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Marzu 2014
March 2014

PARLAMENT TA' MALTA

mill-PARLAMENT

Perjodiku maħruġ mill-Uffiċċju tal-Ispeaker

Periodical issued by the Office of the Speaker

Il-Kamra tal-Paladini

Fiż-żmien li f'Malta kien hawn l-Ordni ta' San Ġwann, dik li llum hija magħrufa bħala l-Kamra tal-Paladini kienet isservi bħala l-Kappella privata tal-Granmastru. Il-Kappella li kienet tinsab biswit il-kamra tas-sodda tal-Gran Mastru, kienet titmexxa mill-kappillani tal-Palazz. Matul it-tmexxija tal-Granmastru Verdalle (1582 - 1595) l-Ordni kkummissjonat lil Filippo Paladini (1544 – 1616) li dak iż-żmien kien qiegħed jiskonta sentenza ta' forzat fuq ix-xwieni tal-Ordni, biex ipinġi affreski fil-Kappella tal-Granmastru. Ix-xogħol ta' Paladini kien jikkonsisti f'pittura tal-Madonna bil-Bambin għall-altar, li aktar tard ittieħdet f'post ieħor, u ċiklu ta' affreski li jikkonsistu f'erba' xeni mill-ħajja ta' San Ġwann Battista. Il-Kappella llum il-ġurnata tifforma waħda mill-Kmamar tal-Kumitati.

The Paladini Room

During the times of the Order of St John in Malta, the Paladini Room as it is known today used to be the Grand Master's Private Chapel. Situated next to the Grand Master's bedroom, the Chapel was administered by palace chaplains. Under Grand Master Verdalle (1582 – 1595) the Order commissioned the Florentine Filippo Paladini (1544 – 1616), who at the time was serving a sentence as a forzato on the Order's ships, to paint frescos for the Grand Master's Chapel. Paladini's work consisted of a painting of the Virgin and Child for the altar, which was later relocated, and a fresco cycle made up of four large scenes from the life of St John the Baptist. The Chapel is now used as a Parliamentary Committee Room

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Bord Editorjali
Editorial Board
Ray Scicluna
Josanne Paris
Ancel Farrugia Migneco
Eleanor Scerri
Sarah Gauci
Kristian Mamo
Eric Frendo

Postal Address
House of Representatives
The Palace
Valletta VLT 1115
Malta

+356 2559 6000
www.parlament.mt
parlinfo@parlament.mt

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Neptune's Courtyard - Main courtyard at the Palace

Ritratti/*Photos:* Parlament ta' Malta/ DOI

Daħla

Foreword

Huwa ta' pjaċir illi nwasslilkom ir-raba' ħarġa ta' dan il-perjodiku mill-Parlament, fi żmien li jaħbat sewwa sew għeluq l-ewwel sena ta' din it-Tnax il-Leġiżlatura, kif ukoll għeluq sena minn meta ġejt elett Speaker tal-Kamra tad-Deputati.

Dħalt għal din il-kariga mimli ħeġġa u entużjażmu; iżda aktar minn hekk dħalt għal din il-kariga konxju illi din hija waħda ta' responsabbiltà kbira u li tirrikjedi impenn sħiħ min-naħa tiegħi. Id-drabi fejn deċiżjonijiet li ħadt jew direzzjonijiet li tajt ġew ikkritikati jew ikkontestati huma mhux biss xhieda tal-piż li ġġorr magħha kariga bħal din iżda wkoll tar-relevanza tal-Parlament għall-ħajja tan-nies.

Is-Sedja ġiet mitluba diversi drabi sabiex tiddeċiedi (tagħti ruling) dwar punti ta' proċedura li tqajmu kemm fil-Kamra kif ukoll fil-kumitati tagħha. L-ammont ta' drabi li ntalbu rulings jirrifletti l-fatt illi l-ħidma tal-Parlament għaddejja b'ritmu mgħaġġel; min-naħa l-oħra huma wkoll evidenza li r-regoli li jiggwidaw din il-ħidma spiss jinstab li ma humiex komprensivi biżżejjed. Għaldaqstant jidher ċar illi wasal iż-żmien li dawn ir-regoli jiġu aġġornati sabiex jirriflettu r-realtajiet u jaqdu aħjar il-bżonnijiet ta' Parlament ta' ċertu livell ta' maturità.

Ix-xogħol fil-Kamra miexi b'ritmu kostanti, u l-kumitati permanenti tal-Kamra, partikolarment il-Kumitat dwar il-Kontijiet Pubbliċi fiż-żewġ formazzjonijiet tiegħu, għaddejjin b'ħidma intensiva. B'mod unanimu, abbażi ta' mozzjoni ppreżentata mill-Onor. Claudio Grech min-naħa Oppożizzjoni fl-2013, il-Kamra waqqfet kumitat permanenti ieħor ġdid, dak dwar is-saħħa.

Saret ukoll ħidma estensiva mill-Kumitat Magħżul imwaqqaf sabiex jirrakkomanda lill Kamra dwar it-twaqqif ta' Uffiċċju ta' Kummissarju u Kumitat Permanenti dwar l-istandards, l-etika u l-imġiba korretta fil-ħajja pubblika.

Meta nħares lura lejn l-ewwel sena fil-kariga ta' Speaker nara li minkejja li kienet sena mimlija sfidi, kienet ukoll sena ta' sodisfazzjon għaliex minkejja d-dibattiti jaħarqu u d-differenzi fl-opinjonijiet, il-Parlament irnexxielu jingħaqad u jivvota unanimament fuq il-maġġoranza tal-liġijiet li għaddew.

Bħal fil-ħarġiet preċedenti ta' dan il-perjodiku ġbarna selezzjoni ta' attivitajiet li ħadna sehem fihom jiena u l-Membri tal-Parlament, kif ukoll il-laqgħat internazzjonali li attendejna. Fuq il-paġna ta' wara tistgħu ssibu l-istatistika li tiġbor il-ħidma tal-Parlament u tal-Membri tiegħu f'dawn l-ewwel tliet xhur tal-2014.

Anġlu Farrugia

It is my pleasure to present the fourth issue of the periodical mill-Parlament, at a time which coincides with the end of the first year of this Twelfth Legislature, as well as one year since my election as Speaker of the House of Representatives.

I welcomed this new role with drive and enthusiasm; however, more than that, I accepted this new role conscious that it carries great responsibility and that it requires my full commitment. Those decisions which I have taken, which were subsequently criticised or contested are not only evidence of the weight borne by this role, but also of the relevance of Parliament to people's lives.

The Chair has been called upon various times to rule on points of procedure which were raised both in Plenary and in the committees. The number of times such rulings were requested reflects the fast pace of parliamentary work; on the other hand they are also evidence of the fact that the rules governing parliamentary work are often found not to be sufficiently comprehensive. Thus it is clear that it is time that these rules are updated in order to reflect the realities and needs of a Parliament with a certain level of maturity.

Work in the House has been moving forward at a constant pace; its standing committees, particularly the Public Accounts Committee in both its formations, have also been meeting regularly. On the basis of a motion presented by Opposition Member Hon. Claudio Grech in 2013, the House unanimously agreed to set up a new standing committee, that on Health.

Considerable work has been put in by the Select Committee set up to recommend to the House on the setting up of an Office of Commissioner and a Standing Committee on standards, ethics and proper behaviour in public life.

When I look back at my first year as Speaker I see that notwithstanding it was a year full of challenges, it was also a rewarding one as in spite of the heated debates and differing opinions, Parliament often acted unanimously when passing laws.

As in the previous issues of this periodical we have selected a number of activities in which I as Speaker, and Members of Parliament, were involved in, as well international activities which we attended. On the back cover you can find statistics concerning the work of Parliament and its Members in the first three months of 2014.

Anġlu Farrugia

Diskors mill-Ispeaker Anġlu Farrugia

KONFERENZA INTERNAZZJONALI

WHAT EUROPE STANDS FOR

Growth, jobs and rights:
will the European Union rise to the occasion?

Intervent magħmul mill-Ispeaker Anġlu Farrugia fil-Konferenza Internazzjonali organizzata mill-Camera dei Deputati Taljana bejn it-13 u l-14 ta' Marzu 2014 fl-ewwel sessjoni dwar il-promozzjoni ta' tkabbir qawwi u sostenibbli msejjes fuq impjiegi b'saħħithom sabiex tiġi megħluba l-kriżi.

Qabel kollox, nixtieq ningħaqad ma' dawk li tkellmu qabli billi nirringrazzja lill-organizzaturi ta' din il-Konferenza Internazzjonali, jiġifieri l-Kamra tad-Deputati tal-Italja u r-Repubblika Ellenika, talli tawna l-opportunità li nindirizzaw kwistjoni daqstant importanti fl-Ewropa llum, jiġifieri x-xogħol.

Ippermettuli wkoll li nirringrazzja lil min qiegħed jospita din il-Konferenza Internazzjonali għall-ospitalità mogħtija lill-parteċipanti.

Id-diskussjoni tagħna hawnhekk illum wara nofsinhar hija bbażata fuq dak li tirrappreżenta l-Ewropa – x'jippretendu ċ-ċittadini Ewropej li għandha tagħmel l-Ewropa/l-Unjoni Ewropea sabiex tingħeleb il-kriżi. Għandna noħorġu b'soluzzjonijiet Ewropej għal dik li titqies bħala problema Ewropea. Għandhom jinkisbu riżultati billi naħdmu flimkien, fejn l-isforzi individwali tal-Istati Membri ma jistgħux iwasslu għall-istess riżultati.

Sa mill-2009, tkellimna ħafna dwar il-kriżi ekonomika u finanzjarja li laqtet l-Ewropa. L-Unjoni Ewropea, b'mod partikolari l-membri taż-żona tal-Euro li ntlaqtu l-aktar mill-kriżi, ħadmet bla heda biex tintroduċi mekkaniżmi għas-sorveljanza tal-baġits u mekkaniżmi ta' appoġġ finanzjarju fiż-żona tal-Euro, li huma maħsuba biex jevitaw li jerġgħu jseħħu kriżijiet ta' din ix-xorta fil-futur. Iż-żmien biss jista' jagħti parir dwar kemm huma effettivi.

