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## Jean Monnet 30 sena minn mewtu



Handna tendenza li nħarsu lejha l-Unjoni Ewropea b'mod utilitarju hafna, jgħifieri, kemm qed niehdu minnha! Meta iktar minn hamsin sena ilu, numru ta' statisti poggew bilqiegħda madwar mejda biex jaraw kif l-Ewropa se terġa' tinbena wara l-katastrofi taż-żewġ gwerer tas-seklu 20, f'moħħhom kellhom iktar minn sempliċi pjan biex jinbena dak li tfarrak bil-gwerer. Dawn l-istatisti kellhom viżjoni għal Ewropa li tmur lil hinn minn pjan ekonomiku. Raw kif setghu johlqu qafas li jgħib fix-xejn, darba għal dejjem, il-kawżi li firdu poplu minn iehor fl-Ewropa u li wassal għal konflitti daqstant traġiċi fil-kontinent Ewropew, li saħansitra xterdu mad-dinja kollha.

Is-16 ta' Marzu habat il-tletin sena mill-mewt ta' Jean Monnet. Flimkien ma' statisti oħra bħal Konrad Adenauer, Winston Churchill, Alcide de Gasperi, Walter Hallstein, Robert Schuman, Paul Henri Spaak u Altiero Spinelli, Monnet hu meqjus bħala wieħed mill-arkitetti ta' dik li hi l-Unjoni Ewropea. Kien l-ispirazzjoni wara d-dikjarazzjoni "Schuman" tad-9 ta' Mejju 1950 li wasslet għat-twaqqif tal-ewwel Komunità Ewropea, dik tal-Faham u tal-Azzar (ECSC). Jean Monnet kien ukoll l-ewwel President ta' dik li llum innejhulha l-Kummissjoni Ewropea.



Wahda mill-frazzjiet ta' Monnet li baqghet famuża kienet li "Irridu nġaħqu l-popli u mhux il-pajjiżi". Fl-aħħar mill-aħħar, l-Ewropa ma tinbeniex bit-trattati li jiffirmaw il-kapijiet tal-pajjiżi membri, iżda billi jinbena sens awtentiku ta' xi tffisser li tkun Ewropew, f'għaqda li filwaqt li tffitex li tagħmel flimkien dawk l-affarijiet li jistgħu jsiru ahjar bl-azzjoni komuni tal-pajjiżi membri flimkien, tibqa' tghożż u tippromwovi d-diversità li tezisti bejn poplu u iehor.

L-Ewropa llum għandha bżonn ta' statisti li bħal Jean Monnet, ikollhom viżjoni li tmur lil hinn mill-eżiġenzi pragmatiċi ta' mument partikolari. Illum iktar mill-bierah, l-Ewropa teħtieġ persuni li kapaċi jheggu liċ-ċittadini Ewropej biex jemmnu tassew fil-validità tal-proċess tal-għaqda tal-Ewropa bħala proċess li jgħaqqad il-popli tal-Ewropa abbażi ta' valuri komuni li jwasslu għal azzjoni li tittiehed flimkien fl-interess komuni Ewropew.

Vanni Xuereb

## Il-Kumitati Settorjali jibdedew jiltaqqgħu

Fil-jiem li għaddew, numru ta' Kumitati Settorjali fil-proċess ta' konsultazzjoni li qed jitmexxa fi hdan il-MEUSAC, iddiskutew dokumenti u proposti legiżlattivi li l-Kummissjoni Ewropea sottomettiet lill-istituzzjonijiet Ewropej. Dan jagħmel parti minn hídma importanti hafna sabiex is-soċjeta' ċivili mhux biss tkun taf x'inhu jseħħ u tkun ippreparata, imma wkoll ikollha l-possibilita' li tkun pro-attiva u ssemma' lehinha fi stadju fejn il-ligijiet jew politika Ewropea jkunu għadhom qed jiġu mfaħsla u mhux diġa' fis-seħħ. Huwa mixtieq ukoll li l-Kumitati jiġu nvoluti fil-proċess ta' traspozizzjoni tajba ta' direttivi Ewropej fil-ligijiet nazzjonali.

