DIARY OF EVENTS
2001

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

- **01 January 2001** The programme *L-Istrina*, transmitted by Television Malta, collected a record Lm226,863. The funds are to be shared by The Richmond Foundation, which provides services for those recovering from mental conditions; and The Little Sisters of the Poor, who are in the process of extending their residential care services facilities for elderly persons.

- **02 January 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, accompanied by Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries, called at the Palace and exchanged New Year greetings with President Guido de Marco.

- **02 January 2001** The Prime Minister also exchanged New Year’s greetings with the representatives of constituted bodies and organisations, as well as members of the public, who flowed into Auberge de Castille throughout the morning.

- **02 January 2001** The Archbishop, Mgr Joseph Mercieca, accompanied by Auxiliary Bishop Annetto Depasquale, exchanged greetings with President de Marco, the Prime Minister, and the Cabinet, at the Archbishop’s Palace, in Valletta.

- **03 January 2001** The Central Office of Statistics announced that the shortfall between ordinary revenue, including the sale of shares, and total expenditure in the first 11 months of last year amounted to Lm80.4 million. This is an increase of Lm10.9 million, or 15.7 per cent, compared to the same period of last year.

- **03 January 2001** Go Mobile Chief Executive Juanito Camilleri announced that, as from January 15, Go Mobile would launch its Information on Demand services on a trial basis, free of charge. Throughout the trial period, subscribers on the network will be able to access information on sports, lotto, news, financial stock quotes, exchange rates, horoscope, and a joke of the day. Prof. Juanito Camilleri was speaking at a press conference.

- **03 January 2001** Portomaso, Verdala Mansions, and the Cottonera Project were featured in articles carried in *Gulf News*. The articles said that Malta was making its mark in the area of luxurious residential developments. The articles followed the participation of Maltese real estate agents in the Worldwide Property Exhibitions in Dubai and Doha.

- **04 January 2001** The Central Office of Statistics announced that the trade gap between January and November 2000 had widened by Lm92.5 million, to Lm399.1 million, when compared to the figure for the same period a year earlier.

- **04 January 2001** A Bank of Valletta delegation headed by Chairman Joseph FX Zahra and General Manager Retail, Frank Xerri de Caro, have taken part in an Investment Promotion Seminar organized jointly between the Konstanz Chamber of Commerce, the Swiss-Maltese Chamber of Commerce, the Malta Development Corporation, and Bank of Valletta.

- **05 January 2001** Ronald Gallimore, Giorgio Boggio’s successor as the EU Ambassador to Malta, presented his diplomatic credentials to the President. He said shortly afterwards that, as Ambassador, he aimed at further strengthening relations between Malta and the EU.
Ms Maria de Los Angeles Florez Prida, who is the new Ambassador of Cuba to Malta, presented her diplomatic credentials to President Guido de Marco.

The Employment and Training Corporation signed cooperation agreements with The Richmond Foundation and Caritas designed to ensure employment opportunities for people with mental difficulties.

Public Transport Association President Victor Spiteri said that the association has been asked to provide the Public Transport Authority with quotations for low-floor buses.

Gozo Channel re-inaugurated Sa Maison quay following works that included the installation of an axle weigh bridge to control the weight of vehicles being driven on board the ferries. Transport Minister Censu Galea and Gozo Minister Giovanna Debono attended the ceremony.

The Central Office of Statistics announced that 16,931 ferry trips were made between the Maltese Islands in the first nine months this year. The number of passengers reached 2.4 million, an increase of 63,608. The ferries carried 282,292 passenger cars, an increase of 25,583.

United States Ambassador to Malta Kathryn Proffitt said that overall bilateral trade between Malta and the US had increased three-fold in the past five years, going up from $250 million to $750 million. Ms Proffitt spoke at the end of a meeting that President Guido de Marco held with members of the diplomatic corps.

Figures released by the Central Office of Statistics show that tourist arrivals in October dropped by 3,630, or 3.2 per cent, to reach 111,747, compared to the figure for October 1999. The deterioration was caused mostly by the German market, Malta’s second biggest, which saw a decline of 5,289 tourists to reach 20,234.

The Gaudos, the second of Gozo Channel’s three new ferries, all built at Malta Shipbuilding, is having sophisticated equipment tested before it undergoes final sea trials.

Port Cottonera Ltd Chairman John Ripard said that the renowned Casino di Venezia, owned by the Municipality of Venice, had concluded a preliminary agreement with Port Cottonera Ltd for the operation of a casino in Scamp’s Palace on the Vittoriosa waterfront – the latest development in the Cottonera project.

Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that he expected 2001 to be a crucial year when very important decisions would have to be taken.

Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern arrived last night for an official visit that will see him discussing the European Union with Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami. He was met at the airport by Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg.

The landmark Bill to amend the Industrial Development Act is set to be the first to be debated when Parliament meets again today after the Christmas recess. The Bill, along with another amending the Development Planning Act, is the most significant on the agenda of the House of Representatives.

Visiting Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern, at a joint press conference with Maltese Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, dismissed fears that small countries like Ireland and Malta could be swallowed up by a huge European entity, arguing that the reverse had happened in Ireland’s case. EU membership had provided Ireland with the means and opportunity to influence the evolution of the EU and its policies beyond the economic sphere and its own national interest.

