Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

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PRESS RELEASE

MEUSAC-PPCD Seminar on EU Territorial Cooperation Programmes

The *Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee* (MEUSAC), in collaboration with the Planning and Priorities Coordination Division of the Office of the Prime Minister (PPCD), today organised a half-day seminar on Territorial Cooperation Opportunities aimed at local councils. In fact, this is one in a series of information seminars which are being organised specifically for local councils.

In his opening address, MEUSAC Head Dr Vanni Xuereb said that MEUSAC is doing its utmost to ensure the best possible assistance to local councils both through the dissemination of information on funding opportunities as well through practical assistance including that relating to project applications. Dr Xuereb reiterated that MEUSAC is strengthening its structure by recruiting more staff within the Information Unit and the Funding Unit so as to ensure that local councils, civil society organisations as well as the general public are well served. He stated that another important tool within MEUSAC and which should benefit local councils is the consultation process on proposed EU legislation. Dr Xuereb encouraged councillors to sound their views through the Local Council Association on the position to be taken by Government in the Council of Ministers.

Dr. Gabriella Pace, Head of the Information Unit within MEUSAC emphasised the importance of disseminating information on EU funding programmes. She encouraged local councils to work together in order for their localities to benefit more from such programmes.

Mr. Stephen Calleja, Director (*Programmes and Projects*) within the PPCD, introduced the Unit responsible for the European Territorial Cooperation Objective of the Structural Funds. Mr Calleja noted the interest registered by local councils in partipating in projects funded by the 2004-2006 financial programme. He encouraged local councils to keep the national priorities in mind when submitting project applications.

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Programmes on Territorial Cooperation Opportunities aim at encouraging the exchange, sharing and transfer of policy experience, knowledge and good practices by European regions and cities. PPCD officials delivered in-depth presentations on the various programmes and explained available funding possibilities for local councils willing to submit project proposals under theses programmes.

Projects submitted under the Programmes on Territorial Cooperation Opportunities are 85% co-financed by the Structural Funds. The remaining 15% is to be forked by the local councils.

Ms. Maria Schembri, Head of the Funding Unit within MEUSAC, explained the tailor-made servives which MEUSAC offers to local councils.

Particpants had the opportunity to listen to experiences of local ocuncils which have benefited under previous programmes. ***Cultexchange*** is a project conducted by the Mosta Local Council and its Sicilian partner. The aim of the project was the restoration of two Paleo-Christian catacombs. ***Medcypre,*** a project conducted by 15 partners, of which the Imgarr Local Council, led to the planting of 2500 cypress trees in two localities in Imgarr. As part of the project studies were conducted to determine the soil formation in the areas where the trees were planted. The **Cospicua Local Council** conducted a project titled **CSM/Emedit** whose aim was to advertise small historic centres, their products and traditions. **Medcoasnet,** a project conducted by the **Vittoriosa Local Council** and the **Fondazzjoni Temi Zammit**, together with partners from other European Union member states, to create a permanent network of authorities and agencies involved in the sustainable management of coastal urban Meidterranean zones.

While delivering the closing address, the Parliamentary Secretary for Public Dialogue and Information, Dr. Chris Said, stated that practical assistance to local councils and dissemination of information on EU funding oportunities is being given great importance by the Government to ensure that local councils maximise on the opportunities offered by EU funding programmes. This will be further strengthened by means of a co-financing fund which is to be launched this coming Wednesday.

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STQARRIJA GĦALL-ISTAMPA

Il-MEUSAC u l-PPCD jorganizzaw Seminar dwar il-Programmi ta' Kooperazzjoni Territorjali Ewropea

Il-*Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee* (MEUSAC), b' kollaborazzjoni mad-Diviżjoni għall-Ippjanar u Koordinazzjoni tal-Prioritajiet (PPCD) fl-Uffiċċju tal-Prim Ministru, illum organizza laqgħa oħra ta' informazzjoni għall-kunsilli lokali dwar il-Programmi ta' Kooperazzjoni Territorjali Ewropea. Fil-fatt din il-laqgħa hija waħda minn sensiela ta' inizjattivi informattivi li qed jiġu organizzati speċifikament għall-benefiċċju tal-kunsilli lokali.

Fl-indirizz tiegħu, il-Kap tal-MEUSAC, Dott. Vanni Xuereb, qal li l-MEUSAC qed jagħmel l-almu tiegħu biex joffri kull tip ta' assistenza lill-kunsilli lokali, kemm permezz ta' tixrid ta' informazzjoni dwar l-opportunitajiet ta' fondi permezz ta' programmi tal-Unjoni Ewropea kif ukoll permezz ta' assistenza prattika u diretta fil-mili tal-applikazzjoni għall-proġetti taħt dawn il-programmi. Huwa sostna li xhieda ta' dan huwa t-tisħiħ tat-Taqsima tal-Informazzjoni kif ukoll it-Taqsima tal-Fondi tal-MEUSAC biex jingħata l-aħjar servizz possibli lill-kunsilli lokali, minbarra lill-entitajiet oħra u lill-pubbliku. Dott. Xuereb tenna li l-MEUSAC huwa wkoll strument fejn issir konsultazzjoni fuq liġijiet ġodda tal-UE u ħeġġeg lill-kunsilliera preżenti biex joffru l-veduti tagħhom dwar il-pożizzjoni li l-Gvern Malti jieħu fil-Kunsill tal-UE permezz tal-Assoċjazzjoni tal-Kunsilli Lokali.

