

ELECTION SPECIAL

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THE POLITICS OF SURVEYS

Stefano Mallia is advisor to MEP Simon Busuttil and a central part of the PN electoral campaign. His firm EMCS produced the newspaper survey predicting Labour's 10% lead over the PN and AD's 0.25% vote. **WHY?**

FULL STORY PAGE 8

BUSUTTIL'S AIDE BEHIND 'INDEPENDENT' SURVEY

Cutting losses - the strategy to turn out the PN vote



PHOTOGRAPHY BY RAY ATTARD

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LABOUR >>>

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Newspaper post

but losing the war



Lawrence Gonzi faces an uphill struggle in an electoral race which Labour has turned into a campaign on domestic issues

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RAY ATTARD

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DEMOGRAPHY

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ENVIRONMENT

"... maximize on EU funds, increase incentives, introduce renewable energies, better water quality ..."

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"... animals are sentient beings and their well-being should be protected"

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"... help you to identify appropriate EU grants and funds"



PN Candidate for European Parliament Elections



This is not just a



KARL STAGNO-NAVARRA

LABOUR leader Joseph Muscat last night looked straight into the lens of a One TV camera to reiterate a strong message to his grassroots support: "This is your chance to send a clear message to government;

do not be complacent with your vote, use it."

A concise message, but surely Muscat has stepped up the pressure on his own campaign at getting out the vote, as Europe-wide turnouts for these elections are heading for an all-time low.

Just over a year since Labour's shock defeat in the general election, and less than a year since his own election to party leader, Joseph Muscat desperately needs this vote to acquire a clear, popular mandate that will not only confront Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi on

national issues, but also consolidate his role as Prime Minister in-waiting for the rest of the legislature.

Replying to questions by TV personality Simone Cini during a public interview in Joanne Gardens in Tarxien, Joseph Muscat insisted this was a "difficult election" for Labour, adding that many Labourites had either given up or become sceptical about politics.

Joseph Muscat is sticking to his cautious approach on how to interpret reports about voter surveys that have put PL well in the lead for next Saturday's election.

He warned about the hype that led to the belief that a clear labour win was written on the wall during last year's general election. But Joseph Muscat knows that this is not a general election and moreover, Lawrence Gonzi will still be the Prime Minister on Monday.

The issue Joseph Muscat wants his party to understand, however, is that this is not just a European game. Most of all, next Saturday's vote will be his first and most important test since he was elected PL leader a few months ago by party delegates.

Joseph Muscat is cautiously calculating his future, because he desperately needs to consolidate an absolute majority

to be able to clinch that mandate and catapult his party as the trusted alternative to Lawrence Gonzi's administration.

He also needs that clear majority to be able to put the spoke into the wheel of the Prime Minister's legitimacy in office with just a handful of votes.

Last night – as in previous occasions – Joseph Muscat has once again directly attacked Prime Minister Gonzi's credibility, by listing a series of issues that are the talk of the day.

Shooting down the Prime Minister's appeals for the campaign to be directed solely on European issues, Joseph Muscat goes on to insist that this is not just a European game, but one to respond to what he defines as an arrogant administration, that has broken all electoral promises and is ignoring people's hardships.

He digs in where it hurts, and people respond, especially when he mentions water and electricity, hunting and trapping, and illegal immigration.

All are populist issues, and put into context, could also be interpreted as European issues that place PN at a disadvantage.

On illegal immigration, Joseph Muscat responds to what the Maltese want to hear: "Yes, we will use our veto with no shame at all, until Brussels



Winning the battles

Gonzi struggled to project an image of calm and serenity yesterday, but was unable to conceal his bitterness at Labour's 'populist' campaign.

RAPHAEL VASSALLO on the chronicle of a defeat foretold

THE atmosphere at the PN headquarters in Pietà yesterday was vaguely reminiscent of a funeral parlour. Behind the smiles and impeccable politeness, there was also a palpable aura of despondency. At one point – while accusing his opposite number of hijacking a Europe campaign with purely local issues – the Prime Minister even allowed his sentence to trail away into a sigh and a shake of his head.

Everything about Lawrence Gonzi's delivery yesterday spelt out a single message in large, indelible letters. "Yes, we will lose Saturday's election," he seemed to be saying, "But, damn it, we don't deserve to..."

That is of course debatable, but at the same time few would deny that the writing on the wall is clear. All independent surveys strongly suggest a Labour landslide on Saturday – differing only in the margin of victory – though confronted with these and other prognostics, Gonzi put on a brave but ultimately unconvincing face.

"You all know I refuse to discuss surveys and polls," he decreed impatiently when asked about a projected 10% advantage for Labour. "I prefer to wait until I have the official results in hand..."

All the same, his own party appears to have already thrown in the towel behind his back. In what may well be a first for Maltese politics – or indeed, politics anywhere – the PN's own campaign ads now predict a worst-case scenario, whereby the Nationalists retain only one seat to Labour's four. And Gonzi himself recently made an astonishing public admission, when he strongly hinted to an audience of disgruntled hunters that – if they were "not careful" – the sixth seat might go to AD's Arnold Cassola.

"Yes, we have had to make difficult decisions," Gonzi conceded yesterday with an air of exasperation. "But these were necessary for the national interest..."

It was a leitmotif to which he would return with every example of populism and opportunism with which the Labour party succeeded in derailing the entire campaign – the real theme of yesterday's press conference, in which nothing was said that wasn't already widely known and discussed beforehand.

"This is the fundamental difference between our campaign and that of Labour," the Prime Minister began. "The PL has chosen to disregard the European Union altogether, and instead speaks only of national matters. It has taken the easy



way out, appealing to populist issues to increase its own popularity, while ignoring the realities our country is facing..."

In defending his record, Gonzi urged the electorate to remember the backdrop against which so many unpopular decisions had to be taken: foremost of which, the global economic crisis.

"Much larger countries than Malta have faced much larger problems. Some, like Spain, have seen their unemployment soar to as much as 17%. In Malta, by way of contrast, unemployment stands at only 6%. This is still a cause for concern for us: when even a single person registers for work and doesn't find any, that is a problem we have to face..."

But the Labour Party, he said, has chosen to ignore all this, and has instead embraced populist rhetoric aimed only at boosting its short-term electoral chances.

In between staple PN soundbites – anything from "we are not afraid of the challenges ahead" to "we want to bring the European Union to a factory shopfloor near you" – Gonzi was scarcely able to conceal his bitterness when accusing his opposite number of opportunism.

This he did on four separate issues: the revision of water and electricity tariffs; unemployment; public transport reform; and last but not least, irregular immigration.

And yet, little of this has any direct bearing on Saturday's election. It is as though Gonzi has been forced to play along to a tune set for him by Joseph Muscat; and it is evidently not a position the Prime Minister relishes.

But apart from the occasional admission that the government, with hindsight, could have handled some of those issues slightly better, Gonzi was on the whole defensive. As such, there were moments when he could no longer conceal the enormous contradictions in his own arguments. For instance, questioned about the controversial Delimara power station contract – signed in the absence of an Environment Impact Assessment – Gonzi insisted this was the only way the matter could have been concluded.

"It is only natural that an EIA would be carried out after the choice of technology was made," he quickly retorted. But this was at best a distortion of what actually happened: for the EIA was commissioned, not after the "technology was chosen", but after the contract itself was already signed on the dotted line.

Besides, minutes before his defence of the controversial contract, Gonzi had lambasted Joseph Muscat for omitting any reference to the international price of oil in connection with the hike in utility tariffs.

Ah, but what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. If our dependence on oil resulted in higher water and electricity tariffs... what sense did it make to choose none other than heavy fuel oil for the new power station? Doesn't this make us all the more dependent on notoriously unstable international oil prices?

Elsewhere, the Prime Minister failed to convince when asked for reassurances that this sensitive decision had indeed been taken by the Cabinet of Ministers... as opposed to by the Nationalist Party itself, as strongly

suggested by Austin Gatt last Saturday.

"I can assure you all," Gonzi insisted, "that when Gatt referred to 'the party', he meant 'the party in government'..."

But did he really? If so, why did he choose to couch his already peculiar statement in the words 'party first of all'? Surely a seasoned Cabinet minister would know the difference between party and State, and avoid such an obvious electoral pitfall in the last lap before E-day itself...

On other issues, however, it must be said that Gonzi fared better in his own defence. And nowhere was he more convincing – as usual – than on the issue where he is unfairly criticised the most: irregular immigration.

Joseph Muscat, Gonzi declared, had committed the unpardonable sin of turning a human tragedy into a political football.

"Why?" he rhetorically asked, with reference to Muscat's recent insistence on an "extraordinary" debate in parliament. "Because a boat turned up with 230 people on board? Is that an emergency? If so, why wasn't it an emergency when so many other boats had come before? I told the Opposition leader back then: yes, let's have a debate by all means. Let's discuss the issue, but with the seriousness it deserves..."

Far from an emergency, the Prime Minister insisted, Muscat views the entire issue as nothing more than an opportunity for his own self-advancement.

And this alone explains his bitterness. For though Gonzi knows he is "ethically, morally and legally" right in his convictions, he knows equally well that the general public is far

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I have only one thing to say about people who adopt opportunistic, populist policies. Their place is not in politics. In politics, you cannot allow yourself to be dragged away by the current

more attuned to Muscat's scare-mongering talk of "crisis", than to his own impassioned appeals for rationality and calm.

"I have only one thing to say about people who adopt opportunistic, populist policies," he said almost as an afterthought. "Their place is not in politics. In politics, you cannot allow yourself to be dragged away by the current..."



Lessons from a failed campaign

PERHAPS the greatest irony of the 2004 EP elections in Malta was the fact that Labour bagged three of the five available MEP seats when it had been so keen to prevent Malta ever joining the EU. Despite the accurate poll predictions, the 2004 result still felt like a surprise and a commission was appointed by the PN to conduct a post mortem on its campaign.

