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BRUSSELS COULD BE ABELA'S NEXT MOVE

Senior Labour officials tip leadership runner-up George Abela for MEP

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International charity defends legal pills trafficker

JAMES DEBONO

FAIR Trials International (FTI), a charity defending the rights of those facing charges in a country other than their own, has taken up the case of British national Steven Marsden who is still awaiting trial two years after being charged with conspiring to import drugs to Malta.

In July 2006 Marsden was arrested on board the catamaran travelling from Sicily when 50,000 pills believed to be ecstasy were found on him. At the time the Police claimed this was their largest ecstasy haul to date.

However, FTI claims the pills did not contain MDMA, the chemical found in ecstasy. "The pills are in fact called mCPP and sold as an ecstasy substitute of sorts, but contain nothing unlawful under Maltese law," FTI claims.

The international organisation expressed its

concern on various aspects of this case. "It is deeply worrying that the Maltese authorities insist on pursuing this case despite Steven Marsden having committed no offence under Maltese law. It seems that they are desperate to secure a conviction for something at any cost."



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Labour could **censure** Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando in parliament

JAMES DEBONO

LABOUR could be throwing the ball back in the Prime Minister's court by presenting a motion of censure against Nationalist MP Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando, if Lawrence Gonzi stays silent while three men are arraigned over the award of a permit for a disco on land owned by Pullicino Orlando.

Labour leader Joseph Muscat has told MaltaToday the party "will keep all options open", and did not exclude a motion to censure Pullicino Orlando's role in the Mistras case (**Interview – pages 10,11**).

A motion of censure would force Gonzi to take a stand on Pullicino Orlando's refusal to assume political responsibility for having lied

when stating he knew nothing of the project earmarked over his land, which he leased to a third party.

Muscat insisted Gonzi owes the public an explanation: "It is unacceptable that the Prime Minister says he has nothing new to say after three persons are arraigned in court charged with different breaches of planning laws in such a high profile case. The people expect him to speak clearly on the political implications of this case."

He expressed full trust in the Attorney General's office, after the latter did not find any criminal liability for Pullicino Orlando, who is alleged to have put in personal store for the planning permit for a disco on his land.

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