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

***The Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives meets the Incoming State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic***

Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives David Agius, MP, had a meeting with Peter Misik, the Incoming State Secretary of the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic. During the meeting both sides discussed several issues of mutual interest to Malta and Slovakia including the bilateral relations between both countries, trade, education, and culture as well as European Union affairs on the rule of law, gender equality and migration.

The Deputy Speaker informed that there is ample scope for the strengthening of political contacts and diplomatic exchanges between Malta and Slovakia. He stressed that Malta aims to leverage its expertise in diplomatic education to contribute towards the enhancement of trade and commercial relations and the attraction of Slovak students to travel to Malta to learn English.

Deputy Speaker Agius argued that Malta and Slovakia have a mutual interest to safeguard the continued relevance of a rules-based international order and encouraged the Slovak State Secretary to work with the pertinent Maltese authorities to ensure the consolidation of a long-lasting multilateral relationship between both countries.

Both dignitaries recognised the importance of working together within the European Union and other multilateral institutions and increase efforts aimed at ameliorating the commercial, tourist and educational sectors. On migration there is an understanding that this remains a sensitive and complex issue for border countries like Malta and requires a robust and urgent response from the EU.