



Press Release

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Delegation of the Maltese Parliament participates in the 18th Winter Meeting of the OSCE PA

Members of Parliament Byron Camilleri and Frederick Azzopardi represented the Maltese Parliament at the 18th Winter Meeting of the OSCE PA, held in Vienna, Austria, on 21 and 22 of February. The Winter Meeting commenced with a meeting of the standing committee, comprising presentations by officers of the OSCE PA, including the President, Secretary General and the Treasurer, as well as review of the current international political issues.

The 18th Winter Meeting continued with a meeting of each of the three general committees of the OSCE PA. These tackled the themes of human rights, good governance, money laundering, terrorism, energy security, minorities and protracted conflicts. MP Azzopardi participated in the debate on good governance in the area of fighting corruption, money laundering and the financing of terrorism in the OSCE region, held as part of the meeting of the General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment. MP Azzopardi underlined the State's responsibility to establish robust systems to prevent and detect money laundering, organised crime and financial crime, which may contribute to financing terrorism. He highlighted the cross-border nature of these crimes, which therefore require international solutions, implemented through multilateral cooperation.

Two joint sessions of the general committees were also held, addressed by President of the Austrian National Council, Mr Wolfgang Sobotka, Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia, Mr. Miroslav Lajcak, Secretary General of the OSCE Ambassador Thomas Greminger, Mr Filippo Lombardi and Mr Makis Voridis, Chairs of the OSCE PA's *Ad Hoc* Committees on Migration and Countering Terrorism respectively, and Special Representatives of the OSCE PA. Participating in the open debate as part of the second joint session of the three general committees, MP Azzopardi spoke about human rights, warning against governments who seek to abuse of the qualified nature of human rights for their own ends, including populist governments who seek to undermine the need for human rights on the pretence that the government will always act in the citizens' best interests.

The Maltese delegation also participated in a side event “Kleptocracy in the OSCE states, a threat to democracy and human rights”, organised by the Institute for Reporters’ Freedom and Safety in the margins of the Winter Meeting of the OCSE PA. Participating in the debate during this side event, MP Camilleri condemned the murder of journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, briefing the attendees on the progress made towards securing justice for those involved in the murder, and outlined the Maltese government’s initiatives aimed at strengthening the rule of law in Malta.

Attachments: photos

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