



Going beyond 10 million



Europe launches its first satellites



Valletta - European Capital of Culture 2018



Modern & more effective higher education systems in Europe

Editorial Vanni Xuereb

Deal or no deal?

They negotiated well into the early hours of the morning. Few doubted that a deal would be struck. Most of us predicted that it would be a much criticised compromise: some would see it as “too little, too late”, whereas others would say “better late than never”



When EU leaders met on October 26 the stakes were high and a failure to reach agreement would have signalled a break up of the Euro and of the Union itself.

Though a few euro sceptics might have hoped for such an outcome, many of us knew that this would not happen. However, whereas

in the past the EU has managed to move ahead by means of such compromises, is the “three pronged” deal for the euro area’s debt crisis enough to stabilise international markets and put the citizens’ minds at rest? Or have EU leaders merely bought time yet again?

In their final statement, EU leaders reaffirmed that the euro is at the core of the European project and that, therefore, it is necessary to “strengthen the economic union to make it commensurate with the monetary union”. The means for this to be achieved are further strengthening economic convergence within the euro area, improving fiscal discipline and deepening economic union, including exploring the possibility of limited Treaty changes.

Words need to be translated into action and all Member States must renew their commitment to ensure that the European project succeeds. Its failure would be a catastrophe the consequences of which one would not even wish to start imagining!

Euro crisis: closer to a solution

Marathon talks led to an agreement by EU leaders on the way forward to restore market confidence in the Euro and resolve the crisis in countries of the euro area. Two extraordinary summits were held in a space of 3 days and yielded in a comprehensive set of additional measures:

The banks to act as a barrier against contagion of debt-ridden countries

Banks will be taking 50% loss on Greek debt; Euro area countries to provide aid to banks

The European bailout fund (EFSF) will be increased to more than €1 trillion

There will also be regular meetings between the President of the European Commission, the President of the Eurogroup and a new Head of Euro Summit who will be shortly appointed by the Heads of State or Government of the euro area.

Following announcement of the agreement, international markets rallied strongly, with the Euro hitting a seven-week high above \$1.41.

Debating poverty

The financial crisis has had a great impact on the income of vulnerable groups due to experiencing unemployment particularly among young persons, migrants and the low skilled workers. People in these categories are relying on temporary and low-paid jobs and exposed to sub-standard living conditions. The European Commission has, consequently, placed the fight against poverty at the heart of its economic, employment and social agenda and aims to lift at least 20 million people in the EU out of poverty and social exclusion in the next decade.



MAKE POVERTY HISTORY

EUROPEAN PLATFORM AGAINST POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

A seminar and workshops on the research and innovation targets of Europe 2020

Date: Wednesday, 16 November 2011
Venue: The Palace, Sliema
Time: 9:00 – 12:30

Overcoming discrimination

The challenge of an ageing Society

Social innovation for supporting vulnerable groups

Promoting shared responsibility in combating poverty and social exclusion

Interested participants are requested to register for this seminar by sending an email on info.meusac@gov.mt or by phone on 2200 3300. Proceedings during the seminar will be held in Maltese. Complimentary parking will be available. For more information view our website www.meusac.gov.mt



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee



This project is financed by the European Commission (DG Comm) and is one of the Operations of the Joint Communication Plan between the Government of Malta, the European Commission and the European Parliament

COMMUNICATING INFORMATION, RAISING AWARENESS, INSTILLING DEBATE

Rotta: EU07-13

The Planning and Priorities Coordination Division (PPCD) within the Office of the Prime Minister will be organising coach tours highlighting the benefits of Cohesion Policy 2007-2013

The tours, entitled *Rotta: EU07-13* will give the public a first hand opportunity to find out more how EU funds are being invested in Malta and Gozo. The tours will be spread over six different routes with two routes focusing on Gozo and four routes focusing on Malta covering a select number of projects co-financed through the European Regional Development

Fund (ERDF), the Cohesion Fund and the European Social Fund (ESF).

Each tour will stop at different project locations for a site visit of around 30 minutes and, will include a short presentation and explanation of the projects. Each route will be run once on Saturday and once on Sunday in order to allow the public to take more than one tour. The selected projects target a number of themes

of local interest including cultural heritage, tourism, social inclusion, health, education, employment, ICT and the environment. Refreshments will be provided for registered visitors. The projects will also remain open on both days for those members of the public who may wish to visit individual projects at their leisure.

The coach tours will take place on Saturday and



Sunday November 26 & 27 and run all day. For more information about the routes, schedules and to book your seats log on to www.rottaeu.info. Bookings open on

November 7 and close at noon of November 24. PPCD is the Managing Authority for EU Structural Funds and the Cohesion Funds 2007 -2013.

