

'Taking on the challenge'

FRANCESCA VELLA

Sweden could not have chosen a better slogan for its working programme as it assumes the presidency of the European Union till the end of the year. It certainly needs to "take on the challenge" as Europe slowly recovers from the economic crisis, and as Sweden leads the EU to bring everyone on board for a new international climate agreement.

The Ambassador of Sweden to Malta, Ulla Gudmundson, said during a public dialogue organised by the Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC) that the EU will push to raise the 2020 target for carbon dioxide emissions from 20 per cent to 30 per cent.

"We need to get the major

carbon dioxide emitters on board – the US, China and India – as well as middle income countries such as Mexico, Brazil and South Africa."

The Swedish presidency's priorities are mostly focused on three areas that are increasingly shaping the world – the economy, employment and climate change.

The presidency is giving priority to action regarding measures that limit unemployment, reduce exclusion and help people return to work.

Better regulation, financial stability and better access to capital are also considered as necessary points when dealing with the business sector, particularly when addressing SMEs. The presidency is look-

ing for a good business climate with simple rules.

Foreign Affairs Minister Tonio Borg, who also participated in yesterday's public dialogue, said that given the current political and economic climate, the EU must seize opportunities to work with other international partners such as the United Nations, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the Commonwealth.

"We should devise policies that guarantee peace and security, particularly in areas that most require our help, such as the Middle East, the Horn of Africa and Afghanistan.

"We have been stricken by a financial crisis that has drastically reduced export revenue for developing states that

depend on our capricious demands for their survival. Various countries have relapsed into poverty, and they have few chances to recover since their arable land has been greatly damaged and rendered unproductive by the impacts of climate change."

On justice and home affairs, the Swedish presidency's challenge is to further develop cooperation in areas where cooperation across national borders provides added value.

The presidency intends to adopt a new strategic work programme for the entire policy area – the so-called Stockholm Programme.

The programme is to specify the framework and focus of EU cooperation in 2010-2014 in areas such as police, border and customs issues, legal mat-

ters and asylum, migration and certainty, and transparency.

The EU global approach to migration is an important tool to strengthen the positive link between migration and development, to deepen dialogue and cooperation with countries outside the EU and to counteract irregular migration without undermining anyone's opportunity to seek asylum.

Work is also set to continue on the development of the European Neighbourhood Policy. Particular focus will be placed on the implementation of the Eastern Partnership and to work for closer cooperation with neighbouring countries in the Mediterranean region, within the framework of the Union of the Mediterranean, for instance.

Government issues call for expressions of interest for public transport

NOEL GRIMA

A year and a week after the public transport strike, the government yesterday issued an international call for expressions of interest for the running of a reformed public transport system in Malta.

The call for expressions of interest was published both on the Government Gazette and on the Official Journal of the EU.

Interested parties have until 15 September to express their interest.

The tender proper will be issued in October and only those who have expressed their interest will be eligible to apply.

The government announcement stated that the reformed public transport system will mean more services and facilities. There will be more bus routes to and from Valletta but also between different villages and towns. The new service will be based on five nodes – Birkirkara, Mater Dei, MIA, Sliema, etc – connected by means of swift transport, surrounded by more Park & Ride facilities.

The hours of service will be longer than today and the operator will be bound to keep the buses clean, with air-conditioning, and bus drivers with a proper attitude and uniform. The bus fleet will be renewed to be less polluting.

Any organisation interested in offering this service, the government statement said, can get more information from ADT or from www.maltatransport.com/reform.

For Worse not For Better

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But the reality is not as bad as the TPPI depicts it, divorce does not offer any solution and indeed, in some cases, divorce had made situations worse.

The Curia said the report has a main author and lists board members without saying whether the members agree with the report, or how far they do so. Readers are given no references supporting the findings of the report, which has various mistakes where statistics are concerned.

The report mixes up separations, nullity declarations and divorce, and goes on to reach wrong conclusions based on these. The author says that many of those who separate, go on to cohabit and bear children, when in fact about 18.7 per

cent go on to cohabit. The report claims that the children of couples who cohabit have no legitimacy.

The author says that new relationships formed after a marriage break up are happy, when in fact married couples are happier than cohabiting couples, the Curia said. The report reaches the conclusion, not backed by research, that pro-divorce legislation does not lead to more marriage break-ups. Various studies, the Curia said, show that the contrary is the case and some say that pro-divorce legislation is the cause of more marriage break-ups. A recent study in 18 European countries claims that pro-divorce legislation has caused 20 per cent more marriage break-ups.

It is claimed by those who are in favour of divorce that society

is more stable with divorce because there are fewer cohabitations and births outside marriage. But, the Curia said, facts show otherwise. Wherever divorce has been introduced, the marriage rate has gone down and cohabitations have gone up in number.

The report discusses the harm done to children while a marriage is in the process of breaking up, but it does not say anything about the harmful effects which divorce and another relationship have on children.

The Curia said it seems that the TPPI report proposes pro-divorce legislation because of negative social situations in society. Studies have shown that with divorce none of these situations has improved, nor did any have its effects lessened.

Out of stock medicines and pensioners

Pensioners are being made to shuttle to and fro in search of medicines which they find are out of stock, the UHM said. These pensioners go to collect their medicines from the pharmacy of their choice and

are informed the medicine is out of stock.


They then go to health centre pharmacies, where they also find the medicine to be out of stock, the union said. This was leading to an increase in their

costs because they are having to buy medicines which they are entitled to for free.

The union called on social policy minister John Dalli to ensure that the situation does not continue.

PREVIEW TODAY
Sacha Baron Cohen

brüno
Borat was so 2006



EDEN CINEMAS ST JULIANS
EMPIRE CINEMA COMPLEX BUGIBBA
EMBASSY CINEMA WORLD VALLETTA

Today's weather forecast

MAX
34°C

MIN UV INDEX
22°C 10

GENERAL SITUATION: High pressure extends from the Atlantic to Libya, as a trough of low pressure from the British Isles to the Western Mediterranean is moving eastwards.

the evening
VISIBILITY: Good
WIND: Light West to Southwest, becoming locally light to moderate at times, veering West to Northwest during

SEA: Slight becoming slight to moderate
SWELL: Negligible
SEA TEMPERATURE: 25°C

WEATHER: Sunny becoming fine in