During the joint news conference, Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that it was a Government priority to proceed with negotiations as fast as it could and to open 11 chapters under the Swedish Presidency, hoping that Malta would also be able to open the chapter dealing with agriculture.

Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern said that small economies had a multitude of successes and opportunities within the EU. “The single market has been, and continues to be, of
enormous benefit to our economic growth and it is a crucial driver in our economic success.” Mr Ahern was addressing members of the Chamber of Commerce.

- **09 January 2001** An EU delegation was in Malta to determine whether Maltese laws and policies on tourist guides comply with EU law. Delegation leader Eduardo D’Amico said that, when Malta became a member, it would have to broaden the concept of guiding, allowing European guides to practise in Malta, and vice versa.

- **09 January 2001** The first edition of *Question & Answer on 10 topics concerning Malta’s EU membership* is to reach each and every household in Malta and Gozo as from tomorrow. The booklet, in English and Maltese, is published by the Malta-EU Information Centre and provides down-to-earth explanations in simple language about various topics.

- **10 January 2001** Ronald Gallimore, who succeeds Giorgio Boggio as Head of the EU delegation to Malta, announced that the EU Commissioner for Enlargement, Gunther Verheugen, would be visiting Malta in early February. Mr Gallimore was speaking after his first official meeting with Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, at Auberge de Castille.

- **10 January 2001** Foreign Minister Joe Borg underlined the Government’s plans to complete negotiations with the European Union by June 2002, in line with the EU Commission’s enlargement strategy endorsed at the Nice summit last month. Dr Borg was amplifying the Government’s foreign policy goals when he addressed some 30 Maltese Ambassadors accredited to various countries at the eighth Ambassadors’ meeting at the Foreign Ministry.

- **10 January 2001** Figures obtained from the Central Office of Statistics indicate that more books, brochures, and leaflets, but fewer newspapers, journals, and periodicals, were imported between January and November last year, compared to the same period in 1999.

- **10 January 2001** The Malta External Trade Corporation published the latest edition of the *Made in Malta* directory of manufactured goods and services. The annual publication is a comprehensive reference guide to over 850 companies. Information on this publication is available at Metco’s website, at http://metco.com.mt

- **10 January 2001** Former teacher Ronald Micallef has been appointed director of the British Council’s Malta office. Mr Micallef takes over from Ms Anne Bradley.

- **11 January 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami predicted that the year 2001 would be a very good year for the country. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking during a social activity in Msida.

- **11 January 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami was in Berlin to take part in the leaders’ conference of the European Democratic Union (EDU) and the congress of the European People’s Party. The 20th EDU conference was expected to focus on the EU enlargement process, and the developments taking place within the EU in the economic and social areas.

- **11 January 2001** President Guido de Marco hosted Maltese Ambassadors, together with Foreign Minister Joe Borg, to lunch. Prof. De Marco said that it was the diplomats’ duty to serve their country irrespective of which party was in government. “Diplomats do not have a party, they only have a democratically elected Government.”

- **11 January 2001** The Archbishop’s Curia announced that Fr Robert Tucci, the Pope’s travel organiser, was expected in Malta in the next few days to plan Pope John Paul II’s second visit to Malta in “the coming few months”. During his visit, the Pope was expected to beatify Dun Gorg Preca.

- **11 January 2001** The International Maritime Law Institute conferred Prof. Francesco Berlingieri and Reverend Prof. Peter Serracino Inglott with honorary titles. The ceremony was presided over by President Guido de Marco at the Tapestry Chamber of the Palace, in Valletta.

- **11 January 2001** Education Minister Louis Galea announced that the new vocational college would be actively promoting the teaching of Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Japanese. Dr Galea was speaking in Parliament on the Business Promotion Bill.
11 January 2001 The Consumer Affairs Department and the Office for Fair Competition have been amalgamated into the Office of Fair Trading. The two offices were amalgamated as a result of an operations review within the Ministry to improve effectiveness.

11 January 2001 Yachting experts Camper and Nicholsons launched an international promotional campaign for the Cottonera marina, which could be ready to take its first boats by next September if all the permits are obtained in time. Work is due to start on the marina in March.

11 January 2001 The Central Office of Statistics said that, during November last year, the number of registered unemployed rose by 34 to 6,472. As a result, the unemployment rate edged upwards to 4.4 per cent, from 4.3 per cent the previous month.

11 January 2001 Eighteen local councils, 13 in Malta and five in Gozo, agreed to put up information stands of the Malta-EU Information Centre. The stands contain booklets, leaflets and other literature on the EU.

12 January 2001 Former President Ugo Mifsud Bonnici was honoured with the Premio Vincente Azzopardi in recognition of his efforts to promote the Spanish language in state schools. The honour was conferred during the official opening of the new premises of the Spanish-Maltese Cultural Circle in Mikiel Anton Vassalli Street, Valletta.

12 January 2001 Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that a survey carried out by the UK magazine Holiday Which? puts Malta as the leading, or close to the leading, destination in the value for money stakes among 20 holiday destinations. Dr Refalo was speaking to members of the Malta Cookery and Food Association.

12 January 2001 Swedish Ambassador Göran Berg, who is resident in Rome, said that the Swedish Presidency’s priorities for the coming six months were enlargement, employment, and the environment. Mr Berg was addressing students of the Mediterranean Diplomatic Academy, at the University.