Magħmula minn għaqdiet li jirrapprezentaw interessi diversi, il-Kumitati qed iwasslu biex il-fehmiet differenti jgħaddu għall-kunsiderazzjoni tal-Gvern. B'hekk meta tkun qed tiġi fformulata l-pożizzjoni ta' Malta fid-dawl ta' xi proposti Ewropej ma jkunx hemm biss l-involvement ta' ufficjali u esperti tal-Gvern imma wkoll il-ħsbijiet ta' setturi differenti tas-soċjeta' Maltija.

Il-laqgħat qed iservu ta' lok fejn ufficjali tal-Gvern u membri tas-soċjeta' ċivili jistgħu jiltaqqgħu wiċċ imb'wiċċ u jiddiskutu materji b'laqta Ewropea li huma ta' interess partikolari - kemm għaliex dawn jista' jkollhom impatt dirett fuq l-operat tagħhom jew għaliex jorbtu ma' aspirazzjonijiet għal soċjeta' ahjar. Joffru wkoll il-possibilita' għal analiżi ta' proposti legiżlattivi bejn rapprezentanti ta' għaqdiet differenti.

Tajjeb li wieħed jgħid li f'dawn il-Kumitati ma jridx jittiehed xi vot jew hemm xi pressjoni biex jintlaħaq kunsens. Huwa iktar spazju fejn wieħed jgħaddi l-pożizzjoni rispettiva waqt li jinstemgħu l-ħsbijiet minn oqsma oħra. Huma dawn li mbagħad iridu jiġu mwieħna biex jintlaħaq bilanċ favur l-interess nazzjonali.

S'issa kien hemm erba' laqgħat ta' Kumitati differenti - dawk tal-Impjeg, Politika Soċjali u Sahħa; Trasport, Telekomunikazzjoni u Energija; Affarijiet Ġenerali; u Kompetittività u Affarijiet tal-Konsumatur. It-temi fuq l-aġenda ta' kull laqgħa kienu varjati: Green Paper dwar il-Haddiema fil-qasam tas-sahħa, is-settur tat-trasport marittimu fl-aspetti differenti tiegħu, il-programm tal-Kummissjoni Ewropea għall-2009 u l-istrateġija għat-tkabbir tal-UE, pakkett ta' ligijiet li jolqtu d-drittijiet tal-konsumatur u t-tnaqqis ta' ċertu piżijiet burokratiċi għall-mikro-intrapriżi.

Hames Kumitati oħra għadhom iridu jiltaqqgħu



L-ewwel laqgħa tal-Kumitat Settorjali tal-Impjeg, Politika Soċjali u Sahħa u ta' dak tat-Trasport, Telekomunikazzjoni u Energija

għall-ewwel darba, u dan se jagħmluh matul il-gimghat li ġejjin. Dawn huma dak tal-Affarijiet Ekonomiċi u Finanzjarji; dak tal-Ambjent; tal-Edukazzjoni, Żgħażaġh u Kultura; tal-Gustizzja u Affarijiet Interni u dak tal-Agricoltura u Sajd. Sadanittant, l-għaqdiet kollha li qegħdin jiehdu sehem fil-Kumitati Settorjali, imma wkoll oħrajn li wrew interess, qed jirċievu aġġornamenti dwar żviluppi Ewropej. Dawn l-aġġornamenti jinsabu wkoll fuq is-sit elettroniku tal-MEUSAC taħt is-sezzjoni tal-konsultazzjoni.

Il-partecipazzjoni fil-Kumitati Settorjali tibqa' miftuħa għal dawk l-organizzazzjonijiet tas-soċjeta' ċivili kollha li huma interessati jiehdu sehem f'dan il-proċess. Fil-fatt in-numru ta' dawk li jesprimu interess u jippartecipaw qiegħed ikompli jżieded. Il-formula tal-applikazzjoni u l-kriterji ta' eligibiltà jinsabu fuq is-sit elettroniku [www.meusac.gov.mt/fme/298/default.aspx](http://www.meusac.gov.mt/fme/298/default.aspx).

# 0% VAT fuq prodotti tal-ikel u medicinali

**N**har it-Tlieta 10 ta' Marzu ntlahaq ftehim bejn is-27 Pajjiż Membru fil-Kunsill tal-Ministri tal-Unjoni Ewropea u l-Kummissjoni Ewropea, li permezz tiegħu Malta se żżomm rata ta' 0% VAT fuq prodotti tal-ikel u medicinali wara l-2010.

