

DIARY OF EVENTS

2000

Important Note: Dates hereunder do not denote the actual dates on which the respective events occur, but refer to the dates on which they are reported in the local print media, which is normally on the morrow.

January

- **1 January 2000** President Guido de Marco said in his eve of the millennium message to the country that it was his wish to see Malta continue to steer away from isolation. "Malta has to exist against an international background, where isolation and prejudices are a thing of the past, where everybody realises the importance of values," Prof. de Marco said.
- **1 January 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami stated that the self-confidence and ambition that have filled our sails over the past centuries should be our guiding spirit. The values of solidarity and love that have enriched us over the past two thousand years should provide us with the energy we need to pass on to future generations a world better than the one we inherited. Dr Fenech-Adami was delivering his message to the country on the eve of the millennium.
- **1 January 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo announced that the Malta Tourism Authority would be revising the standards and regulations of the industry towards a new classification. Dr Refalo was addressing the staff of the Jerma Palace Hotel in Marsascula.
- **2 January 2000** The President received national leaders and members of the public in an exchange of New Year greetings at the Palace on Saturday 1st January. Among them were Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, Archbishop Joseph Mercieca, Chief Justice Joseph Said Pullicino, Mr Speaker Anton Tabone, Opposition Leader Alfred Sant, and the leaders of the UHM and the GWU.
- **2 January 2000** Chief Justice Joseph Said Pullicino told President de Marco that the Judiciary appreciated the President's firm determination to ensure that the country and those running it realised the intrinsic value of the administration of justice for democracy and the need, therefore, for society to adequately invest in the necessary structures. In recognition of its appreciation, the Judiciary invited the President to pay an official call by the head of state on the judiciary. The President accepted the invitation.
- **2 January 2000** The Prime Minister, accompanied by Mrs Fenech-Adami, met well wishers at the Auberge de Castille, while Archbishop Mercieca and Mgr Depasquale received visitors at the Archbishop's Palace in Valletta. Among those calling on the bishops were the Prime Minister and Ministers.
- **3 January 2000** Justice Minister Austin Gatt stated he was satisfied with what he described as the "positive speech" made by Chief Justice Joseph Said Pullicino during the exchange of greetings on New Year's Day with President Guido de Marco. "The speech was a positive one as it recognises, like the Government did, the fact that unless the three parties involved - the Judiciary, the Government, and the lawyers - cooperate, there can be no solution to the problems at the Law Courts," Dr Gatt said.
- **3 January 2000** The Year 2000 National Contingency Plan Command Centre announced that no Y2K problems were reported by various entities, including *Enemalta*, *Maltacom*, the Water Services Corporation and *Air Malta*.
- **4 January 2000** The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Anton Tabone, attended the 15th

conference for Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding Officers in Australia. Mr Tabone was accompanied by the Clerk of the House.

- **5 January 2000** Dr Francis Zammit Dimech, the Minister responsible for capital projects, accompanied by project architect Richard England welcomed President Guido de Marco to St James Cavalier. Dr Francis Zammit Dimech announced that 30,000 people had visited St James Cavalier in the space of six days.
- **5 January 2000** Figures released by the Central Office of Statistics show that Government's ordinary revenue rose by 11.8 per cent, up to Lm533.4 million, in the first 11 months of last year, compared to that for the same period in 1998.
- **5 January 2000** Fra Andrew Bertie, Prince and Grand Master of the Sovereign Military and Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem, Rhodes and Malta visited the walk-through new attraction, *The Great Siege of Malta and the Knights of St John*, in Valletta's Cafe Premier complex.
- **5 January 2000** The Malta External Trade Corporation (METCO) announced it will be organising the first ever national Export Marketing Conference on January 27.
- **6 January 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami told the press that Cabinet had met to set the agenda for the coming year. It had also discussed several issues such as the sinking of the Maltese flagged tanker *Erika* and the liberalisation of the telecommunications sector.
- **6 January 2000** Dr Fenech-Adami announced that Transport Minister Censu Galea had briefed Cabinet about the *Erika*. "From our point of view, the register did all it had to do. There were definitely no shortcomings from the Maltese side," the Prime Minister said.
- **6 January 2000** Dr Simon Busuttill, head of the Malta-EU Information Centre (MIC), launched the centre's official activities for this year. The Malta-EU Information Centre would also soon be commissioning its first opinion poll on various aspects of the EU and on the centre itself.
- **7 January 2000** Malta has been certified to be one of the 29 freest countries in the world by Freedom House's end-of-century *Freedom in the World* survey. The survey assesses a country's freedom by examining its record in two areas: political rights and civil liberties. A country upholds its citizens' civil liberties when it respects and protects their religious, ethnic, economic, linguistic, and other rights, including gender and family rights, personal freedoms and freedoms of the press, belief and association.
- **7 January 2000** Figures released by the Central Office of Statistics show that the retail price index for November 1999 went up by 0.89 per cent, or 0.99 point, the highest monthly increase since November 1997. The index at the end of November stood at 111.81, 3.58 points higher than in November 1998. The inflation rate in November was 1.96 per cent.
- **7 January 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that a structure promoting investment and export was needed if the country's standard of living were to continue to improve. The Minister was speaking during the launch of the first export conference, being organised by Metco.
- **7 January 2000** The Malta Stock Exchange described 1999 one of its busiest years. The MSE said that the year was characterised by a sharp increase in equity business, new listings and full membership of the *Federation of International Stock Exchanges*.
- **7 January 2000** Joseph R. Grima, the Head of the Civil Service, issued a circular to Permanent Secretaries, Directors General and Directors telling them that the Government is to start allowing public officers to take special unpaid leave in order to foster a child. The initiative was in line with the Government's programme of promoting family-friendly policies within the Public Service.
- **8 January 2000** The Economic Services Ministry said in a statement that, had the levies on certain goods not been removed, Malta would have run the risk of retaliatory measures that would have prejudiced its exports to the EU. Such measures would have had potentially devastating consequences on employment in the manufacturing sector. The Ministry was replying to a recent statement by the

Ghaqda Imprendituri Maltin (GHIMA).

- **8 January 2000** Transport Minister Censu Galea said the Government was doing all it should to ensure that the Malta Maritime Authority register only included the best possible standard of vessels. Mr Galea was reacting to a paper published by the EU Commission stating that the Commission had pledged to force Malta and Cyprus to cut the number of substandard boats operating under their flags.
- **8 January 2000** Grand Master Fra Andrew Bertie and Sovereign Military Order of Malta President Roger de Giorgio donated 62 hampers to needy families who gathered at the SMOM premises in Valletta.
- **9 January 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the year 2000 would be one of opportunities, one that should open several doors to the future. In an obvious reference to the upcoming changes required for European Union membership, Dr Fenech-Adami urged everybody to be forward-looking. "We should face up to any changes with confidence and courage and not fear," Dr Fenech-Adami stressed. The Prime Minister was speaking during a reception held at Villa Arrigo, Naxxar.
- **9 January 2000** Transport Minister Censu Galea revealed that, on December 13, only a day after the *Erika* incident, he had sent two officials from the Malta Maritime Authority to France to look into the matter.
- **9 January 2000** President Guido de Marco, Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami and Opposition Leader Alfred Sant joined forces and planted a holm oak each. The planting formed part of *Green 2000*, Nature Trust's millennium project which involves planting thousands of native trees in Wied Ghollieqa.
- **10 January 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the question of EU membership should now be dealt with on a national level, rather than a partisan one. He said that the document published by the Maltese bishops contains important sections in which the bishops show themselves in favour of the concept of European union. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking on the Party radio.
- **10 January 2000** *A National Agenda for Sustainable Health Care* is the name of a conference organised by FMS and the Forum Group to be held on February 18-20. The conference will be discussing the future of health care in Malta and the formulation of a sustainable national agenda.
- **10 January 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici announced that solutions were expected in the coming weeks on the situation of monopolies in the telecommunications sector. He said the break-through in the telecommunications sector was expected to result in lower rates in the mobile telephone sector. Prof. Bonnici was speaking during a Party activity with self-employed persons in Gozo.
- **10 January 2000** Cabinet approved a bill to amend the Public Transport Authority Act. The Authority would now be transformed into a body responsible for all internal transport in the country.
- **10 January 2000** On the first working day of its new information campaign, the Malta-EU Information Centre (MIC) was inundated with calls from people in all walks of life seeking information about the EU.
- **11 January 2000** Government introduced a series of reforms to the Legal Aid System in a bid to cut down on abuse and to increase efficiency at the Law Courts.
- **12 January 2000** Regarding the Scud missiles parts seized in Britain, the Malta Government issued a statement with reference to the various press reports appearing in the Maltese and international media.
- **12 January 2000** It was announced that Malta Drydocks submitted its first bid for work on a US Navy auxiliary vessel, following the agreement signed between the shipyard and the US Navy in December.
- **14 January 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg confirmed that European Commission President Romano Prodi would be coming to Malta on an official visit on March 5 and 6, following an invitation by Prime

Minister Edward Fenech-Adami. Dr Borg was speaking to reporters during a gathering of about 20 Ambassadors from EU countries and applicant countries held at the residence of French Ambassador Didier Destremau.

- **14 January 2000** Pakistani High Commissioner Shafqat Ali Sheikh and Iraqi Ambassador Anwar Thiban presented their diplomatic credentials to President Guido de Marco at the Palace in Valletta.
- **14 January 2000** The next round of Local Council elections will be held on March 11 at Mdina, Cospicua, Zabbar, Victoria, Birkirkara, Fgura, Gudja, Gharb, Ghaxaq, Kalkara, Lija, Marsascala, Mgarr, Msida, Naxxar, Pieta', Rabat, San Gwann, Sannat, Sliema, Tarxien, Xghajra and Mtarfa.
- **15 January 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami told a New Year meeting with diplomats that the Government hoped to hold a referendum on EU membership by not later than 2002. Dr Fenech-Adami said the Government was confident that there already existed a majority in Malta in favour of membership. "Concerning the possible outcome of the referendum, I can only state my intentions, that is to present the Maltese with a negotiated accession package which will confirm the wisdom and long term utility of membership."
- **15 January 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea told educators that the EU had approved Malta's participation in the *Leonardo da Vinci* programme. There were still some formalities before Malta would be approved for the *Socrates* and *Youth* programmes. Nonetheless, Malta was already being invited to meetings about these programmes.
- **15 January 2000** Local Councils Minister Austin Gatt launched a week of activities on Local Government based on the theme *Devolution, Autonomy, Service*. The aim is for councils to analyse the significant changes regarding devolution that had taken place in the past year.
- **16 January 2000** Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg presided over the official handing-over ceremony of fire fighting and rescue duties from the police force to the Civil Protection Department.
- **17 January 2000** *The Sunday Telegraph* reported that Malta had placed second in a survey carried out among wealthy Britons on the best retirement spot in southern Europe. Spain's *Costa del Sol* was given top marks in the survey about the pros and cons of settling down in four southern European spots. The study was led by Prof. Anthony Warnes from the University of Sheffield.
- **17 January 2000** President Guido de Marco paid a state visit to the Sovereign Military Order of Malta at its headquarters in Rome as "witness to the lasting bond that ties the names of Malta and the Order, a living testimony of a shared culture and belief". The President's visit to the Order's Prince and Grand Master Fra Andrew Bertie came at the close of the Order's 900th anniversary celebrations.
- **17 January 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said in Gozo that EU membership was a national issue and should not be treated in a partisan manner.
- **18 January 2000** Figures released by the Central Office of Statistics show that the number of registered unemployed had gone down from 7,866 last October, to 7,803 in November 1999. The rate of unemployment that month stood at 5.3 per cent, slightly down on the 5.4 per cent of the previous month.
- **18 January 2000** Minister for Economic Services, Prof. Josef Bonnici, announced in Parliament that Malta and Libya were having talks aimed at extending by nine months the duration of an oil purchases agreement due to expire at the end of March.
- **18 January 2000** Bank of Valletta chairman Joseph Zahra announced that the bank was not seeking a strategic partner to "partake in its equity". Bank of Valletta will remain a Maltese bank. Mr Zahra said, however, said that BoV would "have a working partnership" with foreign banks and institutions.
- **19 January 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami told honorary consuls that the Government appreciated the role played by honorary consuls and would be conforming to the Vienna convention as regards the rights of honorary consuls while bearing in mind the size of the country. Dr Fenech-Adami

was replying to a speech made by John A. Gauci Maistre, president of the Association of Honorary Consuls, during a traditional courtesy call on the Prime Minister at the Auberge de Castille.

- **19 January 2000** Local Government Minister Austin Gatt announced that, as from February, responsibility for the replacement of spent street bulbs is to be shifted from Enemalta Corporation to local councils through agreement with the councils. Dr Gatt was speaking during the signing of a cooperation agreement between local councils.
- **19 January 2000** Edwin Vassallo, Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Economic Services, announced that Cabinet had approved the idea of the crafts village at Ta' Qali being re-built on a public-private partnership basis.
- **19 January 2000** Simone Vella was appointed chairman of the Commission for the Advancement of Women with effect from January 1. She replaces Dr Joanne Drake.
- **20 January 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami stated that the Government was planning to make amendments to the Industrial Development Act that would offer new incentives to generate commercial activity. Proposals for such incentives were being drawn up. Dr Fenech-Adami made this announcement while launching the first Malta Business Convention at Palazzo Parisio in Naxxar.
- **20 January 2000** The Prime Minister announced the publication, later on this year, of a *White Paper* on the needs of small enterprise as part of preparations to introduce a law on the small businesses sector. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing the first Malta Business Convention at Naxxar.
- **20 January 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg said in Parliament that Malta would make clear in EU membership talks that it intends to stand by the neutrality provisions in its Constitution. The introduction of the concept known as "constructive abstention" in decisions involving the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy was seen as safeguarding Malta's neutrality, and the neutrality of other neutral countries already in the EU, he added. The concept of "constructive abstention" provides that a country can opt out from certain decisions without blocking them.
- **20 January 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that Malta would be making a grave mistake if it believed that the changes taking place in commerce and business on a global level would not affect it. It was important to realise that the methods which had served Malta well in the past might not be so relevant today, he said. Prof. Bonnici was speaking during an afternoon seminar on mergers and acquisitions within the economic restructuring process organised by the Bank of Valletta Group as part of Malta Business Convention 2000.
- **20 January 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said European Union membership could be seen as a new way by which the Government was renewing its commitment towards protecting the environment. Addressing the third session of the Mini European Assembly, Dr Zammit Dimech said this did not mean that the Government would be introducing new environmental laws solely to satisfy the requirements of the *acquis communautaire*. The *acquis*, however, provided an excellent 'guide' or blueprint for the optimum protection of the environment.
- **20 January 2000** The House of Representatives gave a second reading to a Bill amending the Citizenship Act. The Bill broadens the possibilities of dual citizenship for Maltese and their descendants abroad. It also aims to clamp down on marriages of convenience by providing that a foreign spouse must have been married and living with the other spouse as a married couple for five years before becoming eligible for Maltese citizenship.
- **20 January 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said the Irish training and employment consultants FAS would be advising the Government on an operations review of the Employment and Training Corporation. The firm would also be helping the Government in the drawing up of a strategic document for the development of human resources over the next three years. Dr Gonzi was interviewed at the Malta Business Convention in Naxxar.
- **20 January 2000** Local Government Minister Austin Gatt said councils had proven their efficiency both in administration and in handling finances. This had encouraged the Government to pursue its policy of devolving responsibility to local councils. Dr Gatt was addressing council members,

following the signing of a cooperation agreement through which the councils assumed responsibility for repairing the roads dug up during trenching works carried out by the Water Services Corporation.

- **20 January 2000** According to figures released by the Central Office of Statistics there was a record number of tourist arrivals last November, bringing the cumulative total for the year up to 1,162,298.
- **20 January 2000** Government MP Francis Aquilina attended a meeting of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development of the Council of Europe in London.
- **21 January 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said public opinion polls showed that a large majority of young people were in favour of joining the European Union. They recognised the “big opportunity” represented by the EU. He said young people would enjoy opportunities in training, education and work experience in modern environments. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing the annual general meeting of his party’s youth movement.
- **21 January 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that an audit carried out by the Social Policy and Finance Ministries revealed that some individuals and families were receiving between six and eight forms of social benefit. However, the number of such cases was low and it did not transpire from the audit that benefits were being given in an uncontrolled manner. Dr Gonzi was being interviewed on state television.
- **21 January 2000** The 18th Quality Service Charter was launched at the Qormi Health Centre which caters for 36,000 people in Qormi, Zebbug and Siggiewi.
- **21 January 2000** Local Government Minister Austin Gatt announced that local wardens were to start being seen on local roads as from February 18, slowly taking over from the police responsibility for contraventions.
- **22 January 2000** Prime Minister E. Fenech-Adami stated he considered the fact that people were asking to have more information about the European Union as a healthy sign. "The EU is a reality that has to be faced," Dr Fenech-Adami said. He was speaking during the annual general meeting of his party's *Solidarjeta Haddiema*. Dr Fenech-Adami described the EU as standing for solidarity and for enhancing the standard of living of its member states.
- **22 January 2000** President Guido de Marco and Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi made a strong appeal to landlords and tenants to help solve the problem of abandoned or dilapidated buildings when they visited the site of a building in Floriana where 62-year old Riccardo Cesare lost his life. "This is not a partisan issue, but a national one. The problem has gone on for too long. Solutions do exist, but these will only be forthcoming if there is serious dialogue between all parties concerned," stated Prof. de Marco.
- **22 January 2000** The Malta-EU Information Centre announced that the screening session on Justice and Home Affairs Policy had established that Malta needs to introduce simplified extradition procedures as well as to train police officers for certain situations, such as hostage taking. EU Commission officials were also reported to have said that Malta's legislation needed to have an updated definition of "organised crime".
- **22 January 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo inaugurated the *Roots* website, which hopes to encourage third and fourth generation Maltese to visit their ancestors' country of origin. The project is under the responsibility of the Tourism Ministry, but after its official launch at the end of this year it will be entrusted to the Malta Tourism Authority.
- **23 January 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech announced that negotiations between the Government and *Viset*, the consortium selected for the building of the Valletta cruise liner terminal, will be concluded before the end of February. The process of public consultations will start shortly after, and Dr Zammit Dimech said it was his wish that actual work would commence by the end of the year.
- **23 January 2000** A uniformed local warden carrying a hand-held computer paraded at the second national conference on local councils, on the theme *Gvern Lokali: Servizz b'Impenn lill-Komunita`*

held at the Coastline Hotel. It was the first public appearance of a warden, due to start patrols in the second week of February.

- **23 January 2000** Mrs Mary Fenech-Adami, the Prime Minister's wife, christened the new Gozo Channel ferry *Ta' Pinu*. The ship was named following a brief ceremony held under a large marquee at Malta Shipbuilding, with guests sheltering as a bottle of champagne was smashed against the ship's anchor.
- **23 January 2000** Maurizio Moreno, Director General for European Countries at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome, is heading a high-ranking Italian delegation visiting Malta. The Italian delegation will visit various projects being carried out under the fourth Italian financial protocol and will have talks with Foreign Minister Joe Borg, Dr Louis Galea, Minister of Education, and Finance Minister John Dalli.
- **23 January 2000** The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mr Anton Tabone, received Mme Marie Helene Aubert, a French Green MP, in his chambers at the Palace, Valletta. This was an introductory meeting meant to reactivate the France-Malta Parliamentary Friendship Group, which is chaired by Mme Aubert. The Malta side is composed of two Government MPs - Dr Carmelo Mifsud Bonnici, and Dr Michael Ascias - and two Opposition MPs - Mrs Rita Law and Mr Carmelo Abela.
- **24 January 2000** A Parliamentary delegation led by Nationalist MP John Vella, and comprising MPs Michael Ascias (NP) and Joe Debono Grech (MLP), attended the first part of the 2000 Ordinary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, held in Strasbourg.
- **24 January 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami warned against wage demands that would threaten the social sector and undermine government policies aimed at correcting the state of the country's finances. "There is consensus that the government deficit needs to be addressed but there is no point in saying that one is in favour of curbing the deficit but offering resistance in practice," said Dr Fenech-Adami.
- **24 January 2000** President Guido de Marco presented a copy of the Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Law to Joseph Camilleri, chairperson of the *Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni B'Dizabilita`* at the Commission's offices in St Venera. The Law is the result of the active contribution of both political parties. Minister Gonzi pointed out that the Law was not only the first one of the third millennium but also the first in Maltese history to deal with civil rights.
- **25 January 2000** President Guido de Marco visited *Maltacom's* offices and made a whirlwind tour of the corporation's major installations and subsidiary companies such as Telepage, PINK and Mobisle Communications. He was welcomed at Maltacom's head office in Marsa by Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici, chairman Maurice Zarb Adami, and the Maltacom board.
- **25 January 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said the proposed contract between the Government and the developers of Manoel Island and Tigne Point was "a good package deal" for Malta with important spin-offs for the economy. He made his remarks as Parliament started debating the proposed contract and the transfer of the sites to the developers, *Midi Consortium*.
- **25 January 2000** *Sicons Opto-Products Malta Ltd*, a subsidiary of Signal Construct GmbH of Germany, is a new export company set up to manufacture LED light systems. The company will be producing systems to be integrated into printed circuit boards, control systems of machinery and switch-gear cabinets.
- **25 January 2000** The Malta Maritime Authority announced that the number of cruise passengers visiting Malta has trebled over the past five years and preliminary reservations for this year suggest another successful year.
- **26 January 2000** President Guido de Marco addressed an audience of more than 100 Maltese migrants and people of Maltese descent meeting at the Mediterranean Conference Centre as delegates and participants in the second convention of leaders of associations of Maltese abroad and of Maltese origin. The convention was organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Emigrants' Commission.

- **26 January 2000** European Commission president Romano Prodi stated that the commission had not given any candidate country a specific date regarding accession to the EU. "We won't be able to give an opinion on who will next join the EU until January 2003. This does not mean that membership will follow soon after. However, after that date, efforts will be redoubled." Mr Prodi was answering questions from members of the Council of Europe after he addressed the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council.
- **26 January 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea launched a structure to oversee local participation in European Union educational, cultural and research programmes. He said Malta had made a formal request to take part in the *Leonardo, Socrates, Community Action Programme for Youth, Culture 2000* and the *Fifth Framework Programme*. The EU had accepted Malta's request and agreement on the financing of the programmes had been reached.
- **26 January 2000** Guenther Verheugen, the EU Commissioner responsible for Enlargement, told the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee that the European Commission will announce on March 8 the areas in which it intends to open negotiations with the six new candidate countries - Malta, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Bulgaria.
- **26 January 2000** The Government said it undertook to reform the internal audit process which, the National Audit Office has found, falls short of the required level of effectiveness. The comments were made following the presentation of a report by the National Audit Office (NAO) on internal audit function within government ministries. A copy of the report was laid on the table of the House of Representatives.
- **26 January 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo was presented with a report on the tenders for the White Rocks complex by the committee set up to evaluate the three shortlisted consortia: *Marriott, Sol Melia* and *Frosch Touristik*. The government-owned White Rocks Holiday Complex is to be passed on to the private sector on a 99-year lease.
- **26 January 2000** The House of Representatives approved a motion authorising the Government to sign a contract with the *Midi Consortium* for the development of Manoel Island and Tigne Point into a touristic, residential, entertainment and commercial complex.
- **26 January 2000** Dr Noel Buttigieg Scicluna presented his credentials to Austrian President Thomas Klestil as Malta's Ambassador in Vienna.
- **26 January 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami met a GWU delegation led by Secretary-General Tony Zarb at the Prime Minister's office in Parliament to discuss the budget measures.
- **27 January 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici announced the members of the new Malta Drydocks Council who will take up their appointments on February 8 in terms of the Act to amend the Malta Dockyard Act. The council is made up of Mr John Cassar White as chairman, and Mr George Borg, Mr Lawrence Ciantar, Mr Emanuel Ellul, Mr Anglu Fenech and Dr Joseph Micallef Stafrace as members. The remaining member of the council will be elected from among the MDD employees. Mr Cassar White is also at present the Chairman of Malta Shipbuilding.
- **27 January 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea laid on the table of the House of Representatives the final version of the national minimum curriculum. Dr Galea said at a news conference that two committees had also been set up to oversee the implementation of the national minimum curriculum: the national steering committee on the implementation of the national minimum curriculum and the training strategy formulation team.
- **27 January 2000** Speakers at the second convention of leaders of associations of Maltese abroad and of Maltese origin called for assistance from the Government and other organisations to help preserve Maltese culture and language among migrants.
- **28 January 2000** Belarus Ambassador to Malta Natalia Drozd presented her diplomatic credentials to President Guido de Marco at the Palace in Valletta. Mrs Drozd, 49, had previously served as Ambassador to Italy. She speaks English, French and Italian.

- **28 January 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that the Government is committed to helping the furniture industry meet the challenges of restructuring. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking at the inauguration of the third Kitchens and Bathrooms Fair at the Trade Fair grounds in Naxxar.
- **28 January 2000** Parliamentary Secretary in the Home Affairs Ministry George Pullicino urged all Ministries, government departments, agencies and public corporations to assist the Planning Authority with the revision of the Structure Plan. Mr Pullicino was speaking during a seminar on the subject organised by the Planning Authority and the Interdepartmental Committee within the Office of the Prime Minister.
- **28 January 2000** The Central Office of Statistics launched *The Maltese Islands on the Move*. The 286-page publication traces the development of Malta and the Maltese people and consists of a collection of 18 papers on subjects like population, settlement patterns, the environment, economics, the changing role of women, health, public administration, the judiciary, religion and culture, and the electoral process.
- **28 January 2000** Australian High Commissioner Colin Willis officially inaugurated an exhibition entitled *The Maltese Mackay Pioneers, 1883-1940* at *Dar l-Emigrant* in Valletta.
- **29 January 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami announced new public service regulations that shift responsibility for disciplinary measures from the Public Service Commission to 140 Heads of Departments. Dr Fenech-Adami told a news conference at Auberge de Castille that the new regulations would come into effect on Tuesday, 1 February.
- **29 January 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that it was clear that there would be additional benefits for the Island of Gozo once Malta became an EU member. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing a seminar organised by the Gozo Business Chamber at Imgarr Hotel with the theme *The Effects of EU membership on the island region of Gozo*.
- **29 January 2000** European Union Ambassador Giorgio Boggio noted that the six new candidate countries would officially open negotiations with a ministerial ceremony in Brussels on February 15. Dr Boggio was speaking at a full-day seminar focusing on the effect that EU membership would have on Gozo.
- **29 January 2000** The Malta-EU Information Centre announced that, following a week of sessions dealing with agriculture and the EU's Common Agriculture Policy, the screening process between Malta and the European Union had come to an end.
- **29 January 2000** John Cassar White, new Chairman of both Malta Drydocks and Malta Shipbuilding, said he saw his top priority as strengthening the management structures of both 'yards. Raising productivity, reducing costs and working hard to make less use of subsidies were also high on his agenda. Mr Cassar White was being interviewed by *The Times* newspaper.
- **29 January 2000** President Guido de Marco invested Clemente Zammit and Ivan Magri-Overand with the National Order of Merit and presented them with the medal *Qadi tar-Repubblika* for their work among Maltese communities abroad. The two had been unable to attend when the official award ceremony was held on 13 December 1999.
- **30 January 2000** Madame Natalya Drozd, newly appointed Ambassador for Belarus, called on Speaker Anton Tabone at his Chambers in the Palace, Valletta.
- **31 January 2000** Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg explained that recent amendments to the *Citizenship Act* involved three major changes regarding dual citizenship. Those who held dual citizenship when they turned 18 would not need to drop one. Those who, in the past, gave up their Maltese citizenship could apply to have it back without losing the adopted citizenship. Foreigners who marry Maltese would be eligible for Maltese citizenship after five years of marriage. Dr Borg was addressing a meeting in Gozo.

February

- **1 February 2000** The House of Representatives joined to honour and grieve over the untimely deaths of three Public Works employees at Cirkewwa.
- **1 February 2000** Malta was among the first seven member states of the United Nations that signed the International Convention for the Suppression of Financing of Terrorism. This took place on January 10, the first day it was opened for signature at the UN Headquarters in New York. The Permanent representative of Malta to the UN, Ambassador Walter Balzan, signed the convention on behalf of the Government.
- **1 February 2000** *Maltacom* introduced a new service that enables a person receiving a call to see the telephone number of the person calling. The service will apply to Maltacom phone numbers and mobile phone numbers, as long as the number is not confidential, ex-directory or restricted by the caller.
- **1 February 2000** Figures released by the Central Office of Statistics show that tourism in 1999 overall was up by 2.7 per cent. There were 31,990 more tourists who visited Malta than in the previous year, bringing the total up to a record 1.21 million. Cruise passengers increased by 43,774 or 30.4 per cent, compared to 1998.
- **1 February 2000** Prof. Anthony Warnes from the University of Sheffield, together with Prof. Guy Patterson from the University of Sussex, carried out a survey among 1,000 British expatriates who were asked about the pros and cons of settling down in four southern European spots. Malta placed second, while Spain's Costa del Sol coastal region placed top of the survey.
- **1 February 2000** Two Armed Forces of Malta officers are to be attached to an Italian Army unit for 28 days of training. They will be serving with the *Terzo Reggimento Fanteria Alpini* at Pinerolo in Torino, Italy. This training was made possible with the assistance of the Italian Military Mission in Malta.
- **2 February 2000** The Convention of Leaders of Associations of Maltese Abroad and of Maltese Origin, meeting at the Emigrants' Commission in Valletta, set up an International Federation of Maltese living abroad. The aim of this Federation is to promote unity among Maltese living in various countries. The Federation's committee has representatives from each country where Maltese migrants are settled.
- **2 February 2000** Health Minister Louis Deguara said the Health Division currently spends Lm1 million a week to sustain the health services. The new Tal-Qroqq hospital would have a running cost of a further Lm1.2 million per week. Dr Deguara was speaking at the inauguration of the Cospicua Health Centre.
- **2 February 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg told the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee that Malta was expected to get six million *Euros* (approximately Lm2.6m) in European Union aid this year.
- **2 February 2000** The Environment Ministry said in a statement that the draft waste management plan had been completed and was presented to Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech last week. The Ministry announced that the plan would be published "imminently".
- **2 February 2000** The Ombudsman enjoys the highest credibility among Malta's major institutions. A *Misco* survey commissioned by the Office of the Ombudsman shows that 84.3 per cent of respondents trust the Ombudsman "a great deal".
- **2 February 2000** The 2000 edition of the Malta External Trade Corporation's publication *Made in Malta* has 1,500 listings, grouped under 25 categories. The publication carries general information, as well as an overview of the services offered by Metco to local industry and to foreign entrepreneurs.
- **2 February 2000** Malta International Airport chairman Lawrence Zammit announced that some 2.88

million passengers used the airport last year, an increase of five per cent over the previous year. Another 55,000 passengers used the airport in transit. Mr Zammit was addressing a news conference on the company's performance during the past year.

- **3 February 2000** President Guido de Marco told the newly appointed Council of the Chamber of Commerce that they had to look at the needs of their members in the context of the country's needs. Prof. de Marco was speaking during a courtesy visit by the Chamber Council, led by its President John E. Sullivan.
- **3 February 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi told a press conference that the Employment and Training Corporation had commissioned Ireland's employment agency FAS International Consulting to develop a national human resource policy and strategy. The exercise, costing Lm32,000, would be carried over 16 weeks and should establish a three-year business plan for the ETC based on the Employment *Guidelines 2000*.
- **3 February 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici stated that it was imperative that Malta's financial services legislation be constantly reviewed and fine-tuned in anticipation of legislative changes in competing states and in harmony with evolving EU directives. Prof. Bonnici was speaking during the opening of premises for the Bank of Valletta's new International Business Centre.
- **3 February 2000** Figures published by the Central Office of Statistics show that total exports last year were valued at Lm791.1 million, an increase of Lm79.1 million, or 11.1 per cent, on the previous year. Imports reached an all time high of Lm1,136.2 million with the industrial supplies category accounting for half of the increase of Lm101.3 million. The visible trade gap in 1999 stood at Lm345.1 million.
- **3 February 2000** Prof. Joseph Bannister, chairman of the Malta Financial Services Centre, told the Public Accounts Committee that the Centre had decided to employ a number of part-time compliance officers to carry out continuous on-site inspections on companies holding an MFSC licence.
- **4 February 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami opened an exhibition of fine bookbindings at the Bibliotheca Wittcockiana, in Brussels. The exhibition includes a collection of French, Italian, German, Spanish and British books, as well as other manuscripts. The collection was put together from the collections at the National Library in Malta and the Order of St John in Rome.
- **4 February 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo toured the Portomaso Complex, of which the Hilton Hotel forms part. Dr Refalo said that it was neither up to him, nor up to the Tourism Authority or any other authority to decide whether there should be more five-star hotels.
- **4 February 2000** The Planning Authority approved an outline application for a Lm10 million Sea Passenger Terminal at Pinto Wharf in Valletta. The development was proposed by the *VISET* consortium that combines Maltese with foreign investment.
- **4 February 2000** The Economic Services Ministry officially launched the Malta Film Commission and appointed Winston Azzopardi as Film Commissioner.
- **4 February 2000** Figures released by the Central Office of Statistics show that the rate of inflation in December reached 2.13 per cent. In November, it had stood at 1.96 per cent.
- **4 February 2000** Mr George Saliba presented his Letters of Commission to Ms Adrienne Clarkson, Governor General of Canada, as Malta's High Commissioner to Canada.
- **5 February 2000** President Guido de Marco visited the Law Courts, becoming the first President to pay an official visit to the Courts since Malta became a Republic 25 years ago.
- **5 February 2000** Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar reaffirmed his country's full support for Malta's EU membership bid in a meeting with Prime Minister Dr Edward Fenech-Adami in Madrid.
- **5 February 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo announced that, since the then National Tourist Organisation had opened an office in Amsterdam in the late 1980s, the number of Dutch visitors to Malta had trebled and by last year had risen to around 65,000. Dr Refalo was speaking during the

launch of *Soner Reizen's* colourful new brochure for Summer/Winter 2000.

- **6 February 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami stated that Malta would maintain bilateral relations with Austria. He said Government was not expected to take any steps at the moment other than monitor the situation there. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing journalists on his return from Madrid, where he participated in a conference of the European People's Parties and had talks with Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar.
- **6 February 2000** Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg announced that a freephone service and an e-mail address would be put at the disposal of those who had queries on the dual nationality laws. Dr Borg was addressing a meeting to explain the nitty-gritty of the law, at *Dar l-Emigrant* in Valletta.
- **7 February 2000** Prime Minister Dr Edward Fenech-Adami celebrated his 66th birthday.
- **8 February 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami announced that the Cabinet had approved a draft of the National Plan for the adoption of the *acquis communautaire*, the section of EU legislation that is common to all member states. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing the press shortly after a lengthy Cabinet meeting at Girgenti.
- **8 February 2000** The Intellectual Property Rights Bill, meant to enable the Comptroller of Customs to stop the importation or re-export of pirated material, found bipartisan support in Parliament. The Bill was given a second reading unanimously.
- **8 February 2000** Minister of Finance John Dalli said in Parliament that the Government's net revenue through Income Tax reached Lm128.1 million last year. Mr Dalli said tax for the year amounted to Lm112.71 million and arrears from previous years totaled Lm15.39 million. Revenue from Social Security amounted to Lm144.1 million.
- **8 February 2000** According to figures released by the Central Office of Statistics the number of unemployed persons in December was 7,695, that is 108 less than in the previous month. The level of unemployment at present is 5.3 per cent.
- **8 February 2000** The Education Ministry presented copies of Maltese textbooks, as well as books and CDs about the language, to representatives of Maltese communities in Australia. It was hoped that this would help to keep the Maltese language alive among Maltese migrants and their children.
- **8 February 2000** The Malta Tourism Authority is to embark on a poster campaign in France to promote the Islands' Mediterranean identity and unique attractions. The theme of the campaign, being coordinated by the MTA's marketing and promotion directorate and Paris office, will be *Malta - an unforgettable place in the heart of the Mediterranean*.
- **8 February 2000** Mr Adrian Chetcuti was appointed Director General for Inland Revenue in the Ministry of Finance, according to the *Government Gazette*. The appointment was backdated to January 4.
- **9 February 2000** Prime Minister Dr Edward Fenech-Adami led a Government delegation in a meeting with GWU officials led by General Secretary Mr Tony Zarb. The meeting was held at Dr Fenech-Adami's office at the House of Representatives. Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Dr Fenech-Adami said: "We discussed the Budget measures at length and the Government has not been persuaded that the measures announced should be revised given the circumstances of the country."
- **9 February 2000** Terranet Ltd launched its new Internet Portal site - *di-ve.com*. The site promises to open hundreds of doors to items of information, news, business, chatting, planning, buying and selling through the computer.
- **9 February 2000** President Guido de Marco noted that *di-ve.com* ensured that valid information and content about Malta would enable the many who were physically far away from these shores to keep their bond alive with these Islands. Prof. de Marco was delivering a message to mark the launch of *Terranet's* Portal.

- **9 February 2000** Gunther Verheugen, European Union Commissioner responsible for Enlargement, stated that he was convinced that some of the six applicant countries about to start negotiations stood an excellent chance of catching up with the countries that had started negotiations last year. Mr Verheugen was addressing a press conference in Brussels.
- **9 February 2000** British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook stated that the UK expected to see “rapid progress” on Malta’s EU application once membership negotiations begin on February 15. Mr Cook expressed his support on the Internet, on the occasion of the official launch of Terranet’s *di-ve.com*.
- **9 February 2000** Parliamentarians Helen D’Amato (PN) and Leo Brincat (MLP) attended the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD X) held in Bangkok.
- **9 February 2000** Australian High Commissioner Colin Willis paid a farewell visit to the Speaker at the Palace in Valletta.
- **10 February 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo announced that, during 1998, tourism injected Lm55 million into the economy through spending in catering establishments alone. Dr Refalo was speaking during the inauguration of the 16th Food and Drink fair at the Trade Fair grounds in Naxxar.
- **10 February 2000** The Malta-EU Information Centre (MIC) received and handled over 1,000 requests for information from the public since it set up its telephone and e-mail reply service in January. The Centre's telephone number is 25909192 and its e-mail address is quinfo.mic@magnet.mt
- **10 February 2000** Maltacom chairman Maurice Zarb Adami announced that the company was to become the official sponsor of *Fondazzjoni Memorja Kulturali Nazzjonali*, a trust for the preservation of Malta’s cultural heritage. Maltacom will be making its human and technical resources available to *FMKN* in order to record documents and works of art on video and CD Roms and to disseminate cultural information over the Internet.
- **11 February 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg explained the outcome of talks in EU screening sessions to the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee. The subjects involved were customs, taxation and quality standards.
- **11 February 2000** Dr Edgar Mizzi, a former Attorney General regarded as one of Malta’s most brilliant legal minds, died at St Luke’s Hospital. He was 78. In his lifetime Dr Mizzi had acted as adviser to Prime Ministers George Borg Olivier and Dom Mintoff.
- **13 February 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg said that the Government was geared for a fast pace in the European Union membership negotiations. Dr Borg was being interviewed by *The Sunday Times*.
- **13 February 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo inaugurated the Belgian Boat Show in Ghent, where Malta was the special guest. The Minister spoke briefly about Malta’s history and heritage and observed that tourism from Belgium was on the increase.
- **14 February 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Government was committed to eliminating the Budget deficit and had drawn up a five-year plan to see this through. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing party candidates contesting local council elections in Rabat, Gozo.
- **14 February 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici announced that importation of cars and domestic appliances was 16 per cent higher in 1999 than in the previous year. He said that in 1998, importation of these goods had shown a decrease compared to the previous year. Prof. Bonnici was speaking during a party activity in Senglea.
- **14 February 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami left for Sweden for meetings with Swedish King Carl XVI Gustaf and Swedish Prime Minister Goran Persson. Dr Fenech-Adami was also scheduled to inaugurate the Maltese Embassy in Stockholm.
- **15 February 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, in an article titled *Why Europe now*, laid out four reasons why Malta should join the EU. Firstly, EU membership would enhance Malta’s

already high degree of economic integration with EU countries. Secondly, it would create the right atmosphere for increased inward flows of foreign direct investment. Thirdly, as an EU member state, Malta would be able to play a much more effective part in the development of the economic and cultural networks between Euro-Mediterranean countries. Finally, EU membership would give Malta a competitive edge in the area of high-tech investment.

- **15 February 2000** The European Union opened formal membership talks with Malta and five other applicants, bringing to 12 the number of eastern European and Mediterranean countries holding accession negotiations. Meeting at the EU's Council of Ministers in Brussels, the foreign ministers of the 15 member states held separate opening ceremonies with their counterparts from Malta, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Romania.
- **15 February 2000** Dr Edward Fenech-Adami inaugurated Malta's first embassy in a Nordic country during the first visit by a Maltese Prime Minister to Sweden. The Embassy is situated in the eastern part of Stockholm, the hub of diplomatic missions and embassies in the Swedish capital. Eric Gerada Azzopardi will be Malta's Ambassador in Sweden.
- **15 February 2000** Minister for Justice and Local Government Austin Gatt announced that the police would hand over work associated with traffic contraventions and certain other minor duties to local tribunals by mid-April. Following this change, all revenue from fines would go to the councils. Dr Gatt was addressing newly appointed Commissioners of Justice and local tribunal prosecutors.
- **15 February 2000** Alfred Camilleri, Director of the Central Office of Statistics, gave details of a Household Budgetary Survey that is to be conducted among 3,000 families during the next 12 months. Mr Camilleri was addressing a news conference.
- **16 February 2000** Mr Verheugen, in his statement on Malta, said the opening of accession negotiations had marked a new chapter in the history of Malta and of Europe as a whole. He said this was another step towards fulfilling the aspirations of the founding fathers of the European Union who called for "an ever closer EU among the people of Europe".
- **16 February 2000** Prime Minister E. Fenech-Adami said he hoped a referendum on EU membership would be held sometime in 2002 and that Malta would be ready for membership by 2003. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs.
- **16 February 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said Sweden was supportive of Malta's EU bid and had offered a helping hand wherever expertise was needed during the negotiation stage. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing a press conference following a meeting with Swedish Prime Minister Goran Persson. Later in the afternoon he had a private audience with the Swedish King Carl XVI Gustaf.
- **16 February 2000** Dr Fenech-Adami expounded upon Malta's foreign policy and underlined the significance of the opening of the Swedish Embassy. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at the Swedish Institute for Foreign Affairs.
- **17 February 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami announced that the Government intended to pursue a phased programme of fiscal consolidation. The aim was to reduce the structural budget deficit from around seven per cent of the Gross Domestic Product to three per cent in the space of four years. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing the Annual Conference of the Federation of Industries.
- **17 February 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said the Government believed that privatisation was an economic exercise that should imbue the entities concerned with renewed vigour and bring about efficient practices. Mr Dalli was addressing the FOI conference.
- **17 February 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that it was essential that unions moderated their demands, "lest they protect the interests of those still employed at the expense of those who are, or who become, unemployed". Prof Bonnici was addressing the FOI conference.
- **17 February 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said the emphasis during the opening of accession talks with the EU was that Malta could "make it" by 2003. Dr Fenech-Adami said that

Malta's membership depended on the commitment of the Government but also on the developments that were expected to take place in the EU over the next two years. The Prime Minister was speaking to the press following his return from an official visit in Stockholm.

- **17 February 2000** A medium-term economic policy will be established by the Government this year to sustain a sound macro-economic environment, according to the draft national plan for the adoption of the *acquis communautaire*. The plan has just been submitted to the constituted bodies for their consideration.
- **17 February 2000** Malta signed the protocol to the Council of Europe convention on the transfer of sentenced persons. The protocol makes it possible for persons to serve their sentence in their country of origin. Malta's Permanent Representative to the Council, Joseph Licari, signed the protocol on Malta's behalf.
- **17 February 2000** The percentage of women contesting local elections for 23 councils grew steadily over the past seven years. The Department of Women in Society said that in 1993/4, when the first round of elections were held, only 17.06 per cent of the candidates were women. This rose to 18.22 per cent in 1997 and to 22.9 per cent for the current round to be held on March 11.
- **18 February 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli stated that developments in technology had shrunk the world to a veritable global village. "We need to be committed to ongoing consolidation, modernisation and reforms of our financial framework, to ensure that we continue to provide the spectrum of services that the trade requires," said Mr Dalli. The Minister was speaking during the official opening of the new premises of *Globe Financial Services Ltd* in Sliema
- **18 February 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi quoted Central Office of Statistics figures showing that, between December 1998 and December 1999, the number of women joining the workforce was 1,137, while the number of men went down by 90. During the same period, 1,143 women found full-time work and 1,512 found part-time work. Dr Gonzi was addressing a seminar organised by the Department for Women in Society at Project House in Floriana.
- **18 February 2000** Australian High Commissioner Iain Cameron Dickie presented his Letters of Commission to President Guido de Marco at the Palace in Valletta. He said he saw relations between Malta and Australia as "warm and strong" due to the strong migrant link between the two countries. Mr Dickie also welcomed the recent amendments to the Dual Citizenship Act and said Australia never had any problems with dual citizenship.
- **19 February 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami inaugurated the first combined cycle plant in Malta, at the Delimara Power Station. The plant costs close to Lm26 million and will be adding 110 MW (or 23 per cent) of electricity to the current output.
- **19 February 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami announced that the Government was drafting legislation to set up the post of Regulator in the energy sector. The regulator would be completely independent of *Enemalta* and would make possible the separation of the regulatory aspect from *Enemalta's* commercial activities, said the Prime Minister. Dr Fenech Adami was speaking during the inauguration of the new plant at Delimara.
- **19 February 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami formally opened the *National Agenda for Sustainable Health Care* conference at St Julians. He outlined three priorities for discussion: the need to de-centralise care from the hospitals to the community health care system; the need to empower health care professionals; and the need to discuss how the system would be funded.
- **19 February 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg pledged that the Government would not try to rush accession talks. He said that Government planned to take as much time as was necessary to negotiate what needed to be negotiated. Dr Borg was addressing a press conference to launch the draft National Plan for the Adoption of the *Acquis*.
- **19 February 2000** European Commission President Romano Prodi is to be conferred with the degree of Doctor of Laws (*Honoris Causa*) by the University of Malta. The conferment will be held on March 6.

- **20 February 2000** Local Government Minister Austin Gatt said he hoped that, in the future, it would be possible for Local Councils to administer a number of social services presently administered by the central Government. Dr Gatt was speaking during a seminar for mayors held at the Le Meridien Phoenicia, in Floriana.
- **20 February 2000** The Armed Forces of Malta purchased four ex-PAF Bulldogs training aircraft from the UK's Ministry of Defence Disposal Sales Agency. The planes arrived in Malta and landed safely at the Air Squadron site at Luqa Airport.
- **21 February 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami appealed to the General Workers' Union to put the national interest before any other interest in its dispute over the Budget, which the union wants revised. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing a political conference at Rabat.
- **22 February 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that a report on waste management presented to the Cabinet would be published by next week. Its publication would launch a process of public consultation lasting until April 28, after which date a Government strategy for waste management would be drawn up.
- **22 February 2000** *Air Malta* and *Trans World Airlines* signed a code share agreement that gives customers of the two airlines access to new destinations in Europe and the US. The agreement was signed by Air Malta Chairman Louis Grech and TWA Chairman Gerald Gitner at Air Malta's head office in Luqa.
- **22 February 2000** Bank of Valletta plc launched an issue of Lm10 million subordinated bonds, each with a nominal value of Lm100. The bonds would mature on 15 March 2010, unless previously purchased and cancelled. Interest on the bonds would be paid annually in arrears on March 15 at the rate of 6.15 per cent per annum.
- **22 February 2000** Central Bank Governor Michael C. Bonello presented President Guido de Marco with a cheque for Lm3,200 in aid of the Malta Community Chest Fund. The sum is symbolic in that it represents Lm100 for each year of the bank's existence.
- **23 February 2000** Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Borg announced in Parliament that the Prime Minister would be visiting Libya soon. Government's policy, said Dr Borg, was to have the best possible relations with Mediterranean states.
- **23 February 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg announced that the Government had allocated Lm75,686 for the opening of an embassy in Athens this year. Dr Borg said Malta would have a resident ambassador in Greece.
- **23 February 2000** Dr Simon Busuttil, Head of the Malta-EU Information Centre (MIC), gave a presentation before the House Foreign Affairs Committee. The centre, he said was accountable to the Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC) rather than to the Government, ensuring autonomy. The staff complement was of eight persons. This number would, however, be going up to fifteen soon.
- **23 February 2000** Deputy Speaker Michael Bonnici attended a forum on decentralisation democracy and stability, organised in Bucharest by the Council of Europe in co-operation with the Government of Romania.
- **23 February 2000** Schools in the southeast of Malta have the highest literacy average in Maltese and English, while those in the Inner Harbour region and Gozo have the lowest, according to the first national literacy survey, carried out among Year 2 pupils.
- **23 February 2000** Prof. Rene' Cremona, one of the most respected senior lawyers and former president of the Chamber of Advocates, died after a short illness. He was 70.
- **24 February 2000** Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Drnovsek arrives on an official visit today, accompanied by his Foreign Affairs Minister, Dimitrij Rupel. His programme includes talks with

Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami at Auberge de Castille, as well as calls on President Guido de Marco and Speaker Anton Tabone. Dr Drnovsek will also be meeting Leader of the Opposition Alfred Sant, Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee and representatives of business organisations and trade unions.