Għalkemm xi analisti qegħdin jargumentaw li l-kriżi għaddiet – bl-appoġġ ta' statistiċi li jqawwulna qalbna li jindikaw li l-Greċja, l-Italja u l-Portugall huma mistennija li jmorru lura għal tkabbir ekonomiku din is-sena – ma għandniex ninsew x'fissret għaċ-ċittadini tagħna l-awsterità kkawżata mill-kriżi. Iċ-ċifri ta' qgħad fl-Istati Membri huma ta' tħassib kbir: ir-rati ta' qgħad ta' aktar minn 25% huma allarmanti, wisq iktar meta wieħed jikkunsidra li f'dawn l-istess Stati Membri r-rati ta' qgħad fost iż-żgħażagħ huma ta' madwar 50% u f'xi każijiet saħansitra aktar. Lil hinn mill-istatistiċi, dan ifisser li f'xi nħawi wieħed minn kull erba' ċittadini tagħna jinsab bla xogħol, u għal kull persuna żagħżugħa li għandha xogħol, oħra tinsab qiegħda. Il-ġenerazzjoni żagħżugħa tagħna jistħoqqilha futur. Dawk li għada għandhom ikunu l-mexxejja ta' negozji u mexxejja politiċi m'għandhomx l-opportunità li jakkwistaw il-ħiliet meħtieġa. L-Ewropa, u l-Unjoni Ewropea b'mod partikolari, għandha d-dmir li tindirizza dan in-nuqqas.

Bħala mexxejja politiċi għandna dmir lejn il-ġenerazzjonijiet futuri, dawk l-istess ġenerazzjonijiet li ser ikunu qegħdin jieħdu postna ftit snin oħra. Aħna lkoll dħalna fl-isfera politika b'missjoni waħda: li nħallu warajna dinja aħjar minn dik li sibna. Iċ-ċittadini tagħna jridu riżultati tanġibbli. Iċ-ċittadin mhuwiex interessat fi previżjonijiet matematiċi kumplessi jew fil-figuri ta' dejn jew tkabbir; dawn huma relevanti biss għaċ-ċittadin jekk iwasslu għal tkabbir ekonomiku u ħolqien ta' impjiegi.

B'xorti tajba, is-sitwazzjoni f'Malta mhijiex daqstant imwiegħra, b'rata ta' qgħad ta' 6.7% u qgħad fost iż-żgħażagħ ta' 15%, iżda din iċ-ċifra qiegħda tiżdied. F'pajjiż żgħir li ma għandu ebda riżorsi ta' art jew riżorsi minerali biex imexxu l-ekonomija, ilna li rrikonoxxejna li l-forza tax-xogħol hija l-aktar riżorsa ta' valur li għandna.

Ix-xogħol jiddependi fuq it-tkabbir ekonomiku. Sabiex it-tkabbir ikun qawwi u effettiv fuq medda ta' żmien twil, għandna naraw tkabbir innovattiv immexxi mill-ħtiġijiet tal-konsumaturi li ma jeżawrixxux ir-riżorsi limitati prezzjużi. Nixtieq infakkar il-kliem tal-President tal-Urugwaj, Jose Mujica – li huwa magħruf bħala l-ifqar president fid-dinja – li fid-diskors tiegħu lis-Summit Rio+20 fl-2012 staqsa jekk il-pjaneta tistax tmantni 7 jew 8 biljun persuna bl-istess livell ta' konsum bħal fil-pajjiżi l-aktar żviluppati. Huwa staqsa wkoll x'jiġri fil-provvista tal-ossiġnu kieku l-Indjani kellhom l-istess proporzjon għal kull unità domestika bħall-Ġermaniżi.

Waqt li nagħraf li t-tkabbir ekonomiku huwa essenzjali sabiex nerġgħu nroddu lura l-kunfidenza u l-ġid liċ-ċittadini tagħna, nemmen li dan għandu jinkiseb b'mod li jirrispetta r-riżorsi limitati tagħna u li huwa sostenibbli fuq medda ta' żmien twil.

Speech delivered by Speaker Anġlu Farrugia

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

WHAT EUROPE STANDS FOR

**Growth, jobs and rights:
will the European Union rise to the occasion?**

Intervention made by Speaker Hon. Anġlu Farrugia at the International Conference organised by the Italian Camera dei Deputati between 13 and 14 March 2014 during Session 1 on promoting robust and sustainable growth based on sound employment in order to overcome the crisis.

First of all, I would like to join previous speakers in thanking the organisers of this International Conference, that is the Italian Chamber of Deputies and the Hellenic Republic, for giving us the opportunity to address such an important issue in today's Europe, namely employment.

Allow me also to thank the host of this International Conference for the hospitality extended to the participants.

Our discussion here this afternoon is based on what Europe stands for – what the European citizens expect Europe/the European Union to do in order to help overcome the crisis. We ought to come up with European solutions to what is perceived to be a European problem; to achieve results by working together, where individual efforts by the Member States cannot lead to the same results.

Since 2009 we have talked a lot about the economic and financial crisis which has hit Europe. The European Union, particularly the members of the Euro zone which were most affected by the crisis, worked hard in order to introduce budgetary surveillance mechanisms and financial support mechanisms in the Euro zone intended to prevent such crises from happening again in the future. Their effectiveness can only be proven in time.

Although some analysts are arguing that the crisis is over – supported by encouraging statistics that indicate that Greece, Italy and Portugal are expected to return to growth this year – we must not forget what the austerity arising from this crisis has meant for our citizens. Unemployment figures from the Member States are more worrying: unemployment rates above 25% are alarming, even more so considering that in these same Member States youth unemployment rates are around 50% and in some cases even more. Beyond statistics, it means that in some places 1 in 4 of our citizens is out of a job, and for every young person in employment, another is unemployed. Our young generation deserves to have a future. Those who should be tomorrow's business and political leaders do not have the opportunity to gain the required skills. Europe, and the European Union in particular, has a duty to address this failure.

As political leaders we owe it to future generations, those same generations which will be replacing us in a few years. We have all entered the political sphere with one mission: that of leaving a better world than what we found. Our citizens want tangible results. The man on the street is not interested in complex mathematical predictions or in the debt or the growth figures themselves; these are only relevant to the man on the street if they are conducive to economic growth and job creation.

Luckily, the situation in Malta is not as dire, with unemployment standing at 6.7% and youth unemployment at 15%, however this figure is on the rise. Coming from a small country which does not have any land or mineral resources to drive the economy, we have long recognised that the workforce is the most valuable resource we have.

Employment depends on growth. For growth to be robust and effective in the long-term, we should see innovative growth driven by the needs of the consumers which do not deplete the precious limited resources. I would like to recall the words of the President of Uruguay, Jose Mujica – who is known as the poorest president in the world – who in his address to the Rio+20 Summit in 2012 asked whether the planet can support 7 or 8 billion people with the same level of consumption as is the case in the most developed countries. He also asked what would happen to the oxygen supply if Indians had the same proportion per household as Germans.

Whilst conceding that growth is essential for confidence and prosperity to return to our citizens, I believe that this should be achieved in such a way that respects our limited resources and can thus be sustainable in the long-term.

Ir-Rappreżentant tal-Parlament Malti Fi Brussell

Minn meta ġie adottat it-Trattat ta' Liżbona f'Diċembru 2009, bdiet era ġdida ta' kooperazzjoni interparlamentari, li wasslet biex l-irwol tar-rappreżentanti parlamentari nazzjonali bbażati fi Brussell isir aktar sinifikanti. L-uffiċċju fi Brussell huwa l-mezz prinċipali li permezz tiegħu l-Parlament Ewropew jista' jikkomunika malajr u informalment ma' parlamenti nazzjonali oħrajn permezz tan-netwerk ta' rappreżentanti fi Brussell, fejn l-isforzi ta' koordinazzjoni ewlenin bejn il-parlamenti nazzjonali sseħħ fir-rigward tal-applikazzjoni tal-Protokoll Nru. 2 tat-Trattat ta' Liżbona – Applikazzjoni tal-prinċipji tas-sussidjarjetà u l-proporzjonalità.

It-Trattat ta' Liżbona, li jirrikonoxxi l-importanza ċentrali tal-parlamenti nazzjonali fin-nisġa demokratika tal-UE, jagħmel lill-parlamenti nazzjonali l-għassiesa tal-prinċipju tas-sussidjarjetà. Dan ifisser li huma responsabbli biex jaraw li l-istituzzjonijiet tal-UE ma jadottawx atti leġiżlattivi f'oqsma li jmorru lil hinn mill-kompetenza tagħhom jew li jmorru lil hinn minn dak li huwa meħtieġ sabiex jinkisbu l-objettivi tat-Trattat.

Il-Protokoll Nru. 2 jistabbilixxi mekkaniżmu ta' twissija bikrija tas-sussidjarjetà permezz ta' "karta safra/ oranġjo", li tagħti lill-parlamenti nazzjonali opportunità biex jissottomettu lill-Kummissjoni opinjoni mmotivata fi żmien perijodu ta' tmien ġimgħat, li tispjega għalfejn huma jidhrilhom li l-proposta ma tikkonformax mal-prinċipju tas-sussidjarjetà. Ladarba jintlaħaq il-livell minimu meħtieġ, il-Kummissjoni jkollha tirrevedi l-proposta sabiex tiddeċiedi jekk iżżommx, temendax jew tirtirax il-proposta. Sa mid-dħul fis-seħħ tat-Trattat ta' Liżbona, il-livell minimu ntlaħaq darbtejn biss: l-ewwel darba fuq regolament propost dwar l-eżerċitar tad-dritt li tittieħed azzjoni kollettiva fi ħdan il-kuntest tal-libertà ta' stabbiliment u l-libertà li jiġu pprovduti servizzi [COM(2012)130] u t-tieni darba fir-rigward ta' regolament propost dwar l-istabbiliment tal-Uffiċċju tal-Prosekutur Pubbliku Ewropew [COM(2013)534]. Fl-ewwel każ, il-Kummissjoni kienet iddeċidiet li tirtira l-proposta waqt li fit-tieni każ, il-Kummissjoni kienet ikkonkludiet li l-proposta tikkonforma mal-prinċipju tas-sussidjarjetà u b'hekk żammitha fil-forma oriġinali tagħha.

