



DOI

## Il-MEUSAC jiddiskuti inizjattivi tal-UE għal hliet godda u impjegi ahjar

Fi 27 ta' Marzu, saret is-seba' laqgħa tal-Core Group tal-Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC).

Għad-diskussjoni fuq l-Aġenda tal-laqgħa kien hemm il-Komunikazzjoni mill-Kummissjoni dwar hliet godda u impjegi ahjar. Is-Sinjorina Kirsten Miller,

uffiċjal fi hdan il-Kummissjoni Nazzjonali għall-Edukazzjoni Oghla (NCHE), tat preżentazzjoni dwar din il-Komunikazzjoni.

L-UE hija mħassbha dwar it-ktabbir u l-produttività fit-tul, dwar l-impjegi u l-kapaċità li dawn jaddattaw mal-bidla, l-ugwaljanza tas-sessi u l-koeżjoni soċjali.

Teżisti qasma sostanzjali bejn il-kapaċitajiet li huma meħtieġa minn organizzazzjoni u dawk tan-nies impjegati mal-organizzazzjoni, minhabba raġunijiet varji li l-istituzzjonijiet edukattivi mhumiex qegħdin jindirizzaw.

Tkompli l-paġna 2

## Information on EU Funds allocated to Malta

RICHARD CACHIA CARUANA

Permanent Representative to the European Union and co-ordinator of Malta's negotiations on the Financial Perspectives.

### INTRODUCTION

EU funds are allocated to Member States on the basis of a 7 year financial plan known as the Financial Perspectives. The current Financial Perspectives cover the period 2007-2013 and were agreed at the European Council of December 2005 following negotiations lasting over a year. Following agreement, the allocated funds were then apportioned in annual tranches which form part of the EU Budgets for each year.

### 2007-2013 FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVES

The level of Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund allocated to Malta guarantee Malta's status as a net beneficiary for the period 2007-2013. A strategy on the utilisation of these funds, known as the National Strategic Reference Framework, was agreed with the European Commission in December 2006 and this was followed up by the

Table 1: EU Funds allocated to Malta for the period 2007-2013

EU Funds	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
	€ millions							
Structural Funds	86	80	76	69	70	80	94	555
Cohesion Fund	26	35	42	52	53	44	32	284
Rural Development and Fisheries	14	13	12	11	11	11	12	84
Migration Funds <sup>1</sup>	7	11	9	15	18	29	36	125
Total	133	139	139	147	152	164	174	1048

<sup>1</sup>This consists of the External Borders Fund, the Refugee Fund, the Return Fund and the Integration Fund.

Commission's approval of Malta's two Operational Programmes which set out the structure within which the funds will be absorbed. In this regard 73 projects and 10 aid schemes have been selected including the restoration of historical fortifications in Malta and Gozo, the upgrading of arterial and distribution roads, investment in educational facilities, training courses for employment and adaptability of workers and childcare subsidy schemes. Funds have also been allocated to finance actions in the rural development and fisheries sectors as well as in the area of justice and home affairs including the security of external borders.

Malta has also been allocated additional funds as follows: €16 million of

Structural Funds to participate in cross-border and transnational programmes, €25 million under the European Economic Recovery Plan to finance the interconnection to the European electricity grid, €37.8 million in direct payments to the farming community as well as approximately €26 million for participation in EU education programmes. An amount of €5.3 million was also earmarked for Malta from the European Economic Area countries (Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein) and Switzerland, as part of the contribution these countries pay for access to the Single Market. The total amount of funds allocated for the 2007-2013 period is therefore €1,158 million.

Continues on page 2

## Our Team

When we started off as MEUSAC last July, we were just a small team of ten persons. Once the recruitment process is concluded in a few days' time, we shall be over double that number. MEUSAC inherited a highly capable and hard-working staff from Forum Malta fl-Ewropa that has now been complemented by equally capable and hard-working personnel particularly in the consultation and funding support areas and, more recently, also in the information unit.