12 January 2001 Yihuda Millo, who is the Israeli Ambassador to Malta, said that there was scope for improved relations between Malta and Israel, and he hoped that his country might one day reopen its embassy here. The Israeli Embassy in Malta was officially closed down in December 1987.

12 January 2001 Prof. Patricia Leighton is in Malta to study the situation of women in senior posts in the public service. The strategy is being developed by the Office of the Prime Minister, the Employee Relations Department and the Women in Society Department. Ms Leighton’s work is funded by the Commonwealth for Technical Cooperation.

12 January 2001 The Central Office of Statistics announced that the retail price index in November had gone up by 0.74 point, or 0.65 per cent, over that for October and reached 114.09. The November inflation rate stood at 2.56 per cent, down from 2.66 per cent a month before.

13 January 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Government was working on the ever more realistic assumption that it would be in a position to hold a referendum on EU membership by the end of the year 2002. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking during an exchange of New Year greetings with members of the Diplomatic Corps, at Auberge de Castille.

13 January 2001 Foreign Minister Joe Borg said that the pursuit of European Union membership in the next enlargement constituted Malta’s primary foreign policy objective. Dr Borg was speaking during an exchange of New Year greetings with members of the Diplomatic Corps, at Auberge de Castille.

13 January 2001 President de Marco said that the ultimate decision on EU membership rested with the people. Prof. de Marco was addressing the members of the Diplomatic Corps.

13 January 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Government was proposing to negotiate transition periods with the EU Commission in four areas. These were the organisation of working time; noise at work; temporary mobile sites; and use of equipment. Dr Fenech-Adami concluded the Malta Employers’ Association annual conference.
• **13 January 2001** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi announced that discussions between the Government and the Malta Council for Economic Development over strengthening the council were at an advanced stage. Dr Gonzi was speaking at the annual conference of the Malta Employers Association.

• **13 January 2001** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that European Union accession would make Malta more accessible to visitors from member states. This would further guarantee more tourists to Malta and more clients for tourist guides. Dr Refalo was speaking at the annual general meeting of the Malta Union of Tourist Guides.

• **13 January 2001** A review of last year’s statistics at the Stock Exchange released by the MSE shows that market turnover on the Malta Stock Exchange during 2000 had reached a total of Lm149 million.

• **13 January 2001** Malta Drydocks won a Lm2.5 million contract to carry out routine ship and maintenance work on the *USS La Salle*, flagship of the US Sixth Fleet. The contract is the first to be awarded to the ‘yard since an agreement signed in December 1999 enabling Malta Drydocks to bid for repair and alteration of auxiliary vessels of the Sixth Fleet.

• **14 January 2001** Parliamentary Secretary Jesmond Mugliett announced that the Youth Co-ordinating Committee 2001 would, next month, be launching the EU Youth Programme in Malta. The Committee overseeing the programme is composed of representatives of various youth sectors.

• **14 January 2001** *Go Mobile* launched its Information on Demand services. Through this new service, subscribers are able to get information on matters such as sports, stock quotes, exchange rates, lotto draws and news. The service is to be available 24 hours a day.

• **15 January 2001** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that a Lm1.5 million sports complex to be built in Cospicua would serve to inject new life into the area and generate commercial activity and jobs from which the people of the area would benefit.

• **16 January 2001** The Maltese delegation to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has taken over the chair of the Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC) of the OSCE in Vienna, during the month of January. Malta’s Ambassador to the OSCE, Noel Buttigieg-Scicluna is chairing the plenary sessions.

• **16 January 2001** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that Spanish giant *Sol Melia* had written to the Government to confirm its interest in the White Rocks Project. Talks between the Government and the *San Andrea Consortium*, which includes *Sol Melia*, started four months ago after negotiations with the first choice, *SIVA Consortium*, had failed.

• **16 January 2001** Education Minister Louis Galea was presented with a copy of the prestigious volume *Encounters with Malta* by Ms Petra Bianchi and Rev Prof. Peter Serracino Inglott, the book’s editors.

• **16 January 2001** Bank of Valletta Group issued its first-ever inter-active CD. The CD gives a detailed profile of the organisation, an insight into the Group’s business, and the services offered. It also includes details about Malta and its economy, a map, bank agencies and ATMs, the latest annual report and a virtual walk through a typical BoV branch.

• **16 January 2001** Veterinary Services Director Lino Vella announced a total ban on the importation of beef aged over 18 months. Mr Vella said that this step was taken to ensure that Maltese consumers were only provided with beef free of BSE, the so-called ‘mad cow’ disease.

• **17 January 2001** Foreign Minister Joe Borg announced that Spanish Foreign Minister Joseph Piqué i Camps had offered to provide technical assistance during Malta’s accession phase in negotiations with the EU. The meeting between the two ministers took place at *Palacio de Viana*, in Madrid.

• **17 January 2001** Don Sforza Ruspoli dei Principi di Cerveteri, outgoing Ambassador of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St John of Rhodes and of Malta, made a final visit to Prime Minister Fenech-Adami. Don Ruspoli is to be succeeded by Ambassador Giampietro Nattino.
• **17 January 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami received Maltese Consuls representing 52 countries at *Auberge de Castille*, in Valletta, to exchange New Year greetings.

• **17 January 2001** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that arrivals in winter from the Austrian market were, so far, comparable to those in winter 2000. Dr Refalo was addressing 120 Austrian travel agents, journalists and television crew who are in Malta as guests of the Austrian tour operator *Prima Reisen* and their local agents ‘In Tour Services’.