- **24 February 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Government planned to meet the GWU on March 6 over the Budget measures following a request by the Union.
- **24 February 2000** The Prime Minister said no agreement had been reached with the *Union Haddiema Maghqudin* at a meeting to discuss the Budget measures. The meeting was held at the Prime Minister's office in Parliament.
- **24 February 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo announced that the Government had embarked on negotiations with the consortium SIVA over the development of the White Rocks Project. Dr Refalo was speaking at a news conference.
- **24 February 2000** Minister for Economic Services Josef Bonnici said in Parliament that interest in the privatisation of Malta International Airport had been expressed by various quarters, including *via* embassies and by visiting delegations.
- **24 February 2000** Health Minister Louis Deguara announced that the contract between the Foundation for Medical Services and *Skanska* for the design, construction and finishing of the rest of the tal-Qroqq hospital building was expected to be signed in the coming days. Dr Deguara was speaking during a news conference at the Trade Fair grounds in Naxxar.
- **24 February 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea said that the Government was investing heavily in the setting up of a vocational college to make up for the fact that education and training for workers lagged behind university education. Dr Galea was speaking during the inauguration of the careers convention at the Trade Fair grounds in Naxxar.
- **24 February 2000** The Malta External Trade Corporation (METCO) announced that a business co-operation mission would be visiting Australia next summer. The mission is to be organised jointly by METCO, Euro Info Correspondence Centre, and the Maltese-Australian Chamber of Commerce.
- **25 February 2000** Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Drnovsek arrived in Malta for an official visit, accompanied by his Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel. Dr Drnovsek was greeted by Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries and the Diplomatic Corps.
- **25 February 2000** Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Borg opened a seminar that discussed how the legal profession could be trained to face EU law now that Malta had been accepted to start negotiations for membership. The seminar was organised by the European Law Students Association and the Malta-EU Information Centre.
- **25 February 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that a Budget impact assessment carried out by the Government confirmed that the distribution of the burden of the Budget measures was socially just. The report, Mr Dalli said, dispelled the myth that the lower income bracket was hit harder than the higher income bracket. The Minister was addressing a press conference at his office in Valletta.
- **25 February 2000** A study published by the Malta Tourism Authority shows that some 41,451 jobs are supported by the tourism industry that directly provides full-time jobs to 19,362 people. Total earnings from tourism in 1998 were estimated at Lm319.49 million. In terms of GNP, these earnings represent 24.3 per cent of the national total.
- **25 February 2000** Ms Eniko Gyori is the new Hungarian Ambassador to Malta. She presented her letters of appointment to President Guido de Marco at the Palace in Valletta. Ms Gyori will be residing in Rome.
- **25 February 2000** Swiss Ambassador Alexei Lautenberg presented his letters of appointment to President Guido de Marco at the Palace in Valletta. Mr Lautenberg will be residing in Rome.

- **26 February 2000** Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Drnovsek said he believed that both Malta and Slovenia could be ready for membership by 2003. Mr Drnovsek was addressing a joint press conference together with Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami in the courtyard of Auberge de Castille in Valletta.
- **26 February 2000** Prime Minister E. Fenech-Adami announced that the Chairman of the Malta-EU negotiating group, Richard Cachia Caruana, would be visiting Slovenia at a later date to compare notes on that country's negotiations with the EU.
- **26 February 2000** Prime Minister Janez Drnovsek had a meeting with President Guido de Marco. Dr Drnovsek invited Prof. Guido de Marco to visit Slovenia in the near future.
- **26 February 2000** Transport Minister Censu Galea announced that a record of 193,000 cruise liner passengers visited Malta last year on board 248 liners. Mr Galea said the figures represent an increase of 16 per cent in the number of cruise liners calling at Malta and a 31 per cent rise in the number of passengers.
- **26 February 2000** The local warden scheme came into effect as local wardens took up their duties in the streets of Sliema, St Julian's, San Gwann, Swieqi and Pembroke. By April, the warden system will be extended to all localities in Malta and Gozo.
- **26 February 2000** Mediterranean Film Studios participated in *Locations 2000 Global Expo*, in Los Angeles. The fair is visited by top names in the film industry and is the only annual trade show for worldwide production services.
- **26 February 2000** The Maltese Association of the Sovereign Military and Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem, Rhodes and Malta launched its own official journal, *L-Ospidaliier*.
- **27 February 2000** John Lowell, Malta's Ambassador-designate to Croatia, officially represented Malta at the swearing-in ceremony of Stjepan Mesic, the new President of Croatia. Mr Mesic succeeded Dr Franjo Tudjman, who died last December.
- **28 February 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that he would be meeting the General Workers' Union again on the Budget measures. "If they have better solutions than ours, I will accept them. If not, I will not accept them," Dr Fenech-Adami said. The Prime Minister was addressing a party conference.
- **28 February 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea emphasised that all the social partners - politicians, employers, the Employment Training Corporation, schools, unions and teachers - had to work hand in hand. Dr Galea was addressing a Careers Convention seminar titled *Creating the future together* at the trade fair grounds in Naxxar.
- **28 February 2000** Malta features prominently in a prime time travel programme on Norwegian TV. *Rubicon*, one of Norway's largest independent TV production companies, chose Malta as one of 15 destinations to feature in 10 travel programmes to be screened on TV-Norway and TV-2.
- **29 February 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the burning of an EU flag during a GWU meeting was a theatrical stunt to give the impression that the Maltese were against the EU. Dr Fenech-Adami was replying to a comment by a member of the audience during a political conference.
- **29 February 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said in Parliament that the Government was willing to find a way of keeping the Opposition informed with regard to the EU accession process. The Government was also prepared to co-operate with the Opposition if it genuinely wanted to participate in the process leading to the negotiations, said Dr Gonzi.
- **29 February 2000** Employment and Training Corporation chairman Robert Tufigno told a news conference that a tracer study had shown that over 75 per cent of university students who graduated last November had found employment. The tracer study was conducted by the ETC in collaboration with the University of Malta, among the 1,924 students who graduated at diploma, first degree and post-graduate level.

March

- **1 March 2000** Health Minister Louis Deguara announced that the new hospital at Tal-Qroqq was to cost the Government Lm83 million. Dr Deguara was speaking during a press conference following the official signing of the contract for the design and construction of the hospital.
- **1 March 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that the European Commission was considering a government request for help in the drawing up of a waste management strategy. Dr Zammit Dimech also announced that, later this year, Ms Margot Wallstrom, the EU Environment Commissioner, would visit Malta on a series of visits to candidate countries.
- **1 March 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said in Parliament that diffusion tubes would shortly be installed in various towns and villages around the Maltese islands. These tubes are used to monitor the quality of air.
- **1 March 2000** The Central Office of Statistics announced that the number of tourists in January was 44,717, virtually the same as that for the same month last year. The number of German tourists increased by 2,976 to 10,976, while that of British tourists fell by 3,263, to 14,674.
- **1 March 2000** Joseph Zammit Tabona was elected president of the Federation of Industry (FOI) during a council meeting. He takes over from Mr Joe Caruana Curran.
- **2 March 2000** The Prime Minister said the Government would consider any Opposition suggestions on how it could be kept informed on the EU membership process. Dr Fenech-Adami made his offer in Parliament after an Opposition MP complained over a Reply given to a Parliamentary Question on position papers prepared by the Government ahead of the membership talks.
- **2 March 2000** *Maltacom* chairman Maurice Zarb Adami announced that Maltacom was holding talks with three telecommunications giants - Nokia, Ericsson and Nortel - over the purchases of a mobile network for its new mobile company. The equipment was estimated to cost between \$20 million and \$25 million.
- **2 March 2000** Bank of Valletta chairman Joseph F.X. Zahra announced that BoV had, for the first time, become the largest bank in Malta in terms of total assets. The total assets declared by HSBC (Malta) in its public accounts as of December 31 amounted to Lm1.34 billion, while BoV's total assets as at September 30 were Lm1.39 billion, he said. Mr Zahra was speaking at the launch of the Wignacourt Malta Fund.
- **2 March 2000** *Tug Malta Limited* chairman John E. Sullivan said the company made a pre-tax profit of Lm609,000 in the financial year ending September 30. The company had an income of Lm2.25 million from towage services, up from the previous high of Lm2 million in 1998. Mr Sullivan was speaking during the annual general meeting of the company.
- **3 March 2000** President Guido de Marco noted that tourism was easily affected by political, internal and external circumstances. Anything that left a negative effect on peace in the country or in the region around us affected tourism to Malta negatively, he said. Prof. de Marco was speaking during an official visit to the Institute for Tourism Studies (ITS) in St Julian's.
- **3 March 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami inaugurated the Malta Arbitration Centre. The centre, located at Palazzo Laparelli in Valletta, aims to reduce the court's workload, solve relatively minor disputes without undue delay, and hopefully usher in a new source of economic activity. Justice Minister Austin Gatt was present for the inauguration.
- **3 March 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech was at Cospicua to see the 320-metre long wall along St Theresa Street and Gavino Gulia Square in Cospicua being pulled down. The operation started after the Planning Authority gave the green light for the wall to be replaced by

railings. The work is due to be completed inside a month.

- **3 March 2000** Minister Josef Bonnici returned from Lisbon where he attended the *Euro-Med Conference on Investment*. The conference was held under the auspices of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and was co-organised by the Governments of Tunisia and Portugal.
- **3 March 2000** Agriculture Minister Ninu Zammit was in Rome where he met his Italian counterpart Paolo di Castro. Mr Zammit was expected to discuss the agricultural sector with respect to Malta's EU membership application.
- **3 March 2000** The Chamber of Commerce commented in its journal that the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA), together with the private and public sectors, should analyse the downward trend in tourism from the UK.
- **3 March 2000** Employment and Training Corporation chairman Robert Tufigno announced that the ETC had prepared a draft national plan for an IT-literate workforce. The plan proposes the setting up of evening community centres to offer free Internet access to citizens with little opportunity to use a PC.
- **4 March 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami stated that privatisation was not happening because of the European Union, or because of government deficits, but simply because we needed to move ahead. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at a business lunch organised by *The Business Times* newspaper.
- **4 March 2000** The Malta Council for Economic Development discussed a suggestion to publish, in a White Paper, the proposed amendments to the Conditions of Employment Regulations Act and Industrial Relations Act. The suggestion, aimed at creating a national debate, was made by Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi.
- **4 March 2000** According to figures released by the Central Office of Statistics the inflation rate went up to 2.29 per cent in January, from 2.13 per cent the previous month. In January 1999, the inflation rate had been 2.39 per cent.
- **5 March 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said the time had come for local councils to expand their activity in the social sector so that they would assume the role of 'living communities' in their localities. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking during a social activity in Gozo.
- **5 March 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici, accompanied by Gozo Minister Giovanna Debono, inaugurated Gozo Channel's new vessel *Ta' Pinu*. Bishop Nikol Cauchi blessed the ship.
- **6 March 2000** Bank of Valletta announced a reduction in its rate of interest on savings accounts from 2.75 per cent to 2.5 per cent.
- **6 March 2000** European Commission President Romano Prodi and EU Enlargement Commissioner Gunter Verheugen arrived in Malta on an official visit. Mr Prodi is visiting the six membership applicant countries with which the European Union opened formal negotiations two weeks ago.
- **6 March 2000** European Commission President stated on his arrival at Malta International Airport that Malta was always welcome in the EU but membership was a decision that had to be taken by the Maltese people and Maltese Parliament.
- **6 March 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami told President Prodi that Malta's firm objective was to be among those candidate countries to become members at the next enlargement. Dr Fenech-Adami said he was confident that in Romano Prodi and Gunter Verheugen Malta had two forceful and committed advocates towards Malta's early EU membership. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing the EU President during an official dinner hosted by the Prime Minister and Mrs Fenech-Adami at Auberge de Castille.
- **6 March 2000** President Prodi said he hoped that the debate on whether or not Malta should join the

EU would be strong but clear because EU membership was an important, long lasting decision. Mr Prodi went on to describe this decision as "some sort of indissoluble marriage". Mr Prodi was replying to Dr Fenech-Adami's address.

- **7 March 2000** EU Commission President Romano Prodi told Parliament that European membership for Malta would mean financial assistance for infrastructural and restructuring needs, greater inward investment and increased influence for the Island.
- **7 March 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami stated he believed the interests of the country as a whole would prevail when the people voted in the referendum over whether Malta should join the EU or not. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking in Parliament immediately after an address by President Prodi.
- **7 March 2000** Leader of the Opposition Alfred Sant declared that his party considered most favourably the achievements of the European Union. However, it would be a mistake to believe that there could only be one model towards achieving peace and prosperity, he said. Dr Sant's speech in Parliament followed that of the Prime Minister.
- **7 March 2000** President Romano Prodi stressed the importance of stability in the Mediterranean region and how Malta could contribute to the development of the region. Mr Prodi was speaking during the conferment on him of an *Honoris Causa* degree by the University of Malta. The ceremony took place at the Jesuits' Church in Valletta.
- **7 March 2000** Enlargement Commissioner Gunter Verheugen said that following EU membership, Malta would be at the heart of north-south relations. "The goal is a stable and prosperous Mediterranean basin with its southern and eastern flanks filling their true potential," Mr Verheugen said. The Commissioner was addressing the NSTF Mini-European Assembly.
- **7 March 2000** President Guido de Marco described Malta as a bridge builder. He said: "We are a European country and we are a Mediterranean country, and as such, we believe that our relevance within Europe and within the Mediterranean depends very much on its bridge-building role." Prof. de Marco was speaking at a luncheon in honour of European Commission President Romano Prodi at San Anton.
- **7 March 2000** President Romano Prodi said that he saw no reason why Malta could not catch up with the six countries that started negotiations two years ago. On its part the EU would do its best to speed up negotiations with Malta as much as possible, and avoid bureaucratic problems. Mr Prodi was addressing a joint news conference together with Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami in the courtyard of Auberge de Castille.
- **7 March 2000** President Romano Prodi expressed the belief that small countries like Malta would be completely protected in the European Union and that their role was enhanced by the real nature of Europe. Mr Prodi was addressing business organisations and trade unions at the Chamber of Commerce in Valletta.
- **7 March 2000** Both Mr Prodi and Mr Verheugen confirmed that the EU would help Malta achieve modernisation through financial support. At least 38 million Euro would be made available, between 2000 and 2004, for this purpose in the form of EU grants. Loans would also be made available from the European Investment Bank.
- **7 March 2000** President Romano Prodi and Commissioner Gunter Verheugen met Leader of the Opposition Alfred Sant and Deputy Leader George Vella. The meeting took place at the EU Embassy in Ta' Xbiex.
- **7 March 2000** Commissioner Gunter Verheugen said that through European Union membership, sovereignty is shared, rather than lost. Mr Verheugen was speaking during a special sitting of the NSTF Mini-European Assembly at the Foreign Ministry.
- **7 March 2000** Commissioner Gunter Verheugen said the EU had "a very good proposal for Malta". He later amplified on this and said that, in a racing sport context, Malta would be in 'pole position'. He said the proposal concerned the number and the nature of the chapters that could be opened with Malta

during its membership talks under the Portuguese Presidency. Mr Verheugen was speaking to the media at the Foreign Ministry.

- **8 March 2000** Simone Vella, Chairperson of the Commission for the Advancement of Women, noted that women's participation in the labour market had risen to an encouraging 32 per cent from 20 per cent just a few years ago. Between December 1998 and December 1999, 1,137 women entered the labour market. Ms Vella announced these figures when the commission met Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami and Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi on the occasion of Woman's Day.
- **8 March 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici told Parliament that talks between Malta and Libya on the renewal of an agreement for Malta to buy oil at preferential rates were continuing. He said the subject might feature on the agenda of meetings the Prime Minister would have in Libya.
- **8 March 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said in Parliament that the Malta Development Corporation was considering six proposals for investment by companies based in EU countries. Two of the companies are in Italy, another is a joint venture having Italian and Irish interests, another is an Anglo-Canadian venture and the others are British and German respectively.
- **8 March 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech announced that the company that will be responsible for the development of the opera house site in Valletta would be set up in the coming weeks. The Minister was hoping that the foundation stone of the project would be laid by the end of this year.
- **8 March 2000** Four female MPs, two from each side of the House, attended the first meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Forum of women Parliamentarians, held in Naples between the 7th and 9th March 2000.
- **9 March 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Local Councils election campaign had developed into an exercise in defence of democracy in view of recent events. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing a party rally.
- **9 March 2000** The European Commission recommended that eight chapters, including telecommunications and common foreign and security policy, be opened with Malta. The Commission's recommendation was made to the committee of permanent representatives of EU member states (COREPER).
- **9 March 2000** Prime Minister said that Malta had the capability to be state of the art in every aspect of daily life through the extensive use of information technology. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking during a visit to *Datatrak*, the company that had developed the software system operated by local wardens.
- **9 March 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that the Institute for the Promotion of Small Enterprises (IPSE) would soon conclude a study on the furniture industry in Malta. Prof. Bonnici was opening the Furniture and Interiors Fair being held at the Trade Fair grounds in Naxxar.
- **9 March 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi was presented with a draft bill on domestic violence. Dr Lorraine Schembri Orland, Dr Jeanne Pia Mifsud Bonnici, and Social Policy Co-ordinator Christine Theuma drew up the proposed Domestic Violence Act. Dr Gonzi is expected to forward the bill to Cabinet for approval within the next few weeks.
- **9 March 2000** According to statistics issued by the Employment and Training Corporation the job of an office clerk or secretary is the most common occupation for women in full-time employment. Just over a quarter of the female workforce is employed in this category, while those in top or senior management staff number just 4.2 per cent.
- **10 March 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg said he was confident that the eight chapters to be opened in Malta's negotiations with the European Union would be concluded within a short period of time.
- **10 March 2000** The Malta-EU Information Centre handled 1,518 requests for information in February, an increase of 17 per cent over January when its Information Service was launched. The centre said education remained the top subject of queries.

- **10 March 2000** Justice Minister Austin Gatt made a strong call on the Government, the Judiciary and lawyers to work hand in hand to carry out the necessary reforms in the administration of justice. Dr Gatt was speaking during a ceremony at which 51 lawyers and five legal procurators were given their warrants.
- **10 March 2000** Dr Noel Buttigieg Scicluna presented his credentials to President Rudolf Schuster as Malta's Ambassador to the Republic of Slovakia. The ceremony took place at the Palace of the President in Bratislava.
- **10 March 2000** The new High Commissioner of South Africa, Anthony Le Clerk Kgwadu Mongalo, and the Ambassador of the Guinea Republic, Dione Aboubacar El Hadj, presented their diplomatic credentials to President Guido de Marco at the Palace in Valletta.
- **11 March 2000** Norman Lamont, on a visit to Malta, paid a courtesy call on Foreign Minister Joe Borg. Dr Borg explained to Lord Lamont the way the Government intended to pursue its European Union application and outlined the structures already in place. The former British Chancellor of the Exchequer was accompanied by British High Commissioner Howard Pearce.
- **11 March 2000** *Mobisile Communications Ltd*, a subsidiary of Maltacom plc, signed a contract worth some \$24 million with Nortel Networks for the purchase of new mobile network equipment. Senior executives of Maltacom, Mobisile and the US company Nortel announced the deal during a press conference held at Maltacom head office in Marsa. Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici and US Ambassador Kathryn Proffitt were present.
- **11 March 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that the restructuring of the manufacturing sector had to be accompanied by a parallel restructuring of the public sector. Prof. Bonnici was speaking at the opening of a PKF Malta discussion, *Restructuring of Industry: Recovery and Turnaround*, at the Hilton Hotel in St Julian's.
- **11 March 2000** Eight hundred people applied for dual nationality in the past month. Amendments to the dual nationality law came into effect on February 10.
- **11 March 2000** Engineer Norman Zammit, the Building Industry Consultative Council (BICC) working group co-ordinator, notes in his report *Education and Training in the Building Industry* that lack of human resources in the construction industry was leading to an increase in demand to employ foreigners.
- **12 March 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea said that, as Malta prepared to join the European Union, the University of Malta had to expand to reach the levels of European universities. Dr Galea was addressing the Annual Conference on Higher Education, organised by the University Students' Council (KSU), at the Foundation for International Studies.
- **13 March 2000** In local council elections held in twenty-three towns and villages the *Partit Nazzjonalista* won 49.3 per cent of the vote. The Malta Labour Party won 48.8 per cent and Independent candidates garnered 1.9 per cent support. The MLP had 78 candidates elected, the PN had 76 and Independent groupings had 3. The PN won a majority in 12 councils and the MLP in 10.
- **13 March 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami described the outcome of Saturday's local council elections as a vote of confidence in the Government. "Today we are reaping the fruits of our work," Dr Fenech-Adami told a press conference.
- **13 March 2000** The Malta External Trade Corporation announced that exports of woven men's wear to the European Union had been completely liberalised. The 1970 Association Agreement with the former EEC had laid down a quota on the quantity of items that could be exported by Malta to the EU without duty.
- **13 March 2000** Philip Tissot, Deputy High Commissioner at the British High Commission in Malta, said that the High Commission had been inundated with business enquiries from the UK since the

Island was given the green light to start negotiations with the European Union at the Helsinki summit in December.

- **13 March 2000** Mario Ghio, Air Malta Manager for Scandinavia, said there was a growing interest in tourism from Scandinavian countries and both Air Malta and the Malta Tourism Authority were seeking ways to exploit the market. The Scandinavian tourist market has been registering significant increases for the past three years.
- **14 March 2000** Thirty women were elected in the local councils elections, securing just under one-fifth of the 155 council seats contested.
- **14 March 2000** The Malta External Trade Corporation (METCO), the Euro Info Correspondence Centre and the Maltese-Australian Chamber of Commerce will be organising a business co-operation mission to Australia in July. The main objective of the mission is to introduce Maltese companies to prospective Australian partners.
- **14 March 2000** The marketing and promotion directorate of the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) launched an advertising campaign to promote the Island as a tourist destination in Germany, Switzerland and Austria. The campaign focuses on the major print media and makes use of billboards and posters that portray the Maltese Islands as a sun, sea and culture destination.
- **15 March 2000** The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labour of the US Department of State published its annual human rights report. The report includes a section on human rights practices in Malta during 1999.
- **15 March 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg told the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee that the EU did not totally prohibit state subsidies for certain sectors. Dr Borg was speaking during a discussion on competition policy.
- **15 March 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said in Parliament that government revenue from income tax last year amounted to Lm128.4 million. Lm56.6 million was paid by employees. Income tax paid by companies amounted to Lm47.2 million and the self-employed paid Lm8.4 million.
- **15 March 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi told Parliament that the number of full-time employees as at December 1999 stood at 138,206, which was 819 more than the number registered a year earlier.
- **16 March 2000** President Guido de Marco invested Prof. Helga Reimann with the National Order of Merit at the Palace in Valletta. Prof. Reimann could not be present during the official ceremony held last December 13.
- **16 March 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami will be visiting Libya next month and is expected to meet Libyan Leader Muammar Gaddafi. The two-day official visit starts on Saturday, April 8.
- **16 March 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that the Institute for the Promotion of Small Enterprises (IPSE) is to receive 2 million Euro as part of the European Union pre-accession funds. The agreement for these funds was finalised under the Fourth Financial Protocol.
- **16 March 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea introduced a bill in Parliament amending the Broadcasting Act. Through this bill Malta would align itself with EU regulations.
- **16 March 2000** Dr George Hyzler, Parliamentary Secretary in the Economic Services Ministry, said that he would be proposing new consumer protection legislation amending the Consumer Affairs Act of 1994. Dr Hyzler was addressing a conference on the theme *The consumer first - striking a balance in a market economy*, held to coincide with World Consumer Rights Day.
- **17 March 2000** President Guido de Marco explained the significance of a President's role as defined by the Constitution. He said that when a President spoke on behalf of the Government he had to voice the views of a democratically elected Government. Prof. de Marco was addressing guests at a

luncheon held in his honour at the Chamber of Commerce in Valletta.

- **17 March 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi announced that a national conference on social housing was to be held in April. Dr Gonzi was addressing a joint news conference with Marisa Micallef Leyson, chairperson of the Housing Authority and Robert Musumeci, chairman of the Building Industry Consultative Council respectively.
- **17 March 2000** British High Commissioner Howard Pearce said that, although inquiries from Britain over trade and investment with Malta had increased since it was confirmed that accession negotiations would start with the EU, the uncertainty over whether Malta would join or not could be delaying investment decisions. Mr Pearce was speaking during a luncheon in his honour organised by the Institute of Directors on the theme *Britain and Malta - old friends, future partners*.
- **17 March 2000** The Malta Maritime Authority announced that the Planning Authority had approved the full development application for the extension of Cirkewwa's existing quay and breakwater, together with the land reclamation for a marshalling area. The works, part of the proposed upgrading of facilities at the Cirkewwa Ferry Terminal, were expected to kick off by the beginning of May and would last around three years.
- **17 March 2000** According to figures released by the Central Office of Statistics, average per capita spending by tourists last year was Lm222.4, compared to Lm215.4 in 1998.
- **18 March 2000** President Guido de Marco said that the common responsibility for the protection of the oceans shared between countries could be transformed into a common action for redress in the case of disasters at sea. An international body, such as the United Nations Trusteeship Council, could act as a collective depository and trustee. The President was addressing International Maritime Law Institute students at the Palace in Valletta.
- **18 March 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that the initial set-up of the Tax Compliance Unit was expected to be functional by the third quarter of this year. The unit, announced in the Budget speech, would have the role of creating an intelligent database and conducting investigations into suspected tax evasion. Mr Dalli was addressing a forum organised by the Malta Institute of Taxation.
- **18 March 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that, at the going rate, by next year the Tour Operator Support Scheme would cost the Government as much as Lm6 million. This figure was equivalent to over 80 per cent of this year's total of the Malta Tourism Authority budget. Dr Refalo was speaking at the Annual General meeting of the Malta Association of Incoming Tourism Agents.
- **18 March 2000** Alfred Mallia-Milanes, Director General of the Malta Employers' Association, said that the association was all for Malta joining the EU. He appealed, however, that every effort should be made to negotiate the time frames and the assistance necessary for the training and retraining of the workforce. Mr Mallia-Milanes was speaking after the association announced the findings of a survey it commissioned on how employers viewed EU legislation in the fields of social policy, employment and industrial relations.
- **20 March 2000** Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that the invitation for the Opposition to appoint a representative on the Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC) was still open. Dr Gonzi was speaking on Radio 101.
- **20 March 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that it was the Government's intention to announce the liberalisation of the telecommunications sector by the end of March. The three major companies involved were: Maltacom, Vodafone and Melita Cable. Mr Dalli was being interviewed by *The Times* newspaper.
- **20 March 2000** Dr Giorgio Boggio, the head of the EU delegation to Malta, said that Malta had, for the first time, been included in a poll held in all EU member states and applicant countries. The results of this poll will be published in the *Eurobarometer* report.
- **20 March 2000** The Malta Maritime Authority announced that a total of 228 cruise liners had already booked visits to Malta this year. This makes the year 2000 another possible record year for liner

activity.

- **20 March 2000** The next seminar for Euro-Mediterranean diplomats will be held in Malta between April 14-17. The seminars are held twice a year and are intended for diplomats responsible for Euro-Mediterranean portfolios in the 27 partner countries.
- **21 March 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami announced that the Cabinet had approved a memo outlining how government-impressed drivers would be given permanent employment. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking after a Cabinet meeting.
- **21 March 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg said in Parliament that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was considering opening new embassies, both in European states and elsewhere. Dr Borg said priority would be given to EU states and applicant countries, and also to other Mediterranean states.
- **21 March 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo led a delegation, made up of senior executives from the Malta Tourism Authority and Air Malta, that participated in the world's leading tourism exhibition *ITB*, in Berlin.
- **21 March 2000** Figures published by the Central Office of Statistics show that the average length of stay by tourists between January and September last year was 9.6 days. The COS also reported that the occupancy rates in 5-star hotels had improved from a low of 44 per cent in January to full occupancy in August and 87 per cent in September.
- **22 March 2000** President Guido de Marco said that the beauty of the challenge of youth was lost on a youth without challenges, ideals and principles. If youths were to be rebels, they should be rebels with a cause, and find ways of improving the country. Prof. de Marco was speaking in a meeting with the National Youth Council to mark National Youth Day.
- **22 March 2000** Prime Minister Dr Edward Fenech-Adami visited the new Tal-Qroqq Hospital and was shown the progress made on the project over the past months. Dr Fenech-Adami said there would soon be full mobilisation on site. He expected the process to proceed as scheduled so that the new hospital would be able to receive its new patients in 2003.
- **22 March 2000** Prime Minister Dr Edward Fenech-Adami received *Kosovo Direct* representatives who presented him with a memento to mark their voluntary work in the war-scarred province.
- **22 March 2000** Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Borg stated that new thinking methods and tools had a significant role to play in the country's development, particularly in Malta's EU membership bid, and Prof. Edward de Bono was a pioneer in that field. Dr Borg was addressing local and foreign delegates taking part in the four-day seminar organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Edward de Bono Foundation entitled *New thinking for the new Millennium*.
- **22 March 2000** Malta-EU Information Centre head Dr Simon Busuttil updated bankers on the progress of Malta's accession process during an EU-information session held at the Russian Cultural Institute in Valletta. MIC also embarked on a separate information campaign in schools in Malta and Gozo.
- **22 March 2000** A team from *Moody's Investors' Service* was in Malta to collect information for their annual report. *Standard and Poor's*, another credit agency, had sent out its team earlier this month.
- **22 March 2000** Dr George Hyzler, Parliamentary Secretary in the Economic Services Ministry, announced that public corporations employ a total of 11,000 people and have a collective debt of Lm531 million. This works out to some Lm14,000 per employee. He said taxpayers' money could no longer be used to finance public corporations. Dr Hyzler was speaking at a conference on the theme *Privatisation, what would it mean to me?* organised by the *Union Haddiema Maghqudin* at St Julian's.
- **23 March 2000** Data supplied by Malta International Airport shows that tax-free sales per departing passenger ranged from Lm7 to Lm8 in the first five months of 1999. Taken on a yearly basis, tax-free sales per passenger at MIA totalled Lm7.67 last year, the highest since 1992.

- **23 March 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that more than eight per cent of Malta's fuel bill was spent on the running of the very large reverse osmosis desalination plants which also contribute to green-house gas emissions. Dr Zammit Dimech was addressing a ministerial conference on *Water in the 21st Century*, in The Hague.
- **23 March 2000** The Government has decided to officially regulate the operation of *online* betting offices. Regulations, which amend the Public Lotto Ordinance to this effect, came into force on 1 February 2000. Maltese residents are excluded from taking part in this type of betting.
- **23 March 2000** Malta is to feature in the television programme *La Domenica del Villaggio*, presented every Sunday on *Rete Quattro*. The programme has an estimated weekly audience of 17 million viewers.
- **24 March 2000** The Government officially replied to a formal complaint lodged with the ILO by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, saying it had always fully respected ILO conventions. The Brussels-based ICFTU had accused Malta of ignoring international conventions on labour rights.
- **24 March 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that the economy had a great demand for workers with trade skills. Dr Gonzi was speaking at a presentation of Journeyman's certificates to candidates who had successfully followed an Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) and Education Division course.
- **24 March 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea said that once Malta joined the European Union the monopoly on higher education enjoyed by the University of Malta would come to an end. The university would have to compete with other European universities to attract students. Dr Galea was addressing a conference on tertiary education.
- **24 March 2000** The Ambassador of North Korea, Choi In Sop, presented his diplomatic credentials to President Guido de Marco at the Palace in Valletta. The new North Korean Ambassador will be residing in Tripoli.
- **24 March 2000** The Ambassador of Albania presented his diplomatic credentials to President Guido de Marco at the Palace in Valletta. The new Albanian Ambassador will reside in Rome.
- **24 March 2000** The Housing Authority announced that it would no longer take into consideration whether applicants for housing were married or single parents. It would focus rather on their need.
- **24 March 2000** *Air Malta* General Manager Joe Cappello launched the seventh Air Malta International Travel Exhibition (AMITEX0. The fair is to be held at the Trade Fair grounds in Naxxar between 30 March and 2 April.
- **24 March 2000** A number of French tour operators belonging to the *Syndicate National Entreprises de Tourisme* visited Malta. The group took part in the annual SNET Congress. Last year, Malta received 73,264 visitors from France.
- **24 March 2000** Acting Chief Executive of Public Broadcasting Services, Andrew Psaila, announced that PBS is planning to introduce a news service in sign language in accordance with the terms of the Equal Opportunities Act.
- **24 March 2000** The Council of Health lifted the ban on beef of UK origin. The ban was introduced in Malta in 1996, following the outbreak of BSE (Mad Cow disease) among cattle in the UK. All future imports would be subject to the Date Based Export Scheme permitted under the EU Council Decision 98/256/EC.
- **25 March 2000** President Guido de Marco said that it was only through the wisdom of dialogue that one could find a solution or at least compromise. Prof. de Marco was speaking at the inauguration of *Gallerija Liberta`* at the Workers' Memorial Building in Valletta.

- **25 March 2000** Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg and Police Commissioner George Grech presided over a passing-out parade at the police academy in which seventy-six recruits took their oath of office to become police constables.
- **25 March 2000** Maltacom Group chairman Maurice Zarb Adami told a news conference that the company had posted pre-tax profits of Lm13.1 million for the year ending December 1999, up by 21 per cent from the previous year's Lm10.8 million.
- **25 March 2000** The Central Bank of Malta issued *Finansbank (Malta) Ltd* with a licence to carry out banking in Malta. The bank is authorised to operate with non-residents of Malta in all currencies except the Malta Lira.
- **25 March 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that seating capacity from the UK to Malta would increase by 14 per cent next summer with the added flights being introduced by Sabre Airways.
- **25 March 2000** The captain of the Tunisian *Mv Carthage* and the Tunisian Ambassador hosted a reception on board the cruise liner. The reception was attended, among others, by President Guido de Marco and various Cabinet Ministers, including Tourism Minister Michael Refalo. Efforts are being made to include Valletta on the ship's itinerary.
- **25 March 2000** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Edward Debono Foundation (Malta) jointly organised an international conference entitled *New thinking for the new Millennium*.
- **26 March 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami announced that, according to opinion polls on the European Union conducted by his Party, only 25 per cent of the people appeared to be against EU membership. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking during a discussion on the European Union with the Leader of the Opposition at City Gate, Valletta.
- **26 March 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi announced that the Board of the Occupational Health and Safety Authority would be made up of representatives of the Malta Council for Economic Development and the Government. Dr Gonzi said that the Government would have a majority on the board to ensure that regulations were enforced.
- **26 March 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that the Water Services Corporation (WSC) accounted for 14 per cent of energy consumption. The Minister was speaking during a news conference launching the book *The Voice of Water* produced by the World-Wide Water Awareness Foundation within Junior Chamber International.
- **26 March 2000** Malta was unanimously elected to the council of the International Seabed Authority. The election took place at a meeting of the assembly of the International Seabed Authority in Kingston, Jamaica.
- **26 March 2000** Prof. Salvino Busuttil presented his credentials as Ambassador to Portugal to the President of Portugal, M.G. Sampaio, and as Ambassador to Andorra to its joint Governors, President Jacques Chirac of France and the Bishop of Urgell, Joan Mari Alanis.
- **26 March 2000** Summer time started today at 2 a.m. when clocks were put one hour forward, bringing Malta two hours ahead of GMT. Summer time ends on October 29.
- **27 March 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami visited the Vittoriosa wartime shelters at *Couvre Porte*. The restoration of the labyrinthine, underground shelters, located in Vittoriosa's ditch, was a joint effort between the Vittoriosa Local Council and the Cottonera Rehabilitation Project within the Environment Ministry.
- **28 March 2000** The formal talks on Malta's EU membership aspirations started today in Brussels during a meeting between Maltese and EU negotiators. The Maltese Core negotiating team was led by Mr Richard Cachia Caruana.

- **28 March 2000** Agreement was reached between the General Workers' Union (GWU), the Union Haddiema Maghqudin (UHM) and the Malta International Airport for both unions to negotiate a common collective agreement for MIA employees.
- **28 March 2000** The Prime Minister proposed, and the Cabinet agreed, that the President should be advised to grant a pardon, in terms of Article 93 of the Constitution of Malta, to all workers and GWU officials arraigned in court in connection with the industrial action at Malta International Airport in August 1999.
- **28 March 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg said that the Government's position on the EU referendum was directly opposite to that of the Leader of the Opposition since the Government strongly believed in democracy and would therefore respect the people's decision. Dr Borg was replying to a Parliamentary Question from Labour MP Leo Brincat.
- **29 March 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami accused the General Workers' Union of playing with words when it said that it did not want a pardon but wanted the procedures against it to stop. "The union knew all along that the only way by which the court proceedings could be stopped was through a pardon." Dr Fenech-Adami said he was signing the file advising the President to give all those involved in the August 20 incidents a Presidential pardon in the national interest. The Prime Minister was speaking at a press conference at his office in Parliament.
- **29 March 2000** Mr Richard Cachia Caruana, Head of Malta's Core negotiating team, called on the European Union to fix a date for the next enlargement. He also called on the EU to raise the level of pre-accession assistance available to Malta. Malta, together with five central and eastern European countries, started membership negotiations yesterday.
- **29 March 2000** Portuguese Ambassador Jose Vasco Valente, on behalf of the EU presidency, said the European Union would be honouring its wish to offer the opportunity to candidates which had just started negotiations - including Malta - to catch up with those which had started negotiations two years ago, if this was justified by their relative degree of preparedness.
- **29 March 2000** Mr Eneko Landaburu, the Director General responsible for EU enlargement, said the European Commission would continue with its efforts to help Malta prepare itself for accession. Mr Landaburu said he was delighted that the EU had decided to open eight chapters with Malta.
- **29 March 2000** Mr Anthony Diacono, chairman of the Malta External Trade Corporation, announced that Malta would be participating in the next World Exposition. This year Expo is being held in Germany between June 1 and October 31.
- **30 March 2000** Local Government Minister Dr Austin Gatt announced that tenants of Government property would shortly be able to pay rent at their local council instead of at the Lands Department in Valletta. Dr Gatt was speaking during the swearing in ceremony of 157 councillors who were elected in 23 localities in the March 11 elections.
- **30 March 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech announced that the Government was preparing to hand over the Ghadira and Simar nature reserves to *Birdlife Malta*. Dr Zammit Dimech visited the Ghadira nature reserve where he was presented with the book 'Important bird areas of Europe: Priority sites for conservation' issued by Birdlife International.
- **30 March 2000** *Maltacom* chairman Maurice Zarb Adami announced that the Integrated System Digital Network (ISDN) would be available to subscribers as soon as the Telecommunications Regulator gave the company the green light. ISDN provides customers with the opportunity to use a single phone line for multiple uses such as simultaneous calls or transmission of fax messages or data. Mr Zarb Adami was speaking at the Maltacom head office in Marsa.
- **30 March 2000** The Telecommunications Regulator gave *Vodafone Malta Ltd* partial approval for its application to reduce its mobile telephone tariffs.
- **30 March 2000** Nationalist MP Dr Francis Agius attended a meeting of the economic affairs

committee of the Council of Europe in Paris. The meeting discussed tourism, among other topics. Dr Agius later attended a plenary session of the Council of Europe held in Strasbourg.

- **30 March 2000** Ms Claudia Pasini Vagnola was appointed Honorary Consul for Malta in Savona, Italy.
- **31 March 2000** President Guido de Marco and Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami laid flowers at the foot of the Freedom Monument in Vittoriosa.
- **31 March 2000** Central Bank Governor Michael Bonello said that the country's foreign reserves currently stood at about Lm700 million, following an increase of Lm120 million last year over the figure for 1998. Mr Bonello was speaking during an official visit to the Central Bank by President Guido de Marco.
- **31 March 2000** Provisional figures released by the Central Office of Statistics, covering the international economic transactions of Malta for the fourth quarter of 1999, showed a current account deficit of Lm67.6 million. This figure is Lm7.4 million more than the net negative balance of Lm60.2 million recorded in the same period a year before.
- **31 March 2000** The Central Office of Statistics announced that the number of gainfully occupied had risen to 138,673 in February from 138,354 the previous month. Unemployment rose to 7,996 from 7,987 in January, while the labour supply increased from 146,341 to 146,669.
- **31 March 2000** *Cottonera Waterfront Group* Chairman Edward Scicluna said he expected work on the project to start as early as May or June this year. Prof. Scicluna was speaking after the Planning Authority approved several outline and full development applications.
- **31 March 2000** *Maltacom* Chairman Maurice Zarb Adami said there could be a price war between Vodafone Malta Ltd and Mobisle Communications Ltd if Vodafone Malta Ltd attempted to snatch the mobile telephony market. Mr Zarb Adami was reacting to the news that the telecommunications regulator had approved most of the requests for rate cuts made by Vodafone.
- **31 March 2000** The Malta-EU Information Centre launched its web site which carries information about the EU and Malta's accession process. The site may be visited at www.mic.org.mt
- **31 March 2000** The American Centre launched a new Information Resource Centre. The Centre's *e-mail* address is falzonml@hotmail.com, while its home page can be accessed at <http://www.usembassy.state.gov/malta/>

April

- **1 April 2000** Air Malta Chairman Louis Grech estimated that this year's *Amitex* Travel Fair in Naxxar had attracted a record 35,000 visitors. Mr Grech was speaking during a visit to the fair by Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici.
- **3 April 2000** A Parliamentary delegation, made up of Government MPs John Vella, Francis Agius and Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando, and Opposition MPs John Attard Montalto and Joe Debono Grech, attended the second part of the ordinary session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg.
- **4 April 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami announced that a scheduled cut in rebates on water and electricity charges had been put off by a year. The rebates would remain the same this year as they were last year. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking after a Cabinet meeting.
- **4 April 2000** The Prime Minister said that the Cabinet had also discussed the preliminary report by the Social Reform Commission dealing with the future of pensions and benefits.

- **4 April 2000** The National Commission on Welfare Reform set up by the Prime Minister in June 1999 expressed concern at the threefold increase in benefits payable between 1985 and 1998. It said that it was also worried by the fact that the welfare gap had more than doubled in the same period. The interim report was signed by all 13 members and by the Chairman, former Central Bank Governor Anthony P Galdes. GWU representative Mario Cutajar signed the report "with reservations". The report was tabled in Parliament.
- **4 April 2000** Mr Michael C Bonello, Governor of the Central Bank of Malta, warned that domestic inflation remained higher in Malta than in the country's trading partners and competitors. If allowed to persist, this inflation differential would erode the country's international price competitiveness and could also affect the stability of the currency. Mr Bonello was writing in the Central Bank's Annual Report for 1999, tabled in Parliament.
- **4 April 2000** The Central Office of Statistics (COS) said that during February the retail price index fell by 0.17 per cent, from 112.24 in January to 112.05 in February.
- **4 April 2000** Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Borg announced that the 7th Mediterranean Forum Meeting had accepted a proposal by Malta to establish the Euro-Mediterranean Award. The award would be bestowed on personalities considered to have made outstanding contributions towards the fulfilment of the objectives of the Barcelona Declaration. The meeting was held in Funchal, Madeira.
- **4 April 2000** The Government informed the Planning Authority in writing that it would carry out a traffic impact assessment for the Cottonera Project, effectively removing the last stumbling block to the project.
- **4 April 2000** The Lord Mayor of London Clive Martin paid a courtesy call on President Guido de Marco at the Palace in Valletta.
- **4 April 2000** Agriculture Minister Ninu Zammit presented his Dutch counterpart with the first bag of Maltese spring potatoes.
- **5 April 2000** President Guido de Marco said that the Presidency was neither a static nor a symbolic office, but one which should evolve. Such an evolution would very much depend on the personality of the President. Prof. de Marco was speaking during an informal meeting with reporters at the Palace in Valletta to look back at his first year in office.
- **5 April 2000** The Government said in a statement that Italy and Malta had signed an agreement providing for over Lm5 million in Italian financial aid to Malta. The grant had been made available under the fourth Italian-Maltese protocol on financial, economic and technical assistance. Italian Foreign Ministry Secretary General Umberto Vattani and Maltese Ambassador Joseph Cassar signed the agreement at a ceremony held at the Italian Foreign Ministry in Rome.
- **5 April 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that a landfill remained a necessary evil in every waste management plan, no matter what management policies, solutions and options were adopted. Dr Zammit Dimech was addressing a conference on waste management solutions organised by the Malta Institute of Waste Management.
- **5 April 2000** The Malta-EU Information Centre took part in the Green Week Fair at the Trade Fair grounds. The theme of the stand was the EU and its work in the environment, agriculture and fisheries sectors.
- **5 April 2000** The Malta Maritime Authority said in a statement that the maritime industry last year registered a positive growth in the rapidly evolving bunkering sector. Up to 1998, the bunker market appeared to have stabilised its annual growth at 20 per cent. In 1999, sales volume was just below the 750,000 tonne limit, marking a 29 per cent increase on the previous year's 575,000 tonnes.
- **6 April 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the General Workers' Union's latest action against state-owned corporations was illegal. "No industrial dispute exists with the General Workers' Union. The union is taking political action and, according to our laws, these are illegal as

they do not enjoy the protection of the Industrial Relations Act," he said. The Prime Minister was speaking to reporters following a Cabinet meeting.

- **6 April 2000** The Prime Minister said that he had instructed state-owned corporations affected by industrial action to take legal steps against the GWU. The corporations filed five separate protests yesterday afternoon.
- **6 April 2000** The Prime Minister said in Parliament that the Government's reaction to the industrial action ordered by the GWU was identical to that by then Prime Minister Alfred Sant following industrial action at Malta Freeport in 1998. At the time Dr Sant had sought and obtained a court declaration that the actions were illegal. Dr Fenech-Adami was reacting to remarks by Opposition Leader Alfred Sant who requested the adjournment of the House for an urgent debate on the impact of the Budget measures and the current situation.
- **6 April 2000** President Guido de Marco visited the Water Services Corporation and toured the corporation's head office in Luqa, the information technology section, the billing section, the Institute of Water Technology, Ta' Kandja galleries, and the reverse osmosis plant in Pembroke.
- **6 April 2000** The Planning Authority (PA) held a full-day in-house seminar to discuss the implications of Malta's potential accession to the EU and how this would affect the review of the structure plan. The event was organised by the PA, the Malta-EU Information Centre and the Inter-Departmental Planning Committee.
- **6 April 2000** The Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) said it was "disturbed" that the proposed landfill near the Maghtab dump threatened to affect an area with a high concentration of tourist accommodation. Tourism, it said, deserved better.
- **6 April 2000** Local Government Minister Austin Gatt attended the Conference of Ministers responsible for Local Government, organised by the Council of Europe in Istanbul, Turkey.
- **6 April 2000** Government MP John Vella, who is also leader of the Parliamentary delegation to the Council of Europe, was appointed Vice-President of the group of the European People's Party of the Council of Europe.
- **6 April 2000** The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination said it welcomed the changes in Maltese legislation to cover aspects of Article 4 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.
- **6 April 2000** Freeport Chairman Marin Hili said that, from the middle of this month, the China Shipping Group, one of the world's largest shipping lines, was to start making use of the Malta Freeport. The agreement is expected to be formally concluded in China next week.
- **7 April 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Government was democratically elected to govern and it was determined to do so. He said: "The law of the land is the Industrial Relations Act and political strikes are illegal." Dr Fenech-Adami was reacting to the actions being taken by the General Workers' Union over the Budget measures.
- **7 April 2000** The Prime Minister gave notice of a motion calling on Parliament to condemn the Opposition and the General Workers' Union for together choosing to go on a path of obstruction and confrontation "in the squares", instead of seeking the national interest. The motion also urges the Government to continue with its policies aimed at strengthening the country's financial situation, to do so always with a sense of social justice, and to continue to seek what is in the people's best interest.
- **7 April 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi presented the People Management and Satisfaction Awards for 1999 to the Public Library in Floriana and to *Dedicated Micros* in San Gwann. The presentation took place at the Employment and Training Corporation's new training centre in Valletta.
- **7 April 2000** President Guido de Marco received the Vice-President of the Committee on Environment, Health and Consumer Protection of the European Parliament, Alexander De Roo. The

Dutch Green MEP is the *rapporteur* of the European Parliament on the state of the environment in applicant countries.