The "secret" report was leaked to the press two years after the fact and made very interesting reading: instead of galvanizing all the party's resources, the Campaign Strategy Group appointed by Lawrence Gonzi appears to have made vital elements feel left out. Ministers did not feel that they had a role to play, backbenchers said that had felt left in the dark and an unidentified prominent PN figure who offered his services was told to keep a low profile.

In the campaign itself the strategy group managed to disregard its own advice, and ended up attacking Alternattiva Demokratika despite having previously resolved not to do so. Another mistake identified by the Commission was the failure to mobilise resources in districts where

no local election was to take place. Among the advantages gained by Labour was its clear strategy to emphasise local issues over European ones.

There is no way of knowing at this time to what extent the commission's findings have served the PN in the 2009 election, but some things do appear to have been done differently. The spearhead of the PN campaign is no longer its secretary-general Paul Borg Olivier, but its prime candidate: Simon Busuttil MEP.

Having bagged the lion's share of the PN vote in 2004, Busuttil is way ahead of the field in the polls in 2009 also. He can afford to take responsibility for campaign strategy far more than any of his competitors. It still does not explain the back seat taken by Paul Borg Olivier but the PN is making use of a resource it has available because of the peculiar circumstance of Busuttil's electoral prominence.

Once more Labour has set the pace in this campaign by focusing on local issues, but the PN this time has responded in like vein: Labour's gambit on immigration has been parried with the PN's slogan of more employment; Labour's thrust through the VAT

refund issues meets a counterstroke through the blow by blow account of Labour MEPs' voting foibles in Brussels in the past five years.

Although these matters are EU connected, it is the local aspect that dominates.

If we were to review the candidates' statements, we would find even more local skirmishes ° many altogether unrelated to anything they can ever deliver as MEPs. Does it matter that so and so is all for the holding of a referendum on divorce or that another MEP wannabe leads the assault on some planning violation?

The wider continental issues are largely neglected. Apart from Libertas candidate Mary Gauci, the Lisbon Treaty gets mentioned only thanks to its effect of granting Malta a sixth seat in the Brussels parliament. Despite recruitment of bona fide environmentalists by both major parties, climate change – a crucial issue best addressed at EU level – remains a poor relation, invited to the campaign as a matter of form.

In the 2004 post mortem it was pointed out to the PN, that its popularity was at a low ebb 12 months after the euphoria of

winning a general election, and its support had been disoriented by the bitter contest for the party leadership and disillusioned by the appointment of Eddie Fenech Adami as President of the Republic.

This time around the PN can claim a coup in the appointment of George Abela as President, but suffers from the same disillusionment a year from the last general election, with the 12-month saga over electricity bills taking a significant toll. Losing the EP elections may have become the fate of every government taking office just one year before, and the Busuttil strategy seems to take this on board.

The PN is not engaging all its resources and appears to be preparing to absorb the blow of yet another defeat. Candidates who taunt their adversaries with the fact that Lawrence Gonzi will still be Prime Minister after this election, no matter the outcome, appear to have conceded defeat. Busuttil's genius in these circumstances appears to be in going with the flow: a PN advert that gives out that the PN will have a hard time electing two MEPs is an inspired lie. The PN cannot help electing two MEPs, but by

proposing such a complete rout they hope to scour the bottom of the barrel and maximise the turnout for their party.

Busuttil is sure to secure one of the two safe PN seats, in fact he is sure to bag the first one. And by painting a grim picture he nourishes a secret hope of bagging Malta's sixth seat for the PN, thus equalising several months after the election proper.

That may be about the time for the final phase to be played if and when Busuttil takes Richard Cachia Caruana's place as Malta EU representative and RCC becomes Malta's EU Commissioner. Whether or not the PN secure their third seat, they are likely to have three MEPs in 2009, their third qualifying as Busuttil bows out.

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POINTS OF VIEW

MaltaToday asks prominent personalities and opinion formers to comment on the campaign themes and main electoral issues ahead of Malta's second-ever European election next Saturday



Joe Farrugia Malta Employers Association

The choice of European MEPs is a decision which will reflect on Malta's ability to participate effectively in the decision making process of the European Union. The fact that as a small country we are represented by only a relatively small number of seats makes it even more essential to be selective and to have a team of MEPs that, irrespective of which side of the political divide they come from, will truly be able to participate and act in the best interests of the nation.

Our MEPs face a more daunting task than those of other, larger countries because they need to be involved and keep abreast with many issues simultaneously. Therefore we need MEPs who are convinced that a small voice can make a big difference,



who would be prepared to stir debate, and possibly even disagree with their political affiliations within the European Parliament if such disagreement is in the national interest. This is only possible if the MEPs that are elected are fully knowledgeable of the mechanics of the EU and who lobby effectively within their respective camps to magnify Malta's influence in the EU.

MEPs should promote a business mentality in the European Parliament, which unfortunately, has demon-

strated, on various occasions, a complete detachment from the realities of the business world. It often seems as if MEPs (not just the Maltese ones) are too keen on discussing issues that affect business and the work environment – e.g. organization of working time, maternity leave, family friendly measures – with a complete disregard of the fundamental underpinnings that make such things possible, namely the generation of productive jobs through a healthy competitive environment.

The European Social Model is only sustainable if European enterprise is competitive. In their interventions and lobbying activities, MEPs should ask themselves: How will my contribution generate more investment in Malta? Will this position increase the job creation potential for my country? It is regrettable that there have been cases where the domestic squabbling between political parties has tainted the quality of the



We need MEPs who are convinced a small voice can make a big difference and possibly even disagree with their political affiliations

MEPs participation, and even went against the national interest.

It is expected that MEPs should establish and maintain regular communication links with constituted bodies, unions and civil society. Consultation with these institutions will enable them to take more informed positions on a number of sensitive issues, and that their contributions to the debates will push the Maltese agenda – not necessarily that of their political party – forward.

The selection of candidates for the European Parliament in the coming elections should hopefully result in an outcome whereby our voice in the European Parliament will be heard and respected. The wrong choice could be a source of national embarrassment. It is up to the democratic process to decide.

Joseph Farrugia is director-general of the Malta Employers' Association

Martin Scicluna Today Public Policy Institute

It would be disrespectful of me to tell our elected European Members of Parliament what they should or should not do. They are after all the representatives of all those thousands of people who have voted them into the European Parliament.

But if I were pressed to do so, my message would be two-fold and it would be addressed to Members of both political parties.

First, please remember that in the Parliament you account together for less than 1% of the total vote. It is



important, therefore, wherever possible, for the Maltese vote on those issues that matter nationally to be unified and coordinated. This is not because they will sway the vote on their own, but because there are some issues – illegal immigration and the

budget come immediately to mind – where consensus between our MEPs of all political persuasions becomes essential if Malta's voice in Europe is to be heard.

Secondly, we, your electors, expect you to uphold Malta's good name abroad for probity, intelligence and our ability to punch above our weight. It is vitally important that, even where there is political disagreement between you, your differences do not undermine the national interest and that Malta's reputation remains untarnished.

Martin Scicluna is government advisor on illegal immigration and head of the Today Public Policy Institute



It is important for the Maltese vote on those issues that matter nationally to be unified and coordinated

Sunday Times survey produced by Simon Busuttill aide's firm

THE survey giving Labour a 10% lead in the Sunday Times last Sunday was produced by a firm whose director is Simon Busuttill's advisor – Stefano Mallia.

Mallia's central role in the PN campaign – led by MEP incumbent Busuttill – was exposed last week due to a gaffe by a candidate who inadvertently forwarded Mallia's message in an email reply to questions by the Sunday Times about his electoral spending.

Mallia was revealed to have instructed candidates to reply that they were too "taken up" by campaigning, to entertain the newspaper's questions on their electoral spending.

Although yesterday Mallia denied being the PN campaign manager in replies to MaltaToday, PN insiders have pointed at him as being Busuttill's right-hand man in this campaign.

But Mallia is not just Busuttill's advisor. He is the director and a shareholder in EMCS, the firm commissioned by the Sunday Times to prepare a survey which gave Labour a 10% lead in the MEP elections, and a miserly 0.25% support for Alternattiva Demokratika – contrary to the predictions of MaltaToday's regular polls.

In fact, both Mallia and Busuttill are directors of Europa Research Consultancy Services, a company owned by both EMCS and Gansam, the legal firm whom Busuttill is a shareholder of.

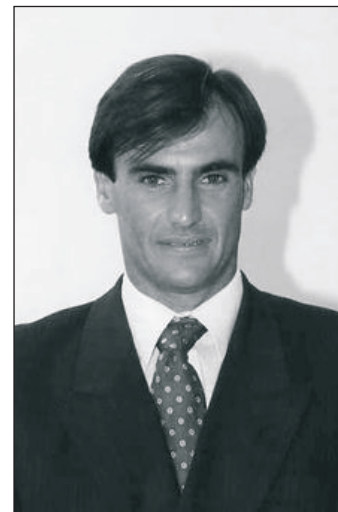
The link exposes Busuttill's role as an architect of the PN's electoral strategy, assisted by his advisor Stefano Mallia. But it also sheds light on the strategy that is squarely aimed at minimising an impending PN loss in the European elections.

Survey politics

Struggling with the government's unpopularity due to the rise in utility bills, the EMCS-Sunday Times survey predicted that a substantial 11.6% of those who voted for the PN in 2008, will not be voting for the PN this time around.

It gave Labour a 10% lead, compared to MaltaToday's survey – published last Sunday – giving Labour a 9-point lead.

But subtle differences between the two surveys are worthy of note: the MaltaToday survey



GANSAM and EMCS are the two shareholding firms in Europa Research and Consultancy Services Ltd whose directors are:

For GANSAM Holdings: Simon Busuttill (chairman), Austin Sammut (ex-PBS chairman), Peter Fenech (chairman Manoel Theatre/MCC).

