

mid week

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ELECTIONS

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DAYS TO GO

PN



**EDUCATION**  
Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi steps up the gear on educational reforms and criticises Labour's reception class proposal.  
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MLP



**ONE-STOP SHOP**  
Opposition leader Alfred Sant says Labour will be open to the manufacturing industry's needs.  
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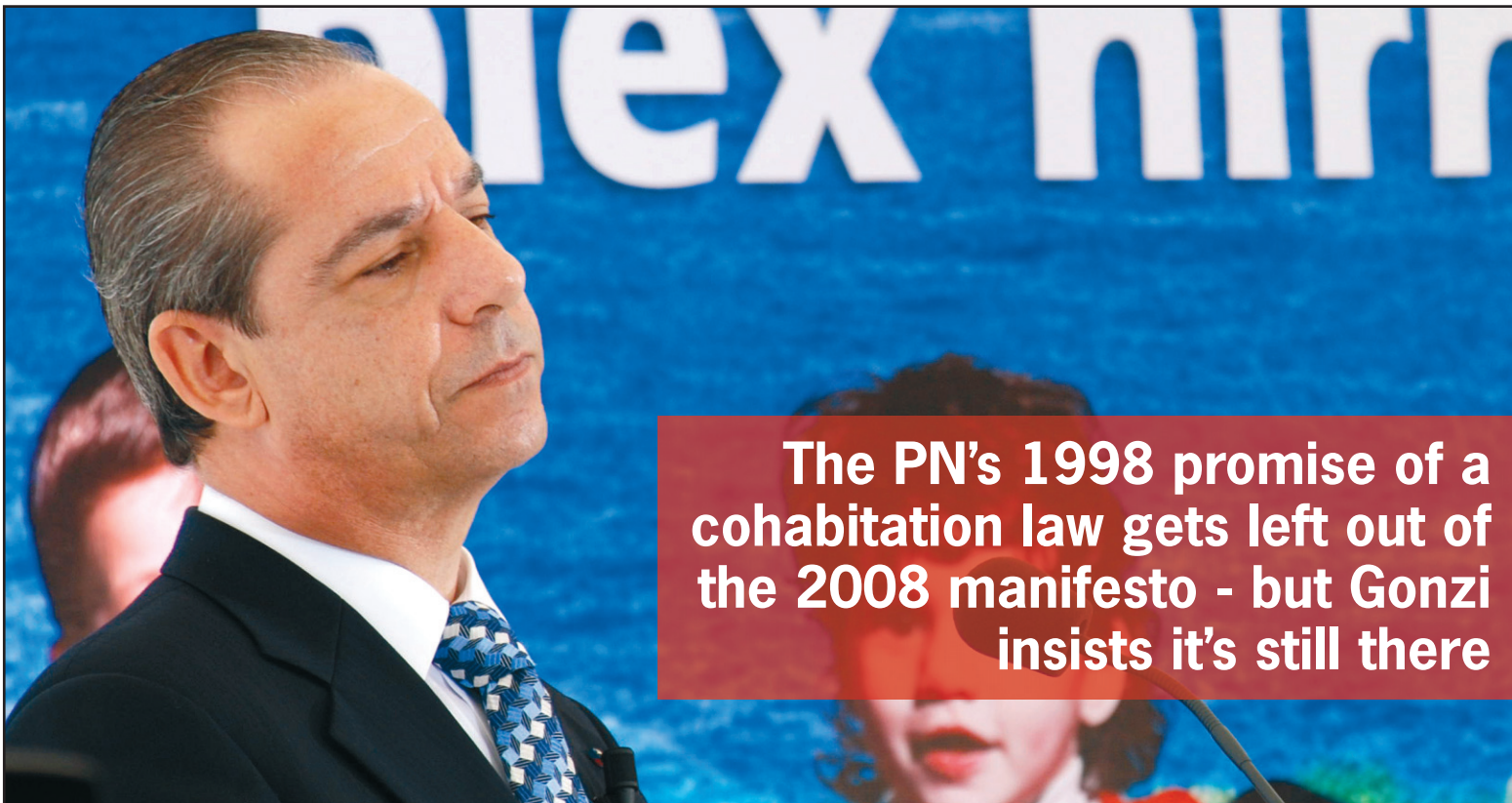
**SPRING HUNTING**  
Harry Vassallo challenges Environment Minister George Pullicino to take a final decision on Spring hunting.  
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**ANGLU TAKES ON MIDI**  
Anglu Xuereb attacks MEPA's concessions to rival consortium MIDI in Tigne project, while defending his own consortium VISET.  
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## Gonzi's muddle on cohabitation promise



The PN's 1998 promise of a cohabitation law gets left out of the 2008 manifesto - but Gonzi insists it's still there

JULIA FARRUGIA

PRIME Minister Lawrence Gonzi yesterday appeared somewhat muddled over the cohabitation issue, claiming during a televised debate that the Nationalist Party's electoral programme for 2008 includes the promise, originally made in 1998, of legislation to regularise cohabiting couples.

However, none of the 353 pro-

posals included in the PN manifesto makes any reference to cohabitation.

Shortly before the 1998 election, then Nationalist Party leader Eddie Fenech Adami had promised that if elected, he would amend the law in order to grant legal rights to persons who are cohabiting. But 10 years later, the promised cohabitation law has still not materialised.

During last night's debate on

TVM, organised by the Broadcasting Authority, this newspaper asked Dr Gonzi whether it was embarrassing for him to once again ask for the vote of thousands of separated people who are still waiting for this reform.

The Prime Minister insisted: "You're wrong. That promise did not vanish from our electoral programme. On the contrary, we re-confirmed that we want to look into this situation."

Gonzi avoided the question when asked specifically whether the PN electoral promise 10 years ago was just a political convenience stunt. But he admitted that the existing law does not protect people who are living together outside wedlock, and made an impromptu promise which is not included in the PN's electoral programme.

"Our law already gives limited protection (to **pg 5 ▶**

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**JAMES DEBONO**  
**CAMPAIGN ANALYSIS PG 8-9**

## Sant puts his foot down on civil marriages: 'They have to happen'

KARL SCHEMBRI

LABOUR Leader Alfred Sant yesterday dismissed the Mosta mayor's objections to civil marriages in his locality by saying

"they have to happen".

Asked for his reactions to Mosta mayor Paul Chetcuti Caruana's hardline opposition to officiating civil marriages in the council hall, Sant gave a curt reply that sounded like an overruling of the mayor's

weird decision.

"We had discussions with him (the mayor)," Sant said. "Civil marriages will happen, yes, why not?"

Chetcuti Caruana has already told him why, in his bizarre antithesis to Labour's

own historical policy introducing civil marriages in the 1970s: "I have a right to stick to my principles. Couples should first undergo a Cana movement course, and then get married. If they want to get married civilly they **pg 4 ▶**

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