Forum Malta fl-Ewropa
280, 3rd Floor
Republic Street
Valletta VLT 1112
Malta
Tel: (+356) 2590 9101
Fax: (+356) 2122 7580
Email: foruminfo@gov.mt

Svetlana R. Cumi
Media Officer
svetlana-rose.curmi@gov.mt

PRESS RELEASE

‘Say EU….and Action!’

Forum Malta fl-Eworpa and Fondazzjoni Temi Zammit have today launched their new EU funded project entitled “Say EU, and …Action”. This project is being staged in the framework of Plan D – for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate on the future of the EU, a Commission initiative which is seeing this project being 70% co-funded by the Commission’s DG Communications.

While addressing the Press, the Hon. Michael Frendo, Minister of Foreign Affairs, thanked the *Forum Malta fl-Ewropa* and Fondazzjoni Temi Zammit for the initiative taken to tap the Commission’s call for proposals for projects which are envisaging debate by civil society. He also thanked the European Commission, who was at today’s press conference represented by Dr Joanna Drake, for believing in this project as a tool to bridge the gap between the European Union

and its citizens. Minister Frendo reiterated on the importance of a pro-active society, whose attitude should be that of influencing politics. He said that the subjects chosen for discussion, that is research and innovation, energy, flexicurity and immigration, are of public interest and should encourage civil society to participate actively in the debate thus ensuring for a civil society which is at the forefront in the development of Europe's politics.

Dr Joanna Drake, Head of the European Commission's Representation Office in Malta, also emphasised the important role civil society has when shaping policies to be adopted by the European Union. Dr Drake reiterated that both *Forum Malta fl-Ewropa* and Fondazzjoni Temi Zammit have the tools to make this project a success because both organisations have civil society at heart. She said that the Commission's choice to target women and youths is an optimal choice as it is they who play a crucial role in the formation of the societies to come.

Dr Gabriella Pace, Chief Executive, *Forum Malta fl-Ewropa*, acknowledged the importance of this project to *Forum*'s role as the key player in bringing the European Union closer to Maltese citizens as well as that of creating a structured public space within which civil society could contribute directly to the debate. Dr Pace emphasised FME's role "as the national reference point on EU-related affairs", with its three main areas of competence being, the dissemination of information on EU-related issues, the facilitation of consultation with stakeholders on EU pipeline *acquis*, as well as support and awareness with regard to access to EU funding opportunities. Dr Pace said that the Commission's input towards this project augurs well and emphasised on the need for discussion to be objective and impartial by including all stakeholders. *Forum*'s CEO once again encouraged civil society to take an active role in this project.

Jesmond Xuereb, Chief Executive, Fondazzjoni Temi Zammit gave a detailed presentation of the project. "Say EU…and Action" will seek to involve all the NGOs who work in close collaboration with the target groups chosen so as to ensure an in-depth discussion of the salient issues. Mr Xuereb again stressed the relevance of the chosen topics to this debate, while thanking *Forum Malta fl-Ewropa* for the active role taken in this initiative and the Permanent Representation for its financial support.

The project will be set in various stages with the first public working groups/debates set to commence in January 2008, followed by two conferences: one will be held in Malta in July and another will be held in Gozo in August. An internet portal will be designed to include online polls, forums, a multimedia section, and FAQs which will be compiled following each working group and or/debate with answers from the European Institutions. A virtual postcard will also be created to incorporate the most salient arguments brought up during these working group and/or debates through the use of video clips. The final report and evaluation of this project will be convened in September 2008.

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STQARRIJA GĦALL-ISTAMPA

‘Say EU….and Action!’

Forum Malta fl-Ewropa, flimkien mal-Fondazzjoni Temi Żammit, illum nieda proġett ġdid bit-titlu “Say EU, and…Action!”, li 70% ta’ l-ispejjeż involuti fit-twettieq tiegħu se jkunu ffinanzjati mill-Kummissjoni Ewropea permezz tad-Direttorat Ġenerali tal-Komunikazzjoni. Dan il-proġett qiegħed jiġi ppreżentat fil-qafas tal-Pjan D għad-Demokrazija, id-Djalogu u d-Dibattitu dwar il-futur ta’ l-Unjoni Ewropea.

Waqt li kien qiegħed jindirizza l-Konferenza Stampa li nediet dan il-proġett, l-Onor. Michael Frendo, Ministru ta’ l-Affarijiet Barranin, irringrazzja lill-*Forum Malta fl-Ewropa* u lill-Fondazzjoni Temi Żammit ta’ l-inizjattiva tagħhom biex japplikaw għas-sejħa ta’ proġetti kif proposta mill-Kummissjoni Ewropea sabiex jiġġedded id-djalogu bejn is-soċjetà ċivili u l-Unjoni Ewropea. Huwa rringrazzja

wkoll lill-Kummissjoni Ewropea, li waqt il-Konferenza Stampa ta' llum kienet rappreżentata minn Dr Joanna Drake, tal-fiduċja li wriet f'dan il-proġett bħala għodda biex titnaqqas id-distanza virtwali bejn iċ-ċittadini u l-Unjoni Ewropea. Il-Ministru Frendo saħaq dwar l-importanza ta' soċjetà pro-attiva, li tagħraf kif tinfluwenza l-politika ta' l-UE. Huwa qal li s-suġġetti magħżula: ir-riċerka u l-innovazzjoni, l-enerġija, il-flessigurtà u l-immigrazzjoni, għandhom ikunu ta' interess għall-pubbliku Malti kollu u għandhom jinkoraġġixxu lis-soċjetà ċivili biex tipparteċipa b'mod attiv fid-dibattitu biex tiżgura li s-soċjetà ċivili tkun minn ta' quddiem fit-tħejjija tal-politika ta' l-Unjoni Ewropea.

