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# Press Release

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

### *Speaker of the House of Representatives presides over the EU-Arab High-Level Meeting on Disability Rights*

Delegates from Arab and European countries, including representatives of the League of Arab States and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), convened in Malta to discuss and share their experiences in respect of the adoption of measures at upholding the rights of and improving the living conditions of persons with disabilities.

Speaker Anglu Farrugia held that the democratically elected representatives of the people are morally obliged to speak on behalf of disadvantaged persons and to advance their causes till their legitimate demands are legally acknowledged, and action and measures are duly taken by governments to secure social justice and social order, and the rightful place of persons with disabilities in society.

In his concluding remarks, the Speaker stated that the meeting in Malta served as a political forum for Arab and European States to share their experiences and further collaborate to advance the rights of persons with disabilities so that they live in dignity. He said that the establishment of the Valletta Forum augurs well for tangible forms of cooperation at the bilateral, as well as, at regional level. These framework programmes should not only endeavour to our better understanding of the needs of persons with disabilities but should also serve as a means to render our societies more sensitive to the needs of persons with disabilities and ensure that the human values of solidarity and social justice are held high by our societies. The Speaker held that the full integration of persons with disabilities enriches our societies and actively contribute towards the attainment of higher levels of human development.

The meeting was addressed by the Prime Minister of Malta Joseph Muscat, the Leader of the Opposition Adrian Delia, and other members of parliament. The meeting was also addressed by Rola Dashti, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, and Executive Secretary of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN ESCWA).

This meeting was organised by the House of Representatives, Parliament of Malta, in close collaboration with the Office of the Parliamentary Secretary for Persons with Disability and Active Ageing at the Ministry for the Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity.