



Press Release

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Maltese Delegation participates in the 15th Plenary Session of the PA-UfM

On Thursday, 14 February, the 15th Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean resumed the work of the Assembly and continued discussions on the challenges of migrants and refugees in the Mediterranean. Malta is being represented by a cross party delegation composed of Head of Delegation MP Glenn Bedingfield, MP Fredrick Azzopardi and MP Anton Refalo.

Guest speakers included Ms Sophia Magennis representative of the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) and Mr Manfred Profazi representative of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). Both representatives emphasized the importance of cooperation and increased dialogue between countries experiencing migration from an origin, transit and destination perspective. The 2015 Valletta Summit and Action Plan were identified as an excellent document and framework that brings together partners from Europe and Africa and together address migration within a holistic and comprehensive approach.

Member of Parliament Glenn Bedingfield addressed members present and agreed with the IOM representative that the 2015 Valletta Action Plan provides a comprehensive approach for regional partners in Europe, the Mediterranean and Africa. Furthermore, he invited members to consult the Valletta conclusions reached by national parliaments of the 5+5 Western Mediterranean Dialogue member countries meeting in the Maltese House of Representative on 17 January 2019. The Valletta conclusions reaffirmed the importance of addressing migration within a framework that includes elements related to climate change and sustainable development, and youth in the context of education and employment. MP Bedingfield underlined that unfortunately, European States are taking a border management and security approach prior addressing the root causes pushing people out of their countries and towards more stable and prosperous countries. Concluding, MP Bedingfield emphasized that European and developed countries need to seriously inject funds and promote sustainable economic, political and social development in North African and African countries.

MP Frederick Azzopardi underlined the serious issue of migration and the need to upgrade collective action to minimize as much as possible the consequences of irregular and unsustainable migration. He highlighted that every state should fulfil its moral and legal obligations to address the situation, especially to combat criminal networks involved in the smuggling and trafficking of human beings. Concluding, MP Azzopardi warned that irregular and undocumented entries could be used by criminal organizations to have a relatively easy access to the country.

Attachments: photo

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The Parliamentary Assembly - Union for the Mediterranean (PA-UfM) is an inter-parliamentary organisation bringing together the Parliaments of the EU and of the Mediterranean. It provides a unique forum to enhance regional cooperation and dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The 15th Plenary Session was organized by the European Parliament, currently holding the Presidency of the PA-UfM. At the end of the session, the EP handed over the Presidency to Turkey, the country holding the Presidency of the PA-UfM for 2019-2020.