

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE GOZO BUSINESS CHAMBER  
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## Inter – Islands Connection

The Gozo Regional Committee within the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD) has said that an airstrip in Gozo is essential reducing the island's double insularity and opening its businesses to new opportunities. The GRC continued that in turn, this would assist in creating further job opportunities for locals to benefit from and helping to combat the social erosion due to emigration especially by the younger generation.

Regarding the airstrip's location, the GRC feels that the identification of a suitable location remains within the responsibilities of the competent authorities.

The committee has also prepared a position paper on the Airstrip detailing the effects the airstrip may have on Gozo's economy as well as on Gozo's social life; on connectivity, the environment and employment.

Recently, a correspondent from the Gozo Airlink Group has written to The Times to point out that there are certain flaws in the current plan being put forward which centres on the idea of having the airstrip at the existing helipad. The correspondent says that the length of 500 metres is not enough for an aircraft to operate in all weather conditions. Also, the runway should ideally point directly into the prevailing wind (north-west / south-east). Besides, the correspondent points out that the 500 metre strip will not be practical for the type of commercial traffic that Gozo needs and, also, the scheme does not allow for aircraft parking.

The correspondent mentions benefits which can be derived from a properly designed aerodrome facility which can generate revenue for Gozo and urges the authorities to “make their decisions on practical common sense - both technical

and commercial”.

A different concept has also been in the news with the publication of several letters in the papers suggesting the building of a bridge. As usual, while those who experience the crossing over to Malta on a regular basis are in favour, those who cross over to visit Gozo on rare occasions or for a holiday are against. Some of the latter are even falling into the trap of acting as the big brother who “knows better” on what is best for Gozo, even more than the Gozitans themselves.

However, when one experiences the hardships faced by the Gozitans who have to cross over to Malta all year round for work, visits to hospital to get the services not yet available at the Gozo General Hospital, visits to health specialists, etc, as well as the long time they have to spend travelling, one realises how insensitive these “big brothers” are.

More recently, the idea of a tunnel was floated by various Gozitan entrepreneurs in the presence of the Prime Minister. The suggestion seems to have appealed to many.

The proposers of the tunnel have mentioned that this will not have any bad effect on the environment as it will not be visible. They also said that, apart from the time saving factor and the greater reliability, such a connection would be beneficial to both Gozo and Malta.

The Gozo Business Chamber agrees with a fixed link as experience has shown that most of the extra burdens faced by Gozo and the Gozitans, as indicated by the Special Needs Assessment Study for the Island of Gozo, emanate from the accessibility problem due to Gozo's double insularity.



## Calendar of Events 2011



Malta Enterprise Ltd seeks to support local business owners and developers through a range of national, international, and other programmes. These efforts are being implemented to create opportunities for investment, Technology Transfer, Licensing and Franchising, International Trade, and International Business. The International Business Units within Malta Enterprise and the Enterprise Centre Network will continue through 2011 to engage with local business owners and developers to assist them in their international trade, investment and other activities.

The following Calendar of Events is being published in order for interested parties to plan their participation and response their demands.

Month	Event	Country/City	Dates 2011	Product/Service
January	Malta Enterprise 2011 Awards	Malta	21-22 Jan	Awards
February	Malta Enterprise 2011 Awards	Malta	21-22 Feb	Awards
March	Malta Enterprise 2011 Awards	Malta	21-22 Mar	Awards
April	Malta Enterprise 2011 Awards	Malta	21-22 Apr	Awards
May	Malta Enterprise 2011 Awards	Malta	21-22 May	Awards
June	Malta Enterprise 2011 Awards	Malta	21-22 Jun	Awards
July	Malta Enterprise 2011 Awards	Malta	21-22 Jul	Awards
August	Malta Enterprise 2011 Awards	Malta	21-22 Aug	Awards
September	Malta Enterprise 2011 Awards	Malta	21-22 Sep	Awards
October	Malta Enterprise 2011 Awards	Malta	21-22 Oct	Awards
November	Malta Enterprise 2011 Awards	Malta	21-22 Nov	Awards
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Nov	Malta Enterprise 2011 Awards	Malta	21-22 Nov	Awards
Dec	Malta Enterprise 2011 Awards	Malta	21-22 Dec	Awards

More information on all events:

- The Enterprise Centre Network offers a range of services to assist you in your international trade and investment activities.
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For further information on all of the events listed, visit the Malta Enterprise website: [www.mta.gov.mt](http://www.mta.gov.mt)



## Budget 2011

The Gozo Business Chamber (GBC) appreciates that this year's budget is based on the rhythm which the Maltese economy has developed lately and that the measures being proposed are aimed to strengthen this rhythm; to see that the deficit and national debt decrease; create new jobs; increase productivity; Malta remains competitive; and also strengthen the educational and social services.

