjal tal-Parlament u l-importanza li ċ-ċittadin jinvolvi ruħu fil-ħajja politika tal-Istat.

Bil-għan li tissaħħaħ id-demokrazija, il-Parlament Malti jaħdem bis-sħiħ biex jagħti vuċi liċ-ċittadini, inkluż iż-żagħżagħ, permezz ta' attivitajiet bħal Eko-Parlament, il-Parlament Nazzjonali taż-Żgħażagħ u l-Parlament għall-Persuni b'Diżabilità.

Fl-okkażjoni tas-Sena Ewropea taċ-Ċittadini, il-Parlament se ilaqqa' Parlament taċ-Ċittadini f'Novembru sabiex jiżdied l-għarfien pubbliku dwar id-drittijiet li wieħed igawdi bħala ċittadin tal-Unjoni Ewropea.

Is-sit elettroniku tal-Parlament jagħti l-fakultà liċ-ċittadin li jinvolvi ruħu anke billi jikkuntattja lir-rappreżentant tiegħu fil-Parlament. Barra minn hekk il-pubbliku jista' jsemma' leħnu billi jippreżenta petizzjoni lill-Kamra.



Għal aktar informazzjoni dwar il-Jum Internazzjonali tad-Demokrazija wieħed jista' jidħol fit-twitter: http://twitter.com//IPUparliament, jew jaċċessa s-sit tal-IPU: http://www.ipu.org/idd jew is-sit tan-Nazzjonijiet Uniti: http://www.un.org/en/events/democracyday. Wieħed jista' jinvolvi ruħu fil-proċess demokratiku permezz tas-sit elettroniku tal-Parlament Malti http://www.parlament.mt/ get-involved?1=1.

THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DEMOCRACY

The International Day of Democracy was instituted by the United Nations in 2007. In September 1997 the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) had already adopted a Universal Declaration on Democracy, affirming the principles of democracy, the elements and exercise of democratic government, and the international scope of democracy.

The International Day of Democracy presents an opportunity to encourage citizens to take an interest in their parliament, bringing democracy to the people. This year's theme is 'Strengthening Voices for Democracy'.

The ultimate goal of democracy is to preserve and promote the dignity and fundamental rights of the individual, to achieve social justice, foster the economic and social development of the community, strengthen the cohesion of society and build a propitious environment for international peace. Democracy, development and human rights are therefore interdependent.

Democracy means the right of all to be heard, and this right is exercised thanks to and through Parliament. The parliamentary institution, by seeking opinions from civil society and providing a stage for effective dialogue ensures that the State is governed by the will of the people.

Dialogue between Parliament and citizens is essential in order to connect parliamentary institutions and parliamentarians with their constituents and civil society at large. It is in the interest of all to be familiar with the mechanisms that enable citizens to participate in the democratic process, as this is the only way to ensure a properly functioning democracy.

The International Day of Democracy provides an opportunity to realize the potential of Parliament and the importance of active involvement in the political life of the State.

In order to strengthen democracy, the Maltese Parliament strives to give a voice to citizens, including young people, through various activies such as Eco-Parliament, National Youth Parliament and Parliament for the Disabled.

To mark the European Year of Citizens, Parliament will also be holding a Citizens' Parliament in November to raise public awareness of the rights enjoyed as citizens of the European Union.

A webpage on the Parliamentary website is wholly dedicated to enable citizens to get involved and provides a way to contact one's representative Member. Citizens can voice their opinions and concerns by petitioning the House through their MP.

Further information on the International Day of Democracy may be accessed by following http://twitter.com//IPUparliament, by visiting the IPU website at http://www.ipu.org/idd or from the UN website at http://www.un.org/en/events/democracyday/. One can also get involved in the democratic process through the Maltese Parliament website http://www.parlament.mt/get-involved?l=1

L-Unjoni Inter-Parlamentari twaqqfet fl-1889 u l-kwartieri ġenerali tagħha jinsabu f'Ġinevra. Din l-organizzazzjoni dinjija tal-parlamenti nazzjonali fil-preżent tilqa' fiha 162 Membru u 10 Membri assoċjati bl-għan li jaqsmu flimkien l-għarfien, jingħaqdu biex isibu soluzzjonijiet għal kwistjonijiet ewlenin fid-dinja tal-lum, u jixprunaw tibdil demokratiku pożittiv. L-oqsma ewlenin li fihom taħdem l-IPU huma d-demokrazija rappreżentattiva, id-drittijiet tal-bniedem u l-liġi umanitarja, il-paċi u s-sigurtà internazzjonali, l-iżvilupp sostenibbli, in-nisa fil-politika, u l-edukazzjoni, xjenza u kultura. Il-Parlament Malti ssieħeb fl-IPU fl-1988.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) was founded in 1889 and has its headquarters in Geneva. It is the global organization of national parliaments and currently has 162 Members and 10 Associate Members. The IPU brings parliaments together to share knowledge, unite on tackling key issues facing the world today, and to drive positive democratic change. Its main areas of activity are representative democracy, human rights and humanitarian law, international peace and security, sustainable development, women in politics, and education, science and culture. The Maltese Parliament became a member of IPU in 1988.