• **17 January 2001** President Guido de Marco invested Roberto Baggioni, Rear Admiral of the Italian Navy, with the title of *Honorary Officer of the National Order of Merit*, at the Palace, in Valletta. Rear Admiral Baggioni had been unable to attend the investiture ceremony of the National Order of Merit Awards held on December 13, Republic Day.

• **17 January 2001** Armed Forces of Malta commander, Brigadier Rupert Montanaro, announced that the army was planning to hold an exercise with United States marines towards the end of the month.

• **17 January 2001** Health Minister Louis Deguara announced that a process aimed at making hospitals more autonomous was underway. Dr Deguara said that a structure was being created so that the Health Division would be in a position to be a regulator for both public and private sectors.

• **17 January 2001** Health Minister Louis Deguara told Parliament that there were no reports of *Creutzfeldt-Jacob Disease* in Malta during the past few months. Dr Deguara said that the possibility of the disease surfacing here was remote. *CJD* is the human version of ‘mad cow’ disease.

• **17 January 2001** *The Centre for the Teaching of European Languages* for foreign students in the framework of the Socrates programme was launched at the University. Through this centre, Malta will become the clearinghouse for International Language Preparation Courses, with the Socrates office running the whole unit.

• **18 January 2001** Foreign Minister Joe Borg exchanged New Year greetings with Maltese consuls representing 52 countries. Dr Borg announced that the Protocol and Consular section of the Ministry was being extended into a directorate that would also incorporate Information.

• **18 January 2001** An official statement says that Government has never had talks with the American authorities over the possible installation of an American radar system in Malta. The statement was issued in reply to a newspaper report.

• **18 January 2001** *Sabratha Duty Free Co Ltd.*, a company registered in Malta, inaugurated two duty-free shops at Tripoli International Airport. Economic Services Minister Joseph Bonnici and Finance Minister John Dalli attended the official opening.

• **18 January 2001** Malta Drydocks and *Brovig RDS* of the United Kingdom signed a contract worth $6.6 million. The contract involves the conversion by the drydocks of the *mt Northia* to a floating production, storage, and off-loading unit that is to be based in the Isis oil field, off the coast of Tunisia.

• **19 January 2001** The Malta Maritime Authority announced that, for the first time in the history of Malta’s cruise-liner activity, the United States had replaced the UK as Valletta’s foremost source market. Over the past year, over 26 per cent of the total number of passengers visiting the island were from the US, compared to the 25 per cent share of the UK market.

• **19 January 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici announced that the value of Maltese exports to Libya between January and November last year had risen by Lm3 million, to Lm17.5 million, over that for the previous year. Prof. Bonnici was speaking at the official opening of two new duty-free shops operated by an Air Malta subsidiary at Tripoli’s International Airport.

• **19 January 2001** The Parliamentary Secretary within the Economic Services Ministry, George Hyzler, and film commissioner Winston Azzopardi, had talks with the production team of *Ocean Warrior* about filming along the coast of Malta. *Ocean Warrior* is a film about Greenpeace environmentalist Paul Watson’s personal mission to save underwater wildlife.

• **19 January 2001** Justice Minister Austin Gatt announced that the number of civil cases determined by the Courts last year was larger than the number of new cases coming in. This meant that the strategy to
reduce pending cases being adopted by the Government was bearing fruit. Dr Gatt was speaking before presenting warrants to nine new lawyers.

- **19 January 2001** University of Malta Rector Roger Ellul-Micallef was unanimously elected President of the *European Access Network*. The network is an international, non-governmental society that promotes wider access to higher education for those who are currently under-represented, for reasons ranging from age, gender or ethnic origin to disability, income level or family background.

- **19 January 2001** Chinese Ambassador Yang Guirong, on behalf of the Chinese Forestry Bureau, presented three hundred date saplings to Tourism Minister Michael Refalo. The presentation took place in Qormi.

- **20 January 2001** Eneko Landaburu, Director General of Enlargement of the European Commission, who also doubles up as the EU’s Chief Negotiator with the 12 candidate countries engaged in accession talks, was in Malta for the first time on a one-day visit. Mr Landaburu had intensive talks with Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Admi, Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Borg, and Chairman of the Core Negotiating Group Richard Cachia Caruana.

- **20 January 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that progress had been made on outstanding payments owed to Malta Drydocks and to Air Malta by Libya. Prof. Bonnici was speaking at the inauguration of two duty-free shops set up in Tripoli International Airport by *Sabratha Duty Free Co Ltd*.

- **20 January 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli said he had discussed the renewal of the oil contract between Malta and Libya with Libyan Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Farj Abdusalem Milad. Mr Dalli attended the inauguration of *Sabratha Duty Free Co Ltd*.

- **20 January 2001** The Central Bank’s *Quarterly Review* noted that the Maltese economy expanded at a faster rate in the third quarter of 2000 than in the same period of 1999 despite the negative impact of the rise in oil prices on the profitability of government enterprises. This acceleration in economic growth was largely driven by the electronics industry, both in terms of exports and in terms of investment.

- **20 January 2001** The Council of Europe, together with the European Union, chose the year 2001 as the European Year of Languages, with the aim of celebrating Europe’s linguistic diversity.

- **20 January 2001** A Parliamentary delegation led by Dr John Vella, and comprising Government MP Michael Ascia and Opposition MP Joe Debono Grech, attended the first part of the 2001 session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, in Strasbourg.