F'kummenti li ta lil **MEUSACNEWS**, il-Ministru tal-Finanzi, l-Ekonomija u Investment, is-sur Tonio Fenech, qal li dan il-ftehim huwa rebha kbira għal pajjiżna, li nkisbet wara diskussjonijiet li damu għaddejnin għal żmien twil. In-negozjati min-naħa tal-Gvern Malti bdew f'Lulju tal-2007. Minhabba li t-tassazzjoni huwa settur li jeħtieġ vot unanimu fil-Kunsill, Malta kellha bżonn tikseb l-appoġġ tal-Pajjiżi Membri kollha. Kien meħtieġ għalhekk, li l-Ministru Fenech jagħmel kuntatt individwali mal-Ministri tal-Finanzi tal-pajjiżi membri l-oħra tal-Unjoni Ewropea.

Il-Ministru Fenech spjega kif minhabba d-daqs tas-suq lokali kif ukoll l-ispejjeż marbuta mat-trasport ta' dawn il-prodotti, it-tassazzjoni fuq prodotti bħalma huma l-medicinali kif ukoll prodotti tal-ikel, setgħet halliet impatt negattiv fuq l-ekonomija ta' pajjiżna.

"Filwaqt li d-Direttiva tal-VAT teżiġi li kull Pajjiż Membru għandu jkollu mill-anqas rata minima ta' 5% VAT fuq l-ikel u l-prodotti medicinali, sa minn żmien in-negozjati għas-shubija fl-Unjoni Ewropea, Malta kienet esprimiet l-oppożizzjoni tagħha fuq dan il-punt. Dan għaliex Malta diġà taffronta sfidi konsiderevoli f'dan il-qasam minhabba l-ispejjeż addizzjonali marbuta mat-trasport u ċ-ċokon tas-suq lokali. L-importanza ta' din id-deċiżjoni għal Malta hija wkoll marbuta mal-fatt li aktar minn 90% tal-prodotti kkunsmati f'Malta huma impurtati. Mhux aċċettabbli li l-familji Maltin se jkollhom iħallsu prezzijiet ogħla fuq prodotti tal-ikel u l-medicinali. Id-Direttiva kienet tobbli-gana li nżidu r-rata tal-VAT għal 5% fuq l-ikel u l-medicinali mill-1 ta' Jannar 2011 u dan kien se jhalli impatt dirett negattiv fuq il-familji Maltin u Ghawdxin. Huma biss żewġ pajjiżi li għandhom id-dritt li japplikaw ir-rata ta' 0% fuq l-



ikel, u tlieta fuq il-medicini. Malta riedet ukoll tikseb dan id-dritt, u baqgħet tinsisti sakemm sabet l-appoġġ tas-26 Stat Membru l-iehor".

Dan il-ftehim huwa pass importanti għal Malta għax il-VAT fuq il-medicinali u l-prodotti tal-ikel tithallas f'kull pajjiż membru tal-UE, bl-eċċezzjoni tar-Renju Unit u tal-Irlanda li kienu nnegozjaw deroga permanenti. Malta kienet ingħatat deroga temporanja sal-2009 li imbagħad għet estiza b'sena sal-2010.

Il-ftehim milhuq jinkludi wkoll l-opportunità li jiġu applikati rati ridotti ta' VAT fuq servizzi bħall-kura tal-anzjani, tiswija ta' roti, żraben u prodotti tal-ġilda, servizz ta' tindif ta' twieqi, *hairdressing*, ir-rinnovazzjoni jew ir-riparazzjoni ta' djar privati, eskluż il-materjal li jammonta għal parti sostanzjali tal-valur tas-servizz provdut, u servizzi provduti f'ristoranti, fost oħrajn.

## EVE - Espace Virtuel d'Echange

**O**ver the years, there have been hundreds of successful projects which have benefited from EU funding. The most popular programmes, possibly because they are also the easiest to tap into, particularly by smaller organisations, are those in the fields of education, culture, youth and citizenship.