GETTING THE HANG OF EU FUNDS

Venue: MEUSAC 280, Republic Street, Valletta VLT1112
Time: 9.00am – 12.30pm

Programme Themes: education, training and networking, youth, citizenship, infrastructure, energy, environment, policy governance, culture and the arts

Beginner's Workshops

Programmes: Youth in Action, Lifelong Learning, Co-Financing Fund
Dates: 5th, 6th, 7th, 9th December

Intermediate's Workshops

Programmes: Culture, Europe for Citizens, ERDF, ESF, Co-Financing Fund
Dates: 10th, 11th, 12th, 14th December

Advanced Workshops

Programmes: FP7, CIP, IEE, LIFE+, ENPI, ITALIA-MALTA, Co-financing Fund
Dates: 20th, 21st December

All sessions will be led by professional trainers from the EU Funding Team: Alison Camilleri, Sharon Farrugia, Albert Delia and Simon Grech

Special Trainers for the Advanced Course: National Contact Points

By the end of each workshop, NGOs will be able to:

- identify the best EU funded programmes
- develop creative and innovative projects
- know how to plan for a project proposal
- network and develop partnerships
- get informed from where they can get guidance and assistance



MEUSAC'S new publication

Information, interviews and photographs with NGOs, local councils and Government entities about EU funded projects

A new MEUSAC publication entitled *Going beyond 10 million – EU funded Projects* is to be launched in the coming weeks. The publication will showcase a number of EU funded projects by NGOs, local councils and a selection of Government entities that received assistance by MEUSAC to obtain EU funds.

Projects to be featured in the publication range from infrastructural projects and youth-themed activities, to citizenship-themed initiatives. *Going beyond 10 million* will also highlight the benefits being reaped from EU membership by localities,

voluntary organisations and the communities they represent.

In three years, €12 million have been obtained thanks to MEUSAC's technical assistance to NGOs and local councils which collectively were entrusted with 87 EU funded projects. Local councils are responsible for 62 projects with an allocation amounting to €7.5 million. A number of NGOs have collectively gained €3 million in funding for 19 projects. Another €1.4 million have been allocated for initiatives falling under the remit of 6 government entities.

Valletta

European Capital of Culture 2018



Valletta, Malta's capital city, supported by all other localities in Malta and Gozo, recently submitted its candidature to be designated as the European Capital of Culture 2018. The application was presented by Valletta Mayor Alexei Dingli to the Parliamentary Secretariat for Tourism, Culture and the Environment.

Valletta's bid, *V.18*, addresses the development of an environment for exchange which enables communication and learning experiences for citizens of Malta, Europe and the Mediterranean, differing in age, gender, physical needs, ethnicity and employment. *V.18* aims

to support citizens through the development of sound cultural and technological infrastructures that will encourage access to and participation in the arts, an inclusive approach to culture, the professionalisation of performers and cultural operators and the internationalisation of Maltese creativity, primarily through European partnerships.

The European Capital of Culture is a flagship programme of the EU which can provide Valletta with the opportunity to experience social, economic and cultural regeneration aiming at leaving a long-term legacy on the city.



MEUSAC News
meets...

**Dr Peter
Agius**
Senior Administrator

Maltese participation in the decision-making process of the EU institutions

Dr Agius wanted to pursue his interest in EU law and politics by participating in the decision-making within the EU institutions. For almost 9 years, he has been working as a Senior Administrator at the Council of the EU, specialising in the Internal Market and the Four Freedoms.

"I participate in discussions within the Council of Ministers by briefing and providing advice to the rotating Presidency on negotiation strategies, procedures and alternatives to achieving compromise between diverging national positions. Moreover, I assist the rotating Presidency in negotiations with the European Parliament and

assist the services of the President of the European Council with expertise in my policy areas (Internal Market and Four Freedoms)."

Dr Agius describes working within the EU institutions as an endless learning curve, especially professionally, as he has the opportunity of getting a privileged insight into the EU. However, he sometimes questions his sense of belonging to the lifestyle in Brussels and whether he wants his children to grow up in such an environment. Dr Agius enlists the hidden benefits of living in the Belgian capital, but insists about striking a work-life balance when adapting to a new lifestyle abroad.

news in brief



Packaging waste in the EU

According to the latest Eurostat statistics on packaging waste in the EU, on average, every EU citizen in the EU27 generated 164 kg of packaging waste in 2008. This quantity varied between 40 kg and 233 kg per capita across European countries. Paper and cardboard, glass, plastics, wood, and metals are, in that order, the most common types of packaging waste in European countries. Packaging waste in the EU is regulated by Directive 94/62/EC on Packaging and Packaging Waste.



Consumer markets scoreboard

According to the latest Consumer Markets Scoreboard, financial services, investments (including pensions and securities), mortgages and real estate services are the markets which are the most likely to be failing consumers across the EU. Among goods markets, second-hand cars and fuels have the poorest ratings. Compared to the situation in 2010, electricity supply and fuels are perceived to have deteriorated most.