LEJN IL-MATURITÀ

LEJN IL-MATURITÀ – il-pożizzjoni tal-Uffiċċju Nazzjonali tal-Verifika fil-Kumitat dwar il-Kontijiet Pubbliċi u l-awtonomija tal-Parlament Malti

Fil-biċċa l-kbira tad-demokraziji, tifhem il-kostituzzjoni ta' Stat ifisser li tifhem kif jiffunzjona l-Parlament ta' dak l-Istat. Il-Parlament huwa ċ-ċavetta biex tifhem id-demokrazija moderna. Id-demokrazija moderna mhijiex demokrazija diretta; in-numru ta' persuni li minnhom hu magħmul l-Istat jeliminaw dik il-possibbiltà. Id-demokrazija moderna hija demokrazija medjata u hija l-funzjoni tal-Parlament li toħloq in-ness bejn gvern u poplu. Il-Parlament huwa, fl-Istat, l-istituzzjoni rappreżentattiva; huwa kompost minn persuni li idealment għandhom jirrappreżentaw b'mod wiesa' lill-elettorat kollu. Il-kostituzzjonijiet parlamentari għandhom it-tendenza li jiżviluppaw konvenzjonijiet kostituzzjonali, li jbiddlu sostanzjalment ir-realtà politika u l-mod kif tiġi eżerċitata s-setgħa kostituzzjonali. L-iżvilupp tal-kostituzzjoni tar-Renju Unit huwa eżempju evidenti ta' kif dan l-iżvilupp isir fil-prattika. Huwa evidenti li għall-ewwel kien maħsub li l-Parlament jeżerċita kontroll reali u effettiv fuq l-eżekuttiv, li beda bħala l-eżekuttiv tal-monarkija. Mal-mogħdija taż-żmien, dan żviluppa fil-kunċett ta' responsabbiltà ministerjali individwali u kollettiva li ġabet magħha it-trasferiment tal-poter politiku għal għand ir-rappreżentanti eletti tal-poplu. Min-naħa tiegħu, matul is-snin, dan ġab miegħu trasferiment effettiv tal-poter għal għand l-eżekuttiv. Dan il-mudell huwa evidenti wkoll fil-Kostituzzjoni Maltija.

Il-kliem tal-Kostituzzjoni jipprevedi sitwazzjoni fejn il-gvern tal-ġurnata huwa dipendenti u jaqa' taħt il-kontroll tal-Parlament, li huwa kompost mir-rappreżentanti eletti tal-poplu. Tabilħaqq, huwa gvern fil-veru sens tal-kelma għaliex igawdi l-appoġġ tal-maġġoranza eletta. F'inverżjoni mhux prevista tal-irwoli tagħhom, fl-aħħar mill-aħħar, dan wassal għad-dipendenza tal-Parlament fuq l-eżekuttiv. Ta' rilevanza partikolari f'din il-perspettiva hija s-setgħa tax-xoljiment, li użata b'mod effettiv mill-Prim Ministru, twassal għall-Parlament passiv aktar milli awtoassertiv. Flimkien mal-iżvilupp ta' dik li effettivament hija s-sistema bipartitika, u, flimkien, mal-livell akbar ta' organizzazzjoni tal-partiti, dan jidher li pproduċa trasferiment effettiv ulterjuri ta' poter barra l-Parlament għal fuq l-istrutturi tal-partiti. Dan mhuwiex trasferiment li huwa kostituzzjonalment previst jew iddixxiplinat, iżda huwa r-riżultat ta' żviluppi politiċi konkreti. Huwa f'sitwazzjoni bħal din li l-awtonomija tal-Parlament u l-indipendenza tiegħu mill-gvern tal-ġurnata jsiru ingredjent essenzjali fl-iżvilupp u t-tisħiħ tad-demokrazija vera.

F'dan ix-xenarju, it-twaqqif tal-Kumitat dwar il-Kontijiet Pubbliċi u l-iżvilupp tal-uffiċċju nazzjonali tal-verifika taħt id-direzzjoni tal-Awditur Ġenerali jsiru wieħed mill-passi ewlenin fit-tisħiħ tal-awtonomija parlamentari. Huwa f'din il-perspettiva li jkun interessanti li nħarsu mill-qrib lejn ir-relazzjoni li teżisti bejn il-Kumitat dwar il-Kontijiet Pubbliċi u l-Awditur Ġenerali. L-arranġamenti kostituzzjonali inizjali f'Malta pprevedew biss il-ħatra ta' Awditur Ġenerali, li l-uffiċċju tiegħu kellu jkun kostituzzjonalment protett. Il-liġi ma pprovdietx l-għodod li huma meħtieġa sabiex ikomplu jiggarantixxu l-eżerċitar effettiv tal-ġudizzju indipendenti tal-awditur ġenerali, u is-sorveljanza effettiva tal-finanzi pubbliċi permezz ta' skrutinju ddettaljat tal-kontijiet pubbliċi u permezz ta' investigazzjonijiet oħrajn. Kien bdil fl-ordnijiet permanenti tal-Kamra li pprovdew għat-twaqqif ta' Kumitat dwar il-Kontijiet Pubbliċi, u dan kien preċiżament maħsub sabiex isaħħaħ ir-rwol superviżorju li kellu jeżerċita l-Parlament fir-rigward tal-finanzi pubbliċi. Dan jinsab fl-ordni permanenti 120A, li ġiet introdotta permezz tar-riżoluzzjoni 198 tal-1995. Il-funzjonijiet tal-Kumitat dwar il-Kontijiet Pubbliċi huma definiti fl-ordni permanenti 120E u jikkonsistu primarjament fi rwol superviżorju fuq il-finanzi pubbliċi. Bl-għan evidenti li tiġi enfasizzata l-indipendenza ta' dan il-kumitat mill-gvern, ingredjent essenzjali li jrid ikollu l-kumitat jekk irid jaħdem kif suppost, u fl-istess ħin tiġi ssalvagwardjata l-awtonomija tal-Parlament, hija r-regola illi li l-president ta' dan il-Kumitat jintgħażel minn fost il-membri tal-oppożizzjoni (skont l-ordni permanenti 120E (4), il-president jiġi nnominat mill-Kap tal-Oppożizzjoni). Ta' rilevanza partikolari hija s-subklawżola li tistabbilixxi li l-Kumitat dwar il-Kontijiet Pubbliċi għandu jkollu s-setgħa:

