



Ministers' pay-rise justifiable? pg 5 ▶

€0.50



## Social welfare czar Joe Gerada resigns

KARL SCHEMBRI

JOE Gerada, the Chief Executive Officer of the government's Foundation for Social Welfare Services, has tendered his resignation after eight years at the helm.

Contacted yesterday, Gerada confirmed he had submitted his resignation from the foundation and that he will be staying until the end of December on the foundation that runs Appogg, Sapport and Sedqa – the state agencies for children's and families' welfare, disabled people and drug addicts.

Gerada denied rumours that he was about to join Fondazzjoni Suret il-Bniedem – the Capuchin friars' NGO that works with homeless people and runs open centres – saying his resignation was solely triggered by his desire to work elsewhere in the social field.

"I'm moving on ... I will be joining another organisation in January, a private one, but I will keep working in the social sector," Gerada said.

Gerada also denied having had any clashes with the new social policy minister John Dalli.

When contacted, Dalli too denied having had any clashes with Gerada. "We are now searching for a replacement," Dalli said.

Throughout his career, Gerada has worked in social welfare agencies, including the Employment and Training Corporation, Sedqa, the Social Work Development Programme and Appogg.

Gerada has often taken strong public stands on social issues, including child abuse, drinking laws, the family court and gambling.

"We've enacted laws protecting animals but we still don't have laws protecting children's rights; it's a shame," he said in 2004 in the wake of the paedophilia scandal at St Joseph's Institute, lambasting politicians for not having yet enacted a Children's Act.

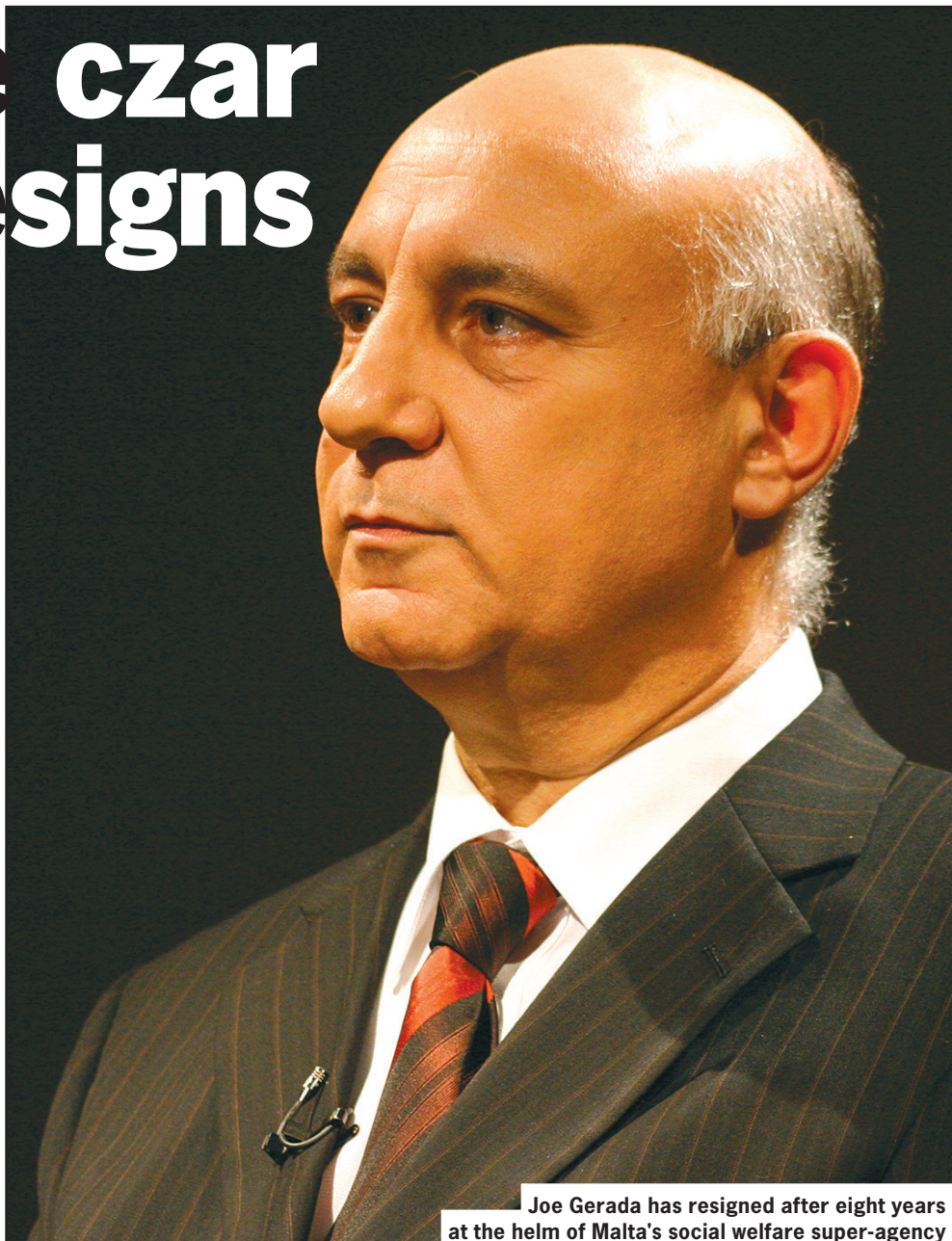
Last year, he also spoke against the mushrooming gaming halls which were sprouting everywhere, including next to children's premises.

