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Everything above board and in good faith - Parmalat Malta director

- MFSA has been examining accounts from day one

By Julian Manduca

Dr Ian Stafrace, a director in all three Parmalat owned companies in Malta, yesterday told *The Malta Financial and Business Times* that since the Parmalat companies came to Malta, everything was "above board, and conducted in good faith."

Stafrace explained that the international media was wrong to put Malta and the Parmalat companies in Malta in a bad light, since the transactions they refer to were effected prior to the companies' registration in Malta in April 2002. Over past weeks various sections

of the international media have suggested that missing Parmalat funds have ended up in Malta.

Stafrace said that reports appearing in some media, including the Italian magazine *Panorama*, were incorrect and he is reserving the right to take legal action in this regard.

One of the wrong impressions created was that soon after the Parmalat Capital Finance Limited came to Malta, it acquired Bonlat Financing Corporation, the company that held the US\$5 billion that was supposedly at the Bank of America that sparked off the entire Parmalat scandal.

Stafrace pointed out that as could be seen in the accounts, Bonlat was already a subsidiary on PCFL in 2001.

In another report, according to Italian news agency ANSA, it was stated that investigators have been trying to trace EUR250 million (Lm109 million) which had disappeared from Parmalat funds and were believed to have ended up in a bank account in Malta.

It was reported that the money had been raised from a bond issue of a Brazilian company owned by the Italian food giant.

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A view of a dilapidated Parmalat sign at one of Rome's Parmalat distributors. Magistrates in Parma are questioning the latest fraud suspects in Parmalat's bankruptcy, a case that has been dubbed "Europe's Enron"

Simed alleges that pressure from Italian government is "clear"

By Matthew Vella

Speaking to this newspaper, Simed area manager Ferry Dubbers yesterday alleged that it was "clear, that there has been some pressure from the Italian government on the Maltese", commenting on the specific mention of the Mater Dei hospital in the fifth Malta-Italy financial protocol, which was enacted on 1 January.

The fifth Malta-Italy financial protocol that has assigned a total of EUR 75 million to the Maltese Islands for technical, economic and financial assistance includes a specific clause in which part of the money will be used for the planning, supply and instalment of equipment at Mater Dei Hospital.

The clause does not make specific mention of medical equipment, the heart of the rumpus that has frayed

bidder and government authorities on the award of the controversial Mater Dei medical equipment tender. Simed's Ferry Dubbers, area manager of the Dutch bidder that is hotly contesting the controversial decision to award the tender to Italian firm INSO, expressively said that "the clause in the protocol probably refers to the supply of storage and other logistical equipment, and not the medical equipment... however, it is clear that there has been some pressure from the Italian government on the Maltese."

In a statement issued earlier this week, Dubbers said that statements by Finance and Economic Services Minister John Dalli that the hospital is not part of the Italian protocol do not "exclude the protocol to be conditional to the award of the contract to INSO".

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Farsons appears to be involved in another takeover bid

By Kurt Sansone

Bigger seems to be the buzzword for the Farsons Group. After taking over Guido Vella Cash & Carry - a wines and spirits business concern in Qormi - in November last year, the Farsons Group seems to have set its eyes

on another import company.

Well-founded speculation among employees of Qormi-based Law Quintano Ltd has it that Farsons is engaged in discussions with the import company in a take-over bid.

Contacted by *The Malta Financial*

and *Business Times* yesterday, officials from both companies refused to comment on the speculation. Norman Aquilina, a director at Law Quintano said "at this stage" there was "no comment to make."

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MSE Index: 2,127.502 -0.116%

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World indices			Rates of exchange	
Index	Value	Change	EURO	2.3177
S&P	1120.57	-0.15%	US DOLLAR	2.9452
DJIA	10510.52	-0.32%	UK STERLING	1.6253
NASDAQ	2050.09	0.13%	SWISS FRANC	3.6233
FTSE	4498	-0.34%	JAPANESE YEN	312.5158
CAC 40	3595.82	-0.35%	CANADIAN DOLLAR	3.7712
DAX	4032.44	-0.09%	GOLD US Dollars	424.0750
H. SENG	13036.32	0.24%	SILVER US Cents	621.0000
NIKKEI	10813.99	-0.10%		

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