"Li jitlob lill-Awditur Ġenerali li jippreżenta memoranda dwar kull ħaġa fejn issir talba biex dan isir minn mill-inqas tliet membri tal-Kumitat Permanenti;

"Li jikkunsidra l-memoranda ppreżentati mill-Awditur Ġenerali, li jkunu ġew ippreżentati wara li tkun saritlu talba bis-saħħa tas-subparagrafu (d) ta' dan il-paragrafu, jew fuq inizjattiva tiegħu stess;

LEJN IL-MATURITÀ (KONT.)

"Li jeżamina rapporti u dokumenti li għandhom x'jaqsmu magħhom, li jsiru mill-Awditur Ġenerali;"

Ta' min jinnota li dan l-iżvilupp f'Malta jimmudella ruħu fuq prattiki li huma stabbiliti sewwa fil-Parlament tar-Renju Unit.

Id f'id mal-ħolqien tal-Kumitat dwar il-Kontijiet Pubbliċi, kompliet tissaħħaħ il-figura tal-Awditur Ġenerali. Dan seta' jsir permezz tal-ħolqien tal-kariga ta' Viċi Awditur Ġenerali, kif ukoll permezz tat-twaqqif tal-Uffiċċju Nazzjonali tal-Verifika permezz ta' leġiżlazzjoni, li għandu jkun uffiċċju taħt il-kontroll u d-direzzjoni tal-Awditur Ġenerali u l-ħaddiema tiegħu għandhom jiġu impjegati b'mod indipendenti mis-servizz pubbliku. Dan huwa l-Att XVI tal-1997, li ġie ppromulgat mill-Parlament Malti fil-25 ta' Lulju 1997 u li issa huwa l-kapitolu 396 tal-Liġijiet ta' Malta.

F'dan il-kuntest, huwa faċli li tipperċepixxi li l-Awditur Ġenerali u l-Uffiċċju Nazzjonali tal-Verifika għandhom relazzjoni speċjali mal-Parlament u mal-Kumitat dwar il-Kontijiet Pubbliċi, u li l-Awditur Ġenerali huwa xhud speċjali ħafna quddiem il-Kumitat dwar il-Kontijiet Pubbliċi. Din hija relazzjoni li nħolqot u li hija maħsuba biex tissalvagwardja kemm l-awtonomija tal-uffiċċju tal-awditur, kif ukoll l-awtonomija tal-Parlament. L-Awditur Ġenerali jiffunzjona bħala uffiċjal tal-Parlament u jirrapporta lill-Kumitat dwar il-Kontijiet Pubbliċi. Is-sistema kollha hija intiża biex tissalvagwardja l-kontabbiltà pubblika u s-sorveljanza xierqa tal-fondi pubbliċi.

B'mod partikolari, ta' min jinnota d-dispożizzjoni li l-Kumitat dwar il-Kontijiet Pubbliċi jista' jitlob li jsiru investigazzjonijiet mill-Awditur Ġenerali mhux biss meta t-talba tkun approvata mill-membri tal-kumitat, iżda wkoll meta jkun hemm tliet membri tal-kumitat li jitolbu li ssir tali investigazzjoni mill-Awditur Ġenerali. Din id-dispożizzjoni hija intiża sabiex tiżgura li l-oppożizzjoni tkun tista' titlob li jsiru tali investigazzjonijiet b'mod indipendenti mill-pożizzjoni li tittieħed mill-maġġoranza tal-Kumitat jew mill-membri li jappoġġjaw lill-Gvern. Fl-esperjenza tiegħi, din hija arma effettiva li tiżgura t-tħaddim xieraq tal-Parlament bħala awtorità ta' kontroll.
B'mod partikolari, ta' min jinnota r-regolament 3 tat-tielet skeda tal-Att dwar l-Awditur Ġenerali u l-Uffiċċju Nazzjonali tal-Verifika, li jistipula li l-Awditur Ġenerali jista' jeżamina jekk id-dipartiment ... li l-kontijiet tiegħu qegħdin jiġu vverifikati minnu ... użax il-fondi u r-riżorsi disponibbli għalih *b'mod effettiv, effiċjenti u ekonomiku* ... Għaldaqstant, il-verifika msemmija mhijiex waħda sempliċi iżda eżerċizzju tal-aħjar valur għall-flus.

Ta' min jinnota wkoll is-setgħat mogħtija mil-liġi lill-Awditur Ġenerali fit-twettiq tal-verifiki u l-investigazzjonijiet tiegħu. Huwa għandu setgħat wiesgħa ta' aċċess għad-dokumenti pubbliċi u governattivi u għandu l-abbiltà li jħarrek ix-xhieda u li jeżaminahom taħt ġurament. Huwa permezz tal-eżerċitar ta' dawn l-għodod investigattivi li mbagħad huwa jkun jista' jirrapporta b'mod effettiv lill-Parlament. Dan jinvolvi l-ħtieġa li huwa jeżerċita dawn is-setgħat b'mod sensittiv u għaqli jekk irid jagħmel xogħlu b'mod effettiv u kif jixraq.