The energy, creativity and commitment of the MEUSAC team is reflected in the growth of our organisation from being a mere information provider to managing a fully-fledged consultation process on EU legislation consisting of a Core Group and nine Sectoral Committees as well as assisting a rapidly growing number of local councils and non-governmental organisations in applying for EU funds. Consultation, Funding and Information are our three main aims and I am proud to say that all of us at MEUSAC are committed towards fulfilling them.

The increase in staff complement is reflected in the increase in services provided and activities organised by MEUSAC. In the past two weeks alone, there have been consultation sessions, the Core Group meeting, meetings of the Sectoral Committees, and meetings in preparation for a Public Dialogue with the Swedish Minister of Trade, for a three-day international Conference on Sustainability in May as well as for a National Conference to mark the 5th anniversary of Malta's accession to the EU. Moreover, MEUSAC officials kept up their regular weekly participation in radio programmes as well as their contributions in newspapers and magazines. I cannot fail to mention the numerous queries by members of the public that our officers respond to so promptly.

As Head of MEUSAC I am proud of our team and of the contribution of each and every one of our staff.

Vanni Xuereb



Il-MEUSAC jawgura lill-Avukat Ġorġ Abela fl-okkażjoni tal-ġurament tal-hatra tiegħu bħala President ta' Malta.



DOI

## KONFERENZA NAZZJONALI

### "5 snin shubija ta' Malta fl-UE"

### fl-20 ta' Mejju, 2009

# Information on EU Funds allocated to Malta

Continued from page 1

## 2000-2006 FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVES

The 2007-2013 period is the second financing period that Malta has had access to EU funds. Following accession to the EU, Malta was allocated money under the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund to invest in a number of sectors, such as the environment, roads, tourism, human resources, rural development and fisheries as well as the special needs of Gozo. A number of infrastructural and non-infrastructural projects were financed, including the upgrading of the Sant'Antnin Waste Treatment Plant and Material Recycling and Recovery Facility, the Haġar Qim and Mnajdra Temples Conservation, the restoration and upgrading of Hal-Far Road, training and employment schemes as well as aid schemes to enterprises.

In addition to the amount allocated under Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund, Malta also received budgetary compensation automatically paid by the Commission to Malta on a monthly basis to consolidate Malta's status as a net beneficiary of the EU budget for the period 2004-2006. Malta was also allocated funds under the Transition Facility 2004-2006 to assist it in the implementation of Community legislation. This budgetary compensation, which was agreed during Malta's EU accession negotiations, ensured that Malta received maximum EU funding also during the 2004-2006.

Table 2: EU Funds allocated to Malta for the period 2004-2006

EU Funds	2004	2005	2006	Total
€ millions				
Structural Funds	15	21	27	63
Transition Facility	12	6	3	21
Budgetary Compensation <sup>1</sup>	55	103	103	261
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>345</b>

<sup>1</sup> The budgetary compensation was paid automatically by the Commission on a monthly basis.

Malta was also allocated €22 million under the Cohesion Fund in the 2004-2006 period and an additional €3 million of Structural Funds to participate in the Interreg III (regional cooperation with Sicily) and Equal Community Initiatives (transnational cooperation on social aspects).

## OTHER FUNDS

Malta also receives funds on the strength of participation in various EU Programmes such as FP7 (research), LIFE+ (environment) and the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme as well as funds to cover for the travel expenses incurred in attending EU-related meetings. In addition, Malta received EU support in 2004 under the Solidarity Fund for damages caused by flooding and in 2008 under the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund to assist workers made redundant as a result of the effects of globalisation to re-enter the labour market. It should also be noted that prior to accession Malta was allocated EU funds amounting to €35.4 million for the period 2000-2003 to assist in preparations for EU membership. These funds financed a number of projects to strengthen the administrative capacity of the public service to be able to implement EU laws as well as the installation of a waste water treatment plant in Gozo and payments for the participation of Malta in EU education programmes such as Socrates and Leonardo.

