



Stephen Calleja
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Lm3,000 a day to run Malta House in Brussels

Karl Schembri

THE RUNNING expenses for maintaining staff and the Brussels House will be around Lm3,000 a day. This was confirmed in a reply by the DOI to *MaltaToday*.

This newspaper has also learned that the official list of staff working at the Brussels embassy which the government passed to the European Commission contains at least 10 incorrect names out of the 31 submitted.

News of the incorrect list, officially submitted by Malta's Permanent Representation to the EU last May surfaced after *MaltaToday* reproduced the Commission's official list of Malta's embassy staff published on its website, following the government's refusal to divulge the names of individuals appointed to Brussels.

Of the 31 employees listed on Richard Cachia Caruana's staff list, only 21 have been officially posted at

the embassy so far. The other 10 include people who are still expecting to sign the contract of employment while others had actually turned down the contract following disagreements related to terms and conditions.

A Department of Information statement sent to *MaltaToday* confirms that the list "was forwarded by the Permanent Representation of Malta to the EU to the European Commission on 1 May 2004," so as to "ensure that communication on the different policy areas between the EU and its institutions and the Permanent Representation is channelled directly to the appropriate officer." The DOI said the list is "updated on a quarterly basis" although a disclaimer on the EU website says it is updated every week.

When *MaltaToday* asked Cachia Caruana for a list of the staff at his embassy in Brussels last month, the DOI replied on his behalf: "It is regretted that in the circumstances,

the amount of work involved to gather the information does not justify the request."

The government's excuse turned out to be a veritable lie as the names had been drawn up and officially submitted to the EU more than two months earlier, even though it now transpires that the list was inaccurate.

Far from channelling better information, the list, with its inaccuracies, has created confusion among potential embassy officials awaiting their contracts. It has also meant that other European counterparts did not have any clear reference points for Malta in at least 10 different fields.

Some of the people still awaiting the final contract contacted *MaltaToday* to express their surprise at the fact that they were on the EU's official list when they had not yet been assigned the Brussels job.

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Evacuation exercises for bar staff among new regulations



From next year, all village bars in Malta will have to have an evacuation exercise

Julian Manduca

FOR MALTA'S better restaurants and bars, the new catering regulations set to come into force 1 January 2005 will not be a cause of much concern. For those, however, who have given scant importance to facilities and standards, the new rules will constitute a revolution. Many of Malta's nightclubs, dis-

cotheques, restaurants, bars, snack bars and kiosks were never designed with EU style standards in mind. The traditional village men's bars with the most rudimentary of amenities and toilets are being called on to shape up.

Among the measures being introduced which will seem strange to many of our poor quality catering establishments are: a yearly evacuation exercise to be organised for

the staff; a notice of the maximum number of patrons to be affixed at the entrance; non-slip kitchen floors; the prohibition of eating in kitchens; soap on dispenser, toilet paper, clothes hook, a mirror and a toilet brush to be made available in each toilet; women's toilets to have sanitary bins; and staff is to wear clean and ironed clothes.

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Director of Contracts to take legal action against Joe Zahra

Matthew Vella

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR Joe Zahra, 50, currently facing charges of falsifying information with respect to the award of the controversial Mater Dei tender for the supply of medical equipment, can expect to face fresh legal procedures by the Director of Contracts Joseph Spiteri and his daughter, Claudine Cassar, director of Alert Communications.

MaltaToday is reliably informed that Spiteri and Cassar, who were implicated in a private investigation commissioned by Simed International bv, the Dutch healthcare company which contested the award of the tender to Italian firm INSO Spa, will be pro-

ceeding legally against Joe Zahra, who conducted the investigation.

Zahra is accused of having falsely giving the impression of incriminating evidence, making false accusations against third persons, filing a false report, and spreading unfounded rumours. Joseph Spiteri and Claudine Cassar were two of the three people implicated in the alleged corruption, along with Bastjan Dalli, brother to Nationalist MP John Dalli.

In the evidence compiled against Joe Zahra last week, it was revealed that the investigative report had falsely implicated Cassar of having travelled to Naples, Florence and London.

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PM on Radio: Brussels detractors will change their mind

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