- **7 April 2000** The Malta-EU Information Centre (MIC) began sending out copies of the brochure in Maltese entitled *Kif ser ninforma ruhi?* to all households in Malta and Gozo. The brochure explains various aspects of the EU.
- **8 April 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami spoke about the various options the Government had in the privatisation process. He said the Government did not have a standard formula to be applied for all companies. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at a conference entitled *Privatisation - a strategy for the future*, held by the Finance Ministry and the Malta Council for Economic Development.
- **8 April 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that the Government intended privatising Malta Freeport this year, with a possibility that Malta International Airport would be privatised next year. Mr Dalli was being interviewed by *The Times* newspaper.
- **8 April 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that companies in Malta had made investment amounting to 40 per cent more last year than in the year before. Prof. Bonnici was speaking at the launch of the Award of Achievement in Industry.
- **8 April 2000** Tourism Minister Dr Michael Refalo called for a culture change in the industry, saying this was a must if tourism wished to continue along the path of prosperity. Dr Refalo was addressing the Annual Conference of the Hotels and Catering International Management Association (Malta).
- **9 April 2000** President Guido de Marco and Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami signed the book of condolences for former Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba, at the Tunisian Embassy in Sliema. Bourguiba died on Thursday 6 April at the age of 97.
- **9 April 2000** A government statement said that, contrary to what the General Workers' Union was claiming, its illegal actions were only having a negligible effect on the Government but they were causing inconvenience to the public.
- **10 April 2000** *Rete 4's* Sunday programme *La Domenica del Villaggio* was transmitted live from Valletta. It was the first time that the popular transmission was beamed from outside Italy.
- **11 April 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Government was seeking a "social pact" based on the Irish model so that decisions could, as far as possible, be taken by consensus. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at the opening of a debate in Parliament on a government motion condemning the actions of the General Workers' Union and the Opposition over the Budget measures.
- **11 April 2000** The Prime Minister said after the weekly meeting that the Cabinet had devoted time to discuss the situation resulting from industrial action ordered by the General Workers' Union as part of the union's campaign against Budget measures. Other government business discussed by the Cabinet included a Bill for the setting up of a communications authority to assume the functions of regulator in the field of telecommunications.
- **11 April 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg said that the European Union's Council of Ministers had adopted an accession partnership document with Malta that set out the short and medium term priorities that the EU considered to be eligible for financing. Dr Borg was speaking during the opening session of the European Documentation and Research Centre conference on the challenges of negotiating membership terms with the EU.
- **11 April 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that some 80 Maltese company representatives were in Libya to take part in the Maltese External Trade Corporation (METCO) trade mission aimed to pave the way for business between the two countries. Prof. Bonnici was speaking at the Malta Libyan Business Relations' Meeting in Libya.
- **11 April 2000** The Malta External Trade Corporation, (METCO) in association with Crest Publicity, published the year 2000 edition of the *Made in Malta* directory.

- **12 April 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said he was certain that the electorate would vote 'Yes' in a referendum on EU membership. He said the people would vote across party lines because it was in their interest to do so. Dr Fenech-Adami was answering questions from students at a discussion meeting at the University campus organised by *Studenti Demokristjani Maltin*.
- **12 April 2000** The *Union Haddiema Maghqudin* and the Government signed an agreement on the Budget. Speaking at the signing, Finance Minister John Dalli said that the Budget measures would be revised no further.
- **12 April 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that the authority regulating occupational health and safety is expected to be in operation by mid-summer. Dr Gonzi was speaking to delegates attending the conference *Health and Safety at Work - A National Priority*.
- **12 April 2000** Communications Minister Censu Galea said that the law setting up the Malta Communications Authority would hopefully be enacted by the end of the month. He said the regulatory authority would be appointed to replace the current Regulator and the aim was to strengthen the office and speed up the liberalisation process.
- **12 April 2000** Former President Ugo Mifsud Bonnici and Mrs Mifsud Bonnici represented the Government and the Maltese people at the funeral of former Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba in Monastir on Saturday 8 April.
- **12 April 2000** Lea Harding, née Stilon Depiro, a Maltese immigrant who lives in Australia, was honoured with the New South Wales Premier's *Seniors Award 2000* for her outstanding service and voluntary work for the community and people of New South Wales.
- **13 April 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, accompanied by Finance Minister John Dalli and Foreign Minister Joe Borg, had a private meeting with Libyan Leader Muammar Gaddafi in Sirte, Libya.
- **13 April 2000** Teams made up of senior government officials and experts in different sectors from Malta and Libya met in Sirte to analyse the effect of Malta's EU membership on the various agreements that exist between the two countries. Foreign Minister Joe Borg led Malta's side, while Libyan Foreign Minister for African Unity Ali Abdel Salam el Treiki led the Libyan group.
- **13 April 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said in Parliament that figures on economic growth last year given in the Central Bank's annual report appeared to be "very conservative" and "subject to correction". The Central Bank report estimated GDP growth last year as having been between 2.5 per cent and 3 per cent. But Prof. Bonnici said that according to reports he had received, growth last year was actually in the region of four per cent, which reflected an acceleration of growth over the previous year.
- **13 April 2000** The Central Bank amended its notice on interest rates, removing the provision relating to the maximum rate of interest that banks might charge for loans and advances for a residential unit.
- **13 April 2000** Minister Austin Gatt said that local councils would be working in conjunction with the Malta Tourism Authority in the publication of leaflets with information on the history and attraction of each locality. Dr Gatt was speaking during the launch of a nation-wide campaign encouraging civic pride entitled *Sebbah Pajjizek*.
- **13 April 2000** Eighteen tankers brought to Malta 167,507,008 metric tons of various products for use by Enemalta in the first quarter of this year. Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici gave the information in Parliament.
- **13 April 2000** Government MP Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando expressed himself against a recommendation made at the last Council of Europe session to allow the termination of pregnancies that were the result of alleged violence. Mr Pullicino Orlando was a member of the parliamentary delegation that took part in the council session.

- **14 April 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli announced in Sirte that, in a meeting with Libyan Foreign Minister for African Unity Ali Abdel Salam el Treiki, agreement had been reached for the renewal of the agreement for the purchase of oil at preferential rates. The contract expired in March and the Libyans had agreed to renew it with immediate effect.
- **14 April 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami announced that Libyan Leader Muammar Gaddafi had accepted an invitation to visit Malta. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking to reporters at Malta International Airport shortly after his return from Libya.
- **14 April 2000** The Prime Minister told reporters that at Sirte he had discussed the project being proposed for a gas pipeline between Sicily and Tripoli. Dr Fenech-Adami said no decision had been taken, as the project required further study. The proposed pipeline would pass through Malta's continental shelf.
- **14 April 2000** President Guido de Marco said that it would be only a matter of time before states which were not currently among the candidate countries for EU membership saw it was in their best interest to form part of the European family. The President was addressing the final session of the 11th edition of the NSTF-Mini European Assembly that was held at the Palace, Valletta.
- **14 April 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that the Housing Department and the Planning Authority had completed the drafting of a harmonised points system for the allocation of housing as part of plans to do away with different systems that had created confusion. Dr. Gonzi was speaking at the opening of a conference on social housing.
- **14 April 2000** The Commission for the Administration of Justice, presided by President Guido de Marco, proposed ways to increase the number of judges for a limited time until the pending caseload at the courts was resolved. The Commission presented its report to Justice Minister Austin Gatt.
- **14 April 2000** Gozo Minister Giovanna Debono said that a look at the unemployment statistics for Gozo showed that the relatively unskilled constituted a significant proportion of the total unemployed in Gozo. The Minister was the keynote speaker at a conference on *Improving the employability of the workforce in Gozo* organised by the Bank of Valletta in conjunction with the Ministry for Gozo.
- **14 April 2000** President Guido de Marco received Mr Osman Mohammed Osman Dirar and Mr Serban Stati at the Palace in Valletta. Mr Osman is the new Sudanese Ambassador and Mr Stati is the new Ambassador for Romania.
- **14 April 2000** Central Office of Statistics Director Alfred Camilleri announced that the COS was to carry out a labour force survey involving 2,500 households.
- **14 April 2000** Diplomats from European Union member states and the Mediterranean partner countries were in Malta to attend the 8th Euro-Mediterranean Information and Training Seminar. The seminar is organised by the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies of the University of Malta.
- **15 April 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici presented awards to students who took the three-year course of the Industrial Management Development Foundation. The presentation took place at Auberge d'Aragon in Valletta.
- **15 April 2000** The Parliamentary Secretary in the Home Affairs Ministry, George Pullicino, announced that more than 80 per cent of those questioned in recent public surveys had expressed overall satisfaction with the service provided by police officers. Mr Pullicino was addressing German police officers visiting Malta.
- **15 April 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami told visiting Chinese Deputy Prime Minister Li Lanqing that Malta was looking forward to an expansion of trade with China. Dr Fenech-Adami hosted Mr Li to lunch at Auberge de Castille.
- **16 April 2000** China agreed to give a Lm150,000 grant to Malta to be spent on projects agreed upon

by both Governments. The agreement was signed by Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici and Long Yongtu, the Deputy Minister for Foreign Trade and Economic Co-operation of China.

- **16 April 2000** Valletta's Siege Bell Monument was the stage for a solemn wreath-laying ceremony commemorating the 58th anniversary of the award of the George Cross to Malta by King George VI on April 15, 1942. President Guido de Marco presided over the ceremony and laid the first wreath.
- **17 April 2000** One hundred students from different faculties at the University of Malta are being given the opportunity to spend a semester at another university within the European Union, as part of the *Socrates* programme.
- **18 April 2000** Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Borg said that democracy and small states would be the main topic of discussion during a meeting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Assembly to be held in Malta next month. Dr Borg was speaking after meeting Pius Msekwa who currently holds the chairmanship of the CPA's executive committee.
- **18 April 2000** Minister of Justice and Local Councils Austin Gatt announced that over Lm61,500 in fines were imposed by wardens since the warden system was introduced on March 3. The money from these fines will be passed on to the respective local councils. Dr Gatt was speaking during a news conference at the Auberge de Castille, Valletta.
- **18 April 2000** The Maltese and Italian Governments signed an agreement to provide mutual administrative assistance for the prevention and investigation of customs offences. The agreement was signed in Italy by the Maltese Ambassador in Rome, Joseph Cassar, and the Italian Director-General for customs, Michele Del Guidice.
- **19 April 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg had talks in Paris with the French Foreign Minister, Hubert Vedrine, and the Minister delegate for European Affairs, Pierre Moscovici. Mr Vedrine said he felt Malta would be able to open more chapters and make substantial progress during the French EU Presidency, due to start on July 1. Mr Vedrine also reiterated that France was willing to support Malta's EU application and that the Island had a good chance to make it with the first group of candidates to join the EU.
- **19 April 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that Malta's next step in the restructuring process was to develop the necessary regulatory framework to permit the entry of additional service providers, thereby opening the relevant sectors to the forces of competition. Prof. Bonnici was speaking at a seminar by Prosper (Malta) on *The challenge of change - a practical framework of implementation*.
- **19 April 2000** Speaker Anton Tabone attended the ninth meeting of the Speakers of Parliaments of EU candidate countries in Slovenia. The Clerk of the House, Richard Cauchi, and MPs Dr Carmelo Mifsud Bonnici (PN) and Carmelo Abela (MLP) also attended.
- **20 April 2000** According to a poll published by *Eurobarometer*, of the 13 European Union applicant countries, the EU citizen is most likely to support Malta's membership. Malta's support is 49 per cent overall, and ranges from 36 per cent in France to 72 per cent in Greece. Eurobarometer is the EU official survey.
- **20 April 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici announced that the Government had invested Lm900,000 in Malta's participation at the *World Exposition* in Hanover. The fair is to be held between June 1 and October 30. Prof. Bonnici was speaking at a presentation on Malta's participation to representatives of the business sector.
- **20 April 2000** *Malta Maritime Authority's* new Chairman, Marc Bonello, said that strengthening the functions of the authority as a regulator were among MMA's main priorities. Dr Bonello was addressing the first meeting of the newly appointed board of directors in the presence of Transport Minister Censu Galea.
- **22 April 2000** Nominal GDP in 1999 was Lm84.4 million higher than the corresponding value in 1998. When translated into real terms, this amounts to a 4.6 per cent increase in GDP during 1999 as

against the 3.4 per cent increase recorded in 1998. This results from data published by the Central Office of Statistics.

- **22 April 2000** President Guido de Marco said he would be promoting Malta's economic interest during a visit to Kuwait later this year. Prof. de Marco was speaking during a courtesy visit by Malta External Trade Corporation (METCO) Chairman Anthony Diacono at the Palace.
- **22 April 2000** The Malta-EU Information Centre (MIC) announced that it had handled 3,327 requests for information about the EU during March. This figure is an increase over the figure of 1,518 requests handled in February.
- **22 April 2000** Joe Psaila Savona, the Maltese non-resident High Commissioner to South Africa, presented his letters of commission to President Thabo Mbeki in Pretoria.
- **23 April 2000** Hoteliers were enjoying a bumper Easter season with even better prospects to follow. This resulted from a Ministry of Tourism telephone survey conducted by the Hotels and Catering Establishments Board.
- **24 April 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech announced that the Water Services Corporation was planning to use new equipment at reverse osmosis plants that would cut energy consumption by half. The Minister was speaking at the inauguration of World Day activities by the YMCA.
- **24 April 2000** A Bill for the setting up of an Occupational Health and Safety Authority has been published and was expected to be debated in Parliament after the Easter recess.
- **24 April 2000** Social Security Department figures show that the number of occupational accidents decreased steadily over the past decade. The number of accidents in 1991 was 7,761; by last year the figure had gone down to 5,151.
- **25 April 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said in Senglea that figures released by the Central Office of Statistics showed that the economy had been given a new lease of life.
- **25 April 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici opened a new German firm making machinery for the packaging industry. Managing Director Horst Ranke said the firm, *Lasercomb*, planned to spend Lm415,000 in development over the next three years.
- **25 April 2000** Franco Serracino-Inglott, Director General (Agriculture) at the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, said that in negotiations with the EU, Malta would attempt to negotiate a special package of measures to enable farmers to continue with their current levels of economic activities.
- **26 April 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the General Workers' Union should join the discussions about the next Budget scheduled to start next month if it wants to be a reasonable union. Dr Fenech-Adami was being interviewed on PBS, the national television station.
- **26 April 2000** The Malta External Trade Corporation (Metco) presented its Export Marketing Award for the year 1999 to three companies, namely Toly Products, Foster Clark Products Ltd and Calibre Industries.
- **26 April 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo announced that a new incentive scheme for British tour operators would be introduced in summer. Dr Refalo was speaking during a meeting between Gozo Minister Giovanna Debono and operators in the tourism industry in Gozo.
- **26 April 2000** Transport Minister Censu Galea and Maritime Authority Chairman Marc Bonello met four French MPs who form part of a commission set up to investigate the *Erika* disaster and propose measures needed in the international shipping sector.
- **26 April 2000** The 85th anniversary of ANZAC Day was marked with an ecumenical service and a wreath-laying ceremony. President Guido de Marco led various dignitaries laying wreaths at the foot of the Cross of Sacrifice monument.

- **27 April 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami appealed to unions and social partners to work together in the national interest. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking to representatives of unions and employers' organisations.
- **27 April 2000** The Prime Minister said that the Cabinet had approved plans for significant amendments to be made to the consumer protection law and for the publication of a White Paper dealing with three laws related to information technology. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking after the weekly Cabinet meeting at Auberge de Castille.
- **27 April 2000** *Siva Consortium* Chairman Michael Soler presented Tourism Minister Michael Refalo and the local council of Pembroke with a detailed proposal on the White Rocks complex.
- **27 April 2000** Health Minister Louis Deguara said that unions had a duty to understand the benefit of reforms. He said that it would be a mistake for them to try to retain the *status quo* for the sake of defending individual members' interests. Dr Deguara was speaking at a seminar organised by the *Union Haddiema Maghqudin* on the theme *Health sector workers today and in the future*.
- **27 April 2000** A delegation from the Malta Union of Bank Employees returned from Brussels following a familiarisation visit to study the implications of EU membership on the local banking sector and on bank employees.
- **27 April 2000** A Bank of Valletta spokesman announced that clients applying for home loans would benefit from a special fixed interest rate of six per cent per annum on the first Lm15,000 borrowed. The rate would apply for the first five years and could be extended to the first 10 years. The offer follows the recent liberalisation of interest rates by the Central Bank.
- **27 April 2000** HSBC and the Institute for the Promotion of Small Enterprise (IPSE) signed a co-operation agreement under which companies wanting to restructure might obtain half the loan they needed at a preferential rate of 6.5 per cent. The other half would be negotiated between the bank and the client. The agreement was signed by IPSE Chairman Lino Callus and HSBC Chief Executive Tom Robson.
- **27 April 2000** The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Anton Tabone, had a meeting with Chris Kok, Director of the Department for External Relations of the European Court of Auditors, at the Palace.
- **27 April 2000** Figures published by the Central Office of Statistics show that participants in the University of the Third Age continued to increase - to 949 members - during the academic year 1999/2000.
- **28 April 2000** President Guido de Marco presented fifty-six young people with the Gold Award of the President's Award at the Palace in Valletta. Formerly known as the Duke of Edinburgh Award, the scheme recognises individuals who show commitment in four different sections: community service, skills, sporting activities and expeditions.
- **28 April 2000** President Guido de Marco received the new Ambassadors of Lebanon and Ecuador. The Lebanese Ambassador is Samin El-Khoury and the Ecuadorean Ambassador is Jose Ayala Lasso.
- **28 April 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the country's economy was moving ahead. The number of people looking for work was going down and the number of people in employment increasing. The Prime Minister was speaking to reporters after visiting four workplaces in connection with Workers' Day.
- **28 April 2000** The Corinthia Group formally launched its new share, bonds issue - Lm10 million in shares and Lm5 million in five per cent convertible bonds. They are being issued at par by International Hotel Investments (IHI), a subsidiary of the Corinthia Group.

- **28 April 2000** Chase Manhattan Bank gave Bank of Valletta International (BOVI) the Outstanding Performance Award for 1998-99. Mr Maurizio Maggiolini, Chase representative in Milan, presented the award to BOVI's General Manager, Tony Parnis, in recognition of the high quality of work channeled through its offices by its correspondent banks.
- **28 April 2000** President Romano Prodi received a delegation of the Federation of Hoteliers from the Small Islands of Europe. The European federation incorporates the Federation of Malta Hotels, Pensions and Catering Establishments.
- **29 April 2000** President Guido de Marco appealed to the social partners to understand the burden of responsibility on their shoulders and work together. Prof. de Marco was speaking to trade union leaders whom he hosted to lunch at the Palace, Valletta, to mark Workers' Day.
- **29 April 2000** The Government published its plan for the liberalisation of the telecommunications sector. The plan was published as a schedule to a bill providing for the establishment of a Malta Communications Authority to oversee and regulate the development of communication services and technologies in Malta.
- **29 April 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said the liberalisation of telecommunications was expected to create new opportunities and a large number of jobs in a relatively new sector of industry in Malta. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking in Gozo.
- **29 April 2000** *Maltacom* Chairman Maurice Zarb Adami presented Lm20,000 to President Guido de Marco who received it on behalf of the Malta Community Chest Fund. The money was collected from pledges made in favour of the fund during Christmas time on Maltacom lines.
- **29 April 2000** Bank of Valletta Group Chairman Joseph FX Zahra announced that the bank had made a pre-tax profit of Lm10.9 million for the six month period ending March 31, an increase of 29 per cent over the same period in the previous year. Mr Zahra also said that the bank was considering the possibility of opening representative offices in North Africa, particularly Libya and Tunisia.
- **29 April 2000** The Malta Commercial Banks' Association announced that bearer savings accounts and bearer term deposit accounts would be closed on June 30. The changes follow the Budget announcement that all bearer accounts would be phased out.
- **29 April 2000** The Court of Appeal confirmed a Civil Court judgment imposing a three-month time limit on *Lloyds* underwriters and foreign insurance companies for the filing of a claim against the Government and *Air Malta*. The Court of Appeal ordered that the three-month time limit was to start running from 28 April 2000.
- **29 April 2000** The new Ambassador of Ecuador, Jose Ayala Lasso, paid a courtesy call on the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Anton Tabone.
- **30 April 2000** The Prime Minister stressed that a competitive and enterprising national economy could not be maintained without the competence, integrity and leadership of graduates in management, economics, law, engineering and the natural sciences. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing the Graduate Potential seminar at the University of Malta.
- **30 April 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that trade unions in other countries had long realised that a union's first role was the general interest of the country. Dr Fenech Adami was speaking at a national conference about labour.

May

- **1 May 2000** The Prime Minister said that, had we not lost out by not continuing with the country's application, and going by what Ireland would be receiving by 2002, as EU member Malta would have received between Lm45 million and Lm47 million.
- **1 May 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg confirmed that former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev would be visiting Malta 'soon'. Mr Gorbachev would be returning to the country where he and then US President George Bush buried the cold war in 1989.
- **1 May 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that there was no issue of compensation for Maltacom.
- **2 May 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami made a strong call on trade unions, employers and workers to unite, to stop being rigid and face up to change, gearing themselves to the challenges of globalisation. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing a social activity at Ta' Qali to mark Workers' Day.
- **2 May 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg welcomed Albania's Foreign Minister, Paskal Milo, on his arrival at Malta International Airport. Dr Borg said the two sides would sign agreements on double taxation and on co-operation between their respective Ministries.
- **2 May 2000** The aircraft of the Armed Forces of Malta Air Squadron started bearing military registrations, replacing their civilian registration.
- **3 May 2000** Chief Electoral Commissioner Carmel Degabriele and Secretary Joe Calleja presented a report on the proposed changes to the electoral boundaries to the Prime Minister and to the Leader of the Opposition. A minority report was also presented.
- **3 May 2000** The International Labour Organisation (ILO) agreed to contribute towards efforts to revamp the Malta Council for Economic Development to strengthen dialogue among the social partners. The ILO will be sending an advisory mission to discuss possible changes to the present council structure.
- **3 May 2000** Albanian Foreign Minister Paskal Milo said that some 95 per cent of the Albanian people, and all the Albanian political parties, wanted to be part of the European Union. Mr Milo was speaking at a joint news conference following meetings with his Maltese counterpart, Dr Joe Borg.
- **3 May 2000** The annual report for 1999 of the Office of the Ombudsman was presented in Parliament.
- **3 May 2000** Transport Minister Censu Galea told Parliament that the Public Transport Authority would be replaced by a new authority that would embrace all aspects of transport, including public and private transport, the roads, traffic management and testing, and the registration and licensing of vehicles and their drivers.
- **3 May 2000** Malta is set to register the second highest GDP growth this year among a number of countries surveyed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. UN/ECE forecasts indicate a GDP growth of 4.8 per cent for Malta this year, second only to Ireland's 7.5 per cent increase.
- **3 May 2000** The Central Office of Statistics said that the Retail Price Index in March stood at 112.28 points, up by 0.23 points, over that for February. The COS said that sections within the RPI during March included food, durable household goods, personal care and health, and other goods and services.
- **4 May 2000** President Guido de Marco addressed a conference to mark the 55th anniversary of the end of the war. The event was organised by the Russian Institute for Science and Culture and the University of the Third Age, and was entitled *Malta and Russia - allies in the fight against tyranny*.
- **4 May 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami inaugurated the new Malta Centre for Restoration at Bighi. The project is being co-ordinated by the University of Malta and the Ministry of Education. The *Istituto Centrale per il Restauro* in Italy will be providing staff as well as ascertaining quality assurance of the courses.
- **4 May 2000** The Prime Minister discussed the role of the Armed Forces of Malta Staff Association at a

meeting with association representatives led by Captain Reuben Lanfranco.

- **4 May 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that, regardless of what people might be saying, there was plenty of common ground on which all social partners agreed in the country. Dr Gonzi was speaking during a seminar on labour laws organised by the General Workers' Union's *Reggie Miller Foundation*.
- **4 May 2000** Local Government Minister Austin Gatt said that he would be proposing that the concept of local councils could be entrenched in the Constitution. Dr Gatt was speaking at a ceremony to mark the 35th anniversary of Malta's membership of the Council of Europe.
- **4 May 2000** Figures released by the Central Office of Statistics show that total manufacturing sales last year rose by Lm62.9 million or 7.6 per cent to Lm892.1 million from Lm829.2 million in the previous year.
- **5 May 2000** Credit rating agency *Standard and Poor's* upgraded Malta's credit rating from negative to stable. A second credit rating agency, *Moody's*, left its rating for Malta at A3 and retained its negative outlook.
- **5 May 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that 71 per cent of the 17,700 self-employed declared an income of less than Lm5,000 last year. Only some 6,000 featured incomes of over Lm10,000.
- **5 May 2000** The Secretary of the People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Co-operation of Libya, Abdolrahman Mohamed Shalqim, arrived in Malta for a two-day visit.
- **5 May 2000** Telecommunications Minister Censu Galea said that the liberalisation of telecommunications would result in a substantial increase in job opportunities and better working conditions. Mr Galea was addressing a news conference.
- **5 May 2000** Figures released by the Central Office of Statistics show that unemployment dropped by 230 in March compared to the figure for February. Over the same period the number of gainfully occupied rose by 473.
- **5 May 2000** The Central Office of Statistics reported that there were 240,781 vehicles of all types in Malta at the end of March.
- **5 May 2000** Speaker Anton Tabone took part in the Conference of Speakers and Presidents of the European Parliamentary Assemblies, held in Strasbourg.
- **5 May 2000** The Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry for Economic Services, George Hyzler, said that the Government was planning a number of incentives to encourage the film industry to make more use of Malta.
- **5 May 2000** Government MP Helen D'Amato and Simone Vella, who head the Social Affairs Committee and the Commission for the Advancement of Women respectively, attended a meeting of the Commonwealth Ministers for Women's Affairs, held in New Delhi, India.
- **6 May 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami and Libya's Secretary for People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Co-operation of Libya, Abdolrahman Mohamed Shalqim, discussed co-operation between Malta and Libya at a meeting at the Auberge de Castille.
- **6 May 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli announced the setting up of the Tax Compliance Unit.
- **6 May 2000** The Central Office of Statistics announced that total revenue during 1999 amounted to Lm637.8 million. Total expenditure amounted to Lm690.9 million.
- **6 May 2000** President Guido de Marco attended a wreath-laying ceremony at the Air Force Memorial in Floriana. The memorial is dedicated to all Commonwealth airmen lost in action in the Mediterranean and the Balkans during the Second World War.

- **7 May 2000** President Guido de Marco and American Ambassador Kathryn Proffitt distributed over \$55,000 among 34 Maltese charities. The money was collected by the American Foundation for Maltese Charities.
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- **7 May 2000** Local Government Minister Austin Gatt said that the Government would be transferring legal title of 20 sports facilities to local councils in the near future. Dr Gatt made his comments during a brief ceremony during which the Pieta' council was handed the administration of the garden at Pieta' seafront.
- **7 May 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo announced that the Government would be handing over Lm34 million to support the Malta Tourism Authority in its marketing and promotion programmes between 2001 and 2004.
- **7 May 2000** *Maltacom* Chairman Maurice Zarb Adami and Michel Rostaing, Chairman of French on-line trading company *Excelstocks*, agreed that Maltacom subsidiary *Terranet* would provide internet transaction clearing facilities for the French company.
- **8 May 2000** Malta Freeport Corporation Chairman Marin Hili announced that the Italian authorities had given the green light for the start of operations at the Brindisi container terminal, in which Malta Freeport Corporation has a 40 per cent share.
- **9 May 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg announced that, over the coming months, the Government intended to proceed energetically with the necessary programme of economic, social and institutional reforms. Dr Borg was addressing Parliamentarians attending the first session of the EU-Malta Joint Parliamentary Committee.
- **9 May 2000** The Prime Minister tabled in Parliament the report of the Electoral Commission.
- **9 May 2000** The *Maltacom* group recorded a pre-tax profit of Lm3 million for the January/March quarter this year, up from Lm2.7 million during the same period last year. These figures were announced at a news conference by Maltacom Finance Director Edgar Borg in the presence of Chairman Maurice Zarb Adami.
- **9 May 2000** *Gozo Channel* Chairman John Sullivan announced a profit of Lm571,000 for the year ended 30 September 1999, compared to Lm781,000 the previous year. Mr Sullivan was addressing the company's annual general meeting.
- **9 May 2000** Malta Stock Exchange Chairman Alfred Mallia was quoted as saying that the turnover of the exchange rose to over Lm190 million last year, from Lm135 million the year before. The number of deals reached 170,000, almost double the figure for the previous year. The MSE's annual report was tabled in Parliament.
- **9 May 2000** Mr Malcolm Scerri-Ferrante, Production Manager of the Mediterranean Film Studios, announced that, following the company's participation in the Los Angeles film-makers fair, MFS was being overwhelmed with requests from foreign production companies.
- **9 May 2000** President Guido de Marco paid his respects to Cardinal John O'Connor, whose body was lying in state at St Patrick's Cathedral in New York. Prof. de Marco was in New York to attend the meeting of the Council of Presidents of the United Nations.
- **9 May 2000** Police Commissioner George Grech said that survey results showed that some 79 per cent of the Maltese were satisfied with the way the police were doing their job.
- **9 May 2000** Sig. Gianluigi Covini, Chief of the Italian Military Mission in Malta, announced that the Armed Forces of Malta would be presented with equipment worth Lm1.5 million.

- **10 May 2000** The EU-Malta Joint Parliamentary Committee held its 13th meeting at St. Julians, under the joint chairmanship of Minister Louis Galea and Mr Luigi Cocilovo. This was the first Joint Parliamentary Committee in Malta after the European elections in June 1999.
- **10 May 2000** Minister of Foreign Affairs Joe Borg addressed the EU-Malta Joint Parliamentary Committee meeting. He stated that the Government was confident that it could negotiate the right conditions for Malta's membership of the Union and that the promised referendum on the result of the negotiations would find the very strong support of the Maltese electorate.
- **10 May 2000** Portuguese Ambassador José Paulouro das Neves, representing the Presidency-in-Office of the EU, welcomed the progress made by Malta. Mr das Neves was addressing the EU-Malta JPC meeting.
- **10 May 2000** Mrs Ursula Stenzel, the European Parliament *rappporteur* on Malta's EU membership application, said there was no viable alternative to membership and that a free trade zone alone would expose the country to very harsh competition without the support of the EU.
- **10 May 2000** Malta Tourism Authority Chairman John C Grech said that the authority had set itself the ambitious aim of increasing tourism to Malta by an annual three per cent over the next three years.
- **11 May 2000** President Guido de Marco attended meetings of the Council of Presidents of the United Nations' General Assembly in New York.
- **11 May 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi addressed a workshop organised jointly by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association with the support of the Government. The seminar was the fourth in a series of Commonwealth meetings on the theme *Deepening Democracy*.
- **11 May 2000** Minister for the Environment Francis Zammit Dimech expressed solidarity with France following the *Erika* incident. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking during the discussion on the recommendation by the *Bureau of the Contracting Parties of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution and its Protocols* to convene a regional meeting.
- **11 May 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that the Government intended setting up a company, that would initially be wholly government owned, to oversee the development of the Opera House into an arts centre and Freedom Square into a commercial zone.
- **11 May 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea launched the *ad interim* management board for St James' creativity centre and said that the first artistic season of events would be launched in September. Dr Galea was addressing a news conference.
- **11 May 2000** Malta Maritime Authority Chairman Marc Bonello said that in the first four months of the year thirty cruise liners had called at Malta. Mr Bonello was speaking at the opening of the fifth Malta International Boat Show.
- **11 May 2000** The President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Astrid Heiberg, was in Malta to visit the local branch of the Red Cross. The Maltese Red Cross has 500 individual members and over 3,000 corporate members.
- **12 May 2000** Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Borg addressed the 106th meeting of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg.
- **12 May 2000** Minister for Economic Services Josef Bonnici highlighted the attractions of Malta as a potential springboard for the European and North African markets. Prof. Bonnici was addressing an investment promotion seminar in Dusseldorf.
- **12 May 2000** Mr Eric Gerada-Azzopardi, Ambassador of Malta in Sweden, presented his Letters of

Credence to Her Excellency Mrs Vaira Vike-Freiberga, President of the Republic of Latvia.

- **12 May 2000** British High Commissioner Howard Pearce presented Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg with audio equipment for use at police headquarters.
- **12 May 2000** The European Commission allocated 1.5 million *Euros* (Lm635,000) to be used for a comprehensive information campaign about EU membership in Malta over the next five years.
- **12 May 2000** A Maltese parliamentary delegation led by John Vella, MP and including Joe Debono Grech, MP attended the spring meetings of the parliamentary assembly of the Council of Europe held in Dublin, Ireland.
- **13 May 2000** An *ad-hoc* committee, set up in January to help in preparations for the privatisation of Freeport operations, recommended the Government to appoint as advisor a consortium composed of the international law firm Clifford Chance LLP, Drewry Shipping Consultants and Credit Suisse First Boston as the lead advisor.
- **13 May 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli presented 'outstanding achievement' certificates to Customs officials who were involved in the seizure of drugs and other illegal imports by incoming passengers at Malta International Airport and Grand Harbour since the beginning of this year.
- **13 May 2000** The chairman of the UK Foreign Affairs committee, Mr Donald Anderson, said that all sister parties within the Socialist International, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, were committed to EU membership. Mr Anderson was speaking shortly after a meeting with Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, at Auberge de Castille.
- **14 May 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami inaugurated a centre to assist non-governmental organisations at Xewkija, Gozo.
- **15 May 2000** President Guido de Marco was conferred with the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*, by the University of Bridgeport in Connecticut, USA.
- **15 May 2000** Prime Minister Fenech-Adami said that the purchase of property by foreigners in Malta would have to be controlled so that a balance would be found to suit local conditions. Dr Fenech-Adami was answering a question from the floor during a dialogue meeting on EU membership held in Mgarr, Gozo.
- **15 May 2000** The Ministry for Economic Services said that, following the holding of two investment promotion seminars in Germany and Austria addressed by Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici, software companies in these countries had shown particular interest in the possibility of some venture in Malta.
- **15 May 2000** Environment Minister Dr Francis Zammit Dimech announced that the final contract of the Lm100 million Manoel Island and Tigné project was to be signed before the end of June, and works at Tigné were intended to kick off after summer. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking at the inauguration of the Gzira seafront embellishment project.
- **16 May 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Cabinet had authorised Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici to draft a series of measures to strengthen the role of the Malta Council for Economic Development. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking to reporters following a Cabinet meeting at Auberge de Castille.
- **16 May 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami left Malta for a two-day official visit to Slovakia.
- **16 May 2000** Telecommunications Minister Censu Galea announced that, prior to the introduction of liberalisation in telecommunications, all telephone numbers would have to give way to new ones having eight digits. Mr Galea was speaking following a Cabinet discussion on the liberalisation of the telecommunications sector.

- **16 May 2000** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that the Maltese Embassy in Germany had moved to a new address.
- **16 May 2000** The Malta-EU Information Centre (MIC) announced that the European Commission had allocated *Euro* 1.5 million (Lm635,000) to be used for a comprehensive information campaign about EU membership in Malta over the next five years.
- **16 May 2000** Members of the Armed Forces Maritime Squadron's Rapid Deployment Team had a one-week bilateral training exercise with a team of SEALs, the elite of the US naval special forces.
- **17 May 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami signed a co-operation accord with his Slovak counterpart, Mikulas Dzurinda, agreeing to combat organised crime, terrorism and illicit drug trafficking. The Prime Minister was on an official two-day visit in Bratislava.
- **17 May 2000** Maltacom plc unveiled the name of its new mobile company, *GO Mobile*, which is expected to start competing with Vodafone Malta within six months.
- **17 May 2000** Central Office of Statistics figures show that the shortfall between total expenditure and ordinary revenue for the first four months of the year was Lm51.7 million, up from a comparable shortfall of Lm35.8 million during the same period last year.
- **17 May 2000** According to figures released by the Central Office of Statistics, total exports in the first quarter of this year went up by 26.3 per cent over the same period last year, to reach Lm238.9 million. However, imports also increased by 29.1 per cent to Lm325.1 million, meaning that the visible trade gap widened by Lm23.5 million to Lm86.2 million.
- **17 May 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea explained that Government would be slowly introducing trade school reform. This reform was being phased in to broaden the teaching of modern technology and strengthen training in fields that were relevant in today's working world.
- **17 May 2000** Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg said that the immigration authorities were studying the possibility of introducing transit *visas* for nationals of certain countries passing through Malta. Dr Borg was speaking in Parliament.
- **17 May 2000** Bank of Valletta Chairman Joseph Zahra made a donation of almost Lm18,000 to President Guido de Marco who received it on behalf of the Community Chest Fund.
- **18 May 2000** Slovak President Rudolph Schuster said that he expected to visit Malta later this year, accompanied by a delegation of entrepreneurs and bankers. Mr Schuster was speaking at a news conference following a meeting with Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami at his office in Bratislava.
- **18 May 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami stressed that, while all the EU membership candidate countries were making strenuous efforts to prepare themselves for membership in the shortest possible time, Malta was in an advantageous position in that most of its legislation only needed minor changes to bring it in line with the *acquis communautaire*. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking to newsmen in Bratislava.
- **18 May 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that, following the dip in the UK markets in the first quarter of the year, April 2000 was one of the best in terms of volume and may have even surpassed 1999 levels.
- **18 May 2000** Communications Minister Censu Galea said that he believed that two thirds of the population could have access to the mobile sector. Mr Galea was speaking on state television on the occasion of *World Day of Telecommunications*.
- **18 May 2000** Mr Edwin Vassallo, Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry for Economic Services, announced that the Ministry had set up a committee to analyse the effects of *e-commerce* on the Maltese business scene. Mr Vassallo was speaking in Parliament during the debate setting up the Malta Communications Authority.

- **18 May 2000** US Ambassador Kathryn Proffitt and University Rector Roger Ellul Micallef announced that the Fulbright agreement between the US and Malta would be extended.
- **19 May 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami launched a White Paper on a planned legislative framework on information technology, saying it would guard against data misuse and computer abuse while promoting IT. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing a news conference at Auberge de Castille.
- **19 May 2000** Communications Minister Censu Galea insisted that a level playing field had to be ensured for the various operators providing communications services. Mr Galea was addressing a conference hosted by *The Zimmerman House Group* that brought together all those involved in communications.
- **19 May 2000** *Terranet* Chief Executive Keith Fearne announced that 21 per cent of Maltese households were now *on-line*, placing Malta ahead of countries like Germany, France and Spain in terms of Internet penetration. Mr Fearne was speaking at the *Telecoms 2000* conference, held at the Hilton, St Julians.
- **19 May 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici attended a meeting for Industry Ministers of EU member and candidate countries. At the Brussels meeting, a number of EU countries requested the extension of support initiatives and the granting of subsidies to EU shipyards beyond the original deadlines established for phasing out such assistance.
- **19 May 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech announced that a tender for restoration works on the external envelope of Sta. Caterina church in Valletta, estimated to cost Lm275,000, was recently awarded to a specialised Italian restoration firm. The Minister was speaking at the presentation of an aerial photogrammetric survey of Malta's fortifications at Project House, in Floriana.
- **19 May 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli attended a seminar about financial investment in Malta. The seminar was organised in Paris by the Malta Financial Services Centre. Also addressing the seminar were MFSC Chairman Joe Bannister and the Maltese Ambassador to France, Salvino Busuttill.
- **19 May 2000** President Guido de Marco said that the people were showing greater appreciation of the role of the Planning Authority. Prof. de Marco was speaking during an official tour of the PA's offices in Floriana.
- **19 May 2000** President Guido de Marco conveyed birthday wishes to Pope John Paul II. The Pope turned 80 on May 18.
- **20 May 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami thanked the Italian Government for its continued assistance, through the Italian Military Mission, for the past 27 years. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at a ceremony in which the Italian Government donated military equipment having a value in excess of Lm2 million.
- **20 May 2000** Malta Drydocks announced that the 'yard was to receive a three-star British Safety Council Rating award. This follows an audit of the dockyard's safety systems, carried out by the British Safety Council.
- **20 May 2000** President Guido de Marco nominated Fr Maximilian Mizzi Member of the National Order of Merit in the rank of Companion. Fr Mizzi was due to receive the honour last December but had been unable to attend the ceremony on Republic Day.
- **21 May 2000** Local Government Minister Austin Gatt announced that a three-year plan, through which local councils would be able to offer various social services, was to be launched soon. Dr Gatt was speaking during a seminar for local councils.
- **21 May 2000** Transport Minister Censu Galea said that the Government would soon be discussing a new Merchant Shipping Act to meet existing International Maritime Organisation conventions and European Union directives. Mr Galea was addressing 25 graduands in International Maritime Law at the Maritime Museum in Vittoriosa.

- **21 May 2000** Bert van Caelenberg, Secretary-General of the European Federation for Public Service employees (EuroFedop), said that, with the globalisation process taking shape, there was no alternative to EU membership. Mr Caelenberg was in Malta as a guest of the *Union Haddiema Maghqudin*.
- **22 May 2000** University Rector Prof. Roger Ellul Micallef appointed a working group under the chairmanship of Prof. Josef Lauri to investigate the possible impact of accession to the European Union and to evaluate the university's place in the framework of international and European higher education.
- **23 May 2000** President Guido de Marco praised Malta's proposal to adapt the UN's Trusteeship Council from one that took into trust the fate of territories, to one that took into trust the common heritage of mankind. Prof. de Marco was speaking during the 601st Wilton Park Conference, in West Sussex.
- **23 May 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that an industrial relations expert was in Malta to prepare a report on the state of the dialogue between the social partners. Dr Gonzi was addressing a conference with the theme *EU - The Way Forward*, organised by the *Union Haddiema Maghqudin*.
- **23 May 2000** EU Ambassador Giorgio Boggio announced that the European Commission would be providing Malta with *Euro* 38 million (Lm15.2 million) in grants over the next five years as a partial contribution to help cover foreseen expenses. Dr Boggio was addressing a *Union Haddiema Maghqudin* conference.
- **24 May 2000** President Guido de Marco said that the Malta Shipbuilding and the Malta Drydocks were a relevant industry to Malta partly because between them they had nearly 4,000 Maltese workers. Prof. de Marco was addressing council members of the Malta Drydocks and directors of the Malta Shipbuilding at the Palace in Valletta.
- **24 May 2000** Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Borg announced that Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak had accepted an invitation to visit Malta. The invitation, made by President Guido de Marco, was passed on to Mr Mubarak by Dr Borg in Cairo.
- **24 May 2000** The Malta Tourism Authority announced that UK tour operator *Virgin Sun*, the leisure subsidiary of the Virgin Group, was to start operating to Malta from November, selling Malta primarily as a weekend break destination over the off-peak season.
- **25 May 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli announced that the Government was planning to issue special bonds. Subscribers to these bonds would be given preference when it came to buying shares in entities the Government intended privatising over the next five years. Mr Dalli was taking part in a seminar on privatisation organised by the Reggie Miller Foundation of the General Workers' Union.
- **25 May 2000** Freeport Chairman Marin Hili, Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici, and Italian Minister for Transport Pier Luigi Bersani, signed a formal agreement granting Brindisi Terminal Italia SpA a 30-year lease to develop, manage and operate container handling operations in the harbour of Brindisi.
- **25 May 2000** President Guido de Marco said that a holistic approach for the regeneration of Valletta was needed to keep the capital alive. Prof. de Marco was addressing the closing session of an international experts meeting, *Monitoring for World Heritage Cities*, organised by the World Heritage Centre of UNESCO, the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property, and the Environment Projects Office within the Environment Ministry.
- **25 May 2000** Local Government Minister Austin Gatt announced that the local wardens service would, this week, be extended to another ten towns or villages, bringing the total number of localities offering this service to thirty-five. Dr Gatt was speaking during the signing of the agreement with three of these councils.
- **25 May 2000** Gozo Minister Giovanna Debono announced that her Ministry was opening an office in Malta for the convenience of Gozitans who were in Malta to study, work, or receive medical treatment.

- **26 May 2000** The conference on Malta's accession to the European Union met at the level of negotiators in Brussels and agreed unanimously that seven of the eight chapters currently open for negotiations with Malta should be provisionally closed. The seven chapters are industrial policy, small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), science and research, education and training, telecommunications and information technology, external relations, and common foreign and security policy.
- **26 May 2000** Irving Mitchell, Head of the Higher Education Unit at the European Union's Directorate-General Education and Culture, launched the *Socrates* education programme for Malta.
- **26 May 2000** Giuseppe Casale, ILO's law and industrial relations specialist, visited Malta to familiarise himself with the structures and methods for social dialogue in Malta. Dr Casale had talks with Government and with the members of the Malta Council for Economic Development.
- **26 May 2000** The Parliamentary Secretary in the Economic Services Ministry, George Hyzler, announced that some Lm500,000 was estimated to have been pumped into the economy by five films shot in Malta this month.
- **26 May 2000** Malta's Ambassador to Croatia, John Lowell, presented his credentials to Croatian President Stejpan Mesic.
- **26 May 2000** Government MP Michael Ascjak attended a meeting of the sub-committee on science and ethics within the Council of Europe Committee on Science and Technology in Strasbourg.
- **26 May 2000** The French Embassy will be moving to new premises at 130 Melita Street, Valletta, on June 1. The commercial section will remain at Dolphin Court, Embassy Way, Ta' Xbiex.
- **26 May 2000** Minister of Foreign Affairs Joe Borg participated in the *Euro-Mediterranean Think-Tank Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs*, in Lisbon.
- **26 May 2000** *Novelles Frontieres* founder and chairman Jacques Maillot told Tourism Minister Michael Refalo that his company would match the Malta Tourism Authority on a 50:50 basis in any promotional and advertising campaign that the Authority planned for France. Mr Maillot was on a seven-hour visit to Malta late last week to address delegates attending the Citroen Conference.
- **27 May 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami returned from Prague where he attended the re-opening of the Corinthia Towers Hotel, one of the properties in the Corinthia Hotels International chain.
- **27 May 2000** The Central Bank, the Malta Financial Services Centre, and the Malta Stock Exchange have taken exception to the inclusion of Malta, and the classification given to the Island, by the Switzerland-based *Financial Stability Forum* in a survey on offshore financial centres.
- **27 May 2000** Malta has, over the past weeks, upgraded its relationship with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and has also undergone a screening exercise. This results from a letter which the Central Bank, the Malta Financial Services Centre and the Malta Stock Exchange sent to the *Financial Stability Forum* in Basle.
- **27 May 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech noted that, although the number of occupational accidents had declined by almost 30 per cent over the last 10 years, those in the construction industry had risen by 120 per cent. The Minister was speaking at the launch of a new phase of the Building Industry Consultative Council's campaign to promote occupational health and safety.
- **27 May 2000** *Maltacom* Chairman Maurice Zarb Adami announced a series of new telephone services and announced several tariff reductions.
- **27 May 2000** A group of officials from the Slovak Republic, Estonia, Lithuania and Slovenia visited the Malta-EU Information Centre in Valletta in order to familiarise themselves with the operation of Malta's information centre. The officials said that the four candidate countries could set up similar

centres in their respective countries.

- **27 May 2000** The Commission for the Advancement of Women welcomed the publication of new regulations on the protection of maternity at work places. These regulations come into force on January 1, 2001.
- **28 May 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that the Waste Management Department was receiving many requests for paper for recycling and was prepared to provide skips where local councils could collect paper. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking at a cleanliness campaign held jointly by St Paul's Bay council and the Hotels and Restaurants Association.
- **28 May 2000** The Tourism Authority set about upgrading two small beaches in Sliema according to the guidelines set by the *Blue Flag* beach management office of the European Union.
- **28 May 2000** Malta Development Corporation Chairman Francis Vassallo is in Japan for a privately organised seminar on *Boardroom Management Revolution*.
- **29 May 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi announced that unemployment was going down at a steady rate and the economy was generating a substantial number of jobs. Dr Gonzi was addressing a meeting for the self-employed, in Marsascala.
- **29 May 2000** *Socrates* Malta chairman Joseph Mifsud announced that over 300 students had applied for the *Erasmus* Project within the *Socrates* Programme. Of these, 100 would be attending European universities for six months as from September.
- **29 May 2000** The UN's Committee on the Rights of the Child started its review of Malta's compliance with the Convention of the Rights of the Child in domestic law and on efforts to pass a major act related to child rights and standards.
- **30 May 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg and his Tunisian counterpart, Habib Ben Yahia, took part in the opening of the third Mixed Commission meeting at the Foreign Affairs Ministry, in Valletta.
- **30 May 2000** A new co-operation programme between Malta and Spain was drawn up during the sixth meeting of the Mixed Commission on Educational and Cultural Cooperation which took place in Madrid. The programme covers the fields of education, culture, sport and youth and is valid for the next three years.
- **30 May 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli announced in Parliament that five foreign companies had been given permits to operate betting offices from Malta and one had already started operating. The Minister was replying to a Parliamentary Question.
- **30 May 2000** The President of Malta and Mrs Guido de Marco distributed over Lm12,000 on behalf of the Malta Community Chest Fund to 94 organisations and individuals. The presentation ceremony was held at the Palace in Valletta.
- **31 May 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said he hoped to see the Tunisian President visiting Malta in the near future. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking during a meeting with Tunisian Foreign Minister Habib Ben Yahia at Auberge de Castille.
- **31 May 2000** Foreign Minister Dr Joe Borg announced that Malta and Tunisia were expected to sign bilateral agreements covering areas that included trade, economic cooperation, and culture and technology.
- **31 May 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg published the position papers adopted by Malta for the areas dealt with in the first round of membership talks with the European Union.
- **31 May 2000** Health Minister Dr Louis Deguara said that some 750 workers would be needed on site when work on the new general hospital reached its peak. Dr Deguara said that *Skanska* - the international building construction firm entrusted with the development of the hospital - was having

difficulty recruiting workers willing to work on the project.

