

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE GOZO BUSINESS CHAMBER
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INSULEUR FORUM – “PIRAEUS 2009”



President Joe Grech and Treasury Tony Bezzina have represented the Gozo Business Chamber at the last INSULEUR FORUM held in Piraeus, Greece.

The main topics discussed during the meeting were the problems and challenges faced by the islands forming part of EU when compared to the mainland, and how to drive the message home that the people living in islands, 21 million in the whole EU including Malta and Cyprus compared to the 500 million living in the whole EU, had equal rights as those living on the mainland. The 'one size fits all' does not apply to people living in islands. The same that applies to the island often applies to the European Union.

It was evident that many of the problems faced by these islands were very similar to each other resulting from insularity due to the peripheral location leading to communications and transport/accessibility problems, small size of local market leading to adverse economies of scale, a higher level of jobless people, normally less taken care of by the country's government, problems related to energy and water and local dynamics (aging population and emigration) amongst others. On the other hand such islands normally are strong on tourism and crafts.

The speakers mentioned two different cases of two Greek islands that succeeded in boosting tourism. The first was an island where all form of hunting was absolutely prohibited and the island invested in infrastructure with some 60km of pathways for walking



holidays. The island soon flourished with birds and it became very popular with tourists coming from other Greek areas for a rest. At first the mayor was requested to resign by the local reasoning that he was doing the wrong decisions. Having seen the increase in tourism these same people now state that they would shoot any hunter who would dare use their island as a hunting ground.

Another island was in the periphery of Greece and had no proper access with only one month of tourism and just 50 beds for visitors. The locals invested in a ship and the island now is accessible to another island. After only a few years the beds have increased to 1000 and tourism season has extended from one month to five months.

The main effort that will have to continue to be made by the islands is to continue with its pressure groups requesting the country's government to place the islanders on the same footing as those residing on the mainland. At the same time these islands are to continue with their lobby to attain more funds and attention from the European Union.

The main aims of Insuleur will continue to be the collaboration of its members with the view to support the island regions of the European Union:

- To put an end to isolation, put forward their particularities and formulate propositions for the solution of their problems.
- To elaborate an integrated policy for the development of their regions and to collaborate closely, in this respect, with European institutions, as well as with government and non-governmental organisations.
- To encourage initiatives, projects and perspectives concerning the economic development of the island regions of the European Union.
- To record the specific problems of undertakings in the island regions of the European Union, study them and submit original propositions.
- To organise information and research activities with the view to facilitate the realisation of the above objectives.

EU Service Directive

Vice President Michael Grech and CEO Joseph G. Grech recently represented the Gozo Business Chamber at a business seminar organised by the Malta Business Bureau in connection with the upcoming implementation of the EU Services Directive.

The aim of the Seminar was to analyse the implications and to discuss the ongoing process linked to the imminent transposition of the EU Services Directive which had to come into effect in December 2009. This directive would propel a number of amendments to local licensing regulations affecting a wide cross-section of local business sectors such as the travel and tourism industry, as well as the regulated professions like auditing and engineering, besides the general licensing regulations.

The first speaker was the Hon. Tonio Fenech, Minister of Finance, the Economy and Investment, who said, among other things, that one of the most frequent assertions that we tend to make when referring to the Maltese market is that “our market is too small”. The Minister pointed out that the introduction of the Services Directive into the Maltese legislation “in support of our participation in the EU's half billion strong Single Market, will consign such statement to history”.

Buoy for Cruise liners at Xlendi



The long awaited buoy to aid cruise liners moor off Xlendi Bay has been laid. This is a move in the right direction and the Gozo Business Chamber hopes that now more cruise liners will be able to visit Gozo. Visits to Gozo by cruise liners help not only to publicise Gozo as a tourist destination but also generate business out of which the whole of Gozo benefits.