For EMCS Investments: John C. Grech (ex-MTA chairman), Stefano Mallia, and John Farrugia

gives AD 4.1% of the vote, while the EMCS gives it just 0.25%.

And while MaltaToday shows 3% of those who voted PN in 2008 will be voting AD this time around, the EMCS survey predicts just 0.4% of the PN vote will go to AD.

In another survey last week by TV programme Xarabank, Labour was polled at 23.5% with the PN close behind at 22.2%.

But this survey also produced a discrepancy. By factoring in more respondents who said they voted PN in 2008 (36.7% of respondents) compared to those who voted Labour (28.2%), the survey produced higher abstention levels for PN voters (7.7% said they will stay home) and even a significant 4.1% saying they will switch sides to Labour.

On the other hand, Labour enjoyed lower abstentions (3.6%) and just 1.2% of their 2008 voters switching sides.

Central to the PN strategy is propping up the Labour vote, in a bid to encourage Nationalist voters to come out to vote and minimise PN losses.

More to the point, in a surprise move the PN placed an advert in last week's Sunday Times predicting an abysmal result for the PN: "Our polls tell us that the way things stand today, Nationalist EP candidates will struggle for a second seat, and that if a sixth seat were available to Malta, then anti-EU or eurosceptic candidates would get four seats and pro-EU Nationalists would get only two," the advert warns, pointing to the fall in turnout for the PN.

Coupled with the recent advertising blitz by the Department of Information to bring out the vote, Simon Busuttill himself and candidate Vince Farrugia have publicly told voters that regardless of the dismal predictions for the PN, the MEP elections would not be changing anything for the Nationalist government.

On his part Stefano Mallia yesterday denied being the PN's electoral campaign manager when contacted by MaltaToday, but admitted to "helping out" the party in running the campaign.

Questioned about the email he wrote to all PN candidates instructing them how to reply to Sunday Times questions, Mallia said: "I am not going into this. I have already given my replies."

Labour is 10% ahead – survey

Labour has a 10 point lead over the Nationalist Party, according to a poll commissioned by *The Sunday Times* ahead of Saturday's European Parliament election, though 15 per cent of respondents said they do not yet know how they are going to vote.

The poll, conducted by EMCS, shows that Labour would gain 44.7 per cent of the vote while the PN trail on 35 per cent. These figures were derived after removing from the equation the 'don't knows' and those who failed to give an answer.

From the survey it is not possible to analyse how the 'don't knows' are likely to vote. However, the share of both major parties will

While refusing to reply if Simon Busuttill was running the PN campaign, Mallia also denied being a prominent member of Busuttill's staff – despite being listed as an 'external advisor' on the MEP's website.

When this newspaper put it to him that other PN insiders had indicated him as the PN campaign manager, Mallia simply replied: "They can say what they like."

Email blunder

Mallia's role in the party campaign strategy was exposed thanks to a reply inadvertently forwarded by candidate Vince Farrugia, which carried Mallia's comments to candidates on the questions put to them by the Sunday Times.

"With reference to the query from The Sunday Times re MEP election expenses please use the reply reproduced below.

"I am very taken up with the demands of the election campaign and so am unable to give a comprehensive and proper account of the expenses incurred for the election campaign which is still underway... Once the election is over I will ensure that all accounts are properly done."

Libertas candidate trashes Lisbon Treaty

THE MEP candidate for pan-European party Libertas, Mary Gauci, said her party was not against the European Union but wanted to see a "better operational European Commission".

Criticising the Lisbon Treaty, Gauci said Brussels had taken away people's rights by pushing for the Treaty and making "a few unelected European Commissioners decide our future without even discussing with the European Parliament and the people

who elected them."

Gauci said the Lisbon Treaty puts at risk "our automatic right to a referendum on future changes to existing treaties."

She said the Treaty have the EU too much power, reducing Malta's ability to stop decisions not in its interests; it gives 105 additional powers to the EU on issues such as international relations, security, trade and economic policy; and in more than 60 of these areas Malta will lose

its right to stop laws against national interest.

She added that the Treaty will create an EU foreign minister to speak on Malta's behalf, eroding neutrality by drawing the island into a common defence and obliging it to increase military spending.

She said the Treaty will cut Malta's voting strength on the Council of Ministers by more than half, ending its automatic right to a Commissioner.

She also said it will "seriously undermine workers' rights and public services, mandates the EU to promote nuclear energy, and undermines the EU's commitment to tackling global poverty and inequality."

Gauci said that while it gives more power to the European Parliament, it does not allow it to put forward its own laws.

Gauci said the European Parliament elections were not about who will govern Malta, "but an

election to elect our representatives in the European Parliament – the more representative Malta would be, the better off would be our citizens, because an elected MEP with Libertas would open a new door through another political group in Brussels.

"The Maltese electorate should understand that it stands having better representation with MEPs in different political groupings rather than having MEP in just two political groups," Gauci said.

AD lashes out at 'one-man show' in Birkirkara council



L-R: AD candidates Yvonne Ebejer Arqueros and Arnold Cassola, Sliema councillor Michael Briguglio and Birkirkara councillor Mario Mallia

CHARLOT ZAHRA

SPEAKING during the launch of the Alternattiva Demokratika (AD) candidates that will be contesting for the Local Council elections on 6 June yesterday afternoon, AD candidate Mario Mallia lashed out at the Birkirkara local council's running by Nationalist mayor Micheal Fenech Adami – son of former prime minister Eddie Fenech Adami – as a “one-man show”.

“The participation of the residents in the running of the Birkirkara council has been neglected. It has literally become a one-man show,” Mario Mallia said.

“The residents have not been consulted on how the Local Council is run. I invite you to ask the residents and the other Local Councillors about the matter.

“Having one project after another with the residents only seeing the end product, without being ever consulted, is plain disgusting, and is not conducive to encourage further participation by residents in the locality,” he insisted.

This besides the over-spending by the Local Council as highlighted in the Auditor's report, he added.

AD was proposing the appointment of area managers from different parts of the locality instead of having a single person, the mayor, who practically decided which areas were maintained and the amount of money spent on each project.

AD chairperson and MEP candidate Arnold Cassola said that the AD candidates that would be contesting the local council elections – Mario Mallia for Birkirkara, Michael Briguglio for Sliema and AD secretary-general Victor Galea for Gharb – had already shown that they could make a difference, as they had already shown both in Sliema and Birkirkara respectively, together with Ralph Cassar in Attard.

“Many times, AD councillors propose Green policies that most of the time, improve the quality of life of residents in the respective localities and manage to bring consensus between councillors hailing from different political parties,” Cassola insisted.

Sometimes there were occasions where councillors from different parties did not agree on an ideological basis. “However, there are other instances where councillors from the same political party disagree because they were allied to different MPs in the House of

Representatives,” he explained. “AD councillors bring consensus in the locality because they are not allied to a specific party or faction, or the lobbies of big business,” Cassola added.

Mallia served in the Birkirkara Local Council in the 2000-2003 term, getting elected at the first count. Mario had managed to bring the council closer to the residents, and introduced various campaigns about the use of bicycles, the use of open spaces, traffic management, Cassola said.

“When I was still in the local council way back in 2003, AD, together with the residents, had objected to the building of an old peoples' home by the Birkirkara Local Council in the area where the playing field, one of the few open spaces in the locality, was sited,” Mallia said.

Moreover, the local council had still not consulted on the way how this playing field should be development to the benefit of all the residents. “We do not know, for instance, where a number of grounds that will be built in this open space will be accessible to all residents free of charge, or whether a few of them will only be available under payment,” the AD candidate explained.

“Accessibility of open space is a crucial issue for us”.

In the Sliema Local Council, Briguglio, who has been serving since 2003, has introduced the practice that when there are dubious projects, they are contested by the council.

Moreover, the Sliema council, under the insistence of Briguglio, this week introduced the use of solar energy at its offices.

“Despite the fact that I was on my own, I made an impact. If I had not been there, the Qui-Si-Sana car park would have been developed despite the residents' objections.”

Likewise, the Chalet and the Pjazzetta would have been built if the council under the pressure of Briguglio had not objected.

The third candidate, AD secretary-general Victor Galea, will be contesting the council elections for the Gharb locality for the first time.

“Victor is well-known all across Gozo as well as in Malta about his dedication to the residents' cause,” Cassola said. “Moreover, Victor Galea's name is well-connected with the Eco-Gozo concept, which AD introduced in 2007,” he added.

czahra@mediatoday.com.mt

“

Having one project after another with the residents only seeing the end product, without being ever consulted, is plain disgusting - Mallia

Can anyone tell me where the **** is Richard?

I know, I know. The last time I saw him he was there behind the PM's back. The Prime Minister had just won single-handedly the last general election. In traditional Cardinal style, he appeared when the battle was won and finally over.

Before that particular moment he was nowhere to be seen.

Now word has it that when Gonzi will address the press conference and declare that he has achieved a mind-blowing electoral victory over Labour, Richard – I mean, the Cardinal – will be there behind his back smiling like a cockatiel (cockatiels do not smile by the way), taking all the credit for the unexpected victory over Muscat, that very terrible man who has named his children Etoile and Soleil.

Now let us for a minute imagine that Dr Gonzi will not be celebrating a victory over the PL but declaring a defeat. I could bet my next hundred euros that Richard will be no-

where in the building. I mean, nowhere to be seen.

Richard reminds me of my pet lizard, only visible when there is a feast to be had. You see, legend has it that the Cardinal only appears when the sun is shining (sun, soleil in French, just like the name Muscat chose for his daughter to the dismay of the fascist bloggers who will be ingesting the valium big time this weekend).

