

# GONZI DECIDES

## RCC for EU Commissioner, Busuttill for Permanent Representative

THE prime minister has decided that the next European Commissioner will be Richard Cachia Caruana, the permanent representative to the EU, whose position will be offered to Simon Busuttill, the MEP.

Highly placed sources have told MaltaToday that Lawrence Gonzi has already taken his decision to replace Joe Borg, whose tenure comes to an end in October.

The Cabinet and parliamentary group have not been informed of Gonzi's decision.

With Cachia Caruana expected to vacate his role as Malta's ambassador to the EU, it is Simon Busuttill who is being tipped to take up the position of permanent representative.

A preliminary meeting between Cachia Caruana and Busuttill has already been held at Dar Malta, where the permanent representation's organigram was reviewed.

But Simon Busuttill is still contesting the Eu-



Cachia Caruana and his imminent successor at Dar Malta, Simon Busuttill

ropean Parliament elections to be held in June 2009, despite Gonzi having already decided that he should be permanent representative.

The prime minister will first ensure that Busuttill, now a main vote-catcher for the PN, will garner as many votes as possible for the June elections, before asking him to take up the new role in Brussels. Busuttill got close to 60,000 first preference votes in 2003. The current Maltese Commissioner, Joe Borg, recently expressed his desire to serve a second term, saying he knows the workings of the Commission very well and that he is ready for another term if the Prime Minister re-appoints him.

But Cachia Caruana has also been angling for the €220,000-a-year job with the Commission. And Simon Busuttill's name was already floated in the press as one of the possible candidates for a high-profile European post. The president of the commission, José Manuel Barroso, is said to be pushing for the reappointment of Joe Borg to a second term.

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## 50% of drivers had a puncture last month

mt survey

THE ever-growing potholes on the Maltese roads have left nearly half of the Maltese drivers with punctures and other damages to their cars over the last month of uninterrupted rain showers.

The latest MaltaToday survey reveals the extent of the disaster on the country's roads. While registration tax was exorbitantly increased in the last budget, so have the damages on cars caused by the roads' terrible conditions.

A staggering 71% said their cars were damaged from potholes in the last year. Another half claim to have sustained more

than two punctures or other damages in the past year due to the bad state of the roads.

Unsurprisingly, only 2.3% believe Maltese roads are in good shape.

Yet the government allocated a meagre €500,000 for patchwork and repairs in only 23 roads out of the hundreds of third-world rated roads and arteries. Contractors are re-laying the tarmac, but few are those who believe they are doing a good job given their abysmal track record.

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