Council for 2010 – 2011

The new Council of the Gozo Business Chamber for 2010 – 2011 has been elected and announced during the Chamber's Annual General Meeting. It is formed of the following:-

Mr. Joe Grech	President
Mr. Michael Grech	Vice President
Mr. Renzo Curmi	Secretary
Mr. Anthony Bezzina	Treasurer
Mr. Michael Galea	PRO
Ms. Charmaine Vella	Membership Officer
Mr. Charlie Axiak	Member
Mr. Joe Borg	Member
Mr. Emanuel Caruana	Member
Mr. Emanuel Cini	Member
Mr. John Saliba	Member
Mr. Joe Spiteri	Member
Mr. Dominic Sultana	Member
Ms Noella Vella	Member
Mr. Joseph G. Grech	CEO

European SME Week 2010

European SME Week 2010 will take place from 25 May to 1 June in all EU member states, including Malta. Events in Malta will include various activities ranging from dialogues with students, to a roadshow in various commercial communities, to seminars and press conferences. On 31 May, the Enterprise Bus with major business support agencies will visit Gozo and hold dialogues with the local business community.

Presentation on Waste Compliance Schemes

The Council has recently attended for a presentation by Mr Joe Attard of GreenMt on Waste Compliance Schemes. The meeting was held at the Gozo Business Chamber and Mr Attard gave a detailed explanation of how the scheme works and how the different entrepreneurs can participate. It is now intended that a similar meeting will be held for other interested members.

Companies to be assisted to trade abroad through franchise agreements

At a recent meeting held at the Gozo Business Chamber between representatives from the GBC, Malta Enterprise, the Commonwealth Secretariat, as well as with the International Franchising Centre (UK), it was agreed that the GBC would team up with Malta Enterprise and the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry to help local businesses spread their wings abroad through franchise agreements.

Franchising allows businesses to set up branches or clones of an existing brand in another country, using the franchisor's business format such as the business model, established trademarks, corporate image signage, proprietary products and systems.

Additionally, a good number of Maltese companies holding a franchise licence for Malta have managed to extend their licence and set up franchise retail operations in North Africa, as well as to other European countries.

On the other hand, a few Maltese and Gozitan companies had also reached agreements to be represented abroad. The government wants to see this number grow.

The Commonwealth Secretariat, through its Special Advisory Services Division (SASD), will

be supporting this project on internal capacity building and through the development of a franchise support programme for Malta and Gozo.

To do this the International Franchise Centre, has been engaged to assist and support ME and the Malta Chamber in implementing the development of a local SME franchise industry especially for companies having potential to internationalize and export their brand abroad.

ME and the Malta Chamber will work together to develop further this opportunity and potential for local brand names to operate both locally and abroad using the franchise formula.

One of the purposes of the project is to assist ME to support and encourage businesses to look beyond Malta and Gozo shores and explore the opportunities offered by the worldwide market. Hopefully, this will then lay the ground-work for a new scheme to be created so as to help entrepreneurs look beyond Malta's shores and explore the possibility of franchising their business abroad.

MCESD / MEUSAC Office in Gozo

Mr. Aldo Formosa has been appointed as the person responsible for the running of the newly set up MCESD / MEUSAC office in Gozo. The office

also serves as the meeting place for the Gozo Regional Committee of which the Gozo Business Chamber forms part.

Trade Delegation to the Gulf States

The President of the Gozo Business Chamber was invited to form part of a trade delegation to the Gulf States which was to be led by the Hon. Dr. L. Gonzi, Prime Minister. Prior to the departure date, members of the Gozo Business Chamber had the

opportunity to hold one-to-one meetings with the Chamber's President to provide information about their business and how contacts for future business with their foreign counterparts could be formed.

Contacts with Australia

As a result of a meeting held between the Australian High Commissioner for Malta and the Gozo Business Chamber, several members had the opportunity of meeting with Mr Damien Digby, President of the Maltese Australian Business and Professional Association of Victoria, Australia, who was in Malta to attend for the Convention for

Maltese living in other countries. During the meeting, discussions were held on the possibilities of the Gozitan entrepreneurs doing business with their Australian counterparts and also on how the Australian businessmen can make good use of Malta and Gozo's strategic position to reach the European and North African markets.

10th Anniversary of the Gozo Business Chamber

A Commemorative evening was held to mark the 10th Anniversary since the founding of the Gozo Business Chamber. A large number of members and guests led by Minister for Gozo, the Hon Giovanna Debono, and Minister of Finance, the Economy and Investment, the Hon Tonio Fenech, attended. In his welcome address, the President of the Chamber, Mr Joe Grech, gave a detailed account of the Chamber's origins which stemmed from the initiative of the Minister for Gozo and also of the hard work put in by the past and present Councils and members to put the Chamber on the map and, most importantly, to contribute its share towards the improvement of the investment and job creation to help Gozo's economy in general and the business community in particular.



