

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE GOZO BUSINESS CHAMBER
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Annual General Meeting

The administrative and financial reports for 2010 were presented to the members during the Annual General Meeting which was held on the 13th of February, 2011.

The Chief Executive's report highlighted the activities carried out by the Chamber during 2010. Foremost among these were the celebrations marking the 10th anniversary of the Chamber, the participation in INSULEUR and OTIE as well as in the Gozo Regional Committee and MEUSAC Core Group. During the year under review, the Chamber was instrumental in the setting up of the Gozo Branch of the English Speaking Union of Malta and continued to give its contribution for the setting up of the Gozo Action Group Foundation (LEADER Programme). A special project was undertaken for the setting up of ICT Gozo Malta in collaboration with Synaptic Laboratories Ltd. The report also referred to the various conferences and other meetings attended as well as to services offered to the members.

The Treasurer presented the audited accounts and explained that the unfavourable balance was due to the expenses in connection with the 10th Anniversary celebrations and also to the fact that some refunds in connection with participation in overseas conferences arrived after the books had already been closed. He also pointed out that, when these two items are taken into consideration, the 2010 accounts are balanced.

The meeting then proceeded to discuss amendments to the statute so that it would conform to the requisites of the Voluntary Organisations Act and become eligible to register as a Voluntary Organisation. There was unanimous agreement.

During the general discussion that followed, those present brought up various topics. Foremost among these was the recently suggested permanent link between Gozo and Malta. All present agreed with the idea of the undersea tunnel and that the Chamber should follow the matter and continue to use pressure so that the momentum be kept up. Those present were of the opinion that a permanent link would be beneficial to Gozo as well as to Malta. A decision was also taken to



form a committee within the Chamber to follow up the matter.

Another point raised concerned the financial help offered to Gozo producers in connection with the extra burden they face in transporting their products to Malta. The meeting asked the Council to take up the matter in order to find solutions to offset the disadvantages they have to face.

The meeting also discussed the results of the members' participation in EU projects; the Chamber's active participation in INSULEUR and OTIE; the availability of skilled workers in Gozo; the Xewkija Industrial Zone; the amendments to the Gozo Local Plan; and the applications for aid from the ERDF.

A vote of thanks was passed in favour of Mr Joe Cordina, the auditor, and the meeting once again appointed him as the official auditor for the year 2011.

The President then made a short closing speech as most of the time had already been taken up by the general discussion. He mentioned some points about which the Council is still working on and thanked all concerned for their voluntary participation in order that the Chamber might be able to offer its services to all members.

Gozo - The Home for the Working or Retiring Expatriate

Michael Grech - Vice President

For thousands of years Malta and Gozo have always been the islands where the superpowers of the time always wanted to maintain a permanent presence in order to be strategically placed in the middle of the Mediterranean. Nowadays owning a property in Malta or Gozo can be a totally different experience for the expatriate.

Life in the Mediterranean countries has always had a reputation of being one of a laid back nature where having a siesta during the hot summer months is something quite normal. This is more so with the island of Gozo, which although forming part of the same country as Malta, one can notice a striking difference between the smaller and the larger island forming part of the same state. Even a first time visitor to Gozo will immediately notice this difference. The fact that Gozo is much less densely populated than Malta is evident in the larger amount of open green space which one finds separating all the towns and villages of Gozo. But where is the real attraction and edge that Gozo can offer to those who want to set up home in it?

For those shopping around for a property in Gozo one feels that in most cases there is more real value for money than property situated in Malta. When I say real value for money I have to include not only the cost per square meter when compared to other properties in Malta but more importantly the quality of life. It is a statistical fact that Gozo is much safer to live on than Malta. Serious crime, like murders, muggings, hold ups, rape etc, is a very small percentage of the total crime rate of the Maltese Islands even when taken on a per capita basis. In Gozo there are still some residences where you can see the key in the front door of the house during the day. A lot of people go to sleep at night and the still leave the keys of their cars in the ignition. The fact that in Gozo there are only four sets



of traffic lights and that the rush hour is made up of a 10 minute wait in the morning in the main street of Victoria, already tells you a lot.

The expatriate who is working in Gozo can also see the



difference between living in Gozo and in Malta. To start with, renting a property in Gozo would be at a relatively much cheaper price than in Malta. The choice of good quality homes is also quite impressive. Whether one is looking to buy or rent an apartment, an old converted farmhouse, a maisonette or a brand new villa, one can always find good value for money. The small size of Gozo also means that at maximum you are never more than fifteen minutes away from any destination on the island. A tightly knit community, a sense of belonging and a safe environment offer both the working and retired expatriate the chance of tranquillity and peace of mind.