- **31 May 2000** Social Policy Minister Dr Lawrence Gonzi said in Parliament that about 5,000 applications for children's allowances had been identified as requiring investigation. Dr Gonzi said that the Department of Social Welfare would be looking closer at these applications.
- **31 May 2000** A Memorandum of Understanding between the Government and the Holy See was signed to address problems that exist over the transfer of Church property to the Government. The agreement is expected to be presented to the House of Representatives and published in the *Government Gazette*.
- **31 May 2000** *Sea Malta* Chairperson Marlene Mizzi announced that a survey conducted jointly by Sea Malta and the Federation of Industry showed that the overwhelming majority of Maltese industrialists were satisfied with the services offered by the national maritime carrier.

June

- **1 June 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg and his Tunisian counterpart, Habib Ben Yahia, signed a number of agreements to forge closer links between Malta and Tunisia. The agreements were signed at the Foreign Ministry in Valletta.
- **1 June 2000** Transport Minister Censu Galea said that the bill amending the Merchant Shipping Act being put before Parliament would put Malta in the forefront of maritime law. It would enable the country to seize all opportunities to enable its maritime sector to grow in a way that was based on quality, rather than quantity.
- **1 June 2000** Legal Notice 90 of 2000, published in last Friday's *Government Gazette*, announced the waiving of the 2.6 per cent duty levied on documents and transfers connected to intellectual property assignments. The move is aimed at incentivising foreign trading companies showing active interest in Malta.
- **1 June 2000** Malta and Latvia have signed agreements on double taxation and the prevention of tax evasion. The agreements were signed recently by the Latvian Finance Minister Gundars Berzins and Maltese Finance Minister John Dalli in Latvia.
- **1 June 2000** The Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Jesmond Mugliett, attended the ninth conference of European Sports Ministers in Bratislava. The conference was organised by the Council of Europe.
- **2 June 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli announced that the Malta Freeport, the Lotto Department, Malta International Airport, and Bank of Valletta, top the list of entities that the Government plans to privatise by next year. Mr Dalli was speaking during the first meeting of the newly set-up Privatisation Unit.
- **2 June 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that Malta had objected to being placed in Group II in the listing published by the *Financial Stability Forum*. A reaction to Malta's objection had not yet been received. Mr Dalli was speaking at the opening a two-day European area meeting of the Midsnell Group International.
- **2 June 2000** According to figures released by the Central Office of Statistics, unemployment in April declined by 4.04 per cent, or 314, over the previous month to stand at 7,452.
- **2 June 2000** Minister for Social Policy Lawrence Gonzi launched a new issue for the sale of 167 apartments, 44 maisonettes, 2 houses and 2 cluster houses, which will be sold to the public at subsidised prices of up to 50%. Dr Gonzi was addressing a news conference.

- **2 June 2000** The Parliamentary Secretary in the Economic Services Ministry, Edwin Vassallo, said that a re-organisation of the 16 open air markets around Malta would place the responsibility for the management of the markets on local councils. Mr Vassallo made his remarks as he toured the open-air market in Birzebbuga.
- **2 June 2000** President Guido de Marco presided over the renaming of Pieta' Primary School. The school was named after former British diplomat Hookham Frere. Education Minister Louis Galea attended the ceremony.
- **2 June 2000** Representatives of 26 Maltese companies returned from a trade mission to Kuwait and Dubai organised by the Malta External Trade Corporation.
- **3 June 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that it was encouraging to see more graduates entering the public service. A high 56 per cent of the new intake for the post of principal were graduates. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing a press conference at Auberge de Castille at the launch of Public Service Week.
- **3 June 2000** The Prime Minister said the economy was picking up. The most recent economic indicator was that the number of gainfully occupied had gone up, while the number of those looking for a job was down. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at a short ceremony held at HSBC head-office in Valletta to mark the first anniversary of the bank's acquisition of a majority share-holding in Mid-Med.
- **3 June 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami received Assadi El Gaddafi, the son of the Libyan Leader, Muammar Gaddafi, at the Auberge de Castille. Eng. Col El Gaddafi delivered his father's greetings to Dr Fenech-Adami and reaffirmed that relations between Malta and Libya were excellent.
- **3 June 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea had a meeting with Wang Yongda, the Deputy Director General of the Department of Co-operation and Personnel Exchanges in the Chinese Education Ministry. They discussed student exchanges and the reciprocal recognition of qualifications as well as the possibility of setting up a centre for Chinese culture in Malta.
- **3 June 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea had a meeting with Wang Yongda, the Deputy Director General of the Department of Co-operation and Personnel Exchanges in the Chinese Education Ministry. ciprocal recognition of qualifications as well as the possibility of setting up a centre for Chinese culture in Malta.
- **3 June 2000** Local Government Minister Austin Gatt announced that local wardens had taken to the streets of Gozo, bringing to 49 the total number of councils now boasting of the service. Dr Gatt, who was speaking during the launch of the service in Gozo, said that, by the end of June, all localities would have wardens.
- **4 June 2000** Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Borg said that the Government was being fully transparent on the EU negotiation process and strongly rebutted the claim that the Government was not explaining what had been agreed in the negotiations so far. Dr Borg was addressing a press conference at the Foreign Office in Valletta together with Mr Richard Cachia Caruana, the head of the Core negotiating team.
- **5 June 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami defended his Government's employment record, saying that the economy in the year up to April had created 2,200 more jobs than the previous year. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing the general council of his party.
- **5 June 2000** The Prime Minister said that, while we had to see how each and every one of us would be affected by EU membership, we should not forget what Europe stands for. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing his party's general council.
- **5 June 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech announced that the Government was proposing the setting up of an environment protection authority having greater powers than those available to the Government. Such an authority, said Dr Zammit Dimech, could be truly effective for environmental protection. The Minister was delivering a message for *World Environment Day*.

- **5 June 2000** Hundreds of people visited the site of the new hospital at Tal-Qroqq during an Open Weekend that formed part of the Public Service Week programme of activities.
- **6 June 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami announced that the Cabinet had approved a bill to amend the Competition Act. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking to reporters after the usual Monday morning Cabinet meeting.
- **6 June 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli announced that he expected to meet unions and other constituted bodies on June 23 to start discussions on the Budget for 2001. The meeting will take place at the Malta Council for Economic Development, in Floriana.
- **6 June 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech announced that the Government intended to put three environmental conventions into force by the end of the year. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking during an activity marking World Environment Day.
- **6 June 2000** President Guido de Marco was presented with Fr. Edmund Theuma's 768-page translation of the Koran by the author. The presentation took place at the Palace, in Valletta.
- **6 June 2000** The Commissioner of Inland Revenue, Adrian Chetcuti, told the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee that shortcomings had been identified in about 30,000 of the income tax returns submitted last year to the Department of Inland Revenue.
- **6 June 2000** Police Commissioner George Grech said that a fact-finding mission from the European Union was in Malta to report on Home Affairs and Justice. Mr Grech was addressing a news conference.
- **6 June 2000** According to figures released by the Central Office of Statistics, a breakdown of the arrival figures showed that tourists spent a total of 11.7 million days in Malta, an increase of 2.9 per cent over the 11.3 million days spent in 1998. The average length of stay in 1999 was 9.5 days.
- **6 June 2000** Government MP Helen D'Amato led a delegation that participated in the 23rd special session of the UN General Assembly, in New York. The session debated *Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st century*.
- **6 June 2000** The Planning Authority and the Environment Protection Department announced the setting up of a website through which the public would be able to comment on the various stages of Environmental Impact Assessments. The site may be found at: www.eia-malta.org
- **6 June 2000** Malcolm Scerri-Ferrante, Production Manager at the Mediterranean Film Studios, announced that a new version of the film *The Count of Monte Cristo* was to be shot in Malta at the end of summer.
- **6 June 2000** The Malta Tourism Authority organised a workshop in Moscow to boost holiday bookings to Malta by Russian travel agents. The workshop was visited by over 100 travel agents and 10 journalists from leading travel trade and consumer media.
- **7 June 2000** Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Social Policy Lawrence Gonzi attended the 88th Session of the International Labour Conference, held in Geneva.
- **7 June 2000** Justice Minister Austin Gatt launched the official version of Malta's laws on compact disc. The CD-Rom includes all the primary legislation of the country updated up till 1st March 2000 and covers 16,000 pages of text. Malta's laws were last published in 1990.
- **7 June 2000** Figures published by the Central Office of Statistics show that the retail price index dropped by 0.5 points, or 0.45 per cent, over the March index, to reach 111.78. However, the inflation rate increased marginally and stood at 2.52 per cent in April, up from 2.43 per cent in March.
- **7 June 2000** Ms Hely Kehä, Head of Development at the Finnish Ministry of the Interior, addressed a seminar for senior officers from the Ministry for Home Affairs, the Customs Division, and the Armed

Forces of Malta. Ms Kehā spoke about the training strategy adopted by her ministry in preparation for membership of the EU. The seminar formed part of Public Service Week.

- **7 June 2000** Central Bank Deputy Governor David Pullicino announced the launching of the *Special Millennium Issue 2000*, a set of bank notes to mark the new millennium.
- **8 June 2000** The former President of the Republic, Ugo Mifsud Bonnici, was asked by the Speaker of the House of Representatives to revise the House Standing Orders. Speaker Anton Tabone announced this when he spoke during a commemoration of *Sette Giugno*, at Palace Square, Valletta. During the ceremony Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami and Leader of the Opposition Alfred Sant laid wreaths at the foot of the *Sette Giugno* monument, at Palace Square, Valletta.
- **8 June 2000** Drydocks Chairman John Cassar White announced that turnover at the yard had increased in the first five months of the year, compared to that in the same period last year. However, losses were Lm0.5 million higher than they were last year.
- **8 June 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami expressed concern at the fact that Malta Drydocks had not yet showed signs of recovery. Dr Fenech-Adami was commenting on the situation at Malta Drydocks following the termination of contract of Chief Executive Barry Johnson by the 'yards board.
- **8 June 2000** Mr John Camilleri, Executive Head of the Employment and Training Corporation, said that since January, the ETC Intervention Unit, together with the unions had been instrumental in finding alternative employment for a total of 500 workers. Mr Camilleri was meeting representatives of the General Workers' Union and the *Union Haddiema Maghqudin*.
- **8 June 2000** The Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities of the Council of Europe met in Malta to discuss the Island's experience in fresh water management, as well as its hunting regulations and protection of endangered species.
- **9 June 2000** Danish Ambassador Gunnar Riberholdt and Moroccan Ambassador Aziz Mekouar presented their credentials to the President of Malta. Both Ambassadors are based in Rome.
- **9 June 2000** The Sovereign Military Order of Malta is marking the 500th anniversary of the birth of Charles V, King of Spain, with a seminar and an exhibition tracing back the relationship between Charles V and Malta.
- **9 June 2000** Dario Richiari, Sales Manager for Sicily for *Royal Caribbean Cruise Line*, announced that the line is considering using Malta as one of the pick-up points for its Mediterranean cruises.
- **10 June 2000** Public Service Head Joseph R. Grima presented awards to the twenty-one Heads of Department who had introduced *Quality Service Charters* in their respective departments.
- **10 June 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami expressed his satisfaction at the success obtained during the Public Service Week and at the interest that this year's topic - *Public Service and the European Union* - had generated. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking during the closing award presentation.
- **10 June 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg, and Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Igor Ivanov, agreed to set up a joint Working Group to review current outstanding issues and identify possibilities of furthering future bilateral co-operation. Dr Borg was leading a Maltese delegation on a two-day official visit to Russia.
- **10 June 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi insisted that social dialogue lead to decisions that are in the best interest of a country as a whole and not merely in the exclusive interest of one sector. Dr Gonzi was addressing the *International Labour Organisation* conference in Geneva.
- **10 June 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici opened a new HSBC area office at Marsascala. HSBC Chief Executive Tom Robson said the customer service and sales office was designed to serve customers seeking investment and life assurance products, home loans and other HSBC services.

- **10 June 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici and US Ambassador Kathryn Proffitt led representatives from 25 parastatal and private companies on a trade mission to California.
- **10 June 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech announced that the Government would be setting up an environment monitoring board to ensure that hunting laws and regulations were observed. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking at a joint news conference between the Minister and the hunters.
- **10 June 2000** The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Anton Tabone, received a courtesy call from the Ambassador for the Kingdom of Morocco. Subsequently Mr. Speaker received the Ambassador for Denmark. The two ambassadors were received at the Speaker's Chambers in the Palace, Valletta.
- **10 June 2000** *Compania Sud America de Vapores* is to start a new service from the West Coast of South America to the Malta Freeport. The Chilean shipping company is the largest shipping company in Latin America.
- **11 June 2000** The Head of the European Communities delegation, Dr Giorgio Boggio, said he expected Malta to open a relatively high number of chapters for negotiation during the French EU Presidency, starting on July 1. Dr Boggio was speaking to the press at an international seminar on *The Mediterranean and Europe: Contradictory or Complementary?*
- **12 June 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea announced that the National Minimum Curriculum steering committee was to draft a strategic plan to implement the curriculum. Dr Galea was delivering the closing speech at the three-day conference on the implementation of the curriculum at the University of Malta.
- **12 June 2000** Malta Tourism Authority Chairman John C. Grech said that the authority had committed itself to expanding tourism arrivals by three per cent per annum over the next three years, while stepping up the rate of tourism yield by four per cent. These objectives form part of the authority's first strategic plan for 2000 to 2002, setting specific deadlines by which these goals had to be achieved.
- **13 June 2000** A meeting presided over by the Prime Minister decided upon new security measures to be implemented at Kordin Correctional Facility. The meeting followed the escape of three inmates from the prison's juvenile section and their re-capture last week.
- **13 June 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami was presented with the Malta Tourism Authority's strategic plan for 2000 - 2002 by MTA Chairman John C. Grech. The presentation took place at Auberge de Castille in the presence of Tourism Minister Michael Refalo.
- **13 June 2000** The Prime Minister paid a visit to centenarian M'Carmela Caruana at the St Vincent de Paul residence for the elderly, on the occasion of her 100th birthday. Dr Fenech-Adami was accompanied by the Parliamentary Secretary within the Social Policy Ministry, Antoine Mifsud Bonnici.
- **13 June 2000** The Maltese delegation attending a United Nations conference on gender equality in New York reaffirmed Malta's stand against induced abortion. This results from documents tabled in Parliament by Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi.
- **13 June 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli announced that some 30 per cent of those who sent in their income tax forms last year failed to declare incomes which they should have declared and on which they should have paid tax.
- **13 June 2000** The Minister for the Interior of the Republic of Cyprus, Dr. Christodoulous Christodoulou, said that he was very happy to be given the opportunity to visit Malta knowing that Malta and Cyprus were small countries in the process of joining the EU. Dr Christodoulou was welcomed to Malta by Minister for Justice and Local Government Austin Gatt.
- **14 June 2000** President Guido de Marco represented Malta at the funeral of Syrian President Hafez al-

Assad, in Damascus. Prof. de Marco was received by Hafez al-Assad's son and successor, Dr Bashar al-Assad.

- **14 June 2000** The Minister for the Interior of the Republic of Cyprus, Dr. Christodoulous Christodoulou, and the Minister for Justice and Local Government, Dr. Austin Gatt, signed a Memorandum of Understanding to "develop and also establish co-operation between their respective countries in the field of local self-government".
- **14 June 2000** Health Minister Louis Deguara launched the web site of the endoscopy department in St Luke's Hospital. The site can be visited at www.mag-net.mt/services/health/endoscopy.
- **14 June 2000** The Malta Stock Exchange was declared 'Correspondent Exchange', receiving partial recognition from the Federation of European Stock Exchanges. The recognition took place during the federation's general assembly in Switzerland last week. MSE chairman Alfred Mallia, and the general manager, Mark Guillaumier, attended the assembly.
- **14 June 2000** Financial journalist Mauro Meazza, from *Il Sole 24 Ore*, described *Terranet's* 'e-shore' as one of the most promising emerging initiatives in cross border e-commerce solutions.
- **14 June 2000** HSBC Bank Malta launched its first Private Clients Office in Malta to give personalized services to its high net worth clients. The office is situated at The Strand, Gzira. A Gozo office will be opened later this week.
- **15 June 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg said that EU candidate countries were increasingly feeling the need for clear time frames to be agreed upon for the next enlargement. Dr Borg was addressing a meeting of the ministerial level EU accession conference with Malta, held in Luxembourg, and attended by the 15 EU Foreign Ministers. During the meeting, a formal decision was adopted to close the first seven chapters with Malta.
- **15 June 2000** The Governor of the Central Bank and the Chairman of the Malta Financial Services Centre announced that Malta had withdrawn from the Offshore Group of Banking Supervisors.
- **15 June 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli told Parliament that the gross effect of the new civil service collective agreement on government expenditure would be Lm37.9 million next year.
- **15 June 2000** President Guido de Marco was presented with the Special Millennium Issue 2000, a set of bank notes issued to mark the new millennium. The presentation was made at the Palace by Central Bank Governor Michael Bonello.
- **15 June 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea presented more than 240 teachers with their letters of appointment and warrants. The presentation took place at the Mediterranean Conference Centre, in Valletta.
- **15 June 2000** Maltese entrepreneurs would be able to discuss Euro-Mediterranean partnerships with firms in southern Italy during the 23rd edition of *Europartenariat* in Palermo next December. *Europartenariat* is an EU sponsored initiative. More information on the event can be found on www.europartenariat.it
- **16 June 2000** The contract between the Government and *MIDI Consortium* for the Lm140m Manoel Island and Tigne' project was signed. The contract provides for the transfer of land and property to the company on a 99-year lease. Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech signed for the Government and *MIDI* Chairman Albert Mizzi signed for the consortium.
- **16 June 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo advised tourism operators, especially hoteliers, to invest in another sector if they were not prepared to improve their product. Dr Refalo was speaking at a seminar organised by the Tourism Ministry on the final proposals for Malta's tourism.
- **16 June 2000** Middle Sea chairman Mario C Grech informed the annual general meeting of the company that negotiations were at an advanced stage for Middle Sea Group to obtain a majority interest in *Mapfre Progress Assicurazioni SpA*, a company operating in the southern Italian region.

- **16 June 2000** President Guido de Marco re-launched the Mediterranean Youth Forum in Malta with the aim of enhancing co-operation among youth to ensure peace, stability, development, freedom, democracy and human rights in the Euro-Med region.
- **16 June 2000** President Guido de Marco was presented with a copy of the newly launched *Dizzjunarju Malti* by author Mario Serracino Inglott and publishers Merlin Library. The one-volume Maltese-to-English dictionary carries over 30,000 entries.
- **16 June 2000** Health Minister Louis Deguara announced that the number of food poisoning cases last year dropped by 35 per cent when compared to the number of cases in 1998. Dr Deguara was speaking during the launch of a booklet on food hygiene.
- **17 June 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami visited the Hal Mann factory in Lija. The factory is exporting 22,000 square metres of *terrazzo* tiles to Australia.
- **17 June 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that, at a time when the public deficit required sacrifices to be made, the whole topic of tax evasion had become an issue of great concern for Maltese society. Mr Dalli was addressing the annual dinner of the Malta Institute of Accountants.
- **17 June 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo announced that the University of Malta had reacted positively to a proposal to offer a course leading to a full degree in Tourism. Dr Refalo was speaking during the graduation ceremony of over 150 students attending the Institute of Tourism Studies.
- **17 June 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici told Parliament that thirty-five new factories were opened and 11 had closed down since September 1998.
- **17 June 2000** A total of 755 people acquired dual citizenship since amendments to the law were made last February.
- **19 June 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, who participated in the European People's Party summit in Oporto, said discussion had focused on the Enlargement of the European Union. The delegates, said the Prime Minister, expressed the opinion that the enlargement process should not be delayed.
- **19 June 2000** Italian Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini said that Italy would like to see Malta among the first countries to join the European Union. Mr Dini was speaking to *The Times* newspaper at Oporto.
- **19 June 2000** Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that the Government was satisfied with the conclusions and recommendations contained in the ILO 17-page report, as they showed that the GWU allegations against Government were baseless and proved that the Government's actions in trying to control the situation at the Malta International Airport had been justified.
- **19 June 2000** Fifteen businessmen visited Rome and Catania on a trade mission organised by the Malta External Trade Corporation (METCO).
- **20 June 2000** The Malta Financial Services Centre quoted the Government as saying that the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) had decided to remove Malta from its tax havens list. The Government said this represented a major boost to global perceptions of Malta and was a vindication of its fiscal and regulatory policies.
- **20 June 2000** Portuguese Foreign Minister Jaime Gama, speaking on behalf of the European Presidency, said that Malta's membership application negotiations were a success story. Mr Gama was speaking at Oporto, where the European People's Party summit was meeting.
- **20 June 2000** Portuguese State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Francisco Seixas da Costa, expressed his firm conviction that, as membership negotiations proceeded, Malta would be able to make up for time lost and catch up with countries that had started negotiations more than two years ago. Mr da Costa was speaking on behalf of the EU Presidency.

- **20 June 2000** EU Commission spokesman for external relations, Gunner Wiegand, said that Malta was catching up very quickly, after all the time lost when the application had been put in abeyance.
- **20 June 2000** The President of Malta and Mrs de Marco visited the Malta Hospice Movement to help raise awareness of the sterling work being carried out for cancer patients.
- **20 June 2000** The Maltese language and its structure were discussed in the *MedTyp Project*. The project is funded by the European Science Foundation and aims to determine the degree of interaction between languages in the Mediterranean.
- **20 June 2000** The Minister of Social Policy, Lawrence Gonzi, said that this year 793 single mothers were receiving social assistance.
- **21 June 2000** The President was presented with a copy of the proceedings and report of the Convention of Leaders of Associations of Maltese Abroad and of Maltese Origin. The report was presented by the Chairman of the Convention's organising committee, Mr George Busuttil.
- **21 June 2000** The 15 EU leaders meeting in Oporto said in their summit conclusions that it should be feasible to open negotiations in all areas of the *acquis communautaire* with the most advanced candidates "as early as possible in 2001". Malta had been described as the most advanced candidate in the group, having closed the largest number of chapters.
- **21 June 2000** Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi said, in reaction to a press conference addressed by General Workers' Union General Secretary Tony Zarb, that the ILO Report on industrial action at MIA should open the GWU's eyes to the fact that, solutions are to be found meeting round a table and not on the streets or by waging unnecessary strikes.
- **21 June 2000** According to figures released by the Central Office of Statistics Government debt at the end of May 2000 stood at Lm866.6 million, an increase of 6.7 per cent over that in May last year.
- **21 June 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said in Parliament that Maltese nationals had invested abroad Lm13 million in the first four months of this year.
- **21 June 2000** *Hospitality Assured*, described as the leisure industry's version of the *ISO 9000* certification, was launched in Malta.
- **21 June 2000** Agriculture and Fisheries Minister Ninu Zammit said in Parliament that the value of total catches landed at the fish market in May represented a 150 per cent rise over the same period last year.
- **21 June 2000** Malta is listed in a 228-page yearbook published by *Eurostat*, the statistical office of the European Communities in Luxembourg. The yearbook contains detailed statistical tables covering population, education, the labour force, and national accounts. It also includes chapters on social indicators, energy and telecommunications.
- **21 June 2000** Joseph Tancred Dougall, a Maltese migrant living in Sydney Australia, was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia. The announcement was made in the Queen's Birthday 2000 Honours List on June 12. The citation proposed for the honour is "For service to the communities of Parramatta and Granville through sporting, ex-service and Maltese community groups".
- **22 June 2000** President Guido de Marco presented this year's edition of the *Pope John XXIII Award for Kindness* to Maria Pace, 15, a student at the Santa Lucija Junior Lyceum. Ms Pace helps out Marija Mamo, a student in her class who, last March, was diagnosed with cancer.
- **22 June 2000** Dr Simon Busuttil, Head of the Malta-EU Information Centre (MIC), said that to date some 10,000 people had made use of the centre's information service.
- **22 June 2000** Parliamentary Secretary in the Home Affairs Ministry George Pullicino said calls for tenders would be issued for the construction of two underground car parks in Sliema. Mr Pullicino was

taking part in the last public consultation meeting called by the Planning Authority to discuss the North Harbour Local Plan.

- **22 June 2000** Mario C. Grech, Chairman of *Middle Sea Insurance*, announced that the Government planned to dispose of the shares it had purchased in on HSBC's takeover of Mid-Med Bank. Mr Grech was addressing the company's 19th Annual General Meeting.
- **23 June 2000** Health Minister Louis Deguara said that the positive results achieved by Malta in the WHO *Report 2000* was recognition of the work done by different administrations in the medical field over the years. Dr Deguara was commenting on the results achieved by Malta which placed fifth after France, Italy, San Marino and Andorra.
- **23 June 2000** ILO Senior Labour Inspection Specialist Wolfgang von Richtofen ended a three-day advisory mission in Malta. Mr von Richtofen will be providing assistance for the setting up of a new regulatory framework in Occupational Health and Safety standards in Malta.
- **23 June 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech announced that the Government had asked the European Investment Bank for a proposal on the financing of the Lm50 million Valletta project. The project would include the building of the opera house, the rebuilding of City Gate, the rebuilding of a bus terminus, and the building of a commercial centre.
- **23 June 2000** Fifty AFM personnel, from 2nd Regiment's Maritime Squadron, completed exercise NAVEX 001. The nine-day naval exercise was conducted in the Ionian and Aegean Seas.
- **23 June 2000** Government MP Francis Agius was nominated by the European People's Party to contest the election of Chairman of the sub-committee on fisheries of the Council of Europe committee on agriculture, rural development and food.
- **24 June 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli returned from talks in Libya. The Finance Ministry said in a statement that in Libya discussions had centred on *Limsuk* - the market selling Maltese products - as well as on co-operation between the two countries in the field of gas and oil, Air Malta, and the Malta Drydocks.
- **24 June 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici told Parliament that an agreement had been signed for METCO to open its first representative office in Libya.
- **24 June 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli, in the first of a series of meetings with constituted bodies leading up to the Budget, briefed the social partners on the country's financial and economic situation. The meeting took place at the Malta Council for Economic Development.
- **24 June 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech announced that it was estimated that, by the end of the year, the volume of paper recycled at Sant Antnin Recycling Plant would amount to 2,000 tonnes, compared to the 220 tonnes of last year. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking at a news conference in Swieqi.
- **24 June 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo appealed for the closure of the Magtab dump. He also suggested that the Planning Authority should rethink its opposition to sea reclamation. Dr Refalo was opening a seminar organised by the Malta Institute of Waste Management on *Waste Management and the Hospitality Industry*.
- **24 June 2000** KM871, the first *Air Malta* direct flight from New York, landed at Malta International Airport. This summer, Air Malta is operating a twice-weekly scheduled flight to New York's JFK Airport, via Shannon in Ireland.
- **25 June 2000** Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Borg said that, during his meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov in Moscow, Mr Ivanov had looked with favour on Malta's future role as a member of the EU. Dr Borg said that, in the opinion of the Russian Government, Malta could well provide a link for Russian investments in Europe and in North Africa.
- **25 June 2000** The Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the German Parliament, Hans-Ulrich

Klose, said that Europe was the only realistic proposition for the future. Mr Klose was in Malta for a short visit to get acquainted with local politics.

- **25 June 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that the active participation by all EU candidate countries in the formulation of environmental priorities in Europe gives such countries “a sense of ownership” ahead of membership. Dr Zammit Dimech was addressing the ministerial consultation meeting in environment policy-making in Central and Eastern Europe, held at the regional environment centre in Hungary.
- **25 June 2000** Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association President, Joe Preca, and Andreas F. Forthuber, Managing Director of the digital interactive travel TV company www.travel, announced that the two sides had teamed up to forge a joint marketing and co-operation agreement. The third side to this triangular agreement is expected to be the Malta Tourism Authority.
- **26 June 2000** Health Minister Louis Deguara inaugurated the new cardiac intensive care unit (CICU). Dr Deguara said the number of heart operations was expected to increase following the opening of the new unit and the forthcoming appointment of two new cardiologists.
- **26 June 2000** A team of *Enemalta* engineers, helped by electrical engineering expert Prof. Charles Pule, is conducting an inquiry to establish the cause of Friday’s nation-wide power failure. A blast at Marsa power station had led to a total shutdown of the country’s two sources of electrical power at Marsa and Delimara.
- **26 June 2000** Figures published by the Central Office of Statistics show that total tourist arrivals in the first five months of this year declined by 4,628 (1.1 per cent) to 412,712 from 417,340 in the same period last year.
- **27 June 2000** President Guido de Marco said that the United Nations must undergo serious reform, otherwise it would risk becoming irrelevant. The President was speaking at the opening of a conference on the theme *The United Nations in the 21st century*, organised by the United Nations Association of Spain.
- **27 June 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici announced that work on a Lm2 million tunnel to facilitate energy distribution between the Delimara and Marsa power stations was to be taken in hand later on this year. Work on the tunnel had been planned to commence in 1996 but the previous government had shelved the project.
- **27 June 2000** Emanuel Attard, Chief Executive at the Foundation of Medical Services, told a news conference that the Employment and Training Corporation would be holding an open week in an attempt to interest workers in work on the new Tal-Qroqq Hospital Project. The number of workers on site has recently risen from 40 to 150 and could rise to 750 towards the end of the year.
- **27 June 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea encouraged teachers to inject new life into the teaching of science subjects as the number of students opting for science and related careers seemed to be dwindling. Dr Galea was addressing a seminar for science and technology teachers.
- **27 June 2000** Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg said in Parliament that the Government planned to issue a White Paper ahead of moving amendments to the Arms Ordinance.
- **27 June 2000** Parliamentary Secretary at the Home Affairs Ministry George Pullicino said that opinions expressed by the public on the draft North Harbours Local Plan should be given due weight to the extent that the plans be amended to reflect these views. Mr Pullicino was speaking during a news conference at the Planning Authority offices in Floriana.
- **28 June 2000** President Guido de Marco addressed the third part session of the 2000 Ordinary Session of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly in Strasbourg.
- **28 June 2000** Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Borg told the House Foreign Affairs Committee that the United States had informed Malta that the General System of Preferences (GSP) treatment would be stopped next year or the year following. Dr Borg said that the GSP treatment would be stopped

irrespective of whether Malta became a member of the EU or not.

- **28 June 2000** The Malta-EU Information Centre (MIC) said it would be providing a number of local councils with EU information stands that may be installed in council premises. 21 councils submitted a request for the installation of an information stand.
- **28 June 2000** The Maltese regulatory authorities received the Report published on the 22nd June by the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (FATF) containing the *Review to Identify Non-Cooperative Countries or Territories*. The Review found that Malta has a “comprehensive anti-money laundering system” with the only weakness identified being the system of nominee companies.
- **28 June 2000** Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi, Government MP Helen d’Amato, and Opposition MP Karl Chircop, attended an Inter-Parliamentary Union conference in Geneva. The conference addressed themes on social development in a globalised world, employment, female participation and poverty.
- **28 June 2000** *Valletta Fund Management* launched five new sub-funds. The La Valette Far East Opportunities Fund and the La Valette International Equity Fund are equity based, while the other three are cash funds denominated in Sterling, Euro and US Dollars.
- **29 June 2000** Figures released by the Central Office of Statistics show that unemployment in the month of May fell below five per cent for the first time since December 1996. It went down to 4.8 per cent from the April figure of 5.1 per cent. The gainfully occupied population went up by 351 from April to reach 139,854.
- **29 June 2000** Justice Minister Austin Gatt said that the Government would be ready to extradite Mohammed Abdel Monem Abbas Aly if Turkey were to give Malta assurances that the suspect would not be executed. The Egyptian man was charged *in absentia* in Turkey for the murder of British librarian Edgar Fernandes in April 1998. Dr Gatt was speaking during a press conference at his office.
- **29 June 2000** Two Quality Service Charters were introduced in the Health Promotion Department and the Health Information Department within the Health Division. The two new charters follow close behind those already launched by the health centres at Floriana and Qormi, the Drug Control Unit, and the Speech Language Department.
- **29 June 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that success in the rehabilitation process of people with drug problems depended a lot on the extent to which society accepted that a person could change. Dr Gonzi was visiting an exhibition of artistic works by people in drug rehabilitation.
- **29 June 2000** Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Education Jesmond Mugliett said that it was high time that Malta started to participate in the European Union’s *Fifth Framework Programme*. The FP5 supports research, technological development and innovation. Participation in the programme gives opportunities to individuals and to legal entities to team up with foreign partners in order to submit proposals for funding to the EU.
- **29 June 2000** Parliamentary Secretary in the Economic Services Ministry Edwin Vassallo said that the Malta Standardisation Authority should not be viewed as a bureaucracy but as an entity that offers direction to the business and manufacturing sector. Mr Vassallo was speaking during a seminar on *CE-Marking and Product Safety Legislation* at the METCO offices in San Gwann.
- **30 June 2000** The annual UN Human Development Report survey ranked Malta in 27th place from among 174 countries. Rankings are based on income, health care, life expectancy and educational levels.
- **30 June 2000** Malta Tourism Authority representatives made arrangements with the organisers of the *Miss Switzerland* beauty contest for the contest to be held in Malta and transmitted live on television from here. Switzerland's three television stations together command 1.5 million viewers.
- **30 June 2000** *Euronews* aired a corporate feature on Air Malta. The feature promoted Malta as an island rich in history and a long tradition as a tourist destination.

July

- **1 July 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that Malta's accession to the EU meant that the country would have to face up to challenges. Europe, however, also presented huge opportunities for those willing and able to make the most of them. The Prime Minister was speaking at the official opening of the 43rd International Fair of Malta.
- **1 July 2000** Director of Information Emanuel Abela told reporters that the Government would be empowering local councils so that the public would be able to obtain all government services, including permits and licences, directly from the councils.
- **1 July 2000** The Lm16 million Cottonera Waterfront Project was officially launched when a mechanical shovel started demolishing old stores in the presence of Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech. The whole project provides for the creation of a yacht marina, the restoration of historical palaces, and the building of residential apartments, a hotel, restaurants, shops, a health club and a casino.
- **1 July 2000** Freeport Terminal (Malta) plc reported a net profit of \$5 million for the year ending December 31, 1999. Turnover for the period amounted to \$31.3 million, that is, an increase of 9.6 per cent over the 1998 turnover figure of \$28.5 million.
- **1 July 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici announced that losses at Malta Shipbuilding would be reduced by Lm1million this year. Prof. Bonnici attributed this improvement to management restructuring at the shipyard.
- **1 July 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli told Parliament that public subscription to three recent government stock issues amounted to Lm14.09 million.
- **1 July 2000** Minister of Foreign Affairs Joe Borg told Parliament that a new embassy would cost the country between Lm125,000 and Lm200,000 a year.
- **1 July 2000** The Malta Tourism Authority launched a media campaign to ensure that Maltese and tourists alike can enjoy the islands' limited beach space. The campaign will tackle issues such as cleanliness, beach barbecues and noise pollution.
- **2 July 2000** Transport Minister Censu Galea announced that some 250 cruise liners would be calling at Malta this year, bringing over about 200,000 passengers. Moreover, eight operators would be using Malta as a hub port offering 20 different itineraries. Mr Galea was speaking during a news conference marking the inaugural visit of the cruise liner *Van Gogh*.
- **2 July 2000** The Malta Maritime Authority launched a *Safety at Sea* campaign.
- **4 July 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Cabinet had approved a bill that would guarantee the safety standards of products manufactured and sold in Malta. The Cabinet also approved a development brief for the Ta' Qali Crafts Village, which will now be submitted to the Planning Authority. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking to journalists after a Cabinet session at The Palace, Valletta.
- **4 July 2000** Parliamentary Secretary Edwin Vassallo said that the General Product Safety Bill discussed by Cabinet would establish a common framework to ensure the safety of products sold or offered for use by consumers.

- **4 July 2000** UK Minister for Europe Keith Vaz wrote in *The Times* newspaper to describe the challenge and benefits of EU membership. Mr Vaz arrives in Malta today for talks.
- **4 July 2000** The Government invited the general public to visit the Malta Pavilion and make use of the Complaints Handling System that is being operated during the International Fair at Naxxar.
- **4 July 2000** Tourism magazine *Island Travel Trader* said in a recent edition that Air Malta plans to launch a public bond issue in September or October.
- **4 July 2000** US Ambassador Kathryn Proffitt told a recent meeting of the Maltese-American Chamber of Commerce that the best way of marketing Malta in the US was to sell the island as a hub.
- **4 July 2000** A statement by the British High Commission said that a total of 30 companies would be exhibiting at the UK's Trade Partners Pavilion at the International Fair of Malta. The pavilion would show a wide range of goods and services that are available in the UK.
- **5 July 2000** The French Government, which assumed the rotating EU Presidency on 1st July, informed the Maltese Government that during its term nine new chapters would be opened for negotiation with Malta.
- **5 July 2000** British Minister for Europe Keith Vaz congratulated Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami on the progress Malta was making in its bid to join the European Union.
- **5 July 2000** President Guido de Marco, patron of the first Malta International Conference on Autism, said that 'inclusion' meant a change in the school's general approach towards catering for children with different needs. Prof. de Marco was addressing a conference on the theme *Autism: The Challenge of Inclusion* organised by the Eden Foundation and the University of Malta.
- **5 July 2000** Local Government Minister Austin Gatt said that wardens were operating in 54 localities and would be fully operational throughout Malta and Gozo within two weeks. Dr Gatt was speaking at a news conference launching the warden service in Valletta.
- **5 July 2000** The Cabinet approved Dr Max Ganado as the new Chairman of the Malta Arbitration Centre, following the resignation of Prof. David Attard.
- **5 July 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici told Parliament that over 40,000 mobile phones were imported in Malta between 1996 and 1999. No statistics had been kept before 1996.
- **5 July 2000** Bank of Valletta's Deputy General Manager for Strategy, Anthony Darmanin, represented the Bank at the *Mediterranean Bank Network's* annual general meeting at Banco Sabadell's head office in Spain.
- **5 July 2000** Malta's Embassy in Rome co-ordinated a day of activities for the Maltese community in Italy to mark the traditional Maltese feast of *Imnarja*. Malta's Ambassador in Rome, Joseph Cassar, read out a special message of thanks sent by President Guido de Marco.
- **6 July 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg officially confirmed the new chapters to be opened in negotiations for EU membership. The chapters deal with European monetary union, social policy, fisheries, company law, consumer protection, statistics, transport, free movement of capital, and competition.
- **6 July 2000** British Minister for Europe Keith Vaz and Foreign Minister Joe Borg signed the UK-Malta Europe Action Plan. According to this agreement Britain is to give Malta technical assistance to help the island in the process towards European Union membership.
- **6 July 2000** Mr Vaz announced that Britain was proposing that its Attorney General convene a meeting with representatives of the Maltese and Turkish Governments in a bid to find a solution to the Fernandes case. Mr Vaz, who ended a two-day visit in Malta, was addressing a joint news conference with Foreign Minister Joe Borg.

- **6 July 2000** *Sea Malta* Chairperson Marlene Mizzi launched a corporate brochure highlighting the Company's various maritime services and other commercial activities.
- **7 July 2000** President Guido de Marco urged the museum authorities to look into the possibility of setting up a national portrait gallery. Prof. de Marco was speaking during the official commemoration marking the completion of restoration works on Antonio Sciortino's *Christ the King* monument in Floriana.
- **7 July 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami inaugurated the newly-refurbished *Priceclub* discount store in Birkirkara.
- **7 July 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi launched the first community resource centre. He told a news conference that it would be a family focused network aimed at serving and strengthening families living in the Cottonera area.
- **7 July 2000** According to a report commissioned by the *Institute for the Promotion of Small Enterprise (IPSE)* it will be the large furniture companies that will most need to change their structures if they are to survive and prosper.
- **7 July 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that June tourism figures should show that the year 2000 was moving in the same direction as the year 1999. He said a recent survey had also indicated an increased degree of optimism on the part of tourism operators.
- **7 July 2000** Malta's honorary consul general in Eastern Canada, Charles Puglisevich, met Canada's new governor-general, Adrienne Clarkson.
- **8 July 2000** President Guido de Marco said that the creation of a free trade area among 14 Arab states could be the key to turning the region into one of peace and stability. Prof. de Marco was speaking during the opening of the Annual Co-ordinative Meeting of the Joint Arab European Chambers of Commerce. The meeting was hosted by the Maltese-Arab Chamber of Commerce.
- **8 July 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that Malta was beginning to reap the benefit of the legislative financial reforms initiated in 1994. Mr Dalli was referring to the report recently published by the Financial Action Task Force that concluded that Malta had a comprehensive anti-money laundering system.
- **8 July 2000** According to figures released by the Central Office of Statistics the inflation rate in May rose to 2.64 per cent, from 2.52 per cent the previous month.
- **8 July 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli announced in Parliament that Libya was to keep selling fuel to Malta at preferential rates. Mr Dalli said the supply of fuel to Malta by Libya had been discussed in recent talks.
- **8 July 2000** Minister of Economic Services Josef Bonnici said that the Metco office in Libya was estimated to cost Lm42,000 in its first year and some Lm35,000 a year in subsequent years.
- **8 July 2000** Transport Minister Censu Galea said that now, that Vehicle Roadworthy Test stations were in place, his ministry would soon move into implementing a second phase of the VRT. Mr Galea was speaking during the opening of an exhibition of American cars.
- **8 July 2000** Health Minister Louis Deguara hinted in Parliament that a ban on tobacco and alcohol advertising could be on the cards.
- **8 July 2000** John Camilleri, Chief Executive Officer at the Employment and Training Corporation, said that more than 90 per cent of men aged over 45 who have been registering for work for over a year have a primary school level of education. Mr Camilleri was speaking during the corporation's second Clients' Forum.
- **8 July 2000** Brigadier Rupert C Montanaro and *SOS Albania* Chairperson Lilian Miceli Farrugia welcomed back the twenty-three members of the AFM who took part in a mercy mission to Kosovo.

- **9 July 2000** Maltacom Chairman Maurice Zarb Adami announced that around 3,000 persons had booked their *Go Mobile* number in the past six days. Mr Zarb Adami was speaking at the Maltacom stand at the Trade Fair.
- **10 July 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech announced that he would be meeting the council of Malta Drydocks again, in an effort to push the ‘yard and the three consortia involved in the Cottonera project towards reaching an agreement over the development of the Number One dock area. The Minister was speaking during a radio interview.
- **10 July 2000** The Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs, George Pullicino, represented Malta at a global conference on the urban future, held recently in Berlin.
- **10 July 2000** Libya was invited to take part in *Canale 2000*, a military exercise involving the Maltese and Italian Armed Forces. Other countries invited to participate were France, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey.
- **10 July 2000** Maltese-born policeman Emanuel Grima was awarded the Australian Police Medal. Mr Grima has served in the Victoria police force for the past 32 years.
- **11 July 2000** Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Borg told Parliament that, rather than a “two speed Europe”, the proposals made at the EU intergovernmental conference were about reinforced cooperation.
- **11 July 2000** A Ministry of Finance reply to GWU statements about Kalaxlokk said that, after talks between the union and management came to a deadlock last week, the case would be passed on to an industrial tribunal.
- **11 July 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi announced that 12,000 people had made use of the *Helpline 179* services last year. Problems raised by callers ranged from simple momentary loneliness, to child abuse, to mental health problems.
- **11 July 2000** Transport and Communications Minister Censu Galea said in Parliament that there were 275,000 registered vehicles in the country: 252,111 in Malta and 22,889 in Gozo. Mr Galea announced that 8,977 new vehicles were registered in the first half of this year.
- **11 July 2000** *Crown Odyssey*, a 1,000-capacity passenger liner on a Mediterranean tour, called at Grand Harbour. The liner is in the service of Orient Lines and is represented in Malta by SMS Ltd.
- **11 July 2000** Representatives of Maltese financial services were expected to leave for a familiarisation visit to Guernsey. The visit was organised by Valletta Fund Management, in collaboration with the Malta Financial Services Centre. VFM is a strategic alliance between the Bank of Valletta Group and Rothschild Asset Management.
- **12 July 2000** According to figures released by the Central Office of Statistics, total manufacturing sales in the first quarter of this year rose by 21.3 per cent to Lm256.1 million, compared to the figure for the same period last year.
- **12 July 2000** The United States informed Malta that the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) treatment will be stopped by January 2002, after the country was deemed to be “high income” according to the definitions of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.
- **12 July 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli told Parliament that effective action had been taken by the Malta Financial Services Centre with regard to changes required in connection with the OECD report on harmful tax practices. Mr Dalli said recommendations should be made in the near future. The OECD had not set any reporting date.
- **12 July 2000** The Government accused the General Workers’ Union of having been intransigent since November and of having forced *Kalaxlokk* into a position whereby it could not win contracts.

- **12 July 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici and the Parliamentary Secretary in the Home Affairs Ministry George Pullicino announced during a joint news conference the issue of a tender for the drawing up of a plan on land uses by industry.
- **12 July 2000** Transport Minister Censu Galea announced the publication of a list of guidelines to cover works carried out on roads and pavements. The guidelines are aimed at government, local councils, parastatal entities and contractors.
- **12 July 2000** Parliamentary Secretary George Pullicino told Parliament that a site being transferred by the Government to the Aviation Museum Foundation at Ta' Qali included land that would be developed into a museum of military vehicles by the Military Vehicles Association.
- **12 July 2000** Local Government Minister Austin Gatt announced two competitions geared to encourage the cleanliness of sandy beaches, rocky areas, parking areas, quays, platforms, stairways and walkways.
- **12 July 2000** Transport and Communications Minister Censu Galea told Parliament that a total of 59,637 vehicles had been tested for road-worthiness between 1st October 1999 and 31st May 2000.
- **12 July 2000** *British Airways* will be adding two Malta services a week in winter, bringing the total number of services to Heathrow and Gatwick to eight a week.
- **13 July 2000** The Government issued a counter-statement to say that there had been agreement among all parties concerned that the *Kalaxlokk* issue be referred to an industrial tribunal.
- **13 July 2000** The Government reacted in a separate statement to the news conference organised by the Opposition on the *Kalaxlokk* dispute. It said that the Labour Government's proposal to absorb *Kalaxlokk* workers into the civil service whenever vacancies arose would have discriminated against those who were registering for work.
- **13 July 2000** Act XV of 2000, which came into force on Tuesday 11th July, enables companies owning radio and TV stations to launch a 24-hour teleshopping service. The broadcasting station would still need a licence from the Broadcasting Authority.
- **13 July 2000** The number of people booking a personalised number with *Go Mobile* is still on the rise. Maltacom's senior executive for sales and marketing, Franco Degabriele, said that the figure now stood at 5000.
- **13 July 2000** The Malta Tourism Authority is organising a *Summer Fun 2000* programme. Historical and cultural events will be held nightly in Bugibba Square.
- **13 July 2000** Bank of Valletta announced that a number of students from the University of Messina would work for the Bank during the summer months under an agreement between the bank and the university. In return, BoV staff will be invited to attend special seminars and lectures at the university.
- **13 July 2000** A Japanese delegation is in Malta to promote trade between the two countries. The delegation, from the Japan External Trade Organisation (Jetro), is represented at the International Fair of Malta.
- **14 July 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami condemned "those who still believed they could achieve their aims by taking to the streets". He also condemned the attack on PBS journalist Ivan Camilleri. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking during a news conference following a General Workers' Union demonstration in support of *Kalaxlokk* workers.
- **14 July 2000** The Prime Minister said that for the past seven months the Government had sought agreement with the GWU on the reform of the *Kalaxlokk* workers' collective agreement in a bid to make it more viable, but this had been to no avail. Dr Fenech-Adami said that the Government was seeking to reach agreement on the introduction of flexibility and the removal of half days.
- **14 July 2000** The board of directors of the Public Broadcasting Services condemned the incidents that

took place during the demonstration organised by the GWU. A similar condemnation was issued by the Broadcasting Authority.