Now back to the Cardinal, who as we all know is not someone who likes or admires Paul Borg Olivier, that very nice guy who is not exactly up to the posting he was elected to.

So Richard, I mean the Cardinal, who believes his rightful position and destiny is to be Commissioner in Brussels on a salary equivalent to the Liberian national deficit, has pushed Simon Busuttill to head the PN campaign team. Yes, you heard right: a candidate organising the campaign team for the PN.

Now just imagine Louis Grech or better still John Attard Montalto being chosen as campaign managers to run the campaign for the PL. It would of course be unethical, simply not on, unprofessional, unacceptable and all the other things you can imagine being wrong if you happen to be a Labourite and not GonziPN aficionado.

The Cardinal thinks that when GonziPN wins or loses, we should heap all our praise, or hand-grenades, onto Gonzi. Now that is grossly unfair. If GonziPN is to be congratulated then we have no qualms about praising the Cardinal and his sidekick little Simon, who once told me soon after EU accession he would very much like to militate in a social-democratic party!

Indeed when Gonzi faces the press on Sunday night and takes all the credit, we should expectedly show our deepest admiration for the man and his two captains, Richard and Simon. That is how it should be: where credit is due, we should



SAVIOUR BALZAN

I also take slight offence with respect to the revelation featured in MaltaToday's front page story. Why should it be a problem if Stefano Mallia – who by the way is only a 'helper' in the Simon-led PN campaign team – be probed by any newspaper because his business company has simply carried out a survey that appeared in a newspaper very well known for blowing a raspberry at Muscat?

Why should we concern ourselves about this?

After all why should we doubt Stefano Mallia's sincere intentions of publicising the polls, and then have his firm paid by this Sunday newspaper to expose the survey results?

And what is wrong in showing that the Labour party is about to have an astonishing landslide victory? Why the fuss? Is anyone suggesting that the surveys organised by Stefano Mallia's business company are 'dubious'? And why should they be 'dubious'?

I cannot believe the allegation that the stronger Labour appears in the polls, the better for the PN. Simply because according to some statistician, the fear of Labour winning hands-down will push disgruntled voters to vote for the PN. What an exaggeration.

And to prove the point that no survey will change minds, I would like to inform all my readers that I have still not changed my mind about not voting next weekend since this Saturday I will do one of four things:

1. Off on a boat fishing; 2. In bed sleeping it off; 3. At work writing my opinion; 4. In Paris eating steak tartare.

Check out Saviour Balzan's blog on: www.maltatoday.com.mt

Tomorrow in Wednesday's election special Saviour Balzan writes why John Attard Montalto is such a great traveller, gardener, artist and last but not least a politician!

“

If GonziPN suffers defeat, it goes without saying that surely Richard will have no problem to face the cameras, the press and the questions, together with Simon: like every other brave general, go down with the king



be magnanimous and extend our gratitude to all those who made this great hopeful victory for GonziPN.

Since we cannot even entertain the idea that GonziPN will suffer defeat, it goes without saying that if the opposite happens, surely Richard should have absolutely no problem to face the cameras, the press and the questions, together with Simon. And like every other brave general, go down with the king.

But this hypothetical discourse is entirely discouraging and disparaging.

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\$1 billion for Libya? No way

Libya demands \$1,000,000,000 from the EU to stop illegal immigration. That's our tax money we are talking about so I need to be convinced that Libya delivers!

First let us have a look at the facts. Illegal Immigration is an "alarming problem facing Malta" – not my choice of words but that of the director of the EU's border control agency Frontex, Illka Laitinen, in September 2008.

Illegal immigration is challenging even residents of core villages in Malta such as Balzan, let alone other coastal areas such as Birzebbugia, Marsa, and St Paul's Bay. More than 15,000 illegal immigrants have arrived in Malta since 2002.

Illegal immigration is a direct result of human trafficking – a vast operation run by gangs operating with impunity from



Frank Portelli

Libya. Although Libya has a vast coastline there are few points of departure where boats can be fuelled and launched. The port of departure from Libya up to now has almost invariably been the Port of Al Zuwarah – this happens to be one of the closest points of departure to Malta.

Illegal immigrants who come to Malta pay money to these human traffickers in Libya and traffickers then provide boats to these illegal immigrants to enable them to cross over from Libya into Malta.

Human trafficking is a crime under international law. Libya has been refusing to abide by its international obligations. EU proposals such as voluntary burden sharing between EU countries have failed – so that the European Parliament's Committee for Civil Liberties' acceptance in principle that burden sharing should be on a compulsory basis is very welcome.

However compulsory burden sharing is unlikely to become legally binding before 2011. Meanwhile even Italy has been refusing to accept illegal immigrants rescued close to the shores of Lampedusa, an

integral part of Italy.

The source of the problem of illegal immigration is Libya. This is because Gaddafi has his mind set on Europe being in debt with Africa because of its colonial past. Gaddafi has been urging Africans to emigrate to Europe illegally, and is on record stating that "we have the right to go to Europe because we go after our wealth; they (the Europeans) left us empty – we go after our stolen wealth." (Reuters).

A solution

The solution can be achieved in the same way that a solution was reached on the Lockerbie bombing. Lockerbie, the terrorist attack on flight PAN AM 103 on December 21, 1988, killed 270 individuals and was masterminded by Libyan agents. Initially, the United Nations invoked economic sanctions against Libya.

It was only after Nelson Mandela put moral pressure on Gaddafi that he accepted responsibility for the Lockerbie bombing. Mandela negotiated a deal in which the United Nations would not press criminal charges against Gaddafi, provided that he accepted civil responsibility. Gaddafi agreed, accepted civil responsibility for the bombing and agreed to pay \$2.7 billion in compensation to the families of the Lockerbie victims.

Gaddafi also agreed to deliver the Libyan suspects to an international tribunal for processing in a court of law. Only after Gaddafi agreed to these conditions did the UN lift the sanctions imposed against Libya on September 12, 2003.

I am convinced therefore that this is what we must do: combine diplomatic pressure with economic sanctions.

Malta – so what can we do?

For several years we have been asking Libya to fulfill its international and humanitarian obligations. To no avail, Libya has continued to ignore our pleas.

Illegal immigrants continue to leave the Libyan coast and

they keep invading Malta's shores – causing severe human distress, sometimes drowning; compounded by social, medical and financial problems to our country.

Although very recently (May 7, 2009) Libya accepted the return of a group of illegal immigrants rescued at sea. This may be the first sign that the increasing pressure we have been applying on Libya is starting to work. Clearly we need to keep up the pressure – to force Libya to fulfill its obligations.

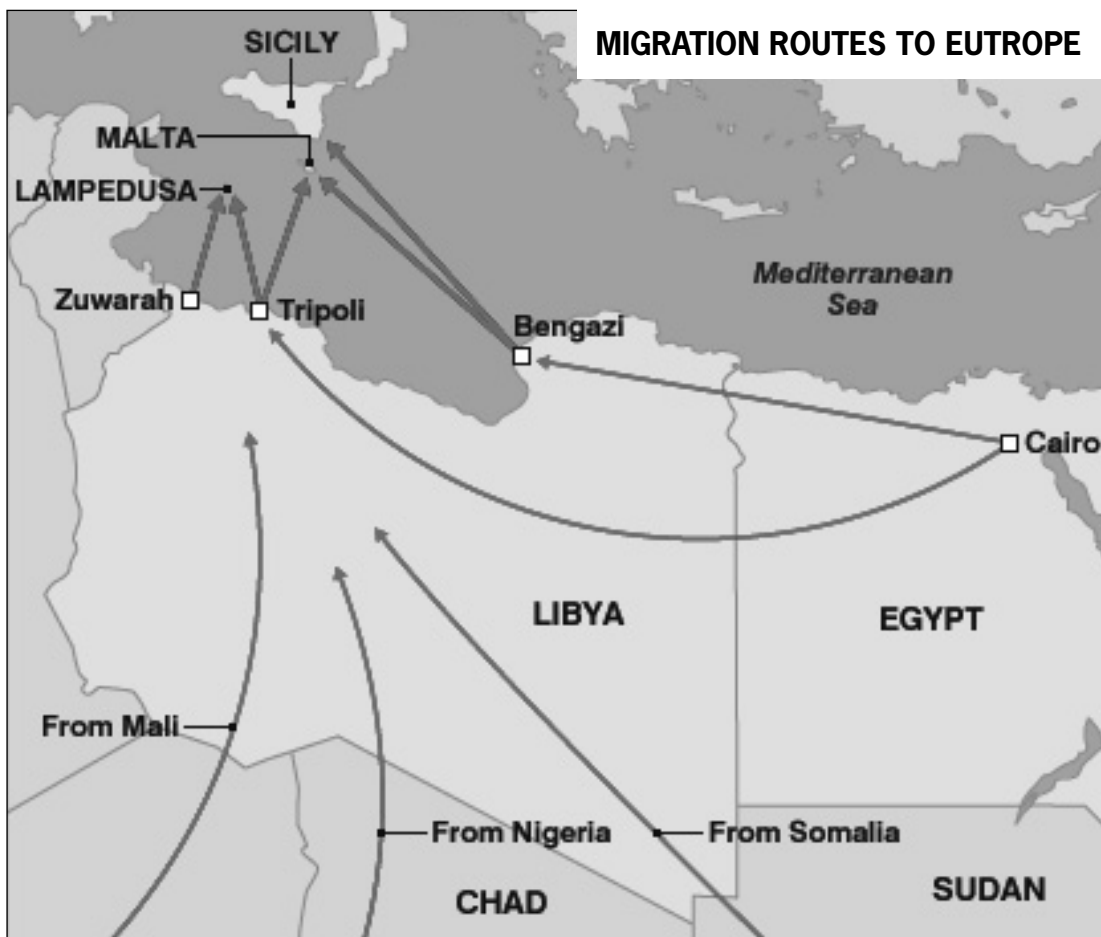
As a member of the EU we have the power that comes from our membership. The time for talking is now over. We must now be prepared to take all the necessary actions, diplomatic as well as any other measure – including EU sanctions against Libya – if Libya does not adhere to its legal and moral obligations.