Second Superbrands Malta programme launched

The second Superbrands programme was launched before the local media earlier this month during a breakfast meeting at Hilton Malta, Portomaso. The branding concept that is Superbrands, dubbed the independent arbiter of branding, builds on the success of the first edition that was launched in 2009.

Maurizio Comollo, Italy Country Head, who is responsible for Italy, Malta and Mauritius, sees further potential in the successful implementation of this branding concept locally. "Superbrands gives local brand owners the opportunity to stand out, with a Seal of Quality & Value, brings the islands' top brands together and enables them to build a significant advantage over their competition, while building synergies with similar high value brands," he said.

Stressing the importance of branding to companies the world over, Mr Comollo said brands are increasingly being seen as valuable business assets. Superbrands was launched in the UK in 1994 and is now present in 87 countries.

Mr Comollo announced that the first step in compiling a Malta and Gozo Superbrands brand

bible, to be launched in December, had been accomplished with the

Superbrands

appointment of a ten-member Superbrands Council Malta & Gozo 2011-12, chaired by former Tourism and Culture Minister Francis Zammit Dimech and including Gozo Business Chamber President Joe Grech.

A local market research company, Misco, will be carrying out a survey on brand awareness in Malta and that, along with a shortlist of 1,200 brands from an initial list of 2,500 that were considered by Superbrands will produce a final list.

Each brand will be scored and will be whittled down to 350 brands who are being invited to join the second programme for Malta and Gozo of Superbrands. The highest scoring brands will earn themselves Business Superbrands status and will receive an award at a Tribute event to be held in late November.

Euro-Mediterranean B2B Event

The Euro-Mediterranean B2B Event is being held at the Malta Hilton on 18-19 May, 2011, for SMEs operating in the following sectors:

- Renewable Energy and Environment
- ICT
- Education and Training
- Food and Beverage Processing
- Creative Industries and Audiovisual Sector

One-to-one meetings are envisaged over two days and there will also be a parallel FP7 Café where SMEs (maximum 10) that have an FP7 project and are still looking for partners will be given a stand free of charge to showcase the project.

For further details about the event contact Malta Enterprise or visit <http://www.malta121.eu/Register.asp>



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GBC MEMBERS' SUCCESSES

- “Fantasy in Yarn” was the title of an exhibition of works of traditional and modern weaving and macramé put up by Alda



Bugeja and organised by the Gozo Culture and Information office – Ministry for Gozo at the Banca Guiratale during February / March 2011.

The event also included lectures about the traditional methods of weaving as well as an active workshop where visitors could watch weavers on the job.

- Gozitan Sculptor Mario Agius has won the silver medal at the tenth International Salon Ganfa in Nates, France as well as numerous foreign artists living in France, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, Holland, Russia, China, Japan and Thailand.



Mario exhibited two works entitled Disparity and Ballerina.

- Kempinski Hotel San Lawrenz is the first hotel in Europe to stop using chlorine to treat tap water, thanks to the introduction of a new ecological product, Eco Clear Prox, which upgrades the drinking water quality.



For the third consecutive year Kempinski Hotel San Lawrenz was recently declared the Mediterranean's Leading Spa Resort by the World TravelAwards.

- Mary Portelli, a mosaic artisan, recently displayed her creations at the Banca Giuratale in Rabat, Gozo during an exhibition inaugurated by the Hon. Giovanna Debono, Minister for Gozo.



The works were mostly two-dimensional items in mixed media – mainly glass and recycled material. The subjects varied from animal pictures to reproduction of famous paintings. The items that stood out the most were those pictures depicting waves. These were made from glass bottles.



- Michael Grech Financial Investment Services have officially inaugurated their new premises during a ceremony led by Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi. Also in attendance were the Hon Giovanna Debono, Minister for Gozo, Hon Dr Chris Said, Parliamentary Secretary, and Hon Frederick Azzopardi, Parliamentary Assistant. Mgr. Emanuel Curmi blessed the new premises.

GOZO - MALTA PERMANENT LINK

The Gozo Business Chamber has welcomed the news of the proposal for a tunnel between Malta and Gozo, something which the Chamber has been discussing for a long time.

Such a fixed link between the two islands will mean that students and young workers who have to cross over daily to Malta will find it easier to return home everyday, something which will help increase commerce by their shopping and living in Gozo. It will also make life easier for people needing to travel continuously for hospital treatment in Malta. Besides, it will encourage foreign and domestic investment as it will provide a direct link with Malta International Airport and the Freeport.

