

Splendid performance by Maltese soprano in Portugal

Soprano Ruth Sammut Casingena gave a splendid performance of Maltese traditional songs and contemporary adaptations in the historical city of Evora at the start of a three-day tour in Portugal representing Vittoriosa.

Accompanied by her team of Maltese dancers Jes Sciberras, Angelo Bonello, Dianne Portelli and Pamela Baldacchino Kerr, Ms Sammut Casingena was the highlight of the open-air festival held in the central square of Evora in a 40-minute performance that captured the enthusiasm of the crowd led by the Mayor of Evora, Ernesto Oliveira.

Ms Sammut Casingena was given a prolonged standing ovation by the audience at Giraldo Square in the heart of the historical city.

Mr Oliveira met Ms Sammut Casingena and her troupe after the show to personally congratulate them and said that like the city of Vittoriosa, Evora had a long history

that represented the national spirit and that similarly, a thriving tourist trade helps both cities and their people project their country to the numerous visitors from all over the world who annually visit them.

The performance in Evora on Friday was followed by similar successful performances in Mertola on Saturday and Idana-a-Nova on Sunday.

The three festivals held in Portugal fall under the European Union sponsored Oralities Project that aims to help eight participating cities to share and exchange cultural values through music and language.

In October the local council of Vittoriosa will host the festival Music of the South.

Ms Sammut Casingena performed in another Oralities programme event in Vittoriosa last May together with three foreign groups: Roda Pe, representing Evora, Os Alentejanos, representing Mertola and Klez, representing Ravenna.



Public dialogue: Presentation of the Programme of the Swedish EU Presidency

The Embassy of Sweden in Malta and the Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee (Meusac) are holding a public dialogue at the Hotel Phoenicia, Floriana on Friday at 11am, to discuss the priorities of the Swedish presidency of the EU.

Sweden took over the EU rotating presidency for six months on 1 July. In the words of Sweden's Prime Minister, Fredrik Reinfeldt, "it's going to be a very exciting six months, but the task before us is not an easy one. I'm looking forward to tackling the autumn's challenges together."

Dealing with the financial crisis and tackling the rising unemployment that is currently affecting the whole of Europe together with climate change are the two priorities that will dominate the Swedish presidency. Other priorities for Sweden are: within Justice and Home Affairs, the "Stockholm

Programme" including asylum and migration issues; environment and growth in the Baltic Sea region; promoting the EU as a global actor; as well as EU Institutional issues.

At the public dialogue on Friday, the discussion will be opened by Ulla Gudmundson, Ambassador of Sweden to Malta, who will present Sweden's programme and outline its priorities for the next six months. Her intervention will be followed by that of Foreign Minister Tonio Borg, who will provide an insight into Malta's reactions, perspectives and priorities for this semester.

This will be followed by a question and answer session with contributions from the floor.

Participation is free of charge, but prior registration is required in view of seating restrictions. Registrations should reach Meusac by tomorrow on info.meusac@gov.mt.

Substandard housing is still a problem – Galdes

The story about the housing situation of an elderly woman, carried in the electronic newspaper *Maltastar* shows that the housing problem is still around and affecting the most vulnerable sector of society, Labour MP Roderick Galdes, party spokesman for planning and housing said. The woman lives in a substandard house in Pieta and it is not acceptable that she has been on the Housing Authority waiting list for eight years.

There are several people in similar circumstances who are not being paid any attention by the Housing Authority, Mr Galdes said. The authority has 2,600 cases of families asking for state aid and it is the government's duty to provide social assistance to the needy. To date the government has no targets about solving

Information stand for students at Mater Dei Hospital



Prospective students interested in the health care courses offered by the Institute of Health Care (IHC) of the University of Malta, may obtain information and discuss their interest with academic members of staff who are available at a stand set for the purpose at Mater Dei Hospital foyer, between 13-19 July, during the hospital main visiting hours. The stand is manned daily between 3 and 6pm and on Sunday morning between 10am and noon.

Health Parliamentary Secretary Joseph Cassar, who visited the stand, highlighted the specific characteristics which are associated with health care professions – particularly:

- the vast opportunities for international networking providing overseas experiences to both students and qualified staff across the professions;
- the extensive opportunities for both career and academic progression for qualified staff;
- the diversity of roles within professions as health care

to community and primary health care settings; and clearly

• the job security complementing health care professions against a climate of significant health care services expansion, in response to increased and diverse health care demands.

Dr Cassar reiterated that such characteristics indeed augur well to favourable interest among potential recruits towards educational programmes in health care professions.

Sandra Buttigieg, director of the Institute of Health Care, said that a career in the health sector gives one the opportunity to work in different settings from acute care to long term care, research, education, management and policy development.

"A caring profession offers much job satisfaction since one will be responsible for the direct care of the patient or client. The opportunities for young people to join the health profession are ever increasing. A career in this area helps them become an integral part of a global car-

in order to meet the needs of the health service sector in Malta, the Institute of Health Care offers courses at various levels. All courses offered are in line with international requirements in order to ensure professional standards," Dr Buttigieg said.

The Institute of Health Care offers studies in 12 areas, however it is the Nursing and Midwifery Divisions that attract the largest number of students. This year, IHC marks the 20th anniversary of the introduction of Nursing and Midwifery Studies into the curriculum of the University of Malta.

Over the past 20 years, over 1,500 nurses and midwives have completed a course of studies within the IHC, with nearly 400 obtaining an undergraduate degree and 28 a postgraduate degree. A total of nine programmes of studies at both undergraduate and postgraduate level are offered.

Further information regarding IHC courses may be obtained by sending an email to Student Advisory Services: sas@um.edu.mt or to The Institute, of Health Care: