



**Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee**

**280 Republic Street  
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Malta**

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **MEUSAC Core Group holds its first meeting**

The Core Group of the Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee met for the first time today at the Mediterranean Conference Centre. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Chris Said, Parliamentary Secretary for Public Dialogue and Information. Prior to Malta's accession to the European Union, MEUSAC was an effective instrument for consultation between the Government, the political parties, the constituted bodies and civil society. MEUSAC will now be coordinating the process of consultation on EU legislation as well as promoting debate on EU issues.

The consultation process is to be managed by the Core Group which consists of representatives of the Government, political parties, constituted bodies (including Gozo), non-governmental organisations and experts.

In his opening address, Parliamentary Secretary Dr. Said emphasised the importance that the Government is giving to consultation. He mentioned how in the first four months of the current legislature, the Government has already moved ahead with a process of wide-spread consultation on various themes. He mentioned how his Secretariat is seeking to strengthen national fora established for consultation on important issues. For this reason, the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development is being strengthened and MEUSAC has been re-established. Dr. Said spoke about how MCESD would continue to focus on national issues of a social and economic nature, whilst MEUSAC would be focusing on EU policy and legislation and on how this impacts various sectors of the Maltese economy. However, the two entities would also be coordinating as necessary and for this reason, the Chairman of MCESD has been asked to sit on the Core Group of MEUSAC.

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Dr. Said also mentioned how prior to accession to the EU, MEUSAC's operation was successful and that this experience would now be consolidated. Now that Malta is a member of the EU, Government's strategy is that of adapting to a situation where EU policy and EU law are now part of domestic policy and legislation.

MEUSAC also aims to ensure that the process of consultation on European Commission legislative proposals and on EU policy is as wide-spread as possible, ongoing and extended to all stakeholders. The latter are to be represented in an equal manner in the sectoral committees which are to be established in the coming weeks. Criteria for eligibility and the selection procedures are to be established in close coordination with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations.

Among the point raised during the meeting was the need for the Core Group to take initiatives in relation to EU policy and legislation. Some members expressed their views on the number of sectoral committees to be established which should not only reflect how the EU institutions operate but also the sectors which are of particular importance to the Maltese economy. The need for a greater dissemination of information as well as for close cooperation between MEUSAC and the Implementing Ministries responsible for the various sectors was also mentioned. In fact, the Ministries will also form part of the sectoral committees.

Dr Said stated that a better synergy both within the public administration, as well as among the constituted bodies and civil society is essential. He also mentioned the need for true dialogue between members of the Core Group whereby they would be willing to listen and to give value to what is said by other members.

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MEUSAC Head, Dr Vanni Xuereb, reiterated his satisfaction at the Core Group's wide sectoral representation which, he said, shows the willingness by all parties to achieve common goals in so far as European policy is concerned. He said that, "pulling the same rope does not necessarily mean agreeing about all and with everything that is being said, but should be taken to mean that all of us are convinced that we should be doing our utmost in the best interests of the country". Dr Xuereb cited Robert Schuman's words that, 'Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity.'

The Core Group's first two priorities are to determine the mechanism for the consultation process and to establish the sectoral committees. The former was discussed at length and it was agreed in principle that issues with national implications are discussed at Core Group level, while proposals which are of interest to specific sectors are discussed at sectoral level following a consultation procedure carried out by the Implementing Ministry. MEUSAC is to ensure that whenever there is the obligation for consultation with stakeholders this is thoroughly conducted. The need and method for coordination and cooperation with the House of Representatives, the Maltese members of the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee as well as those in the Committee of the Regions was also mentioned.

The day's agenda also focused on the election of NGO representatives to the Core Group, the programme of meetings, how to communicate what is being discussed in MEUSAC to the public as well as the involvement of experts. The Core Group will be meeting regularly and at least once a month.

**MEUSAC – 29.08.2008**



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## STQARRIJA GĦALL-ISTAMPA

### Il-Core Group tal-MEUSAC jiltaqa' għall-ewwel darba.

Illum, f'Dar il-Mediterran għall-Konferenzi, iltaqa' għall-ewwel darba l-*Core Group* tal-*Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee* (MEUSAC) taħt il-presidenza tas-Segretarju Parlamentari għad-Djalogu Pubbliku u Informazzjoni, Dott. Chris Said. Il-MEUSAC, li qabel is-sħubija ta' Malta fl-Unjoni Ewropea, serva bħala strument ta' konsultazzjoni bejn il-Gvern, il-partiti politiċi, l-imsieħba soċjali u s-soċjetà ċivili, se jkun qiegħed jikkoordina l-proċess ta' konsultazzjoni u d-dibattitu kollu dwar l-UE.

Dan il-proċess se jhaddan fih *Core Group* magħmul minn rappreżentanti tal-Gvern, il-partiti politiċi, il-korpi kostitwiti, inkluż dawk Għawdxin, rappreżentanti ta' għaqdiet mhux governattivi, kif ukoll esperti.