The Chamber believes that, due to work and travel constraints, Gozo is suffering a brain drain and the population is slowly shrinking as parents now go to Malta to visit their children on weekends rather than vice-versa.

Besides, the double insularity of Gozo means extra expenses for businesses, lack of foreign direct investment and lack of fair competition.

Further to a decision taken at its Annual General



Meeting in February, the Gozo Business Chamber has set up a Gozo-Malta Permanent Link Committee whose aim



is to promote a permanent link between the islands of Gozo and Malta. The members forming up this committee are Joseph Borg, Michael Grech, Anthony Bezzina, Paul Curmi, George Galea, Francis Xavier Tabone and Euchar Vella.

Amongst its objectives this Committee wants to encourage a widespread discussion on the theme in various fora in Gozo and in Malta. The Committee, which will be holding various outreach meetings in Gozo and in Malta, is inviting the general public, NGO's and Constituted Bodies to contact it by correspondence which should be addressed to the Permanent Link Committee at the Gozo Business Chamber, 27 Republic Street, Victoria, Gozo or else through its dedicated email at islelink@gozobusinesschamber.org All opinions are welcome and the Committee would cherish all contributions.

In a meeting held with the Parliamentary Secretary Dr Chris Said, the Committee expressed its full support for the Government's position to initiate studies related to a sub-sea tunnel between the two islands. It also expressed satisfaction at the momentum which this proposal was gaining. It reiterated that such a permanent link will push forward Gozo to benefit from national economic growth in a proportionate manner whilst driving the island to contribute more to the nation as a whole.



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Victoria Bus Terminus Project

The planned introduction of the new public transport system is a very welcome thing. The Gozo Business Chamber favours such a project as its positive outcome will definitely help the business activities and will provide an easier mode of transport from one place to the other without worries about parking.

The new system entails the re development of, among others, the present Victoria Bus Terminus.

This is where the Chamber feels that prior consultation would have provided a platform for the Chamber to offer practical suggestions for the benefit of all.

In fact, while applauding all efforts being made to ameliorate the public transport system on the island of Gozo, being undertaken by Transport Malta, the Chamber cannot but deplore the facts that:

- the Gozo Business Chamber thinks that it could have made a positive contribution had it been involved in the preparatory process;
- a sizeable area of the already restricted parking zone is being taken up for the duration of the works, thus reducing the parking area by at least 46 car spaces;



- no heed was taken to integrate this new project into a fully developed car park as approved by MEPA in its Review of the Gozo Local Plan published in December 2010, funds for which could have been utilised from the MEPA Urban Improvement Fund.

The Gozo Business Chamber has appealed to the competent authorities, as it has done at nauseum, for a greater effort to make the best possible use of the area in question as per MEPA's suggestion for surface and underground car parking.

Congratulations

The Gozo Business Chamber congratulates Mrs Helga Ellul, outgoing President of the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry, on being awarded the German Officers' Cross of the Order of Merit. The presentation was made by the German Ambassador H.E. Bern Braun on behalf of the President of the Federal Republic.

Mrs Ellul is well known for her contribution towards Malta's recent appointment as a member of the policy board at the Office of the Prime Minister.

The Chamber also congratulates Mr Tancred Tabone for being unanimously elected President of the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry (MCOCEI) for 2011/2013 by the Chamber's Council.

We look forward to the continuing cooperation between the MCOCEI and the GBC.



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GOZO'S FIRST....

The Gozo Business Chamber has received notification of Government funding support under the eco-Gozo initiative to launch Phase I of Gozo's first Cluster of Excellence in ICT, the ICT Gozo Malta Project.

The project will build on the initial draft work on the creation of ICTGOZOMALTA.COM, an innovative and forward looking ICT Portal. This phase will prepare the groundwork for a proposal to create a Cluster of Excellence in ICT with a strong focus on Cyber Security.

This portal is a joint initiative between the Gozo Business Chamber and Synaptic Laboratories Limited, an R&D company with Australian Directors based in Gozo, and draws on Synaptic Laboratories Limited's existing circle of international collaborators.

Working in close collaboration with key Government and private stakeholders and selected leading International companies, ICT Gozo Malta Projects (www.ictgozomalta.eu/vision-and-projects/introduction-and-overview-map.html) 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 Secure Computing, Global Cyber Security and Future Internet.