- **22 January 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Government’s vision for the years to come was to create a society without frontiers. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking during a party function.

- **22 January 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli said that, last September an approach was made with the United States with a view to negotiating a new double taxation agreement. However, no further developments were reported since then. Mr Dalli was answering a Parliamentary Question.

- **22 January 2001** A statement issued by the Office of the President stated that Prof. Guido de Marco was admitted briefly to St Luke’s Hospital on Saturday evening for the treatment of respiratory *sequalea* of an acute viral infection. All investigations performed proved normal and the President was discharged soon after.

- **22 January 2001** The Maltese Government was informed that Pope John Paul’s second visit to Malta would possibly be made on Friday, April 27. The Pope’s visit is this time connected with the beatification of Dun Gorg Preca.

- **23 January 2001** Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Borg stated that Malta's foreign policy rested on two pillars, namely, relations with the European Union and the Mediterranean. Dr Borg was addressing the Berlin European Academy.
23 January 2001 A team of EU experts on tourism, led by Antonio Scipione, was in Malta to prepare an interim report on how local laws on hotels and travel agents could be harmonised with the laws of the European Union.

23 January 2001 Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that social challenges could not be handled exclusively by the Government and required the partnership of the private sector. Dr Gonzi was speaking at the launch of a Sedqa programme in favour of substance abuse-free employees.

23 January 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli said in Parliament that a number of options on the financing of parastatal companies were being studied. The idea, Mr Dalli said, was to negotiate better conditions and strengthen control on loans.

23 January 2001 The International Institute on Aging held a two-week international course in social gerontology as part of its ongoing training programme. The programme was organised in collaboration with the United Nations Fund for Population Affairs.

23 January 2001 Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said in Parliament that, in this legislature, up to January 16, Members of Parliament had tabled 22,813 Parliamentary Questions. The number of documents laid on the Table of the House came to 3,187.

24 January 2001 President Guido de Marco continued with his duties from San Anton Palace whilst recovering from a viral infection. Prof. de Marco yesterday received the Ambassador of Egypt, Yehya Ibrahim El Ramlawy, British High Commissioner Howard Pearce, as well as Broadcasting Authority Chairman Joe Pirotta and BA Chief Executive Kevin Aquilina.

24 January 2001 Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Borg met the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, Joschka Fischer, in Berlin. Minister Fischer reiterated Germany's support for Malta's accession to the EU as part of the first enlargement and offered German assistance to Malta in the pre-accession phase.

24 January 2001 Foreign Minister Joe Borg said that he was not surprised at the position taken by the General Workers’ Union on EU membership. The Union had said that, based on the findings of a report that it was publishing, its stand now was definitely against EU membership.

24 January 2001 Minister for Transport and Communications Censu Galea had a meeting with Hamadoun Touré, Director of the Telecommunications Development Bureau of the International Telecommunication Union. Mr Touré was on an official visit to Malta in preparation for the finalisation of the partnership agreement between ITU Global Telecommunication University and Training Institute and Maltacom Training College.

24 January 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami stated in Parliament that a call for applications for recruitment of soldiers in the Armed Forces of Malta was due to be issued in the near future. Dr Fenech-Adami was replying to a Parliamentary Question.

24 January 2001 Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi stated in Parliament that, out of a total of 6,583 registering for work in December, 1,810 persons were under 25. Dr Gonzi gave this information in reply to a Parliamentary Question.

24 January 2001 Maltacom Chairman Maurice Zarb Adami announced that Maltacom subsidiary Terranet was aiming at introducing Digital Interactive TV in the near future. Mr Zarb Adami was addressing a press conference on the occasion of the first anniversary of local Internet portal www.dive.com

24 January 2001 Malta is to form the backdrop for a special episode of the popular Retequattro prime time TV programme, La Macchina del Tempo. Last year, the programme reached audience figures topping 13 million.

25 January 2001 Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that the economy had to continue restructuring in order to sustain and improve its international competitiveness. Prof. Bonnici was speaking at the opening of the Malta External Trade Corporation marketing conference with the theme International marketing in the digital economy.
• 25 January 2001 Justice Minister Austin Gatt said that Malta could not afford to underestimate the impact of the information economy on the global market place, including its positioning within this market place. Dr Gatt closed the Metco conference on the theme *International marketing in the digital economy.*

• 25 January 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli observed that an efficient service and a strong sense of justice and dialogue with the taxpayers would help bring about a mentality in favour of voluntary compliance. Mr Dalli was speaking at the launch of the *Quality Service Charter* for the VAT Department.

• 25 January 2001 VAT Commissioner Joe Portelli said that, over the past two years, the VAT Department had managed to exceed the VAT collection targets set out in the Budgets. Mr Portelli was speaking at the launch of the *Quality Service Charter* for the VAT Department.

• 25 January 2001 The Accountant General announced that the Government had decided to start publishing an indicative calendar of the annual programme of issues of government securities. Such a calendar would assist investors to gain a better insight into what investment opportunities would be available during the course of the year.

• 25 January 2001 Stock Exchange Chairman Alfred Mallia said that, following the co-operation agreement signed last month with the London Stock Exchange, the local exchange would very soon sign in a co-operation agreement with the Cairo Stock Exchange, the oldest in the region. Mr Mallia said that he was hoping that in the future such agreements would also lead to cross listings.

