



"Tourism between Portugal and Malta is an area which needs to be enhanced"

Antonio Russo Dias INTERVIEW ■ PAGE 10



"EUROMEDITI reaffirms the government's commitment to strengthening IT in the Mediterranean"

Lawrence Gonzi POINT OF VIEW ■ PAGE 9

Business Today

ISSUE NO. 494

www.businesstoday.com.mt

WEDNESDAY 11 July 2007

EU Council allows adoption of the euro for Malta in 2008

Gerald Fenech

At an ECOFIN meeting in Brussels, the European Council yesterday decided to allow Cyprus and Malta to adopt the euro as their currency, thus enlarging the euro area to 15 member states, as from 1 January 2008.

It also adopted regulations setting permanent conversion rates for the Cypriot pound and the Maltese lira against the euro and adjusting certain technical provisions on introduction of the euro.

Cyprus and Malta will issue euro notes and coins at the same time as adopting the euro. The conversion rates are set at 0.585274 Cyprus pounds to the euro and 0.4293 Maltese lira to the euro, which correspond to the current central rates of both currencies within the EU's ERM II exchange rate mechanism.

Speaking to Business Today just after the conclusion of the meeting, Parliamentary Secretary Tonio Fenech said that this decision was of great satisfaction to all after the hard work put in to reach this important stage.



ALL SMILES: From left Parliamentary Secretary Tonio Fenech, Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi and Central Bank Governor Michael Bonello holding the designs of the Maltese euro coins in Brussels yesterday after the ceremony held to commemorate Malta and Cyprus as new members in the single currency zone as from January 2008

"Apart from the positive decision to adopt the Euro, another important point was the fact that the Council accepted the convergence rate of 0.4293 currently in force which also

means that we can go ahead with transactions in a stable manner. We now have to do our utmost to ensure that the changeover will bring positive benefits to the

consumer as much as possible".

Fenech explained that the next step is the publishing of the 4th stage of the Euro changeover master plan ▶ page 3

Private equity firm acquires Melita Cable plc

GMT Communications Partners ("GMT"), the leading European independent private equity group focused exclusively on the communications sector, has signed an agreement to acquire Melita Cable plc ("Melita"), the leading provider in television, broadband and telephony services in Malta, from Nasdaq listed Liberty Global and the Gasan Group of Companies.

The Maltese television, broadband and telephony services sector has grown rapidly in recent years, due to an increasing customer base and a continually developing product offering. Melita's management team's experience in driving forward and maximising growth opportunities include heavy investment in Melita Cable plc to expand and upgrade its network and to develop new services. It is now regarded as the leader in its field and has continued to grow despite fierce competition in this sector.

GMT will acquire a majority shareholding and the Gasan Group will retain a minority interest. Melita Cable plc is in a strong position to keep on expanding and improving its service portfolio and market share and to carry out the necessary ▶ page 3

Today public policy think tank launched see page 5

Tourism players outraged at anchoring of rig in St. Paul's Bay

Interministerial group has 'failed miserably' - MHRA

The decision to anchor a large oil rig in St Paul's Bay in full view of the shoreline in the peak of the tourist season has provoked outrage amongst the major tourism associations, the Federated Association of Travel and Tourism Agents (FATTA) and the Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association (MHRA).

In a press release, FATTA said that it is astounded by the fact that an oil platform has been given permission to anchor in St. Paul's bay, one of Malta's more picturesque areas.

"Not only has this been done during one of the peak tourist months of July but the area is a

along a stretch of coast which is extremely tourist sensitive. It is ironic that FATTA has constantly lobbied with MTA and the Ministry of Tourism that sensitive tourist areas should be kept in pristine condition at least during the peak summer months, free of construction debris and eyesores", the federation added.

FATTA insisted that the berthing of this oil Platform at ST Paul's Bay is highly insensitive, especially given the fact that Malta is passing already through a bad period for incoming tourism and wonders what image the Ministry or the

Authority responsible is trying to impart to both the general public and the tourists currently visiting our islands.

"Such insensitivity towards the tourism zones and the tourism industry is even more glaring since FATTA and other NGO's have been actively lobbying to move the position of current Fish Farm pens even further offshore to avoid both environmental damage as well as the visual pollution that such artefacts produce. The berthing of the platform can only exacerbate the already negative effects being suffered in the ▶ page 5

New Enemalta CEO expected soon

David Spiteri Gingell, currently heading the Malta Council for Science and Technology is shortly to be appointed CEO at Enemalta, Business Today can reveal.

Spiteri Gingell will replace Ing. Antoine Riolo who steered the national energy carrier for a number of years before taking up a more lucrative post as CEO of the Malta Resources Authority a few months ago. The position of CEO at Enemalta has been vacant for some time now.

David Spiteri Gingell headed

the Consultancy Division of the Management Systems Unit and later the Management Efficiency Unit between 1994 and 1999. He was then appointed Chief Information Management Officer (CIMO) for the Public Service. In May 2000 he moved to MITTS as Chief Executive Officer. In February 2002 he was concurrently re-appointed CIMO. He left MITTS in July 2006 where he took on the appointment of CEO at MCST. It still unclear whether he will retain his current position in light of the new duties.



David Spiteri Gingell

A GLOBAL FORCE IN TRADE FINANCE

International Payments
Letters of Credit
Guarantees
Forfaiting

Factoring
Term Deposits
Foreign Exchange
Structured Trade Finance

NEW YORK SAO PAULO LONDON MALTA
ISTANBUL MOSCOW MUMBAI SINGAPORE

In touch with your Business

FIMBank p.l.c.

7th Floor, The Plaza Commercial Centre,
Bisazza Street, Sliema SLM 15 - Malta

Tel : +356 21322100

Fax : +356 21322122/3

www.fimbank.com info@fimbank.com



FIMBANK
GROUP