



'Joseph and Michelle asked me to contest' – Farrugia

Nationalist MEP candidate hits back over Labour denials

MATTHEW VELLA

NATIONALIST candidate for MEP Vince Farrugia yesterday reiterated he was three times extended an invitation by the Opposition leader to contest in Labour's name, and also by Joseph Muscat's wife Michelle: a former personal assistant of his at the GRTU.

Labour has denied claims by Farrugia, the director-general of GRTU, that he was formally approached to contest for the party.

"Joseph Muscat has a way of saying things in private, and another when in public. The truth is that he broached the subject three times," Farrugia told Maltatoday.

The first time was an encounter at a social event in December where the two had a five-minute chat. Labour sources told The Times this was their only encounter, in which Muscat taunted Farrugia over rumours that he was contesting for the PN. Muscat is said to have asked him why he was not interested in contesting

with the PL, to which Farrugia replied that the PL had not invited him.

But in a second encounter, both Farrugia and GRTU president Paul Abela met Joseph Muscat and senior Labour MPs in a meeting to lobby support over the rent reform bill.

"We were talking about the rent law reforms, and it was here that he tried to gently dissuade me from contesting for the PN. We were lobbying for Labour's support on our proposals for rent reform, and Joseph came back to me saying – 'OK, but what will you give me?' And I asked him what he wanted and he said: 'Come on, don't you know? Don't contest for them...'"

In a third encounter in Valletta, Muscat once again

reminded Farrugia that if he wanted to contest for Labour, the party's doors were open to him. "He told me: 'You know the doors are always open.'"

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Labour leader Joseph Muscat and his wife Michelle. Both tried to persuade Vince Farrugia (left) to contest on a Labour ticket when the first rumours of his impending PN candidature started emerging. While Labour spin doctors have attempted to quash Farrugia's claims, the GRTU director-general has reiterated his claims and revealed that there were at least three instances in which Joseph Muscat asked him to contest for Labour.

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