- **14 July 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech inaugurated the *Ghajn tal-Hassel* on which restoration works had just been completed.
- **14 July 2000** The Malta Tourism Authority gave details of the survey *The Maltese population's perception of tourism in Malta* during a press briefing at the Mediterranean Conference Centre in Valletta.
- **14 July 2000** A delegation of Maltese businessmen will be in Sydney from 17 to 27 July 2000 to take part in a business co-operation mission. The mission is being organised by the Malta External Trade Corporation in conjunction with the Maltese-Australian Chamber of Commerce.
- **14 July 2000** *Smash Communications Ltd* notified the Broadcasting Authority of its intention to operate another television station dedicated exclusively to *Teleshopping*. This follows changes to the Broadcasting Act that came into effect last week.
- **14 July 2000** Architect Richard England was awarded a gold medal for his contribution to 20th Century Architecture at the Sixth Belgrade International Triennale of Architecture. Prof. England was commended for his contribution to the development of a contemporary architectural expression that evolves directly from the history and *genius loci* of the region he works in.
- **15 July 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, together with other Maltese and foreign VIPs, followed the annual Italo-Maltese military exercise *Canale 2000* from aboard the Italian frigate *Euro*.
- **15 July 2000** The House of Representatives recommended the re-appointment of Joseph Sammut as Ombudsman for a second and final term of five years. The proposal was made by Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami and seconded by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Dr George Vella.
- **15 July 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi told Parliament that the Fraud and Investigation Unit at the Social Welfare Department had identified over 1,000 cases of persons found to be abusing social benefits.
- **15 July 2000** Parliamentary Secretary George Pullicino said that the Planning Authority had received some 1,000 comments about the proposed North Harbours Local Plan.
- **15 July 2000** *Water Services Corporation* Project Officer Stefan Riolo said that, now that production was meeting demand, the corporation was concentrating on providing better quality water. Mr Riolo was speaking at the corporation's stand at the International Fair of Malta.
- **15 July 2000** Veterinary Services Director Carm Lino Vella said that the Government had given the green light for the construction of an incinerator for the burning of animal waste. Mr Vella said that the smokeless incinerator would cost some Lm300,000 and would be built to international standards.
- **15 July 2000** Over one hundred students who have completed their certificate level studies at the Institute of Tourism Studies left Malta to start their 12-month industrial placement overseas. Another fifteen students are expected to leave in September.
- **15 July 2000** The President and General Secretary of the Confederation of Malta Trade Unions, Alfred Buhagiar and Charles Magro respectively, were due to leave for a visit to England. The visit, organised with the help of the British High Commission in Malta, is meant to show the impact that EU membership had on that country.
- **16 July 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the General Workers' Union had the option to either lead its members responsibly towards real employment or insist that the taxpayer continue to pay for "phantom" work. Dr Fenech-Adami was referring to the *Kalaxlokk* dispute at a social activity in Marsaxlokk.
- **17 July 2000** *Telepage* General Manager Lorraine Williams said that the company has branched out

into the Call Centre business with the intention of targeting the local business sector. Telepage Limited is a subsidiary of the Maltacom Group.

- **18 July 2000** The Central Bank of Malta notes in the June issue of its *Quarterly Review* that retail prices during the first quarter of this year were relatively stable, with the retail price index edging up to 2.4 per cent, an increase in employment, as well as a rise in the labour supply.
- **18 July 2000** *Interprise 2000*, an initiative of the European Commission, this year will be held in Gorlitz, Germany between September 20-22. During this period, Maltese companies will be able to meet and discuss business prospects with companies from Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Poland, the Czech Republic, Austria and Italy.
- **19 July 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli told Parliament that Government revenue from the withholding tax on bank deposits last year reached Lm8.8 million, from Lm9.7 million the year before.
- **19 July 2000** Leader of the House Lawrence Gonzi said in a statement that an updated National Plan for the Adoption of the *Acquis* would be tabled in Parliament on 18th September 2000.
- **19 July 2000** Figures released by the Central Office of Statistics show that a total of 182,271 tourists came to Malta in the January to March quarter. This is 12,000 less than the number of tourists in the same period last year.
- **19 July 2000** *Din l-Art Helwa* and the Malta Tourism Authority together launched the Tourism Industry Heritage Fund. The initiative forms part of the MTA's strategic plan covering the years 2000-2002.
- **19 July 2000** The Maritime Squadron's *Rapid Deployment Team* conducted a boarding exercise on board the new Gozo Channel ferry, the MV *Ta' Pinu*.
- **20 July 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that, in the next three years, on-line betting companies in Malta would be offering employment to 500 people. Mr Dalli said that Government was expected to net between Lm5 million and Lm8 million from the operations of these companies. Mr Dalli was speaking during the launch of the British online betting company in Malta, *Heathorns International*.
- **20 July 2000** Figures compiled by the Central Office of Statistics show that exports of goods and services in the first quarter this year reached Lm344.7 million, up from Lm281.2 million in the same period last year. Imports of goods and services amounted to Lm390.1 million, an increase of Lm84.6 million over that quarter last year.
- **20 July 2000** The Government announced that the recent stock issue of Lm58.5 million had been over-subscribed by Lm23.5 million. The total applications amounted to Lm82 million.
- **20 July 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea announced that 359 Maltese had applied to take part in educational programmes since the European Union Programmes Unit was set up six months ago. Dr Galea was speaking during a news conference where he was presented with the first progress report of the EUPU.
- **20 July 2000** Education and Culture Minister Louis Galea announced in Parliament that a committee headed by former President Ugo Mifsud Bonnici had drafted a new Heritage Bill.
- **20 July 2000** Local Government Minister Austin Gatt said that the Government encouraged initiatives for the introduction of procedures for 'alternative dispute resolution'. Dr Gatt was speaking during the inauguration of a conference on *Alternative Dispute Management*, organised by Malta Dispute Management Ltd.
- **20 July 2000** The Malta-EU Information Centre announced that thousands of people visited the MIC stand at the Malta International Trade Fair.
- **21 July 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami re-inaugurated the Hal Safflieni Hypogeum. Over the past nine years the monument had been undergoing restoration and conservation works which were

partly funded by *Unesco*.

- **21 July 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami announced that a brief was to be drawn up for a major development project involving the building of a communal centre in Gozo. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking following a special Cabinet meeting held on the Island.
- **21 July 2000** A team of top local medical experts certified that *Go Mobile*'s rooftop antennas do not pose any threat to health.
- **21 July 2000** Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi appealed to the General Workers' Union to adopt the role of "the leader rather than the messenger and lead its members to do what is best in the national interest". Dr Gonzi was replying to questions from reporters on the *Kalaxlokk* issue.
- **21 July 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli announced that the Government did not intend to impose a strategic partner on Bank of Valletta. Mr Dalli was speaking at a discussion on public finances organised by the *Union Haddiema Maghqudin* in Qawra.
- **21 July 2000** Malta Tourism Authority Chairman John C Grech announced that the minimum standard for hotels in Malta was being raised to two-star, meaning that the one-star classification would cease to exist. Dr Grech was speaking during the launch of an exercise aimed at reviewing the standards and classification of tourist accommodation.
- **21 July 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that, as from the beginning of the year, Malta would become a member of the European Environment Agency. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking during the annual clean up of the seabed at Marsascala.
- **21 July 2000** The *Malta-EU Information Centre* said that the issue of whether the Maltese language would be recognised as an official EU language would only be discussed during the final stages of negotiations. *MIC* was reacting to various statements made recently on the issue.
- **21 July 2000** The Maltese-American Chamber of Commerce executive committee quoted American Ambassador Kathryn Proffitt as saying the growth of economic ties between Malta and the United States could only accelerate. The committee was referring to a speech made by Ms Proffitt when she attended a recent Chamber executive committee meeting.
- **21 July 2000** According to figures issued by the Central Office of Statistics, at the end of June 2000 there were 243,692 licensed motor vehicles, of which 179,420 were private. The number of new licences issued in the second quarter of the year was 4,446.
- **22 July 2000** President Guido de Marco celebrated his 69th birthday.
- **22 July 2000** Deputy Prime Minister and Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that the Government was looking closely at the Irish model and he planned to visit Ireland in the near future. Dr Gonzi was speaking to Patricia O'Donovan, Deputy General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, who was in Malta as guest of the *Union Haddiema Maghqudin*.
- **22 July 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that ongoing talks over the future of *Kalaxlokk* were positive and had brought the Government, the company, and the General Workers' Union to gain a better understanding of the situation at the company.
- **22 July 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli told Parliament that the sale of tickets in connection with government lotteries yielded Lm10,849,643 in the first six months this year.
- **22 July 2000** According to figures released by the Central Office of Statistics, the shortfall between ordinary revenue and total expenditure during the first half of this year amounted to Lm27.4 million, down from a comparable shortfall of Lm39.4 million reported during the January to June period of 1999.
- **22 July 2000** The Malta-EU Information Centre (MIC) announced that it had handled 1,930 requests for information during the month of June.

- **22 July 2000** Dr Joseph R Micallef was sworn in as judge in a ceremony presided over by President Guido de Marco. Mr Justice Micallef's appointment brings the complement of judges to seventeen.
- **23 July 2000** *Moody's* credit rating agency gave a stable rating outlook for Bank of Valletta and HSBC Bank Malta. Finance Minister John Dalli said that Moody's report confirmed the country's positive thrust forward, even in the face of the restructuring process that had been going on for some time.
- **24 July 2000** Minister of Foreign Affairs Joe Borg, on an official visit to China, personally conveyed Dr Fenech Adami's greetings to Chinese Prime Minister Zhu Rong Ji and, on the Maltese Premier's behalf, extended an invitation for Mr Zhu to make an official visit to Malta.
- **24 July 2000** A report drawn up by members of the European Parliament's women's committee called on all EU applicant countries to appoint an ombudsman specifically to tackle gender equality issues.
- **24 July 2000** A report, commissioned by the government-owned Public Transport Authority and dealing with the effects of EU regulations on local public transport, proposes the creation of a new bus service divided into five regions.
- **24 July 2000** Enemalta Corporation became a full member of *Euroelectric*, the body of the electricity industry of Europe.
- **24 July 2000** The Malta Jazz Festival organised by the Department of Culture was this year filmed by *RAI 3*. It was also covered by *BBC Radio 3* as well as by *The Sunday Times* of London. The respective journalists were brought over to Malta on the initiative of the Malta Tourist Authority.
- **25 July 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that he hoped that the College for Arts, Science and Technology, as proposed to the Cabinet by the Ministry of Education, would start functioning in October. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing the media following the usual Monday cabinet meeting.
- **25 July 2000** Minister of Foreign Affairs Joe Borg told Parliament that Malta, along with 106 other countries, had approved the Warsaw Declaration during a meeting that took place in the capital city of Poland last month.
- **25 July 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that Malta was considering the possibility of linking into the underwater gas pipeline being planned between Italy and Libya. Mr Dalli told reporters that the issue would be explored during the meeting currently being held in Malta between Maltese and Libyan Government officials.
- **25 July 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici told Parliament that the first draft of a report by *Eurostat* had shown that Malta's GDP, corrected to purchasing power parity, was around 60 percent of the EU average. That meant that Malta could maximise the assistance it was eligible for from the EU.
- **25 July 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said the role of the new Malta Statistics Authority would be to collect, compile and publish official statistics. Prof. Bonnici was moving the second reading of the bill for the setting up of the authority.
- **25 July 2000** *E-shore*, the electronic-commerce company operated by Terranet, combined efforts with the Malta Lotto Department to put the sale of national lottery tickets on-line. The site may be visited at www.maltalotteries.com
- **26 July 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that recruitment with the Armed Forces of Malta was scheduled for next year. The last recruitment had been made in February and 70 had successfully completed their basic training.
- **26 July 2000** The Central Office of Statistics states that, in line with international standards, the Balance of Payments statement of Malta was, as from this year, being compiled and published in accordance with the methodological guidelines set in the fifth edition of the *International Monetary*

Fund Balance of Payments manual. These guidelines are similar to those specified within the European Union. Data has been revised back to 1995.

- **26 July 2000** Transport Minister Censu Galea stated that, following new procedures being adopted by the Maritime Authority, a number of tankers have been struck off the Maltese register or de-registered by their owners and will be scrapped. Mr Galea was reacting to an announcement by *Lloyd's Register* that oil tankers, that were more than 15 years old and were capable of carrying more than 3,000 gross tons, were to be subject to special inspections by port state controls between September and the end of November.
- **26 July 2000** *Water Services Corporation* Chief Executive Antoine Riolo told Economic Minister Josef Bonnici that devices installed on two water production trains were expected to save the Water Services Corporation Lm21,000 a year. Prof. Bonnici was on a visit to the reverse-osmosis plant at Pembroke.
- **26 July 2000** Malta was formally re-elected to serve for a further four-year term to the Council of the International Seabed Authority that will run between 2001 – 2004.
- **26 July 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech announced that a master plan for Cottonera would be drawn up over the next two years. Dr Zammit Dimech presided over the signing of an agreement between the Cottonera Rehabilitation Project's executive co-ordinator, Ray Bondin, and Israeli architect and conservation consultant Giora Solar.
- **26 July 2000** Prof. John Rizzo Naudi, High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaysia, presented his credentials to the supreme head of state, Sultan Salehuddin Abdul Aziz ibni al-Marhum Hisamuddin Alam. Prof Rizzo Naudi also presented his credentials as High Commissioner to the Republic of Singapore to the President of Singapore, S.R. Nathan.
- **27 July 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said in Parliament that although no decision had yet been taken for Malta to re-join the Partnership for Peace, the Government was not renouncing its right to re-apply. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking during question time.
- **27 July 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli announced that Malta and Libya had signed an agreement by which the Libyan Government awarded contracts to Maltese entities, including Malta-Libyan joint ventures, worth \$80 million. Mr Dalli was addressing a press conference, together with Libyan Undersecretary at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Bashri Ramadam Abu Janah.
- **27 July 2000** Figures released by *Eurostat* show that Malta's GDP growth last year was the second highest among the 13 EU candidate countries. The island's annual growth rate of 4.6 per cent was second only to Slovenia's 4.9 per cent.
- **27 July 2000** Figures released by the Central Office of Statistics show that the unemployment rate in June was 4.5 per cent, down from 4.8 per cent the previous month. This followed a drop of 482 persons in the number of registered unemployed.
- **27 July 2000** *Maltacom* Chief Executive Stephen Muscat announced that a new telephone directory would be distributed to Maltacom customers as from today. Over the next two weeks, some 185,000 directories would be distributed to households and businesses in Malta and Gozo.
- **27 July 2000** The House of Representatives rose for its summer recess after giving a second reading to a bill setting up the Malta Statistics Authority. The House will reconvene on September 18.
- **28 July 2000** The Prime Minister and Mrs Fenech-Adami left Malta for a holiday abroad. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Social Policy Lawrence Gonzi assumed the additional duties of Prime Minister during the absence of Dr Edward Fenech-Adami.
- **28 July 2000** The Finance Ministry said that the main problem highlighted by *Moody's* credit rating service in its latest report on Malta's banking system was the retrograde attitude of the Maltese political opposition in its attempt to sabotage Malta's much needed change process.

- **28 July 2000** Figures released by the Central Office of Statistics show that, in May, imports rose by Lm32.7 million to Lm129 million, from Lm96.8 million in May last year. Exports went up by Lm25.1 million to Lm92.7 million, from Lm67.6 million, in the corresponding period last year. The trade gap widened by Lm37.9 million to Lm160.5 million.
- **28 July 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg discussed trade and tourism links with Hong Kong in a number of meetings with Government officials there.
- **28 July 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that an incentive package prepared by the Tourism Ministry would be available to hoteliers in the three-star and lower categories. The package would include training schemes and financial and technical assistance.
- **28 July 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that, this year, the Ministry was expected to spend about Lm1 million on restoration, maintenance and rehabilitation of historic landmarks. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking during a visit to the site of the excavation of Pembroke Battery.
- **28 July 2000** The Planning Authority unanimously approved an outline application for alterations and an extension to the new hospital at Tal-Qroqq. The application was felt necessary after it was decided that the hospital would have 850 beds instead of the 450 originally planned.
- **28 July 2000** The European Commission assigned to the University of Malta the contract to organise a Master's degree in 'Human Rights and Democratisation' for the Mediterranean region. This is a first ever project assigned to a Maltese institution under the MEDA Democracy programme.
- **28 July 2000** Mr Peter Toledo presented his credentials as Malta's new Ambassador to Lebanon to President Emile Lahoud.
- **28 July 2000** The Libyan-Maltese Chamber of Commerce inaugurated new premises at 9, Princess Margaret Street, Msida.
- **29 July 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that accountants and auditors had to keep abreast of new developments in their profession, particularly new methodologies, theories and standards. Mr Dalli was speaking prior to his presenting 20 accountants and 13 auditors with a warrant to practise their profession.
- **29 July 2000** President Guido de Marco urged the Museum of Fine Arts to look into the possibility of setting up a national portrait gallery. Prof. de Marco was speaking during a visit to the Museum.
- **29 July 2000** Malta was the subject of a seven-hour live programme on the state radio in Poland. The programme regularly attracts some two million listeners.
- **29 July 2000** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that the Embassy of Malta in Brussels, Belgium, would be moving to 65-67 Rue Belliard, Brussels 1040.
- **30 July 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg said that, over the past twenty-two months, Malta had made great strides forward. Not only had it successfully completed the EU screening process in record time, but it had also made considerable progress in its preparations to take on the obligations of EU membership. Dr Borg was speaking during a dinner held in his honour by the members of the diplomatic corps.
- **30 July 2000** The *Kalaxlokk* industrial dispute was settled at a three-hour meeting between the Government, senior *Kalaxlokk* officials and the General Workers' Union. The agreement was signed by Finance Minister John Dalli, *Kalaxlokk* Chairman Harold Walls, and GWU General Secretary Tony Zarb.
- **30 July 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo made an impassioned plea to the public to keep Malta tidy. Dr Refalo was speaking during the launching of a pilot project for improved beach facilities based on *Blue Flag* standards. The pilot project was initiated by the Malta Tourism Authority and co-

ordinated by the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of the Environment.

- **31 July 2000** *Malta Film Facilities* announced that *Ocean Warrior* was the title of a new film to be shot in Malta and the Netherlands. *Ocean Warrior* is based on a true story about an environmentalist on a personal mission to combat illegal whaling. The film is to be directed by John Badham.

August

- **1 August 2000** President Guido de Marco said that it was important for the President to get to know how matters were developing in the country, both from the perspective of the politicians, as well as from that of the unions. Prof. de Marco was speaking prior to a meeting with senior General Workers' Union officials at the Palace, in Valletta.
- **1 August 2000** Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg announced that a bill amending the Development Planning Act of 1992 would be launched this month after being discussed by the Cabinet and the Government Parliamentary Group. Dr Borg was speaking at the launching of a document *Policy and Design Guidance 2000*.
- **1 August 2000** Statistics show that last year the Mgarr-Cirkewwa ferry route carried three million passengers and 700,000 vehicles. The peak recorded for one day stood at 16,350 passengers and 3,450 vehicles, carried on 84 ferry trips.
- **1 August 2000** The Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) is marking its 10th anniversary with the launch of a new logo and a new website. The site can be found at www.etc.org.mt
- **2 August 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg welcomed the call made by his British counterpart, Robin Cook, for the European Union to set a target-date for its next expansion.
- **2 August 2000** A group of *Lloyds* underwriters and insurance companies dropped their \$32 million claim against Air Malta and the Government for the loss of a Boeing 747 over Lockerbie. The evidence produced so far has not shown that there were any failings on the part of Air Malta, but had in fact shown that security procedures at Luqa airport were superior to other European airports.
- **2 August 2000** The Education Ministry launched a new project, *Nilqghuk*. The aim of the project is to introduce students starting secondary school to their new surroundings and make them familiar with the new system of administration.
- **2 August 2000** Weather reports and forecasts are now available on Malta International Airport's website, which may be found at www.maltairport.com. The website also provides flight information.
- **3 August 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli challenged Opposition Leader Alfred Sant to back up his tax abuse claim and name those companies which, according to Dr Sant, were being backed up by the Ministry to evade VAT.
- **3 August 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea launched the *Institute for Child and Parent Learning Support*. The institute will run two programmes aimed at assisting weak students and their parents. An initial Lm70,000 has been budgeted for the programmes.
- **3 August 2000** The Parliamentary Secretary in the Economic Services Ministry, George Hyzler, said that an *ad hoc* advisory council had been set up to look into the present structures of the film industry and propose new incentives to exploit the potential of this lucrative sector. Dr Hyzler was addressing a press conference.
- **3 August 2000** The Commission of the European Communities issued a call for the submission of project proposals for the protection of the Mediterranean environment within the context of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership.

- **3 August 2000** The Italian Alpine Training Team delivered a course of instruction in the basics of rock climbing and cliff rescue to a group of soldiers from the Armed Forces of Malta. The course was spread over the month of July.
- **4 August 2000** President Guido de Marco expressed the hope that legislation regulating the voluntary sector would be enacted sooner rather than later. Prof. de Marco said the law was required not so much to regulate the sector, but for the sake of transparency. The President was speaking during a visit to the 15th Kerygma Volleyball marathon being held at St Theresa Junior Lyceum, in Mriehel.
- **4 August 2000** New Chinese Ambassador Yang Guirong presented his credentials to President Guido de Marco at The Palace, in Valletta. Mr Yang is a former Ambassador to Madagascar and Sweden.
- **4 August 2000** The Tourism Ministry launched a video targeting second and third generation migrants. The video forms part of the Ministry's *Roots* programme and is intended to encourage emigrants and their descendants to take interest in their country of origin and pay Malta a visit.
- **4 August 2000** The Malta Tourism Authority is to embark on a Lm350,000 advertising campaign targeting the travel trade in the UK, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, France and Italy. The campaign takes off in September.
- **4 August 2000** Dr Max Ganado, who is the new Chairman of the Malta Arbitration Centre, heralded the centre as a quicker and cheaper form of settlement of disputes than a court of law.
- **5 August 2000** President Guido de Marco sent his best wishes to the Queen Mother on her 100th birthday.
- **5 August 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami had to cut short a holiday in Italy as he was suffering from severe gastro-enteritis. Dr Fenech-Adami was admitted to St Luke's Hospital for treatment.
- **5 August 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg announced that the Government would be requesting a transition period, or special arrangement, in five of the nine chapters soon to be opened for negotiations under the French presidency. Dr Borg was addressing a news conference together with Mr Richard Cachia Caruana, Head of Negotiations with the EU.
- **5 August 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli announced that the Government had saved Lm2 million over the past few months in the new drive to check abuse in social benefits. The figure was given at a meeting of the Malta Council for Economic Development.
- **6 August 2000** Mr Roderick Seda, Manager (International Sales and Marketing) of *Premier Cruise Lines*, announced a family-oriented holiday programme aimed at the Maltese market. Mr Seda was speaking during a press launch at Le Meridien Phoenicia.
- **7 August 2000** A Government medical bulletin said that Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami was responding well to hospital treatment and was expected to be discharged shortly.
- **7 August 2000** The Government announced that it would be proposing a ten-year transition period to the European Union in the crucial sector of state aid for shipyards. Meantime, the Government intended to start implementing the *Appledore Report*, which aims to achieve long term viability for the shipyards over a five-year reform programme.
- **7 August 2000** According to statistics from the Association of Estate Agents, residential property purchases by foreigners in Malta and Gozo in 1999 increased to Lm178,070,880, from Lm32,566,775 twenty years ago.
- **7 August 2000** HSBC Malta sponsored a financial services seminar organised by the *Malta Financial Services Centre* in Jersey, Channel Islands. The key speaker was MFSC Chairman Joe Banister who gave a brief overview of Malta as a viable financial centre ideally situated in the centre of the

Mediterranean.

- **8 August 2000** A report on tourism in Gozo, prepared by Wales-based firm Stevens and Associates, recommends that Gozo should be identified as a distinct region and sub-destination of Malta differentiated by the quality of its tourism product and its unique heritage and culture. The report was commissioned by the *Gozo Tourism Association*.
- **8 August 2000** Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg and Parliamentary Secretary George Pullicino launched a scheme that will enable those tilling government-owned land to register as the legal tenants of the land in question. Dr Borg said the scheme applied to anyone who had been cultivating land for at least two years.
- **8 August 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea announced the setting up of *Klabb Sajf*. The club is meant to provide complementary teaching to children who need additional help. Dr Galea was speaking to a group of parents at St Anne primary school, in Marsascala.
- **8 August 2000** Mr Edwin Vassallo, Parliamentary Secretary in the Economic Services Ministry, announced that all nine localities in the area covered by the North Harbours Local Plan had voiced their concern over the problems arising from the number of vehicles on the road, and the apparent inability to provide adequate parking space.
- **8 August 2000** According to figures released by the Central Office of Statistics the inflation rate in June had gone up from 2.64 per cent to 2.71 per cent. In June last year, the rate stood at 1.7 per cent. The Retail Price Index, in the meantime, went down by 0.41 per cent from the previous month, to 112.23.
- **8 August 2000** Enemalta Corporation announced that the corporation had again achieved an “A” stable credit rating from *Standard and Poor’s*, the global utilities rating service. The rating has remained unchanged since July 1998, when it was awarded for the first time.
- **8 August 2000** The front of bastions of Vittoriosa and the dome of St Lawrence church were lit up as the first phases of a two-year project that would eventually floodlight all the Cottonera bastions. The Cottonera Rehabilitation Project announced that Fort St Angelo and parts of the Cospicua and Senglea fortifications would be lit up in 2001.
- **8 August 2000** The Maltese-Australian Studies section of the Faculty of Arts of Victoria University of Technology has just published *Maltese in Australia – Wanderings through the Maltese-Australian story, from convict times to the present*. The book is the work of Ghajnsielem-born author Barry York.
- **9 August 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami left St Luke’s Hospital after being discharged by his doctors.
- **9 August 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that whoever had passed on confidential information concerning the VAT Department to the party in Opposition had committed a criminal offence.
- **9 August 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo announced that the number of tourists in June was 120,703 – an all-time record for one month. The figure represents an increase of 2,473, or 2.1 per cent, over that for the same month last year.
- **9 August 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea said that three major initiatives embarked upon by the Education Ministry were the of drafting Malta’s first cultural policy, a new law on culture, and the setting up of a National Council for Culture and Art.
- **9 August 2000** The Parliamentary Secretary in the Economic Services Ministry, Edwin Vassallo, said that the *European Charter for Small Enterprises* would form an integral part of the Business Plan to be discussed with business organisations. Mr Vassallo was speaking during the launch of the Small Business Efficiency Unit advisory board, at Tal-Handaq.
- **9 August 2000** *Middle Sea Insurance* acquired 51 per cent of the shareholding of *Mapfre Progress Spa*, a non-life insurance company operating in southern Italy. *Mapfre Progress* is a subsidiary of

Spain's Corpracion Compania Internacional de Reasegueros, considered to be one of the leading three national re-insurers.

- **10 August 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea met members of the Young Enterprise Company *InPact*. The company, made up of sixteen students from the Junior College, placed fourth among nineteen countries in the Young Enterprise Europe finals held in Hanover.
- **10 August 2000** *The International Peace Forum of Women Creators of the Mediterranean* invited a number of Maltese women from different artistic professions to a forum in Rhodes, at the beginning of September. The forum is being held under the auspices of UNESCO.
- **11 August 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said he hoped that the General Workers' Union's decision to lift its directives over the budget measures marked the beginning of a change in approach by the union. Mr Dalli said he hoped that the GWU would, together with the other social partners, take part in the discussion within the Malta Council for Economic Development on the country's present situation.
- **11 August 2000** Minister of Education Louis Galea said he planned to evaluate the quality of teaching in English, Maltese, mathematics and science in state secondary schools. Dr Galea was addressing representatives of the media.
- **11 August 2000** Health Minister Louis Deguara announced that a committee set up by the Health Department and the Wireless Telegraphy branch of the Office of the Prime Minister had concluded that there was no evidence to suggest that mobile telephone transmission antennas were harmful to public health. Dr Deguara was speaking at a news conference.
- **11 August 2000** Malta aligned itself with the European Union in expressing deep concern over a Malaysian court's sentencing of former Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim. The EU added its name to a lengthening list of critics of the controversial verdict.
- **12 August 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami officially launched the foundation that will set up the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology with a public deed signed at the Auberge de Castille. Education Minister Louis Galea attended the launching.
- **12 August 2000** The Malta-EU Information Centre weekly bulletin *Aggornat* reported that the European Commission was expected to make a decision over a complaint made by 12 airlines, including Air Malta, about Italy's allocation of flights to Milan's Linate and Malpensa airports. The Commission is expected to pronounce itself on the issue in September.
- **12 August 2000** Five Maltese furniture manufacturers took part in the Manchester furniture show, a small regional fair targeting UK importers, retailers and distributors of furniture and related products. The visit was organised by the Malta External Trade Corporation (METCO).
- **12 August 2000** The television series *Paul of Tarsus*, shot in Malta and Morocco, is expected to be broadcast in the US and Italy later on this year. Filming of the water sequences at the Mediterranean Film Studio's shallow water tank at Rinella was completed this week.
- **14 August 2000** President Guido de Marco visited the exhibition *Arti fl-Apert*. The exhibition formed part of the Mediterranean Nights Festival, organised by the Malta Labour Party. Prof. de Marco praised the Opposition party for continuing this initiative over the years and showing that political parties were not just about confrontation.
- **14 August 2000** The Central Office of Statistics announced in that the number of births in Malta had dropped by 23 per cent between 1988 and 1999, while the number of deaths had risen by 10 per cent. The information is carried in the booklet *Malta in Figures: 2000*, published by the COS.
- **15 August 2000** President Guido de Marco received a group of twenty-five Russian children from Chernobyl. The children were accompanied by Valery E Sorokin, Deputy Chief of Mission of the Russian Embassy, and by Dr George Hyzler who organised the children's stay in Malta.

- **15 August 2000** Gozo Minister Giovanna Debono inaugurated a Renal Unit at the Gozo hospital consisting of four dialysis machines and two reverse osmosis units. The equipment was paid for by the *Gozo Channel* company on the initiative of Minister Debono.
- **15 August 2000** According to figures provided by the Central Bank of Malta and published in a booklet by the Central Office of Statistics, deposits by non-residents in Maltese banks increased almost five-fold between 1995 and 1999, going up from Lm236.18 million to Lm1,148.67 million.
- **15 August 2000** *Maltacom* Chairman Maurice Zarb Adami announced that the state telecommunications Company made a pre-tax profit of Lm6.7 million for the first six months of the year. This represents a seven per cent increase in profit compared to the Lm6.3 million made during the same period last year.
- **15 August 2000** The Malta-EU Information Centre received 2,028 requests for information during the month of July. The Centre may be contacted by e-mail at euinfo.mic@magnet.mt
- **15 August 2000** French Ambassador Didier Destremau visited the Institute for the Promotion of Small Enterprise, where he met Chairman Lino Callus and Chief Executive Joe Vella Bonnici.
- **16 August 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that the legislation regulating non-governmental organisations was expected to be on the statute books by June 2001. Dr Gonzi was speaking in an interview with *The Times* newspaper.
- **16 August 2000** Malta featured in *Tuttoturismo*, *Il Corriere della Sera*, *Barche*, *Entro e Fuoribordo* magazines. The exposure followed press trips organised by the Malta Tourist Office in Milan and the marketing and promotion directorate of the Malta Tourism Authority.
- **17 August 2000** Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg announced that up to last week 825 persons had qualified for dual citizenship. Dr Borg was speaking at the launch of a booklet entitled *Dual Citizenship - the Rule, Not the Exception*.
- **17 August 2000** A government statement said that the authorities would start the consultation process over the Arms Ordinance with interested parties as soon as it received the draft currently being prepared by its consultants. Following consultation, the final say would then remain to the Cabinet and Parliament.
- **17 August 2000** Maltese Ambassador to Rome Joe Cassar presented a donation of Lm1,200 to President Guido de Marco at the Palace in Valletta. The money was collected by the Maltese community in Italy in aid of the Malta Community Chest Fund.
- **17 August 2000** The Central Office of Statistics is working on the compilation of a Business Register. To this effect it has mailed questionnaires to about 47,000 business units in Malta.
- **17 August 2000** *Air Malta* was among eight members of the 27-strong Association of European Airlines that registered an increase in their passenger load factor on scheduled flights last year.
- **17 August 2000** The website of the French presidency of the EU carries a dossier about Malta. The dossier is one of a series being published about EU member-states and candidate countries. The site may be visited at www.presidence-europe.fr
- **18 August 2000** Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Social Policy Lawrence Gonzi inaugurated HSBC's new branch at Fgura. Dr Gonzi emphasised the importance of providing a personalised service for the benefit of the community.
- **18 August 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo received a group of Italian students led by Professoressa Cristiana Sottile and Signora Piera De Lelio, organisers of English language studies abroad. The group was in Malta to evaluate the quality of the *Teaching of English as a Foreign Language* locally, and to study the historical, cultural and social potentials of the Maltese Islands.
- **18 August 2000** President Guido de Marco was presented with a copy of the book *Insights into Sliema*,

written by former Maltese Ambassador Victor J. Gauci. Mr Gauci currently resides in Sydney, Australia.

- **18 August 2000** Chamber of Advocates President Joe Azzopardi and Malta Arbitration Centre Chairman Max Ganado agreed to hold joint seminars early next year, focusing on domestic and international arbitration.
- **19 August 2000** President Guido de Marco received the Maltese contingent that will be representing Malta at the Sydney Olympics.
- **19 August 2000** According to figures released by the Central Office of Statistics, the shortfall between ordinary revenue and total expenditure in the first seven months of the year was Lm55.9 million. This figure is 13.5 per cent down from the shortfall reported during the January/July period of 1999.
- **19 August 2000** According to a survey by the Central Office of Statistics, the number of mobile phone users nearly trebled during the last three years, to reach 44,314. The number was expected to increase further following liberalisation.
- **19 August 2000** *Maltacom* launched its *G-Card*. The card can be used to place calls to Malta from as many as 60 different countries.
- **19 August 2000** The sixth Mediterranean Medical Society Congress and the second Mediterranean Summer School will be held in Malta in the first week of September. Further information is available on the event's web site www.synapse.net/mt/mms2000
- **19 August 2000** The Hubert H. Humphrey Alumni Association (Malta), in collaboration with the Institute of International Education in Washington, and the US Embassy in Malta, will be organising the regional alumni conference in Malta. The conference will be held between 7 and 10 September 2000 at the Suncrest Hotel, in Qawra.
- **19 August 2000** Three Italian newspapers, *Tuttosport*, *Gazzetta Dello Sport* and *Corriere Dello Sport*, as well as television stations *BBC Sport*, *Spanish Television (TVE)*, and *TMC*, gave coverage to the *Kerygma* volleyball marathon.
- **20 August 2000** President Guido de Marco inaugurated a monument to Dr Anton Tabone. Dr Tabone was the former head of the Gozo Hospital and first President of the Gozo Civic Council.
- **20 August 2000** Minister for Social Policy Lawrence Gonzi said that the Government intended to check for abuses in social services across the board.
- **21 August 2000** A delegation from the Confederation of Malta Trade Unions, made up of President Alfred Buhagiar and General Secretary Charles Magro, paid a courtesy visit to the Maltese High Commissioner in the UK, George Bonello du Puis. The delegation was on a familiarisation visit about the European Union.
- **22 August 2000** President Guido de Marco received Mr Lino Callus and Mr Joseph Vella Bonnici, Chairman and Chief Executive respectively of the Institute for the Promotion of Small Enterprise, at the Palace, in Valletta.
- **22 August 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea announced that a total of Lm3.3 million was being pumped into construction and maintenance works for 28 state schools. Dr Galea was inspecting works at state schools in Attard and Mgarr, where extensive construction work is underway.
- **22 August 2000** Dockyard Chairman John Cassar White announced that Minister of Economic Services Josef Bonnici had met representatives of *Appledore*, the Drydocks Council, and the General Workers' Union. The four sides discussed, amongst other topics, the recruitment exercise for the top management posts at the 'yard.
- **22 August 2000** Sir Neville Purvis, Director General of the British Safety Council, presented Malta Drydocks with the council's prestigious Five Star Safety Award. "In achieving a Five Star Award,"

said Mr Purvis, "Malta Drydocks has shown real commitment to improving health and safety in the workplace."

- **22 August 2000** Malta featured prominently in a number of high profile magazines in South Africa.
- **23 August 2000** A Legal Notice on the Telecommunications Services (General) Regulations, 2000, setting out the fees for the granting of licences, was published in the Government Gazette of the 18 August 2000. The legal notice applies to public fixed telecommunications systems and services; public mobile telecommunications systems and services; and fixed wireless telecommunications systems and services. The regulations fall in the context of Government plans for the liberalisation of the telecommunications sector.
- **23 August 2000** Assistant Police Commissioner (Protective Services) Josie Brincat announced in an interview that mobile speed cameras were being used by the police in an attempt to curb traffic accidents. Between January and July this year there were seven fatalities; in August there were another three.
- **23 August 2000** Communications Minister Censu Galea said that discussions were going on between *Datatrak Systems Ltd.* and the Transport Authority on the possibility of installing a tracking system in route buses. The system would serve to monitor routes taken by bus drivers. Mr Galea was speaking during a news conference at Datatrak headquarters, in Mosta.
- **24 August 2000** The President of Malta and Mrs de Marco, on behalf of the Community Chest Fund, distributed over Lm12,000 amongst 17 philanthropic organisations and 47 individuals.
- **24 August 2000** President Guido de Marco urged youths to nurture their sense of values and to believe in the future. Prof. de Marco was speaking at the opening of *Festazghazagh*. This festival is organised every five years by the Diocesan Youth Commission, and includes the participation of 70 local youth organisations together with 200 young people from 12 countries.
- **24 August 2000** *Lloyds List* reported that the Malta Maritime Authority had sent a draft report on the sinking of the *Erika* to nine interested parties. Transport Minister Censu Galea said the report was sent with a strict confidentiality label as the International Maritime Organisation regulations stipulate that interested parties have a right to comment on a draft report. The final report would take into account comments made before proceeding to publication.
- **24 August 2000** The Employment and Training Corporation is requesting up to Lm8.4million over the next three years to fund existing programmes and to provide for new initiatives it has planned for the future.
- **24 August 2000** Fisheries Minister Ninu Zammit said that the value of fish landings between May and July this year rose by 29 per cent, reaching Lm901,419, compared to Lm698,882 during the same period last year. Mr Zammit was addressing a news conference at the Ministry in Valletta.
- **24 August 2000** Dr Pierre Mallia and Dr Emanuel Agius, members of the Bioethics Consultative Committee within the Health Ministry, represented Malta at the annual meeting of the European Society for Philosophy in Medicine and Health Care, in Poland.
- **24 August 2000** The Meteorological Office recorded a temperature of 40°C, the highest temperature recorded so far this year. Temperatures are still below those experienced last year, when a record of 43.8°C was marked on August 9.
- **25 August 2000** President Guido de Marco sent a message of condolence to Russian President Vladimir Putin following the loss of life of 118 Russian sailors on board the submarine *Kursk* in the Barents Sea. President de Marco also expressed solidarity with the families of the victims.
- **25 August 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo announced regulations giving new rights to the consumer in the local package holiday market. These regulations were given legal effect by Legal Notice 157, published in the Government Gazette of the 25th August 2000.

- **25 August 2000** Middle Sea Insurance announced that the company had obtained a licence from the Financial Services Commission of Gibraltar to operate a branch there. *Mascarenhas Insurance and Finance Ltd* were appointed representative agents for the new branch.
- **25 August 2000** *Maltacom* Chairman Maurice Zarb Adami announced that the company was studying the implications of new wide-ranging telecommunications regulations. Mr Zarb Adami was speaking during the signing of a new collective agreement for Maltacom employees.
- **25 August 2000** Ms Janet Caruana-Savage, a young artist of Maltese descent, met Ms Jan Arnesen, Chief of the UN Exhibitions Department of Public Information. The two sides made arrangements for an exhibition of Maltese art to be mounted at United Nations headquarters, in New York. Ms Caruana-Savage can be contacted on e-mail JANETSAVAGE@aol.com
- **26 August 2000** President Guido de Marco received members of the Confederation of Malta Trade Unions. The two sides agreed on the need for better relations among trade unions.
- **26 August 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami announced that the first draft of a law on voluntary organisations was ready. The law was expected to be enacted early next year. The Prime Minister was speaking during a discussion on politics with Leader of the Opposition Alfred Sant, at *Festazghazagh*.
- **26 August 2000** Malta Financial Services Centre chairman Joseph Bannister strongly rebutted the allegation made by the Jersey Financial Services Commission, and reported in *The Guardian* newspaper, that Malta's financial crime regulations were not up to international standard. Prof. Bannister pointed out that the Financial Action Task Force had recently said that Malta had extensive anti-money laundering legislation.
- **26 August 2000** Thirty-two former dockyard workers or their relatives received just over \$116,000 between them from two US companies as compensation for asbestos-related diseases suffered after working on American ships in the 1950s and 1960s.
- **26 August 2000** *Gozo Channel* reported a sharp increase in traffic during the *Santa Marija* period. A total of 224,521 passengers and 48,479 vehicles commuted between Malta and Gozo between 5 and 20 August. These figures show an increase of 13,564 passengers and 3,351 vehicles over the same period last year.
- **26 August 2000** Mr William Spiteri presented his credentials to President Vaclav Havel as Malta's Ambassador to the Czech Republic.
- **27 August 2000** Transport Minister Censu Galea said that the Maritime Authority's draft report on the sinking of the *Erika* had been sent to interested parties according to International Maritime Organisation regulations. The parties had been given until September 11 to submit their comments. The final report is to be published by the end of September.
- **28 August 2000** President Guido de Marco delivered an important speech about the administration of criminal justice and the penal system in Malta. He said that punishment must serve as a deterrent for potential crime. Prof. de Marco was visiting a residence for ex-convicts, in Cospicua.
- **28 August 2000** Transport Minister Censu Galea told *The Times* newspaper that a tender for bus ticketing machines would be issued in the coming days. Mr Galea said that the preparatory work for the new tender was now complete.
- **28 August 2000** Maltese emigrants Mario and Lillian Borg made an emotional return to their homeland after a long and gruelling sea voyage across the Atlantic in their 39-foot boat *Maltese Falcon*. The couple left Port Credit, Ontario, Canada, on 3rd October 1999.
- **29 August 2000** President Guido de Marco received representatives of the Malta Institute of Accountants, led by Institute president, Mr Steve Cachia.

- **29 August 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami arrived in Poland to take part in a conference to mark the 20th anniversary of *Solidarnosc*. The conference is being convened in Gdansk on the initiative of the Polish Premier, Jerzy Buzek.
- **29 August 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli accused the Jersey Financial Services Commission of making uninformed statements about Malta and advised the Commission to check the facts. Mr Dalli was reacting to a statement by the JFSC that warned banks to be wary of doing business with companies in Malta and the Cayman Islands because of concerns about money laundering.
- **29 August 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo addressed students from 16 countries meeting in Malta to take part in the Summer University organised by the Valletta branch of *Association des Etats Généraux des Etudiants de l'Europe (AEGEE)*.
- **29 August 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea announced that Cabinet had discussed recommendations that lightweight shelters be installed at *Hagar Qim, Ggantija, Mnajdra* and Tarxien to address the most critical agents of deterioration – the sun and the rain. Dr Galea was speaking at a news conference at the Archaeology Museum, in Valletta.
- **29 August 2000** Speaker of the House of Representatives Anton Tabone will be attending the conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, being held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, between 30 August and 1 September, 2000. Mr Tabone is accompanied by Government MP Helen D'Amato and Opposition MP Joe Mizzi.
- **30 August 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami attended the summit of the European Popular Party in Poland. Dr Fenech-Adami also addressed the conference on the theme *Solidarity as a factor in shaping 21st century politics*.
- **30 August 2000** Figures released by the Central Office of Statistics show that total exports increased by Lm118 million, to Lm503.8 million, in the first half of this year. Total imports went up to Lm710.3 million, from Lm533.7 million in the same period last year.
- **30 August 2000** Gozo Minister Giovanna Debono launched the guide-book *Gozo – Island of Myths and Miracles*. The book is an initiative of the Gozo Tourism Association. Italian, French and German versions of the book are to be published in the coming weeks.
- **31 August 2000** President Guido de Marco received members of the Chamber of Commerce, led by Mr John Sullivan. Prof. de Marco said that the meetings with constituted bodies were proving very useful to keep him abreast of public opinion.
- **31 August 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami returned to Malta from Poland where he had talks on the EU membership process with Polish Premier Jerzy Buzek and Slovenian Prime Minister Andrej Bajuk. The process was also discussed on a technical level between Malta's chief negotiator Richard Cachia Caruana and negotiators of the other countries.
- **31 August 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech visited the chapel of *Santa Caterina d'Italia* where restoration work is taking place. The project will cost about Lm250,000 and is to be financed out of the fourth Italian Financial Protocol. Dr Zammit Dimech was accompanied by Foreign Minister Joe Borg, Italian Ambassador Giancarlo Riccio and Valletta mayor Paul Borg Olivier.
- **31 August 2000** The Institute for the Promotion of Small Enterprise and Bank of Valletta signed a co-operation agreement to provide extra drive to Malta's industrial restructuring efforts. The agreement was launched at a news conference at the Institute's offices, in Marsa.
- **31 August 2000** The Malta Association of Travel Agents welcomed *The Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 2000*. MATA said that it looks forward to the clamping down on unlicensed tour organisers by the Malta Tourism Authority's Enforcement Directorate.
- **31 August 2000** The Maltese Culture Movement in the UK is to organise a day of festivities on 9

September to mark the feast of *Our Lady of Victories*. The event is to be addressed by Maltese High Commissioner George Bonello du Puis.

September

- **1 September 2000** The Central Office of Statistics reported that the gainfully occupied population for July had increased by 1,152, or 0.8 per cent, over June to 141,536. The number of registered unemployed in July was up by 194 over the figure for the previous month and reached 6,803, or 4.6 per cent, of the labour force.
- **1 September 2000** The Malta/EU Information Centre (MIC) is distributing an eight-page information leaflet explaining to the public what has been achieved so far in the seven chapters that Malta negotiated with the European Union. A total of 150,000 leaflets are to be distributed.
- **1 September 2000** The Euro Info Correspondence Centre at the Malta External Trade Corporation will be leading a Maltese delegation to a conference on economic and monetary union in Greece on September 18 and 19. Further information is available from the Euro Info Correspondence Centre on e-mail: charmaine.hogan@metco.net
- **1 September 2000** *Radio Rai Uno* and *Radio Vatican* interviewed Life Cycle volunteers taking part in a 2,500km cycling marathon from Reggio to Lourdes to raise funds for St Luke's Hospital's Renal Unit. *Radio Rai Uno* will be following the team's progress throughout its journey in Italy. Updates on the journey may be obtained online from lifecycle@vol.net.mt
- **1 September 2000** Japanese scholars, led by Prof. Hiroshi Kato from Hitotsubashi University, held a workshop in Malta on the theme *Multiculturalism in the Mediterranean world*. The workshop was organised by the Islands and Small States Institute of the Foundation for International Studies.
- **1 September 2000** *Enemalta Corporation* recorded summer's peak load of 333 megawatts. This is an increase of 7 per cent over last year's summer peak of 311 megawatts.
- **2 September 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said the country seemed to have accepted the direction his two-year-old administration had given back to it. In particular, Malta accepted its EU membership bid. The Prime Minister was speaking at a news conference on the theme *In your interest*, which gave an account of the Government's second year in government.
- **2 September 2000** Dr John Vella, leader of the Maltese Parliamentary delegation to the Council of Europe and member of the Council's Political Affairs Committee, will be attending a meeting of the committee being held in Prague between 4 and 5 September.
- **2 September 2000** A group of 35 journalists from Canto Ticino in Switzerland and members of the Federation of Sports Journalists were in Malta to assess the Island's sports and tourism facilities. The group was led by Federation President Ulisse Cherugatti.
- **2 September 2000** Celebrated French actor Gerard Depardieu was in Malta for the shooting of the movie *Asterix and Obelix vs Cleopatra*. In 1996, the actor starred in *The Count of Monte Cristo*, also partly filmed in Malta.
- **3 September 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami left Malta at the start of a nine-day visit to the United States and Canada. Dr Edward Fenech-Adami was expected to address the United Nations' *Millennium Summit*.
- **3 September 2000** *GoMobile* Chief Executive Officer Prof. Juanito Camilleri announced that the company was planning to launch its service by next Christmas.