Għalkemm l-Awditur Ġenerali jista' jkun xhud quddiem il-Kumitat dwar il-Kontijiet Pubbliċi, huwa tabilħaqq xhud ta' tip speċjali, hekk kif sabiex ikun jista' jipproteġi l-awtonomija tiegħu b'mod effettiv, huwa għandu jeżerċita għaqal u miżura ta' kunfidenzjalità bil-għan li jżomm is-sorsi tal-informazzjoni tiegħu intatti. Wara kollox, b'mod speċjali, huwa l-*lunga manus* tal-Kumitat dwar il-Kontijiet Pubbliċi, tant li mingħajr il-funzjoni essenzjali tiegħu l-Kumitat isib ruħu limitat verament ħafna fis-sorveljanza li jkun jista' jeżerċita fuq il-kontijiet pubbliċi.

L-aħħar punt li rrid insemmi, iżda li għandu wkoll ċerta importanza, huwa li l-Awditur Ġenerali jħaddan privileġġ aħħari ta' kunfidenzjalità fuq il-proċeduri tiegħu u d-dokumenti li jeżamina. Dan huwa meħtieġ sabiex huwa jkun jista' jeżerċita l-funzjoni tiegħu b'mod awtonomu u jwettaq id-doveri tiegħu kif xieraq. Dan il-punt tqajjem f'numru ta' każijiet, iżda fl-aħħar mill-aħħar dejjem ingħata r-rispett li jixraqlu.

Il-Prof. Ian Refalo, B.A., LL.D., Dip. IL (Cantab.) huwa Professur fid-Dritt Pubbliku fl-Università ta' Malta u hu ex Dekan tal-Fakultà tal-Liġi fl-Università ta' Malta. Huwa wkoll il-Konsulent Legali tal-iSpeaker tal-Kamra.

COMING OF AGE - the position of the National Audit Office in the Public Accounts Committee and the autonomy of the Maltese Parliament

Understanding the constitution of a State, in most democracies, is to understand how Parliament functions. This is the key institution to understand the modern democracy. The modern democracy is not a direct democracy; the numbers which compose the State rule out that possibility. Modern democracy is a mediated democracy and it is mediated precisely through the function of Parliament. Parliament is the representative institution; it is made up of persons which ideally represent broadly the whole electorate. Parliamentary constitutions tend to lead to the development of constitutional conventions which substantially alter the political reality and the exercise of constitutional power. The development of the United Kingdom constitution is an evident example of how this development takes place in practice. It is evident that initially Parliament was meant to exercise real and effective control over the executive, which initially started out as being the monarch's executive. With the passage of time this developed into the notion of collective and individual ministerial responsibility which mediated the transfer of political power to the elected representatives of the people. This in turn over the years brought about an effective transfer of power into the hands of the executive. This pattern is evident also in the Maltese Constitution.

The words of the Constitution envisage a situation where the government of the day is dependent and answerable to Parliament, the elected representatives of the people. Indeed, it is a government at all because it enjoys the support of the elected majority. In a strange reversal of roles this has ultimately led to the dependence of Parliament on the executive. Of particular relevance in this perspective is the power of dissolution, wielded effectively by the Prime Minister, which tends to cater for a docile rather than a self-assertive Parliament. Coupled with the development of what effectively are a bi-party system and an increased level of party organization, this seems to have produced a further effective transfer of power outside of Parliament on to the echelons of the party structures. This is not a transfer that is constitutionally provided for or disciplined, but it is the result of concrete political developments. It is in such a situation that the autonomy of the Parliament and its independence from the government of the day becomes an essential ingredient in the development and strengthening of true democracy.

Within this scenario the setting up of the Public Accounts Committee and the development of the national audit office under the direction of the Auditor General becomes one of the building blocks in the erection of parliamentary autonomy. It is in this perspective that it becomes interesting to look closely at the relation which exists between the Public Accounts Committee and the Auditor General. The initial constitutional arrangements in Malta provided solely for an Auditor General whose office was constitutionally protected. The law did not provide the necessary tools to guarantee further the effective exercise of the independent judgement of the auditor general, nor the effective overseeing of public finance through detailed scrutiny of public accounts and other investigations. The Public Accounts Committee was provided for through standing orders, and was meant to strengthen the supervisory role which Parliament was meant to exercise in relation to public finance. This is provided for in standing order 120A which was introduced by resolution 198 of 1995. The functions of the Public Accounts Committee are defined in standing order 120E and principally consist in a supervisory role over public finance. With the evident aim of stressing the independence of this committee from government, an essential ingredient if the committee is to work properly and if the autonomy of Parliament is to be safeguarded, the Standing Orders provide that the chairman of this Committee be chosen from the members of the opposition (the chairman, in terms of standing order 120E (4), is nominated by the Leader of the Opposition). Of particular relevance is the sub-clause which provides that the Public Accounts Committee shall have the power:

> "To request the Auditor General to submit memoranda on any matter where a request for such submission is made by at least three members of the standing committee;
>
> "To consider memoranda submitted by the Auditor General made upon a request made to him in virtue of sub paragraph (d) hereof, or on his own initiative;

"Examine reports and related documents, made by the Auditor General;"

It is of interest to note that this development in Malta patterns itself on practices well established within the United Kingdom Parliament.

