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Josie woos hunters, will not rule out suspending EU membership

DAVID DARMANIN

FAR right political leader Josie Muscat told MaltaToday he would not rule out suspending membership if the EU refused to negotiate exemptions to the Birds Directive.

Teaming up with Federazzjoni Kaccaturi, Nassaba u Konservazzjonisti (FKNK), Azzjoni Nazzjonali has proposed a number of measures with which hunting should be regulated in Malta – claiming that we could be in a position to negotiate derogations with the EU under Article 9 of the Birds Directive adopted in 1979.

Such measures include allowing spring hunting and trapping of turtledoves and quails, permitting the trapping of songbirds in autumn and winter as well as allowing hunting from speedboats – so long as such boats do not exceed



Josie goes for the hunters' vote and allies his far-right party with Lino Farrugia (R)

the velocity of 5kph while hunting.

Malta has repeatedly been told that it will be awarded no such special derogation.

Asked whether he was aware of the infringement procedures al-



ready launched by the EU against Malta after failing to respect the Birds Directive, Dr Muscat replies "The EU should not pick on Malta for the use of hunting firearms when it supports the use of firearms to kill people. I find

it strange that the EU tolerates members who congratulate Russia on its presidential elections behind its back, and does not tolerate a tradition that is so dear to us Maltese. The EU has to learn to respect Malta's needs – that may differ from those of other member states with different realities."

And what if the EU rejects AN's proposals on hunting?

"In principle, AN is in favour of EU membership but we want to be members our way. We want to negotiate with the EU so that our rights are respected. We are nobody's lapdogs (ahna m'ahna l-psataz ta' hadd). Malta does not belong to the EU, it belongs to the Maltese people. In case they won't hear us out, we'll do what is most convenient for us Maltese." Would that include relinquishing EU membership? "We wouldn't rule anything out".

Marlene Mizzi ousted after nine years with BOV

TESTAFERRATA MORONI VIANI SIBLINGS NOW BOND MALTA'S BANKING GIANTS CLOSER

BUSINESSMAN Paul Testaferrata Moroni Viani has been elected to the board of directors of Bank of Valletta by shareholders at the bank's EGM, replacing former Sea Malta chairman Marlene Mizzi whose nine years on the board appear to have been abruptly ended.

Mizzi was ousted just weeks after her husband Magistrate Antonio Mizzi was blacklisted from government functions over calls to resign his sporting executive post by the Commission for the Administration of Justice, which claims he is in breach of a code of

ethics. Marlene Mizzi had publicly defended her husband's decision not to step down as president of the Malta Basketball Association.

A lack of visible support for Mizzi's candidature may have been at the centre of an effort to have Moroni Viani finally elected to the board. Last year, his nomination for the board of directors was seconded by none other than 'rival' bank HSBC, a minority shareholder with 530,000 shares in BOV.

He later withdrew his nomination, but

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The Christmas class divide

JAMES DEBONO

SKILLED workers are more likely to attend midnight mass than any other socio-economic groups while the upper-middle classes are more likely to spend New Year's Eve in a restaurant or hotel, according to MaltaToday's Christmas survey in which respondents were asked how they plan to spend Christmas eve and New Year's eve.

While 29% of skilled workers plan to attend midnight mass, only 15.2% of unskilled workers

and unemployed plan to do likewise. Among the upper-middle classes, 17% plan to participate in mass.

This could be an indication that skilled workers are more keen on religious devotion than other groups. By contrast, unskilled workers and the unemployed tend to be the least keen on attending midnight mass.

Not surprisingly, while 22.9% of ABs and 23% of the self-employed would spend New Year's Eve in a restaurant or hotel, only 9% of DEs, the least earning of socio-economic groups,

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Skilled workers most likely to attend midnight mass

Upper middle class most likely to party on New Year's Eve



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Debut single



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Michael Falzon



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Polidano's not so 'LIDL' appetite

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