I will be frank with Libya: speaking our minds clearly and frankly to a country which subjected us to gunboat diplomacy is what is required.

I was the first person to reveal that the UNHCR has an office in Libya. Some have claimed that returning illegal immigrants to Libya can mean the violation of immigrants' human rights. Not so.

Although Libya is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, it allows the UNHCR (United Nations High Commission Refugees) to operate an office in Tripoli. The UNHCR must fulfill its obligations and ensure refugee protection in Libya.

Let's be frank with Libya in the EU. If elected as an MEP, to Libya I will say frankly: fulfill your international and humanitarian obligations – or suffer the consequences. Libya should expect no benefits from the EU until such time as it fulfills its humanitarian and international obligations. Actions speak louder than words. Illegal immigration from Libya will be stopped.



Yes we can... vote Green!

In a recent interview I was asked whether AD is just a 'protest party', therefore, just around to garner and benefit from all those disgruntled voters that decide to pen their disagreements to our favour.

It would be foolish not to be happy with protest votes, but the greens are in for the real game. The Greens, not only on a European level but also locally, have been the precursors of great changes – the environmental agenda, sustainable development, clean air, clean energy initiatives, patent-free software and countless others amongst others.

A vote for the greens, in the Maltese context that is, is not just a protest vote. Voting for both the undersigned and for Yvonne Arqueros Ebejer will give Malta a chance to be



Arnold Cassola

more influential, more well-represented and, thus, more effective in the European Parliament and the EU at large. A vote for Alternattiva Demokratika would be of benefit for the country. Here is why.

A Maltese Green MEP will:

1) Become a de facto member of the Greens – the fifth biggest group in the European Parliament – thus giving our country a much needed third voice and more influence in the EP. So far Malta has been represented only in two groups. With a green MEP, that goes to three. An increase of 33% representation.

2) Push a Green New Deal in Europe and Malta. The Green New Deal will help to create around 5 million jobs in the EU at large by focusing the investments on Clean Energy – like solar, geo-thermal, wind and others. In turn, these investments will have a wider impact on the economy by creating more jobs, such as: technicians specializing in these new technologies;

agronomists, engineers, architects, lecturers and trainers; consultants; researchers, and more. Thus, whilst being essential for Malta and indeed Europe, to combat climate change, this Green New Deal will augment the life-line of governments, reinforcing them against the global economic crisis by shifting from an economy based on fossil fuels to a cleaner and more environmentally friendly one.

3) Contribute to breaking the duopoly long persisting on the Maltese political scene. A third voice elected to the European Parliament from the third party – AD – will help break away from the political dualism that has characterised local politics for the last forty-odd years.

Fundamentally it's all about

hope. In days the electorate will elect the six people, yes, six, that will represent our country in the EP. We need people of courage, of experience, integrity, credibility and consistency. And we need them to be part of more groups than the two currently in place. There is a third group, the Green group – which the AD candidate will, if elected, join – read 'influence' – for the benefit of us all.

The time is right. On June 6th Think Big and Vote Green. This is not a dream. It is something that together we can indeed achieve. So let us go for it. Yes we can!

Arnold Cassola is AD chairperson and candidate for MEP

ON THE RECORD

Compiled by James Debono

Vince Farrugia Nationalist Party

On wind farms

Every day, I get to deal with people who are convinced about a target but find closed doors. Half of the ugliness of Malta is due to this fact – because people get convinced of the wrong ideas. So let us not convince people of the wrong ideas – let us not convince them about wind farms. I don't want to see them in our countryside.

MediaToday Business Breakfast, November 2008

On not paying utility bills

By consumer law, I have every right to refuse paying for a product or service that does not meet its required standards for which it is priced... We will show [Austin Gatt] whether or not our members will comply. We are in discussion with our lawyers on this, and we can confirm that GRTU accepts Austin Gatt's challenge. We will take it up

MaltaToday, November 2008

On Lawrence Gonzi's government

There is one big problem with this government: it is dominated by yesterday's men. There are too many faces in government that inspire little or nothing



to the new generation of entrepreneurs and hard working middle class families. Eddie Fenech Adami, in spite of his age, had a vision – a vision that inspired those around him and brought him great following.

MaltaToday, May 2005

On Lawrence Gonzi

Lawrence Gonzi is in my view, the best choice we have at the moment. He has the right personality, he is honest and he is capable and unpretentious. He inspires confidence in many people. But he looks and sounds sad. It's the picture of a person without a vision. Many around him are equally sad and give the same impression. Some are even angry, as if they hate the world around them. Some others are simply laid back: as if they are awaiting for something to happen.

MaltaToday, May 2005

On contesting with the PN

Business and SMEs need a strong voice not only in Malta but also in Europe. It is important for one of Malta's MEPs to be able to play a leading role in defending SMEs and to be well versed in economic

policy and in how the EU can help small economies.

The Times Business, March 2009

On his future in the GRTU

As a full-time employee of the GRTU - and the GRTU is an exemplary employer - we abide by the right of every European citizen to contest such elections and not to lose his job. At the end of the campaign, if I am not elected, it will be illegal not to allow me to return to my post.

The Times Business, March 2009

On his opposition to VAT in 1996

Strangely enough, the person who wrote a thick paper as a consultant to GRTU, saying that VAT should be introduced at 15%, was called Vince Farrugia. When I joined the GRTU, I realised that the majority of businessmen, most of whom were staunch Nationalists, were dead against it. I had to go back to the government and suggest they don't adopt the paper. The government didn't want to change it because of Brussels. All of us made a mistake then, considering the financial consequences.

The Times, March 2009

On his opposition to the PN in the 1990s

You look at it from a politically narrow point of view, of a party which wants to be in power forever, it is justified. If you look at it (from the point of view) that a political party can be in power one day and out the next; that it's good to look at the world from the opposition, even if you're a Nationalist, you will say it was a blessing in disguise. I don't say I planned that blessing in disguise.

The Times, March 2009

On how Nationalists look at him

The Nationalists' image of me is not 1996, as some people like to say. Their image of me is the pre-EU referendum period. Look at the speeches of Eddie Fenech Adami - he used to mention me by name. I'm not saying I was instrumental for the 'yes' vote to win, but I was one of the more important influences. The people had to stand up and be counted not in 1996, but in the pre-referendum period.

The Times, March 2009

On being invited to contest with Labour

I met Dr Muscat four times. He has an excellent way of talking to people. On all four occasions, he was probing whether I wanted to bite. If I said yes, I would have gone through the formality. I never said yes, but the invitations were clear - they were overheard by others. I had people with me. I keep saying it's the truth. Every Labour Party supporter who meets me keeps asking me why I didn't join them and if Joseph asked me to do so. I am doing him a favour saying that he did.

The Times, March 2009

Sharon Ellul Bonnici Partit Laburista

On the European Socialists

The party line that Jason talks about is the control by the European socialists. And the European socialists do not permit freedom of expression if it is criticism of the EU, even if this would be of detriment to our country... the European

socialists work for EU power to be centralised in Brussels.

video launch of EUIDemocrats (EUD) on Youtube, April 2008

On Labour's U-turn

To me it was the referendum that counted. The truth is Labour has shifted from its opposition to the EU, to a position today where it is scared of criticising the EU because the PN will attack it with the accusation that it wants to withdraw from the EU. Labour is literally mute on what is detrimental to Malta.

MaltaToday, April 2008

On moving on from her NO days

A lot of people are still stuck in a Yes/No mentality. Personally, I've moved on since the referendum. It's the Yes camp that evidently hasn't...

MaltaToday, February 2009

On the working time directive

Who could possibly disagree with that? But in practice we all know it would be detrimental to Malta. Take doctors and nurses, for example. It's common knowledge they work more than 40 hours a week because of a staff shortage. It's not an ideal situation, but that is the reality. If you applied the directive to Malta, you would end up with a situation whereby patients would not have access to medical staff...

MaltaToday, February 2009

On being a Eurorealist

No, I have never defined myself as a Euro-sceptic. That's a label given to me by others. I think it's a disparaging way of referring to people who argue against a federal Europe. I prefer to use the term 'Euro-realist' myself...

MaltaToday, February 2009

On the EU referendum

Five years ago, the people were faced with an option: either to join the EU, or not to join. For my part I argued that we should not join, because membership would be detrimental to Malta. As for the referendum, I always wanted to respect that vote...

MaltaToday, February 2009

On withdrawing from the EU

I personally disagree: in fact I think

it would be political suicide. The damage to our international reputation would be irreversible. We would project the image of an unreliable nation that can't make up its own mind. This in turn would diminish our standing in international fora... which would negatively affect foreign investment... and ultimately, the citizens would suffer."