On the 2nd March, EVE (an acronym for the French Espace Virtuel d'Echange), was launched by Commissioner Jan Figel, who is responsible for Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism. EVE is a virtual platform, providing easy access to the results and details of EU-funded projects in the fields of education, culture, youth and citizenship. This new multilingual, user-friendly, web-based tool is freely accessible online. EVE seeks to increase the visibility and to ensure better dissemination and exploitation of the products, the innovative contents and the interesting practices resulting from the programmes and initiatives in the fields of education, training, culture, youth, citizenship, sport and multilingualism.

Entries relating to various initiatives and projects funded under the Commission's education and training programmes for the current period (2007 - 2013) will be uploaded on a regular basis, as projects develop. Moreover, details about hundreds of projects funded under the previous cycle of programmes (2000 - 2006) are already available online.

Other information available on EVE includes dissemination tools (such as learning materials, handbooks, manuals and CDs), links to different databases, testimonials from project participants, as well as documents and guidelines relating to particular calls.

In order to serve the public good, projects need to disseminate and exploit their results and output. To achieve maximum impact, the results of projects funded through EU programmes and initiatives need to be disseminated as widely as possible so that the valuable lessons and experience gained by one group can be of benefit to others. Anybody interested in learning more about these projects, including prospective applicants, can visit the EVE website at [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/eve/](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/eve/).

Gabriella Pace

## The Committee of the Regions

**T**he Committee of the Regions (CoR) was set up by the Treaty on European Union in 1994. It is a consultative body composed of 344 representatives of regional and local government from the EU-27. Malta has five members: Claudette Abela Baldacchino, Michael Cohen and Frederick Cutajar from the Party of European Socialists (PES), and Noel Formosa and Ian Micallef from the European Peoples' Party (EPP).

The European Commission (EC) and the Council of Ministers consult with the CoR before decisions are taken

on matters concerning local and regional government such as economic and social cohesion, health, education and culture, and employment. The CoR can put forward opinions on Commission proposals or issue opinions on its own initiative and submit them to the EC, Council and EP.

A special Eurobarometer survey was commissioned by the DG Communication of the EC to obtain a better understanding of the importance the public gives to the various levels of public authorities and to gauge public awareness of the CoR.

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### BRIEFING SESSION

## New developments for electrical and electronic products

**T**he increased use of electrical and electronic equipment coupled with the concerns on their waste's impact on the environment and, of late, their efficiency, has fuelled various EU rules. Aimed at addressing such concerns, we have seen the coming into force of the Directive 2002/95/EC on the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment (the so-called RoHS Directive), which is aimed at restricting the use of hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment, the WEEE Directive, on the waste generated by such equipment, as well as a legislative

framework for more energy-efficient design (labelled as eco-design).

MEUSAC, together with the GRTU, is organising a briefing session for stakeholders in relation to the proposed recast of the RoHS Directive as well as the implementing measures adopted under Directive 2005/32/EC on energy-using products which should lead to more efficient designs. A representative from the Malta Standards Authority will be addressing this session which will tackle the issues involved, the current discussions taking place and developments to be expected in the near future.

It is important that members of the business community, particularly those

having a stake in such products, are aware of these developments given that new obligations will be in force when placing a product on the market. The new amendments are still at a proposal stage, and thus one may wish to pass views on this particular matter.

The session is being held on the 25 March 2009 between 1.30 and 3pm, at the GRTU offices, Republic Street, Valletta. Participation is free of charge, but registration is highly recommended in view of seating restrictions. Registrations should reach MEUSAC offices by email to [consult.meusac@gov.mt](mailto:consult.meusac@gov.mt), by not later than noon of Tuesday 24 March.

### EURES Malta Annual Job Fair 2009

MEUSAC will be participating in the EURES Malta Annual Job Fair 2009, being organised by the ETC between the 27 and 28 March at the Hotel Excelsior, Floriana.

A presentation by Dr Gabriella Pace, MEUSAC's Head of Information, on 'Working in the EU Institutions' will be delivered on Friday 27 March at 5 pm.

# The importance of networking

**T**he number of civil society organisations across Malta is substantial. Officially there are some 200 organisations registered with the Commissioner of Voluntary Organisations and around 60 trade unions and employer associations registered with the Registrar of Trade Unions. These figures are, by any consideration, very conservative compared to the number of civil society organisations operating on the ground.