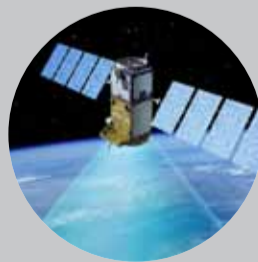
Survey on European attitudes on the crisis

A survey on the attitudes of Europeans to the Euro crisis shows that a majority of Europeans are worried about the effects of the crisis on their personal situation. A growing number of Europeans believe that the crisis is going to last for many more years. The number of Europeans who consider that the Euro has mitigated the negative effects of the current crisis remains stable across the EU27. However the number of those who disagree has slightly decreased in 14 Member States and increased in 13 Member States.



Food safety report

From the 2010 annual report on the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) it emerges that the number of notifications in RASFF rose to 8,582 last year. This is a record number and constitutes an increase of 8% compared to 2009 when the number of notifications was slightly under 8,000. This is the third consecutive year where an increase in the number of notifications has been registered. This is largely due to rejections of consignments at EU borders in the light of the strengthening of border controls on food products of non-animal origin.



Galileo: Europe launches its first satellites for smart navigation system

On October 21, Europe launched into space its first operational Galileo satellites. These were the first two satellites to be launched out of a future 30 satellite constellation that is estimated to generate around €90 billion over the next 20 years. The satellites are also interoperable and compatible with GPS and, as from 2014, are expected to bring around improvements in services ranging from more precise in-car navigation and effective road transport management to improved search and rescue services, more secure banking services and a more reliable electricity provision.

Official talks in Malta on the Cohesion Policy and Common Agricultural Policy during visits by EU Commissioners Hahn and Giolos



October 17, 2011 PM Lawrence Gonzi meets Commissioner for Regional Policy Johannes Hahn at Castille for bilateral talks about the Cohesion Policy and Malta's funding budget for 2014-2020.



October 28, 2011 Minister George Pullicino accompanies Agriculture and Rural Development Commissioner Dacian Ciolos on a visit at a cow farm in San Ġwann which utilised EU funding for renovation and upgrade.

DOI: Clifton Fenech & Reuben Piscopo

Modern & more effective higher education systems in Europe

During a recent MEUSAC Core Group meeting, the discussion focused on the European Commission's Communication *Supporting growth and jobs – an agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems*

Dr Philip von Brockdorff, Chairman of the National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE), said that the Europe 2020 Strategy is targeting a reduction in school drop-out rates to below 10% in the EU and 29% in Malta, while it envisages to increase the share of 30-34 year olds having completed higher or equivalent

education to 40% in the EU and 33% in Malta. Key priority areas to be tackled include:

- increasing the number of graduates and researchers;
- improving the quality and relevance of higher education;
- providing more opportunities for students to gain additional skills

through study or training abroad

- strengthening the links between education, research and business; and
- ensuring that funding is efficient.

Amongst the issues raised by Malta in this regard are the emphasis on the importance of higher

education for economic development and concern about the limited focus of quality on its relevance to the labour market. Malta is insisting that transparency and information on higher education are vital to ensure that there will not be major differences in national higher education systems across the EU.



Children's corner

Volunteer opportunities exist for children of all ages!

World Children's Day is celebrated every year on November 20. The dedication of a Children's Day by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is aimed at drawing attention on the well-being of children's throughout the world. To celebrate this year's World



Children's Day, the Office of the Commissioner for Children, in collaboration with a number of entities and organisations, will be hosting a day of activities for children at Villa Francia in Hal Lija. MEUSAC will also be taking part at the World Children's Day! We encourage you children to come and

This week MEUSAC would like you to draw a post card and write a short message on what you think about volunteers in society. Tip: You can use Tommy and Rosy in your drawing.

visit us and take part in our interactive game. Our aim, this year, is to help you learn that volunteering is a great way how to give back to your community. You may also watch the second episode of Tommy and Rosy entitled *Give a Helping Hand!* Hope to see you on Sunday!

Last issue's winner was Luke Bezzina, 11, from Naxxar. Congratulations!

The digital revolution discussed during a "Europe 2020" seminar

Europe's strategy for a flourishing digital economy by 2020 was the main theme discussed during the fourth seminar on the Europe 2020 Strategy organised by MEUSAC as part of the Management Partnership with the European Commission.

The seminar aimed at giving an overview of the key challenges in implementing the EU's Digital Agenda, an agenda designed to maximise the social and economic potential of Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

Celia Falzon, Head of External Relations at the Malta Communications Authority (MCA), said that Malta has the highest broadband rate in

the EU. However, the rate is much lower for broadband connections in households. MCA is working to increase the participation rate of online purchases from the present 38% to 50% by 2015. Ms Falzon pointed out that roaming charges in the EU should eventually decrease even further.

MEUSAC Head Vanni Xuereb highlighted the importance of the digital revolution in economic growth which has to be complimented by the necessary measures addressing the digital divide.

A number of workshops also took place tackling various issues related to the Digital Agenda.