- **4 September 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that the Government was keeping its options open following the steep rise in the country's fuel imports bill. Prof. Bonnici said that in the long term it was impossible to have a situation where fuel is sold cheaper than it is bought. In the first six months this year, the country's fuel imports bill more than doubled, to Lm49.8 million from Lm24 million last year.
- **4 September 2000** *The European Movement (Malta)* is organising a one-day consultation on EU enlargement and institutional changes. The results of the Malta consultation will form part of a comprehensive report on enlargement and institutional change in the EU, to be submitted to the EU and to the national governments of EU member-states in advance of the December European Council meeting.
- **4 September 2000** The Gozo Business Chamber issued *The Effects of EU membership on the Island Region of Gozo*. The publication highlights the advantages and disadvantages to be considered when assessing membership.
- **5 September 2000** President Guido de Marco praised the courage of Captain Mark Said and Captain Alex Dalli of the Armed Forces of Malta who will attempt to fly a Shadow Microlight Aircraft from London to Australia in a record 35 days. The flight is intended to raise money in aid of the Community Chest Fund.
- **5 September 2000** Acting Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi is to sign on behalf of Malta a declaration of peace that a group of Italian aviation enthusiasts from the *Associazione Sportiva Sottovento* will be presenting to leading dignitaries of the Mediterranean. The group is arriving in Malta on 7 September 2000.
- **5 September 2000** Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg announced that a *White Paper* to be published soon would be proposing a whole range of new offences, as well as stiffer fines for common crimes. The White Paper would also give the Attorney General and the police wider powers to prosecute and bolster the rights of victims. Dr Borg was addressing 23 cadets following a course to qualify as police inspectors.
- **5 September 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo announced that Malta was Europe's second largest centre, after London, for the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language. Close to 40,000 students from all over Europe visit Malta annually, said Dr Refalo. The Minister was launching a course in English for Italian lawyers at the University of Malta.
- **5 September 2000** Figures published by the Central Office of Statistics show that the retail price index in July went up by 0.08 per cent when compared to the month of June. The inflation rate rose by 0.05 per cent in July, to reach 2.76 per cent.
- **6 September 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Commonwealth was "going through a phase of soul-searching" with regard to its real role in the new century and its need to continue to exist and be strengthened. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking following a meeting with Commonwealth secretary-general Don McKinnon, in New York.
- **6 September 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami today attends the *United Nations Millennium Summit* – the largest-ever-single gathering of world leaders. Dr Fenech-Adami is also participating in the first of four interactive round-table sessions, being chaired by Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong.
- **6 September 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that the Malta Council for Economic Development should be strengthened and also start discussing social development. Dr Gonzi was speaking during the third Clients' Forum organised by the Employment and Training Corporation.
- **6 September 2000** Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg and Parliamentary Secretary George Pullicino announced plans to make major amendments to the Development Planning Act. The Act regulates the Planning Authority and development planning. Dr Borg and Mr Pullicino were addressing a press conference.

- **6 September 2000** Malta will host the annual meeting of Commonwealth Finance Ministers from 19 to 21 September. The meeting will bring together Commonwealth Ministers and delegates from 54 member countries.
- **6 September 2000** The *Valletta Rehabilitation Project* and the heritage organisation *Din l-Art Helwa* signed an agreement for the joint restoration of the Church of Our Lady of Victory, in Valletta. The agreement was signed in the presence of Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech. The church is the oldest building in the capital.
- **6 September 2000** A Maltese business delegation is shortly due to visit Canada and the US as part of a business co-operation mission jointly organised by the Malta External Trade Corporation and the Euro Info Correspondence Centre. The mission is being sponsored by Bank of Valletta and HSBC Bank Malta.
- **7 September 2000** President Guido de Marco received a delegation from the Malta Employers' Association. This meeting was one in a series Prof. de Marco intends holding with constituted bodies.
- **7 September 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami was one of the 160 Heads of State and Government who converged upon the UN headquarters in New York for the United Nations Millennium Summit. The meeting was the largest-ever gathering of world leaders. Dr Fenech-Adami also participated in the first interactive round-table session that gathered together over 40 Heads of State and Government.
- **7 September 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami announced that Malta's proposal to set up a mechanism in the Commonwealth to promote Information Technology in less developed countries had been adopted. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking to reporters after a meeting of the Commonwealth High-Level Review Group, in New York.
- **7 September 2000** Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Borg, accompanying Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami for the United Nations Millennium Summit in New York, discussed EU enlargement and bilateral issues with Edward Kukan, Foreign Minister of Slovakia, and Mitja Brobnic, Deputy Foreign Minister of Slovenia.
- **7 September 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami was quoted as saying that he was well on the way to recovering from a recent viral infection and had no intention at present of retiring from politics. Dr Fenech-Adami also ruled out a Cabinet reshuffle in the immediate future. The Prime Minister was interviewed by *The Times* newspaper.
- **7 September 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi launched *Dur Dawra Ma' Dahrek*, an information campaign on occupational health and safety. The campaign was organised by the Ministry of Social Policy in conjunction with the Malta-EU Information Centre, and was launched during a visit by Dr Gonzi to the Brandstätter factory, in Bulebel.
- **7 September 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli described a four-hour meeting of the Malta Council for Economic Development that discussed the forthcoming Budget as "very positive and constructive". Mr Dalli was speaking to reporters after the meeting.
- **8 September 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, together with representatives of around 40 other countries, participated in the first of the United Nations Millennium Summit's four interactive round-table sessions.
- **8 September 2000** The Prime Minister signed two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child - one on the involvement of children in armed conflicts, and the other on child pornography. Dr Fenech-Adami also signed the Declaration on Human Rights of Mary Robinson, the chairperson of the UN Human Rights Commission.
- **8 September 2000** The Government announced two stock issues having a total value of Lm28 million: one is for Lm17.5 million at 5.9 per cent over nine years, and the other for Lm10.5 million at 6.6 per cent over 14 years. Accountant General Benedict Grech said the two stock issues were a roll-over of two other government stock issues that would mature on September 28.

- **8 September 2000** Bank of Valletta Group Chairman Joseph FX Zahra announced that the bank had made a pre-tax profit of Lm14.5 million in the nine months from October 1, 1999 to 30 June 2000. Mr Zahra was speaking at the formal launching of a \$25 million bond issue.
- **8 September 2000** Gozo Minister Giovanna Debono had a meeting with a group of Japanese scholars who are in Malta to take part in a workshop on *Multiculturalism in the Mediterranean World*. The Japanese scholars were led by Prof. Hiroshi Kato from Hitotsubashi University, in Tokyo.
- **8 September 2000** Dr Richard Vella Laurenti presented his credentials as Malta's Ambassador to Libya. The presentation was made to Mr Abdul Rahman Shalgam, secretary for foreign liaison and international co-operation in Tripoli.
- **8 September 2000** Public Lotto Director Alfred Muscat announced that the first prize in the national lottery was being raised from Lm120,000 to Lm150,000, as from the 209th edition of the lottery on 8th October 2000.
- **9 September 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami told the United Nations Millennium Summit in New York that Malta intended to significantly increase its financial contribution to peacekeeping. For the future, Malta would be raising its contribution from \$22,000 to \$110,000 per year.
- **9 September 2000** Archbishop Mgr. Joseph Mercieca celebrated Pontifical High Mass at St John's Co-Cathedral, in Valletta, to mark *Jum il-Vitorja*. The Mass was attended by the President and Mrs de Marco, Acting Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi as well as by Cabinet Ministers and Government MPs. The congregation also included members of the Diplomatic Corps, members of the Judiciary and representatives of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta.
- **9 September 2000** Health Minister Louis Deguara addressed the Sixth Mediterranean Medical Congress and the Second Mediterranean Summer School held at the Westin Dragonara Hotel, in St. Georges. The three-day meeting was organised by the Malta College of Family Doctors.
- **9 September 2000** Culture Minister Louis Galea announced that Malta would be joining 39 other countries taking part in the campaign titled *Europe – a common heritage*, organised by the Council of Europe. Dr Galea was speaking at a news conference held at the Upper Barrakka Gardens, in Valletta.
- **9 September 2000** A convoy made up of two AFM officers and 21 soldiers, driving six trucks and two Land Rovers loaded with humanitarian aid, left Malta *en route* for Kosovo.
- **10 September 2000** The fourth Hubert Humphrey Alumni Association conference was held in Malta. The theme of the conference was *Globalisation and its effects in the Euro-Med Region*. The Conference was attended by 70 participants from 16 countries in Southern Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East.
- **10 September 2000** President Guido de Marco delivered a keynote address at a conference on *Protecting Society from Organised Crime*, in Caserta, Italy. The Conference was organised by the Council of Europe, the *Procura Anti-Mafia*, and Naples' *La Seconda* University.
- **11 September 2000** Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi announced that an Employment and Training Corporation report showed that there had been a net increase of 77 jobs in sectors where, last year, levies were lifted. Dr Gonzi was speaking at a discussion in Luqa.
- **12 September 2000** President Guido de Marco said that peace building was about people and involved crucial elements such as human rights and human dignity. Prof. de Marco was speaking on *Peace-building challenges in an era of globalisation*, at the third meeting of the Board of Governors of the Peres Centre for Peace, in Israel.
- **12 September 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that the Social Policy Ministry's recommendations on amendments to the Conditions for Employment (Regulations) Act and the Industrial Relations Act would shortly be presented to the Cabinet. Dr Gonzi was speaking to reporters

following a meeting with the *Union Haddiema Maghqudin*.

- **12 September 2000** The Grand Master of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, Fra Andrew Bertie, presented decorations of the Order to Foreign Minister Joe Borg, to Malta's Ambassador to the Order, Jimmy Farrugia, and to Cabinet Secretary and Chancellor of the National Order of Merit, Alfred Fiorini Lowell. The decorations were awarded in recognition of these persons' exemplary service where the Order was concerned.
- **12 September 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici told *The Times* newspaper that the Government was following developments on oil price fluctuations. It would be keeping its options open and would not be ruling anything out, including a fuel price hike.
- **12 September 2000** A group of 23 children from Kaluga, in the Chernobyl area, returned home after a fortnight's holiday in Malta at the invitation of Dr and Mrs George Hyzler. The children spent a week at the Golden Tulip Vivaldi Hotel, in Paceville.
- **13 September 2000** President Guido de Marco, on a visit to Jerusalem, was the first foreign head of state to be received by newly elected Israeli President, Moshe Katsav. The two Presidents discussed continued co-operation between Malta and Israel and the strengthening of mutual support in multilateral and bilateral fields.
- **13 September 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg told the 55th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York that, as an EU member, Malta could play a role on the international stage and make a more effective contribution to peace and progress in the Mediterranean.
- **13 September 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo reported a rise in total income from tourism in the second quarter this year, as compared to that in the same quarter last year. He said results for the whole of this year were expected to be similar to results achieved last year. Dr Refalo made his remarks when he presented certificates to 27 new tourist guides.
- **13 September 2000** Agriculture and Fisheries Minister Ninu Zammit renewed his offer for Malta to house the headquarters of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean. This centre would monitor fishing regulations in the region. Mr Zammit was speaking at the three-day meeting of the GFCM, which opened at the Crown Plaza Hotel.
- **13 September 2000** Transport Minister Censu Galea announced that the Malta Maritime Authority was considering submissions from some of the nine interested parties following its draft report over the sinking of the tanker *Erika*. The report was expected to be finalised by the end of the month.
- **13 September 2000** The Malta-EU Information Centre last month handled 1,021 requests for information. The centre said the most frequently asked questions in August were about the environment and consumer protection.
- **14 September 2000** President Guido de Marco and Yasser Arafat, the President of the Palestinian National Authority, discussed the benefits of peace in the Middle East, and the need to overcome the current impasse and the remaining obstacles in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. The two Presidents met in Gaza.
- **14 September 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg announced that, during his participation in the United Nations Summit, Belgian Foreign Minister Louis Michel had told him that his Government believed that Malta was the best prepared among the EU applicant countries. "There should therefore be no difficulty for Malta to become a member in the first wave of enlargement," continued Mr Michel.
- **14 September 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg said that Irish Foreign Minister Brian Cowen had informed him that the Irish Prime Minister intended visiting Malta next January. Dr Borg met Mr Cowen at the United Nations Summit, in New York.
- **14 September 2000** Bank of Valletta said that its \$25 million eight per cent bond issue would close that same day because of very strong demand when subscription opened yesterday. The bond issue was supposed to close on September 22.

- **14 September 2000** The Chinese Embassy announced that former President Ugo Mifsud Bonnici would be paying a goodwill visit to China between 14 - 23 September. Dr Mifsud Bonnici was invited by Prof. Mei Zhaorong, President of the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs.
- **14 September 2000** Italian Ambassador Giancarlo Riccio invested Dr Cecil Paris and Mr Hubert Charles Mifsud with the Italian title *Cavaliere Ufficiale*. Mr Riccio said during the ceremony that the award was a token of gratitude from Italian President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi for the work put in to enhance relations between Malta and Italy.
- **14 September 2000** The Gozo Tourism Association issued a Gozo guide book titled *Gozo – Island of Myth and Miracles*. Versions in Italian, German and French are to be published in the near future.
- **15 September 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that fuel prices in Malta were fixed and could only be changed through regulations drawn up by the Government. The Government, he said, was keeping an eye on what was happening and hoping that the situation would soon settle down. Dr Fenech-Adami said there was no need for undue concern.
- **15 September 2000** The Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament unanimously approved a resolution on Malta's EU application and the progress achieved during negotiations. The resolution adopted by the committee will now be tabled at the European Parliament's plenary session for discussion and final approval in the first week of October. The resolution was drafted by Malta's rapporteur, Austrian MEP Ursula Stenzel.
- **15 September 2000** The representatives of EU candidate countries, meeting in Vilnius, said they were convinced that the accession negotiations could be concluded with any prepared candidate country during 2001. They expressed their expectation that this possibility would be included in the accession scenario to be adopted at the forthcoming EU Summit in Nice. In the meeting, Malta was represented by a delegation headed by Richard Cachia Caruana, Chairman of the Core Negotiating Group.
- **15 September 2000** Speaker Anton Tabone is leading a Parliamentary delegation on a visit to Moscow and St Petersburg at the invitation of the State Duma of the Russian Federation. The delegation includes Government MP Victor Galea Pace and Opposition MP Noel Farrugia.
- **15 September 2000** Justice and Local Government Minister Austin Gatt announced that local wardens had started booking people for environment-related offences. He had previously said that wardens had been concentrating too much on traffic. Dr Gatt was speaking at a press conference on the theme *In your interest*, which gave an account of the Government's second year in office.
- **15 September 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech announced that Malta was to adhere to the Basle Convention on the *Trans-bound Movement of Hazardous Waste and its Disposal*. Obligations under the convention have been transformed into regulations that will come into force on Sunday, 17th September.
- **15 September 2000** The Malta Film Commission announced that a BBC film crew had filmed the documentary *Playing with fire*. The crew filmed fireworks let off at the Mellieha feast last week. The documentary is to be shown on the *Discovery Channel* some time next year.
- **16 September 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo announced that new and as yet unapproved tourism accommodation projects would be regulated by a different set of guidelines in a bid to improve standards. Dr Refalo was closing a Malta Tourism Authority seminar on the manual of standards for existing and approved tourism accommodation establishments.
- **16 September 2000** A Parliamentary delegation made up of Government MPs Mario Galea and Tony Abela and Opposition MP Adrian Vassallo attended the 46th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in London and Edinburgh between September 20 and 29 under the auspices of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference.
- **16 September 2000** Shipping agents SMS announced that the *Atlantic Liberty* was in Malta for general

repairs. The tanker, owned by *Mitsui O.S.K. Line* of Japan, is 330 metres long, has a 58-metre beam, and a gross tonnage of 164,373. The *Atlantic Liberty* is the widest tanker ever to be drydocked in Malta.

- **16 September 2000** Mr Justice Patrick Vella was elected to the United Nations Human Rights Committee for a four-year term commencing on 1st January 2001. The Committee is made up of eighteen members.
- **17 September 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that Malta's participation in *Expo 2000* was money well spent. Dr Fenech-Adami said that, although the decision had been carefully weighed and discussed because of the somewhat high cost, a tour of the Malta pavilion had led him to conclude that he had no regrets. The Prime Minister was speaking at a press conference for the local and foreign press on Malta Day at Expo 2000.
- **17 September 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea announced a number of initial reforms in public broadcasting, including one that would limit the amount of revenue for PBS from television licences. The new system will come into effect in the year 2002. Dr Galea was addressing a press conference.
- **17 September 2000** *IVA – Malta fl-Ewropa*, an independent movement campaigning for a “Yes” vote in the national referendum on Malta's membership of the European Union, is to be launched on the 27th October. The *IVA* movement will be open to everybody, irrespective of political leanings or social background.
- **18 September 2000** Leader of the House Lawrence Gonzi said that, in view of the Government's legislative programme, Parliament would be holding eight sittings during most weeks until the end of the year. Eight bills will be moved for their first reading when the House of Representatives meets today after the summer recess.
- **18 September 2000** Agriculture and Fisheries Minister Ninu Zammit inaugurated an ice-making plant for use by fishermen at Marsaxlokk. The plant, worth close to Lm25,000, was built by the *Ghaqda Koperattiva tas-Sajd*.
- **19 September 2000** President Guido de Marco was due to officially inaugurate a three-day leadership seminar on *Mediterranean Basin-wide Co-development and Security* at the Strickland Foundation, on the 21st September. The regional seminar is being organised by the International Ocean Institute, in association with the United Nations Environment Programme, with the support of the Government of Malta.
- **19 September 2000** Ombudsman Joe Sammut says in his Business Plan for the year 2001, tabled in Parliament, that the Office of the Ombudsman expects to handle between 600 and 700 cases next year. These figures represent just about this year's amount.
- **19 September 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg tabled in Parliament the revised edition of the National Programme for the Adoption of the *Acquis* (NPAA).
- **19 September 2000** The Government expects to spend just under Lm10 million over three years to implement the changes necessary to bring Malta in line with European Union directives, laws, and regulations falling under the 17 Chapters on which negotiations have already been opened. This emerges from the NPAA document, tabled in Parliament by Foreign Minister Joe Borg.
- **19 September 2000** The annual meeting of Commonwealth Finance Ministers is being held in Malta from the 19 - 21 September, prior to the Annual Meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, in Prague, the following week. The theme of the meeting is *New challenges for the international financial institutions in supporting growth and development*.
- **19 September 2000** Dr Galina Kovalieva, who is the deputy Prime Minister of the Sverdlovsk Region of the Russian Federation, arrived in Malta. She heads a large delegation to discuss investment opportunities and joint co-operation with local enterprise.
- **19 September 2000** Mr Joseph C. Caruana, a business service consultant for the firm *Deluge Inc.*,

announced that the company planned to employ some 300 skilled workers in a subsidiary company to be set up in Malta. The company produces thermal hydraulic pumps that make use of solar power. *Deluge Inc.* is based in Arizona, USA.

- **19 September 2000** Government MP Michael Asciaq returned from Strasbourg after attending a Council of Europe conference on 'Science, Communication and Society' with particular emphasis on Bioethics. Dr Asciaq also attended a meeting of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights.
- **19 September 2000** British High Commissioner Howard Pearce launched the festival *Celebrating Britain - And 200 years of friendship with Malta*. The festival is organised jointly by the British High Commission and the British Council and is to be focused on the National Arts Centre at St James Cavalier.
- **20 September 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that one of his Government's key economic objectives was to build a modern and efficient financial centre based on a legislative framework that was in line with the requirements of the relevant intergovernmental institutions. These included the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organisation, the European Union, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing the Commonwealth Finance Ministers' meeting being held in Malta.
- **20 September 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that the recent rise in international oil prices posed a significant threat to most developing countries, because their terms of trade had deteriorated and because tightening monetary policy to ward off inflationary pressures would dampen global demand. Mr Dalli was addressing the Commonwealth Finance Ministers' meeting.
- **20 September 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that a report on the setting up of a Financial Intelligence Unit had been prepared by a working group composed of representatives of the Central Bank, the Financial Services Centre, the Attorney General and the Police. Mr Dalli was replying to a Parliamentary Question.
- **20 September 2000** Transport and Communications Minister Censu Galea presented *Maltacom* Chairman Maurice Zarb Adami with a licence to operate a mobile telephone system. Maltacom subsidiary *Go mobile* is set to start operations in December.
- **20 September 2000** Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg said he had requested the setting up of a system whereby embassies could be contacted immediately when immigration authorities suspected that foreigners were not *bona fide* tourists. The Egyptian Ambassador had earlier complained of discrimination against North Africans who, he said, had been refused entry into Malta for no justified reason. The Minister was replying to Questions in Parliament.
- **20 September 2000** Leader of the House Lawrence Gonzi announced that the Parliamentary House Business Committee had agreed that Parliament will debate the National Plan for the Adoption of the *Acquis* in eight sittings in the first week of October.
- **20 September 2000** Gozo Minister Giovanna Debono said that between January and August this year the Gozo ferries had carried 2,127,852 passengers and 495,976 cars.
- **20 September 2000** *Eden Leisure Group Ltd.* announced a Lm10 million bond issue to finance a new project in St George's Bay. The 100,000 bonds have a nominal value of Lm100 each, at 6.7 per cent interest, and will mature in 10 years. The bond issue has been underwritten by HSBC Bank Malta.
- **21 September 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that he was prepared to continue being of service to the people till God gave him the mental and physical capabilities to do so. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing a political rally at Floriana.
- **21 September 2000** The Prime Minister announced that the Commission set up to look into the social security system would be presenting its recommendations in a couple of months' time. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at Floriana.
- **21 September 2000** Commonwealth Secretary General Don McKinnon was separately received by

President Guido de Marco and Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami.

- **21 September 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that Malta was aiming to attract some 30,000 tourists from Russia and the Ukraine in 2001. This would mean an increase of 15 per cent over this year. Dr Refalo was addressing Dr Galina Kovalieva, Russian Deputy Prim Minister of the Sverdlovsk Region of the Russian Federation.
- **21 September 2000** President Guido de Marco, Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, Ministers, MPs and various other personalities took part in activities marking the 36th anniversary of Independence.
- **21 September 2000** *Middle Sea Group* Chairman Mario C. Grech announced that the company had made a pre-tax profit of Lm779,234 in the first half of this year, a drop of 17.5 per cent over the same period last year. Correspondingly, earnings per 50c share were reduced to 5c7, compared to 6c5 achieved in the first six months of 1999.
- **21 September 2000** *Bank of Valletta plc* announced that it would exercise the over-allotment option regarding the issue of its US\$25 million eight per cent bonds 2010, and increase the number of bonds in order to satisfy all the demand.
- **21 September 2000** Maltese Ambassador George Saliba presented his credentials as Ambassador to Mexico to President Ernesto Zedillo.
- **22 September 2000** Commonwealth Secretary General Don McKinnon announced that up to 30 member-states and British protectorate countries were considered “uncooperative tax havens”. Mr McKinnon described Malta, which was removed from the tax haven blacklist a few months ago, as a very clean state in this respect.
- **22 September 2000** Gozo Minister Giovanna Debono announced the creation of an educational council for Gozo to coordinate work in various areas of the sector and to propose “forward-looking policies”. Ms Debono was addressing Heads of Schools ahead of the start of the scholastic year.
- **22 September 2000** *Brightpoint Inc.* announced that its subsidiary, *Brightpoint Middle East FZE*, had entered into an agreement with *Go Mobile* to provide wireless prepaid products and integrated prepaid services.
- **23 September 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami told Parliament that the Government was closely following international oil price developments, but did not intend changing local fuel prices at that juncture. Dr Fenech-Adami was replying to a Parliamentary Question.
- **23 September 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg said that he would be meeting the Egyptian Ambassador to discuss his complaints about discrimination against Egyptians and other Arabs who were not allowed entry into Malta. Dr Borg was replying to a Parliamentary Question.
- **23 September 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that the Government had drawn up a bill that would give a new lease of life to the Malta Council for Economic Development. The bill will give the council legal backing and widen its terms of reference to include social development. Dr Gonzi was speaking during a news conference at the Ministry, in Valletta.
- **23 September 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli attended the annual meeting of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, in Prague.
- **23 September 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said in Parliament that Malta’s fuel reserves were at a normal level, with between 19 and 20 weeks’ supply of gas oil, and six weeks’ supply of premium and unleaded fuel. Prof. Bonnici gave the information during a debate on a bill setting up the Malta Resources Authority.
- **23 September 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that investment in the manufacturing sector between January and June had doubled when compared to the same period in the previous year. Prof. Bonnici was giving an account of the performance of his Ministry over the past 12

months.

- **23 September 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici announced that Malta Shipbuilding was at an advanced stage of negotiation on three separate contracts. These included the building of a chemical tanker and the construction of a bridge for an unnamed country.
- **23 September 2000** Drydocks Chairman John Cassar White said that measures taken by Malta Drydocks to reduce prices earlier this summer had helped to reverse the bleak situation at the shipyard. Mr Cassar White was being interviewed by *Lloyd's List* of London.
- **23 September 2000** St James Cavalier, built for war needs and converted into a Lm4 million arts centre, opened with a spectacle of music, art, film, dance and theatre.
- **23 September 2000** The Parliamentary Secretary in the Education Ministry, Jesmond Mugliett, had several meetings in Sydney and Melbourne over the past few days. Mr Mugliett met with several Maltese associations in the two cities, as well as with many Foreign Ministers present for the Olympic Games.
- **23 September 2000** President Guido de Marco received a delegation from the Sverdlovsk region of the Russian Federation, headed by Deputy Prime Minister Galina Kovalieva. Russian Ambassador Sergei Azotov attended the meeting.
- **23 September 2000** President Guido de Marco received representatives of a group of refugees heading for a new life in Canada. The group was led by the Archbishop's delegate for emigrants, Mgr Philip Calleja, and the representative of the UNHCR in Malta, Charles Buttigieg.
- **23 September 2000** A Parliamentary delegation, headed by Government MP John Vella, attended the fourth part of the 2000 Ordinary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, held in Strasbourg. The other delegation members were Government MP Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando and Opposition MPs John Attard Montaldo and Joe Debono Grech.
- **23 September 2000** The new Gozo Channel ferry, the *Gaudos*, was towed out to start a period of sea tests. *Gaudos* is the second ferry built by Malta Shipbuilding for Gozo Channel.
- **23 September 2000** Mr Oliver Vassallo, who is VAT Department director of operations, said that he was optimistic that the VAT lottery in its new format would convince more people to ask for a fiscal receipt. In this way, consumers would be helping in the fight against tax evasion, said Mr Vassallo.
- **24 September 2000** Bank of Valletta (BoV) has set up a new representative office in Tunisia. The new office brings the number of overseas representative offices operated by the bank to nine. BoV also has four offices in Australia, three in Canada, and one in Italy.
- **25 September 2000** French Defence Minister Alain Richard was quoted by *Reuters* as saying that Malta was among 15 non-European Union states who have expressed interest in being associated with a new EU rapid-reaction force. Mr Richard was speaking at a press conference, in Paris. Foreign Minister Joe Borg confirmed that Malta would be taking part in meetings about the issue.
- **25 September 2000** An aerobatic display by a Red Arrows team launched a programme of events organised by the British High Commission and the British Council to celebrate 200 years of friendship between Malta and the UK.
- **26 September 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said, following a Cabinet meeting held in Parliament, that the Government's position had not changed and Malta continued to be interested in taking part in humanitarian missions. Dr Fenech-Adami was referring to the possible participation of Malta in an EU rapid-reaction force.
- **26 September 2000** HSBC Chief Operating Officer, Jeremy Hunt, announced at a press conference that the bank would be renewing its University Students' Council (KSU) sponsorship and co-operation agreement for the next five years. Through this agreement, HSBC will support all KSU activities and initiatives organised during the year. Parliamentary Secretary George Pullicino was present for the

press conference.

- **26 September 2000** The Central Office of Statistics announced that tourists had spent an average of 7.9 days in Malta in the first six months of the year.
- **26 September 2000** The Education Department said that almost 46,000 students had started the new scholastic year in state kindergarten, primary and secondary levels. Another 4,700 students will, next week, be going to post-secondary schools.
- **27 September 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg told Parliament that Malta would be ready to take part in EU humanitarian and related missions that did not violate the constitutional provisions on neutrality. Dr Borg was reacting to reports that Malta was among 15 non-European Union states that had expressed interest in being associated with a new EU rapid-reaction force.
- **27 September 2000** President Guido de Marco, accompanied by Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici, visited the Delimara Power Station. From there he went to the Marsa Distribution Centre and later to the Marsa Power Station.
- **27 September 2000** *Enemalta* Corporation Chairman Robert Ghirlando said that the corporation had reached an agreement with Libya to supply Malta with lower lead content fuel at the current price as from next year. The new agreement covers supplies to be sent to Malta as from next year. Prof. Ghirlando was speaking during a visit by President Guido de Marco to the power station at Delimara.
- **27 September 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi told Parliament that abuse of social services, such as under-declaration of income for eligibility purposes, would not be tolerated. The Social Security Department had detected 9,600 cases of under-declaration of income and 4,500 applications for supplementary allowances. Dr Gonzi was speaking during Question Time.
- **27 September 2000** Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg said that the Government had paid out a record Lm1.2 million for expropriated land so far this year. Next year, the sum would be substantially higher, he said. Dr Borg was speaking at a news conference to review the work done by his Ministry during the Government's second year in office.
- **27 September 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo attended a Conference for Tourism Ministers in Hanover, Germany. The conference was organised by the World Tourism Organisation on the occasion of World Tourism Day.
- **27 September 2000** World Tourism Day was marked, in Malta, by free entrance to museums and sites falling under the jurisdiction of the Museums Department.
- **27 September 2000** Ambassador Saviour Borg presented his credentials to President Kim Yong Nam as Malta's Ambassador to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.
- **28 September 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Government was ready to hold talks with the Opposition on changes to the electoral system to make electoral boundaries irrelevant to the outcome of general elections. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking in Parliament on a motion to approve new electoral boundaries as drawn up by the majority of the members of the Electoral Commission.
- **28 September 2000** Parliament approved new electoral boundaries as drawn up by the majority of the members of the Electoral Commission. The motion was approved with 30 votes in favour and 27 votes against.
- **28 September 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that Government had spent Lm14 million on oil exploration in the past 10 years. All expenditure had been made on the oil exploration well in Gozo, where Malta came closest to making a strike. The Prime Minister was replying to a Parliamentary Question.
- **28 September 2000** Justice Minister Austin Gatt announced that the Government was considering two

strategic initiatives for promoting universal use of the Internet. These relate to the dissemination of *e-mail* on a national scale, and the providing of a national free Maltese *Internet* system directed towards giving unrestricted Internet access to sites located in Malta. Dr Gatt was speaking at a *Deloitte & Touche* conference entitled 'Technology: avoid it, embrace it, or manage it'.

- **28 September 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici announced that the Institute for the Promotion of Small Enterprises (IPSE) had issued a call for tenders to carry out a general survey and broad analysis of the characteristics of micro-enterprises in Malta and Gozo.
- **28 September 2000** The Central Office of Statistics said that the number of registered unemployed in August was 6,676, a drop of 127 over the figure for the previous month.
- **28 September 2000** Bank of Valletta Chairman Joseph F. X. Zahra announced the setting up of a new company, the Bank of Valletta Stockbrokers Ltd. (BoVSL). The purpose of the new company is to provide stock-broking services to the bank's branch network and customers and to other companies in the BoV Group.
- **28 September 2000** Mr Michael Peter Macy, US Foreign Service Officer, took up appointment as officer in charge of public affairs at the US Embassy.
- **29 September 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg stated in Parliament that there would be no foreign military bases on Malta's territory. Neither would the island form part of any military alliance. Dr Borg was replying to comments made in Parliament by the Opposition's Foreign Affairs spokesman George Vella about the proposed EU rapid reaction force.
- **29 September 2000** Minister of Justice Austin Gatt stated that some of the new court tariffs were to be amended following an agreement reached with the Chamber of Advocates and the Chamber of Legal Procurators.
- **29 September 2000** Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg announced that the police corps had started using *Datatrak's* Automatic Vehicle Location System service. He said that, as crime gets more professional, the state's reaction must also be professional. Dr Borg was speaking while on a tour of the *Datatrak* premises.
- **29 September 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici stated that Malta Drydocks had commissioned a report about the economic viability of the development of Dock Number 1. Prof. Bonnici was answering a Parliamentary Question.
- **29 September 2000** Gozo Minister Giovanna Debono announced that the tender to build, design and operate the new communal centre in Gozo would be issued by the middle of next year. Ms Debono was presenting her Ministry's performance report on the second year in government.
- **29 September 2000** Figures released by the Central Office of Statistics show that tourism earnings in the second quarter this year had reached Lm70.4 million, a rise of 4.9 per cent over the same period last year.
- **29 September 2000** The five-star American liner *Millennium* made a stop at Valletta. The liner has a total capacity of 2,449 passengers, weights 91,000 tons and is 965 feet long. *Millennium* was described by S. Mifsud and Sons as the largest cruise liner ever to enter Grand Harbour.
- **29 September 2000** The Parliamentary Secretary in the Economic Services Ministry, Edwin Vassallo, said that between April 1999 and March 2000 airlines operating flights through Malta had carried 13,000 tons of cargo. This figure is an increase of 9.3 per cent over the same period in 1998-99. Mr Vassallo was addressing participants in the second *Traxon User* forum on cargo.
- **29 September 2000** Spain's new Ambassador to Malta, Jose de Carvijal Salido, presented his diplomatic credentials to President Guido de Marco, at the Palace, in Valletta.
- **29 September 2000** Dr Julian Vassallo, the first secretary at Malta's Permanent Mission to the United

Nations, was elected vice-Chairman of the United Nations Special Political and De-colonisation Committee, also known as the Fourth Committee.

- **29 September 2000** German-Maltese Circle secretary-general Victor Sammut was awarded the Officer's Cross of the *Bundesverdienstkreuz* – the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany. Mr Sammut was honoured for the outstanding contribution he made to the strengthening of German-Maltese bonds of friendship during the past 28 years.
- **30 September 2000** International Labour Organisation consultant Giuseppe Casale said that economic and social issues should become a priority for bodies such as the Malta Council for Economic Development to succeed and prosper. Mr Casale was one of the main influences behind the new MCED bill.
- **30 September 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said in Parliament that the Government had raised Lm76.4 million in income tax in the first eight months this year. The total collected in 1999 was Lm112.8 million.
- **30 September 2000** The Accountant General said in a statement that a total of Lm13.8 million worth of government stocks had been taken up by the banking system, while Lm14.1 million had been taken up by households and others.
- **30 September 2000** The Central Office of Statistics said that provisional figures on the international economic transactions of Malta for the second quarter this year reveal a current account deficit of Lm43.7 million. These figures were published in the Report on the Balance of International Payments.
- **30 September 2000** Prof. John Rizzo Naudi, an active senior citizen, was awarded the *Premju Anzjan 2000* during an evening of entertainment at St Vincent de Paul residence for the elderly.
- **30 September 2000** The Armed Forces of Malta have been asked by the Verification Centre of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe to assist in an inspection mission by the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in accordance with Article IV of the Dayton Peace Accords. This was the third time that Malta has been asked to assist in inspections of this kind.

October

- **1 October 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg said that, in its European Union membership negotiations, the Maltese Government would be seeking to obtain transition periods in at least five of the nine chapters opened under the current French Presidency. Dr Borg was addressing a press conference.
- **1 October 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that it was very important to get economic policy in line with social policy. Dr Gonzi was speaking at a press conference at the end of a two-day high-level tripartite conference for International Labour Organisation constituents in EU accession countries.
- **1 October 2000** The Government issued a draft bill on the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development. This council succeeds the Malta Council for Economic Development. Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi hailed the bill as a major step towards the development of economic and social issues.
- **2 October 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami announced that the Government would shortly conclude an agreement with an Italian company to continue its programme of offshore oil drilling. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking on Radio 101.
- **2 October 2000** The Prime Minister said that the Government's intention for the Armed Forces of Malta was to involve them only in humanitarian activities, not in other people's wars.

- **2 October 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi described the *Equal Opportunity (Persons with Disability) Act* that came into force on 1st October 2000 as an act of courage that would mean a leap forward for Maltese society. Dr Gonzi was speaking at a news conference called to explain the new law and to highlight the work of the Equal Opportunity Unit.
- **2 October 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that, by Budget time, the country's financial deficit would have been brought down to below Lm100 million. This figure would be more than Lm9 million below the forecast made in the Budget speech last year. Mr Dalli was speaking at Qormi.
- **2 October 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea announced that Malta had signed an association agreement with the European Union to be able to participate in full in the educational programmes of the EU. The EU programmes are *Leonardo*, *Socrates* and *Youth*.
- **2 October 2000** Nine radio stations will broadcast one-minute information slots about the European Union and Malta. The slots, prepared by the Malta-EU Information Centre, will be on air three times daily over the next three months.
- **3 October 2000** The Prime Minister said that the Armed Forces of Malta needed to contribute to humanitarian work in a multilateral context. "Once Europe is moving in this direction, it is proper that Malta, despite its small size, gives its due contribution. Malta should not keep back from putting its resources at the disposal of a European force," the Prime Minister said. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at an occasion marking the 30th anniversary of the setting up of the AFM.
- **3 October 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami announced the imminent publication of two *White Papers*. The first of these will deal with important, wide-ranging amendments to the Criminal Code, the second with e-government. The Prime Minister was speaking to journalists following a Cabinet meeting.
- **3 October 2000** Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg said that the proposed amendments to the Criminal Code included allowing victims of crime to be present in proceedings against their aggressors.
- **3 October 2000** Justice Minister Austin Gatt announced that e-government would be available in about three years' time. Dr Gatt was commenting on the subject of one of the *White Papers* due to be published in the coming weeks.
- **3 October 2000** The Assistant Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Christine Pintat, arrived in Malta to discuss the establishment of a Parliamentary Assembly of Mediterranean States with the IPU National Group of Malta.
- **3 October 2000** A Malta Maritime Authority team investigating the loss of the tanker *Erika* last December concluded that, in all probability, corrosion had played a significant part in the sinking of the ship. The report was tabled in Parliament by Transport and Communications Minister Censu Galea.
- **3 October 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that small states tended to perform rather well economically and, as a group registered a relatively high GDP per capita when compared to larger developing countries. Mr Dalli was addressing a workshop on banking and finance organised by the Islands and Small States Institute.
- **3 October 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici was the key speaker during a seminar aimed at promoting Malta as a potential location for Japanese investment and as a base for Japanese companies wanting to expand their trade with Europe and North Africa. The seminar was organised in Tokyo by the Malta Development Corporation and hosted by the Japan External Trade Organization.
- **3 October 2000** University Rector Roger Ellul Micallef welcomed students to the start of a new academic year. This year the student population will reach 8,000 and will include 300 foreign students.
- **3 October 2000** No agreement was reached when Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami and Leader of the Opposition Alfred Sant met to discuss the appointment of an Acting President to stand in for President Guido de Marco, who was due to leave the island. Following the lack of agreement, the Government appointed Dr George Hyzler to serve as Acting President.

- **4 October 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that some 30,000 taxpayers had under-declared some form of income earned in 1999. Mr Dalli was speaking at a press conference about the work of his Ministry over the past year.
- **4 October 2000** Chief Justice Joseph Said Pullucino criticised the method used to tackle the problems at the Law Courts. He said the solution did not lie in resolving side issues but more in acknowledging that the Judiciary was committed to carry out its duty to its best ability. Dr Joseph Said Pullucino was delivering a speech at the start of the forensic year in the presence of, amongst others, President Guido de Marco and Justice Minister Austin Gatt.
- **4 October 2000** Transport Minister Censu Galea made reference to a four-point strategy to reduce the use of vehicles and improve the environment and health over the medium-to-long term. The strategy mentioned was based on the WHO Charter for transport, environment and health.
- **4 October 2000** According to figures released by the Central Office of Statistics the rate of inflation in August stood at 2.27 percent, compared to the 1.69 percent in August last year. In August this year, the retail price index went up by 0.12 points to 112.44 points.
- **4 October 2000** Member of Parliament Francis Agius was in Rome for a meeting of the Food and Agriculture Organisation. Dr Agius is the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Fisheries of the Council of Europe.
- **4 October 2000** A delegation from the Euro-Mediterranean Forum of Women Parliamentarians, led by Senator Ersilia Salvato, paid a courtesy visit to Speaker Anton Tabone. The delegation was in Malta to hand over the presidency of the forum to the Maltese House of Representatives.
- **5 October 2000** President and Mrs Guido de Marco left for Spain, where they will attend the fifth centenary celebrations since the birth of the Emperor Charles V. President and Mrs de Marco were invited to attend these celebrations in Toledo by King Juan Carlos of Spain.
- **5 October 2000** The European Parliament approved a resolution on Malta's EU application and the progress achieved during negotiations, noting that Malta met the preconditions for inclusion in the first round of enlargement. A total of 509 MEPs voted in favour of the resolution, 11 voted against, and 19 abstained. Foreign Minister Joe Borg said that he was delighted that the resolution was overwhelmingly approved.
- **5 October 2000** Ms Suzanne Askelof, former head of the secretariat for information on European affairs in Sweden, said it was crucial for information providers to be objective and politically neutral. Ms Askelof was addressing the second round-table conference for EU information providers organised in Malta by the Malta-EU Information Centre in collaboration with *The Strickland Foundation* and The Malta Press Club.
- **5 October 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea underlined teachers' vital contribution to the country's progress, and appealed to them to be open to the future of education now being envisioned. Dr Galea was speaking on the occasion of Teachers' Day.
- **5 October 2000** Justice Minister Austin Gatt said that the shortfall between the money collected by the court, and what it spent, will remain notwithstanding the increased court tariffs. Dr Gatt was reacting to the speech made by Chief Justice Joseph Said Pullicino at the opening of the forensic year.
- **5 October 2000** The Central Office of Statistics announced that total manufacturing sales in the first six months this year had gone up by Lm103.4 million or 23.7 per cent, to Lm539.2 million. Radio, television, and communication equipment were the main contributors towards this increase.
- **5 October 2000** Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg said in Parliament that, in the period January - August of this year, the immigration police had refused entry to 1,770 persons arriving at the airport. Dr Borg gave this information in reply to a Parliamentary Question.
- **5 October 2000** *Volksbank Malta Ltd* decided to expand its activities into new areas of business,

following five years of successful operations. The bank is a fully owned subsidiary of *Oesterreichische Volksbanken AG*, and has been active in the international financial markets since 1995.

- **5 October 2000** The Government associated itself with the statements issued by the Presidency of the European Union on the situation in the Middle East and condemned the acts of violence provoked by elements hostile to the peace process. It also condemned the excessive use of military force that resulted in numerous deaths.
- **6 October 2000** The Government associated itself with the statements issued by the Presidency of the European Union on the situation in the Middle East and condemned the acts of violence provoked by elements hostile to the peace process, as well as the excessive use of military force that resulted in numerous deaths.
- **6 October 2000** President Guido de Marco and Mrs de Marco attended the fifth centenary celebrations commemorating the birth of Emperor Charles V, in Spain.
- **6 October 2000** Agriculture Minister Ninu Zammit said that a total of 1.02 million kilograms of fish were sold from the fish market in the last year, at a value of Lm1.25 million. Mr Zammit was addressing a press conference held to review the work done by his Ministry over the past year.
- **6 October 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici, on his way back from Japan, made a short stopover in Hong Kong where he met Sandra Lee, Secretary for Economic Services in the Government of the Hong Kong special administrative region.
- **6 October 2000** Housing Authority Chairperson Marisa Micallef Leyson attended the 61st session of a UN Committee on human settlements, held in Geneva. The aim of the UN Committee Meeting was to consider and adopt a strategy on sustainable quality of life in human settlements in the 21st century.
- **6 October 2000** Prof. John Buontempo, former Ambassador to the League of Arab States, died suddenly at *Camp Zeist*, in Holland. He was 69.
- **7 October 2000** President Guido de Marco invited King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia of Spain to visit Malta. Prof. de Marco, together with Mrs de Marco, was attending the Fifth Centenary celebrations to mark the birth of Emperor Charles V, in Toledo.
- **7 October 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the disabled should not be looked at as a burden on society, but as equal partners who had a contribution to make. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking before presenting letters of appointment to the members of the National Commission for Persons with a Disability.
- **7 October 2000** Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi inaugurated the new plant biotechnology centre at the Micropropagation Centre, in Lija. Dr Gonzi was acting in the absence of Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, who was indisposed.
- **7 October 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami told Parliament that a contingent from the Italian army, consisting of five officers and forty-three soldiers, was in Malta to participate in the *Terra Ferma* exercise. Dr Fenech-Adami was replying to a Parliamentary Question.
- **7 October 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that Malta's regulatory framework showed that the Island was not a tax haven of the type being targeted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Mr Dalli was speaking at the launch of *Fexco* funds in Malta.
- **7 October 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that, so far this year, Lm311,853 had been spent on projects aimed at strengthening the Government's monitoring of its expenditure and revenue and to fight tax evasion. The total expenditure was expected to amount to Lm1.3 million. Mr Dalli was replying to a Parliamentary Question.
- **7 October 2000** EU enlargement Commissioner Guenter Verheugen paid a visit to Malta's pavilion at *Expo 2000*, in Hanover. Mr Verheugen recorded a message on the pavilion's guest book in Maltese.

- **8 October 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli inaugurated *Unibet Company Ltd.* He announced that the company had become the 11th betting operator to be granted a licence to operate from Malta. Mr Dalli was speaking at the Plaza Complex, in Sliema.
- **9 October 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli announced that the next Budget was not expected to include increases in income tax or in fuel prices. “Efforts will be made for a better enforcement of existing legislation related to revenue collection, rather than increasing income tax,” he said. Mr Dalli was replying to questions by reporters following a discussion on the forthcoming Budget.
- **9 October 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici announced that the Government had set up a committee to ensure better and more effective co-ordination in the work carried out by the Malta Development Corporation, the Malta Export Trade Corporation, and the Institute for the Promotion of Small Enterprises. The committee will be chaired by Prof. Bonnici himself. Minister Bonnici was replying to a Parliamentary Question.
- **9 October 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that the Government should make greater use of volunteers to help maintain monuments and cultural relics. Dr Refalo was speaking during the opening of a war shelter at Imgarr.
- **9 October 2000** Two new Bills dealing with information technology have been published in the *Government Gazette*. The first is the Electronic Commerce Bill, while the other is the Data Protection Act.
- **10 October 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami stated that the EU was not only devoting considerable sums of money to Human Rights, but was also giving them a strong political commitment. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at the inauguration of the Mediterranean Master’s Degree in Human Rights and Democratisation at the Foundation for International Studies, in Valletta.
- **10 October 2000** A spokesman for the Office of the Prime Minister announced that the Government was telling tourists who complain about hunting practices in Malta that it was aware that hunting laws were still being broken. However, Government also made it clear that it remained committed to improving enforcement and meeting international obligations resulting from conventions aimed at protecting birds and nature. The Government was replying to each complaint received.
- **10 October 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said shortly after a meeting at the Malta Council for Economic Development that most social partners had submitted concrete proposals for the next Budget. The proposals would serve as basis for discussions that would help shape the next Budget.
- **10 October 2000** President Guido de Marco met people of Maltese descent during a visit to the town of Tavernes in Valencia, Spain. The highlight of the visit was the warm welcome that the President and Mrs de Marco received when they were met by the mayor of Tavernes, Eugenio Perez, as well as by a gathering of about 300 persons of Maltese descent.
- **10 October 2000** Transport Minister Censu Galea presented the Joint Aviation Regulations certificate to NCA International Director Abdul Razak Zmirli, at the company’s hanger in Safi. The JAR 145 is considered the aviation equivalent of the ISO 9000 certificate.
- **10 October 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech addressed the sixth informal meeting of the European Commission with candidate countries’ environment ministers, in Brussels. Dr Zammit Dimech listed the steps taken by the Government to achieve its targets for the adoption of the environmental *acquis*.
- **10 October 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said in reply to a Parliamentary Question that works on St James Cavalier had, so far, cost the Government Lm3.1 million.
- **10 October 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo met Peter Brno, State Secretary at the Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic, to discuss developments in Maltese and Slovak tourism. During the meeting Dr Refalo agreed to pass on to Mr Brno information regarding the setting up of the Malta Tourism Authority.

- **10 October 2000** According to figures released by the Central Office of Statistics, the number of live births in Malta in 1999 was the lowest in the past 50 years. The number of births per 1,000 of the population dropped from 18.50 in 1979 to 11.36 in 1999.
- **11 October 2000** Minister for Health Louis Deguara announced that the total amount voted for the health sector had gone up to Lm69.4 million this year, compared to Lm63.3 million last year, and Lm58 million in 1998. Dr Deguara was speaking at his Ministry, in Valletta, where he presented the Ministry's performance report on the second year in government.
- **11 October 2000** The Central Office of Statistics said that, in the second quarter this year, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) nominally increased by Lm14.3 million to Lm383.6 million, or 3.9 per cent, from the figure last year. The Gross National Product (GNP) went up nominally by Lm23.2 million, or 6.4 per cent, to Lm387,9 million from Lm364.7 million a year ago.
- **11 October 2000** *Sedqa* Chief Executive Sina Bugeja said that Europe needed to debate and agree on its overall objectives to combat drugs and assess what collective policies were most appropriate and effective. Ms Bugeja was reacting to a new communication to the EU Council of Ministers and the European Parliament on a European Union action plan to combat drugs between 2000 and 2004.
- **11 October 2000** Representatives from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office said that they had had discussions with the Maltese High Commissioner and representatives of the Egyptian and the Turkish Governments. The discussions were reported to have centred on attempts to break the impasse reached in the Edgar Fernandes case.
- **12 October 2000** President Guido de Marco and Palestinian Ambassador Awad Yakhlef met at the Palace, in Valletta. They discussed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
- **12 October 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami stated that the Government's priority was to transform the island into an EU-based regional financial service provider. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at the opening of *Valletta Fund Management's* new premises, in Floriana.
- **12 October 2000** The Malta Financial Services Centre reported that there had been an immense surge of business during the last three months of this year. The centre said that it had issued 13 new investment services licences, together with 110 new collective investment scheme licences, during the third quarter of this year.
- **12 October 2000** Justice and Local Government Minister Austin Gatt said that a comprehensive White Paper on *e-government* is expected to be launched within two to three weeks. Dr Gatt said the White Paper would spell out how the Government would achieve its goals through public and private partnership. Dr Gatt was speaking during the launch of the Information Technology and Telecommunications Fair, in Naxxar.
- **12 October 2000** The Malta-EU Information Centre handled 2,413 requests for information last month. The most frequently asked questions were related to land transport, human rights, visas, and studying and working in the EU.
- **13 October 2000** Dr Erhard Busek, special envoy for the Austrian Government on European Union enlargement, said that Austria would support Malta's bid to be included in the first enlargement. Dr Busek was speaking to reporters following talks with Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, Foreign Minister Joe Borg, and Chairman of the Core Negotiating Group Richard Cachia Caruana, at the Prime Minister's official residence, in Girgenti.
- **13 October 2000** An air services agreement was signed between Malta and the United States. Following this agreement, airlines from the two countries would be able to operate services between the two countries, also stopping in other countries according to demand.
- **13 October 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that 1999 was concluded with good records in foreign income earnings, in the increase of hotel and restaurant employees, and in the number of tourists who visited the Maltese Islands. Dr Refalo was addressing a news conference on the

Government's second year in office.