## CONCLUSION

It is important to keep in mind that one of the basic rules of the EU budget provides that EU funds are apportioned in annual allocations which are tied to de-commitment provisions that give Member States a certain period of time over which to spend the funds allocated for a particular year.

To use actual figures, for the 2007-2013 programming period, under Structural and Cohesion Funds, Malta was allocated €112 million in 2007 and €115 million for 2008. Malta has until the end of 2010 to spend and submit invoices for the payment of the €112 million allocated for 2007 and until the end of 2011 to spend and submit invoices for the payment of the €115 million allocated for 2008. As it takes time for projects to be identified, permits to be applied for and tenders to be issued and awarded, EU payments are low in the first years, but increase throughout the programming period as projects are completed, as can be seen from the table below.

Table 3: Breakdown of Payments May 2004 – December 2008

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Grand Total
€						
Travel Expenses	176,130	769,963	692,425	672,911	727,936	3,039,365
Pre-Accession Funds 2000-2003 <sup>1</sup>	3,963,868	5,478,910	2,342,268	3,767,959	/	15,553,005
Transition Facility 2004-2006 <sup>2</sup>	/	1,349,254	1,417,330	7,021,781	4,730,138	14,518,503
Structural and Cohesion Funds 2004-2006 <sup>3</sup>	/	1,445,611	14,375,888	32,216,841	22,150,831	70,189,171
Structural and Cohesion Funds 2007-2013 <sup>4</sup>	/	/	/	18,223,186	28,045,141	46,268,327
EU Programmes <sup>5</sup>	2,257,809	3,241,610	2,585,337	9,818,777	4,632,104	22,535,637
Agricultural Subsidies	/	7,541,958	9,324,768	6,116,900	4,711,243	27,694,869
Budgetary Compensation 2004-2006	55,049,557	103,349,105	102,855,751	/	/	261,254,413
Other Funds <sup>6</sup>	961,000	/	/	/	681,207	1,642,207
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>62,408,364</b>	<b>123,176,411</b>	<b>133,593,767</b>	<b>77,838,355</b>	<b>65,678,600</b>	<b>462,695,497</b>

<sup>1</sup> From 2001 to April 2004 Malta received €12,953,117 pre-accession funds.

<sup>2</sup> The remaining amount of €3.5 million will be paid in 2009.

<sup>3</sup> The remaining amount of €14 million will be paid in 2009.

<sup>4</sup> These amounts are not included in the revenue of the Malta budget but are considered as cash inflow to the Central Bank.

<sup>5</sup> From 2001 to April 2004 Malta received €4,989,876 for participation in EU education programmes. The amounts received from May 2004 to December 2008 cover funds received by Malta for participation in EU education programmes, and in 2007 the amount includes the payment of €3,403,516 for participation in EU education programmes and the payment of €6,415,261 for participation in other EU programmes.

<sup>6</sup> Payments are for an application to the Solidarity Fund (2004) and for an application to the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (2008).

## Zooming on sustainability

MEUSAC has been awarded a grant of €19,441 for a project on sustainability by the European Commission's Directorate for Youth, Sport and Citizenship (DG Education and Culture) under the Europe for Citizens Programme 2007-2013. The project entails a conference entitled "Zooming on Sustainability" and will gather over 150 participants from seven different countries which span from Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, The Netherlands, United Kingdom, Spain and Malta, to exchange ideas research and best practices on key issues in the area of sustainability. 21 Local Councils will be represented from Malta. This three day event, to be held on the 13, 14 and 15 May, will include a wide array of practical topics and networking opportunities. The conference will include discussion working groups and will focus on sustainable development and the promotion of active citizenship with particular reference to



environment, culture and social matters. The objectives of this conference are to discuss the role of the targeted beneficiaries in the improvement of the quality of life of their residents and their contribution to sustainable development. Moreover, it will aim to create a network at European level to support the participating audience to work more effectively and with a wider European dimension. In line with the Europe for Citizens Programme the conference aims at discussing thematic sectors that promote citizen's engagement with major EU social issues.