Ir-Rappreżentant tal-Parlament Nazzjonali (RPN), indipendenti mill-Parlament Ewropew jew mir-Rappreżentanza Permanenti tal-Gvern għall-UE fi Brussell, huwa uffiċjal parlamentari b'responsabbiltà lejn il-Parlament ta' Malta.

Attwalment, it-28 Stat Membru tal-UE, ħlief għall-Bulgarija u l-Islovakkja, kollha għandhom uffiċjal wieħed jew aktar ibbażati b'mod permanenti fi Brussell.

L-RPN huwa l-"għajnejn u l-widnejn" tal-Parlament fi Brussell, u jaħdem id f'id mar-rappreżentanti tal-parlamenti nazzjonali tal-UE waqt li jibni netwerks effettivi mar-rappreżentanti l-oħrajn. L-RPN fi Brussell jinsab f'pożizzjoni li jagħti twissija bikrija dwar kwistjonijiet ta' interess jew importanza partikolari u jipprovdi informazzjoni dwar leġiżlazzjoni Ewropea u kwistjonijiet oħrajn li jistgħu ma jkunux disponibbli fil-pront lil hinn mill-istituzzjonijiet Ewropej.

Id-dmirijiet u responsabbiltajiet ewlenin tar-rappreżentant tal-parlament nazzjonali huma li:

- jappoġġja u jakkumpanja lill-Membri Parlamentari Maltin li jipparteċipaw f'laqgħat interparlamentari fi Brussell;
- jipprovdi rapporti wara laqgħat interparlamentari fi Brussell;
- jassisti delegazzjonijiet mill-Parlament Ewropew li jżuru l-istituzzjonijiet Ewropej;
- jirrapporta lura lill-Parlament Malti fuq kwistjonijiet importanti li jkunu qegħdin jiġu diskussi fil-livell tal-UE;
- jaġġorna lin-netwerk ta' rappreżentanti tal-parlamenti nazzjonali tal-UE dwar kwistjonijiet nazzjonali importanti u kwistjonijiet relevanti relatati mal-UE li jkunu qegħdin jiġu indirizzati mill-Parlament ta' Malta, b'mod partikolari l-kontroll tas-sussidjarjetà;
- jistabbilixxi kuntatti ma' uffiċjali mill-Parlament Ewropew, il-Kummissjoni u l-Kunsill responsabbli għal relazzjonijiet mal-parlamenti nazzjonali; u
- iwieġeb talbiet għal informazzjoni mill-membri tan-netwerk ta' rappreżentanti tal-parlamenti nazzjonali tal-UE kif ukoll minn diversi organizzazzjonijiet.

L-RPN huwa mistenni wkoll li jwettaq kull kompitu ieħor assenjat lilu minn żmien għal żmien mill-Ispeaker jew l-Iskrivan tal-Kamra.

Ir-Rappreżentant tal-Parlament Malti, Pauline Abela, flimkien mal-Ispeaker Anġlu Farrugia u mal-Iskrivan tal-Kamra Raymond Scicluna waqt żjara minn delegazzjoni tal-Parlament Malti fl-Istituzzjonijiet tal-UE f'Settembru 2013

Representative of the Maltese Parliament in Brussels

Since the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty in December 2009, a new era of interparliamentary cooperation began with the role of national parliament representatives based in Brussels attracting greater significance. The office in Brussels is the principal means by which the Maltese Parliament can communicate quickly and informally with other national parliaments through the network of representatives in Brussels where the main coordination efforts between national parliaments take place in regard to the application of Protocol 2 of the Lisbon Treaty - Application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

The Lisbon Treaty which recognises the central importance of national parliaments in the democratic fabric of the EU, makes national parliaments the guardians of the principle of subsidiarity, that is, they are responsible for monitoring that EU institutions do not adopt legislative acts in areas outside their competence or that go beyond what is necessary to achieve the objectives of the Treaty.

Protocol 2 sets out a 'yellow/orange card' subsidiarity early warning mechanism giving national parliaments an opportunity to submit to the Commission a reasoned opinion within an eight-week period, outlining why they consider that the proposal does not comply with the principle of subsidiarity. Once the required threshold is reached, the Commission has to review the proposal to decide whether to maintain, amend or withdraw the proposal. Since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the threshold has been reached only twice: the first time on a proposed regulation on the exercise of the right to take collective action within the context of the freedom of establishment and the freedom to provide services (COM (2012) 130) and the second time on a proposed regulation on the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's Office (COM (2013) 534). In the former case the Commission had decided to drop the proposal while in the latter case, the Commission had concluded that the proposal complies with the principle of subsidiarity and therefore maintained it in its original form.

The National Parliament Representative (NPR), independent of the European Parliament or of the Government's Permanent Representation to the EU in Brussels, is a parliamentary official accountable to the Parliament of Malta.

Presently, all the 28 member states in the EU, except for Bulgaria and Slovakia, have one or more officials based permanently in Brussels.

The NPR is the "eyes and ears" of the Parliament in Brussels, working closely alongside the representatives of EU national parliaments and building effective networks with fellow representatives. The NPR in Brussels is in a position to give early warning on issues of particular interest or importance and supplies information on European legislation and other matters which may not be readily available away from the European institutions.

The main duties and responsibilities of the national parliament representative are:

- supporting and accompanying Maltese Members of Parliament participating in interparliamentary meetings in Brussels;
- providing reports following inter-parliamentary meetings in Brussels;
- assisting delegations from the Maltese Parliament visiting the European institutions;
- reporting back to the Maltese Parliament on important issues being discussed at EU level;
- updating the network of representatives of EU national parliaments with important national issues and with relevant EU related matters being dealt with by the Parliament of Malta, particularly, the control of subsidiarity;
- establishing contacts with officials from the European Parliament, the Commission and the Council responsible for relations with national parliaments; and
- replying to requests for information from the members of the network of representatives of EU national parliaments and also from various organisations.

The NPR is also expected to carry out any other task assigned from time to time by the Speaker or the Clerk of the House.

Representative of the Maltese Parliament, Pauline Abela, together with Speaker Anġlu Farrugia and Clerk of the House Raymond Scicluna during a visit by a delegation of the Maltese Parliament to the EU Institutions in September 2013

Il-Kumitat Permanenti dwar l-Affarijiet Barranin u Ewropej

Il-Kamra tad-Deputati fdat lill-Kumitat Permanenti dwar l-Affarijiet Barranin u Ewropej b'firxa ta' responsabbiltajiet differenti, minn dak kollu li jiġri f'livell ta' Unjoni Ewropea, li llum il-ġurnata wieħed jista' jqisu bħala parti mill-affarijiet interni tagħna, sa dak li jiġri lil hinn mill-fruntieri tal-Unjoni Ewropea in ġenerali, u dak li jinteressa lil Malta b'mod partikolari.

Il-kompożizzjoni ta' dan il-Kumitat hija ta' relevanza partikolari għax minbarra Membri miż-żewġ naħat tal-Kamra, insibu wkoll lill-Ministru għall-Affarijiet Barranin li huwa membru *ex officio*, u lill-Membri tal-Parlament Ewropew (MPE) Maltin li għalkemm huma membri tal-Kumitat, m'għandhomx vot. Dan sar sabiex il-Kumitat jinżamm infurmat b'mod regolari dwar il-miżuri li jkunu qed jiġu diskussi mill-Kunsill tal-Ministri (Affarijiet Barranin) u s-suġġetti li jkunu fuq l-aġenda tal-Parlament Ewropew. Il-Ministru għall-Affarijiet Barranin jinforma lill-Kumitat b'mod regolari dwar affarijiet kurrenti fuq livell Ewropew u globali u, sa fejn hu possibbli, jipprova wkoll jindirizza l-Kumitat qabel ma huwa jattendi l-laqgħat tal-Kunsill sabiex il-pożizzjoni li jieħu hemmhekk tkun tirrifletti l-pożizzjoni tal-Membri. Irrid nistqarr, però, illi l-MPE tagħna ftit li xejn taw kontribut f'din il-leġiżlatura, kif ukoll f'dawk ta' qabel. Min-naħa l-oħra, biex inkunu ġusti rridu nirrikonoxxu li r-raġuni prinċipali għal dan hija l-fatt li prattikament il-Parlament Malti u dak Ewropew jiltaqgħu fl-istess ġranet tal-ġimgħa u għalhekk l-MPE ma jkunux Malta minħabba li jkunu qegħdin jaqdu dmirijiethom ġewwa Brussell jew Strażburgu. Irid jinstab mezz li jiffaċilita l-parteċipazzjoni tal-MPE, forsi anke permezz ta' video ***conferencing***, liema faċilitajiet ser ikunu disponibbli fil-bini l-ġdid tal-Parlament.

Il-Kumitat jiddedika parti kbira mill-isforzi u r-riżorsi tiegħu għall-obbligi li joħorġu mit-Trattat dwar l-Unjoni Ewropea u t-Trattat dwar il-Funzjonament tal-Unjoni Ewropea, partikolarment Protokoll 1 u 2, li jipprovdu għar-rwol tal-parlamenti nazzjonali fl-UE u għall-applikazzjoni tal-prinċipji tas-sussidjarjetà u proporzjonalità, fi kliem ieħor li jara li l-Kummissjoni Ewropea ma tmurx lil hinn mill-poteri tagħha meta tabbozza leġiżlazzjoni.

F'dak li għandu x'jaqsam ma' skrutinju, il-Kumitat adotta l-prassi li jevalwa l-pożizzjoni meħuda mill-Gvern fil-Kabinett u jew jaqbel mal-pożizzjoni li jkun ħa l-Gvern jew inkella jikkomunika t-tħassib tiegħu lill-Gvern sabiex jieħu nota tagħhom fid-diskussjonijiet fil-livell tal-gruppi ta' ħidma u tal-Kunsill.