• 25 January 2001 Foreign Minister Joe Borg announced in Parliament that a Maltese Embassy would be opened at The Hague later this year. Dr Borg said that Ambassador Adrian Strickland, who had just presented his diplomatic credentials as non-resident Ambassador, would be appointed resident Ambassador.

• 26 January 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami stated that people had got used to a system of government that was no longer totally centralised. He said that this highlighted the success so far of the local council experience. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing a political rally.

• 26 January 2001 Health Minister Louis Deguara said that Government plans to install technologically advanced equipment at St Luke’s Hospital for the treatment of clinical waste. The equipment will treat waste from all public hospitals and its service will also be available on a commercial basis to individuals, local councils, and commercial companies. Dr Deguara was speaking at a seminar on the management of clinical wastes.

• 26 January 2001 Education Minister Louis Galea said that 21 Maltese schools, involving 2,171 students, were taking part in the *Comenius* project. *Comenius* aims to bring European schools closer together through international projects lasting from one to three years.

• 26 January 2001 Russian Ambassador Sergey S. Zotov presented a replica of the icon of Our Lady of Philermos to President Guido de Marco at the chapel dedicated to the Blessed Sacrament at St John’s Co-Cathedral. The icon was later given to Archbishop Mgr. Joseph Mercieca.

• 26 January 2001 Alex Agius Cesareo, the new Ambassador to Hungary, presented his credentials to the President of Hungary, Ferenc Madl, in Budapest.

• 26 January 2001 Telecommunications Regulator Joseph V Tabone announced that the national numbering plan would be implemented later on this year. In the course of this exercise, all local subscribers, with the exception of *Go mobile* subscribers, would have a change in their telephone number.

• 26 January 2001 The Central Office of Statistics said that tourist arrivals in November had dropped by 5,323 compared to November 1999, to reach 68,067. The number of cruise liner passengers in November had risen by 1,710 compared to November 1999 and had reached 13,648.

• 26 January 2001 Australian High Commissioner Iain Dickie, in a message marking Australia Day, commended the achievements of Maltese and Gozitan migrants to Australia and highlighted the significant contribution they gave to that country.
27 January 2001 *Air Malta* Chairman Louis Grech said that, by March of next year, the company was expected to have finalised plans over the composition of a future fleet costing between $350 million and $400 million. Mr Grech was speaking at the end of a visit to Air Malta by President Guido de Marco.

27 January 2001 President Guido de Marco made the keynote address at an international conference on language and diplomacy that brought together leading figures from the fields of foreign affairs, diplomatic studies, and linguistics. The Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies hosted the conference.


27 January 2001 Foreign Minister Joe Borg signed a double taxation agreement with his Portuguese counterpart, Jaime Gama. Dr Borg was in Lisbon to take part in the ministerial meeting of the 5+5 Dialogues.

27 January 2001 Justice Minister Austin Gatt praised the judiciary for the encouraging results achieved in the number of court cases heard and decided last year. Dr Gatt said that, for the first time in years, the backlog in both Civil and Criminal Courts had actually been cut back.

28 January 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami hailed the achievements of the local councils. Dr Fenech-Adami said that, before local councils were set up, the needs of a locality lay with Ministers. This power had since been passed on to the residents of the locality itself.

28 January 2001 Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that the aspirations of the majority of young people could be fulfilled if Malta joined the European Union. Dr Gonzi was delivering the closing address to the national conference on the theme *Iz-Zghazagh, ix-Xoghol, l-Unions u s-Sigurta’*.

28 January 2001 The mv Gaudos, the second vessel of the new Gozo Channel fleet, will enter into service in a few weeks time. The vessel was named by Mrs Rita Bonnici, the Economic Services Minister’s wife, and blessed by Archbishop Joseph Mercieca.

28 January 2001 Malta’s first weather website is available at [http://maltaweather.com](http://maltaweather.com) The site gives a five-day forecast for the Maltese Islands.

28 January 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami stated that the referendum on EU membership might be held after the general elections. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking in Gzira.

29 January 2001 The Prime Minister harshly criticised the General Workers’ Union for jumping to the conclusion that the EU is not good for Malta and Maltese workers when its own report did not say so. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking in Gzira.

29 January 2001 The January 2001 edition of the influential magazine *Boat International* carries a feature on planned yachting developments at Cottonera and Manoel Island and on the already operating Portomaso project.

29 January 2001 The Prime Minister’s office at Auberge de Castille was included for the first time in the list of places that can be visited during cultural tours organised by the Culture Department.

30 January 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami stated that the General Workers’ Union report on the impact of EU membership on Malta lacked seriousness, contained inaccuracies, and failed to analyse the country’s situation. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking to reporters following the usual Monday Cabinet meeting.

30 January 2001 Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi stated that the Department of Social Security up to the end of December had found 10,532 cases of abuse involving children’s allowance, 4,303 involving the supplementary allowance, and 1,926 involving social assistance, unemployment benefit, sickness benefit, and old age pensions. Dr Gonzi was replying to a Parliamentary Question.
30 January 2001 Transport and Communications Minister Censu Galea stated that the Shipping Register at the end of December consisted of 3,051 vessels having a total tonnage of 28.37 million tons. The information was given in reply to a Parliamentary Question.

30 January 2001 The Ministry for Social Policy launched a fully interactive state-of-the-art website at www.msp.magnet.mt The site provides wide-ranging information on services offered by the agencies and departments falling under the Ministry’s umbrella.