Maria Schembri

## Il-MEUSAC jiddiskuti inizjattivi tal-UE għal ħiliet godda u impjegi aħjar

Tkompli minn paġna 1

Il-Kummissjoni qed tbassar madwar 100 miljun impjieg ġdid fl-UE-25 bejn l-2006 u l-2020. F'Malta jridu jinholqu 77,500 impjieg biex tintlaħaq il-mira tal-Kummissjoni.

Fost il-punti li tqajjmu waqt id-diskussjoni kien hemm:

- Iżvilupp ta' impjegi favur l-ambjent,
- il-bżonn ta' gwida għall-karrieri minn eta' żgħira,
- Iisfida biex jiżiedu l-ħiliet ta' dawkl li għandhom livell baxx ta' edukazzjoni biex jissiehu ma' dawkl li għandhom livell medju. F'Malta 41% tal-popolazzjoni żagħżuġha għandha livell baxx ta' edukazzjoni meta mqabbel man-numru ta' dawkl li għandhom livell ta' edukazzjoni ogħla,
- l-idea li impjegi fil-qasam vokazzjonali huma inqas attraenti u l-bżonn ta' iktar inċentivi biex jimmotivaw dawn it-tip ta' impjegi,
- il-bżonn ta' iktar investiment fl-edukazzjoni f'pajjiżna fil-livell post-sekondarju u terz-jarju: il-livell ta' investiment kurrenti huwa ta' 1.7% tal-PGD, waqt li l-UE qed tipprompi li dan għandu jkollha għal 3% tal-PGD, u
- projezzjonijiet preċiżi fir-rigward tal-mobilità ta' impjegi.

Il-Membri tal-Core Group ġew ipprezentati b'rapport dwar l-elezzjoni tat-tliet rappreżentanti tas-soċjetà ċivili. S'issa ġie elett is-Sur Benjamin Rizzo. Żewġ membri ohra se jkunu eletti fil-gimghat li ġejjin.

Politika aġġornata dwar il-Fond għas-Socjeta' Ċivili ġiet ipprezentata lill-membri li qablu ma' dak li qed jiġi propost. Għall-ewwel darba dan il-Fond se jinkludi assistenza lill-organizzazzjonijiet tas-soċjetà ċivili għall-ko-finanzjament ta' proġetti taht programmi ta' fondi tal-UE. Fl-istess waqt il-Fond se jibqa' jassisti lil dawn l-organizzazzjonijiet fil-partecipazzjoni tagħhom fi hdan gruppi, assoċjazzjonijiet u federazzjonijiet Ewropej. Il-laqgħa li jmiss tal-Core Group se ssir nhar il-Gimgha 24 ta' April, 2009.

# What are the issues being raised in the Sectoral Committees?

In the past weeks a number of Sectoral Committees have already had their fair share of discussion on a number of EU-related documents. Embedded within the local context, there have been calls to encourage students to take up subjects such as in the health sector, maritime engineering and the energy sector. These possibly reflect current concerns that our society needs to gear up in these fields, as the respective challenges come closer to home.

Making consumer rights easy to understand, and redress accessible, were also issues on which emphasis was directed. From a business perspective, there were suggestions to tackle the more burdensome issues related to reporting requirements, and tackle minimum profit margins allowed within consumer-related legislation.

International cooperation was particularly mentioned in the case of maritime transport

where it is feared that vessels registered within the EU could suffer from more stringent obligations and thus have their competitiveness suffer.

Opportunities brought about by mobility should not be the cause of a reduction in rights, and in the current situation studies showing what jobs are required in the future and how many jobs may be created by new energy technology were also suggested.

On the issue of enlargement, it was said that EU-wide referenda could solve the possible threat of one country blocking all others.