Laqgħa mal-Viċi President tal-Kummissjoni Ewropea Maroš Šefčovič

Il-Kumitat iwettaq il-funzjoni li jsegwi dak li qiegħda tagħmel il-Kummissjoni f'dawk li huma l-prinċipji tas-sussidjarjetà u l-proporzjonalità skont Protokoll 2 tat-Trattat, b'mod illi għandu tmien ġimgħat sabiex jesprimi l-opinjoni tiegħu mid-data tal-pubblikazzjoni ta' proposta leġiżlattiva. F'dan il-kuntest, il-Kumitat jew jaqbel li l-Kummissjoni qiegħda taġixxi fl-isfera tal-kompetenzi tagħha skont it-trattati jew li qiegħda taġixxi b'mod illi tikser il-prinċipju tas-sussidjarjetà, f'liema każ tintbagħat opinjoni mmotivata li tiġġustifika din il-pożizzjoni. Il-Kumitat jista' jgħid ukoll li għalkemm il-Kummissjoni għandha d-dritt taġixxi, l-azzjoni hija intrużiva żżejjed jew sproporzjonata meta wieħed iqis l-għanijiet li trid tilħaq u għalhekk ma tgħaddix mit-test tal-proporzjonalità, jew inkella l-miżuri li qegħdin jittieħdu ma jistgħux japplikaw

Il-Kumitat Permanentidwar l-Affarijiet Barranin u Ewropej (Kont.)

għal kull Stat Membru ta' daqs differenti. Matul din il-leġiżlatura, il-Kumitat bagħat ħames opinjonijiet immotivati lill-Presidenti tat-tliet organi tal-Unjoni Ewropea – il-Parlament Ewropew, il-Kunsill u l-Kummissjoni Ewropea – u f'każ partikolari, dwar it-twaqqif ta' Uffiċċju ta' Prosekutur Pubbliku Ewropew, kien hemm in-numru rikjest ta' opinjonijiet immotivati sabiex il-Kummissjoni tirrevedi l-proposta fid-dawl tal-oġġezzjonijiet imqajma mill-parlamenti nazzjonali; iżda ma kinitx obbligata li temenda jew tirtira l-proposta.

Il-Kumitat jiddiskuti wkoll trattati internazzjonali u ftehimiet qabel ma dawn jiġu ratifikati mill-Gvern kif mitlub minn artikolu 4 tal-Att dwar l-Unjoni Ewropea.

Fil-ħidma tiegħu, il-Kumitat huwa assistit minn gruppi ta' ħidma u ***research analysts***, li jippreparaw rapporti u jitolbu għal kjarifiki minn ministeri f'isem il-Kumitat. Il-Parlament ta' Malta jirċievi l-istess ammont ta' dokumentazzjoni mill-Unjoni Ewropea bħal parlamenti fi Stati Membri oħra u għalhekk wieħed irid japprezza li dan il-Kumitat irid jagħmel l-aħjar użu mir-riżorsi limitati li għandu u jaħdem b'mod iffokat.

Il-Kumitat jistieden ukoll ministri barranin u dinjitarji li jkunu fuq żjara ġewwa Malta għal skambju dirett ta' opinjonijiet kif għamel fil-każ tal-Viċi President tal-Kummissjoni Ewropea s-Sur Maroš Šefčovič, il-Ministru tal-Affarijiet Barranin tal-Palestina, l-ET Riyad Malki, l-ET Igor Luksic tal-Montenegro, l-ET Enver Hoxhaj, tal-Kosovo u l-ET Hanna Serwaa Tetteh, tal-Ghana. Kull sena qiegħda ssir ukoll laqgħa li tindirizza t-tħassib tal-komunitajiet Maltin li jgħixu barra.

Fix-xena internazzjonali, il-Kumitat jieħu interess partikolari f'dak li jkun għaddej fil-viċinat, bħal Lvant Nofsani, is-Sirja u l-Afrika ta' Fuq wara r-Rebbiegħa Għarbija, kif ukoll kriżijiet oħrajn bħal dik tal-Ukrajina. Il-Kumitat jieħu wkoll kull opportunità sabiex iġib għall-attenzjoni ta' pajjiżi oħra, kemm dawk li huma membri tal-Unjoni Ewropea u kemm dawk li mhumiex, il-piż sproporzjonat li ġġorr Malta fil-qasam tal-immigrazzjoni irregolari u tippromwovi l-kunċett ta' *burden sharing*.

Bħala President ta' dan il-Kumitat, nipparteċipa fil-laqgħat taċ-Chairpersons tal-Kumitati dwar l-Affarijiet Ewropej tal-Istati Membri tal-UE (COSAC) u għas-sessjonijiet ordinarji ta' COSAC li jinżammu darbtejn f'kull Presidenza tal-UE. Fis-sena li għaddiet irrappreżentajt lill-Parlament f'fora internazzjonali, bħal-laqgħa dwar il-Free Movement of National Welfare Systems li nżammet fid-Danimarka f'Ottubru 2013 u l-*8th Annual European Development Days* li nżammet fi Brussell f'Novembru 2013. F'dak li għandu x'jaqsam ma' affarijiet Ewropej u barranin, immexxi wkoll id-delegazzjoni parlamentari għall-Assemblea Parlamentari tal-Organizzazzjoni għas-Sigurtà u l-Kooperazzjoni fl-Ewropa (PA OSCE).

F'Malta niltaqa' wkoll ma' ambaxxaturi akkreditati lil Malta.

Huwa privileġġ għalija li nippresjedi l-Kumitat Permanenti dwar l-Affarijiet Barranin u Ewropej u nixtieq nieħu l-opportunità li nirringrazzja lill-Ministru għall-Affarijiet Barranin, l-Onor. George Vella, l-Onor. Luciano Busuttil, l-Onor. Ryan Callus, l-Onor. Marlene Farrugia, l-Onor. Carmelo Mifsud Bonnici, l-Onor. Marthese Portelli, l-Onor. Silvio Schembri u l-Onor. Francis Zammit Dimech għall-kontribut tagħhom u għall-kollaborazzjoni bħala Membri ta' dan il-Kumitat.

Onor. Christopher Fearne
Chairman tal-Kumitat Permanenti dwar l-Affarijiet Barranin u Ewropej

The Standing committee on Foreign and European Affairs

The House of Representatives has charged the Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs with a wide range of responsibilities, that is, from what goes on at the level of the European Union, which nowadays one may even consider as part of our local affairs, and what goes on beyond the borders of the European Union in general and what interests Malta most in particular.

The composition of this Committee is of particular relevance in that besides Members of Parliament from both sides of the House, the Minister of Foreign Affairs is also ex-officio member and the Maltese Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are also non-voting members. The purpose behind this set up is for the Committee to be kept continuously informed on issues discussed at the Council of Ministers (Foreign Affairs) and on issues on the agenda of the European Parliament. The Minister of Foreign Affairs regularly briefs the Committee on current issues at EU and at global levels and, as far as practicable, he also endeavours to relate with the Committee prior to Council meetings so that he will take with him the views expressed by its members. I must however confess that the participation and input of our MEPs in the work of the Committee has so far during this legislature, and even in previous ones, been almost non-existent but, to be fair, one must acknowledge that the main reason for this lies in the fact that our House of Representatives and the European Parliament meet practically on the same days of the week and therefore MEPs are away from the island attending to their duties in Brussels or Strasbourg. Ways and means have to be found to facilitate the participation of MEPs, perhaps even via video conferencing, which facilities will be readily available in the new parliament building.

Meeting with HE Dr Riyad Malki, Foreign Minister of Palestine

A good part of the Committee's time and energy is taken up by commitments emanating from the Treaty of the European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, notably Protocols 1 and 2, which provide for the role of national parliaments in the EU and for the application of the principle of subsidiarity and proportionality, in other words, to watch over the European Commission so as not to overstep its remit when drafting legislation.

With regard to scrutiny, the Committee has adopted the practice of evaluating the position taken by Government at Cabinet level and in so doing it either endorses the stand taken by Government or else it communicates its own concerns so that Government takes them into account in its discussions at working group and Council levels.

The Committee exercises its function as watchdog over the Commission with regard to the principle of subsidiarity and proportionality in line with the Treaty provision, Protocol 2, such that it has to express itself within eight weeks from the date of issue of a legislative proposal. In this context, the Committee either agrees that the Commission is acting

The Standing committee on Foreign and European Affairs (Cont.)

within its sphere of competence accorded to it by the treaties or that it is acting in breach of the principle of subsidiarity in which case a reasoned opinion will be sent justifying that stand. The Committee can also express agreement that the Commission is correct to act but that such action is too intrusive or disproportionate considering its intended aims and therefore fails the proportionality test, or else that the one-size-fits-all approach is being adopted. During this legislature, the Committee sent five reasoned opinions to the Presidents of the three organs of the EU – the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission - and in one particular case, the setting up of the European Public Prosecutor's Office, there was the required number of reasoned opinions for the Commission to reassess the legislation in the light of the objections raised by national parliaments; however, it was not necessarily compelled to amend or withdraw the proposal.

The Committee also discusses international treaties and agreements prior to ratification by Government as required by article 4 of the European Union Act.

In carrying out its tasks, the Committee is assisted by working groups and research analysts, who draw up reports besides seeking clarifications from ministries on its behalf. The Parliament of Malta receives the same amount of documentation from the EU as the national parliaments of other EU Member States do and therefore one has to appreciate that this Committee has to make the best use of its relatively limited resources and to work in a focused manner.

The Committee also invites foreign ministers and dignitaries who visit Malta for a direct exchange of views and such was the case with the Vice President of the European Commission Mr Maroš Šefčovič and the Foreign Ministers of Palestine, HE Riyad Malki, Montenegro, HE Igor Luksic,Kosovo, HE Enver Hoxhaj, and Ghana, HE Hanna Serwaa Tetteh. An annual discussion is also being held to address the concerns of Maltese communities living abroad.

On the international scene, the Committee takes particular interest in what goes on in its neighbourhood, such as the Middle East, Syria and North Africa following the Arab Spring, besides other crises such as that in Ukraine. The Committee also takes every opportunity to bring to the attention of other EU and non-EU states the disproportionate burden borne by Malta with regard to irregular immigration and advocates the concept of burden sharing.