30 January 2001 Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said in reply to a Parliamentary Question that there were 839 single mothers receiving social assistance last year. This reflects a constant increase since 1995 when 422 single mothers received such assistance.

30 January 2001 Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said in Parliament that Malta Drydocks was owed $12.7 million from Libya; Air Malta was owed another $20 million. The Minister was replying to a Parliamentary Question.

30 January 2001 The Parliamentary Secretary in the Economic Services Ministry, George Hyzler, said that 162 of the 324 former Kalaxlokk workers who had opted for the voluntary redundancy scheme had since found full-time employment. Dr Hyzler was speaking to reporters and Kalaxlokk workers after touring extensive refurbishment works in progress at Lascaris.

31 January 2001 Foreign Minister Joe Borg said in reply to a Parliamentary Question that the Government was preparing for talks for Malta to have free trade agreements with Egypt and Tunisia. Dr Borg said that a Maltese technical committee had been set up for the purpose and Malta was now waiting for Egypt and Tunisia to set up technical committees on their part.

31 January 2001 Justice and Local Government Minister Austin Gatt said that he was immensely disappointed that there was no reference to the important sectors of justice and local government in the General Workers’ Union’s report on EU accession report. Dr Gatt was addressing a press conference.

31 January 2001 Transport and Communications Minister Censu Galea said that the GWU report on the European Union ignored certain areas where the people stood to benefit from EU membership. Mr Galea was speaking in Parliament.

31 January 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech announced that the consortium to be awarded the City Gate project in Valletta would be selected by the beginning of summer and works were expected to begin by the end of this year. The development includes the construction of a theatre on the site of the Royal Opera House as well as the reconstruction of City Gate according to designs by Renzo Piano.

31 January 2001 Health Minister Louis Deguara announced that, following the introduction of a database system at St Luke’s Hospital Outpatients’ Department, outpatients might now reserve an appointment without having to go to the hospital in person. Dr Deguara said that the new system should drastically reduce the inconvenience for patients.

31 January 2001 Education Minister Louis Galea announced that Gozo’s Ggantija temples had attracted 176,686 visitors last year. Next came Hagar Qim temples with 136,654 visitors, and Tarxien temples with 125,891. The information was given in reply to a Parliamentary Question.

31 January 2001 The outgoing President of the Maltese-American Chamber of Commerce, James Satariano, announced that overall trade between Malta and the United States had expanded by over 300 per cent in the last five years, from $250 million to $750 million.

31 January 2001 Bank of Valletta published the 22nd edition of its Review. The publication features papers on the Maltese macroeconomic situation within the context of Malta’s accession negotiations with the EU.

FEBRUARY
1 February 2001 Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg said that the Scottish court’s judgement in the Lockerbie trial in no way condemned Malta. Dr Borg said that Malta had always fully co-operated during the investigations, almost beyond its call of duty, and this co-operation had been appreciated.

1 February 2001 Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici slammed the General Workers’ Union report on the impact of EU membership, saying it was full of mistakes, inaccuracies and contained “blatant lies”.

1 February 2001 Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici announced that the Malta Development Corporation had given the green light to a British manufacturing company to start assembling, and later build, buses in Malta for export to Europe and the Middle East. Prof. Bonnici said that the company’s expansion programme would generate hundreds of jobs over the years.

1 February 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that Lm178 million worth of property had been sold in 1999, compared to Lm132 million in the previous year. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking during the opening of the fourth Kitchens and Bathrooms Fair.

1 February 2001 Figures released by the Central Office of Statistics show that, last year, domestic exports had risen by Lm264 million, to Lm976.9 million. Imports were up by Lm356.2 million, or 31.4 per cent, to Lm1,492 million.

1 February 2001 A British High Commission statement announced that the United Kingdom had extended its pet travel scheme to include Malta. The scheme allows pet dogs and cats meeting certain conditions to enter the UK without quarantine. Further information on the pet travel scheme is available from the Director of Veterinary Services, Albertown, Marsa, Tel. 237628/225638.

2 February 2001 Foreign Minister Joe Borg said that he was not surprised with the position taken by the General Workers’ Union against European Union membership. Dr Borg said that he was nonetheless disappointed. Dr Borg was speaking at a news conference.

2 February 2001 Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that major British tour operators had indicated that they were ready to increase their programmes to Malta, even as the Tour Operator Support Scheme (TOSS) was planned to be wound up next winter. Dr Refalo was speaking in Parliament in reaction to the General Workers’ Union’s report on EU membership.

2 February 2001 Transport Minister Censu Galea said that tenders for upgrading and construction works on 46 kilometres of road had been awarded to different contractors this year and the work had already started. Mr Galea was speaking at a news conference.

2 February 2001 Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici presented letters of appointment to the Chairman and members of the new Crafts Council. The council will seek to promote and to increase interest in Maltese crafts, to create new opportunities in the sector, and to establish international contacts for local craftsmen.

2 February 2001 President Guido de Marco expressed Malta’s solidarity with the people of India following the earthquake in the state of Gujarat. Prof. de Marco received Acting High Commissioner for India G L Bali and gave him a message of solidarity to be conveyed to the President of India.

2 February 2001 The University’s Centre for Communication Technology has launched CCT News, a news agency that is intended to give students an opportunity to combine theory with hands-on experience. The agency’s editor is to be Joe Mercieca.

