



Press Release

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PRESS RELEASE BY THE OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

The Speaker of the House of Representatives presides over the awards ceremony of the annual conference of the Malta Model United Nations Society

Speaker Anġlu Farrugia presided over the awards ceremony of this year's Malta Model United Nations (MaltMUN) Society Conference (MaltMUN) hosted by the House of Representatives between 15 and 17 September 2017. The theme of this year's annual conference was *Death of the Border: Eliminating Lines of Demarcation Between States*.

Speaker Farrugia welcomed the society's initiative and commitment to be a leading organisation in promoting greater participation and engagement by young professionals in UN-focused conferences and competitions, public-speaking, debating and diplomacy. Participants addressed the topic of borders through the simulation of UN committees, mainly the UN Security Council, the Fourth Committee Special Political and Decolonization, the World Health Organization, and the Economic and Financial Council. The MaltMUN Society strategically identified the importance and centrality of a multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder approach integrating in their programme various inter-related elements directly or indirectly linked to borders and territorial demarcations.

Speaker Farrugia emphasised that the region is currently experiencing a polarisation in the discourse surrounding territorial borders, with issues pertaining to security and heightened terrorist threats conflicting with the principles of the free movement of people, services and goods. On one hand, there are increased calls for tightened security and border checks, whilst on the other hand, the globalised and digital world facilitate and promote connectivity, cooperation, and cross-border exchanges. He continued to explain that borders have now acquired a spatial dimension that goes beyond physical territoriality, and therefore are more reflective of social and political developments rather than being a set in stone principle.

The Speaker posed an important question on how professionals and members of Parliament could promote the death of the border, without negatively impinging on the security and personal safety of their nation state. In his speech, the Speaker made reference to the dual role occupied by members of Parliament, and highlighted the centrality of parliamentary diplomacy. Parliamentary diplomacy and regional cooperation on issues of common concern provide the perfect platform to promote cooperation and mutual understanding across states and ultimately enable increased economic, social, and environmental exchanges across borders.

The Speaker called on the MaltMUN participants to recognise that how we experience borders and how we think about borders depends very much on our personal circumstances, thus what constitutes a border to some is a gateway to others.

Concluding, Speaker Farrugia augured the MaltMUN future success in fostering excellence amongst young and aspiring professionals.