Side by side with the creation of the Public Accounts Committee, the figure of the Auditor General was beefed up. This was brought about by providing for the creation of the post of Deputy Auditor General as well as the setting up by legislation of the National Audit Office, which would be an office under the control and direction of the Auditor General and staffed by persons recruited independently from the public service. This is Act XVI of 1997 enacted by the Maltese Parliament on the 25 July 1997 and now chapter 396 of the Laws of Malta.

In this context it is easy to perceive that the Auditor General and the National Audit office have a special relationship with Parliament and the Public Accounts Committee, and that the Auditor General is a very special witness in front of the Public Accounts Committee. It is a relationship which has been created and is meant to safeguard both the autonomy of the auditor's office as well as that of Parliament. The Auditor General functions as an officer of Parliament and he reports to the Public Accounts Committee. The whole system is meant to safeguard public accountability and proper supervision of public funds.

Of particular note is the provision that the Public Accounts Committee may request investigations by the Auditor General not only when that request is endorsed by a majority of the members of the committee, but also when three members of the committee request such an investigation from the Auditor General. This is meant to ensure that the opposition is able to demand such investigations independently of the position taken by the majority of the Committee or by the members supporting the Government. In my experience this is an effective weapon to ensure the proper functioning of Parliament as a supervisory body.

Also of note is regulation 3 of the third schedule of the Auditor General and National Audit Office Act which stipulates that the Auditor General may examine whether the department … whose accounts are being audited by it has used the funds and resources available to it effectively, efficiently and economically … The audit is not therefore a simple audit but becomes a value for money exercise.

The powers granted by law to the Auditor General in carrying out his audits and his investigations are also of particular note. He has wide powers of access to government and public documents and he has the ability to summon witnesses and to examine them under oath. It is through the exercise of these investigative tools that he is then able to effectively report to Parliament. It entails a judicious and able exercise of these powers if his job is to be done effectively and properly.

Although he may be a witness to the Public Accounts Committee he is a witness of a special kind, as to effectively protect his autonomy he must exercise a judicious discipline in order to keep intact the sources of his information. He is after all in a special way the lunga manus *of the Public Accounts Committee without whose essential function the Committee would find itself strictly limited in the supervision it can exercise over public accounts.*

A last point to mention, but of some importance, is that the Auditor General retains an ultimate privilege of confidentiality over his procedures and the documents he examines. This is necessary for the autonomous exercise of his function and for the proper performance of his duties. This point has been raised in a number of instances but has ultimately always been met with the respect which it deserves.

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GRUPPI INTERPARLAMENTARI TA' ĦBIBERIJA

Tradizzjonalment, il-qasam tad-diplomazija kien wieħed li kien jaqa' b'mod sħiħ taħt ir-responsabbiltà tal-gvernijiet. Maż-żmien il-parlamenti wkoll bdew ikollhom rwol fir-relazzjonijiet internazzjonali. Dan għaliex aktar ma l-Membri Parlamentari żdidilhom il-kuntatt mal-kontraparti tagħhom f'parlamenti oħra, aktar irriżultaw opportunitajiet ta' skambju ta' informazzjoni u koperazzjoni fuq livell internazzjonali.

Ir-relazzjonijiet fuq livell parlamentari huma magħrufa bħala 'diplomazija parlamentari'. Wieħed mill-elementi ewlenin tad-diplomazija parlamentari huwa t-twaqqif ta' gruppi ta' ħidma interparlamentari. Dawn il-gruppi jitwaqqfu b'mod bilaterali, jiġifieri bejn żewġ parlamenti, u jinkludu fihom Membri Parlamentari miż-żewġ naħat tal-Kamra.

Il-ħidma ta' dawn il-gruppi tkun ħafna drabi bbażata fuq ftehim, ġieli informali, bejn il-parlamenti. L-għan ta' dawn il-gruppi huwa biex il-Membri tagħhom jiltaqgħu u jistabbilixxu kuntatti mal-kontrapartijiet tagħhom biex jiġu diskussi suġġetti u problemi li jikkonċernaw iż-żewġ pajjiżi. Ta' spiss il-laqgħat isiru f'qafas anqas formali mill-kuntatti diplomatiċi tal-gvern.

Mill-bidu tat-Tnax-il Leġiżlatura f'April ta' din is-sena 'l hawn, il-Parlament Malti formalment waqqaf sitt gruppi interparlamentari ta' ħbiberija, dawk mal-parlamenti tal-Ġermanja, l-Iżrael, ir-Rumanija, l-Arabja Sawdija, l-Islovenja u t-Turkija. Barra minn dawn, hemm taħditiet għaddejjin ma' parlamenti ta' xi stati Awstraljani, dak Belġjan, tal-Bosnja-Ħerzegovina, tal-Kroazja, ta' Franza, tal-Kuwajt, tal-Litwanja, tar-Renju Unit u tat-Tuneżija.

Il-Parlament Malti, permezz ta' diskussjonijiet li jkollu l-iSpeaker mad-diversi Ambaxxaturi li jżuruh meta dawn jiġu akkreditati għal Malta, juri li dejjem dispost li jitwaqqfu gruppi ta' ħbiberija bħal dawn, partikolarment mal-parlamenti ta' dawk il-pajjiżi li magħhom Malta għandha relazzjonijiet diplomatiċi stabbiliti.