A lot of these share similar interests and objectives, as well as being complementary to each other. Nothing should keep you from forging close links with your partners in the field, particularly on matters of mutual significance.

Analysing legislative proposals often requires a degree of knowledge on the subject, and at

any rate is time-consuming. Pooling resources and expertise with others could be the measure you need to take to tackle the issues better.

The number of umbrella organisations, federations, networks and platforms which have been established along the years should attest to the fact that unity does lead to an enhanced position.

The same can be said of organisations affiliated with international or European bodies. That too could be a way of greatly supplementing your knowledge and ability to garner support on issues which are important to your organisation. Memberships may come at a cost. Exploiting the possibilities well should however lead to compensation.

*Julian Micallef*

## Mosta Local Council benefits from EU funds to restore Ta' Bistra Catacombs

*An internal view of Ta' Bistra hypogeum showing one of the arcosolium tombs (photo: Joseph V. Sammut)*

**T**he Mosta Local Council sought EU funds to conduct studies and restoration works on the Ta' Bistra Catacombs. These underground cavities, which are situated in the vicinity of the Mount St Joseph Retreat House, were excavated to serve as tombs and date back to the 3rd or 4th century A.D. They remained in use till around the 6th century.

In January 2006 the adjudication board announced that the Mosta Local Council project proposal was successful and was to benefit from €320,000 in EU funds through the Interreg IIIA Programme Italy-Malta (2004-2006). The whole project was worth €350,000 and the share obtained by the Mosta Local Council was of €100,000. Other funds were acquired at a later stage, thus enabling the completion of the project which was ranked in second place out of six successful projects. The Mosta Local Council was the leading partner, while the other project partners were the Sicilian *Soprintendenza ai Beni Culturali e Ambientali di Ragusa* and the *Comune di Ragusa*.

The joint project concerned the appraisal and rehabilitation of two paleo-Christian catacombs, Ta' Bistra in Mosta and the Cataomba delle Trabacche in Ragusa, Sicily. The official title of the project was *La rivalutazione delle catacombe come simbolo comune per la valorizzazione delle tradizioni transfrontaliere - CULTEXCHANGE\_IT\_MT*.

The ultimate aim of the project was that of making both sites accessible to the general public. Given the Council's financial limitations, it was decided to concentrate on one section of the Ta' Bistra site: that situated underneath a 1950s construction which had become derelict and was in a dangerous state. Initial work comprised cleaning debris and other rubbish which had accumulated in the decades of abandonment. The site was also secured by the reconstruction of the boundary rubble wall and the vegetation was cleared or pruned according to instructions from Heritage Malta. In fact, the Council worked in



*The building which was erected on part of the Ta' Bistra complex earmarked to be the visitors' centre (photo: Victor B. Caruana)*

close conjunction with Heritage Malta given that it is the legal owner of the site.

A Geo-referenced Survey was conducted to identify the various levels and measurements in order to continue the work on the site. Besides this study, a condition report was also commissioned to examine closely the structure commonly called "the farmhouse" and which was earmarked to serve as the visitors' centre and the access point to the site. These reports were required to design the visitors' centre plans for submission to MEPA. Project approval was granted by MEPA in late 2007, as well as by the Superintendence for Cultural Heritage of Malta.

Heritage Malta experts from the Conservation Division, Diagnostic Science Laboratories, Preventive Conservation Unit drew up a report on the state of conservation of the site so as to gauge the problems affecting the catacombs. Work has been ongoing and the visitors' centre has been restored, though work is continuing on the inside. The Mosta Local Council and Heritage Malta are determined to see this project through, to save the Ta' Bistra Catacombs from dilapidation and return them in a recovered state to the Maltese people as another noteworthy heritage site to be added to the list of interesting places that one could visit and appreciate in the future.

## GBC: Unlocking the EU potential to sustain jobs in Gozo

JOE GRECH



**T**he Gozo Business Chamber was founded by public deed on 20th December 1999. Its main objective is to look after the common interest of all business operators in Gozo. It boasts of over 1000 members and corporate members. Its members are organised in seven sectors namely Import, Wholesale and Retail; Construction; Crafts; Manufacture and Export; Finance, Insurance, Transport and other professional services; Agriculture and Fisheries; and Tourism.

