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# Press Release

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## PRESS RELEASE BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

### *Maltese parliamentary delegation participates in the 8<sup>th</sup> High-Level Meeting of the Parliaments of the 5+5 Western Mediterranean Dialogue member states*

On 17 January 2019 a Maltese Parliamentary delegation led by Aaron Farrugia, head of the Maltese Parliament Delegation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, actively participated in the three round tables of the 5+5 Western Mediterranean Dialogue parliamentary meeting.

Addressing the first roundtable on sustainable development, Glenn Bedingfield highlighted that the Mediterranean region continues to be one of the most highly polluted areas of the world. He explained that, whilst recognising that industrial development is an inevitable process, countries need to be more cautious of decisions and place the well-being of the planet before monetary gain. Bedingfield spoke about the 17 UN Sustainable Development goals and explained that they provide legislators with a unique opportunity to holistically address global ailments and transform challenges into prospects for regional growth.

Aaron Farrugia introduced the roundtable on migration and joined Speaker Farrugia in recognising that the preservation of life is sacred and should take precedence without jeopardising our borders and our people. Farrugia said that as legislators it is important for Members of Parliament to revise existing legislation and develop a comprehensive approach to migration. Speaking about Malta, Farrugia highlighted that the country continues to be a leading figure in promoting a coalition of the willing and thus ensure equal participation and contribution by all. Concluding, Farrugia explained the importance of language and discourse used when addressing highly political and emotional issues such as migration.

Intervening also during this session, Frederick Azzopardi highlighted the importance to develop a collective Mediterranean response to the ongoing humanitarian crisis. Azzopardi explained that migration is a lucrative business for unscrupulous criminals amounting to millions of dollars annually. He explained that only through a collective approach can countries in the region move towards more secure and managed migration flows.

Ryan Callus introduced the round table on youths and spoke on the importance to provide young people with the necessary educational and vocational opportunities to succeed further in life. He called on Northern Mediterranean countries to step up investment in the south and called on Southern Mediterranean to develop Active Labour Markets Policies (ALMPs). Turning his attention to the issue of youths and radicalization, Callus emphasised the need to promote increased inter-religious dialogue and ensure that social ailments, such as economic deprivation and poor working conditions, do not act as a fertile ground for extremist and radicalised ideology. Concluding, he

**Attachments: photos**

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emphasized the role of parliamentarians to provide youths with the appropriate tools and a peaceful and safe environment so as to progress into the adults and leaders of tomorrow. Intervening also during this session, Frederick Azzopardi focused on the importance to engage young people in the democratic process and encourage increased participation in political and community life. He spoke on the importance to develop resilient societies and give young people the opportunity to feel a sense of belonging within their respective communities.

The national parliaments of the 5+5 Western Mediterranean dialogue agreed and adopted the Valletta Conclusions addressing issues related to sustainable development, migration and climate change. The Valletta Conclusions were subsequently presented by the Speaker of the House of Representatives Anglu Farrugia to Foreign Affairs Ministers of the 5+5 Western Mediterranean Dialogue meeting in Malta on 18 January 2019.

The Maltese delegation was composed of Aaron Farrugia, Glenn Bedingfield, Ryan Callus, Frederick Azzopardi, and Carm Mifsud Bonnici.