Fid-diskors tal-ftuħ, is-Segretarju Parlamentari Dott. Chris Said, saħaq dwar l-importanza li l-Gvern qiegħed jagħti lill-proċess ta' konsultazzjoni. Huwa qal li fl-ewwel erba' xhur ta' din il-leġislatura l-Gvern attwa programm wiesa' ta' konsultazzjoni dwar diversi temi. Permezz tas-Segretarjat tiegħu qed jaħdem biex jiġu msahħa l-fora nazzjonali fejn issir il-konsultazzjoni dwar temi importanti. B'hekk ġie msahħa il-Kunsill Malti għall-Iżvilupp Ekonomiku u Soċjali (MCESD) u reġa' twaqqaf il-MEUSAC. Huwa qal li l-MCESD u l-MEUSAC se jkunu qedgħin jimxu fuq binarji differenti, fejn l-MCESD se jkun qed jiffoka fuq l-aspetti soċjali u ekonomiċi ta' pajjiżna, waqt li l-MEUSAC se jkun qed jiffoka fuq il-politika tal-Unjoni Ewropea u l-impatt li din għandha fuq diversi setturi tal-ekonomija Maltija. Biex ikun hemm koordinazzjoni bejn iż-żewġ entitajiet, iċ-Chairman tal-MCESD huwa wiehed mill-membri tal-*Core Group* tal-MEUSAC.

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Dott. Said kompla jgħid li qabel is-shubija fl-UE, il-ħidma tal-MEUSAC kienet wahda ta' suċċess. Huwa tenna li l-MEUSAC irid jikkonsolida din l-esperjenza. Issa li pajjiżna huwa membru tal-Unjoni Ewropea, l-istrateġija tal-Gvern għet addattata għaliex il-politika tal-UE, kif ukoll il-liġijiet tagħha, saru parti mill-politika u mill-liġijiet tagħna.

Il-MEUSAC se jara li l-proċess ta' konsultazzjoni dwar proposti tal-Kummissjoni Ewropea u l-politika tal-UE, jiġi attwat bl-aktar mod wiesa' u kontinwu possibbli u mas-setturi kollha konċernati. Dawn se jkunu rappreżentati b'mod ekwu permezz ta' kumitati li l-membri tagħhom għandhom ikunu maħtura fil-gimghat li ġejjin. Flimkien mal-Kummissarju għall-Għaqdiet Volontarji, se jiġu mfassala kriterji u proċeduri għal dan il-għan.

Tqajjmu diversi punti waqt il-laqgħa fosthom li l-*Core Group* jieħu inizjattivi b'rabta mal-politika u l-leġislazzjoni tal-UE. Xi membri preżenti esprimew il-ħsieb li n-numru ta' kumitati settorjali jiżdied biex minbarra li jirriflettu l-mod kif topera l-UE, jirriflettu setturi li għandhom importanza partikolari għall-ekonomija ta' pajjiżna. Issemma' wkoll il-bżonn ta' iktar disseminazzjoni ta' informazzjoni kif ukoll għal ħidma aħjar bejn il-MEUSAC u l-Ministeri responsabbli mid-diversi oqsma. Fil-fatt, dawn ser ikunu rappreżentati wkoll fil-kumitati.

Dott. Said tenna l-bżonn ta' aktar sinerġija kemm fi ħdan l-amministrazzjoni pubblika kif ukoll bejn il-korpi kostitwiti u s-soċjetà ċivili. Semma wkoll l-ħtieġa ta' djalogu veru fejn il-membri jkunu kapaċi jisimghu lil xulxin u jagħtu valur lil dak li jkun qed jingħad minn haddieħor.

Dott Vanni Xuereb, Kap tal-MEUSAC fisser ukoll is-soddisfazzjon tiegħu li jara rappreżentanza wiesa' miġbura madwar mejda wahda għax dan ifisser li lkoll qed niġbdu habel wiehed fejn tidhol l-UE. Huwa tenna li "tiġbed habel wiehed ma jfissirx li taqbel fuq kollox u ma kollox, iżda jfisser li lkoll kemm aħna konvinti li għandna nagħtu l-aħjar sehem tagħna fl-interess tal-pajjiż." Fakkor fil-kliem ta' Robert Schuman li l-Ewropa "trid tinbena permezz ta' kisbiet konkreti li l-ewwelnett iridu johlqu solidarjetà *de facto*."

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L-ewwel żewġ prijoritajiet tal-Core Group huma dawk li jiġi determinat il-metodu ta' kif ser issir il-konsultazzjoni u li jinbeda minnufih il-proċess biex jitwaqqfu l-komitati. Dwar il-mekkaniżmu ta' konsultazzjoni, saret diskussjoni fit-tul u kien hemm fil-prinċipju li materji b'implikazzjonijiet nazzjonali jiġu diskussi mal-ewwel mill-Core Group filwaqt li materji b'implikazzjonijiet settorjali jiġu diskussi mill-komitati settorjali wara li tkun saret ukoll konsultazzjoni mill-Ministeri konċernati. Tinħass il-htieġa li l-MEUSAC ikun qed jassigura li l-kull fejn trid issir konsultazzjoni, din tkun qed issir tassew. Kien diskuss ukoll il-bżonn ta' hidma flimkien mal-Parlament nazzjonali, mal-membri Maltin fil-Parlament Ewropew, fil-Komitati Ekonomiku u Soċjali u fil-Komitati tar-Regjuni tal-UE.

Ġie diskuss, fosthom l-elezzjoni ta' rappreżentanti tal-għaqdiet mhux governattivi fuq il-Core Group, programm ta' laqgħat, il-komunikazzjoni ta' dak li jkun qed isseħħ fil-proċess ta' konsultazzjoni mal-pubbliku u l-involviment ta' esperti. Il-Core Group se jkun qed jiltaqa' minn tal-inqas darba fix-xahar.

**MEUSAC – 29.08.2008**