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# Press Release

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## PRESS RELEASE BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

### *Maltese parliamentary delegation participates in the 17<sup>th</sup> Winter Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly*

The Maltese delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly within the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE PA), led by MP Rosianne Cutajar, and comprising of MPs Glenn Bedingfield and Herman Schiavone, attended the 17<sup>th</sup> Winter Meeting of the OSCE PA held in Vienna on 22-23 February 2018.

The Winter Meeting started with a session of the standing committee of the OSCE PA, which brought together the heads of delegations of the 57 participating states of the organisation to discuss the OSCE PA's activities over the past few months and plans for the future. The meeting of the standing committee was followed by a joint session of the three general committees, which was addressed by George Tsereteli, President of the OSCE PA, Vincenzo Amendola, Representative of the Italian Chair-in-Office of the OSCE, and Ambassador Thomas Greminger, Secretary General of the OSCE. During this session, members called for increased dialogue within the OSCE area, to which President of the OSCE PA added that the OSCE PA should spare no effort to encourage political action. On the topic of the Mediterranean, Undersecretary Amendola explained that this was a priority of the Italian Chairmanship, referring to the Mediterranean as "a 'hub' connecting three continents and thus indispensable to build peace and sustainable development in the 21st century, including beyond the borders of the Organisation."

In the afternoon, the delegation participated in the meeting of the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions, which focused on media freedom, fake news and disinformation, particularly discussing the challenges and opportunities that these bring to democracy and national and regional security. During the debate, participating members called for higher journalistic standards, the involvement of media companies in tackling disinformation, and further education to enable citizens to identify false information.

The Winter Meeting continued on 23 February with a meeting of the General Committee on Political Affairs and Security. The presentations were followed by a special debate on the topic of arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation.

The Winter Meeting concluded with another joint session of the three general committees, which addressed the topics of gender equality, migration, and terrorism, during which Nahima Lanjri was appointed Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration. In an intervention following the presentation on gender issues, head of delegation Rosianne Cutajar outlined recent efforts that Malta has taken to improve gender equality, which measures include free childcare services and increased civil rights.

**Attachments: photo**

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Cutajar also outlined plans to improve female participation in politics and parliament, noting that this will serve to inspire more women to enter roles having managerial, strategic and political responsibilities, but which will also result in increased legislation and measures on matters which mainly affect or which are prioritised by women.