Dott. Gabriella Pace, responsabbli mit-Taqsima ta' Informazzjoni tal-MEUSAC, saħqet dwar l-importanza għad-disseminazzjoni ta' informazzjoni biex il-kunsilli jkunu nfurmati dwar l-opportunitajiet li hemm miftuħa għalihom. Hija ħeġġet lill-kunsilli lokali biex jaħdmu flimkien biex jibbenefikaw aktar mill-programmi ta' fondi tal-Unjoni Ewropea.

Is-Sur Stephen Calleja, Direttur (*Programmes and Projects*) fi ħdan id-Diviżjoni għall-Ippjanar u Koordinazzjoni tal-Prioritajiet, introduċa t-taqsima fi ħdan il-PPCD li tieħu ħsieb dan il-Programm. Huwa ta' ħarsa lejn il-programmi li jaqgħu taħt il-kappa tal-Programmi ta'

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Kooperazzjoni Territorjali Ewropea. Is-Sur Calleja semma l-interess tal-kunsilli lokali biex jipparteċipaw fi proġetti ffinanzjati mill-programmi li tagħhom hija responsabbli din it-taqsima tant li taħt il-Programm 2004 - 2006 saru madwar 56 proġett. Huwa ħeġġeġ lill-kunsilli lokali jaqraw tajjeb id-dokumentazzjoni kif ukoll il-ħtiġijiet nazzjonali sabiex in-numru ta' applikazzjonjiet eliġbbli għal-finanzjament jiżdied.

Il-Programmi ta' Kooperazzjoni Territorjali Ewropea huma intiżi biex jinkoraġġixxu reġjuni u bliet minn pajjiżi membri tal-Unjoni Ewropea biex jaħdmu flimkien u jitgħallmu mingħand xulxin permezz ta' programmi konġunti, proġetti u *networks*. Uffiċjali mid-Diviżjoni għall-Ippjanar u Koordinazzjoni tal-Prioritajiet, taw preżentazzjonijiet dettaljati dwar dawn il-Programmi u spjegaw lill-parteċipanti x'possibiltajiet jeżistu għall-kunsilli lokali biex jidħlu għal proġetti taħt dawn il-programmi.

Il-proġetti taħt il-kappa tal-Programmi ta' Kooperazzjoni Territorjali Ewropea huma ffinanzjati b' 85% titħallas mill-Fondi Strutturali waqt li l-15% l-oħra tal-ispiża titħallas mil-kunsill lokali.

Maria Schembri, responsabbli mit-Taqsima tal-Fondi tal-MEUSAC tat għajnuniet prattiċi dwar kif il-kunsilli lokali jistgħu japplikaw għal proġetti taħt il-Programmi ta' Kooperazzjoni Territorjali Ewropea.

Il-parteċipanti kellhom l-opportunità jisimgħu esperjenzi ta' kunsilli lokali li bbenefikaw minn fondi tal-Unjoni Ewropea u li għamlu proġetti li ħallew riżultati tanġibbli. Fost dawn kien hemm il-**Kunsill Lokali tal-Mosta permezz tal-proġett *Cultexchange*,** li flimkien ma' msieħba minn Sqallija, niedew proġett għar-restawr ta' żewġ katakombi Paleo-Kristjani fil-lokalità tagħhom; **il-proġett *Medcypre* mill-Kunsill Lokali tal-Imġarr** li twettaq flimkien ma' ħmistax-il imsieħeb ieħor minn pajjizi madwar l-Unjoni Ewropea biex jitħawlu 2500 siġra taċ-ċipress f'żewġ lokalitajiet differenti fl-Imġarr, kif ukoll studju tal-kundizzjoni tal-art li fiha ġew imħawla dawn is-siġar; **il-proġett CSM/Emedit mill-Kunsill Lokali ta' Bormla**, li ngħaqad ma' msieħba minn pajjiżi membri oħra biex flimkien jirreklamaw ċentri żgħar storiċi, il-prodotti u t-tradizzjonijiet partikolari tagħhom; u **l-proġett Medcoasnet Project mill-Kunsill Lokali tal-Birgu u l-Fondazzjoni Temi Zammit**, flimkien ma' msieħba oħra minn pajjizi Ewropej, li ħolqu netwerk permanenti ta' awtoritajiet u aġenziji nvoluti fl-immaniġġjar sostenibbli ta' żoni urbani kostali fil-Mediterran.

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Fl-indirizz tal-għeluq is-Segretarju Parlamentari għall-Konsultazzjoni Pubblika u Informazzjoni, l-Onor. Chris Said, li saħaq li l-kunsilli lokali u l-finanzjament tagħhom qed jingħataw importanza massima mill-Gvern biex ikunu jistgħu jibbenefikaw mill-programmi ta' fondi tal-Unjoni Ewropea. Dott. Said qal li din l-għajnuna għandha tiżdied hekk kif nhar l-Erbgħa għandu jkun varat fond għall-ko-finanzjament għall-proġetti li jkunu se jwettqu l-kunsilli lokali permezz ta' programmi ta' fondi tal-UE.

MEUSAC – 13.02.2009