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# Press Release

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**PRESS RELEASE BY THE OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER**

*ECPRD Seminar hosted by the House of Representatives, Parliament of Malta*

On 14 and 15 September 2017 the House of Representatives, Parliament of Malta, hosted a seminar organised by the European Centre for Research and Documentation (ECPRD) in the area of interest of ICT in Parliaments.

The Seminar has brought together around 50 IT experts from 35 parliamentary chambers from the Council of Europe Member States in order to discuss 'The implications of budgetary pressures on investment in ICT services in Parliaments'. Amongst other issues, the participants will be discussing document management systems and common data formats, the transition to a paperless parliament, and the broadcasting of parliamentary debates.

The Seminar was opened by Speaker Anglu Farrugia who, in his opening remarks, spoke about Parliament's move from the Grand Master's Palace to a new purpose-built building at the entrance to the capital city. He remarked that this move has helped the citizens to appreciate better the distinction between Parliament and the other branches of the administration. He also spoke about the opportunities that this move has brought about, particularly the possibility of implementing new ICT-dependent technologies. Speaker Farrugia spoke about the introduction of live parliamentary broadcasts on a dedicated TV channel, which is helping to bring Parliament closer to the citizens. However, he noted that no matter how desirable investment in new technologies is, this often requires considerable funding which might not always be readily available. In conclusion Speaker Anglu Farrugia remarked that he believes strongly in the importance of inter-parliamentary cooperation, including at the officials level, and that events such as this seminar provide an opportunity to share experiences and learn from one another.

The Clerk of the House, Mr Raymond Scicluna, also addressed the seminar participants. He thanked the ECPRD for the interest shown in organising the seminar in collaboration with the Parliament of Malta, and also for all the work put in to keep the network of correspondents active, noting that the network is often the primary source for information on parliamentary practice and procedure when the need arises. Mr Scicluna spoke about the administrative process of planning and prioritising the introduction of new technologies in the light of budgetary constraints within which Parliament, like any other publicly funded institution, must operate.