The GBC is at the forefront in lobbying vociferously in favour of the business community in Gozo, both in respect of EU regulations that bear on local trade, and also with regard to foreign direct investment. To help achieve its aim, gain experience in EU matters and find physical support, the GBC registered as a member with the Network of Insular Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the European Union, with The Observatory on Tourism in the European Islands, and with The Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry.

During the pre-EU accession period, officers of the GBC visited Brussels and discussed in depth the questions of Gozo's regionality, and the problems adhered to Gozo's double insularity with the DGs of the European Commission, with MEPs and with the Committee of the Regions. Besides, the GBC organised conferences and seminars disseminating thereby information about the pros and cons of EU membership.

After Malta's EU accession, the GBC hosted in Gozo the seventh INSULEUR European Forum on "The future EU Maritime Policy and the European Islands". In 2008, that is a year later, the GBC organised the first Executive Training Programme for officers of the European Chambers of Island Regions. Equally so, members of GBC participated in the EU Leonardo da Vinci programme such as "Empowering Gozitan Entrepreneurs", and the E-Remote project.

Notwithstanding all this, the GBC's efforts to sustain jobs in Gozo, through unlocking the EU potential, is reflected in the seminars held in cooperation with Malta Enterprise and ETC on the utilisation of incentive schemes involving EU funding. Equally so, this is translated in our participation as core member of the Action Group Foundation, which is aimed at contributing to the realisation of the LEADER project. EU circulars, publications and notices that we regularly send to our members through our quarterly issue of *IsleLink* and through our electronic mail intensively back all these efforts. Furthermore, our participation as core members in MEUSAC and in the MCESD's Gozo Regional Committee, coupled with our constant communications with EUPA also justify our efforts to sustain jobs in Gozo through the capitalisation of EU funds.



THE GOZO BUSINESS CHAMBER

*Joe Grech is a retired businessman. He is a founder member of the GBC and has served as PRO, treasurer, vice-president and president. He served as chairman of the Gozo Crafts Committee; founded the Gozo Trade Fair and chaired its committee between 2002 and 2004. He served as core member of the Gozo Regional Projects Committee; represented the Chamber at regional meetings and at meetings held in Brussels. He chaired the organising committee of the seventh Insuleur Forum of European Island Chambers of Commerce of the European Union. He is currently the secretary general of the board of directors of INSULEUR, GBC representative on the Core Group of MEUSAC and founder core member of MCESD's Gozo Regional Committee.*

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

# Kont taf...

## Il-Qorti tal-Prim'Istanza

**K**if semmejna fil-harġa preċedenti, il-Qorti tal-Prim'Istanza twaqqfet fl-1989 biex tgħin lill-Qorti tal-Gustizzja tlaħhaq man-numru kbir ta' każijiet preżentati. Il-kompetenza tagħha żviluppat b'mod partikolari fl-oqsma tal-proprjeta' intellettuali u tal-kompetizzjoni. **Kont taf** li mid-data tat-twaqqif tagħha sa tmiem is-sena 2006, il-Qorti ddeċidiet aktar minn 5200 kawża?



imhallfin huma magħzula bi ftehim bejn il-gvernijiet tal-Istati Membri għal perijodu ta' sitt snin, li jista' jiġgedded? Ghalkemm l-imhallfin huma nominati mill-gvernijiet tal-Pajjiżi Membri, huma jwettqu l-funzjonijiet tagħhom b'mod imparzjali u indipendenti. Il-President tal-Qorti jiġi magħżul minn fost is-27 imhalled għal perijodu ta' tliet snin. **Kont taf** li mis-17 ta' Settembru 2007 l-President tal-Qorti tal-Prim'Istanza huwa Marc Jaeger? Din il-proċedura hija l-istess bħal dik addottata mill-Qorti tal-Gustizzja, iżda kuntrarjament għall-Qorti tal-Gustizzja, il-Qorti tal-Prim'Istanza m'għandhiex avukati ġenerali permanenti. **Kont taf** li l-Hmhalled nominat minn Malta hija l-Avukat Ena Cremona?

