

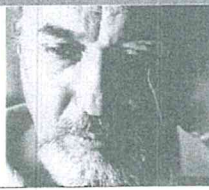


# INDEPENDENT



**PARTY FINANCING**  
db Group saga  
the tip of  
the iceberg

News Page 4 & 5



**CREMONA**  
Abstraction  
and the  
church

Lifestyle & Culture Page 25



sunday

16-page  
supplement  
**OUT TODAY**

## ZEBBUĠ RIDGE ODZ APPLICATION Local council, residents and NGOs up in arms

A planning application for a block of apartments in an Outside Development Zone against the cliffs of Zebbuġ, Gozo, has raised the ire of environmental NGOs, the local council and residents, who say that the development will ruin a virgin area of natural beauty that at present is comprised of picturesque agricultural fields.

The application – to develop six apartments over three storeys, a pool and an additional floor for parking – is objected to unanimously by Zebbuġ Local Council. Environmental NGOs *Din l-Art Helewa* and *Flimkien għal Ambient Alijar* have also filed their objections to the proposed development.



The site of the controversial proposed development

Continued on page 2 »

Youth self-harm seen to be increasing with heightened social media and Internet use

■ Joanna Demarco

The troubling practice of self-harm among young people is increasing along with their ever more widespread use of the Internet and social media, according to consultant psychiatrist for children and adolescents Dr Nigel Camilleri.

Speaking with *The Malta Independent on Sunday*, Dr Camilleri said: "I think self-harm has always been there but it has been more hidden. But nowadays, with social media and the Internet, there has been an increase."

Figures published by the National Statistics Office this week show that people aged between 16 and 24, the youngest group in the study, use the Internet the most. In fact, over 98 per cent of Maltese youths were found to use the Internet.

Continued on page 7 »

## Police silent on Edward Caruana investigation

### • Minister not yet questioned

The police are refusing to divulge any details on their investigations

into former Education Ministry official Edward Caruana and questions sent by this newspaper to the corps appear to have remained ignored.

A spokesperson for Education Minister Evarist Bartolo has, meanwhile, confirmed with this

newspaper that "until now", the minister has not been questioned by the police over the alleged bribes Mr Caruana, who was an official within the Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools, requested.

The spokesperson says that, instead, the minister "has provided

in writing all the information relative to the case to the authorities concerned and as he has publicly stated, he remains open to any assistance if requested".

Meanwhile, sources with knowledge of the case speaking with this newspaper were not

surprised that the police have remained mum on the investigations because, they say, the strategy is to simply do nothing and that Mr Caruana will not be arraigned at the end of the day.

Continued on page 2 »

**Do you still have an old electricity meter?**



**Contact us today to replace it with a new one.**



**8007 2217**  
(Call anytime, seven days a week)

✉ [meters.em@enemalta.com.mt](mailto:meters.em@enemalta.com.mt)

Old meters in vacant properties need to be replaced as well.

**enemalta 40 years**  
1977-2017

[www.enemalta.com.mt](http://www.enemalta.com.mt)



## Business & Finance

# SMEs and tourism: acting for a brighter future

Destination SMEs is a project funded under the INTERREG EUROPE Programme (ERDF) which brings together seven regions from across the European Union – among which Gozo – with the aim of creating a better environment for the growth of SMEs working – or potentially getting involved – in the tourism industry. The ultimate aim of the project is to foster an environment where SMEs grow faster and create more and better jobs.

One novelty in the Interreg Europe programme is the inclusion of stakeholders in the lifetime and actions of the project. Therefore, if you represent an SME that fits the description above, you can join the project and actively participate in it, drawing benefit from the networking opportunities and contributing directly by proposing improvement to policies related to your business.

Destination SMEs aims to assist European territories design effective destination management strategies and policies in order to provide tourist SMEs with a favourable environment that encourage improvement competitively. EU funding, national and regional policy instruments are seen as important tools in this regard. This will subsequently improve the chances for these tourist SMEs



to offer a better product, grow, and generate employment opportunities.

As part of the project, each member region engaged in the project is planned to host project partner regions for a study visit, intended to showcase the respective partner's experiences, good practices and needs. These experiences also strive to bring together business owners and the partners and stakeholders participating in Destination SMEs.

The first study visit of the project

was held in Gozo in October last year. The Ministry for Gozo welcomed a group of 15 partner representatives and stakeholders from France, Slovenia, Latvia, Italy, Finland and Ireland who followed an intensive three-day programme.

### Joint Dissemination Workshop

As stated earlier, the project structure plans for an interaction among stakeholders, project partners and businesses which goes beyond a token ges-

ture.

To this effect, a Joint Dissemination Workshop bringing together all the stakeholders mentioned above was organised. This workshop was chaired by the Minister for Gozo. The floor included representatives of a number of SMEs based in Gozo, Ministry for Gozo officials, the project partners, representatives of the business federations in Gozo, namely the Gozo Business Chamber and the Gozo Tourism Association, and regulatory

bodies such as the Planning Authority, the Environment and Resources Authority, and the Malta Tourism Authority.

After brief overviews of the project and the institutions represented at the meeting, entrepreneurs from a good number of local SMEs took the floor in a frank discussion with legislators and policy makers. SMEs participating included Lampuki Arts, Lazuli Art, The Chocolate Experience, Il-Bejta Artisans and Il-Hagar Museum and Cultural Centre. The dissemination workshop was concluded by Minister for Gozo Dr Refalo.