On the national level and considering the present circumstances when neighbour governments are taking strict measures of austerity, the GBC feels that this is a prudent and responsible budget which strengthens social solidarity.

Regarding Gozo, besides the national benefits as mentioned in the budget, we appreciate the fact that the budget is providing for other measures amounting to €73 million. The Budget mentions the Micro Business Park; the study of the Marsalforn breakwater; childcare at Xewkija Industrial Estate; recreational areas; a farmers' market, and others.

We note also that two projects suggested by the GBC

have been incorporated in the government's plan for this year. These are the indoor swimming pool and the SMEs park.

However, the Chamber was looking forward to other measures that could help further Gozo's economy, like permanent schemes to make up for our double insularity; more sports facilities at international standards; serious tackling of the parking problem in the upper part of Victoria; Broadband connections for ICT and measures so that the GBC would be able to devise an online portal and webcast to encourage coordination for Research and the creation of ICT Clusters.

The Chamber does not agree with the 2% VAT increase on touristic accommodation especially now that many of next year's contracts are already confirmed.

All on all, we feel that this budget is providing the tools that can lead to job creation and for an economy based on high levels of the environment, education and innovation.

## Small Business Act Malta

Following the publication of the Small Business Act Malta White Paper, the Gozo Business Chamber made the following observations and proposals:

In connection with the idea that Organisations representing business should promote the wider use of codes of ethics in SMEs, the Gozo Business Chamber is already promoting business ethics among its members. In fact, the GBC, in collaboration with the Malta Chapter of the Foundation 'Annus Pro Pontefice', is organising a conference on business ethics. However, the financial situation of NGOs representing the Business Community should be taken into account, once NGOs will be bound by SBA to promote business ethics.

The Chamber also proposed that there should be a clearer interpretation of what is meant by 'small' should one include a detailed definition of what is micro, small and medium? Should the definition be based solely on workforce? Should turnover be taken into account? Or should there be a mix of all?

It should be acknowledged that the realities of small size vary among the different regions (even in an island state like Malta) and across the different industries. It's worth zooming on the specific realities of family-run businesses which happen to be the majority of the small businesses segment in Malta and Gozo.

For instance, in Gozo an enterprise with 45 employees is considered as substantially big even though its workforce size fits within the small category. On the other hand, micro businesses - with employment levels less or equal to nine (9) – suffer from over-utilization of resources and also lack of

specialization. Yet, these micro enterprises survive because of their innate resilience and adaptability.

The Chamber has recommended the **Setting up of a Micro and Small Enterprises' Arbitrator re payment defaulters.**

Micro enterprises, very often sole-traders, cannot afford the time and expense involved in taking legal action against payment defaulters.

Another recommendation is that the SBA should include the following heading: **Specific Policies for Gozo Enterprise.**

In the Declaration by Malta on the Island Region of Gozo, the Government of Malta noted that the Island Region of Gozo has economic and social specificities as well as handicaps arising from the combined effects of its double insularity, its environmental fragility, etc.

In light of this, there should be a proviso in the SBA which reflects this declaration and mitigates or better still creates a cutting edge on the competitiveness of Gozo's industries. In this respect the following should be considered:

For encouraging investment, promotion and development of micro and small enterprises in Gozo, the MFEI and Parliamentary Secretary responsible for small enterprise may, by order, notify from time to time, specific policies to mitigate the constraints suffered by micro and small enterprises and to bring them on the same level playing field with their counterparts on the Main Land.

### Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the GBC will be held on Sunday, 13 February, 2011 at the NGO Centre, Xewkija, at 1000 hours.

Apart from the usual reports, there will be an open discussion on "Means of communication between Gozo and Malta".

### ICT Project

An application has been submitted by the GBC for the [ictgozomalta.com](http://ictgozomalta.com) project under the Funding Scheme for Projects by NGO's and Voluntary Groups contributing towards the implementation of Eco-Gozo short term measures (2010 – 2012).

## INSULEUR

### The Network of Insular Chambers of commerce and Industry of the EU Board of Directors Meeting and General Assembly



The Board of Directors and the General Assembly of INSULEUR were held in December in Alghero (Sassari). The Gozo Business Chamber was represented by President Joe Grech who is the Board's Secretary and by the Tourism Sector's chairman Tony Coleiro.

Both the Board Meeting and the General Assembly were presented with the highlights of the activities carried out by INSULEUR during the past year and also with the work programme for 2011.

INSULEUR was busy representing the Island chambers of the EU at various European meetings with tourism being one of the main topics. At the European Parliament, INSULEUR presented its vision of the future European strategy for Tourism in the frameworks of the CAST (Chambers Active for Sustainable Tourism) programme's final conference. This event is the starting point of a close cooperation with other Chambers of Commerce and Industry active at European level in the field of tourism.