Il-Qorti tal-Prim'Istanza tista' tiddeċiedi dwar:

(i) rikorsi diretti mressqa minn persuni fiżiċi jew ġuridiċi kontra atti tal-istituzzjonijiet Komunitarji jew kontra nuqqas ta' dawn l-istituzzjonijiet li jiehdu deċiżjoni. Per eżempju, jista' jiġi pprezentat rikors minn intrapriża kontra deċiżjoni tal-Kummissjoni li tikkundannaha thallas multa;

(ii) rikorsi mressqa mill-Istati Membri kontra l-Kummissjoni;

(iii) rikorsi mressqa mill-Istati Membri kontra l-Kunsill dwar miżuri fil-qasam tal-ġajnunata mill-Istat (*State aid*), miżuri ta' protezzjoni tal-kummerċ u l-atti li bihom il-Kunsill jeżerċita kompetenzi ta' implimentazzjoni;

(iv) rikorsi għal kumpens ta' danni kkawżati mill-istituzzjonijiet tal-UE jew l-aġenti tagħhom;

(v) rikorsi bbażati fuq kuntratti konklużi mill-UE;

(vi) rikorsi fil-qasam tat-*trade mark* Komunitarja;

(vii) appelli kontra d-deċiżjonijiet tat-Tribunal tas-Servizz Pubbliku rigward punti ta' dritt.

Il-Qorti tal-Prim'Istanza tikkonsisti minn tal-anqas imhalled wiehed għal kull Stat Membru. **Kont taf** li l-

Il-proċedura addottata mill-Qorti tal-Prim'Istanza hija simili għal dik tal-Qorti tal-Gustizzja, jiġifieri tinkludi fażi bil-miktub u fażi orali, u hija bla hlas. Madanakollu, il-partijiet fil-kawża huma responsabbli għall-ispejjeż tal-avukat. **Kont taf** li l-lingwa użata fir-rikors tista' tkun waħda mit-23 lingwa uffiċjali tal-Unjoni Ewropea waqt li l-punti essenzjali tar-rikors huma ppubblikati f'komunikazzjoni fil-lingwi uffiċjali kollha fil-Ġurnal Uffiċjali tal-Unjoni Ewropea?

## The Committee of the Regions

# The role and impact of local regional authorities within the EU

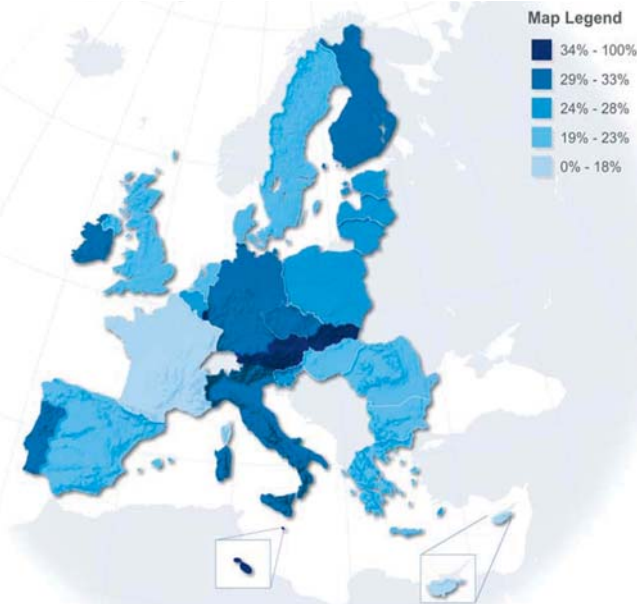
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In line with previous Eurobarometer surveys, the results show that only 24% of the total respondents interviewed were aware of the role of the CoR. The CoR is thus the least well-known of the European institutions and bodies. A country by country analysis shows that "awareness" levels are highest in Austria (38%), Luxembourg and Slovakia (36% each), Malta (35%) and Ireland (31%).

**MEUSACNEWS**, spoke with the five Maltese members of the CoR about these results, also asking them why, in their opinion, the CoR is the least known institution (graph).