MaltaToday, February 2009

On abortion

Having placed all their efforts towards amending the Maltese constitution, (Gift of Life) now realise they have committed a major error by ignoring the Lisbon treaty. Being uninformed, they were not aware that even if they attained their goal, the Lisbon treaty could eventually nullify their prize in a day's work,"

www.sharon4malta.com, April 2009

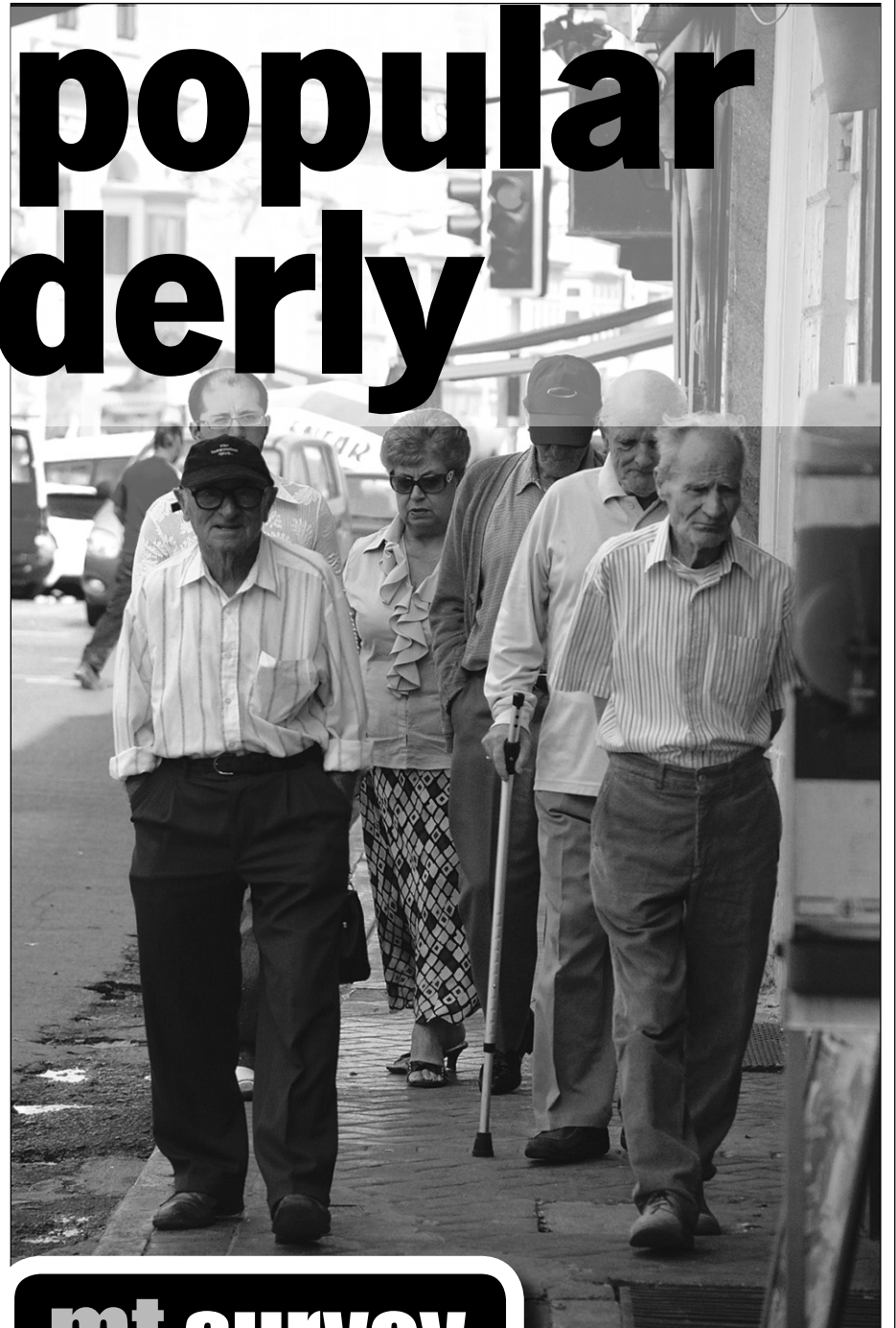
On federalism

Since Malta is a small state, the more the EU centralises power the more we lose say over our own governance. With the Lisbon treaty, Malta already loses a lot more voting power in the EU Council – not only because the weighting system is replaced by population-size proportionality, but also because more areas are moved from unanimous voting to qualified majority voting, while new Union competences are created."

www.sharon4malta.com, April 2009



PN more popular among elderly



SURVEY FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

- Labour ahead in all age groups except over 55-year-olds
- Simon Busuttill preferred candidate in all age groups
- Middle-aged voters more concerned with environment than youngsters

JAMES DEBONO

IT'S not all doom and gloom for the Nationalist Party. According to the latest MaltaToday poll, the PN is still beating Labour by a small margin among one particular segment of society: those aged over 55.

Among this age group the PN is 0.6 percentage points ahead of its traditional rival. Significantly, this category also has the least number of undecided voters.

On the other hand the PL is winning by 11.7 percentage points among 18- to 34-year-olds and by 11.9 percentage points among those aged between 35 and 54.

Yet in both age groups where the PL has a sizeable advantage, the number of undecided voters is very high: 28.1% among those aged 18 to 34 and 26.7% among those aged between 35 and 54.

This is a clear indication that if the PN recovers a sizeable number of these undecided voters, it can still avoid a humili-

ating defeat.

AD, on the other hand, is strongest among 18- to 54-year-olds, but has very little support among those aged over 55.

When it comes to candidates, Simon Busuttill affirms his popularity in all age groups. On the other hand Edward Scicluna is more popular among those aged over 35 years of age than among those aged between 18 and 34. Among the latter, Scicluna is less popular than Louis Grech.

Predictably, irregular immigration emerges as the top concern among all age groups but is even more of a concern among 18- to 34-year-olds.

But 35-54 year olds are likelier to consider the environment as a major issue than other age groups, in a trend which appears to contradict global patterns, whereby the environment is the preserve of the young.

Bread and butter issues prevail among those aged over 55 years of age, as is perhaps to be expected.



Voting intentions according to age

	PL	PN	AD	AN	Others	No answer	Not voting
18-34	36.7	25	3.1	1.6	0.8	28.1	4.7
35-54	37.3	25.4	3.1	0	0.8	26.7	6.7
55+	35.6	36.2	1.3	0.6	0.3	19.7	6.3

Major issues according to age

	Immigration	Cost of living	Utility bills	Environment	Hunting	Employment
18-34	36.7	4.7	1.6	3.1	2.3	2.3
35-54	30.6	4.3	5.9	7.5	4.7	4.7
55+	29.2	14	5.4	4.8	3.2	2.2

Preferred candidates according to age

(All respondents included in each bracket included)

18-34	
Simon Busuttill	10.2
Louis Grech	3.9
Marlene Mizzi	3.9
Edward Scicluna	3.1
John Attard Montalto	3.1
Arnold Cassola	2.9
R. Metsola Triccas	2.9

35-54	
Simon Busuttill	14.1
Edward Scicluna	5.5
Louis Grech	3.9
Arnold Cassola	3
Marlene Mizzi	2.7

55+	
Simon Busuttill	19.4
Edward Scicluna	5.4
Louis Grech	3.5
Marlene Mizzi	2.9
David Casa	2.5



Carlo Ancelotti confirmed as new Chelsea manager

THE west London outfit have made an official announcement that the former AC Milan boss will succeed Guus Hiddink on a permanent basis.

Following AC Milan's announcement that they have relieved Carlo Ancelotti of his managerial responsibilities at the Serie A heavyweight outfit, Chelsea Football Club have made an official declaration that the Italian will occupy the Stamford Bridge hotseat on a permanent basis.

A statement on the club's official website confirmed, "Chelsea is delighted to announce that Carlo Ancelotti has agreed to become our new manager."

Regarding details of the Reggolo-born 49-year-old's contract, the statement continued by in-

dicating that, "He has signed a three year contract and will start on July 1 2009."

Ancelotti was the stand-out candidate for the role, and the Blues were particularly interested in the manager's success in Europe.

Ancelotti, who won two European Cups during his playing days as a midfielder, also claimed two Champions League trophies with Milan as a club boss, together with one Scudetto.

"Carlo was the outstanding candidate for the job," the statement added. "He has proved over a long period his ability to build teams that challenged for, and have been successful in, major domestic and European competitions.

"He also had a highly successful playing career in those competitions and therefore brings unparalleled all round experience to the job.

"We are sure everybody at Chelsea will give him a warm welcome and we are all looking forward to working with him," it concluded.

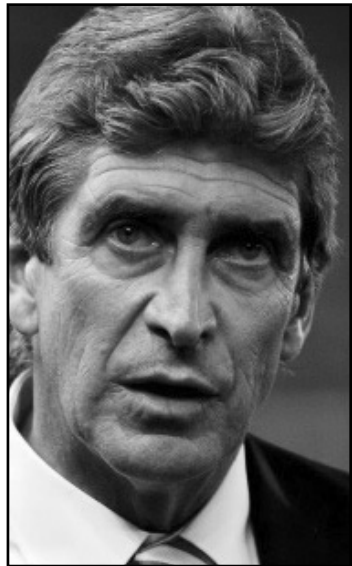
Ancelotti has long made his admiration for Milan attacker Kaka public knowledge, and that he would relish working with the Brazilian if either of them were to ever leave the San Siro.

With Kaka on the shopping list of Florentino Perez, there could be an interesting tug-of-war for the 2007 Ballon d'Or and World Player of the Year winner.



Carlo Ancelotti

Real appoint Pellegrini as coach



Manuel Pellegrini

REAL Madrid have appointed former Villarreal boss Manuel Pellegrini as their new coach.

The Chilean manager will be officially unveiled by club president Florentino Perez today at the Bernabeu stadium.

Pellegrini, had been in charge at Villarreal since 2004, and led the side to a third-placed finish in La Liga in his first full season in charge.

In the 2007-08 season Villarreal did even better, finishing second behind Real Madrid, the highest league finish in the club's history.

Before taking the reins at the Valencian club the 55-year-old managed a number of sides in South America, where he led both San Lorenzo and River Plate to the Argentinian league title.

Federer survives five-set epic

WORLD number two Roger Federer had one foot in the grave before re-discovering his touch to down Germany's Tommy Haas 6-7(4) 5-7 6-4 6-0 6-2 and reach the quarter-finals of the French Open.

The 27-year-old Swiss, chasing the only Grand Slam title to have eluded him, was two sets and 3-4 down facing a break point when he recovered to hold serve and went on to win eight games in a row.