Dr Joanna Drake, Kap ta' l-Uffiċju tar-Rappreżentanza tal-Kummissjoni Ewropea f'Malta, ukoll għamlet enfażi fuq ir-rwol importanti li għandha s-soċjetà ċivili fl-istrutturar tat-tmexxija ta' l-Unjoni Ewropea. Dr Drake saħqet li kemm il-*Forum Malta f-Ewropa* kif ukoll il-Fondazzjoni Temi Żammit għandhom l-għodda meħtieġa biex jagħmlu suċċess minn dan il-proġett peress li ż-żewġ organizzazzjonijiet għandhom għal qalbhom is-socjetà ċivili. Hija qalet li l-għażla tal-Kummissjoni nnifisha biex il-proġett jiffoka fuq in-nisa u ż-żgħażagħ hija tassew għażla tajba peress li dawn għandhom sehem importanti fil-formazzjoni tas-soċjetajiet futuri.

Dr Gabriella Pace, Kap Eżekuttiv tal-*Forum Malta fl-Ewropa*, qalet li l-*Forum* jagħraf l-importanza ta' dan il-proġett għaliex huwa proprju l-*Forum Malta fl-Ewropa* li għandu jservi ta' pont li jqarreb 'l-Unjoni Ewropea lejn is-socjetà Maltija, sabiex b'hekk il-*Forum* ikun tassew ta' servizz għall-pubbliku Malti kollu. Dr Pace kompliet tgħid li l-*Forum* għandu jservi bħala punt ta' referenza nazzjonali dwar affarijiet relatati ma' l-UE, u li għaldaqstant għandu tliet kompetenzi: id-disseminazzjoni ta' l-informazzjoni dwar temi relatati ma' l-UE, l-iffaċilitar tal-konsultazzjoni dwar proposti leġislattivi, kif ukoll l-għoti ta' tagħrif u għajnuna lil min ikun qed ifittex opportunitajiet ta' fondi Ewropej. Hija qalet li s-

sehem tal-Kummissjoni f'dan il-proġett jawgura tajjeb u li l-*Forum* jagħraf il-bżonn ta' diskussjoni oġġettiva u imparzjali billi jiġu involuti l-i*stakeholders* kollha. Il-Kap Eżekuttiv tal-*Forum* għal darb'oħra inkoraġġiet lis-soċjetà ċivili biex tieħu rwol attiv u tipparteċipa f'dan il-proġett.

Jesmond Xuereb, Kap Eżekuttiv tal-Fondazzjoni Temi Żammit ta spjegazzjoni dettaljata tal-proġett. "Say EU…and Action" se jaħdem mill-qrib partikolarment ma' l-għaqdiet mhux governattivi taż-żgħażagħ u tan-nisa sabiex ikun żgurat il-kontribut tagħhom f'dan id-dibattitu. Is-Sur Xuereb saħaq dwar ir-relevanza tas-suġġetti magħzula għal dawn it-taħditiet, filwaqt li rringrazzja lill-*Forum Malta fl-Ewropa* għas-sehem tiegħu f'dan il-proġett u l-Uffiċju tar-Rappreżentanza tal-Kummissjoni Ewropea f'Malta ta' l-għajnuna finanzjarja.

Il-proġett mistenni li jkun maqsum f'diversi fażijiet. Il-*working groups* għandhom jibdew jiltaqgħu minn Jannar tas-sena d-dieħla, waqt li żewġ konferenzi għandhom ikunu organizzati f'Malta kif ukoll f'Għawdex. F'Malta din il-konferenza ser tinżamm f'Lulju, waqt li f'Awwissu għandha tiġi organizzata t-tieni konferenza ġewwa Għawdex. Għandu wkoll jinħoloq sit elettroniku li se jkun jinkludi votazzjonijiet elettroniċi, *forums*, *multimedia section*, kif ukoll paġna li se tinkludi mistoqsijiet mill-parteċipanti ta' kull *working group* u r-risposti mwassla mill-Istituzzjonijiet Ewropej. Kartolina postali virtwali għandha tiġi ddisinjata sabiex tinkludi punti mid-diskussjonijiet ta' waqt il-*working groups*. F' Settembru 2008 huwa mistenni li jkun ippreżentat ir-rapport finali kif ukoll l-evalwazzjoni tal-proġett.

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