



Press Release

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Speaker Farrugia participates in the 12th Conference of Presidents of Parliaments of Small European States held in Vaduz

Speaker Anġlu Farrugia actively participated in the three sessions of the 12th Conference of the Presidents of the Parliaments of Small European States, which took place in Vaduz, Liechtenstein.

In his intervention during Session 1, ‘The sovereignty of small states: origins and international recognition’, Speaker Farrugia spoke about the external and internal threats to the sovereignty of small states. As an example, he mentioned the chaos reigning in Libya and the ISIS (Da’esh) fighters who are using Libya as a haven to train jihadists and fund and plan new attacks in Europe. He said that the absence of law and order and state of total chaos lead to another serious problem affecting EU member states, namely irregular migration. He also mentioned the threat of fake news or serious and unfounded allegations made against the political establishment. These too can jeopardise the state and its reputation, which could in turn have several detrimental effects on that state.

During Session 2, ‘Political participation: special challenges in the small state’, Speaker Farrugia highlighted the high voter turnout in the Maltese general elections and mentioned the recent legal amendment allowing 16-year olds to participate in general elections. He noted that, under the current government, Malta has made huge progress towards equality when it legalised civil union and achieved substantial progress vis-à-vis LGBTIQ equality mainstreaming and rights. He said that Malta will most likely not be sheltered from the effects of rising populism and anti-immigration parties throughout the EU. He also added that, to counter rising populism, governments must fight corruption adequately and narrow the ever-increasing gap between the rich and the poor in more developed societies.

When he intervened in Session 3, ‘International relations and diplomacy: strategies and priorities’, Speaker Farrugia gave examples of how the Maltese Parliament takes a proactive stance in parliamentary diplomacy, namely by means of the launch of the International Parliament for Tolerance and Peace which took place last July, and the hosting of the forthcoming Parliamentary Dimension of the 5+5 Conference this coming January. He referred to his role as Chairperson of the Small Branches of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), who sits on the CPA International Executive Committee to bring a voice for small branches to the governing body of the CPA. He elaborated on the number of inter-parliamentary meetings which the Parliament of Malta organised under the Parliamentary Dimension of the Maltese Presidency of the Council of the EU. He finally highlighted the active participation of the Maltese parliamentary delegations to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe; the Inter-

Parliamentary Union, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean, and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean.

At the end of the conference, the Presidents of the Small European States' Parliaments present—namely of Andorra, Cyprus, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro and San Marino—approved a joint declaration.