



NATIONALISTS TALK JPO PG 7

SANT SPEAKS Vella 'said the truth' on Abela

JULIA FARRUGIA

OPPOSITION leader Alfred Sant yesterday broke his media silence for the first time since he resigned the day after the general elections, to reveal that leadership contender George Abela was not saying the truth with his claims that Labour had planned a U-turn on European Union membership back in 1997.

In an exclusive comment to MaltaToday, Sant simply said that "the correct version is that of George Vella", referring to the latter's comments last week over Abela's claims that internal discussions had taken place "to remove the EU freeze".

Then foreign minister, Vella slammed Abela over his claims that Sant had drawn up a position paper to start discussions with the PN in a bid to lead to convergence on EU membership.

"This is not true. I don't know of any position paper and never participated in any discussion to change the Labour Party's policy in relation with the EU."

Asked directly whether he was involved in any position paper in this regard, Alfred Sant yesterday said he had no further comments other than that "George Vella's version is the correct one."

In an interview with sister pa-



per Illum last Sunday, George Vella categorically denied that in 1997 or the year after there was ever a plan to change Labour's policy on EU membership – a year after it had frozen the membership application soon after its re-election.

"There were no internal discussions, neither at Cabinet level, nor on a leadership, administrative, executive or parliamentary group level, in order to get out Malta's EU application from the freeze," Vella said.

Official records of 1 and 2 April 1998 from a joint EU-Malta parliamentary committee in Strasbourg, where former finance minister Lino Spiteri was co-chairman of the committee, also never stated that Labour intended changing its position on EU membership.

On 15 October 2007, during a par-

pg5 ▶

JOE DEBONO GRECH WALKS OUT OF MLP PARLIAMENTARY GROUP MEETING PAGE 4 ▶



WANTED Asylum from Berlusconi!

pg2 ▶

The inimitable Roberto Benigni was yesterday conferred an honoris causa by the University of Malta. The Italian comic, actor and film director did not fail to lighten the solemnity of the ceremony after he gave none other than the President of Malta a bear-hug and knelt at his feet in a send-up of the ceremony

PM's commitments to Armier squatters not binding on MEPA

JAMES DEBONO

Government is insisting that as owner of the public land in Armier it has "every right to consult" with the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA) on the pending permits aimed at regularising the

community of boathouse squatters there.

Last Sunday MaltaToday revealed that just 19 days before the election and five days after announcing he would take responsibility over MEPA to redress the country's environmental deficit, Lawrence Gonzi had written to Armier's squatters to

inform them none of the structures built before 1992 would be removed; and that within six months of being elected the government will consult with MEPA on the "issue of relevant permits."

But a spokesperson for the OPM told MaltaToday that MEPA was not

pg6 ▶

Morena Live

Dragonara Casino Barrière St Julians
Brasserie & Bar

Wednesday 30 April 2008
Buffet & Drink: €6.00 per person
from 7:30pm onwards

MALTA'S NO.1

Dragonara Palace, St Julians STJ 3143
Tel: 2138 2362/3/4 • Fax: 2138 2371 • Email: casino@dragonara.com • www.dragonara.com

Minimum age of entry is 25 for Maltese citizens and 18 for non-Maltese citizens. Passport or ID Card required. Dress smart

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GILBERT CALLEJA

Newspaper post