He broke in the fifth and seventh games of the decider and never looked back, wrapping up victory on his second match point after three hours seven minutes.

Federer, hot favourite to win the title after world number one and four-times champion Rafael Nadal was beaten on Sunday, will next face either France's Gael Monfils, the man he beat in the semi-finals last year, who downed American Andy Roddick 6-4 6-2 6-3 in a bad-tempered clash as the dark set in.

Roddick, in the fourth round of the clay-court grand slam for the first time, complained to the umpire late in the second set that the light was too bad but his pleas to stop went unheeded and Monfils went through.

"I'm having trouble seeing the ball," Roddick told the umpire. "When we started what did the sky look like? Now look up to the sky and tell me what's changed."

The American former world number one gifted Monfils the first set with a service return into the net and lost the second after squandering three break points in the eighth game.

After querying the light situation again, Roddick slammed his

racket down in anger during the changeover at 3-2 in the third, drawing boos from the partisan crowd.

He seemed resigned to his fate for the rest of the set and the Frenchman, sealed victory at 9.37 pm local time on his first match point when Roddick netted a forehand.

It briefly seemed Federer would stroll past Haas as he won all his service games to love in the first set.

But things did not go his way in the tiebreak when he missed a couple of routine shots to let Haas take a 5-2 lead and the German wrapped up the set after 47 minutes.

The Swiss broke in the third game of the second set with a dipping backhand winner that Haas failed to scoop over the net. The world number two lost his first point on a service game in the following game.

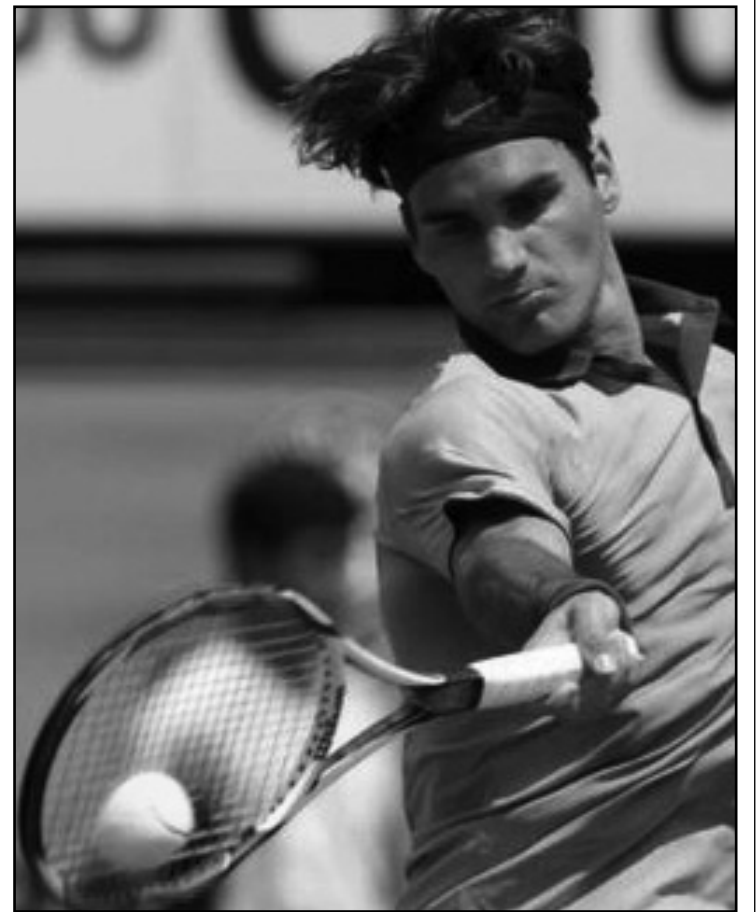
Haas kept up the pressure and broke back for 4-4 when Federer sent a forehand wide. The Swiss hit a string of unforced errors that allowed his opponent to set up a couple of set points.

He saved the first one with a fine second serve but netted a flat forehand on the second as clouds started to gather above Centre Court.

Unlike the day before, when fans chanted Robin Soderling's name as the Swede destroyed Nadal, the crowd loudly backed Federer, with almost 15,000 people roaring when he saved a break point at 3-4 in the third set.

Haas totally faded away, managing only 10 points in a 21-minute fourth set.

Federer's fans felt a shiver at the



Roger Federer

beginning of the fifth set when Haas won the first six points but the Swiss kept his composure to finish the job, smashing the ball with a rip-roaring scream in celebration afterwards.

Tommy Robredo made sure there was at least some Spanish interest left in the draw when he beat Germany's Philipp Kohlschreiber 6-4 5-7 7-6(4) 6-2.

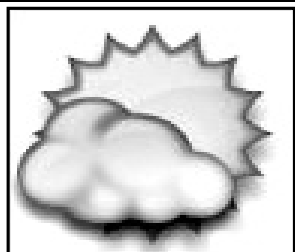
He will now play Argentine fifth seed Juan Martin del Potro, who managed to nullify both the par-

tisan French crowd and Jo-Wilfried Tsonga 6-1 6-7(5) 6-1 6-4, the French ninth seed.

Kohlschreiber put out Serbian fourth seed Novak Djokovic in the third round, but he was unable to reproduce that form against the accomplished Robredo, seeded 16th.

Robredo, confidently hitting winners from behind the baseline, wrapped up the tie after three hours and 16 minutes when the German netted a volley.

Today's Weather



PARTLY CLOUDY
25 °C / 18 °C
UV INDEX: 10

WARNINGS: Nil

GENERAL An area of low pressure over the Adriatic is moving eastwards, as a ridge of high pressure extends from the Atlantic to the Bay of Biscay and Northern Libya.

WEATHER: Mainly fine becoming locally partly cloudy during the morning

VISIBILITY: Good locally moderate to good at first

WIND: Rather strong to strong West to Northwest (force 5 to 6), locally strong (force 6) at times, becoming moderate to rather strong Westerly (force 4 to 5), locally rather strong (force 5) Westerly, during the evening

SEA: Rough becoming moderate to rough

SWELL: Negligible becoming low Northwest in Southwest of area during the evening

Scicluna files two libel cases against PN media

EDWARD Scicluna, Labour candidate for the European Elections, yesterday filed two libel cases against Nationalist Party media In-Nazzjon and NET TV. Addressing a news conference

in front of the Law Courts, Scicluna said he had become "the target of a string of deceitful reports" appearing in the PN media over statements he made on healthcare financing before becoming a PL candidate.

He said the PN was "resorting to lies and twisting of facts in a campaign to tarnish my credibility and integrity, and therefore to harm me days before the European Parliament election." Scicluna is currently Labour's frontrunner according to polls conducted by MaltaToday.

Scicluna sued In-Nazzjon editor Alex Attard, regarding an article which he said contained false and defamatory allegations made in his regard, attributing to him words he never said.

The second case was filed against Louiselle Vassallo regarding a political spot which appeared on NET TV on Thursday 28 May entitled 'From Labour candidate Edward Scicluna YouTube Channel'. Scicluna claimed a number of false allegations were made to purposely tarnish his reputation.

"The spot made use of footage taken from speeches which I had made, and which were manipulated to convey the opposite of what I stated about free healthcare. I am, and have always been, in favour of a free healthcare system. Moreover, I never gave government any advice on health," Scicluna said.



Labour candidate Edward Scicluna (right)

Busuttil plays down fears of EPP split

RAPHAEL VASSALLO

PERHAPS it is just as well that the Nationalist Party has ditched its former campaign slogan that the European People's Party is the "largest political bloc" in the EU.

If British Conservative party leader David Cameron has his way, the Tories will shortly pull out of the centre-right political grouping, and forge a new break-away alliance with hard-line right-wing parties from Poland, the Czech Republic and possibly Finland.

In fact both the Tories and Czech conservatives ODS are already discussing the possibility of a full withdrawal. If this materialises after June 6, there is a fair chance that the Party of European Socialists (PES) will replace the EPP as Europe's largest political bloc... hence, one supposes, Lawrence Gonzi's curious choice of unofficial slogan: "small is beautiful".

However, Nationalist MEP Simon Busuttil played down fears that a split will affect the EPP's status as Europe's largest political formation.

"The 'ED' part of the EPP-ED was a minority part counting some 35 odd MEPs," he told MaltaToday. "On the basis of the strength of

the outgoing Parliament, the departure of the Conservatives and ODS would still leave the EPP as the largest group with some 250 MEPs."

Busuttil further suggests that what the party loses in numbers, it stands to gain in political coherence. "Whereas the departure of the ED component of the group affects numbers negatively, it may well affect the group's political cohesion positively. For instance, on issues such as deeper European integration and the Lisbon treaty, there was a clear difference between the EPP and the ED, with the EPP being firmly pro-European in its approach. Thus, the departure of the ED would re-establish the EPP in its rightful place as one of the leading pro-European groups in Parliament."

Busuttil adds that the same applies on issues such as social policy, where the EPP, as a Christian Democrat party, veers more to the centre than to the right within the current political formation.

"The above notwithstanding, I have no doubt that even after the departure of ED colleagues, the EPP would continue working closely with the new group, especially on issues relating to market and the economy where the positions of the two factions were always convergent," Busuttil added.

European Parliament Elections - 6th June 2009

MEP Candidate - P.N

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European game

and other governments will finally understand our plight," he insisted last night.

But he was also cautious not to be branded as racist. Muscat stressed the unacceptable living conditions migrants are subjected to in detention in Malta.

On the environment, Joseph Muscat was clear about his MEP's taking all the necessary measures within all the European institutions to halt further harm to the promised paradise.

With an obvious reference to the contract granted last week by government to BWSC for the extension of the Delimara Power Station, Joseph Muscat hit out again at Minister Austin Gatt's recent comments that the new plant will produce just 'some dust'.