"Children are being sent to catechism lessons to save their souls only to be lured by the temptation of a gaming hall which has opened right next to the centre for Catholic doctrine," he charged.

"Just as pushers are given a greater punishment if they sell drugs in the vicinity of a school, gaming halls should not be allowed to operate in with 100 metres of any school or youth club."

Gerada had also denounced the gaming halls for illegally al-

pg 3 ▶



Joe Gerada has resigned after eight years at the helm of Malta's social welfare super-agency

## MCAST contract awarded to bidders charged over false declarations

MATTHEW VELLA

LABOUR MP Evarist Bartolo yesterday lambasted the government for awarding an MCAST contract to two companies being charged in court over making false declarations in their tendering bids.

The companies, Future Focus and Key Services, were charged by police after investigations they conducted over the con-

tentious €1.8 million contract for the supply of ICT courses to 600 students at the Malta College of Arts, Sciences and Technology.

They are accused of making false declarations over access for the disabled to their tuition centres.

Along with three other tuition companies, STC Training, St Martin's, and Computer Domain, they were awarded part of the million-euro contract to

teach MCAST's information and communications technology course in their centres.

Yesterday, the company Future Focus was still declaring that notwithstanding any action by the police, it was fully compliant on accessibility for disabled students and that it was at present catering for students and teachers with restricted mobility.

In a reaction issued yesterday evening, the Ministry for Finance reproached the Labour

MP for "turning education into political football".

Without going into the merits of the decision to award the two companies a part of the MCAST contract, the ministry said Bartolo was throwing doubts on the judicial system of the country by alleging that the companies were already guilty before even being tried before a court.

"If a contractor is found guilty, we will take all necessary steps

at law as stipulated in the contract," the ministry said.

The ministry added that the police investigation only served to delay the start of the ICT course for 600 students by one month.

In a later reaction, Bartolo said finance minister Tonio Fenech should have ensured serious and correct procedures, rather than carrying out "a dishonest attack" on him.

pg 7 ▶



SPECIAL DISCOUNTS APPLY UP TO 31/12/08

# BULGARIA

## Investing in Lifestyle on the shores of Lake Batak

Maria Stella Leisure Estate is a state of the art holiday complex consisting of villa style 1 bedroomed and 2 bedroomed apartments, 2 semi-detached villas and a fully detached villa, all enjoying unobstructed breathtaking panoramic views of Lake Batak, peaceful meadows and snow capped mountains. It incorporates a small hotel, a spa, a restaurant and a club house with tennis, water sports and other facilities. The area offers all seasons sports opportunities - skiing on the nearby pistes and ice skating on the lake in winter, water sports on the lake in summer, hunting, fishing, trekking, hiking, cycling and other sports throughout the year. The resort is only 90 minutes away by coach from the capital Sofia which is served by regular scheduled flights from Malta.

**\*Prices (valid upto 31/12/08) €50,000 (Lm21,465)**

\*Payable in 3 instalments spread over 6 to 10 months, which is around 20% cheaper than other similar properties in the area & can be rented out when unoccupied by the owner • 3% interest on all deposits paid from date of deposits till final deed • Title to property guaranteed

FOR FURTHER DETAILS ASK FOR OUR BROCHURE

Contact: **EMKA international** Ltd. 48, Mill Str., Qormi T: 2147 0090 M: 7925 5253 / 9949 5861 F: 2147 0219 E: admin@emkald.eu W: www.emkald.eu