On the other hand, the Minister for Gozo expressed her satisfaction about the running of the Chamber and about the great collaboration with her Ministry for the sustainable socio-economic development of the island. She explained how the Ministry for Gozo has helped the Chamber both financially and logistically and in the Gozo businesses' annual participation in the International Fair of Malta, among others.

The President reminded those present about the initiatives taken by the Chamber and the contribution it made, with regards to the regionality of Gozo, during the discussions held with the relevant local and EU authorities prior to Malta becoming a member of the EU. He also spoke about the many interventions with the authorities in favour of the business community in Gozo, especially in connection with the problems faced due to Gozo's double insularity and the very limited market. Among many other things, mention was made of the Chamber's active participation in regional and national committees, conferences and other fora as well as in international bodies like the Network of the Insular Chambers of Commerce of the European Union (INSULEUR) and the Observatory on Tourism of European Islands (OTIE), of which the Chamber's President is the Secretary General of the former and the Chamber is a founder member of the latter.



The evening's programme also included the appointment of the Past Presidents, Mr John Magro and Dr Michael Caruana LL.D, as Honorary Presidents of the Chamber in recognition of their past contribution in the setting up and running of the Chamber. Both were presented with a special memento of the occasion and, at the same time, were reminded that this occasion should not mean the end of their services to the Chamber but that it should serve as an open invitation for their continued support and contribution. In reply, both Mr Magro and Dr Caruana expressed their thanks and appreciation and, while promising their support when needed, encouraged the present members to strive hard for the Chamber's progress as there is always room for improvement and that this only depended on the abilities and interest of the members.

Two other presentations were made. Mr Robert Xerri B.A.(Hons) Acctcy., C.P.A., M.A.(ISSS), presented the Chamber with a copy of his M.A. Theses "The Role of the Private Sector in Small Island Developing States" while Mrs Alda Bugeja presented the Chamber with a hand woven logo of the Chamber. Members Alda Bugeja, George Farrugia, Kathleen Formosa and Andrew Xuereb were presented with certificates in connection with their successful participation in the EU Leonardo da Vinci programme project which helped them participate in further training in connection with their line of work in Austria, England and Poland.

Minister Fenech lauded the initiatives of the Gozitan entrepreneurs who, inspite of the small market and the great competition which they have to face in today's globalization, they not only survive but also prosper. He also spoke about the incentive schemes which government has launched especially for Gozitan businesses and urged one and all to make good use of them.

During the programme, the Chorus Urbanus gave several musical selections which delighted those present and which drew well merited applause.

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Ghaxar snin ta' fejda ghan-Negozju f'Ghawdex... Kuraġġ ghal sfidi ġodda quddiemna!

Kitba ta' Franco Masini li dehret fil-Hajja f'Ghawdex ta' Marzu 2010

Il-Kamra tan-Negozju ghal Ghawdex, maghrufa ahjar bhala l-*Gozo Business Chamber*, ghadha kif ghalqet ghaxar snin. Frott ta' hidma sfieqa fis-snin ta' qabel, din il-Kamra rnextielha mhux biss tistabbilixxi ruhha bhala korp importanti fi gżirtna iżda wettqet rwol importanti bhala r-rappreżentant tan-negozju Ghawdexi fl-isfond tal-ekonomija nazzjonali.



Fost l-ghanijiet importanti tal-Kamra wiehed jinnota li din thares u gġib 'il quddiem l-interessi tal-membri taghha, tghin biex jiġu mxejna jew almenu mnaqqsa d-diffikultajiet li jaffaċċja l-kummerċ f'Ghawdex, tippromwovi l-vantaġġi u l-oportunitajiet ghall-impriżi f'Ghawdex u tirrappreżenta lis-settur ġo fora reġjonali, nazzjonali u internazzjonali. Huma ghanijiet importanti u ambizzjużi. Iżda fil-mixja ta' ghaxar snin li l-Kamra ilha mwaqqfa ġa tat prova li tista' tilhaqhom. Naturalment hemm iktar ghalieħ ghandha tithabat ghalieħ il-preżent u l-futur qeghdin u sejrjn joffru aktar sfidi ghall-impreditur, kummerċjant u negozjant Ghawdexi. Il-Kamra taghmel tajjeb jekk tlesti ruhha ghal dawn l-isfidi. Ghandha thares lejn il-passat, tipprepara ruhha sewwa u titghallem minn xi nuqqasijiet li forsi tkun ghamlet fil-passat taghha. Huwa importanti hafna li mal-hafna membri li ghandha jinghaqdu dawk il-ftit li forsi s'issa ma rawx il-bżonn li jissieħbu maghha. L-ghaqda fis-settur tkun tisser li l-Kamra jkollha jedd ikbar ghar-rappreżentanza kemm ma' l-awtoritajiet kif ukoll fid-dehra taghha bhala l-korp awtentiku u ewlieni tan-negozju f'ghawdex.