He challenged the Minister to be truthful to the people and admit that the new plant will produce tonnes of toxic waste, without also mentioning government's intention to develop an incinerator in the area.

Presenter Simone Cini insisted that Malta's South has become a dustbin, receiving a nodding acknowledgement from Joseph Muscat who promised a serious and credible approach to the environment by Labour.

On healthcare, Joseph Muscat struck a chord by stressing that he will work to achieve



the successes in the sector by having free health for all in past labour administrations.

Without mentioning his predecessor Alfred Sant, and his famous after election quote about "power of incumbency",

Joseph Muscat challenged the Prime Minister to be a man and confront elections in a just and fair way, by passing a law that would prohibit any government to grant permits, give jobs, and promise the world on

the eve of a general election.

In his closing remarks, Joseph Muscat also referred to the local council elections that will be held concurrently with the European Parliament elections.

Here too, Joseph Muscat knows that he will come out even more victorious to also have a majority in local councils, especially in localities that today hold a nationalist majority.

'This issue is not over yet!'

Joseph Muscat warns government about power station extension contract

KARL STAGNO-NAVARRA

OPPOSITION leader Joseph Muscat yesterday warned government the controversy surrounding a €200 million contract for the extension of the Delimara power station was "not over."

Speaking during a press conference at the PL headquarters in Hamrun, Muscat spoke about sister newspaper Illum's revelations that the multi-million contract for Delimara's fuel oil turbine had been signed last week, amid protest from other bidders for the contract.

"It is interesting to ask why government signed the contract in total secrecy," he said, adding that the choice for contracting an "old and highly polluting technology" had been imposed upon the Maltese when no Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was commissioned.

He added that government has not yet explained what will be done about the 40 to 60 tonnes of toxic waste that the 'new' plant will produce.

"I warn government that for

us this issue is not over, and we will be pursuing all the facts," he said.

Muscat said Labour will be insisting for answers from who decided to overturn all political and strategic recommendations that previously had mapped a future of electricity generation by gas rather than Heavy Fuel Oil (HFO).

Joseph Muscat reiterated a statement by Professor Edward Mallia from the Department of Physics at the University of Malta, who told MaltaToday a week ago that "government cannot be trusted any longer" on the environment after the power station extension controversy.

Flanked by the 12 candidates that will contest next Saturday's European Parliament elections, Joseph Muscat hit out at Austin Gatt's public admission that the increases in the water and electricity rates should have been introduced in January rather than October.

Here, the Labour leader criticised Austin Gatt for being hypocritical in his statements, when it was himself and Prime

Minister Lawrence Gonzi who shunned an Opposition motion in Parliament about the utility tariffs earlier this year. "Austin Gatt has admitted and proved our calculations right," he said.

About healthcare and illegal immigration, Joseph Muscat denied the notion that the PL was playing "political football" on these two issues, insisting that contrary to what some might think, "politicians are there to speak and take action on issues that concern people."

"The Labour party is no fan club, but a political party with serious politicians who are concerned with people's issues and who are stating alternative policies to the government's."

While giving an extensive overview of the work done by Labour MEPs during the last five years, Joseph Muscat stressed that next Saturday's vote must consolidate the responsibility they had been entrusted with.

He shunned the PN's accusations that the PL is diverting from European issues and focusing this electoral campaign on national issues. "What hap-

pens in Malta concerns Europe and what happens in Europe concerns Malta," Muscat said, while insisting that issues such as cost of living, illegal immigration, corruption, VAT on car registration, government's arrogance, utility tariffs and many other issues were intrinsically connected to Europe.

"We are Maltese and citizens of Europe, and this is why we talk about these issues, because we have to compare our rights with others. We are not second class to anyone," he stressed.

Joseph Muscat once again appealed to the electorate to vote in next Saturday's elections, explaining that it was necessary that all must send a clear message to the Prime Minister that he cannot be trusted any longer and that it is about time that the country was given an opportunity to aspire for a new dawn.

"We are a brand new coalition of middle-class, students, workers, pensioners – all sectors are united," Joseph Muscat said.

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'We are a brand new coalition of middle-class, students, workers, pensioners – all sectors are united' – Joseph Muscat

Perici Calascione misses Mistra party

NATIONALIST MEP candidate Alex Perici Calascione missed out on last Saturday's party organised at Mistra by Nationalist parliamentarian Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando, after he had to be hospitalised in Gozo for what sources defined as "indigestion."

Approximately 600 people attended the party that was organised on the controversial site, and were told that Alex Perici Calascione was kept under observation at the Gozo General Hospital after he complained of chest pains that were later attributed to indigestion and stress.

Sources confirmed Perici Calascione was physically unable to make it to the party, and denied that the candidate was absconding from the party, which has embarrassed senior party officials for rekindling memories of the Mistra scandal in the 2008 election.

Perici Calascione was reportedly door-to-door campaigning in various localities



PN candidate Alex Perici Calascione

around Gozo on Saturday morning, when he asked his canvassers to accompany him to hospital. He was discharged from hospital the following morning and subsequently travelled to Malta and continued with his campaign.

The Mistra party itself was criticised by Nationalist MEP Simon Busuttil to be "in bad taste", inviting reactions from Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando who said Busuttil was "in no position" to judge him.

GWU calls for review of Delimara tender

THE General Workers Union yesterday entered the fray to denounce the choice of a fuel oil turbine for the 100MW extension to the Delimara power station.

The tender has attracted controversy for the choice of the fuel oil turbine, over a gas turbine proposed by Israeli firm Bateman, who have protested that their offer was cheaper than the fuel turbine.

In a statement, the GWU said it did not want to enter into the controversy over who merited the contract, but said environmental health should be the absolute priority for any government.

"The GWU thinks that the government challenged public opinion by contradicting its own environmental policy, when the power station extension will be generating tonnes more of dangerous waste, to the detriment of both health and security of workers, and residents, especially those living in the south of the island."

The union said any form of development should be sustainable, without compromising future generations. It said people paid their taxes to see their lives get better, and that the authorities

had to ensure the measures they take were not to the detriment of either the environment or people's health.

"The GWU believes the economy must be guided in equilibrium with the environment, meaning an economic development without being in isolation of people's needs. The GWU calls on the authorities to review their decision on the Delimara extension."

In a reaction, the Nationalist Party accused the GWU of buying into Labour's propaganda. It defended government's decision on the Delimara extension by saying it was "an environmentally right decision".

The PN said that had Israeli firm Bateman been chosen, utility bills would increase by 30%-75%.

"Joseph Muscat and the GWU are acting like agents of the company that lost the contract, which did not even appeal the decision... the new plant is compatible with EU standards and the country is bound by law to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. The new plant has to be finished by 2011 and is needed in time for the interconnection between Malta and Sicily."

Charged with murder by overdose

DAVID Gatt, 32 of Gzira was yesterday remanded in custody after he was charged with the murder of 18-year-old Rachel Bowdler, who died of a drug overdose in May 2001.

The arraignment follows the conclusion in June 2006, of a trial by jury in which a mother, father and son were jailed for a total of 40 years between them in the first ever conviction in Malta for murder by omission.

David Gatt denied the series of charges brought against him in Court for the murder of Rachel Bowdler, and trafficking in cocaine and heroin. Bowdler was found dead in a field in Ras il-Gebel, limits of Mgarr. She died of a drug overdose.

Three years ago, a jury convicted Concetta Decelis to 15 years in jail, while her son Jason was convicted for 25 for having left the young woman die abandoned in the field, in an effort not to get into trouble after they knew that she had overdosed. The father, Carmel Decelis, was sentenced to 18 months in prison for involuntary homicide, but was cleared of murder.

New Sliema lobby to file Villa Bonici objection

THE newly formed Sliema Residents' Association has presented its first objection to the development of Villa Bonici, which lies over Sliema's last green lung.

The proposed development in Manwel Dimech Street in Sliema includes the construction of a residential complex of up to 23 blocks, some as high as 12 floors, in the villa's gardens which stretch almost all the way down to the Sliema Strand.

The association is petitioning residents to support its objection, claiming the development runs counter to various policies.

The association says the construction of a semi-basement goes against the Sliema Building Height & Urban Design map of the North Harbours Local Plan, and the construction over the Villa Bonici garden "has negative implications that go beyond the boundaries of the neighbourhood."

The SRA says gardens within the block give the surrounding dwellings a breath of fresh air and privacy. "The low heat capacity of such an unbuilt area



Villa Bonici in Sliema is set for major development

lowers the day and night temperatures during the summer season and reduces the glare produced by the buildings of the surrounding areas."

"Apart from the intrinsic value of the garden itself, having an unbuilt area serves to clear the heat-island effect produced by the surrounding housing. Building over the existing garden as proposed will have several repercussions which are certainly unsustainable," the objection continues.

The association also quotes

the North Harbours Local Plan which describes Sliema as an over-populated region "suffering from a lack of recreational space, infiltration of traffic, noise and other effects resulting from tourism development, commercial intensification and high housing densities."

Sliema also has one of the highest dwelling densities with much as 234 dwellings per hectare along the coastal belt and 25% of all dwellings "completely vacant".

The association added that Sliema has already surpassed the EU threshold for nitrogen dioxide emissions and benzene on several occasions "but regrettably there is no data regarding other pollutants such as particulate matter since this is not monitored in Sliema."

"These gardens are the last defences against air pollution and rising air temperatures within the urban areas. Furthermore, replacing these permeable surfaces

with impermeable ones such as buildings is contributing to the increase in surface water run-off and impacting heavily on local flooding and the congestion of sewers."

The SRA says Sliema is one of the few villages that does not possess protected enclaves. "We urge that all gardens, yards and all other open spaces should be protected from further development, leading to the reduction of the residents' quality of life - something that MEPA is supposed to be doing."



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