- **13 October 2000** Armed Forces of Malta Commander Brigadier Rupert Montanaro said that Malta's involvement in Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) military inspection teams gave the AFM an opportunity to gain real hands-on experience.
- **13 October 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi called on the unions to change their mentality, saying that the changes taking place around us necessitated a new way of thinking that focused on compromise, rather than confrontation. Dr Gonzi was speaking at a seminar on occupational health and safety organised by the *Union Haddiema Maghqudin*.
- **13 October 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that the structures of the Ministry of Economic Services were being reorganised so that Malta could have a modern and effective market surveillance capability. Prof. Bonnici was speaking at a seminar on the benefits of standardisation to industry.
- **14 October 2000** In a statement, the Maltese Government reiterated its grave concern at the further serious escalation of violence in the West Bank and Gaza. The Maltese Government associated itself with the declaration of the Presidency of the European Union of October 12 and appealed to both sides to exercise maximum restraint and to meet to resolve the potentially explosive situation.
- **14 October 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that the Government wanted to see more women in key positions, where they could influence policymaking processes directly, and before decisions were taken. Dr Gonzi was addressing 105 women, taking part in a Europe Union of Women council meeting, in Sliema.
- **14 October 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli suggested that European Union applicant countries should join forces to come up with financial services and products that were new and distinct from what was already on offer. Mr Dalli was speaking at a seminar organised by the European Investment Services Association, on the theme *Tackling Financial Services*.
- **14 October 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said in Parliament that the capital outlay involved in an electrical concession between Malta and Sicily, as part of a wider European grid, would be in the region of \$112-\$210 million. Prof. Bonnici was replying to a Parliamentary Question.
- **14 October 2000** The Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs, George Pullicino, said that the Government would have to resort to punitive measures to curb land and property hoarding if incentives to make owners release their property failed to yield results. Mr Pullicino was speaking during a meeting with the members of the Building Industry Consultative Council.
- **14 October 2000** The Central Bank issued a coin to mark the new millennium. The coin was designed by Noel Galea Bason and struck at the Royal Mint. The coin is silver-proof with cameos coated in 22-carat gold and is legal tender for Lm5.
- **15 October 2000** Local authorities have issued permits for the setting up of a Malta Transport Museum. The Malta Transport Foundation is accepting the donation of old cars, buses and other memorabilia connected with the local transport scene.
- **16 October 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that, by the end of next year, the Government would have brought the deficit down to under Lm90 million. Mr Dalli was addressing a public meeting on the forthcoming Budget.
- **16 October 2000** A Parliamentary delegation led by Dolores Cristina MP, Chairperson of the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee, attended the 23rd COSAC Meeting in Versailles, France. The delegation included Government MP John Vella and Opposition MP George Vella.
- **16 October 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that the Government would be investing Lm250,000 to strengthen the electricity supply in Cottonera. The Minister was speaking on aspects of the Cottonera Project when he took part in a public discussion in Senglea.

- **17 October 2000** A Cabinet sub-committee, made up of Tourism Minister Michael Refalo, Louis Naudi, and Carmel Portelli, recommended that the Cabinet should start negotiations with *Consortium Costa San Andrea* over the development of the White Rocks complex. The Cabinet agreed with this and authorised the start of negotiations.
- **17 October 2000** President Guido de Marco described the transformation of St James Cavalier, from a military fortification to a centre for creativity, as “an exercise in giving a future to our past”. Prof. de Marco was speaking during a visit to the centre.
- **17 October 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that the Maltese Government was planning to accede to the Nairobi Convention as soon as possible. Mr Dalli was speaking at the opening of the ninth meeting of the heads of European Customs Investigation/Intelligence Services, held by the Malta Customs Organisation.
- **17 October 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said in Parliament that *Malta Shipbuilding*'s losses had been reduced by Lm1 million over the past year. Prof. Bonnici was replying to a Parliamentary Question.
- **17 October 2000** A delegation representing cargo haulers from the Association of General Retailers and Traders, and the haulers co-operative, visited Brussels to discuss the position of haulers in view of Malta's bid to join the EU.
- **17 October 2000** The Central Bank of Malta issued *Akbank TAS* with a banking licence to carry out banking operations in Malta. The bank will establish a branch and is authorised to operate with non-residents of Malta in all currencies except the Maltese lira.
- **17 October 2000** *Sea Malta* Chairperson Marlene Mizzi announced that the cargo vessel *MV Maltese Falcon* had obtained an International Safety Management certification, rendering the company technically qualified to trade in any international waters.
- **17 October 2000** Mr Andrew Psaila was appointed Chief Executive of Public Broadcasting Services Ltd with effect from October 1. Mr Psaila had been acting Chief Executive for the past sixteen months.
- **18 October 2000** A Government statement warned civil servants that, as there could not be an industrial dispute over the Budget, those who absent themselves from work on Friday morning would be subject to disciplinary action for being absent without permission, apart from having their pay docked accordingly for the time they are absent. The warning followed a directive issued by the General Workers Union to “all workers” to report for work at 11 am on the 20th October.
- **18 October 2000** President Guido de Marco referred to his wish for Malta Solidarity International to be set up. Prof. de Marco was receiving Bishop Francis Baldacchino, recently consecrated Bishop of the diocese of Malindi, in Kenya.
- **18 October 2000** Experts from various countries met at the Foundation for International Studies, in Valletta, to discuss maritime risks. The project is an Italian-Egyptian initiative aimed at the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean system of disaster prevention, mitigation and management of natural and man-made disasters.
- **18 October 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici visited Germany where he was due to address investment seminars in Hanover and Hamburg. Prof. Bonnici was accompanied by Malta Development Corporation chairman, Francis J. Vassallo.
- **18 October 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech announced that a call for a development partner, a contractor, or both, was to be published by the beginning of November for the realisation of the Royal Opera House project. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking about the performance and achievements of his Ministry over the past year.
- **18 October 2000** Government MP John Vella, leader of the Malta Parliamentary Delegation to the Council of Europe, attended the Sub-Committee on Relations with Non-Member Countries of the Council of Europe, held in New York on the 19th and 20th October 2000.

- **18 October 2000** Director of Planning Godwin Cassar represented Malta at the meeting of the EU Spatial Development Committee. Dr Cassar said at the meeting that Malta would be particularly interested in integrating into the local Structure Plan review the concepts spelt out in the European Spatial Development Perspective.
- **18 October 2000** The 10th Meeting of the Honorary Consuls General and Honorary Consuls of Malta in Germany will this year be held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The meeting provides an opportunity to update the Consuls on the Malta Government's policies in the economic, social and political fields.
- **18 October 2000** Mr Anthony Galdes, chairman of the National Commission on Welfare Reform, said that the commission was working to conclude its work by the end of the year.
- **18 October 2000** A new movement to promote the country's EU membership bid - *Iva Malta fl-Ewropa* - is to be launched on the 21st October. Dr Austin Bencini was appointed movement co-ordinator.
- **19 October 2000** A Civil Court this morning began hearing a Water Services Corporation's bid to stop the General Workers' Union from executing a directive to employees that would lead to the shutting down of the production of water at reverse osmosis plants tomorrow. The Malta Freeport also called on the union to withdraw the action. Private sector organisations said in a joint statement that, "one cannot solve a crisis by creating another".
- **19 October 2000** The EU Committee of the Regions, in co-operation with the Malta Local Councils Association, will tomorrow be hosting a conference on the regional impact of the EU accession on Malta. Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, and Giorgio Boggio, head of the European Commission delegation in Malta, will be among the speakers.
- **19 October 2000** Dr Philip von Brockdorff, Director, Staff Development Organisation in the Management and Personnel Office of the Office of the Prime Minister, signed a co-operation agreement with the *European Institute of Public Administration*, in Maastricht. As a result of this agreement, the public service, through the Staff Development Organisation, became a member of the leading European public administration institute.
- **19 October 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that his Ministry was finalising regulations on how the value of fringe benefits might be calculated, for introduction next year.
- **19 October 2000** Malta Customs Director General Alfred Pace announced that Malta Customs had recently concluded a memorandum of understanding with Customs in the US and Italy. A similar agreement will shortly be signed with British Customs. Mr Pace was speaking during a news conference at the end of a conference on customs intelligence held in Malta by the Malta Customs Division under the auspices of the World Customs Organisation.
- **19 October 2000** President and Mrs Guido de Marco, on behalf of the Malta Community Chest Fund (MCCF), presented six institutions and 67 individuals with Lm13,500. The presentation took place at the Palace, in Valletta. So far this year, the MCCF has collected Lm100,000 and handed out Lm62,000.
- **20 October 2000** Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that the Government was keeping its options open as to whether or not it would take legal action against the General Workers' Union over its anti-Budget action, in Valletta. Dr Gonzi said that the previous Government had taken the *Union Haddiema Maghqudin* to court over a similar case.
- **20 October 2000** Sixteen judicial protests were filed by parastatal bodies and companies over the planned anti-Budget action by the General Workers' Union.
- **20 October 2000** An agreement was reached between the Water Services Corporation and the General Workers' Union, with the union agreeing that three reverse osmosis plants were not to be shut down during the GWU protest action. The agreement led to the WSC and its subsidiary Malta Desalination Services Ltd. to withdraw their application for a warrant of prohibitory injunction against the union and

nine workers.

- **20 October 2000** Transport and Communications Minister Censu Galea said that the Contracts Department was in the final stages of publishing a new tender for bus ticketing machines. Mr Galea was speaking at a news conference on his Ministry's performance over the past year.
- **20 October 2000** Justice Minister Austin Gatt announced that the Government did not intend to extradite Egyptian Mohammed Abdel Monem Abbas Aly, who faces charges of murder in Turkey. Despite efforts by Malta and Britain, no guarantee had been given that Abbas would not be liable for the death penalty if convicted. Dr Gatt was replying to a Parliamentary Question.
- **20 October 2000** Justice and Local Government Minister Austin Gatt said that the Government had no plans for mayors or councillors to work for local councils full-time. The Minister was replying to a Parliamentary Question.
- **20 October 2000** President Guido de Marco received Ambassador of Qatar Hamad Bin Hamal Al Atiyah, and Appunni Ramesh, High Commissioner of India.
- **20 October 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg welcomed to Malta Honorary Consuls and Consuls-General representing Malta in Germany. Dr Borg said that he did not look upon them as consular officers who process visas and passports, legalise documents, and otherwise assist Maltese nationals. Rather, he looked upon them as mini-embassies, promoting culture, tourism, trade and investment to Malta.
- **20 October 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi told Parliament that a total of 7,817 persons had started registering for work in the first nine months of the year, including 6,646 who had been occupied previously. Dr Gonzi was replying to a Parliamentary Question.
- **20 October 2000** A group of 11 bankers from *Enrode Es Videke Savings Bank* of Hungary visited Bank of Valletta's head office to discuss possible joint initiatives. The meeting, which took the form of a seminar, was addressed by representatives of the Bank of Valletta, Malta Financial Services Centre, and Valletta Fund Management.
- **20 October 2000** Xaghra mayor Anthony Attard was appointed by the Council of Europe to serve as an observer in the Kosovo elections being held later this month. Mr Attard will form part of an international delegation monitoring the elections.
- **21 October 2000** The directives issued by the General Workers' Union to report for work at 1100 hours on Friday 20th October were followed by a total of 168 out of 27,397 workers in government departments and ministries. This represents 0.61 per cent of the worker population in the sector involved.
- **21 October 2000** The Prime Minister said he would be writing to everyone who signed the General Workers' Union's petition. He reiterated that the strike ordered by the union did not fall within the parameters of the Industrial Relations Act. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking after being presented with a sample of the 78,693 signatures collected by the union.
- **21 October 2000** The Head of the EU delegation, Giorgio Boggio, said that a pre-accession loan facility of 8.5 billion Euro was made available by the European Investment Bank for all candidate countries in the period 2000-2003. The EIB loans are available on a first-come-first-served basis, meaning that Malta could tap into them. Dr Boggio was addressing a conference, organised by the Committee of the Regions, about the consequences of EU accession for local authorities.
- **21 October 2000** Local Government Minister Austin Gatt said that the Government's programme for local government policy for the next three years would be based on alternative service delivery; establishing local councils as local and regional one-stop-shops; and establishing local authorities as social policy satellites. Dr Gatt was addressing a conference, organised by the Committee of the Regions, about the consequences of EU accession for local authorities.
- **21 October 2000** Chairman of the Core Negotiating Group Richard Cachia Caruana said that the

benefits of dismantling national borders have to be matched with the benefits of securing partnerships between the regions of Europe. Mr Cachia Caruana was addressing a conference, organised by the Committee of the Regions, about the consequences of EU accession for local authorities.

- **21 October 2000** Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Borg said that the Government did not just see Malta as net receiver from the process of EU integration. It believed that Malta had a role to play in the process of inclusion under way across the entire European continent and, most especially, in the Union's dealings with its southern neighbours. Dr Borg was addressing a conference, organised by the Committee of the Regions, about the consequences of EU accession for local authorities.
- **21 October 2000** Dr Louis Galea, Education Minister and the co-chairman of the EU-Malta Joint Parliamentary Committee, said local councils could start gearing up for Malta's prospective membership of the EU through direct contact with the Committee of the Regions. Dr Galea was addressing a conference, organised by the Committee of the Regions, about the consequences of EU accession for local authorities.
- **21 October 2000** President Guido de Marco appealed to the staff of the Employment and Training Corporation to treat their clients as individuals, and not as names in a file. Prof. de Marco was visiting the corporation's head office in Hal Far and its branch in Xewkija as part of the corporation's 10th anniversary celebrations.
- **21 October 2000** The Central Office of Statistics announced that provisional statistics supplied by the Central Bank showed that the shortfall between ordinary revenue, including sale of shares, and total expenditure during the first nine months of the current year was Lm57.1 million. This is an increase of Lm3.1 million or 5.7 per cent, from a comparable shortfall of Lm54 million reported during the January to September period of 1999.
- **21 October 2000** According to figures released by the Central Office of Statistics the number of unemployed persons in September declined by 82 from the previous month to reach 6,594, or 4.4 per cent of the labour supply. In September last year, there were 6,011 unemployed, accounting for 5.5 per cent of the labour supply.
- **22 October 2000** Justice Minister Austin Gatt launched a website featuring Maltese laws in Maltese and English. Visitors to the site at <http://justice.magnet.mt> can have access to the legislation free of charge, making Malta among the first countries in the world to introduce such a service.
- **22 October 2000** Dr Austin Bencini, co-ordinator of *Iva Malta fl-Ewropa*, the lobby in favour of European Union membership for Malta, said that the movement's top priority would be contact with the people and dialogue with all organisations and entities on EU issues. The movement has its own website at <http://www.movimentiva.org> It may be reached by e-mail at info@movimentiva.org
- **22 October 2000** President Guido de Marco unveiled a statue of Malta's national poet Dun Karm Psaila during a special commemorative programme. The ceremony was attended by the Prime Minister and Mrs Fenech-Adami, and by Education Minister Louis Galea, among others.
- **23 October 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea announced that Maltese students from kindergarten up to post-secondary level have started to take part in the European Union programme *Comenius*. The programme provides students with the opportunity for educational student exchanges with their European counterparts.
- **23 October 2000** Housing Authority Chairman Marisa Micallef Leyson announced the setting up of an internal inspectorate to follow up its allocations. Ms Leyson said that the authority could not accept speculation of taxpayers' money that had been invested in social housing, and would try to stop it.
- **23 October 2000** *La Domenica del Villaggio*, the popular programme on *Rete 4*, focused on the island of Gozo. This was the second time this year that the popular Italian television programme was devoted to the Maltese Islands.
- **23 October 2000** *The Count of Monte Cristo*, which started shooting in Malta three weeks ago,

continued filming in various locations in Valletta, Cottonera, and Comino. The film, which was shot in Ireland, is intended for cinematic release.

- **24 October 2000** The Prime Minister said that Cabinet had authorised the Environment Ministry to issue a call for proposals for the development of the Opera House site, Freedom Square, City-gate, and the bus terminus.
- **24 October 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg said that Malta was planning to have closed all 31 chapters by the end of next year if the EU moves at the same pace as the Government. Dr Borg was addressing a news conference on the work of his Ministry in the Government's second work in office.
- **25 October 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami sent 46,372 letters on behalf of Government to the signatories of the General Workers' Union petition against the Budget measures, explaining that the Government was solving the deficit by distributing the burden fairly.
- **25 October 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that Malta Freeport's pending privatisation would be a milestone, not just for the company but also for the country as a whole, as it would set the blueprint for the privatisation of other government holdings. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at the inauguration of the *Medtrade 2000* conference.
- **25 October 2000** President Guido de Marco invited the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine of Lairg, to visit Malta. President de Marco said after the meeting that the discussion had been an occasion to exchange views on various topics including the judiciary systems in Malta and the UK and the introduction of the European Convention for Human Rights in domestic legislation in the UK.
- **25 October 2000** Mr Richard Cachia Caruana, Chairman of the Core Negotiating Group, announced that Malta had requested three special arrangements and 10 transition periods in the chapters being tackled under the French Presidency.
- **25 October 2000** Ambassador Pierre Vimont, Permanent Representative of France, as President-in-Office of the EU, declared that one had to acknowledge the impressive progress achieved by Malta since the start of the negotiations. He promised that the Union would continue to do its best to register as much progress as possible in the negotiations with Malta. Mr Vimont was speaking at the accession conference.
- **25 October 2000** Mr Eneko Landaburu, Director General for enlargement at the European Commission, described the closing of three chapters by Malta as spectacular progress. He added that the gap was closing and Malta would soon catch up with the first group of candidate countries.
- **25 October 2000** The Central Office of Statistics announced that, between January and July, the visible trade gap had widened by Lm67 million to Lm245.8 million, from Lm178.8 million last year.
- **25 October 2000** Maltapost Chairman Frank Dimech said that the company was expected to register a profit this year, the first time in the history of the company. Mr Dimech was speaking at the opening of a new branch in Mellieha by Minister for Communications Censu Galea, in the presence of Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici, and Parliamentary Secretary George Hyzler.
- **25 October 2000** A long-term management agreement was signed between *Accor Air Malta Co Ltd* and *Costa San Antonio* for the opening of a second property bearing the name *Grand Hotel Mercure*.
- **25 October 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean had proved to be an invaluable asset in Malta's efforts to set up a national oil spill contingency plan.
- **25 October 2000** P&O's new super liner, the *Aurora*, called at Malta for the first time. The ship has a carrying capacity of 1,874 passengers and 850 crew. The company is represented locally by Thos. Smith.
- **26 October 2000** In a letter to President Guido de Marco, British Prime Minister Tony Blair renewed his pledge to fully support Malta in its bid for European Union membership. The letter was delivered to

President de Marco by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Robin Cook. Prof. de Marco was in the UK on an official visit.

- **26 October 2000** President Guido de Marco attended an audience with Queen Elizabeth II, at Buckingham Palace. The British monarch honoured Prof. de Marco with the honorary title of the Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of St Michael and St George (GCMG). President de Marco bestowed the Maltese honour of Companion of the Order of Merit on the Queen.
- **26 October 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami argued that European Union membership was not a partisan issue but a national one that would have an impact on the future of the country. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking during a meeting with senior officials of the newly formed lobby movement for EU membership, *Iva Malta fl-Ewropa*.
- **26 October 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami referred to the GWU protest and said that Drydocks employees who had wanted to report for work were unable to do so because they had found the gate of the 'yard closed. Dr Fenech-Adami called the incident unacceptable and abusive.
- **26 October 2000** A spokesman for the Office of the Prime Minister said that the Prime Minister's Office had received several calls from angry people who said that they had received Dr Fenech-Adami's letter, sent to signatories of the GWU petition against the last budget measures, even though they had not signed the petition.
- **26 October 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg and Italian Minister for EU Affairs Gianni Francesco Mattioli signed a Memorandum of Understanding in Rome. Italy renewed its pledge to continue helping Malta in its pre-accession stage to membership of the European Union. The agreement, first entered into a year ago, was renewed until 2002.
- **26 October 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi and Education Minister Louis Galea announced that the Government had set up the Malta Professional and Vocational Qualifications Awards Council and had appointed university lecturer Antoinette Caruana as Chairperson. The two Ministers were addressing a joint news conference.
- **26 October 2000** Health Minister Louis Deguara announced that the Health Department had, so far this year, spent just over Lm8 million on medicine compared to Lm6.62 million for the whole of last year. Dr Deguara was replying to a Parliamentary Question.
- **26 October 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that the Government had decided to allocate prestigious offices on the foreshore of Grand Harbour to the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC). Dr Zammit Dimech said that the building would be devoted to the administrative needs of Malta's many maritime-related institutions.
- **26 October 2000** Sea Malta Company Ltd *launched Flagstone Insurance Brokers*. The insurance company has been authorised by the Malta Financial Services Centre to act as an insurance broker under the provisions of the Insurance Business Act.
- **26 October 2000** The Malta-EU Information Centre posted on its website Malta's negotiating position papers on the three chapters that were closed on Tuesday 24th October. These chapters deal with statistics, culture and audio-visual policy, and consumer protection. The papers can be found at http://www.mic.org.mt/MALT-EU/mlteu_neg_pospaper.htm
- **27 October 2000** President Guido de Marco, on an official visit to Britain, took part in a round-table discussion at Pembroke College, Cambridge, on the theme *Second Generation United Nations*. Prof. de Marco also delivered a talk at the Royal Institute for International Affairs at Chatham House, in London, on the situation in the Mediterranean.
- **27 October 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi announced that his Ministry had opened a new emergency sheltered home for women who were victims of domestic violence. This is the third shelter for women in Malta.

- **27 October 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli attended the opening of a Bank of Valletta representative office in Tunis. On the same occasion, Mr Dalli and Tunisian Minister for International Co-operation Fathi Merdassi signed an Investment Guarantee Agreement that created the legal infrastructure for investors of both countries to invest in each other's economies.
- **27 October 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg had talks in Tunis with Tunisian Foreign Minister Habin Ben Yahia on relations between the two countries, the situation in the Middle East, and Mediterranean co-operation. Dr Borg attended the opening of a Bank of Valletta representative office in Tunis.
- **27 October 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici told a seminar on *Competitiveness with innovation* that amendments to the Industrial Development Act were to be presented to the Malta Council for Economic Development.
- **27 October 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea praised the Employment Training Corporation (ETC) for its efforts to ascertain the development of a computer-literate, local population. Dr Galea was speaking at an ETC conference on the theme *Lifelong learning – the contribution of the workplace*.
- **27 October 2000** The Government said that it would again be allocating Lm200,000 to constituted bodies and representative organisations next year to assist them in keeping their members informed of EU affairs. The fund is administered by a committee composed of representatives of the Office of the Prime Minister, the Finance Ministry, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the latter as Chairman.
- **28 October 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami made an appeal for a national commitment to growth. "It is only such a commitment to growth by the Government, the social partners, and workers themselves that will bring about sustainable social and economic progress," he said. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at a conference to mark the 10th anniversary of the Employment and Training Corporation.
- **28 October 2000** The Prime Minister announced that the Government intended to issue applications for more reservists to join the Emergency Volunteer Reserve Force next year. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking during the Emergency Volunteer Reserve Force annual camp, at the Pembroke Ranges.
- **28 October 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that all the major backroom processes of government were today totally driven and facilitated by Information Technology. These included the police, health, taxation and accounting, customs, courts administration, and local government administration. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at the official launch of the programme to mark the 10th anniversary of the setting up of Management Systems Unit Ltd, now Malta Information Technology and Training Services Ltd.
- **28 October 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, Foreign Minister Joe Borg, and Chairman of the Core Negotiating Group Richard Cachia Caruana pledged agreement with Malta's EU membership as soon as possible, as well as support for the *Yes to Europe* movement. During the evening over 5,000 persons signed the declaration.
- **28 October 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg informed Parliament that Malta had voted in favour of a United Nations General Assembly resolution on October 20 condemning Israel for using excessive force against Palestinian civilians in the latest Middle-East flare up. The Minister was replying to a Parliamentary Question.
- **28 October 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that, though the Malta Stock Exchange was still young and enthusiastic, steps should be taken to ensure transparency in all transactions. Mr Dalli was addressing a gala dinner hosted by the Malta Stock Exchange to mark the closing of a seminar for the chairmen of listed companies.
- **28 October 2000** Bank of Valletta Chairman Joseph Zahra said that the group was now Malta's largest financial institution, with total assets as at the end of June amounting to \$3.7 billion, and shareholders' funds totalling \$221 million. Mr Zahra was speaking at the opening of the bank's new representative office, in Tunisia.

- **28 October 2000** *Apollo V*, a work by the late artist Victor Pasmore, was donated by the Pasmore family to St James Cavalier Centre for Creativity.
- **28 October 2000** Minister for Justice and Local Government Austin Gatt launched a White Paper on the *Vision and Strategy for the Attainment of e-Government*. The White Paper is about how the Government proposes to make the best use of information technology. Feedback on the White Paper will be accepted till November 17 and may be e-mailed to cimu@magnet.mt or to <http://cimu.magnet.mt>
- **28 October 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech announced a call for proposals for the development, construction and operation of the Valletta entrance project that is expected to cost about Lm40 million. The project includes the construction of a theatre on the site of the former Royal Opera House, as well as the reconstruction of City Gate according to the designs of Renzo Piano.
- **28 October 2000** Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg announced the publication of a White Paper to amend the Criminal Code that is shortly to be presented in Parliament. Dr Borg urged all police force members to read and understand the important and significant alterations proposed. Dr Borg was speaking at a ceremony at police headquarters in which he presented letters of appointment to fourteen new superintendents.
- **28 October 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo announced that the Tourism Ministry was to mount a consumer campaign in Poland aimed at attracting 8,500 Polish visitors to Malta next year. Dr Refalo was speaking to a group of Polish reporters at Spinola Palace, in St Julian's.
- **28 October 2000** A European Commission's public opinion survey published this week shows that out of the 13 applicant countries, Malta still enjoys the best support for membership among European citizens. The survey, known as the *Eurobarometer*, is carried out twice a year.
- **28 October 2000** *Malta Government Privatisation plc* launched Lm10 million five-year bonds. The bond grants investors wishing to participate in the forthcoming privatisation programme preference over other investors at the allocation stage of shares of companies to be privatised. MGP Chairman Joseph Caruana gave details of the scheme at a news conference, in Attard.
- **29 October 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the country should be ready for a referendum on EU membership sometime in 2002, if the necessary changes that would enable the EU to take on new members were ready in time. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at a press conference about the work of the Office of the Prime Minister over the past year.
- **29 October 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici stressed the need to develop the airport as a hub in the Mediterranean. Prof. Bonnici was speaking at a press conference in which Malta International Airport Chairman Lawrence Zammit announced record pre-tax profits of Lm3.25 million for the year ended 31st March 2000, up from Lm2.06 million in the same period last year.
- **29 October 2000** Local Government Minister Austin Gatt urged the need for synergy between agencies and voluntary organisations in the field of social welfare, and for local councils to seek experienced partners to address the locality's specific social problems. Dr Gatt was addressing a seminar on the theme *Social Work – the Way Forward*.
- **29 October 2000** The Central Bank of Malta's September issue of *The Quarterly Review* notes that, during the second quarter of this year, the Maltese economy expanded at a faster rate than in 1999, despite the negative impact of higher oil prices in the international market.
- **30 October 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli vowed that, by 2004, the problem of the budget deficit would have been resolved. Mr Dalli was addressing a conference at Sannat, Gozo.
- **30 October 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that 4,400 jobs had been created over the past two years, part-time jobs had reached 36,000, while unemployment had gone down to 4.4 per cent. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at Zejtun.
- **31 October 2000** President Guido de Marco suggested that the Organisation for Co-operation and

Security in Europe (OSCE) should become the Organisation for Co-operation and Security in Europe and the Mediterranean, OSCEM. Prof. de Marco was delivering the opening speech at the OSCE conference, in Slovenia.

- **31 October 2000** The Central Office of Statistics announced that imports of fuel during the month of August had cost Lm6.4 million, compared to Lm2.7 million in the same month last year.
- **31 October 2000** The Planning Authority published draft studies on tourism and on the retail sector, as part of the process of formulating the Structure Plan Review. The previous Structure Plan, which includes 320 policies, dates back to 1992.

November

- **1 November 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Opposition's option of having close relations with the EU without actual membership was not beneficial to Malta. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at a General Workers' Union seminar about whether Malta should join the EU or not.
- **1 November 2000** Malta and Finland have signed an agreement for the avoidance of double taxation, creating a framework for enhanced economic links between the two countries. Ambassador Joseph Cassar and Finnish Ambassador Dieter Vitzthum signed the agreement at the Finnish Embassy, in Rome.
- **1 November 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici announced that *Air Malta* was to branch out into the cruise liner business. Prof. Bonnici was speaking at the company's annual general meeting.
- **1 November 2000** The Government has confirmed Louis Grech as Chairman of *Air Malta* and has appointed Ivan Falzon as its new Deputy Chairman. Mr Falzon stays on as Chairman of MIMCOL.
- **1 November 2000** Lawrence Zammit, Chairman of Malta International Airport (MIA), is the new chairman of the Malta Development Corporation. He takes over from Mr Francis Vassallo. Mr Zammit will be retaining his position as Chairman of MIA.
- **1 November 2000** Bank of Valletta Chairman Joseph Zahra announced that, during the past financial year, the Group's pre-tax profit had risen by 11.3 per cent, to Lm17.6 million.
- **1 November 2000** The Central Office of Statistics announced that the number of tourists in August had dropped by 2.4 per cent to 155,321, over the same month last year. Arrivals from the British market, however, were up by 3.5 per cent to 52,760.
- **1 November 2000** Maltese writer Leslie Vassallo was classified 'Highly recommended' for the Europe and Canadian region in this year's Commonwealth Short Story Competition. Around 3,500 entries from Commonwealth citizens were submitted for the competition. The top 26 entries, including Mr Vassallo's, will be recorded on CD for broadcast by radio stations around the Commonwealth.
- **2 November 2000** President Guido de Marco visited St John's Co-Cathedral and inspected restoration works there. Prof. de Marco was accompanied by Italian Ambassador Giancarlo Riccio, Italian Cultural Institute Director Rosanna Cravenna, and the Permanent Secretary at the Education Ministry, Paul Attard. The work, which cost Lm61,000, was funded by the fourth Italian financial protocol and by the Museums Department.
- **2 November 2000** The Foreign Minister of Latvia, Indulis Berzins, arrived in Malta for an official visit and was met at the airport by Foreign Minister Joe Borg. While in Malta, Mr Berzins will have talks with Dr Borg, and call on the President and the Prime Minister. He will also meet the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee.
- **2 November 2000** Local Government Minister Austin Gatt announced that rents for government-

owned property may now be paid at local councils. Local councils between them would net about Lm50,000 for accepting to process some 100,000 payments. Dr Gatt announced the new facilities during a news conference at the Senglea local council.

- **2 November 2000** *Air Malta* Chairman Louis Grech announced that the company could branch out to offer a maintenance service for the aircraft of other countries. Mr Grech said that negotiations with a foreign airline were expected to be concluded by December.
- **2 November 2000** *Miller Hughes Associates Ltd* of the UK presented Malta Drydocks with a report on the development of Dock No 1. The report suggests six different choices for the development of the dock.
- **2 November 2000** The Malta-EU Information Centre, in collaboration with the Employment and Training Corporation, has published a 16-page booklet on the employment strategy of the European Union. The booklet was translated from the European Commission publication, *The European employment strategy: Investing in people*.
- **2 November 2000** Maltese companies will have an opportunity to discuss Euro-Mediterranean partnerships with several hundred carefully selected counterparts from Italy and other countries from Europe and the Mediterranean, at the 23rd edition of *Europartenariat*. The EU-sponsored initiative is to be held in Palermo from December 3 to 5. Information on the event may be obtained by visiting the website at www.europartenariat.it
- **3 November 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg and his Latvian counterpart, Indulis Berzins, announced that they had discussed their respective countries' opening and closing negotiating positions on the EU. The two Ministers were addressing a joint press conference.
- **3 November 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg stressed Malta's interest in the re-launching of the western Mediterranean Forum, the so-called 5+5. The forum would include the five EU member states and five other Mediterranean states, including Malta. Dr Borg was speaking at an international conference on Malta and Russia's contribution to security and peace in the Mediterranean, at the Russian Centre for Science and Culture, in Valletta.
- **3 November 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici called for more EU support of the initiatives and reforms designed to create an Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area. Prof. Bonnici was speaking at an international conference on Malta and Russia's contribution to security and peace in the Mediterranean, at the Russian Centre for Science and Culture, in Valletta.
- **3 November 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici announced that investment in manufacturing in the first six months of this year amounted to Lm36.5 million, double the amount registered in the corresponding period last year when investment touched Lm18.5 million. Prof. Bonnici was speaking during the presentation ceremony of the Award for Achievement in Industry.
- **3 November 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that 50 companies set up by Italian investment were currently employing 3,500 workers. Prof. Bonnici was speaking to representatives from 18 companies in the Grosseto region of Italy who were in Malta to seek business co-operation with Maltese industrialists.
- **3 November 2000** Transport Minister Censu Galea said that it was important that bus ticketing machines were installed as soon as possible as they would reduce the amount of contact between drivers and passengers. A call for tenders for the supply of an electric ticketing system for buses was published in *The Government Gazette* of the 31st October 2000. The call closes on January 4, 2001.
- **3 November 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech called on the contracting parties to the Barcelona Convention who have not yet ratified the amendments to the convention, as well as its protocols, to complete the process during the current year. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking in his capacity as President of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties, during the official opening of the Bureau meeting in Damascus, Syria.
- **3 November 2000** Stefan de Mistura, Head of the United Nations Information Centre in Rome, said

that he had discussed with Government how the Island could spearhead an initiative to bridge the digital gap between countries having IT technology and others lacking it. Mr de Mistura was addressing a news meeting hosted by the Department of Information.

- **3 November 2000** Figures released by the Central Office of Statistics show that the value of fuel imports in the first nine months of this year was Lm76.7 million, a rise of Lm41.1 million over that for the same period last year.
- **4 November 2000** American Ambassador Kathryn Proffitt informed Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami that the United States was providing \$13 million to the Government to enable it to detect trafficking of illegal materials in containers, and to assist the Armed Forces to enhance its search-and-rescue capabilities.
- **4 November 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the assistance being given to Malta by the United States reflected the good relations between Malta and the US. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking to the media following his meeting with US Ambassador Kathryn Proffitt.
- **4 November 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that this year's Worker of the Year Award ceremony would focus on health and safety at work. The ceremony will be held aboard the Gozo ferry *Ta' Pinu* in recognition of the high quality of work carried out by Maltese workers at the Deep Water Wharf, in Valletta. Dr Gonzi was speaking during a news conference.
- **4 November 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that the collection of the tax due on fringe benefits was to be incorporated within the Final Settlement System. Mr Dalli was speaking at the Euro-Forum organised by the Malta Institute of Taxation.
- **4 November 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that, while Malta was harmonising its legislation with that of the EU, the country was undergoing "nothing less than a veritable national restructuring programme". Prof. Bonnici, standing in for the Prime Minister, was speaking during a conference on *The challenges facing management in an Enlarged Europe*.
- **4 November 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo announced that Malta had hosted around 250 conferences in 1999. Dr Refalo was speaking during a press conference to announce that the 61st World Congress of SKAL International Clubs would be held in Malta, instead of in Jerusalem.
- **4 November 2000** The Central Office of Statistics announced that initial findings in a household budgetary survey show that the average household size in Malta was estimated at 3.14 people per household. The figure is very close to the findings of the 1995 Census of Population in which the average household size was established at 3.12 persons per household.
- **4 November 2000** British High Commissioner Howard Pearce presented certificates to returning scholars who attended a scholarship in the UK under the *British Chevening Scholarship Scheme*. Each year, the High Commission offers a number of scholarships to Maltese students to undertake postgraduate studies or research at British universities.
- **4 November 2000** A television crew from *Rai 2* interviewed Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami for the feature programme *Speciale Europa*. Rai journalist Valeria Collevicchia said that the network was producing a programme on all the EU applicant countries. The Malta feature will be screened on 30th December 2000.
- **5 November 2000** Air Malta Executive Chairman Louis Grech announced that *Air Malta Group* had achieved a record profit before tax of Lm6.3 million for the year ended March 2000, an increase of Lm100,000 on the previous year. Mr Grech was speaking at the presentation of Air Malta's annual report for 1999-2000.
- **5 November 2000** President Guido de Marco invited Tunisian President Zine el Abdine Ben Ali to visit Malta in the near future. The invitation was extended during an hour-long meeting at the Presidential Palace, in Carthage. On his part, President Ben Ali invited President de Marco to pay a state visit to Tunisia.

- **6 November 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli announced that, following the negotiation of the collective agreement in 1998, the civil service wage bill would go up to Lm225 million next year. Mr Dalli gave the figures when he was speaking at Zabbar.
- **7 November 2000** President Guido de Marco said that the process of globalisation was one that had to be directed in such a way as not to render the rich and powerful countries richer and more powerful and the poor and weak countries weaker and poorer. Prof. de Marco spoke about the primary role of politics in the service of peoples while addressing the *Alcide De Gaspari Foundation*, in Rome.
- **7 November 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that the Government was committed to empowering women with the necessary tools to fully exploit their talents so that they could take an active part in the labour market. Women's participation in the labour market today stands at 30 per cent. Dr Gonzi was speaking during the launch of an empowerment programme for women, held at the premises of the National Council of Women.
- **7 November 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that *Enemalta* was owed Lm26.1 million in payments for electricity up to the end of July. Prof. Bonnici said that the arrears included Lm13.2 million due from domestic clients and small business enterprises, and Lm3 million from the commercial sector. The Minister was replying to a Parliamentary Question.
- **7 November 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo presented the *Tourism Journalism Award 1999-2000* to Julian C Zarb, a freelancer. The Ministry of Tourism invited Mr Zarb to attend the World Travel Market due to be held shortly in London.
- **7 November 2000** Justice Minister Austin Gatt said in reply to a Parliamentary Question that the Government was considering legislation against usury.
- **7 November 2000** Security solutions company *Datatrak Holdings plc* launched a public share issue, the first on the alternative companies' list of the Malta Stock Exchange. The Stock Exchange introduced the alternative companies listing a year ago, effectively paving the way for any company to list its securities on the exchange and allowing for the creation of what is known as a second tier market.
- **7 November 2000** Lombard Bank Malta registered a record pre-tax profit of Lm1.24 million for the financial year ended September 30. This is an increase of 41 per cent over that for 1999.
- **8 November 2000** A EU Health and Safety directive over the use of computers will come into force in Malta in July 2001. A legal notice published last month entitled *Minimum Health and Safety Requirements for Work with Display Screen Equipment Regulations - 2000* contains guidelines.
- **8 November 2000** Matthew Bowerman, representative of the Institute for the Promotion of Small Enterprise, said that the institute had drawn up a number of initiatives and measures to ensure the competitiveness and success of the furniture industry. Mr Bowerman was addressing some 70 delegates attending a Bank of Valletta conference on *The restructuring of the furniture industry*.
- **8 November 2000** Gozo Minister Giovanna Debono was presented with Quality Service Charters for the Notary's Office and the Passport Office in Gozo. The two new charters bring the number of offices having such charters up to 25.
- **8 November 2000** The Central Office of Statistics announced that the inflation rate in September stood at 2.67 per cent, down from 2.72 per cent the previous month. The retail price index went up by 0.36 points over the previous month to reach 112.80.
- **8 November 2000** The Central Bank issued a banking licence to *Sparkasse Bank Malta plc*. The bank, a wholly-owned subsidiary of *Sparkasse Schwaz*, an Austrian savings bank, is authorised to operate with non-residents of Malta in all currencies except the Maltese lira.
- **8 November 2000** University Rector Roger Ellul Micallef was presented with a bequest of more than 1,000 Anglo-Irish literary works by Irish collector David Elyan. In recognition of this outstanding

generosity the University granted an honorary fellowship on Mr Elyan.

- **9 November 2000** EU Ambassador Giorgio Boggio presented Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami and Foreign Minister Joe Borg with the EU progress report on Malta and the enlargement strategy paper that incorporates the new 'road-map' to Europe. Dr Fenech-Adami described the report on Malta as very positive, and one that reflects what is happening in the country. Dr Fenech-Adami said that the strategy document released by the EU was very encouraging. A copy of the progress report can be found at www.mic.org.mt
- **9 November 2000** Hungarian Foreign Minister Janos Martonyi started a three-day official visit to Malta. His first meeting was with the council of the Chamber of Commerce.
- **9 November 2000** Mr Tian Jiyun, Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Republic of China, led a parliamentary delegation to Malta. Mr Tian's visit follows that of vice-Minister at China's Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Co-operation, Mr Zhou Keren, who came to Malta on Tuesday, 7th November.
- **9 November 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that the people expected the General Workers' Union to take part in the marathon meeting within the Malta Council for Economic Development about the Budget.
- **9 November 2000** The Government published a White Paper proposing amendments to the Criminal Code. Justice Minister Tonio Borg said that certain amendments had been prompted by recent case law of the European Court of Human Rights; others were being made to enhance human rights protection in Malta. Minister Borg presented the White Paper to the media at a press conference held jointly with Justice Minister Austin Gatt.
- **9 November 2000** *Go mobile* is set to start providing mobile telephony services on December 1. *Go mobile* Chairman Juanito Camilleri said that the company would be offering customers a full range of wireless communication services. Prof. Camilleri was speaking during the official opening of the company's premises at Marsa.
- **9 November 2000** Subscription for the public share issue of *Datatrak Holdings plc* closed early. At first count, the share issue was heavily over-subscribed with over Lm4 million worth of applications.
- **9 November 2000** The Malta Festival of Mediterranean Literature got under way at St James Cavalier Centre for Creativity, in Valletta. Some 60 participants including writers, poets, and critics from Mediterranean countries are discussing the literature of the region.
- **10 November 2000** President Guido de Marco received the letters of credence of the newly-appointed Ambassador of Japan, Akira Hayashi. Ambassador Hayashi is a career diplomatic officer and is currently serving as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Italian Republic, in Rome.
- **10 November 2000** President Guido de Marco was presented with the letters of commission of the High Commissioner of Bangladesh, A.F.M. Golam Hossain. A graduate of the University of Dhaka, Mr Hossain has also served as Assistant High Commissioner in London, and as Director in the Bangladeshi Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- **10 November 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami announced that the Government was considering setting up a national commission to bring together the key players in information technology. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at a conference organised by the Malta Information and Technology Training Services Ltd (MITTS) on the theme *Attaining E-Malta: Pushing back the frontiers*.
- **10 November 2000** Consultations between the Government and the social partners on the Budget continued during a six-hour meeting of the Malta Council for Economic Development (MCED). Finance Minister John Dalli, who led the government delegation at the MCED meeting, also met Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami for Budget talks for the second day running.
- **10 November 2000** Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Borg announced that, following his meeting with

Hungarian Foreign Minister Janos Martonyi, Malta's Chairman of the Core Negotiating Group, Richard Cachia Caruana, would now be meeting his Hungarian counterpart. Dr Borg said that Malta could learn from the negotiating position adopted by Hungary on the very same chapters now being negotiated by Malta.

- **10 November 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that economic policy-making in Malta was at present steering a course towards the attainment of three crucial, self-reinforcing conditions. The first was to remove the sources of inefficiencies and waste in our economy; the second was to exploit the market *niches* where Malta, with its distinctive characteristics, could enjoy a competitive advantage; and the third was to secure proper access for Maltese goods and services in the targeted export markets. Dr Dalli was speaking at the annual dinner of the Chartered Institute of Bankers.
- **10 November 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici officially opened NEM's new Application Service Providing demonstration centre, at the Mosta Technopark. The NEM Group of Companies is a software solution-provider based in Germany.
- **10 November 2000** The Staff Development Organisation in the Prime Minister's Office, in collaboration with the Centre for European Studies in Strasbourg, began a two-day workshop on the EU's Structural Funds and Social Cohesion Policy, at Floriana. The workshop brings together officials currently involved in the EU accession process.
- **10 November 2000** Mohamed Abdel Monem Abbas Aly, the Egyptian wanted by Turkey for the slaying of British tourist Edgar Fernandes in March 1998, was jailed for three years for credit-card fraud. Turkey has since charged Aly *in absentia* with wilful homicide, but Malta is refusing to extradite the Egyptian to Turkey because the East Mediterranean country still has the death penalty on its statute books.
- **11 November 2000** The Privatisation Unit, in collaboration with *Malta International Airport plc*, is inviting proposals for advisers for the provision of consultancy services in relation to the privatisation of Malta International Airport plc. The call was published in *The Economist*. Details about the privatisation brief may be obtained from the Malta International Airport plc website at www.maltairport.com
- **11 November 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that he was convinced that the more the Maltese, collectively and individually, understood the implications of Malta's membership in the EU, the more their appreciation would grow that the alleged alternatives to membership were illusory. Dr Fenech-Adami was concluding a one-day national conference on the Four Freedoms organised by the Malta Chamber of Commerce, at Qawra.
- **11 November 2000** The Budget will be presented in Parliament on Monday, November 20. The date was fixed at a four-hour Cabinet meeting on Friday morning.
- **11 November 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi announced that the National Commission for Social Welfare Reform was expected to present its report by December 31. Dr Gonzi was speaking at a conference on social welfare reform titled *There's no such thing as a free meal*. The conference assessed the challenges and opportunities of social welfare.
- **11 November 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that action had to be taken as soon as possible over the pensions system. Mr Dalli, who was speaking at a conference on social welfare reform titled *There's no such thing as a free meal*, said: "If we take steps five years from now, the way to Calvary will be steeper, and the Cross heavier." The conference assessed the challenges and opportunities of social welfare.
- **12 November 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami inaugurated the Lm6 million Embassy fun-fashion-film complex at Valletta. The complex, which includes six cinema theatres, retail outlets, a newsagent, a coffee shop, and a food court, is jointly owned by *Gasam Group of Companies* and the *Big Bon Group*.
- **13 November 2000** A government statement said that the Prime Minister was in the United States for specialised medical tests at Mayo Clinic. Dr Fenech-Adami is accompanied by his wife Mary. During

Dr Fenech-Adami's absence, Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi is Acting Prime Minister.

- **13 November 2000** *Enemalta* staff worked round the clock to get the situation back to normal following two switch-gear explosions at the Marsa Power Station. The explosions left more than half of Malta and Gozo without power for several hours.
- **13 November 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech announced that a new Litter Act, to come into force next year, would meet present needs, make up for anomalies in existing legislation, and introduce more enforcement.
- **13 November 2000** The dead of the two world wars were remembered with Mass at St John's Co-Cathedral in Valletta, and a wreath laying ceremony at the war memorial in Floriana. President Guido de Marco led the wreath-laying ceremony.
- **14 November 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, in a written Reply to a Parliamentary Question, announced that the Armed Forces of Malta was considering the modernisation of its fleet of patrol boats. Dr Fenech-Adami said that initial contacts had been made with the United States.
- **14 November 2000** The telecommunications regulator intervened following failure by *Vodafone Malta Ltd* and *Go mobile* to reach agreement over charges on calls by users from *Vodafone* to *Go mobile*, and vice versa. The regulator settled on a rate that is halfway between the two suggested rates.
- **14 November 2000** The Malta-EU Information Centre handled 1,774 requests for information during the month of October. The most frequently asked questions during the month related to education, consumer protection, free movement of persons, and the environment.
- **14 November 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici announced the setting up of *The Glorious Few Production Co Ltd.*, a limited liability company wholly owned by Malta Investment Management Company Limited (MIMCOL). The company will produce a film on Malta during the Second World War.
- **15 November 2000** A government statement said that Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami would undergo surgery for the treatment of a stricture in the small intestine, at St Mary's Hospital, in Rochester, USA. Dr Fenech-Adami is under the care of Prof. Michael Camilleri, a consultant gastroenterologist.
- **15 November 2000** President Guido de Marco told a gathering of University students celebrating a day for peace in the Middle East that Malta would continue with its role as promoter of peace in the Middle East. Prof. de Marco stressed that peace was achieved through negotiation, mediation and commitment. The student meeting was organised by student organisation *Pulse*.
- **15 November 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that measures to assist *Enemalta* would be officially announced in the Budget speech. Figures released by the Central Office of Statistics show that the value of fuel imports in the first nine months this year was Lm76.7 million, a rise of Lm41.1 million over that for the same period last year.
- **15 November 2000** The 14th meeting of the EU-Malta joint parliamentary committee started meeting in Strasbourg. The meeting was held under the co-chairmanship of Dr Louis Galea for the Maltese Parliament, and Dr Luigi Cocilovo for the European Parliament side.
- **15 November 2000** Hungarian Foreign Minister Janos Martonyi said that EU membership was the only option if the Maltese believed that they have a European identity.
- **15 November 2000** The Central Office of Statistics announced that a total of 35,506 foreign students last year followed English language courses organised by the 29 English language schools. This is an increase of 14.1 percent over the figure for the previous year.
- **15 November 2000** Malta International Airport, the Armed Forces, the Police, the Department of Health and the Department of Information combined forces to hold a hijack exercise.