As Chairman of this Committee, I participate in the meetings of the Chairpersons of European Affairs Committees of EU Member States (COSAC) and the ordinary sessions of COSAC each held twice during every EU Presidency and in the past year I have also represented the Committee in international fora, such as the cluster meeting on the Free Movement of National Welfare Systems held in Denmark in October 2013 and the 8th Annual European Development Days held in Brussels in November 2013. As a matter related to European and foreign Affairs, I also lead the parliamentary delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (PA OSCE).

In Malta I also hold meetings with ambassadors accredited to Malta. It is a privilege for me to chair the Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs and I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hon. George Vella, Hon. Luciano Busuttil, Hon. Ryan Callus, Hon. Marlene Farrugia, Hon. Carmelo Mifsud Bonnici, Hon. Marthese Portelli, Hon. Silvio Schembri and Hon. Francis Zammit Dimech for their input and collaboration as Members of this Committee.

Hon. Christopher Fearne
Chairman of the Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs

Attivitajiet fil-Parlament

ŻJARA MILL-VIĊI PRESIDENT TAL-KUMMISSJONI EWROPEA MAROŠ ŠEFČOVIČ

Il-Viċi President tal-Kummissjoni Ewropea responsabbli mir-relazzjonijiet interistituzzjonali u l-amministrazzjoni, Maroš Šefčovič, żar Malta bejn id-29 u l-31 ta' Jannar. Bħala parti mill-programm il-Kummissarju għamel żjara ta' kortesija lill-Ispeaker tal-Kamra tad-Deputati u indirizza wkoll lill-Kumitat Permanenti dwar l-Affarijiet Barranin u Ewropej. Parti importanti mill-portafoll tal-Viċi President hija r-relazzjonijiet mal-parlamenti nazzjonali. L-Ispeaker akkumpanja wkoll lill-Kummissarju Šefčovič madwar il-bini tal Parlament il-ġdid.

Is-suġġetti ewlenin li ġew diskussi fil-laqgħa mal-Ispeaker kienu r-rwol dejjem jikber tal-Parlament Malti fil-qasam tal-affarijiet Ewropej partikolarment fid-dawl tas-setgħat u r-responsabbiltajiet il-ġodda li joħorġu mit-Trattat ta' Liżbona, l-importanza tal-kooperazzjoni interparlamentari, l-elezzjonijiet għall-Parlament Ewropew li jmiss, strumenti ġodda adottati wara l-kriżi finanzjarja u leġittimità demokratika aħjar fil-proċess ta' governanza ekonomika.

Mal-Membri tal-Kumitat dwar l-Affarijiet Barranin u Ewropej il-Viċi President Šefčovič tkellem dwar ir-relazzjonijiet bejn il-Kummissjoni Ewropea u l-parlamenti nazzjonali, l-involviment tal-parlamenti nazzjonali fil-konsultazzjonijiet preleġiżlattivi, il-'karta s-safra' murija mill-parlamenti nazzjonali fil-konfront tal-proposta għall-Uffiċċju ta' Prosekutur Pubbliku Ewropew u r-regoli attwali tal-kontroll tas-sussidjarjetà mill-parlamenti nazzjonali u l-futur ta' COSAC (il-Konferenza ta' Kumitati ta' Skrutinju Ewropew).

Il-Viċi President Šefčovič kien akkumpanjat mis-Sur Martin Bugelli, Kap tar-Rappreżentanza tal-Kummissjoni Ewropea f'Malta.

LAQGĦA MAL-PRESIDENT TAR-REPUBBLIKA ELLENIKA

Fit-13 ta' Frar il-President tar-Repubblika Ellenika, l-ET Karolas Papoulias, li kien f'Malta fuq żjara statali, għamel żjara ta' kortesija lill-Ispeaker tal-Kamra tad-Deputati. Id-Deputat Ministru għall-Affarijiet Barranin, is-Sur Kyriakos Gerontopoulos, akkumpanja lill-ET Papoulias matul din iż-żjara.

L-ET Papoulias u l-Onor. Farrugia ddiskutew suġġetti ta' interess komuni, inkluż ir-relazzjonijiet eċċezzjonali li jeżistu bejn Malta u l-Greċja, il-Presidenza Griega tal-Unjoni Ewropea, il-kwestjoni tal-immigrazzjoni irregolari, il-kriżi finanzjarja u l-qgħad, affarijiet marittimi u l-ġemellaġġ reċenti bejn il-Gżira u Glyfada.

Matul iż-żjara tiegħu ġewwa Malta, il-President Grieg ikkonferixxa l-*Grand Croix de l'Ordre de l'Honneur* tal-Greċja lill-iSpeaker.

PUBBLIKAZZJONI *IS-SEDJA TITKELLEM*

Lejn l-aħħar ta' Marzu ġiet ippubblikata l-ewwel ħarġa f'forma ta' ktieb tar-*rulings* kollha li ngħataw matul din il-Leġiżlatura fl-ewwel sena tagħha, bl-isem *Is-Sedja Titkellem*.

Din il-pubblikazzjoni hija l-ewwel tax-xorta tagħha u ser tkun imqassma lill-Membri Parlamentari kollha, filwaqt li ser tkun disponibbli fil-librerija tal-istess Parlament.

Din l-ewwel pubblikazzjoni ġiet ippreżentata nhar it-28 ta' Marzu 2014 lill-Onor. Prim Ministru, Dr Joseph Muscat, kif ukoll lill-Onor. Kap tal-Oppożizzjoni, Dr Simon Busuttil, bħala l-mexxejja tal-gruppi parlamentari ta' din il-Leġiżlatura.

Activities in Parliament

VISIT BY VICE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION MAROŠ ŠEFČOVIČ

Vice President of the European Commission responsible for Inter-Institutional Relations and Administration, Maroš Šefčovič, visited Malta on 29-31 January. As part of the programme the Commissioner paid a courtesy visit to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and also addressed the Foreign and European Affairs Committee. An important part of the portfolio of the Vice President is relations with national parliaments. The Speaker also accompanied Commissioner Šefčovič on a tour of the new Parliament building.

The main issues discussed in the meeting with the Speaker were the increasing role of the Maltese Parliament in European affairs especially in the light of new powers and responsibilities arising from the Lisbon Treaty, the importance of interparliamentary co-operation, the forthcoming European elections, new instruments adopted in the aftermath of the financial crisis and better democratic legitimacy in the economic governance process.

With the members of the Foreign and European Affairs Committee Vice President Šefčovič spoke about the relations between the European Commission and national parliaments, the involvement of national parliaments in pre-legislative consultations, the 'yellow-card' shown by national parliaments in respect of the proposal for a European Public Prosecutor's Office and the current rules concerning subsidiarity checks by national parliaments and the future of COSAC (Conference of European Scrutiny Committees).

Vice President Šefčovič was accompanied by Mr Martin Bugelli, Head of the European Commission Representation in Malta.

MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE HELLENIC REPUBLIC

On 13 February the President of the Hellenic Republic HE Karolas Papoulias, who was on a state visit to Malta, paid a courtesy visit to the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Deputy Foreign Minister of the Hellenic Republic, Mr Kyriakos Gerontopoulos, accompanied HE Papoulias on this visit.

HE Papoulias and Hon. Farrugia discussed topics of mutual interest, including the excellent relations that exist between Malta and Greece, the Greek Presidency of the European Union, the question of irregular migration, the financial crisis and unemployment, maritime affairs and the recent twinning between Gżira and Glyfada.

During his visit to Malta, the Greek President conferred the *Grand-Croix de l'Ordre de l'Honneur* of Greece on the Speaker.

PUBLICATION *IS-SEDJA TITKELLEM*

Towards the end of March, a collection of the rulings given in the first year of this Legislature was published in the form of a book with the title *Is-Sedja Titkellem*.

This publication is the first of its kind and will be distributed to all the Members of Parliament. It will also be available in the Parliament's library.

This first publication was also presented to the Prime Minister, Hon. Joseph Muscat, and to the Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Simon Busuttil, as leaders of their respective parliamentary groups.

Meeting with the President of the Hellenic Republic

Attivitajiet fil-Parlament (Kont.)

LAQGĦA MAL-KUMITAT DWAR IR-RISPETT TAL-OBBLIGI U L-IMPENJI MILL-ISTATI MEMBRI TAL-KUNSILL TAL-EWROPA (KUMITAT TA' MONITORAĠĠ)

Bejn is-27 u t-28 ta' Frar ġiet organizzata f'Malta laqgħa tal-Kumitat dwar ir-Rispett tal-Obbligi u l-Impenji mill-Istati Membri tal-Kunsill tal-Ewropa (Kumitat ta' Monitoraġġ) taħt l-awspiċi tal-Assemblea Parlamentari tal-Kunsill tal-Ewropa (PACE).

Id-delegati kienu indirizzati wkoll mill-Ispeaker Farrugia li tkellem dwar l-importanza li jagħti l-Kumitat ta' Monitoraġġ lid-drittijiet tal-bniedem, il-ġustizzja u d-dritt tal-liġi, u enfasizza li l-Kumitat ta' Monitoraġġ għandu rwol importanti fis-sitwazzjoni li qed tiżviluppa fl-Ukrajina.

L-Onor. Joe Debono Grech, kap tad-delegazzjoni Maltija għall-PACE, l-Onor. Deborah Schembri, l-Onor. Toni Bezzina u l-Onor. Charlò Bonnici, membri tal-istess delegazzjoni, attendew ukoll din il-laqgħa.

Ix-xogħol tal-Kumitat tmexxa fil-magħluq.

KUMITAT MAGĦŻUL DWAR L-ISTANDARDS, L-ETIKA U L-IMĠIBA XIERQA FIL-ĦAJJA PUBBLIKA

F'Marzu temm il-ħidma tiegħu l-Kumitat Magħżul imwaqqaf sabiex jirrakkomanda lill-Kamra dwar it-twaqqif ta' Uffiċċju ta' Kummissarju u ta' kumitat permanenti dwar l-istandards, l-etika u l-imġiba xierqa fil-ħajja pubblika. Il-Kumitat kien ippresedut mill-Ispeaker Anġlu Farrugia u kompost mill-Onor. Ryan Callus, l-Onor. Justyne Caruana, l-Onor. George Vella u l-Onor. Francis Zammit Dimech.

