



GRTU official sent vicious hate mail to Labour MEP

MARIO Debono, the GRTU vice-president who last month signed the Pharmacy Of Your Choice memorandum with Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi, pleaded guilty in a court of law to the charge of sending threatening and offending electronic emails to Labour MEP Joseph Muscat.

In vitriolic emails sent to Muscat, Debono – who describes himself to his friends as a “die-hard Nationalist” – refers to the MEP as “Goebbels”, former foreign minister George Vella as a “birdbrain”, Labour commentator Manwel Cuschieri as “maqjel” (pig sty), and Labour leader Alfred Sant as a “mental masturbator”.



Mario Debono (L) likened Labour MEP Joseph Muscat (R) to Goebbels, the Nazi propaganda minister

Other emails in the possession of the police, and seen by MaltaToday, are replete with per-

sonal, vulgar and sexual invective directed at Muscat, as well as other vitriolic attacks against

Labour personalities, including One TV's head of news, Miriam Dalli.

Asked to comment about the case, MEP Joseph Muscat said he had already received hate mail in the past, but this was a case which “exceeded all limits”.

“Usually I consider it to be part of the job, but in this case Debono – who would write under his own name and an anonymous name – showed unusual perseverance,” Muscat said.

“I have never met this Mario Debono, but when it was evident that he had started to follow my whereabouts and comment on the restaurant I was dining at with my wife, it was here that I said enough is enough.”

The police later tracked down Mario Debono, who would also post the

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Public outcry and loss of overtime leads GWU to lift actions

BIANCA CARUANA

PUBLIC pressure and complaints from union members missing out on extra income yesterday came together as the General Workers' Union lifted industrial actions which delivered a blow to patients and the elderly in state hospitals, where nurses were left understaffed.

The industrial actions started two weeks ago when 900 nursing aides and health assistants restricted their normal duties to food-related jobs, leaving nurses unaided in their everyday duties.

Yesterday, after the intervention of the Industrial Relations director Noel Vella, the GWU accepted to lift all directives against the Ministry of Health for a three-week period which will serve as a “cooling-off period” pending negotiations.

But nursing aides who were a part of the industrial actions complained they were losing money since they were not allowed to work overtime as a result of these directives,

this newspaper is informed. Others felt the burden the actions had brought upon nurses and the more vulnerable of patients after a public outcry from concerned relatives further increased the pressure on the GWU to lift the directives.

Health Minister Louis De-guara yesterday declared his satisfaction that the actions had been lifted.

“Every issue that may arise can only be solved through civilized discussion. Discussions with the GWU will be continuing tomorrow. With the full cooperation from everyone involved we can improve health services so the needs of patients and the elderly will always be satisfied in a more efficient way.”

Attempts made yesterday to contact GWU section-secretary Louis Marsh yesterday proved futile.

The actions was particularly hard on the elderly at the St Vincent De Paule residence, where wards hosting between 20 to 40 patients were left unattended by nursing aides and health assistants.

‘Minister, shall I ignore him?’

AN email erroneously sent to MaltaToday by the Home Affairs ministry has revealed the government's deliberate attempt at keeping under wraps a recommendation by the Pyrotechnics Commission to relocate two fireworks factories over safety threats to nearby residents.

With a Freedom of Information bill just round the corner, the government has so far refused to disclose the reports

revealing that Malta's fireworks factories are not all in line with the necessary legal and safety requirements.

In particular it has refused to disclose the Pyrotechnics Commission's recommendation to Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg to close down the San Mikiel factory in Lija – the minister's home constituency – and the Sant Andrija factory in Luqa because of the danger they pose to nearby residents

and property since they are not sufficiently distant from public areas as required by the law.

In the email addressed to Tonio Borg but mistakenly sent to this newspaper, communications coordinator Joe Azzopardi informs the minister that the MaltaToday journalist “keeps insisting, even after I sent the reply as drafted by Leonard Callus,” referring to the Prime Minister's spokesperson. “Shall I ignore him?”

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