- **16 November 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami underwent a surgical intervention at St. Mary's Hospital, Rochester, Minnesota. The surgery, which involved laparoscopic resection of a benign small intestinal stricture, was performed by Dr. Michael Sarr and lasted just under two hours. Both procedure and recovery were uneventful and the medical team involved was very pleased with the outcome.
- **16 November 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that women's participation in the labour market stood at 30 percent, while that of Europe stood at about 50 to 55 percent. Dr Gonzi was speaking during a one-day seminar on *Gender equality on the national and international level*.
- **16 November 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg said that, for Malta to meet the target established in the new European Union enlargement strategy, it needed to open negotiations on the remaining chapters as soon as possible in the early 2001. Dr Borg was addressing the 14th Malta/European Parliament Joint Parliamentary Committee, in Strasbourg.
- **16 November 2000** EU Enlargement Commissioner Gunther Verheugen told Foreign Minister Joe Borg that he believed that Malta would be able to catch up with most advanced applicant countries in less than a year. Mr Verheugen said he expected that negotiations with Malta should be concluded by the middle of 2002.
- **16 November 2000** Malta was today expected to close another two chapters during a negotiating session on EU membership being held in Brussels. This means that Malta would have closed a total of 12 chapters. As a result, Malta will not only be leading the group of applicant countries who started negotiations in December, but would also have caught up with Poland in terms of the number of chapters closed.
- **16 November 2000** Malta was elected member of the United Nations Economic and Social Council for a two-year period commencing January 1, 2001. Elections were held on November 14 during a plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly.
- **16 November 2000** The Foreign Minister of Sweden, Anna Lindh, was expected in Malta today for an official visit. During her visit, Ms Lindh was due to hold talks with Foreign Minister Joe Borg.
- **16 November 2000** The Parliamentary House Business Committee agreed on the timetable of the Budget debate. The Budget is due to be presented on Monday 20th November, and the debate on a motion for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of Supply starts on Monday, November 27. The Government will reply on Wednesday, November 29.
- **16 November 2000** *Hyder Consulting* of the UK has concluded that unless major reforms are implemented at Grand Harbour, operations there will not only fail to attract more business but will also become less competitive. The company was commissioned by the Malta Maritime Authority to draw up a port strategic development plan.
- **16 November 2000** The Public Transport Authority declared in its annual report, tabled in Parliament, that the best way to resolve problems in the bus service was through the introduction of direct competition. The Authority said that the number of commuters using the buses in the year up to September had dropped by 4.5 percent to 31.1 million. The decline the previous year had been 2.4 percent.
- **16 November 2000** The Housing Authority's annual report, tabled in Parliament, shows that a total of Lm1,440,460 in subsidies were distributed among 260 beneficiaries in the year ended September 2000.
- **16 November 2000** *Malta Information Technology and Training Services* Chairman Joseph R Grima donated new computer systems to two orphanages and an old people's home. The donation formed part of MITTS' 10th anniversary celebrations.
- **16 November 2000** Malta is among the 28 European countries featured in a new compact disc entitled *Hello Europe*, published by the Directorate General of the European Commission. The CD is a youth guide to Europe, its peoples and the European Union.

- **17 November 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami was recovering well 24 hours after surgery and showing excellent progress. The attending surgical team, after having visited Dr Fenech-Adami, was very satisfied with his progress.
- **17 November 2000** Swedish Foreign Minister Anna Lindh described Malta as one of the advanced applicant countries for membership in the EU. Ms Lindh was addressing a joint press conference with her Maltese counterpart, Dr Joe Borg.
- **17 November 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea called on the EU to set a reasonable and determined time period between the conclusion of negotiations with candidate countries and actual accession. Dr Galea was speaking at the EU-Malta Joint Parliamentary Committee, in Brussels.
- **17 November 2000** The Director General of Enlargement of the European Commission, Eneko Landaburu, said that Malta had continued to make impressive progress. He said that Malta's achievements made him hope that the accession negotiations would progress quickly, even on the more complicated chapters yet to come.
- **17 November 2000** Malta has, to date, concluded 12 chapters in its negotiations with the EU. This means that Malta now leads the group of six applicant countries that started negotiations earlier this year. Malta has also managed to catch up with countries like Poland, a candidate in the first group.
- **17 November 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg attended the fourth meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, in Marseilles. The meeting was addressed by French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine, who announced that EU members had agreed that the amount of funding under the *MEDA II* programme covering 2000-2206 would amount to 5.35 billion Euro.
- **17 November 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that the Government was striving to obtain maximum international recognition for Malta's business laws and regulations. The Minister was speaking at a conference, *Shaping our Profession*, organised by the Malta Institute of Accountants.
- **17 November 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that the Government was moving ahead of targets as set out by the five-year structural deficit-reduction plan announced by the Finance Minister during the 1998 Budget presentation. Dr Gonzi was speaking at a two-day conference, *Shaping our Profession*, organised by the Malta Institute of Accountants.
- **17 November 2000** *Enemalta* Chairman Robert Ghirlando said that *Enemalta* was planning to eventually phase out leaded petrol. It plans to do so as soon as it finds a suitable alternative fuel for cars that cannot use unleaded petrol.
- **17 November 2000** In 1999, the male economic activity rate declined to 69.31 per cent, from 71.09 per cent in 1994. Meanwhile, the female economic activity rate advanced by 2.19 per cent, to 26.03 per cent. These figures are quoted in the publication *A Window on the World of Work*, issued by the Central Office of Statistics.
- **18 November 2000** Agriculture and Fisheries Minister Ninu Zammit said in Parliament that the veterinary services were monitoring meat imports to ensure that no meat products contaminated with the mad cow disease would enter the country.
- **18 November 2000** The Central Office of Statistics announced that the number of tourists in September had risen by 2.5 per cent, or 3,211, compared to the figure for the same month last year. Total arrivals were 48,321, compared with 44,808 last year.
- **18 November 2000** *Malta Government Privatisation plc* announced that it had allocated all privatisation bonds applied for by investors. The company said that it had received applications in excess of Lm5 million from over 800 applicants.
- **18 November 2000** *Telepage Ltd*, provider of the Wireless Messaging Service, announced drastic reductions in call charges related to specific paging services. The announcement follows the launch of *Telepage Ltd's* call centre. *Telepage Ltd* is a subsidiary of *Maltacom plc*.

- **18 November 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that Malta was benefiting from a highly regulated regime of financial services, a reputation highly sought after by the many blacklisted tax havens competing for business. Mr Dalli was delivering the closing address at the Malta Institute of Accountants conference, titled *Shaping our Profession*.
- **18 November 2000** First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, Pavel Telicka, arrived in Malta for discussions with Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Borg and the Chairman of the Core Negotiating Group, Richard Cachia Caruana. Dr Telicka is also Secretary of State for European Affairs as well as Czech Chief Negotiator.
- **18 November 2000** Mr Jean-Francois Verstrynge, Deputy General Director of DG Environment, said that he did not foresee any “fundamental obstacles” in the environment sector if Malta worked hard to ensure that issues of contention were in line with the EU directives. Mr Vertrynge was in Malta on a two-day familiarisation visit.
- **18 November 2000** Acting Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi, who is also Leader of the House, said that during this legislature Members of Parliament had tabled 21,456 Parliamentary Questions. In addition, 2,865 documents had been laid on the Table of the House.
- **18 November 2000** The European Union’s *Leonardo da Vinci* programme, which covers vocational education, was launched in Malta. *Leonardo* will allow Maltese students and workers to spend some time in European vocational educational institutions and enterprises.
- **19 November 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami was discharged from Mayo Clinic, St. Mary’s Hospital, after a 5-day stay for an intestinal operation. The Prime Minister was expected to continue his recovery as an outpatient in Rochester, Minnesota.
- **19 November 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that Malta was in the very important process of aligning itself to the Habitat Directives of the European Union’s *acquis communautaire*. Dr Zammit Dimech was addressing a seminar organised by Nature Trust on *The European Union and its impact on the environment in Malta*.
- **19 November 2000** Acting Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi named Detox Centre head Joe Caruana *Worker of the Year 2000*. Jury president Lilian Miceli-Farrugia said in her report that 15 nominations had been received this year.
- **20 November 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said in an interview that the Government’s major emphasis in the Budget for 2001 would be the curtailment of tax evasion. Mr Dalli was speaking 24 hours before delivering his Budget Speech today.
- **21 November 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli, presenting the Budget for 2001, said that the sacrifices made over the year had paid off. He said that this year the economy had grown by seven per cent in nominal terms and by 4.3 per cent in real terms.
- **21 November 2000** Acting Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that the economy was responding well to the Government’s sense of direction. 3,343 new jobs had been created; unemployment had decreased to 4.4 per cent, while the inflation rate stood at 2.8 per cent. Dr Gonzi was speaking at a press conference, together with Finance Minister John Dalli, shortly after Mr Dalli presented his Budget in Parliament.
- **21 November 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that employer-led health and safety management systems were the key factors for a successful national policy on occupational health and safety. Dr Gonzi was speaking during the launch of a health and safety week for employees at *Playmobil Malta Ltd*.
- **21 November 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg said that, as a sovereign nation state with a deep interest in promoting co-operation and security in the Mediterranean, Malta felt the need to make its own direct contribution to the humanitarian and rescue missions of the EU Rapid Reaction Force. Dr Borg was representing the Prime Minister, who is Malta’s Defence Minister, at the *EU 21 November Conference*.

- **21 November 2000** Malta has signed the Criminal Law Convention on Corruption. Adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in November 1998, the Convention forms part of the follow-up action of the summit of the Council of Europe Heads of State. It helps the implementation of the Council's programme of action against corruption.
- **21 November 2000** *Aggornat*, the Malta-EU Information Centre weekly news bulletin, announced that Malta had asked for six derogations and 10 transition periods in its negotiations with the European Union. Derogations are requested by a candidate country that feels that, due to its particular circumstances, it should be exempted from certain EU laws. Transition periods allow a country time to adopt EU rules.
- **21 November 2000** Ms Bridget Czarnota, Head of the European Commission's Technical Assistance Information Exchange Office programme (TAIEX), announced that as from 2001, Malta would benefit from around 700,000 Euro in assistance.
- **21 November 2000** A record number of participants from 18 developing countries took part in a two-week international course on the demography of ageing. The course was run by the *United Nations International Institute on Ageing*.
- **22 November 2000** The EU Enlargement Commissioner, Gunther Verheugen, said in Brussels that technical consultations between the European Commission and Malta would make it possible for a viable solution to be reached on the question of state aid for the shiprepair and shipbuilding sector within the context of the EU's competition policy. Mr Verheugen was speaking at a Ministerial Meeting on Malta's accession to the EU.
- **22 November 2000** Dr George Hyzler, Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry for Economic Services, said that the Government had started putting into action measures based on EU consumer policy directives dealing with product liability, sale of consumer goods, injunctions to protect the interests of consumers, door-to-door trading, and misleading and comparative advertising. Dr Hyzler was speaking during a consumer protection seminar sponsored by the European Commission's Technical Assistance Information Exchange Office programme (TAIEX).
- **22 November 2000** The French Embassy has moved from Ta' Xbiex to Valletta. The new premises are at 130, Melita Street. The premises were inaugurated by President Guido de Marco in the presence of Daniel Lequertier, a French Foreign Affairs Ministry official who came to Malta specially for the occasion, and French Ambassador Didier Destremau.
- **22 November 2000** Acting Prime Minister and Minister for Social Policy Lawrence Gonzi launched a Quality Service Charter for the Housing Authority, making it the first Charter to be launched by a government agency. The Charter will act as a point of reference where one may find information regarding the services offered by the Authority.
- **22 November 2000** *Go mobile*, Maltacom's mobile phone company, announced rates that are up to 30 per cent cheaper than the rates at present available. In a statement, *Vodafone* welcomed the introduction of competition.
- **22 November 2000** Malta International Airport Chairman Lawrence Zammit said that there had been a significant increase in interest from top international names in the aviation industry to become strategic partners of the company. He said that very big names from the Netherlands, Austria, France, Switzerland, Italy and the UK had already shown interest in becoming a strategic partner.
- **23 November 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami returned to Malta yesterday after undergoing surgery at St Mary's Hospital, in Minnesota, last week. The Prime Minister resumed his duties as from Wednesday the 22nd.
- **23 November 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea inaugurated the annual book fair, at Naxxar. A total of 33 exhibitors took part in the fair.
- **23 November 2000** The Parliamentary Secretary in the Economic Services Ministry, George Hyzler,

said that the Maltese legal system was currently undergoing a phase of rapid change, not only in format, quantity or principle, but also, and increasingly so, in its orientation and underlying philosophy. Malta's stated goal to align its legislation with *the acquis communautaire* of the EU was the major catalyst for this transformation, Dr Hyzler told a TAIEX seminar, in Valletta.

- **23 November 2000** Malta Financial Services Centre Chairman Joe Bannister described Malta as a serious financial centre, based on a legislative framework in line with the requirements of relevant inter-governmental institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Prof. Bannister was addressing a seminar in Milan, entitled *Malta: Centro Finanziario Internazionale*.
- **23 November 2000** *Maltacom's* international telecommunication facilities will be enhanced in six months' time by a new hi-tech, digital microwave radio link that will run between Malta and Sicily. The system will be jointly owned by Maltacom and *Telecom Italia*.
- **24 November 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli announced that a number of discrepancies between Maltese and EU laws regarding excise duties, which had come to light during the screening process, had been tackled in the last Budget. Mr Dalli was speaking at a seminar on indirect taxation at the Technical Assistance Information Exchange seminar, held in Malta.
- **24 November 2000** EU Ambassador to Malta Giorgio Boggio said he would expect a positive outcome of a referendum on European Union membership. Dr Boggio's term of office ends on Thursday, 30th November.
- **24 November 2000** The Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Kim Suk-Hyun, and the Ambassador of Thailand, Precha Pitisant, presented their diplomatic credentials to President Guido de Marco, at the Palace, in Valletta.
- **24 November 2000** The Central Office of Statistics announced that the Gross Domestic Product, at factor cost, had increased by Lm28.4 million or nine per cent, to Lm345.3 million, during the third quarter this year.
- **24 November 2000** The Central Office of Statistics announced that total sales by the large manufacturing enterprises in the September quarter this year amounted to Lm295.6 million, an increase of Lm79.0 million, or 36.5 per cent, over the same quarter in the previous year.
- **25 November 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that he was expecting to return to work at his office at *Auberge de Castille* sometime next week. The Prime Minister said that his health was back to normal and that he was already going out daily.
- **25 November 2000** The Prime Minister said in reply to a written Parliamentary Question that the number of employees in the Public Service stood at 31,052. Dr Fenech-Adami said that the figures included casual, part-time and contract workers, but excluded army personnel.
- **25 November 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that, of the 11,400 women in the work force, 1,226 were professionals, 320 had managerial posts, while another 1,622 carried out office work.
- **25 November 2000** According to figures released by the Central Office of Statistics, the shortfall between ordinary revenue (including sale of shares) and total expenditure during the first 10 months of the current year amounted to Lm64.5 million. This is an increase of Lm5.2 million, or 8.7 per cent, on a comparable shortfall of Lm59.3 million reported during the January to October period of 1999.
- **25 November 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said in Parliament that the country's reserves amounted to Lm689.9 million as at the end of October this year. Mr Dalli said that the reserves over the past three years stood at Lm552.8 million in October 1997, Lm601.6 million in October 1998, and Lm720.5 million in October 1999.
- **25 November 2000** The European Commission's Chief Negotiator with Malta, Arrhi Palasuo, said that there were certain rules in the EU, one of which was the *Bird Directive*, which the EU expected candidate countries to take into account. He could not envisage that "important exceptions" could be

made on such regulations. Mr Palasuo was speaking to reporters following a press conference on TAIEX Malta Week.

- **26 November 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli extended the hand of reconciliation to the General Workers' Union. Mr Dalli called on the Union to forget the disagreements of the past and to take part in future discussions.
- **26 November 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that the Government was working hard to create as much economic expansion as possible, putting into practice what it was continuously preaching: the generation of good quality jobs for Youth. Mr Dalli was speaking at the official launch of Internet betting site *Stanleybet.com* in Malta to service the international market.
- **26 November 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech was confident that the right solution to the controversial hunting issue would be found in the upcoming negotiations with the European Union – a solution that would respect Malta's circumstances. Dr Zammit Dimech was making his comments a day after the European Commissioner's Chief Negotiator with Malta, Arrhi Palasuo, said that he could not envisage that any important exceptions could be made on regulations such as the *Bird Directive*.
- **26 November 2000** Malta will shortly be ratifying the climate change Kyoto Protocol. The statement was delivered to the climate change conference on behalf of Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech by Vince Gauci, Director of the Environment Protection Department.
- **26 November 2000** President Guido de Marco addressed participants attending the celebrations to mark the fifth anniversary of the Barcelona conference that launched the Euro-Mediterranean process.
- **26 November 2000** Thousands of people turned up to watch the colourful opening ceremony of the Bay Street complex, Malta's biggest leisure retail project. The project is estimated to have cost around Lm30 million.
- **27 November 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that Government's plan to reduce the deficit to three per cent of the Gross Domestic Product had nothing to do with Malta's application to join the EU. It was directly linked to the country's good housekeeping. Mr Dalli was addressing a conference in Gozo.
- **27 November 2000** Minister of Finance John Dalli gave a breakdown in Parliament of how the Malta Government Privatisation Bonds issue was subscribed. He said the value of bonds subscribed under pre-placement arrangement amounted to Lm2.9 million, 800 private investors had purchased bonds to the value of Lm2.2 million, and the balance, just under Lm5 million, was taken by the Bank of Valletta as underwriter of the bond issue.
- **27 November 2000** The Parliamentary Secretary within the Economic Services Ministry, Edwin Vassallo, announced that the Ministry of Economic Services was setting up a new commerce division that would incorporate the Industrial Property Office, the Trade Department, and the Small Business and Crafts Unit. Mr Vassallo was speaking at a seminar on intellectual property rights at the Malta Chamber of Commerce.
- **27 November 2000** Ambassador William Spiteri presented his credentials to President Alexander Kwaniewski as Malta's Ambassador to Poland. Mr Spiteri is resident Ambassador in Berlin.
- **27 November 2000** Malta Stock Exchange Chairman Alfred Mallia took part in a two-day workshop in Stockholm, Sweden. The seminar was organised by the International Federation of Stock Exchanges on the theme *Investor Education*.
- **28 November 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that persons with a disability should be employed, not because of legal requirements, but because they were just as capable of doing their job as everyone else. Dr Gonzi was visiting companies employing persons with a disability.
- **28 November 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli described the General Workers' Union as a relevant organisation in the country. Mr Dalli augured that the GWU would participate in the first meeting of

the Malta Council for Economic Development following the Budget.

- **28 November 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli announced that a total of 262 non-resident persons were served with permits to purchase immovable property in Malta during the first 10 months of this year. The comparative figures for 1998 and 1999 stood at 155 and 219 respectively.
- **28 November 2000** A Lm1 million four-year programme aimed at introducing Internet services in all state schools was put into motion. The agreement for the operation of the programme was signed by the Education Division of the Ministry of Education and Malta Information Technology and Training Services Ltd.
- **28 November 2000** The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Anton Tabone, accompanied by MPs Victor Galea Pace and Joe Mizzi, and the Clerk of Parliament, attended the 10th meeting of the President of the European Parliament with presidents of the parliaments of EU applicant countries, in Limassol, Cyprus.
- **28 November 2000** Government MP Michael Ascjak, a member of the parliamentary delegation to the Council of Europe, attended the Committee on Science and Technology, held in Strasbourg.
- **28 November 2000** 109 employees of the local *ST Microelectronics* plant bought 7,322 shares, worth Lm130,000, in *ST Microelectronics NV*. This move was part of a world wide initiative by STM.
- **29 November 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg said that Malta was seeking to contribute to the enhancement of international peace and security in terms of active participation, especially when calls for peacekeeping, search-and-rescue missions and humanitarian operations were made with the blessing of the United Nations or the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Dr Borg was addressing an OSCE Ministerial Meeting in Vienna.
- **29 November 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that over the years Malta had succeeded in weaning away the industry from a mindset that Malta's only, natural market was the United Kingdom. Although Britain was still the source of many welcome visitors, the industry had adapted itself to the demands and tastes of a more international clientele. Dr Refalo was speaking to a delegation from the Sovereign Military Order of Malta from the region of Siberia.
- **29 November 2000** Valletta Fund Management General Manager Charles Borg said that one of the most fruitful and successful enterprises within Bank of Valletta Group was VFM. He said the company boasted \$450 million worth of funds under management and a shareholder base of over 27,000. Mr Borg was speaking during the VFM annual seminar.
- **29 November 2000** Malta had no record of press freedom violations in 1999-2000, a study by the International Press Institute shows. The study was presented during the OSCE Ministerial Council held in Vienna over the past days.
- **29 November 2000** The Meteorological Office will in the near future be posting its weather forecasts on the Malta International Airport Internet site at www.maltairport.com
- **30 November 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami returned to the House of Representatives for the first time since undergoing surgery for intestinal problems in the United States on November 15.
- **30 November 2000** Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that in Parliament that the results achieved so far made the Government proud because they showed that Malta was heading in the right direction. Dr Gonzi was standing in for the Prime Minister when the House debated a motion to resolve itself into a Committee of Supplies to debate the Budget by Ministry.
- **30 November 2000** *Maltacom plc* announced a Lm7.7 post-tax profit for the first nine months of this year. The Group's turnover increased by 7.6 percent to Lm35.2 million mainly as a result of an increase in revenue from line rentals, mobile interconnection, internet and internet-related services.
- **30 November 2000** Outgoing European Union Ambassador Giorgio Boggio, whose term of office

comes to an end this week, made a farewell call on President Guido de Marco at the Palace.

- **30 November 2000** *Maltacom* announced a cut in prices for overseas calls made on Christmas Day and Boxing Day.
- **30 November 2000** The Central Office of Statistics said that the number of youths registering for work during September stood at 1,770. The unemployment rate for the category, which refers to persons between 18 and 24, stood at 5.7 percent.
- **30 November 2000** The Parliamentary Secretary in the Economic Ministry, George Hyzler, said that Malta did not have a problem of graduate unemployment. Dr Hyzler was speaking during a university debate.
- **30 November 2000** The Malta Financial Services Centre has produced a CD-Rom, no bigger than a conventional printed business card, which contains hundreds of pages of information vital to financial services practitioners. The card carries the promotional slogan *Malta – Europe's new dynamic economy*.

December

- **1 December 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici announced that companies that decide to set up operations in a number of sectors identified by the Government would benefit from a reduced tax rate. The incentives form part of the measures contemplated in the Business Promotion Act, which the Government has just published.
- **1 December 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said during Parliamentary Question Time that no tax would be levied on capital gains from collective investment schemes on the Malta Stock Exchange. Mr Dalli said that the Budget measure was aimed at making a fund manager handling such schemes subject to withholding tax just as an individual would be.
- **1 December 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo told the Malta Tourism Authority annual conference that, when the Investment Promotion Act becomes law, the Government would not be proposing incentives to generate new bed stock. It would instead opt for incentives to support refurbishment, the creation of new cultural and sport attractions, and green initiatives.
- **1 December 2000** Figures published by the Central Office of Statistics show that the Maltese population increased by 1,814 persons during the first nine months of this year when compared to the figure for the first three quarters of 1999.
- **2 December 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami launched Maltacom's *Go mobile* service by phoning former President Vincent Tabone in Gozo. Dr Fenech-Adami said that *Go mobile*'s launch was "a story of courage, vision, and of getting things done in the shortest possible time".
- **2 December 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli said that, despite the tax on fringe benefits announced in the Budget, eighty-five per cent of bank employees who had house loans at preferential rates would not be paying any additional tax. The Minister was speaking during the Budget debate on the financial estimates of the Finance Ministry.
- **2 December 2000** The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has made 80,000,000 Italian lire available for conservation works at the archaeological site at *Tas-Silg*. *Tas-Silg* is the only archaeological monument anywhere in the world to be positively identified as the site of one of the great Phoenician colonial temples.
- **3 December 2000** President Guido de Marco received a group of five Maltese lay missionaries, members of MUSEUM, the Christian Doctrine Society, at the Palace of the Brigades, in Tirana. President de Marco, who was on a three-day visit to Albania, congratulated the lay missionaries on their work.

- **3 December 2000** The Government issued a call for proposals for the development and operation of an integrated system for the receipt, management, treatment, processing, and disposal of solid waste in Malta and Gozo. Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech told a press conference that over 100 companies, including top international firms, had expressed their interest in the project.
- **4 December 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi announced that several laws related to women were to be moved in Parliament next year. These included legislation on domestic violence, gender mainstreaming, and the setting up of the Family Court. Dr Gonzi was presented with a report on Women's Welfare in Malta by sociologist Anthony M. Abela.
- **4 December 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli announced that, as from next month, the Malta Council for Economic Development would start a monitoring exercise to ensure that the Budget was being implemented properly. Mr Dalli said that close consultations with the social partners would continue.
- **4 December 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea said that the networking of all schools via the Internet would start next year. Dr Galea was speaking to youths on the theme *Wahidna noholmu, Flimkien Inbiddu*.
- **4 December 2000** Acting President George Hyzler inaugurated a respite centre at Ghajnsielem, Gozo. The centre will provide care and support for people with disabilities and their families. The occasion coincided with *International Day for People with Disabilities*.
- **4 December 2000** The Government is to reduce its spending on hospitality and travel by almost 11 per cent next year, from Lm1.2 million to Lm1.07 million.
- **4 December 2000** Malta Development Corporation Chairman Lawrence Zammit said that there could be fatal consequences for certain aspects of manufacturing industry if Malta stayed out of the European Union. Mr Zammit was being interviewed by *The Times* newspaper.
- **4 December 2000** The possibility of setting up joint ventures between Maltese and Italian small and medium sized enterprises was discussed during the recent visit to Malta by the President of *Confartigianato*, Ivano Spalanzani, and the Consul General for Malta in San Marino, Luigi Lombardo. *Confartigianato* is an organisation representing the interests of around 500,000 SMEs.
- **4 December 2000** A spokesman for Malta International Airport said that Malta Air Traffic Services had introduced new routes and procedures in the airspace which is controlled from the Malta Air Traffic Control Centre. This marks the third and last phase of a major restructuring of the airspace.
- **5 December 2000** European Union Foreign Ministers meeting in Nice endorsed the Bloc's plan to admit a dozen new members. The Ministers also approved a text setting up permanent security and military structures under the EU's new Common Foreign and Security Policy.
- **5 December 2000** Malta Stock Exchange Chairman Alfred Mallia said that the MSE had applied for membership of the Federation of European Stock Exchanges, a body open only to European Union members. Mr Mallia said that the application was being considered favourably. Mr Mallia was speaking during a visit by President Guido de Marco to the MSE, in Floriana.
- **5 December 2000** Prof Edward Scicluna, Chairman of the Malta Council for Economic Development, said that the council had discussed the calculation of the Retail Price Index and found nothing wrong with the computations. However, the council said that the weightings for some items needed to be discussed.
- **6 December 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami left for Nice to take part in a European Conference for EU applicant countries being held ahead of the EU summit. The Prime Minister was accompanied by Foreign Minister Joe Borg, and the Chairman of the Core Negotiating Group, Richard Cachia Caruana.
- **6 December 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said in Parliament that, in the first nine months of this year, the oil import bill had risen by Lm18 million over the figure for the whole of last

year and it was almost double that of 1995.

- **6 December 2000** Health Minister Louis Deguara announced that the Health Division was using the management of Zammit Clapp Hospital as a model for the introduction of autonomy in public hospitals. Dr Deguara was speaking on the occasion of the presentation of the Hammett bed to the hospital.
- **6 December 2000** Government MP John Vella attended the 46th session of the Assembly of the Western European Union, in Paris.
- **6 December 2000** *Maltacom* reduced its tariffs on all local calls made from a fixed line to a mobile phone, from 20c to 12c per minute. The company said that the new tariffs came into effect as from December 1.
- **7 December 2000** Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that in Malta social spending amounted to 25 per cent of the Government's overall recurrent expenditure, a figure similar to that spent in most industrialised countries such as the United States, Denmark and Britain. Dr Gonzi was addressing a seminar on EU Social Policy and Employment. The seminar was organised by the Confederation of Trade Unions.
- **7 December 2000** Foreign Minister Joe Borg said that the Government intended to adopt virtually all of the EU directives regarding social policy and employment by the time of accession. Dr Borg was addressing a seminar on EU Social Policy and Employment.
- **7 December 2000** The *Ggantija* Temples in Xaghra have become the first Megalithic temples in Malta to have a site-interpretation system. The service is available in Maltese, English, French, Italian and German.
- **8 December 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Nice EU conference had lived up to his expectations and those of the other applicant countries. "Everyone had the opportunity to express his viewpoint and the EU members said that all comments would be given due weight." The Prime Minister was addressing reporters before returning to Malta.
- **8 December 2000** Maritime distress alert messages are to start being sent to the Malta Rescue Coordination Centre of the Armed Forces of Malta by the Mission Control Centre of Bari, Italy. The Bari Centre is operated by the Italian Coast Guard.
- **8 December 2000** *Payzone* is a new cooperative set up by 26 Maltacom employees. The cooperative will manage the upkeep of public telephone kiosks and sell telecards on behalf of Maltacom plc.
- **8 December 2000** The Central Office of Statistics announced that, in the 10-month period to October this year, total exports increased by Lm227.2 million to Lm875 million, from Lm647.8 million last year. Imports surged by Lm317.2 million to Lm1,235.1 million, from Lm917.9 million last year. The visible trade gap increased by Lm90 million to Lm360.1 million, from Lm270.1 million last year.
- **8 December 2000** Health Minister Louis Deguara announced that the Health Ministry planned to embark on a restructuring process enabling the Health Division to take on a regulatory role, while reducing its involvement in the everyday management of the various services offered to the public. Dr Deguara was addressing Health Division Directors at a seminar entitled *The regulatory role of the Health Division*.
- **9 December 2000** The Foundation for Medical Services received the ISO 9001 Certificate of Quality Management. During the ceremony, the Foundation launched its website, www.fms.com.mt
- **9 December 2000** The Public Transport Authority issued a call for applications for the importation of new buses, or for the purchase of new, locally manufactured buses. The call for applications, published in the December 7 issue of *The Government Gazette*, laid down the specifications for the buses.
- **9 December 2000** EU Enlargement Commissioner Gunther Verheugen said that Malta would play a valuable role in the Union's southern dimension and would contribute to the building of stronger links

between Europe, Northern Africa and the Middle East. Mr Verheugen was speaking in an interview with *Crossroads*.

- **9 December 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami dispelled speculation about his future when he made it clear that he intended to continue serving the country. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing his Party's General Council.
- **9 December 2000** Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg announced that immigration police had expelled more than 2,600 illegal immigrants in the first 11 months this year. Dr Borg was speaking to reporters at the airport, shortly after welcoming Italian Interior Minister Enzo Bianco.
- **9 December 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that a total of Lm98.6 million had been spent on the Delimara Power Station up to the end of August this year. Prof. Bonnici was replying to a Parliamentary Question.
- **10 December 2000** Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg announced that, within the coming weeks, the Maltese and Italian Governments would be signing two agreements, one on money laundering and the other on illegal immigrants. Dr Borg and Italian Interior Minister Enzo Bianco were speaking to reporters following discussions in a joint Italo-Maltese meeting of Interior Ministers.
- **10 December 2000** *Go Mobile* Chief Executive Juanito Camilleri said that the company had practically doubled the number of subscribers since its launch on December 1. Prof. Camilleri said that over 13,000 subscriptions had been sold over the past few days.
- **10 December 2000** Army Commander Brigadier Rupert Montanaro said that the Armed Forces of Malta was drawing up a demanding training programme for troops who would be participating in humanitarian and rescue missions within the European Union crisis management effort. Brigadier Montanaro was speaking in an interview with *Crossroads*.
- **11 December 2000** President Guido de Marco was invited by Italian President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi to address the opening session of a conference of Parliamentarians of Italian descent from all over the world.
- **11 December 2000** At the EU Nice Summit, French President Jacques Chirac proposed giving Malta three votes in a future EU Council of Ministers. Fellow applicant Cyprus, and founding member Luxembourg, got four votes. In the European Parliament Malta has five seats.
- **11 December 2000** The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture, which periodically visits Council of Europe member countries, announced that it would next year be visiting Belgium, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, the Russian Federation, Slovenia, Switzerland, Turkey and the UK, as well as Malta.
- **12 December 2000** A government statement said that the Government of Malta welcomed the successful conclusion of the European Union's summit in Nice. The summit was expected to be one of great significance for the enlargement process, and its conclusions had amply borne these expectations out.
- **12 December 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said in his annual message to emigrants for Christmas and the New Year that he hoped to visit Australia next year for the meeting of Heads of Government and Heads of State of Commonwealth countries.
- **12 December 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Government was committed to working hand in hand with the Order of St John in the renewed promotion of the hospitalling and rehabilitation traditions. Dr Edward Fenech-Adami was speaking during a two-day conference on rehabilitation held at Fort St Angelo, organised by the Sovereign Military Order of Malta and the *Accademia Internazionale Melitense*.
- **12 December 2000** President Guido de Marco said that Italians all over the world identified themselves with the values that Italy represented. Prof. De Marco was speaking during a conference in Rome for Parliamentarians who were of Italian descent.

- **12 December 2000** The President's wife, Violet de Marco, was given the *Women for Peace Award* by the Together for Peace Foundation, an international organisation based in Rome and New York. The organisation, chaired by Maria Pia Fanfani, spreads the ideals of peace and solidarity among people.
- **12 December 2000** Drydocks Chairman John Cassar White announced that Malta Drydocks had won a Lm2.7 million conversion contract. Mr Cassar White described the contract as immensely important and a turning point for the 'yard.
- **12 December 2000** The Central Office of Statistics announced that the unemployment rate in October stood at 4.3 percent, down from 4.4 percent the previous month.
- **12 December 2000** The New Year's Eve edition of *Mela Verde*, a popular television programme aired on *Rete 4*, will focus on Malta's agricultural and culinary traditions. *Mela Verde* has a weekly audience of 1.5 million Italians.
- **13 December 2000** The House of Representatives rose for the Christmas recess on Tuesday 12th after approving the Budget for 2001. The Appropriation Bill was approved with 35 votes in favour and 30 against. Parliament will meet again on January 8.
- **13 December 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said in Parliament that the number of redundancies in the first 11 months of this year totalled 1,865. Job opportunities, or vacancies, known to the Employment and Training Corporation numbered 6,918.
- **13 December 2000** Finance Minister John Dalli told Parliament that the Inland Revenue Department was drawing up a Legal Notice governing the taxation of share option schemes, including the manner in which capital losses would be considered.
- **13 December 2000** Parliamentary Secretary within the Economic Services Ministry George Hyzler said that Government should be a conductor, not a member of the orchestra. It has to maintain the harmony by letting all parties concerned voice their opinion. Dr Hyzler was one of the main speakers at a discussion on the theme *Are social and economic interests compatible*, held at the University.
- **13 December 2000** The Parliamentary Secretary within the Education Ministry Jesmond Mugliett addressed an information meeting in connection with the European Fifth Framework, an agreement covering research which Malta initialled on Wednesday 6th.
- **13 December 2000** Government MP John Vella, Leader of the Malta Parliamentary Delegation to the Council of Europe, is attending a seminar on the Social Charter of Europe. The seminar, which is aimed at the European Union's candidate countries, is the first in a series of three activities, organised in the framework of the joint programme 'Promotion of the Charter' between the Council of Europe and the European Commission.
- **14 December 2000** President Guido de Marco, on behalf of the Government and people of Malta, yesterday paid public tribute to a number of Maltese citizens who distinguished themselves in different fields of endeavour by appointing them to *The National Order of Merit* or to the *Xirka Gieh ir-Repubblika*, or by awarding them the *Midalja għall-Qadi tar-Repubblika*.
- **15 December 2000** German Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Christoph Zopel, made a strong appeal to Opposition Leader Alfred Sant to respect the outcome of a referendum on the European Union. Dr Zopel made his comments at a joint press conference with Foreign Minister Joe Borg.
- **15 December 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that a system had to be found to integrate the Medigrain silo at Marsa and the Grain Silo at Corradino more effectively. Prof. Bonnici was speaking when he toured the Medigrain silo, recently refurbished at a cost of Lm15,000.
- **15 December 2000** The Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Economic Services, George Hyzler, announced that the Government was planning a new set of fiscal and financial incentives for the film industry in the coming year. Dr Hyzler was opening a two-day conference entitled *When audio-visual meets finance*, organised by Audiovisual Eureka and the Malta Film Commission.

- **15 December 2000** Parliamentary Secretary Edwin Vassallo said that the Cabinet had been presented with a proposal for new legislation to regulate trading hours and remove anomalies in current laws. Mr Vassallo said that the new legislation would clarify licence conditions to ensure that enforcement made more sense.
- **15 December 2000** Dr Michael Frendo said that, although membership of the EU would entail freedom of movement and the opportunity for lawyers to exercise their profession in member states, there would still be certain restrictions to overcome. Dr Frendo was speaking at a conference on *EU Membership: How will it affect the legal profession?*
- **16 December 2000** Malta and Russia signed a double taxation agreement, as well as an agreement to prevent fiscal evasion with respect to income tax. Finance Minister John Dalli signed on behalf of Malta and the Russian First Vice-Minister of Finance, Sergei Dimitrovic Shatalov, signed on behalf of Russia. The agreements were signed in Moscow.
- **16 December 2000** *Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti* launched Prof. Margaret Harker's book *Photographers of Malta 1840-1990*. Education Minister Louis Galea said that the book helps us to understand the history of Malta by documenting the social life of our people over the last 150 years.
- **16 December 2000** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici inaugurated a water theme park, the first of its kind, at the Institute of Water Technology of the Water Services Corporation, in Luqa.
- **16 December 2000** The Malta-EU Information Centre published four new information booklets in Maltese as part of its information campaign about EU membership and its implications.
- **16 December 2000** *Sedqa* and the Department of Information launched a campaign to get the message across that "Alcohol – less is better". Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi was present for the campaign launch.
- **17 December 2000** State, Church and Party Leaders delivered their messages for the festive season under a marquee erected over the Opera House ruins, in Valletta. The speeches, a traditional feature of the annual Malta Community Chest Fund Christmas programme, this year focused on the conflict in the Middle East.
- **18 December 2000** President Guido de Marco was presented with a copy of the book *Encounters with Malta*. The 450-page volume features around 300 celebrated men and women from all over the world who had some form of encounter with the Maltese Islands.
- **18 December 2000** Bank of Valletta Group Chairman, Joseph F X Zahra, announced that the Group would, as from next month, be offering stock-broking services from the bank's wide network of branches in Malta and Gozo, through its stock-broking arm BOVSL.
- **19 December 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said, following the usual Monday Cabinet meeting, that the Government would shortly publish a White Paper to promote entrepreneurship. Dr Fenech-Adami said that the Paper would propose incentives to help entrepreneurs, particularly small businesses.
- **19 December 2000** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi attended the opening of the Shelter for Homeless People by the *Fondazzjoni Suret il-Bniedem*. Dr Gonzi said that the initiative gave hope to the many who would otherwise be forced to live a life of dependency. Archbishop Mgr Joseph Mercieca officially opened the shelter.
- **19 December 2000** Education Minister Louis Galea visited Mother Teresa College, in Msida. Dr Galea congratulated the students for creating a programme that makes young consumers of alcohol aware of the harm that alcohol can cause.
- **19 December 2000** The Meteorological Office reported that, while other countries to the east, to the west, and to the north of Malta were suffering from the effects of floods, Malta had only 133.2 mm of rain to show for itself.

- **20 December 2000** Legal Notice 263, carried in *The Government Gazette* of Tuesday December 19, reminded internet service providers that they were obliged to interconnect with the national internet exchange. The Legal Notice was issued following the intervention of the telecommunications regulator after a group of internet service providers formed a backbone excluding access to other providers.
- **20 December 2000** The House of Representatives met for a record of 245 sittings this year, almost twice the normal number of sittings in an ordinary year. The high rate of sittings was expected to continue next year, as Malta continues to adopt more EU-related legislation.
- **20 December 2000** The Ministry of Economic Services announced that the Department of Industry and the Small Business Efficiency Unit were being transferred to Lascaris, Valetta. On the other hand, the Office of Fair Competition was moving from Lascaris to Sta. Venera. The telephone numbers of the three departments remain unchanged.
- **20 December 2000** Ian Micallef, President of the Association of Local Councils, has been appointed *rapporteur* for the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of Europe. Mr Micallef was in Cyprus to prepare a preliminary report.
- **20 December 2000** Alessandro Cavalletti was in Malta to shoot a 20-minute feature on tourism and the historical attractions of Malta and Gozo. The programme was due to be featured in the popular Rai Tre programme *Alle falde del Kilimagiar* to be screened on Christmas Eve.
- **20 December 2000** The commercial banks were due to close for business on Tuesday, December 26 and Tuesday, January 2, both days being Bank Holidays. The banks affected were APS, Bank of Valletta, HSBC and Lombard.
- **21 December 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the most positive development of the year had been the process of dialogue and cooperation between the social partners. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing Heads of Department in the Government, and of parastatal bodies, commissions and organisations.
- **21 December 2000** *Midi Consortium* Chairman Albert Mizzi announced that work had started on the Tigné Point development project, part of the Lm140 million Manoel Island and Tigné development. The first phase of the Tigné project covers an area of some 125 tumoli.
- **21 December 2000** Bank of Valletta Group chairman Joseph F.X. Zahra announced that BoV Group had posted a record pre-tax profit of Lm17.6 million, that is Lm1.8 million or 11.4 per cent over that for 1999. Mr Zahra was addressing the Bank's annual general meeting.
- **21 December 2000** Malta's Ambassador to The Netherlands, Adrian Strickland, presented his credentials to Queen Beatrix last week. Mr and Mrs Strickland also had a private audience with the Queen.
- **22 December 2000** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami described the year 2000 as positive for Malta. He said that this was particularly due to the developments in the social sector and the progress made in social dialogue. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing representatives of the constituted bodies, trade unions, the media and various voluntary organisations at Auberge de Castille.
- **22 December 2000** *Freedom House*, the Washington-based independent organisation that monitors freedom worldwide, has again placed Malta in the top group of free countries. Malta is placed ahead of countries such as the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy and France.
- **22 December 2000** A government statement announced that Malta had signed the United Nations Convention against international organised crime. Malta also signed two other protocols, one on the trafficking of people, particularly women and children, and the other on illegal immigrants. Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg signed for Malta.
- **22 December 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo announced that the Tourism Ministry was to receive around Lm52,000 from the European Union to carry out two studies on how harmonisation of Maltese laws with EU directives would affect tourist guides and small and medium-sized enterprises,

with particular reference to accommodation and travel agencies.

- **22 December 2000** Lombard Bank reported a record pre-tax profit of Lm1.24 million. This is a 41 per cent rise over the previous year's profit. Chairman Christian Lemmerich was addressing the Bank's annual general meeting.
- **22 December 2000** President Guido de Marco, on behalf of the Malta Community Chest Fund, presented Lm12,000 worth of specialised apparatus and white goods to individuals with special needs and to philanthropic institutions.
- **22 December 2000** The Water Services Corporation said that it was donating the Lm250 it would have spent on Christmas cards this year to charity. A cheque for the amount was presented to President Guido de Marco on behalf of the Malta Community Chest Fund by Corporation Chairman Michael Falzon.
- **22 December 2000** The Department of Information published a calendar entitled *Malta ta' Dari*. The calendar features historic photographs of Malta that can be viewed on Photo Gallery, at www@magnet.mt
- **23 December 2000** The Apostolic Nuncio to Malta, Mgr Luigi Gatti, presented a copy of Pope John Paul II's message to mark the 34th World Day of Peace to President Guido de Marco, at the Palace, in Valletta. World Day of Peace is celebrated on January 1.
- **23 December 2000** The Central Bank of Malta issued details of measures on exchange control liberalisation that are due to come into effect on 1st January 2001. The measures are aimed at relaxing quantitative limits on current payments that are still subject to exchange control.
- **23 December 2000** The Maltese Gaming Board awarded a sports betting licence to Betinternet Malta, a subsidiary of the online bookmaker *betinternet.com*, based on the Isle of Man. The local company will offer coverage in greyhound and horse racing.
- **23 December 2000** New timeshare regulations were published in *The Malta Government Gazette*. The regulations form part of the National Plan for the Adoption of the *Acquis* and will come into effect towards the end of June 2001.
- **23 December 2000** According to the annual report published by the Registrar of Trade Unions, membership of trade unions and employers' associations registered a net increase of 584 over the previous year, to reach 94,071.
- **24 December 2000** Architect Edward Bencini, from the Cottonera Waterfront Group, said that work on the Cottonera marina was expected to commence in February or March 2001. Mr Bencini said that the marina should be fully operational by Spring 2002.
- **24 December 2000** Mrs Violet de Marco, Mrs Mary Fenech-Adami, Mrs Kate Gonzi and Mrs Rose Mifsud Bonnici distributed Christmas gifts to the 1,000 residents at St Vincent de Paul Home for the Elderly. The gifts were sponsored by the St Vincent de Paul Welfare Committee.
- **24 December 2000** *Coca-Cola* has just completed the filming of a commercial at the Mediterranean Film Studios. The production team responsible for the commercial had previously worked in Malta last year on a high-budget commercial for *Dimple Whisky*.
- **27 December 2000** Malta Drydocks won a Lm3 million contract to convert a modern cruise liner into an old-style classic ship. The ship is owned by the company *Hebridean Island Cruises Limited*.
- **27 December 2000** The number of people having a mobile phone has practically doubled over the past six months, with sales peaking during the Christmas period. The number of mobile phone owners stood at 56,000 in June, but it has now soared to over 110,000. In effect, this means that about a third of the population now owns a mobile phone.
- **27 December 2000** The new Maltese High Commission in Canberra was officially opened a few days

before Christmas. The Embassy is situated in a neighbourhood that houses several other embassies in the suburb of O'Malley.

- **27 December 2000** *Maltapost* will mark the first day of the New Year with a philatelic bureau card carrying a hand stamp with the date 01.01.01.
 - **28 December 2000** The Comptroller of Customs announced that the provisions contained in the Bill to amend the Import Duties Act would come into force on Monday, January 1, 2001. The Bill includes the new Customs Tariff.
 - **28 December 2000** The Islands and Small States Institute of the Foundation for International Studies has set up a centre for research and development of sustainability indicators for the Maltese Islands. The Director of the centre is Prof. Lino Briguglio, while the Co-ordinator is Kevin Mercieca.
 - **29 December 2000** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech announced that an air quality monitoring exercise held over the past year had yielded encouraging results. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking at the presentation of the first results of the National Air Monitoring Programme of the Environment Protection Department. The results can be viewed on the internet, at www.environment.gov.mt
 - **29 December 2000** *Maltacom* announced that 37,000 international phone calls were made between non-business clients on Christmas Day and Boxing Day. The company had offered special reduced tariffs on the two days.
 - **30 December 2000** As from 1st January 2001, the levy on imported furniture is being reduced by 20 per cent. The levy will be reduced by another 30 per cent on January 1, 2002, and the remaining 50 per cent will be removed on January 1, 2003.
 - **30 December 2000** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo announced that compulsory contributions by the private sector to the Malta Tourism Authority would, next year, be increased to bring the net contributions to Lm1.2 million. Dr Refalo was addressing a news conference.
 - **30 December 2000** The Finance Ministry said that a detailed version of guidelines for taxation on fringe benefits has been drawn up and would be available to employers in January.
 - **31 December 2000** *Go Mobile* Senior Sales and Marketing Executive Franco de Gabriele announced that the company had sold 20,000 lines in less than a month since it started operations on December 1. "When translated into market statistics, this means that the company managed to reach a market penetration of 5.3 per cent," said Mr de Gabriele.
 - **31 December 2000** The end of year edition of the popular Sunday television programme *Melaverde* was dedicated to Malta. Gabriella Carlucci presented the lunchtime programme on *Rete 4*.
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