Irridu nirrealizzaw illi s-settur tan-negozju huwa settur importanti hafna fil-hajja ekonomika u anke soċjali ta' Ghawdex. L-impreditur huwa dak li jkattar il-ġid, jiġġenera l-postijiet tax-xoghol u jghin biex iġib il-benesseri fil-pajjiż waqt li jkun hu li jassumi r-riskju finanzjarju b'ċertu sogru. Ghalhekk il-qasam tan-negozju huwa pedina importanti hafna fil-qasam ta' żvilupp ghal Ghawdex. Il-Kamra li tiġbor fiha nies fil-qasam tal-kummerċ hija ghalhekk importanti mhux biss ghan-nies f'dan is-settur iżda ghall-ġid ta' Ghawdex.

Hekk kif qed infakkru dawn l-ghaxar snin ta' fejda li l-Kamra ghexet b'risq Ghawdex, ma nistghux ma nfakkrux lill-protagonisti tal-Kamra u l-fundaturi taghha. Ghamlet sew il-Kamra li tat ġieħ liż-żewġ ex-presidenti taghha John Magro u l-Avukat Michael Caruana u onorathom bit-titolu ta' President Onorarji. Huma taw sehem prezzjuż fit-twaqqif u l-hidma tal-Kamra. Ma'

dawn wiehed irid ifakkar ukoll lill-membri tal-kumitat tal-Kamra matul l-ghaxar snin kif ukoll il-hidma kbira tad-direttur ġenerali Joe Grech li minghajrha l-Kamra ffit setgħet twettaq mill-ghanijiet taghha. Kelma ta' kuraġġ lill-President attwali Joe Grech li mexxa u qed imexxi l-Kamra fl-ghaxar anniversarju taghha.

Il-Kamra ghandha hafna sfidi quddiemha. Prinċipalment hemm l-iżvilupp li sejjer ikun hemm hekk kif is-shubija fl-Unjoni Ewropea tibqa tiżvilogi u tiżviluppa. Is-sehem li jmissu Ghawdex mill-fondi Ewropej kif ukoll is-sehem li gżirtna bi dritt tistenna mill-Gvern Ċentrali huma biss tnejn mill-elementi li l-Kamra trid tithabat ghalihom. Hemm imbagħad id-diffikultajiet li r-riċessjoni qed tohloq ghal gżirtna speċjalment bin-numru dejjem ikbar ta' nies bla xogħol li jfisser li riżorsa importanti ta' Ghawdex qed tinhela. Dan mhux biss b'nies li huma weqfin iżda bil-problema kbira ta' *brain drain* li ghad li hija karatteristika endemika ta' Ghawdex, tippronunzja ruhha iktar fi żmien ta' reċessjoni. Barra minn hekk meta u kif ir-rotta terġa' tibda ddrur ikun hemm bżonn ikbar tal-ghaqal, kreattivita' u hidma tal-kamra biex l-ekonomija Ghawdexija tirpilja mill-ewwel u tkun kapaċi tahtaf l-okkażjonijiet li jipprezentaw ruhhom.

L-ghaxar snin li ġejjin se jfissru hafna ghal din il-Kamra u wiehed ghandu ghax jittama li b'Kamra iktar b'saħħitha u b'hila akbar tkompli tghin biex Ghawdex jistagħna.

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Eco-Gozo

One cannot elaborate on eco-Gozo without first going through the term sustainable development, a term comprising the whole vision regarding Gozo as an eco-island. Sustainable development has become a catchword which remains quite vague for the man in the street. It advocates a philosophy of resource use that aims to meet human needs while preserving the environment so that these needs can be met not only in the present but also for future generations. The most often-quoted definition of sustainable development maintains that this is a development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Sustainable development ties together a concern for the carrying capacity of natural systems with the socio-economic challenges facing humanity. Thus it can be conceptually broken into 3 constituent parts namely, environmental sustainability, economic sustainability and social sustainability with cultural diversity as its fourth policy area. Sustainable development therefore implies a thriving economy in the long term, a society at peace with itself and its environment, and an environment which provides us with all that we require without degenerating.