Fil-bidu ta' Lulju ta' din is-sena delegazzjoni ta' Membri Parlamentari fil-Grupp ta' Ħbiberija mal-Parlament tal-Istat ta' Victoria, l-Awstralja, magħmula minn Christine Fyffe, Andrew Elsbury u Alec Burgess, żaret il-Parlament Malti. Iż-żjara saret fuq inizjattiva tal-Membri Parlamentari Awstraljani nfushom. Huma għamlu żjara ta' korteżija lill-iSpeaker, l-Onor. Anġlu Farrugia, fejn iż-żewġ naħat tkellmu dwar is-sistemi parlamentari u elettorali rispettivi, kif ukoll il-ħidma tal-parlamenti fi ħdan l-Assoċjazzjoni Parlamentari tal-Commonwealth (CPA). Il-Membri ttieħdu għal żjara madwar il-Palazz tal-President, u l-Armerija tal-Ordni, kif ukoll il-wirja tal-pittur famuż Taljan Mattia Preti li bosta mix-xogħlijiet tiegħu jinsabu mxerrdin madwar diversi binjiet pubbliċi u knejjes f'Malta.

L-iSpeaker flimkien ma' Mark Pritchard, Kap tal-Grupp Interparlamentari ta' Ħbiberija tal-House of Commons

Fuq talba tagħhom stess, il-mistednin ingħataw l-opportunità li jassistu għal seduta parlamentari fil-Kamra tad-Deputati u kellhom ukoll iċ-ċans li jitkellmu għal ftit minuti ma' Membri Parlamentari Maltin miż-żewġ naħat tal-Kamra wara s-seduta.

Lejn l-aħħar ta' Lulju l-iSpeaker tal-Parlament ta' Malta l-Onor. Anġlu Farrugia kellu żjara ta' korteżija miċ-Chairman tal-Grupp Interparlamentari ta' Ħbiberija bejn il-Parlament ta' Malta u l-House of Commons, Mark Pritchard, li kien akkumpanjat mill-Membru Parlamentari Brian Binley, membru ta' dan il-Grupp. Għal-laqgħa kien preżenti wkoll id-Deputy Speaker, l-Onor. Ċensu Galea.

Matul il-laqgħa qasira ta' bejniethom, ġie diskuss, fost ħwejjeġ oħra, l-alternattivi li għandhom ikunu kkunsidrati sabiex il-problema tal-immigrazzjoni irregolari tingħata aktar attenzjoni mill-pajjiżi kollha tal-Unjoni Ewropea. F'dan ir-rigward kien hemm qbil li l-parlamenti nazzjonali għandhom iżommu din it-tema fil-quċċata tal-aġenda tagħhom għaliex din hija problema li mhix ta' pajjiż wieħed iżda tal-Unjoni kollha, u għalhekk għandha tiġi indirizzata kollettivament fl-interess tal-pajjiżi nfushom.

PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP GROUPS

Although traditionally, the field of diplomacy was always the remit of government, parliaments have also been taking on roles in international relations. Increased contact between Members of Parliament and their counterparts in other parliaments resulted in greater opportunities for the exchange of information and cooperation.

Such relations at parliamentary level are referred to as 'parliamentary diplomacy'. One of the principal elements of parliamentary diplomacy is the setting up of parliamentary friendship groups. These groups are set up bilaterally, i.e. between two parliaments, and comprise Members representing both sides of the House.

The work of these groups is often based on an agreement, at times informal, between the parliaments. The aim of these groups is for their members to establish contacts with their counterparts in order to enable discussions on matters that are of interest to both countries. The meetings of the parliamentary friendship groups are often held in a less formal manner than those held by the government.

Meeting with the State Parliament of Victoria Parliamentary Friendship Group

Since the beginning of the 12th Legislature in April this year, the Maltese Parliament formally set up six interparliamentary friendship groups, those with the parliaments of Germany, Israel, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia and Turkey. In addition, there are ongoing discussions with a number of Australian state parliaments, and with the parliaments of Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, France, Kuwait, Lithuania, United Kingdom and Tunisia.

The Speaker of the House also discusses this issue with visiting ambassadors when they make a courtesy call following their accreditation, and always encourages the setting up of friendship groups with the parliaments of the respective countries.

In the beginning of July, a delegation of Members of Parliament from the friendship group with the Parliament of the State of Victoria, Australia, comprising Christine Fyffe, Andrew Elsbury and Alec Burgess, visited Malta.

The visit was organised on the initiative of the Australian Members of Parliament themselves. They made a courtesy call on the Speaker of the House, Hon. Anġlu Farrugia, where both sides spoke about the respective parliamentary systems, as well as parliamentary work in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Assembly (CPA). The Members were shown around the President's Palace and the Armoury of the Knights. They also had the opportunity to visit an exhibition of works by the renowned Italian painter, Mattia Preti, a number of which can be found in various churches and public buildings in Malta.

At their request, the visitors followed a sitting of the House and also had the opportunity to exchange views with Members from both sides of the House afterwards.

Towards the end of July, Speaker Anġlu Farrugia received the Chairman of the Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group between the Maltese Parliament and the House of Commons, Mark Pritchard, who was accompanied by MP Brian Binley, also a member of the friendship group. The Deputy Speaker, Hon. Ċensu Galea, was also present for the meeting.

During the brief meeting, a number of issues were discussed, including the alternatives that could be considered so that all EU Member States give due attention to the illegal immigration issue. In this regard it was agreed that both parliaments keep this matter at the top of their agenda since this is not a problem linked to one Member State and should therefore be addressed collectively in the interests of the countries themselves.