The above are just some points emerging from the Sectoral Committees' meetings. They are too few to do justice to the various submissions being received. This is just an update and an invitation to all interested organisations.

*Julian Micallef*

## CSO representative on the MEUSAC Core Group

Benjamin Rizzo (right) was recently elected as one of the three civil society organisations' (CSO) representatives on the MEUSAC Core Group. He is president of the Malta Federation of Professional Associations (MFPA) and has been a member of the Council of this Federation for the past sixteen years. He is a self employed accountant and auditor by profession.

Mr Rizzo also represents the MFPA on the MCESD's Civil Society Committee.

For the last eight years he has been a representative of the MFPA on the European Council of the Liberal Professions.



# EU plans more stringent data protection rules

While addressing a conference held earlier this year, to mark Data Protection Day, EU Commissioner Jacques Barrot, responsible for Justice and Home Affairs, announced the Commission's plans to tighten the rules relating to the way that data is treated within the European Union. In fact, a public consultation to be launched shortly will look at ways of reinforcing data protection through the modernisation of the current framework to respond to the new challenges faced by upgrading technological standards.

The so called Article 29 Working Party, an expert group established by the European Commission, is discussing ways in which the existing Data Protection Directive could be updated, in relation to the fairly recent concept that personal data can relate to IP addresses and cookies, which many feel may provide a detailed profile of a consumer's data and internet browsing habits.

Cookies improve the quality of services offered: for instance, there is no need to retype passwords when accessing a restricted area. The European Commission has responded to an opinion, issued by national privacy regulators, which broadens the list of personal data to include IP addresses and cookies, and in forthcoming discussions will cover the duration of data retention by search engines. The Working Party has suggested a six month retention period for

cookies, and industry has reacted in different ways to this announcement. Google, whose business is reliant upon personal data, voluntarily cut its retention period from eighteen to nine months; Microsoft reduced its retention period automatically to the suggested six month period.

New technological advances have meant that there is a perceived need by EU regulators to look carefully at possible areas of infringements. An issue which they hope to look into is the potential risk posed by panoramic street view services which, when released recently in France, Italy and Spain, caused great concern to data protection regulators.

The Commission will be taking action in relation to the current data protection-related legislation in Europe. Commissioner Barrot has stressed the need for social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook to be closely examined and has expressed concern that in the 15 - 24 age bracket, only 33% are aware of their rights in relation to personal data.

Changes to EU legislation will affect the operating landscape for many online service providers, particularly for those who rely upon the collection and retention of personal data from consumers.

We will be monitoring progress and keeping you posted.

*Gabriella Pace*

# The working time directive

RAY MUSCAT



On the 23 March a Conciliation Committee bringing together representatives of the various political groupings within the European Parliament (EP) and a delegation from the Council, met in the presence of Commission officials in their role as arbitrators, under the chairmanship of the Czech Presidency. The conciliation procedure is required under the co-decision procedure when the Council does not agree with amendments approved by the EP.

The outcome of this meeting was that there was no agreement on how to reconcile the divergent positions of the EP following the vote taken in the December 2008 Plenary Session and the Council's common position of June 2008. In December, the EP voted to scrap national opt-outs to the Working Time Directive and consequently enforce an EU-wide maximum working week of 48 hours. As a result, the conciliation mechanism for a possible compromise resolution was put into motion.

The main issue around which the divergent positions of the EP and the Council revolve is precisely the retention or otherwise of the opt-out clause. This has now emerged from the discussions to be the main obstacle towards reaching an agreement. The compromise originally contained in the Council Common position was considered unacceptable by the EP. The EP believes that no agreement is possible without phasing out the opt-out clause. The EP's delegation at the Conciliation Committee could only soften this position by allowing a compromise built on the premise that the phasing-out of the opt-out provision could be done over a longer transitional period instead of with immediate effect from the date of entry into force of the new revised Working Time Directive.