The initiative has attracted support from the heads of key Government Agencies, including MITA, Malta Enterprise, MCST, other agencies and also the Malta Chamber of Commerce, all of whom will directly participate in this initial phase to contribute towards the successful implementation and shaping of the medium to longer term objectives of the project.

The Project 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.

Enquiries should be directed to ICT Project Manager Mr David Pace on (+356) 7963 0221 (info@ictgozomalta.eu) or The Gozo Business Chamber on (+356) 21550305 (email: info@gozobusinesschamber.org). For more information please visit the website at www.ictgozomalta.eu.



Left to right: David Pace, Project Manager, Joe Grech, President, GBC, Joseph G Grech, CEO GBC, Ron Kelson, CEO Synaptic Laboratories

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Gozo Business Chamber Survey
Survey dwar l-Andament tan-negozju f'Ghawdex matul Jannar – Marzu 2011

1. Tip ta' negozju

<input type="text"/> Bejgħ minn fanut	<input type="text"/> Manifattura
<input type="text"/> Lulkanda	<input type="text"/> Restaurant
<input type="text"/> Servizzi Finanzjarji	<input type="text"/> Servizzi Professionali
<input type="text"/> Servizzi oħra	

2. Numru ta' haddiema, inkluż is-sid, f'dan il-perjodu.

<input type="text"/> Full Time	<input type="text"/> Part Time
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3. Matul dal-perjodu, in-numru ta' haddiema

<input type="text"/> żdied	<input type="text"/> baqa' l-istess	<input type="text"/> naqas
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4. Lokalita (isem tal-belt jew raħal)

5. Kil'iqabbel Jannar/Marzu 2011 ma' Jannar/Marzu 2010

<input type="text"/> inqas negozju	<input type="text"/> l-istess	<input type="text"/> iktar negozju
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6. L-akbar amount ta' negozju għamiltu ma':
 Immarka minn no.1 (l-akbar) sa no.4 (l-inqas)

<input type="text"/> Ghawdexin	<input type="text"/> Turisti
<input type="text"/> Maltin	<input type="text"/> Kumpaniji Barranin

7. In-negozju tiegħek qed jopera

bi profitt	<input type="text"/>
b'hafna profitt	<input type="text"/>
kemm tifti	<input type="text"/>
b'kemm tkampa	<input type="text"/>
bit-telf	<input type="text"/>
b'hafna telf	<input type="text"/>

8. Kemm minn dwan taħseb li kienu ta' għajjnuna għan-negozju tiegħek matul Jannar/Marzu 2011?

<input type="text"/>	Servizz tajjeb ta' trasport bejn Malta u Ghawdex
<input type="text"/>	Postijiet biżżejjed għall-Parking
<input type="text"/>	Attivitajiet organizzati fil-weekends
<input type="text"/>	Sinjali biżżejjed għad-direzzjoni tat-traffiku
<input type="text"/>	Sinjali biżżejjed għad-direzzjoni lejn postijiet turistiċi

9. Kemm minn dawn taħseb li setgħu fixklu lin-negozju tiegħek matul Jannar/Marzu 2011?

- Prezzijiet għolja
- Nuqqas ta' Parking
- Toroq imblukkati bit-traffiku
- L-attitudni tal-Traffic Wardens
- Dewmien biex taqsam minn Malta għal Għawdex
- Haddiema addattati
- Kontinwità tad-dawl, ilma, telefon, etc.
- Approvazzjoni għal talbiet mill-Fondi Ewropej

10. X'taħseb dwar id-domanda għas-servizzi tan-negozju tiegħek għat-tlett xhur li ġejjin:

- se tiżdied se tibqa' l-istess se tonqos

11. X'taħseb dwar in-numru ta' haddiema man-negozju tiegħek għat-tlett xhur li ġejjin:

- se jiżdied se jibqa' l-istess se jonqos

12. Int membru tal-Gozo Business Chamber?

- Iva Le

Jekk Le:

- Għax ma nafsibx li hu neċessarju
- Għax ma ġejtx avviċinat

13. Taqbel mas-suggeriment biex issir "Link" Permanenti biex tghaqqad lil Għawdex ma' Malta?

- Iva Le

14. Dhalt f'xi proġett tal-Eco Għawdex

- Iva Le

15. Għandek xi suggerimenti oħra sabiex ighinu n-negozju jopera minn Għawdex?

16. Qatt hadt opportunita jew ibbenifikajt mill-fondi tal-Unjoni Ewropea?

- Iva Le

Jekk Le għala:

17. Hemm xi diffikultajiet li qed issib biex topera minn Għawdex?