AVVENIMENTI FIL-PARLAMENT

EVENTS IN PARLIAMENT

EkoSkola – Id-Disa' Sessjoni Parlamentari

Fid-19 ta' Ġunju 2013, id-9 sessjoni tal-EkoSkola nżammet fil-Kamra tad-Deputati. Is-seduta parlamentari kienet ippreseduta mill-iSpeaker tal-Kamra, l-Onor. Anġlu Farrugia, u għaliha ħadu sehem studenti minn 31 skola, flimkien ma' 23 Membru Parlamentari miż-żewġ naħat tal-Kamra. It-tema tal-Mozzjoni ppreżentata din is-sena kienet "Jimpurtana mill-Futur tagħna". Il-Membri Parlamentari semgħu l-interventi li saru mill-istudenti u wrew l-impenn tagħhom li jagħtu widen lis-suġġerimenti tagħhom.

EkoSkola – Ninth Parliamentary Session

On 19 June 2013, the House of Representatives hosted the 9th EkoSkola Parliamentary sitting. The parliamentary sitting was chaired by the Speaker of the House, the Hon. Anġlu Farrugia, and was attended by students from 31 schools, together with 23 Members of Parliament from both sides of the House. This year the theme of the Motion presented was "Caring for our future". The Members of Parliament listened with interest to the students' interventions and pledged to take heed of their suggestions.

Il-President tal-Kunsill Ewropew jindirizza l-Kamra tad-Deputati

Fil-11 ta' Ġunju 2013, il-President tal-Kunsill Ewropew Herman Van Rompuy indirizza seduta speċjali tal-Kamra tad-Deputati. Fost il-mistednin distinti fl-i*Strangers' Gallery* kien hemm l-Arċisqof Metropolitan ta' Malta, membri tal-ġudikatura, diplomatiċi u Speakers Emeriti.

L-iSpeaker tal-Kamra, l-Onor. Anġlu Farrugia, laqa' lis-Sur Van Rompuy u stiednu sabiex jindirizza l-Kamra. Fid-diskors tiegħu s-Sur Van Rompuy semma diversi materji topiċi, fosthom il-problema tal-immigrazzjoni irregolari. Fuq din it-tema tkellem ukoll il-Prim Ministru, l-Onor. Joseph Muscat fir-risposta tiegħu, kif ukoll il-Kap tal-Oppożizzjoni, l-Onor. Simon Busuttil.

European Council President addresses the House of Representatives

On 11 June 2013, European Council President Herman Van Rompuy addressed a special sitting of the House of Representatives. Invited guests in the Strangers' Gallery included the Metropolitan Archbishop of Malta, members of the judiciary, diplomats and Speakers Emeriti.

The Speaker of the House, the Hon Anglu Farrugia, welcomed Mr Van Rompuy and invited him to address the House. In his speech Mr Van Rompuy touched on various topical issues, amongst them the problem of irregular immigration. This issue was also brought up in the reply by the Prime Minister, Hon. Joseph Muscat, and the speech by the Leader of the Opposition, Hon Simon Busuttil.

Dinjitarji barranin li indirizzaw il-Kamra tad-Deputati fl-aħħar 25 sena

Foreign dignitaries who addressed the House of Representatives in the last 25 years

2011	President tal-Parlament Ewropew	Mr Jerzy Buzek	*President of the European Parliament*
2009	Segretarju Ġenerali tan-Nazzjonijiet Uniti	Mr Ban Ki-Moon	*Secretary General of the United Nations*
2007	President tal-Kummissjoni Ewropea	Mr José Manuel Durão Barroso	*President of the European Commission*
2002	Segretarju tal-Lega tal-Istati Għarab	Mr Amr Moussa	*Secretary General of the League of Arab States*
2002	President tal-Parlament Ewropew	Mr Pat Cox	*President of the European Parliament*
2002	Segretarju Ġenerali tal-Kunsill tal-Ewropa	Mr Walter Schwimmer	*Secretary General of the Council of Europe*
2000	President tal-Kummissjoni tal-Komunitajiet Ewropej	Mr Romano Prodi	*President of the Commission of the European Communities*
1995	President tal-Italja	Mr Oscar Luigi Scalfaro	*President of Italy*
1989	Segretarju Ġenerali tal-Kunsill tal-Ewropa	Mme Catherine Lalumière	*Secretary General of the Council of Europe*
1988	Segretarju Ġenerali tan-Nazzjonijiet Uniti	Mr Javier Pérez de Cuéllar	*Secretary General of the United Nations*

AVVENIMENTI FIL-PARLAMENT

EVENTS IN PARLIAMENT

L-aħħar seduta għal Dr Lawrence Gonzi

Is-seduta tal-Erbgħa, 17 ta' Lulju 2013, kienet l-aħħar waħda għal Dr Lawrence Gonzi bħala membru parlamentari. Fid-diskors tiegħu fil-Kamra dakinhar, qabel ma ssottometta l-ittra tar-riżenja tiegħu minn Membru Parlamentari, Dr Gonzi tkellem dwar karriera ta' 25 sena fil-politika li fihom serva bħala Speaker, Prim Ministru, Viċi Prim Ministru, Ministru u Kap tal-Oppożizzjoni.

