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MSE (daily change)	BOV (weekly change)	HSBC (weekly change)	GO (weekly change)	61 days € COUNTDOWN TO THE EURO	Roberto Viola INTERVIEW page 10
+0.26% 4936.87	2.500% 3.69	3.989% 1.955	0.719% 1.400		

Actavis - no plans to cut Malta workforce after Icelandic take-over

Employees requested to sell back their share options to new majority shareholder

Charlot Zahra

Icelandic generic drug manufacturer Actavis has no plans to dispose of its plant in Malta and its workforce after being taken over by Icelandic investment firm Novator earlier this year.

Asked by BusinessToday whether the new ownership would retain the Malta plant and its associated research and development (R&D) facilities or not and its plans for it, a spokesperson for Actavis in Reykjavik explained that Actavis' Malta site focuses on the production of oral solids.

"The site has been recently refurbished, is EU/GMP approved and has a high-volume capacity, which makes it a vital supply source for Actavis' Western European markets," Hjordis Arnadottir, Director of External Communications for Actavis said. Asked specifically whether



Novator would retain the current employment levels at the Actavis Malta plant, Arnadottir told BusinessToday: "Actavis' Malta site currently employs more than 330 people. That number is not expected to change in the near future."

The take-over by the investment firm led by Actavis Chairman Thor Bjorgolfsson last July of the well-established generic drug manufacturer founded in 1956 led analysts to speculate that the

new ownership could downsize the company and close down unnecessary production sites.

Asked about the General Workers' Union (GWU)'s reaction to the take-over of Actavis by Novator, Roberto Cristiano, Secretary of the Union's Manufacturing and SMEs Section, which represents Actavis employees, told BusinessToday: "The take-over of Actavis by Novator was treated by the GWU like any other business take-over. This is

a normal process in the business world. Our obligation and duty is to see that the transition and take over does not negatively affect our members."

Asked whether Actavis Malta's operations had been affected in any way as a result of the take-over by Novator in terms of facilities and employment levels, Cristiano told BusinessToday: "Till today we haven't been informed that there was an affect on Malta plant. ▶ page 4

Central Bank slams Sunday Times front page story

Charlot Zahra

The Board of Directors of the Central Bank of Malta (CBM) dismissed as "speculative claims" an article carried on the front page of last Sunday's edition of The Sunday Times about what might happen to the external reserves of the Central Bank once Malta adopts the euro next January.

A key assumption underlying these claims is that once the euro becomes the national currency, the Central Bank will be at liberty "to release excessive reserves", quantified later in the article in the amount of "between Lm250 and Lm300 million."

"This assumption is based on an erroneous interpretation of the implications for the balance sheet of the Central Bank of Malta once it becomes a member of the Eurosystem," the CBM Board of Directors insisted in an irate statement yesterday evening.

The Bank explained that upon euro adoption, while those assets that are now described as "foreign reserves" will no longer need to be held in the form of foreign assets, these assets will still be needed to back the currency in circulation and the deposits with the Bank, which feature on the liabilities side of the balance sheet and which, at that time, will have been converted into euro. ▶ page 16

It's Brazil again to host the 2014 World Cup



The image of the statue of Christ the Redeemer reflects on the sunglasses of a football fan yesterday in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Brazil, the only runner in the race, was officially unveiled as the 2014 World Cup host by FIFA president Sepp Blatter in Zurich yesterday. The five-time world champions have staged the World Cup once before, in 1950, when they lost the final 2-1 to Uruguay in front of a near 200,000 crowd at the Maracana stadium in Rio de Janeiro.

World Business Highlights

Merrill Lynch Ousts O'Neal as Chief Executive, Starts Search for Successor
Merrill Lynch & Co. ousted Stan O'Neal as chairman and chief executive officer and said it will begin a search for his successor, leaving the world's biggest brokerage without a leader.

Consumer Confidence in U.S. Drops More Than Estimated; Home Prices Tumble
Consumer confidence in the U.S. fell more than forecast and home prices dropped the most in at least six years, strengthening the case for the Federal Reserve to lower interest rates tomorrow.

Stocks in U.S. Retreat on P&G Outlook, Declines in Confidence, Home Prices
U.S. stocks fell the most in seven days on concern the economy is weakening after Procter & Gamble Co.'s forecast trailed analysts' estimates, consumer confidence dropped to the lowest since 2005 and home prices had the steepest decline in six years.

Mergers Overtake \$3.55 Trillion Record for All of 2006 After Busy October
Mergers and acquisitions overtook last year's record as publicly listed companies stepped in to fill the gap left by private-equity firms that have been unable to fund deals because of rising borrowing costs.

FTSE 100



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