

# Business Today



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## Muscat calls for tax reduction

Karl Stagno-Navarra

Opposition and Labour party leader Joseph Muscat is calling on government to reduce the tax burden and invest in the economy.

Speaking to BusinessToday on the eve of this weekend's European election, Joseph Muscat pledged his party's support to the European Socialist Group's (PES) manifesto, that is calling for an ambitious European recovery plan.

"We believe that in order to stimulate the economy one has to reduce the tax burden and invest in the economy. Unfortunately, while the deficit has been soaring during the first four months of

2009, capital expenditure has decreased," Muscat said.

Addressing a press conference on Monday, Joseph Muscat was quizzed about his views on how the economic crisis should be tackled and what he as PL leader was proposing as an alternative to the measures being taken by government.

Muscat echoed PES President Poul Nyrup Rasmussen's words that Europe needed "to do more" and create a "new recovery effort" to fight the recession and protect employment which he said was in "freefall".

He warned Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi not to paint a "rosy" picture and to be more

forthcoming with the people to explain the realities of the state of the economy.

Put into the context of a European election, Joseph Muscat explained that the PL will be working 'hand in hand' with the PES manifesto that refers to the economic crisis that is facing Europe.

Joseph Muscat expressed his support to PES President Rasmussen's proposal for the issue of 'Eurobonds' as a possibility to stimulate trust in Europe and further assistance from the European Investment Bank (EIB) was another.

The PES is calling for a new, updated Recovery Plan, "otherwise there ▶ page 3

## Gonzi accuses Muscat of "capitalising on serious economic issues"

Charlot Zahra  
Raphael Vassallo

Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi has accused Labour leader Joseph Muscat of capitalising on serious economic issues to increase his own popularity, while failing to offer any solutions of his own.

"The PN, on the other hand, wants to send the best representatives possible to the EP so that they can fight for Maltese interests where it matters the most," Gonzi said while addressing a press conference at the Nationalist Party headquarters in Pieta'.

This was why job creation was at the centre of the PN's campaign. "We want to bring the European Union to the centre of every village, and to the centre of every factory shopfloor," Gonzi said.

In defending his record, Gonzi urged the electorate to remember the backdrop against which so many unpopular decisions had to be taken: foremost of which, the global economic crisis.

"Much larger countries than Malta have faced much larger problems. Some, like Spain, have seen their unemployment soar to as much as 17 per cent," Gonzi said.

"In Malta, by way of contrast, unemployment stands at only 6 per cent," the Prime Minister contended. "This is still a cause for concern for us: when even a single person registers for work and doesn't find any, that is a problem we have to face," the Prime Minister said.



## Fire at Pender



Firemen battled with flames for about two hours at the Pender Place construction site in St Julian's yesterday afternoon after concrete shutters caught on fire, spreading the blaze to an entire storey and other parts of the building. Workers on site were evacuated and nobody suffered injuries. The fire broke out after, for an unknown reason, concrete shutters – the plywood moulds used to build concrete structures, caught on fire at about 16:00. The fires were extinguished by 18:00. Photo Ray Attard



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## Markets

Security	Closing Prices in Euro Tue 26-May-09	Closing Prices in Euro Tue 02-June-09	% Change from previous wk
Bank of Valletta p.l.c.	2.390	2.401	0.460%
HSBC Bank Malta p.l.c.	2.569	2.580	0.428%
Lombard Bank p.l.c.	2.700	2.700	0.000%
Middlesea Insurance p.l.c.	2.260	2.260	0.000%
Simonds Farsons Cisk p.l.c.	1.868	1.860	-0.428%
GO p.l.c.	1.749	1.740	-0.515%
IHI p.l.c.	0.970	0.990	2.062%
Plaza Centres p.l.c.	1.720	1.720	0.000%
FIMBank p.l.c. (US\$)	\$1.290	\$1.290	0.000%
Malta International Airport p.l.c.	2.180	2.250	3.211%
GlobalCapital p.l.c.	1.500	1.500	0.000%
Datatrak Holdings p.l.c.	0.190	0.190	0.000%
San Tumas Shareholdings p.l.c.	3.200	3.200	0.000%
Medserv p.l.c.	3.550	3.550	0.000%
Grand Harbour Marina p.l.c.	1.980	1.980	0.000%
6pm Holdings p.l.c. (GBP)	£0.590	£0.590	0.000%
Crimsonwing p.l.c.	0.390	0.390	0.000%
MaltaPost p.l.c.	0.710	0.710	0.000%
RS2 Software p.l.c.	0.720	0.690	-4.167%