Therefore, eco-Gozo is not merely thinking green, but a vision to achieve a stable and healthy environment for a better quality of life. It's not a quest to bring about environmental improvement on the island in isolation, but to think constantly of the environment in whatever we do as that fundamental element which determines our health, our well-being and what makes the island so



special. Essentially it is not a way of not doing, but doing in a way which does not impair either people or the environment.

Eco-Gozo is a long-term vision which will be achieved through the realisation of a set of measures which strive to improve the island on different levels and in different sectors related to sustainable development namely the environment, the economy, the social dimension, education, culture and identity. A set of objectives have been identified from a compendium of ideas received during a lengthy consultation process involving the island's people.

A series of proposals targeted for implementation in the short-term, i.e. 2010-2012 which have been published recently, are aimed at improving the Gozitan quality of life. This set of proposals, consolidated by the allocation of a €25 million budget for the next 3 years, is already in the implementation phase, and Government will actively seek to involve all stakeholders willing to partake in this major project for Gozo. In this regard, the local business community has a critical role in the achievement of the eco-Gozo targets.

The eco-Gozo mission statement is very explicit:

“Gozo will become an eco-island by 2020, supported by a keen and committed sustainable community. We want to see quality of life in Gozo improving further through education, economic development and social progress. Gozo will strive to reduce its carbon and water footprints. We want to protect the Gozitan lifestyle, the island's environment, resources, culture and identity and see that all these play a significant part in attracting more visitors and investors to the island.”

This is the way forward for a Sustainable Gozo – a better Gozo.

Launch of the Research Manufacturing Strategy

The Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST) has recently held a conference on the Launch of the Research Manufacturing Strategy for Malta. The objectives of the conference were to officially launch the process for developing the strategy; to sensitise the Manufacturing industry on the importance of research and innovation; and to disseminate information among others. Mr. David Galea, CEO of BEAT consulting, gave a presentation on the importance and need of the local manufacturing sector to increase emphasis on research, development and innovation. The conference was also addressed by Ing. Ray Muscat and Ing. Joseph Micallef.

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The Gozo Business Chamber's view about the Airstrip

In a recent interview about the building or not of an airstrip in Gozo, Mr Joe Grech, President of the Gozo Business Chamber commented thus:

“An efficient, reliable, affordable and time-saving fixed-wing air link to MIA and other neighbouring regions is very important to Gozo's economic and social well-being, and should form part of Gozo's transport strategy.



It has been proven time and again, through different professional studies, that accessibility to and from Gozo is a top priority to potential foreign direct investment. Furthermore, the powers-that-be can draw experience from other island regions in the Mediterranean which have been successful in linking island communities through fixed-wing light planes. The increase in tourism to Malta as a result of the introduction of low-cost airlines is another experience. Gozo's economy would benefit from having a wider direct link to the outside world. This would lead to job creation through potential foreign direct investment, and through the export of organic agricultural goods and other products.

Commuting businessmen, residents and incoming tourists would be more attracted to visit Gozo, once Cirkewwa and MIA are done away with, and the possibility of joining directly to a major airline is possible. Investing in an airstrip will open opportunities for new niche markets and for other spin-off benefits that will create jobs in Gozo.

Procrastination and endless discussions about the airstrip will never deliver. The misconception of having large planes landing in a short airstrip should be tackled. A wide-ranging and holistic study should be commissioned immediately, whose outcome should either stop the talk or walk the talk”.

Important Reference Work

Mr. Robert Xerri B . A . (H o n s) Accty., C.P.A., M.A. (ISSS) has presented the Gozo Business Chamber with a copy of his dissertation “The Role of the Private Sector in Small Island Developing States” which he submitted in partial fulfillment of the awarding of the degree of M.A. (Island and Small States Studies), September 2009.



This reference work is now available for use by members of the Chamber as well as by others working on the preparation of studies relating to the topic.

The Chamber would like to thank Mr. Xerri for his donation and invites interested persons to make use of the publication.

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