On the issue of the calculation of inactive on-call time as effective working time, the EP delegation accepted the Council's position differentiating between "active" and "inactive" working time. As regards the calculation of working hours, the EP's delegation held to its opinion that working hours must be counted per worker and not per contract. The Malta Chamber feels that such reasoning would bring additional administrative burdens to employers.

Finally, on compensatory rest, the EP's delegation declared itself to be open to a compromise, allowing workers to take the compensatory rest within a reasonable period after the time spent on duty, and not immediately after it.

Acknowledge that the Government is in favour of the opt-out, the Malta Chamber recommends that Malta must continue to insist on the importance of the opt-out, and that such regulation should remain at the discretion of Member States.



*Ray Muscat is an engineer by profession, and specialised with a Masters Degree in Advanced Manufacturing Systems. Ing. Muscat gained years of experience in local manufacturing industries. He has occupied a senior management post with Malta Enterprise Corporation as Chief Officer. He then joined the Malta Federation of Industry, as Director General, where he was part of the task team seeing to the merger process with The Malta Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise. Ing. Muscat has also served on various local, European Commission and international committees and boards. He is one of the Chamber's representatives on MEUSAC's Core Group.*

*The above article does not necessarily reflect MEUSAC's point of view*

# Kont taf...

## Il-Qorti Ewropea tal-Awdituri

**I**l-Qorti tal-Awdituri twaqqfet fl-1975 u hija bbażata fil-Lussemburgu. Ix-xogħol tal-Qorti huwa li tara li l-fondi tal-UE jingabru b'mod xieraq u jintefqu b'mod legali, ekonomiku u għal għan maħsub. Ir-rwol prinċipali tal-Qorti huwa li tara li l-baġit tal-UE jiġi implimentat b'mod korrett biex tiżgura li ċ-ċittadini Ewropej jiksbu l-akbar valur għat-taxxi mhallsa minnhom. **Kont taf** li l-Qorti għandha d-dritt li tivverifika kull persuna jew organizzazzjoni li jkollha x'taqsam mal-fondi tal-UE? Is-sejbiet tagħha jinkitbu f'rapporti li jindikaw nuqqasijiet lill-Kummissjoni Ewropea u lill-gvernijiet tal-pajjiżi membri. **Kont taf** li l-Qorti tipprepara rapport ta' verifika tal-kontijiet tas-sena finanzjarja preċedenti li jiġi ppreżentat lill-Parlament Ewropew u lill-Kunsill tal-Ministri? Hija

tilgħab rwol importanti ukoll fit-tfassil ta' opinjonijiet dwar proposti għal-leġislazzjoni finanzjarja tal-UE u għall-azzjoni fil-għieda kontra l-frodi.

Il-Qorti għandha membru wiehed magħżul minn kull pajjiż membru tal-UE għal perijodu ta' sitt snin li jiġgedded. **Kont taf** li r-rappreżentant Malti huwa l-Professor Josef Bonnici? Il-Qorti tal-Awdituri għandha President li jintagħżel minn fost il-membri għal perijodu ta' tliet snin li jiġgedded. Bhalissa, dan huwa Vítor Manuel da Silva Caldeira mill-Portugall. **Kont taf** li l-Qorti timpjega madwar 800 persuna, li jinkludu tradutturi, amministraturi kif ukoll awdituri?

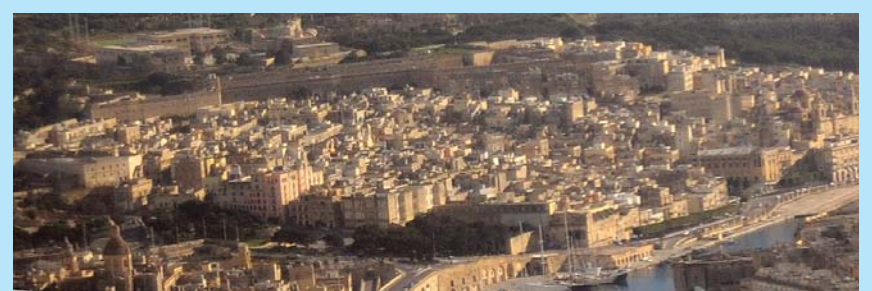


## Mizuri għas-settur agrikolu

**I**l-MEUSAC, flimkien mal-Ministeru għar-Riżorsi u l-Affarijiet Rurali u l-Bank of Valletta, organizza laqgħat ta' informazzjoni dwar żewġ mizuri mill-Programm għall-Iżvilupp Rurali għas-snin 2007 - 2013.