Il-Kumitat iltaqa' ħames darbiet: fl-ewwel tliet laqgħat il-Kumitat iddiskuta l-prinċipji li għandhom ikunu ta' bażi għal-leġiżlazzjoni eventwali, u kkunsidra numru ta' sistemi mħaddma f'parlamenti oħra; fl-aħħar żewġ laqgħat il-Membri ddiskutew abbozz ta' liġi ppreparat mill-Uffiċċju tal-Avukat Ġenerali, ibbażat fuq id-deċiżjonijiet tal-istess Kumitat fl-ewwel tliet laqgħat. Hekk kif il-Membri kollha tal-Kumitat jaqblu dwar it-test tal-abbozz, dan tqiegħed fuq il-Mejda tal-Kamra mill-Ispeaker, sabiex matul din is-sena jgħaddi mill-istadji tal-proċess leġiżlattiv fil-Kamra.

Laqgħa tal-Kumitat dwar ir-Rispett tal-Obbligi u l-Impenji mill-Istati Membri tal-Kunsill tal-Ewropa (Kumitat ta' Monitoraġġ)

TWAQQIF TA' KUMITAT PERMANENTI DWAR IS-SAĦĦA

Fil-5 ta' Frar il-Kamra approvat b'mod unanimu mozzjoni ta' Membru privat imressqa mill-Membru tal-Oppożizzjoni, l-Onor. Claudio Grech, liema mozzjoni tipprovdi għat-twaqqif ta' Kumitat Permanenti dwar is-Saħħa. Ix-xogħol li għandu dan il-Kumitat huwa li:

(a) jiddiskuti *policy* u materji fil-qasam tas-saħħa li jkollhom importanza strateġika u ta' interess materjali għall-pazjenti u jirrapporta fuqhom lill-Kamra;
(b) jikkunsidra kull rapport, pjan strateġiku, pjan ta' ħidma kif ukoll *policy* riferuti lilu mill-Kamra, mill-Ministru jew minn xi Kumitat Permanenti ieħor;
(ċ) jifli materji u ħwejjeġ li għandhom x'jaqsmu mal-infiq kapitali u rikorrenti ta' dawk id-dipartimenti, awtoritajiet statutorji u organizzazzjonijiet pubbliċi li joperaw fil-qasam tas-saħħa pubblika;
(d) jifli materji u ħwejjeġ li għandhom x'jaqsmu mas-saħħa pubblika u d-drittijiet tal-pazjent;
(e) jiddiskuti u janalizza l-impatt tad-deċiżjonijiet tal-gvern u l-Unjoni Ewropea fil-qasam tas-saħħa;
(f) jisma' l-opinjonijiet ta' korpi kostitwiti, *unions* tal-ħaddiema, għaqdiet mhux governattivi, organizzazzjonijiet li jirrappreżentaw lill-pazjenti u tas-settur privat; u
(g) jitlob biex persuni jidhru quddiem l-istess Kumitat sabiex jagħmlu espożizzjoni jew jagħtu rendikont tal-ħidma u tar-responsabbiltajiet tagħhom fl-oqsma li jaqgħu taħt dan l-istess Kumitat.

Il-kumitat il-ġdid ser ikun ippresedut mill-Onor. Etienne Grech u kompost mill-Onor. Deo Debattista, l-Onor. Godfrey Farrugia, l-Onor. Michael Gonzi u l-Onor. Claudio Grech.

Activities in Parliament (Cont.)

MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE HONOURING OF OBLIGATIONS AND COMMITMENTS BY MEMBER STATES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE (MONITORING COMMITTEE)

On 27 and 28 February a meeting of the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee) under the auspices of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) was organized in Malta.

Speaker Farrugia also addressed the participants of the meeting referring to the importance given by the Monitoring Committee to human rights, justice and rule of law, and emphasising that the Monitoring Committee has an important role to play at this time in the current situation in Ukraine.

Hon. Joe Debono Grech, leader of the Maltese delegation to the PACE, Hon. Deborah Schembri, Hon. Toni Bezzina and Hon. Charlò Bonnici, members of the same delegation, attended the meeting.

The proceedings of the Committee were held in camera.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS, ETHICS AND PROPER BEHAVIOUR IN PUBLIC LIFE

In March the Select Committee tasked with reporting to the House on the setting up of an Office and a standing committee on standards, ethics and proper behaviour in public life completed its work. The Committee was chaired by Speaker Anġlu Farrugia and composed of Hon. Ryan Callus, Hon. Justyne Caruana, Hon. George Vella and Hon. Francis Zammit Dimech.

The Committee met five times: in the first three meetings the Committee discussed the principles on which future legislation on the matter should be based, and considered a number of systems in place in other parliaments; in the last two meetings the Members discussed a draft bill prepared by the Office of the Attorney General, based on the decisions of the same Committee in its first three meetings. Once the bill is approved by all the Members of the Committee, the Speaker will table it in the House where it is expected to go through the parliamentary process in the coming months.

SETTING UP OF A STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

On 5 February the House unanimously approved a private members' motion presented by Opposition Member Hon. Claudio Grech calling for the setting up of a Standing Committee on Health. The new committee has been tasked with:

(a) on its own initiative, discussing policies and matters in the health sector which have strategic importance and are of material interest to patients, and report thereon to the House;
(b) evaluating all reports, strategic plans, task plans as well as all policies referred to it by the House, by the Minister or by any other Standing Committee;
(c) evaluating matters and items relating to capital and recurrent expenditure of such departments, statutory authorities and public organizations which operate in the public health sector;
(d) evaluating matters and issues relating to public health and the rights of the patient;
(e) discussing and analysing the impact of government and European Union decisions in the health sector;
(f) examining and report back to the House on reports and related documents, which are compiled by the Auditor General or by the Commissioner for Health;
(g) requesting the Commissioner for Health to appear before the Committee on matters related to his work; and
(h) requesting persons to appear before the same Committee in order to give a presentation or a statement regarding their tasks and responsibilities on matters which fall under this same Committee.

The new committee is chaired by Hon. Etienne Grech and is composed of Hon. Deo Debattista, Hon. Godfrey Farrugia, Hon. Michael Gonzi and Hon. Claudio Grech.

Hon. Etienne Grech
Chairman of the Standing Committee on Health

Attivitajiet Internazzjonali

Il-President tal-Kumitat dwar il-Kontijiet Pubbliċi u membru tal-Kumitat dwar l-Affarijiet Ekonomiċi u Finanzjarji, l-Onor. Tonio Fenech, ħa sehem fil-Ġimgħa Parlamentari Ewropea (European Parliamentary Week) dwar is-Semestru Ewropew, li kienet organizzata mill-Parlament Ewropew u kopreseduta mill-Presidenza Griega tal-Kunsill fl-20 u l-21 ta' Jannar. Din il-laqgħa hija t-tieni waħda organizzata fil-qafas tal-Artikolu 13 tat-Trattat dwar l-Istabilità, il-Konverġenza u l-Governanza. Fil-laqgħa inawgurali organizzata mill-Presidenza Litwana, intlaħaq qbil illi l-Parlament Ewropew għandu jorganizza din il-laqgħa interparlamentari ġdida fl-ewwel nofs tas-sena b'mod li taħbat mal-Ġimgħa Parlamentari Ewropea, filwaqt li l-laqgħa li tinżamm fit-tieni nofs tas-sena tkun organizzata mill-pajjiż li għandu l-Presidenza tal-Kunsill f'dak il-perijodu.

Is-sessjonijiet tal-laqgħa kienu dwar it-triq lejn Unjoni Ekonomika u Monetarja (EMU) aktar profonda, x'għandu jsir biex ikunu indirizzati l-iżbilanċi makroekonomiċi fl-Ewropa, il-leġittimità demokratika tal-programmi ta' aġġustament, il-promozzjoni tat-tkabbir u x-xogħol fl-Ewropa permezz tal-iffinanzjar tal-ekonomija reali, titjib fis-sorvelja fiskali fl-EMU u l-implimentazzjoni taċ-ċiklu tas-Semestru Ewropew tal-2013 u l-prijoritajiet għall-2014.

L-Onor. Fenech tkellem dwar is-suġġett tal-leġittimità demokratika tal-programmi ta' aġġustament, wara numru ta' interventi minn Membri Parlamentari minn pajjiżi taħt programmi ta' aġġustament li qalu li t-tbatijiet f'pajjiżhom kienu r-riżultat tal-miżuri imposti mit-Troika (il-Kummissjoni Ewropea, il-Fond Monetarju Internazzjonali u l-Bank Ċentrali Ewropew). Huwa saħaq illi dawn il-pajjiżi għandhom jassumu r-responsabbiltà għall-azzjonijiet tagħhom, li qed ikunu ta' piż għall-Istati Membri l-oħra. Huwa żied illi fl-aħħar mill-aħħar dawn il-programmi kienu nnegozjati mit-Troika mal-gvernijiet ikkonċernati u ġew approvati mill-parlamenti nazzjonali. Numru ta' parteċipanti oħra qablu mal-pożizzjoni li esprima l-Onor. Fenech.

L-Ispeaker Anġlu Farrugia u l-Iskrivan tal-Kamra, is-Sur Raymond Scicluna, ħadu sehem fit-22 Konferenza tal-Ispeakers u Presiding Officers tal-Commonwealth li nżammet ġewwa Wellington, New Zealand, bejn il-21 u l-24 ta' Jannar. Din il-konferenza laqqgħet aktar minn 50 Speaker minn parlamenti tal-Commonwealth sabiex flimkien jiddiskutu kif il-parlamenti jistgħu jitressqu eqreb lejn iċ-ċittadini fl-era diġitali u b'hekk jibqgħu relevanti, il-privileġġ parlamentari u t-tħaddim tajjeb tad-demokraziji, l-isfidi għal parlamenti żgħar u l-ftuħ u t-trasparenza fil-ħidma parlamentari.

L-Ispeaker Farrugia tkellem dwar is-suġġett tal-privileġġ parlamentari fejn qal li kull Membru Parlamentari għandu juża l-privileġġ li jitkellem b'mod liberu fil-Kamra b'mod responsabbli u għamel referenza għas-sistema tad-dritt għal risposta għaċ-ċittadini li teżisti fil-Parlament ta' New South Wales sabiex jikkontrollaw dan il-privileġġ.