Stakeholders present for this workshop will continue to be involved in the course of the project through the setting up of a Stakeholders' Forum, which will be invited to participate actively throughout the lifetime of the project. Membership in this Forum is not exclusive, and new SMEs or umbrella organisations are invited to express their interest should they wish to be included in this group.

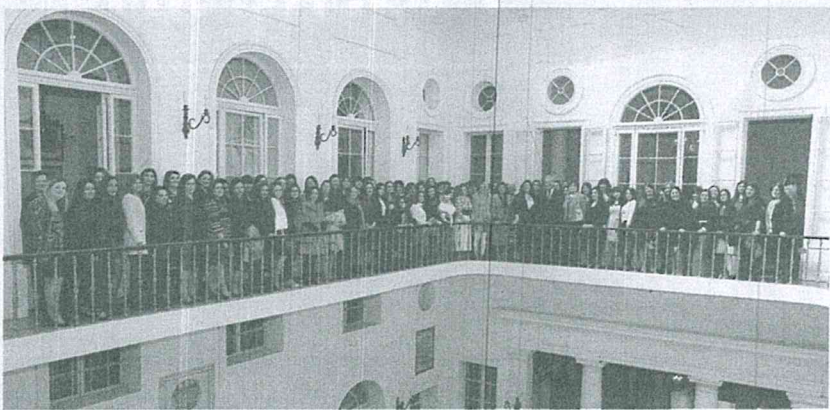
The project will now continue to explore best practices from the other regions participating in this venture. All this experience will be used to elicit policy development locally in order to foster a better environment for SME growth and development.

Find us on Facebook: Destination SMEs

## Vassallo Group celebrates International Women's Day

Vassallo Group has kept a long-standing tradition of marking International Women's Day with a lavish lunch to which over 100 women – directors, managers and employees from across the group – are invited. This year the event was held on 8th March at the Chamber of Commerce. Minister for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties Helena Dalli and Renee Laiviera, Commissioner of the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) were the invited special guests.

CareMalta's CEO Natalie Briffa Farrugia delivered a strong message about women's rights and equality which have come a long way in only a few decades. She spoke about the tough challenge she faced to complete the Malta Full Marathon to support people with disability while also practising HILA's *Believe Achieve*



motto. She also launched a CareMalta campaign to enrol 25 individuals ready to run the half-marathon next year to commemorate CareMalta's 25th An-

niversary.

Nazzareno Vassallo proudly stated that 60 per cent of the work force are women and that per cent of the Group's directors

are women too. He said that women are now involved in all levels within the group management structures including shareholders and directors, managers,

assistant managers and supervisors. A short video clip showing the different types of work performed by women working with companies within the group was shown to the guests.

Minister Helena Dalli congratulated Mrs Briffa Farrugia for her courage and determination in completing such a tough challenge and added that she is a great inspiration to all including herself. He also spoke about Vassallo Group's promotion of women's rights for equality. Dr Dalli also applauded the group for its understanding and support of a greater balance of work and family life for their employees and for achieving the Equality Mark throughout 2016.

All women were presented with a special gift as a token of appreciation. The lunch was prepared by CaterEssence, a leading catering company which forms part of the group.

## Malta Insurance Association sponsors University of Malta Insurance Studies

The University of Malta's (UM) Department of Insurance within the Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy (FEMA) and Malta Insurance Association (MIA) have signed an agreement which sees MIA supporting the Department's curricular activities over a two-year period. The agreement was signed by the Rector, Professor Alfred Vella, on behalf of the University and by Adrian J. Galea, Director General, Malta Insurance Association, representing the MIA. The MIA represents the interests of indigenous insurance companies and agencies of foreign principals. The sponsorship will allow the Department to continue providing insurance courses, engage other academics from overseas and organise seminars.

Minister for Education and Employment Evarist Bartolo, who was present for the event, said that the signing of such an agreement reflects the high standard Financial Services, and in particular Insurance Services, in Malta has attained over the years. As one of the main pillars, Insurance Services in Malta has grown exponentially and the demand for qualified, insurance specialists

and practitioners continues to outstrip supply. Apart from career prospects offered by MIA's members, Malta has also experienced significant growth in attracting foreign players who choose the island as their operational hub of activity.

Speaking on behalf of the MIA, Julian Mamo, president, remarked that the industry can only thrive and continue to grow if the industry supports the Department's efforts and money is invested in the development of the much-needed skills. Apart from the traditional careers one would normally associate with when fol-

lowing insurance studies, a qualification would certainly open up other avenues previously unheard of. The vast array of qualifications available offers students considering a career in insurance the chance to specialise and progress further in an industry which is dynamic and prone to growth.

Professor Vella thanked the MIA and its members for its continued support of the Department of Insurance. The availability of such financial support was paramount for the success of this department, he said, and of the students who wished to embark

on a career in Insurance, Risk Management and other related disciplines. The success gained by the Financial Services and insurance industry in particular depended on the skills, knowledge and expertise gained through institutions such as the University of Malta. He concluded that it was thanks to such financial support that both University students and the industry could benefit from the knowledge, expertise and on-going professional development which were so necessary for career progression.

<http://www.um.edu.mt/fema/insurance>