**Q.** The Committee of the Regions of the European Union represents the point of view of regional and local public authorities of all Member States when deciding policies in the European Union. Before this interview, did you know that?  
**A.** Yes

AT	38%
LU	36%
SK	36%
MT	35%
IE	31%
DE	30%
PT	30%
CZ	30%
IT	29%
FI	29%
LT	27%
LV	26%
PL	26%
EE	25%
SI	25%
EU27	24%
BE	24%
EL	23%
ES	23%
NL	21%
HU	21%
RO	21%
DK	19%
SE	19%
UK	19%
BG	19%
CY	15%
FR	13%



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### FREDERICK CUTAJAR

It is true that 52% of the respondents indicated that the CoR is the least known of all EU Institutions, but it is also true that 57% of respondents want to learn more about the CoR. Therefore, I am certainly not alarmed. Unfortunately the CoR is the least well known institution in Malta because its workings are the least publicised. More information should be forthcoming on the work of the Maltese delegation especially when its members are appointed to act as rapporteurs on opinions that are discussed by the Committee.

### NOEL FORMOSA

The results are alarming and should set us thinking. Although the Maltese delegation is the smallest delegation, it is one of the most active in all aspects of the CoR. Yet the work being conducted by the Maltese representatives is not being transmitted to the public at large. This is mostly due to lack of resources. It is very reassuring to note that over half of the respondents would like to receive more information about the work of their CoR representatives. I believe that the CoR and the work conducted by its members should be publicised more often on the local media. However, CoR members themselves should also be more proactive by visiting educational institutions. I recently invited a member of the CoR to a seminar which was organised in Gozo to discuss the importance which the EU is giving to the environment. This, I believe, ties in well with Government's promotion of Gozo as an ecological island. While the members of the CoR should find ways to promote the good work being carried out, members of the general public should also seek information on the CoR.

### MICHAEL COHEN

Reality shows that the CoR is not very well known with the Maltese citizens, but this is not due to any lack of interest on their part. Rather, this is the result of a situation which is typical to a country that has only been an EU member for five years. We have worked hard to cope with the amount of work that is required despite the lack of resources. We have promoted the work of the CoR with local councillors, as they are the ones who have the right to vote for members in the LCA. We are including in the agenda of our statutory meetings, such as the Mayor's meetings and regional meetings, the priorities being dealt with in the CoR, as well as inviting different members from the CoR to share their experiences with our councillors. The LCA is in the process of producing a weekly 30-minute programme on the public TV station which will enable us to discuss the agenda of the Committee and bring our work closer to the citizens. We are committed to do our utmost not only by participating in the CoR but also by means of contributions that are taken on board by the relevant commissions within the CoR.

### CLAUDETTE ABELA BALDACCHINO

I am not surprised that the Maltese public is still largely unaware of the important role played by the CoR in the development of European policy. The reasons are various, but one good reason is the fact that there is considerable lack of exposure to the workings of the Maltese representatives on the CoR. As a journalist I always strove to highlight the workings of the CoR and of the Maltese representatives thereon. The Local Councils' Association (LCA) is in the process of producing a television programme, thus, I augur that for the future more light is shed by the local media and other structures, including MEUSAC, on such work.

On a positive note, the same survey showed that the majority of European citizens think that regions and local authorities are best placed to explain how European policies impact on the day-to-day lives of citizens. This is quite understandable since it is the Local Council representatives who are most in touch with the people at local level. The Lisbon Treaty will further strengthen the position of the CoR and, therefore, the Maltese members must be given the tools and all the support they need to work in the interest of the many.

### IAN MICALLEF

Four out of ten citizens interviewed believe that the local and regional authorities have an impact on their living conditions, far more than the national and European authorities. Possibly the CoR is the least known institution because of its consultative function, yet the survey clearly indicates that citizens believe that their local and regional representatives on the CoR should be given a major role in policy-drafting. Fifty-six per cent of Maltese respondents stated that they trust local councils and therefore it is only natural that they would request more information on their representatives within the CoR. Various seminars and conferences have been organised locally by the CoR. I myself was the Committee's rapporteur on irregular immigration and I do recall that such events were reported in the local media. I would not be surprised if respondents could not recall the CoR because of the constant barrage of information citizens receive about the other EU institutions. I think that the members of the CoR together with MEPs should jointly organise EU info-dissemination activities, while local councils should be central to the distribution of EU info, including the CoR. Finally, all channels of communication should be better utilised.