



"The real test in relation to our adoption of the Euro starts now"

Charles Mangion INTERVIEW ■ PAGE 10



"Increased generated wealth has not been equitably distributed throughout the country"

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Silence on fresh NSO GDP revisions

Gerald Fenech

A strange silence has settled over the financial community with regard to new figures published by the National Statistics Office on Friday where yet another revision to the Gross Domestic Product was published for the eight years from 1995 to 2003.

This contrasts markedly to the ferocious assault on the then NSO Director General Gordon Cordina, last January when similar revisions were announced to GDP figures. The well respected economist

was subjected to an attack by the opposition that eventually led to his calling a press conference to explain the adjustments and his eventual resignation.

According to sources who spoke to this newspaper on condition of anonymity, the revisions to the figures in question contain much more substantial adjustments to those that were made public in January 2007 and which eventually led to the resignation of Cordina. Contacted for his comments yesterday, Cordina told Business Today that he had



Gordon Cordina - the figures speak for themselves

nothing to add as 'the figures speak for themselves'. A number of economists were also contacted by this newspaper to give their views on the revisions but all claimed to require more time to analyze these figures more thoroughly. Some did not even respond to emails sent.

Labour Deputy leader and spokesperson on economic and financial affairs Charles Mangion who had been at the forefront of the attack on Cordina also told Business Today that he needed more time to analyze the figures.

FIMBank looking for expansion in China

The local trade finance specialist, FIMBank plc, backed by a Kuwaiti investor, hopes to set up a joint venture in China to replicate its IPO-bound operations in India, Business Today has learnt.

The bank is working with the International Finance Corp., the private investment arm of the World Bank, to find a suitable Chinese partner, its president, Margrith Lutschg-Emmenegger told Reuters in an interview which appeared last week.

The IFC, which owns 7 percent of FIMBank and is a partner of the Indian joint venture, is keen to help promote trade financing targeted at small- and medium-sized Chinese firms, she said.

But Beijing must first allow joint ventures to engage in FIMBank's niche trade financing areas of forfeiting and factoring. Domestic banks are allowed to do such business but generally lack expertise.

"We will now make an effort to speak to the regulator and to find a local partner to support the idea," Lutschg-Emmenegger said in the interview. ▶ page 3

Philip Fenech on MIA privatisation - opinion on page 13

MTA CEO needs to understand the industry - Winston Zahra Jr.

David Mifsud's departure from MTA has dealt yet another blow to the Tourism Authority still floundering from the forced resignation of Romwald Lungaro Mifsud Mifsud tendered his resignation after being confronted by Permanent Secretary Peter Portelli on Saturday who suggested that it would be wise if he tendered his resignation in the face of so much opposition from hoteliers and operators.

Mifsud had made a fool of himself at the MTA conference when he

revealed his poor understanding of tourism facts when faced with questions by hoteliers Winston Zahra and Kevin Decesare.

MTA sources also talked of growing tension between Sam Mifsud the MTA Chairman and the CEO. Even though Sam Mifsud was one of the four individuals sat on a board and selected David Mifsud. The other three members were Peter Portelli, former MTA executive chairman Romwald Lungaro Mifsud and former MHRA chief Justin Zammit Tabona.



Winston Zahra Jr. - the sooner a new CEO is appointed, the better for all concerned

The breaking point for David Mifsud appears to have been the MTA annual meeting which confirmed the CEO's lack of knowledge in relating to tourism stats leading prominent MTA members to put into question his capability of running the job at MTA. ▶ page 12



MTA Chairman Sam Mifsud who clashed with outgoing CEO David Mifsud

St Micro saga

Disgruntled D-shift employees speak up

Gerald Fenech

Disgruntled and hurt at being singled out as scapegoats for the problems that are facing their company, the 'D' Shift workers at ST Microelectronics contacted Business Today to air what they feel are misquoted comments in a story published in this newspaper a couple of weeks ago.

During an on site visit at the company's main headquarters in Kirkop, Malta Today met ST Malta's new GM, Sonny Wee who was effusive about the company's prospects and the picture painted was that productivity was improving considerably although some issues, such as the D-Shift still needed to be sorted out.

Speaking to this newspaper, Mark Pace an employee who works in the D Shift said that nobody even knew that a new GM was coming as the previous occupant of the post left abruptly without



so much as a thank you note. He had positive comments regarding Wee's involvement with shop floor employees although this apparently is not all that often during weekends, when D Shift employees report for work.

"It is true that during the week, Mr Wee and management are

spending a lot of time on the shop floor but we have barely met him once during weekends when we work. However, last Saturday, he came and spoke to us although the atmosphere was not too good - one can imagine that some employees are not so happy at the prospect of losing their job". ▶ page 14

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