Dr Lawrence Gonzi's last sitting

Wednesday, 17 July 2013, marked Dr Lawrence Gonzi's last sitting of Parliament. In his farewell speech in the House, prior to submitting his letter of resignation as member of parliament, Dr Gonzi spoke about his 25 year long career in politics wherein he served as Speaker, Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister and Leader of the Opposition.

Il-Kamra tad-Deputati tilqa' donazzjoni ta' *Automated External Defibrillator*

Il-*Malta Heart Foundation* b'kollaborazzjoni ma' żewġ kumpaniji privati, tat lill-Parlament *Automated External Defibrillator (AED)*. Dan sar fuq inizjattiva tal-Onor. Albert Fenech, *Chairman* tal-Fondazzjoni, li f'diskors li għamel fil-Kamra tad-Deputati enfasizza l-ħtieġa ta' sistema ta' risuxxitazzjoni tal-qalb fil-bini tal-Parlament. F'Lulju, Deputati u impjegati temmew kors ta' taħriġ bażiku li wassal għal ċertifikat fl-ewwel għajnuna u l-użu tal-AED. Il-kors sar fil-bini tal-Parlament stess.

House of Representatives receives donation of an Automated External Defibrillator

The House of Representatives of Malta welcomed a donation of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) made to the House by the Malta Heart Foundation in collaboration with two private companies. The initiative was spurred by the Hon. Albert Fenech, Chairman of the Foundation, who in a speech in Parliament had emphasised the need of a cardiac resuscitation system at the House of Representatvies. During July, Members of Parliament and employees completed a certified training course in basic life support and the use of AED. The course was held on site inside the premises of Parliament.

Pubblikazzjoni tal-Ordnijiet Permanenti tal-Kamra

Fl-10 ta' Lulju 2013, il-Kamra approvat unanimament diversi emendi konsegwenzjali għall-Ordnijiet Permanenti sabiex ċerti provvedimenti li qabel kienu japplikaw biss għall-Kumitati Magħżula, jibdew japplikaw ukoll għall-Kumitati Permanenti wara l-introduzzjoni ta' dawn il-kumitati fl-1995. Peress li l-aħħar edizzjoni tal-Ordnijiet Permanenti kienet ġiet ippublikata proprju f'dik is-sena, minkejja li sussegwentement saru diversi emendi oħrajn, ġie deċiż li dawn l-Ordnijiet jiġu ppubblikati mill-ġdid sabiex jinkorporaw l-emendi kollha ta' matul is-snin.

Publication of the Standing Orders of the House

On 10 July 2013, the House unanimously approved several consequential amendments to the Standing Orders so that certain provisions previously applicable to Select Committees, be applied also to the Standing Committees introduced in 1995. Since the last publication of the Standing Orders dated back to that same year, despite the several subsequent amendments approved, it was decided that the Standing Orders be published again in order that all amendments effected over the years be incorporated.

Parlament Nazzjonali taż-Żgħażagħ

L-edizzjoni ta' din is-sena tal-Parlament Nazzjonali taż-Żgħażagħ organizzat mill-Kunsill Nazzjonali taż-Żgħażagħ saret fis-Sala tal-Parlament fid-19 ta' Settembru 2013. L-għan ta' din l-attività hu li tressaq liż-żgħażagħ Maltin eqreb lejn is-sistemi parlamentari u demokratiċi tal-pajjiż billi jiddiskutu kwistjonijiet ta' tħassib għall-ġenerazzjoni żagħżugħa. Id-*Deputy Speaker* l-Onor. Ċensu Galea ppreseda ż-żewġ sessjonijiet li għalihom kienu preżenti wkoll għadd ta' Membri Parlamentari miż-żewġ naħat tal-Kamra.

National Youth Parliament

On 19 September the National Youth Council held the 2013 sitting of the National Youth Parliament at the Chamber of the House of Representatives. This is an activity aimed at bringing Maltese youth closer to the national parliamentary and democratic systems, by discussing issues that are of specific concern to the younger generation. The two sessions were chaired by the Deputy Speaker, Hon. Ċensu Galea, and were attended by a number of Members of Parliament.

Ħidma Parlamentari April – Settembru 2013		*Parliamentary Work* *April – September 2013*
Seduti fil-Plenarju	54	*Plenary Sittings*
Laqgħat tal-Kumitati Permanenti	48	*Meetings of Standing Committees*
Stqarrijiet ministerjali	13	*Ministerial statements*
Mozzjonijiet	66	*Motions*
Mozzjonijiet Privati	3	*Private Members' Motions*
Mozzjonijiet għall-Ewwel Qari ta' Abbozzi ta' Liġi	14	*Motions for First Reading of Bills*
Liġijiet mgħoddija mill-Parlament	10	*Acts enacted by Parliament*
Liġijiet approvati b'votazzjoni	1	*Acts approved upon division*
Mistoqsijiet parlamentari	4,281	*Parliamentary questions*
Dokumenti mqiegħda fuq il-Mejda tal-Kamra	1,097	*Documents laid on the Table of the House*
Diskorsi tal-Aġġornament	39	*Adjournment speeches*
Deċizjonijiet tas-Sedja	12	*Rulings by the Chair*
Membri Parlamentari li siefru fuq xogħol parlamentari	59	*Members of Parliament on parliamentary duties abroad*
Delegazzjonijiet parlamentari barra minn Malta	41	*Parliamentary delegations abroad*
Delegazzjonijiet immexxija mill-iSpeaker/Deputy Speaker	10	*Delegations led by the Speaker/Deputy Speaker*