Il-mizura 114 hija indirizzata għall-bdiewa biex ikollhom l-għodda neċessarja biex jaġġornaw rwiehom ma' innovazzjonijiet f'dan is-settur, jagħrfu sistemi godda ta' produzzjoni biex itejjbu l-effiċjenza u jkollhom aċċess għal kull parir relatat li jista' jkun utli biex ikunu konformi mar-regoli tal-UE. Assistenza permezz ta' din il-mizura tgħin lill-bdiewa biex jagħmlu użu minn prattici sostenibbli biex inaqqsu l-impatt tal-agrikoltura fuq l-ambjent. Il-mizura għet allokata €3 miljun li minnhom €2.25 miljun għejjin mill-Unjoni Ewropea filwaqt li €750,000 għejjin mill-Gvern Malti.

Il-mizura 123 għandha allokati €7 miljun li madwar €5 miljun għejjin mill-fondi tal-UE waqt li l-bqija għejjin mill-Gvern ta' Malta. Din il-mizura tiffoka fuq il-kompetittività tas-settur agrikolu u qed tindirizza l-bżonn ta' agriproċessar aktar effiċjenti u innovattivi billi ssahħa il-katina bejn produttori primarji u dawk li jipproċessaw il-prodotti agrikoli permezz ta' innovazzjonijiet u teknoloġiji godda.



## Bormla local council benefits from EU funds

**B**ormla Local Council together with four other partners from Greece, Italy and Spain, and two observing partners from the Province of Oran and Tunisia, carried out an EU funded project named *Reseau des Centres Historiques Mineurs (RCSM)*.

This project was divided into three sectors namely heritage, tourism and promotion. The staff appointed to work on this project mapped a number of sites within three minor historical centres (Bormla, Isla and Kalkara). Once identified, these sites were included in tourist packages which are offered online through a bookshop and a website that have been created as part of the project. Newsletters and other promotional material, together with amenities such as restaurants, bars, cafeterias, take-aways and libraries were also identified, thus offering the tourist a full range of options from which to choose the services required.

RCSM was funded by Interreg IIIB MEDOCC and was allocated a budget of €116,635, over a 21-month period. Seventy-five per cent of this was funded by the European Regional Development Fund.

Through this project, Bormla benefited from a detailed study of its historical assets, major promotion in the four countries participating in the project and thousands of euros in promotional material. RCSM also enabled the Council to transmit the locality's cultural heritage, exchange ideas on upgrading the well-being of the locality and exchanging good practices which lead to the ability to implement innovative ideas in the locality of Bormla.

## EU - USA Summit

**T**he Czech Presidency has invited all the Heads of State and Government of the 27 EU Member States to the EU - USA Summit being held in Prague. The Summit comes after the G-20 Summit held on the 2 April that dealt with the global financial architecture and the impact of the financial crisis and after the NATO Summit on 3 and 4 April that is discussing safety and military cooperation.

The EU - USA Summit can thus address other foreign policy topics. In its preparation to the meeting, the European Council acknowledged the importance of transatlantic relations and recognised the fact that the following issues should be discussed: the economy, energy security and climate change and the strategic approach towards the area between the Mediterranean Sea and the Caspian Sea. In relation to the energy and climate issue, the EU hopes that US President Obama will be more open to compromise than the previous Bush Administration.

*Happy Easter*  
**TO ALL OUR READERS**