INSULEUR was also present at the European Parliament for the conference organised by the Socialist and Democrat group on "Islands: Bridging the Gap – Challenges and opportunities for the island territories of the EU".

The plenary session of the European Parliament voted a resolution proposing an EU strategy for economic and social development of mountain regions, islands and territories with low population. INSULEUR and the organisations of the 174 group "islands, mountains and sparsely populated areas" co-signed a statement reiterating their position on this issue.

All the member countries present took great interest in being represented on the working groups that were proposed to cater for Tourism, Renewable Energies, and Insular Small Business Act. Finally, these three working groups were set up as follows:

The Tourism Working Group:

- The Gozo Business Chamber (Malta) – (Coordinator)
- CCI Reunion (France)
- CCI Palma de Mallorca (Spain)

The Renewable Energies Group:

- Professional Chamber Piraeus (Greece) – (Coordinator)
- CCI Reunion (France)
- CCI Heraklion (Greece)

The Insular Small Business Act Group:

- CCI Reunion (France) – (Coordinator)
- ICC Santa Cruz de Tenerife (Spain)

The General Assembly's conference had as its main topic "How to strengthen the competitiveness of Island tourism SME's".

Various speakers made presentations on how to strengthen the competitiveness of Island Tourism SME's and the impact of the external factors on the Island's tourism competitiveness. The presentations concerned the economical mission, networking, new proposals, and development of new objectives.

Other presentations on issues and modernisation were delivered on innovation in island tourism. To this effect two reports were presented on "the experience of technological clusters for the touristic sector" and "the knowledge networks".

The members present, including the GBC representatives, made various interventions during the round table discussions and also made a presentation of an innovative approach required for the competitiveness and sustainability of the tourism industry. This included the participation of the local government and the stakeholders.

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## Conference on Papal Encyclical

An evening conference on Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical "Caritas in Veritate" and its relevance to Gozo's social and economic development was recently held in Gozo.

The conference was organised by the Malta Chapter of Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Foundation (CAPPF) in collaboration with The Gozo Business Chamber and the Gozo Tourism Association.

Apart from introductory speeches by Mr Joe Grech and Mr Paul Scicluna, Presidents of The Gozo Business Chamber and of The Gozo Tourism



Association respectively, Mr Joseph F.X. Zahra, Conference Chairman, gave an explanation on the aims of the Foundation and its development.

This was followed by the two main speakers, namely, Mr Joe Borg, Managing Director of FXB Furniture Ltd., and Mr Marcel Cassar, first Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of FIM Bank plc. Mr Borg spoke about Gozo's business and professions community and applied ethics while Mr Cassar presented a Socio-economic glance at Gozo in the context of 'Caritas in Veritate'.

Following these two interesting presentations a discussion followed with many of those attending taking part and putting in more food for thought.

The last speaker was His Lordship Mgr Mario Grech, Bishop of Gozo who spoke about the beneficial impact the conference is bound to generate and also expressed his wholehearted support to the Foundation's willingness to "firmly implant a technical discussion of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the Gozitan economic and social reality within such a holistic vision of the development process as that which Pope Benedict invites us to consider in his encyclical".

## The Manufacturing Research Platform

The Manufacturing Research Platform, managed by the Malta Council for Science and Technology, was set up through an award of € 710 K under the European Regional Development Fund and will run until August 2012.

This project establishes a research platform in the area of manufacturing to facilitate and accelerate the transformation of local industry to higher value added activity. It will also undertake three research projects in the areas of ICT, Energy Efficiency and Innovation in Manufacturing. As these areas are of interest to a number of local enterprises, we aim to demonstrate the benefits of research and innovation, thus encouraging increased industry involvement in such activities.



More information is available on the website <http://manufacturingresearch.eu>. The website also hosts a Manufacturing organization directory.

## Sports Delegation from Norway



On the initiative of Mr Tony Coleiro of the GBC Tourism Unit, and in collaboration with TC-Consult Co. Ltd., the Chamber hosted a sports delegation from Norway recently. The delegation was made up of coaches of various Norwegian football clubs from the second division and also from football nurseries. The idea is to divert these teams to use Malta and Gozo for their training camps during the winter months.

While in Gozo, the delegation was led by the GBC President, Mr Joe Grech and Mr Tony Coleiro.

The first meeting was held at the Ministry for Gozo where the delegates met with Mr Tony Borg, Personal Secretary to the Minister for Gozo; Mr Manuel Tabone, director of Tourism and Economic Development at the Ministry for Gozo; Mr Joe Grech, President of the GBC; and Mr Paul Scicluna, President of the GTA. This was followed by another meeting with representatives of The Gozo Business Chamber and of the Gozo Tourism Association.