L-Ispeaker Farrugia mexxa r-raba' sessjoni dwar il-ftuħ u t-trasparenza fil-ħidma parlamentari. Fir-rimarki tal-ftuħ tiegħu huwa qal illi minkejja li l-parlamenti kollha għandhom skali differenti u jinsabu fi stadji differenti ta' żvilupp, dawn kollha għandhom bħala wieħed mill-għanijiet tagħhom li jippromwovu d-demokrazija fil-pajjiżi tal-Commonwealth. Huwa fakkar il-*benchmarks* stabbiliti mill-Assemblea Parlamentari tal-Commonwealth li magħhom il-parlamenti jistgħu jkejlu l-livell ta' ftuħ u trasparenza tagħhom.

Waqt il-laqgħa tar-Reġjun tal-Gżejjer Brittanniċi u l-Mediterran, l-Ispeaker Farrugia argumenta illi Malta għandha jkollha l-opportunità li tokkupa s-siġġu ta' dan ir-reġjun fil-Kumitat Permanenti tal-Konferenza u li m'għandhiex tkun dejjem id-delegazzjoni Brittannika li tokkupa dan is-siġġu, liema argument sab appoġġ konsiderevoli.

Fi triqitha lejn New Zealand id-delegazzjoni Maltija żaret ukoll il-Parlament ta' New South Wales ġewwa Sydney fejn saru diversi laqgħat. Is-suġġetti ewlenin li tqajmu f'dawn il-laqgħat kienu l-proċedura tad-dritt għal risposta taċ-ċittadini, ir-rwol tal-Kummissarju għall-Istandards u t-trattament ta' mozzjonijiet meta l-parlament ikun xolt qabel elezzjonijiet ġenerali.

Fuq stedina tal-President tal-Assemblea Nazzjonali Kostitwenti tat-Tuneżija, Dr Mustapha Ben Jaafar, l-Ispeaker Anġlu Farrugia ħa sehem f'ċerimonja organizzata mill-President tat-Tuneżija, Dr Moncef Marzouki fl-okkażjoni tal-adozzjoni tal-Kostituzzjoni Tuneżina. Iċ-ċerimonja saret f'forma ta' sessjoni straordinarja tal-Assemblea Nazzjonali Kostitwenti.

Għal din l-okkażjoni kienu preżenti għadd ta' dinjitarji minn madwar id-dinja. Fl-indirizz tiegħu lill-Assemblea l-Ispeaker Farrugia feraħ lill-poplu Tuneżin u lill-awtoritajiet għal dan l-iżvilupp politiku importanti li għandu jservi ta' eżempju għal pajjiżi oħra fir-reġjun. Huwa rrefera għall-elezzjonijiet li għandhom isiru din is-sena bħala għan politiku kruċjali għat-tisħiħ tal-proċess tranżizzjonali lejn id-demokrazija fit-Tuneżija, u qal li Malta tappoġġja dan il-proċess.

L-Ispeaker Anġlu Farrugia jindirizza l-parteċipanti tas-sessjoni strasordinarja tal-Assemblea Nazzjonali Kostitwenti Tuneżina

International Activities

The Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee and member of the Economic and Financial Affairs Committee, Hon. Tonio Fenech, took part in the European Parliamentary Week on the European Semester, which was organised by the European Parliament and co-chaired by the Greek Presidency of the Council on 20 and 21 January. This meeting is the second one organised within the framework of Article 13 of the Treaty on Stability, Convergence and Governance. In the inaugural meeting organised under the Lithuanian Presidency, it was agreed that the European Parliament would host the new interparliamentary meeting in the first half of the year and to coincide with the European Parliamentary Week, whereas the meeting held in the second half of the year would be organised in the country holding the rotating EU Presidency.

The sessions of the meeting concerned the path towards a deeper Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), addressing macroeconomic imbalances in Europe, the democratic legitimacy of economic adjustment programmes, promoting growth and jobs in Europe through financing the real economy, enhanced fiscal surveillance in the EMU and the implementation of the 2013 European Semester cycle and priorities for 2014.

Hon. Fenech intervened on the subject of the democratic legitimacy of economic adjustment programmes, following a number of interventions by parliamentarians from programme countries who blamed the difficulties faced by their countries on the measures imposed by the Troika (the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank). He argued that these countries needed to bear the responsibility for their actions, which came at a cost to the other Member States. He added that ultimately these programmes were negotiated by the Troika with the governments involved and were approved by the national parliaments. A number of participants supported the view expressed by Hon. Fenech.

Speaker Anġlu Farrugia and the Clerk of the House, Mr Raymond Scicluna, took part in the 22nd Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth which was held in Wellington, New Zealand between 21 and 24 January. This meeting brought together more than 50 Speakers from Commonwealth parliaments to discuss how to reconnect Parliament with the public in order to keep parliaments relevant in the digital age, parliamentary privilege and the protection of the effective functioning of democracies, the challenges for small parliaments and openness and transparency.

Speaker Farrugia spoke on the subject of parliamentary privilege saying that every MP should make responsible use of the right to speak freely in Parliament without the risk of being sued for it and mentioned the system of Citizen's right of reply which was used by the New South Wales Parliament to control this privilege.

Speaker Farrugia chaired the fourth session on openness and transparency. In his opening remarks he said that in spite of varying degrees of scale and development, all parliaments have as their aim the advancement of democracy throughout the Commonwealth. He recalled the benchmarks established by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Assembly against which parliaments can measure their level of openness and transparency.

During the meeting of the British Isles and Mediterranean Region Speaker Farrugia made a case for Malta's candidacy to occupy the seat of this region on the Standing Committee of the Conference arguing that it should not always be the British delegation to hold this position, an argument that gathered considerable support.

On the way to New Zealand the Maltese delegation also visited the New South Wales Parliament in Sydney where a number of meetings were held. The main topics discussed were the citizen's right of reply procedure, the role of the Commissioner for Standards and the lapsing of motions upon dissolution of Parliament.

Speaker Anġlu Farrugia was invited by the President of the National Constituent Assembly of Tunisia, Dr Mustapha Ben Jaafar, to take part in a ceremony being organised by the President of Tunisia, Dr Moncef Marzouki, to mark the occasion of the adoption of the Tunisian Constitution. The ceremony was held as an extraordinary session of the National Constituent Assembly.

A number of dignitaries from around the world were present for this occasion. Speaker Farrugia addressed the Assembly and started by congratulating the Tunisian people and the authorities for achieving such an important political development which should be of example to other countries in the region. He also referred to the planned elections to be held later in 2014 as being a crucial political goal that would further strengthen Tunisia's transitional process towards democracy, a process which has Malta's support.

Speaker Anġlu Farrugia at the 22nd Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth, Wellington, New Zealand

Attivitajiet Internazzjonali (Kont.)

Bejn is-27 u d-29 ta' Jannar l-Onor. Joe Debono Grech, l-Onor. Charlò Bonnici, l-Onor. Beppe Fenech Adami u l-Onor. Michael Falzon, ħadu sehem fl-ewwel parti tas-Sessjoni Ordinarja tal-2014 tal-Kunsill tal-Ewropa ġewwa Strażburgu.

F'din il-parti tas-Sessjoni, l-Assemblea eleġġiet lis-Sja Anne Brasseur mil-Lussemburgu bħala President tal-istess Assemblea. L-Assemblea eleġġiet ukoll lis-Sur Jon Fridrik Kjølbro bħala mħallef Daniż fil-Qorti Ewropea għad-Drittijiet tal-Bniedem.

Il-materji li ġew diskussi f'din il-parti tas-Sessjoni kienu strateġija biex tipprevjeni r-razziżmu u l-intolleranza fl-Ewropa; l-impatt fuq id-demokrazjia ta' teknoloġiji ġodda ta' informazzjoni u komunikazzjoni; l-organizzazzjoni u l-assistenza lir-refuġjati Sirjani; l-iżgurar illi l-immigranti jkunu ta' benefiċċju għall-pajjiżi Ewropej li jilqgħuhom; il-kontribuzzjoni tal-Ewropa għall-Objettivi tal-Millennju għall-Iżvilupp; qafas għal ftehim globali fl-2015 dwar it-tibdil fil-klima; reviżjoni tal-Konvenzjoni Ewropea dwar Televiżjoni Transfrontali u l-kontabilità ta' organizzazzjonijiet internazzjonali għal vjolazzjonijiet tad-drittijiet tal-bniedem.

Taħt il-proċedura tal-urġenza l-Assemblea ddiskutiet ukoll il-funzjonament tal-istituzzjonijiet demokratiċi tal-Ukrajina.

Minbarra l-parteċipazzjoni tagħhom fil-laqgħat plenarji, il-membri tad-delegazzjoni Maltija ħadu sehem ukoll fil-laqgħat tad-diversi Kumitati li huma membri tagħhom.

L-Onor. Frederick Azzopardi ħa sehem fil-Laqgħa tax-Xitwa tal-2014 tal-Assemblea Parlamentari tal-OSCE li saret fi Vjenna bejn it-13 u l-14 ta' Frar. Minbarra l-laqgħa tal-Kumitat Permanenti, kien hemm ukoll Sessjoni Konġunta tat-tliet Kumitati Ġenerali, dak dwar id-Demokrazija, id-Drittijiet tal-Bniedem u Kwestjonijiet Umanitarji, dak dwar Affarijiet Politiċi, Sigurtà u Affarijiet Ekonomiċi, u dak dwar ix-Xjenza, Teknoloġija u Ambjent.

Waqt id-dibattitu fil-Kumitat Ġenerali dwar id-Demokrazija, id-Drittijiet tal-Bniedem u Kwestjonijiet Umanitarji, l-Onor. Azzopardi tkellem dwar l-effetti iktar wiesgħa tal-korruzzjoni u l-importanza tas-sistema tal-ġustizzja kriminali sabiex jiġi assigurat li ssir ġustizzja mal-persuni li jikkommettu jew jappoġġjaw atti terroristiċi. L-Onor. Azzopardi sostna li parlamenti li jkunu qed jaqdu tajjeb il-funzjoni tagħhom ta' ħolqa bejn il-gvern u s-soċjetà ċivili huma l-aqwa tarka kontra l-korruzzjoni.