Other meetings were held with Mr Alvin Grech, Gozo Football Association President, and Mr Joe Bajada, Gozo Representative of the Malta Sports Council, as well as with the managers of the various training facilities in Gozo. The delegates also visited places of accommodation of various categories.

Hotel Xlendi Resort and Spa was their venue for lunch while Kempinski San Lawrenz Hotel offered lodging for the night.

## Insuleur Tourism Working Group

Following the setting up of the Tourism Working Group by Insuleur for which The Gozo Business Chamber has been chosen as its coordinator, the Chamber has already started the ball rolling and suggested several points which could be dealt with by the committee.

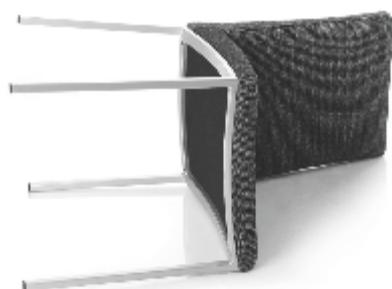
The Chamber is suggesting:

1. Adopting same principles and platform of Social tourism as has been proposed by the Gozo Business Chamber for the launching of the global tourism portal for INSULEUR Members.
2. Consideration to be given to the launching of the Quality Assurance label or the Hospitality Assured label.
  - a. Hospitality Assured is the quality standard created by the Institute of Hospitality specifically for customer facing businesses.
  - b. The Hospitality Assured process encourages businesses to look at their own operation from the customer's perspective and to see where improvements should be made to benefit the business.
  - c. The Hospitality Assured framework can help to:
    - i Improve quality standards
    - ii Improve leadership and management skills
    - iii Increase customer loyalty
    - iv Improve staff morale
    - v Reduce staff turnover
    - vi Increase market share
    - vii Generate great PR
    - viii Develop service ideals, values and principles that support a culture of excellence
3. To assist NGO's or Cooperatives already located in Islands for the setting up of Tourism related Coops'.
4. To assist NGO's or similar organisations, private or public sector on improving the HR element of various entities in the tourism entities by means of training schemes, employment opportunities within INSULEUR members' respective countries.
5. To act as a point of reference for prospective investors and or business opportunities for European Islands.



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## GBC Unveils ICT GOZO MALTA Portal

The Gozo Business Chamber has unveiled ICTGOZOMALTA.COM, an innovative and forward looking ICT Portal, the first stage in its objective is to establish a Cluster of Excellence in ICT with a strong focus on Cyber Security. This is a joint initiative between the Gozo Business Chamber and Synaptic Laboratories Limited, an Australian R&D company, based in Gozo, and draws on Synaptic Laboratories Limited's existing circle of international collaborators(www.synaptic-labs.com).

The portal will become a one-stop shop for local and International companies, and even individuals, who wish to contribute to and collaborate on new and exciting Innovative and Creative Ideas which can be nurtured and developed and which have the potential to grow and expand to global markets,

New Projects will bring together local and internationally sourced ICT breakthroughs and experts to enable the demonstration of even more advanced solutions. Through the facilitation of existing and developing international ICT relationships, the portal will also advance Malta based R&D, and promote Malta's unique advantages as a location for cutting edge ICT demonstration projects. Through participation and information transfer, local companies will develop skills and also have the opportunity to be first to create future products exploiting these breakthroughs.

The envisaged medium term benefits to the economy will be the development of cutting edge ICT solutions in Gozo and Malta, resulting in the creation of new jobs, facilitation of knowledge transfer through regular webinars, seminars and other means for enhancing the skill levels in Malta, particularly in the area of Cyber security. Through the development of a skills and services register (phase 2) a facility will be provided to attract both locally based as well as the Diaspora of Gozitan and Maltese nationals who live and work abroad to register on a database with the potential to support the export drives of Malta sourced R&D or to even locate new jobs in Malta so as to be able return to Malta, bring home knowledge experience and skills acquired in the international markets, thus attracting more knowledge and experience to the Maltese Islands. The

web portal will also be a place to advertise new initiatives to attract direct foreign investment into Gozo and Malta and increase awareness of the Maltese Islands as an ideal location to work and live.

Working in close collaboration with key Government and private stakeholders and selected leading International companies, ICT Gozo Malta Projects will focus on technology proposals and solutions that have already started to win international recognition and that match European and international (such as USA) high priorities, in cutting edge ICT domains such as Future Internet, Global Cyber Security and Secure Computing in the Cloud.

Although it has only just been launched, other cutting edge R&D technology companies being promoted by ICT Gozo Malta already include SST, Sonalysts,

SecureRF and Anagran, all International Cyber Security and Internet focused companies offering next generation solutions.

Further information may be obtained from The Gozo Business Chamber on Tel. (+356) 21550305 or [info@gozobusinesschamber.org](mailto:info@gozobusinesschamber.org)



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