Matul din il-laqgħa saru żewġ dibattiti speċjali: wieħed fuq l-isfidi li qed jiffaċċja r-reġjun tal-OSCE minn żieda fl-estremiżmu, radikaliżmu u ksenofobija, u l-ieħor fuq is-sitwazzjoni attwali fl-Ukrajina.

Delegazzjoni parlamentari mmexxija mill-Ispeaker Anġlu Farrugia żaret Tbilisi, il-Georgia bejn l-24 u s-27 ta' Frar 2014 fuq stedina tas-Sur David Usupashvili, l-Ispeaker tal-Parlament tal-Georgia. Id-delegazzjoni kienet tinkludi lill-Whip tal-Gvern Carmelo Abela u l-Whip tal-Oppożizzjoni David Agius. Waqt il-laqgħa mal-Ispeaker Usupashvili, l-Ispeaker Farrugia qal li Malta tappoġġja l-pożizzjoni tal-UE favur l-integrità territorjali tal-Georgia fi ħdan il-fruntieri internazzjonalment rikonoxxuti tagħha u qal li l-Parlament Malti jinkoraġġixxi lill-Parlament tal-Georgia sabiex jiffirma u jirratifika l-ftehim ta' assoċjazzjoni mal-UE.

Id-delegazzjoni parlamentari Maltija kellha wkoll laqgħat maċ-Chairman tal-Kumitat għall-Affarijiet Barranin,is-Sur Tedo Japaridze, mal-Viċi Prim Ministru u Ministru għall-Enerġija, is-Sur Kakha Kaladze, maċ-Chairman tal-Kumitat dwar l-Integrazzjoni Ewropea tal-Parlament tal-Gerogia, is-Sur Victor Dolidze, mad-Deputat Ministru għall-Affarijiet Barranin tal-Georgia, is-Sja Tamar Beruchashvili u mal-President tal-Georgia, l-ET Giorgi Margvelashvili.

Delegazzjoni parlamentari mmexxija mill-Ispeaker Anġlu Farrugia żaret Tbilisi

Fit-13 u l-14 ta' Marzu L-Ispeaker Anġlu Farrugia ħa sehem fl-konferenza internazzjonali koorganizzata mill-Kamra tad-Deputati tal-Italja u l-Parlament tal-Greċja dwar jekk l-Unjoni Ewropea hux se jirnexxilha tilħaq il-miri tagħha f'kuntest ta' tkabbir, impjiegi u drittijiet. Il-konferenza kienet maqsuma f'żewġ sessjonijiet: l-ewwel waħda kienet tikkonċerna l-promozzjoni ta' tkabbir qawwi u sostenibbli msejjes fuq impjiegi b'saħħithom sabiex tiġi megħluba l-kriżi, filwaqt li t-tieni sessjoni ttrattat kif jiġi assigurat ir-rispett għad-drittijiet fundamentali fl-Istati Membri tal-Unjoni Ewropea.

Fl-intervent tiegħu waqt l-ewwel sessjoni l-Ispeaker Farrugia qal li l-analisti issa qed josservaw xejriet pożittivi li jindikaw li l-ekonomija Ewropea qed tqum fuq saqajha b'ekonomiji li għaddew minn perijodi ta' riċessjoni jerġgħu jibdew jaraw tkabbir. Huwa qal li filwaqt li skont iċ-ċifri jidher li l-kriżi għaddiet, din ħalliet warajha livelli għoljin ta' qgħad f'ċertu Stati Membri. Huwa rrefera wkoll għaċ-ċifri ta' qgħad fost iż-żgħażagħ li hemm riskju li jistgħu jwasslu sabiex tintilef ġenerazzjoni, fis-sens li għada pitgħada jista' jkun hemm ġenerazzjoni li ma ngħatatx il-ħiliet u l-opportunitajiet meħtieġa biex minnha joħorġu mexxejja politiċi u tan-negozju. Huwa żied li għalkemm iċ-ċifri f'Malta mhumiex daqstant inkwetanti, huwa importanti ferm li jitħares ix-xogħol li huwa l-uniku riżors tal-pajjiż.

Il-Whip tal-Gvern, l-Onor. Carmelo Abela, indirizza t-tieni sessjoni dwar ir-rispett għad-drittijiet fundamentali fl-Istati Membri tal-Unjoni Ewropea. Fid-diskors tiegħu l-Onor. Abela tkellem dwar il-problemi li jħabbtu wiċċhom magħhom l-immigranti illegali u kif ir-Regolament Dublin II qiegħed ikollu impatt ħażin fuq Malta. Huwa żied li dan jista' jiġi indirizzat jekk ikun hemm *burden sharing* mill-Istati Membri kollha, għax din hija problema tal-Unjoni Ewropea kollha u mhux ta' Malta biss.

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES (CONT.)

Between 27 and 29 January Hon. Joe Debono Grech, Hon. Charlò Bonnici, Hon. Beppe Fenech Adami and Hon. Michael Falzon, took part in the First Part of the 2014 Ordinary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg.

During this part-session the Assembly elected as its President, Ms Anne Brasseur from Luxembourg. The Assembly also elected Jon Fridrik Kjølbro as Danish judge in the European Court of Human Rights.

The issues discussed during this part-session were a strategy to prevent racism and intolerance in Europe; the impact of new information and communication technology on democracy; the organisation of and assistance to Syrian refugees; ensuring that migrants are a benefit for European host societies; Europe's contribution to the Millennium Development Goals; a framework for a global agreement in 2015 on climate change; revision of the European Convention on Transfrontier Television and the accountability of international organisations for human rights violations.

Under the urgent procedure the Assembly also discussed the functioning of democratic institutions in Ukraine.

In addition to their participation in the plenary meetings, the members of the Maltese delegation took part in the meetings of the various committees of which they are members.

Between 13 and 14 February Hon. Frederick Azzopardi took part in the 2014 Winter Meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE which was held in Vienna. In addition to the Standing Committee Meeting there was also a Joint Session of the three General Committees: Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions, Political Affairs and Security and Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment.

Hon. Azzopardi intervened during the debate in the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions. He spoke about the wider effects of corruption and how the criminal justice system is vital to ensure that persons who perpetrate or support terrorist acts are brought to justice. Hon. Azzopardi argued that well-functioning parliaments, as the link between governments and civil society, are the best barrier against corruption.

Two special debates were held during this meeting: one on the challenges for the OSCE region from the rise of extremism, radicalism and xenophobia and another on the current situation in Ukraine.

Between 24 and 27 February 2014 Speaker Anġlu Farrugia led a parliamentary delegation comprising Government Whip Carmelo Abela and Opposition Whip David Agius, to Tbilisi, Georgia. The visit took place on the invitation of Mr David Usupashvili, Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia. During the meeting with his counterpart, Speaker Farrugia said that Malta supported the EU position in favour of Georgia's territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders and said that the Maltese Parliament encourages the Georgian Parliament to sign and ratify the EU association agreement.

The Maltese Parliament delegation also held meetings with the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr Tedo Japaridze, with the Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Energy, Mr Kakha Kaladze, with the Chairman of the Committee on European Integration of the Parliament of Georgia, Mr Victor Dolidze, with the Deputy Foreign Minister of Georgia, Mrs Tamar Beruchashvili and with the President of Georgia, HE Giorgi Margvelashvili.

On 13 and 14 March Speaker Anġlu Farrugia participated in an international conference organised jointly by the Italian Camera dei Deputati and the Hellenic Parliament on whether the European Union will rise to the occasion in the context of growth, jobs and rights. The conference was divided in two sessions: the first session dealt with promoting robust and sustainable growth based on sound employment in order to overcome the crisis, while the second session concerned ensuring respect for fundamental rights in European Union member states.

Speaker Farrugia addressed the first session on growth based on sound employment. He said that analysts are now observing positive signs that the European economy is getting back on track with growth returning to economies which had been marked by periods of recession. He said that although the figures might show that the crisis is over, it has left critical levels of unemployment in certain Member States. He also referred to the figures for youth unemployment which are posing the risk of giving rise to a lost generation, i.e. a future generation which is now not being given the necessary skills and opportunities to grow into tomorrow's political and business leaders. He added that although the figures for Malta are not as worrying, it is essential that employment, the only resource, is safeguarded.

Government Whip Hon. Carmelo Abela addressed the second session on ensuring respect for fundamental rights in European Union member states. In his address Hon. Abela spoke about the plight of illegal immigrants and how the Dublin II Regulation was having an adverse effect on Malta. He added that this could be addressed by burden sharing by all the Member States, as this is a problem of the whole European Union not just Malta.

Ħidma Parlamentari April 2013 – Marzu 2014		Parliamentary Work April 2013 – March 2014
Seduti fil-Plenarja	131	Plenary Sittings
Laqgħat tal-Kumitati Permanenti	149	Meetings of Standing Committees
Stqarrijiet Ministerjali	23	Ministerial Statements
Mozzjonijiet	115	Motions
Mozzjonijiet Privati	9	Private Members' Motions
Mozzjonijiet għall-Ewwel Qari ta' Abbozzi ta' Liġi	47	Motions for First Reading of Bills
Liġijiet mgħoddija mill-Parlament	24	Acts enacted by Parliament
Liġijiet approvati b'votazzjoni	4	Acts approved upon division
Mistoqsijiet Parlamentari	8,872	Parliamentary Questions
Dokumenti mqiegħda fuq il-Mejda tal-Kamra	2,527	Documents laid on the Table of the House
Diskorsi tal-Aġġornament	92	Adjournment Speeches
Deċiżjonijiet tas-Sedja	21	Rulings by the Chair
Membri Parlamentari li siefru fuq xogħol parlamentari	149	Members of Parliament on parliamentary duties abroad
Delegazzjonijiet parlamentari barra minn Malta	76	Parliamentary delegations abroad
Delegazzjonijiet immexxija mill-Ispeaker/Deputy Speaker	20	Delegations led by the Speaker/ Deputy Speaker