3 February 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami stated that the Government wanted Local Councils to work for the interests of the elderly. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking in Mosta.

3 February 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech criticised the section on environment in the General Workers’ Union report on EU membership, and described it a series of gratuitous assertions made without any research. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking at a news conference.
• 3 February 2001 Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Borg gave details on the derogations and transition periods being sought by the Government with regard to five chapters being discussed with the European Union. Dr Borg was answering a Parliamentary Question.

• 3 February 2001 The Government announced the setting up of a steering committee responsible for developing the country’s first-ever residents’ parking scheme. Details of the committee were given at a joint press conference at Auberge de Castille by Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg, Justice Minister Austin Gatt, and Transport Minister Censu Galea.

• 3 February 2001 A Legal Notice appearing in The Malta Government Gazette of Friday, 2nd February set up the Resource Authority, with Joe N Tabone as Chairman. The authority is to be responsible for the regulation of the use of water, energy and mineral resources.

• 3 February 2001 Prof. Patricia Leighton of the University of Glamorgan, Wales, presented Joseph R Grima, Permanent Secretary at the Office of the Prime Minister and Head of the Public Service, with a report on increasing the number of women in decision-making positions in the public service.

• 4 February 2001 The recently founded Malta Satellite Broadcasting Centre started recruitment for its first project. The MSBC team is currently working on three interactive television projects namely, UbeTV, Casino Channel and TeleD.

• 4 February 2001 The Bank of Valletta and the Notarial Council entered into an agreement entitling notaries to a new BOV debit card specifically tailored for the profession. The agreement was signed by Bank Chairman Joseph F X Zahra and Council President Joseph Saydon at the Bank’s head office, in Sliema.

• 4 February 2001 Pauline Galea, who runs the seismic station at Wied Dalam, said that a shock of not more than 3 degrees on the Richter scale was recorded at 5.18 am Saturday. Ms Galea explained that the tremor was most probably the result of a seaquake about 12 km off Birzebbuga.

• 4 February 2001 Fabrizio Faniello secured first place in the Malta Song for Europe Festival. The singer will now represent Malta in the Eurovision Song Contest, due to be held in Copenhagen on May 12. The winning song was composed by Paul Abela, with lyrics by Georgina Abela.

• 4 February 2001 Environmental Minister Francis Zammit Dimech listed measures being taken by the Government to improve the environment of Marsa. Dr Zammit Dimech was taking part in a seminar on Marsa’s environmental problems.

• 4 February 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that those who vote in the next council elections should keep in mind the whole local political scenario, even though local councils were meant to govern only their respective localities. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing a seminar at the party political school, AZAD.

• 5 February 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the General Workers’ Union should publish the findings of the reports the union commissioned on the impact of EU membership before the union delegates are asked to vote against membership. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing a meeting at Santa Lucia.

• 5 February 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that he hoped that no one would argue that the Malta Drydocks should not accept the USS La Salle contract because of neutrality. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at Sta. Lucia.

• 5 February 2001 Minister of Health Louis Deguara complained in Parliament that the report by the General Workers’ Union on Malta’s application to join the European Union practically ignored the Health sector. Dr Deguara was speaking in Parliament.

• 5 February 2001 Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg said that enforcement orders would have to be registered with the Lands Registry so that anyone purchasing property would know whether there were any problems associated with the property. Dr Borg was addressing a party activity at Luqa.
5 February 2001 Tourism Ministry Michael Refalo said that the Malta Tourism Authority office in London last year had organised familiarisation trips for 300 conference and meeting organisers. Dr Refalo was speaking at the end of a Conference Forum for conference and meeting organisers.

5 February 2001 President Guido de Marco opened an art exhibition of photographs and paintings of the Australian landscape by Kirsten Jeffcoat, at St James Cavalier, in Valletta. The exhibition is the main feature of the Australian High Commission’s celebrations to mark the centenary of federation, when six British colonies in Australia joined together to form one country.

6 February 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami and Leader of the Opposition Alfred Sant exchanged correspondence regarding a contract worth Lm7.7million that the Drydocks had won for work on the US ship *La Salle*.

6 February 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli told a news conference that the General Workers’ Union would be presenting its delegates with a baseless report rather than with the conclusions of 21 reports drawn up by experts on the impact of EU membership. Mr Dalli’s conference was one of a series being given by ministers following the publication of the GWU report on EU membership.

6 February 2001 Malta High Commissioner to Australia Ives De Barro presented his credentials to New Zealand Governor-General Sir Michael Hardie Boys as non-resident High Commissioner to New Zealand, on 1st February 2001. The ceremony was held at Government House, Wellington.

6 February 2001 Ambassador Eric Gerada-Azzopardi presented his letters of credence to the President of the Republic of Finland, Ms Tarja Kaarina Halonen. The presentation took place on 1st February 2001 at the Presidential Palace, in Helsinki.

6 February 2001 Government MP John Vella and Opposition MP John Attard Montalto, both members of the Sub-Committee on relations with non-member countries of the Political Affairs Committee of the Council of Europe, attended meetings of the said sub-committee, held in Japan.

6 February 2001 The Malta Maritime Authority announced that the International Maritime Organisation had identified Malta as one of the countries giving full and complete effect to the provisions of the *International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch-keeping for Seafarers – STCW*.

6 February 2001 A Transport Ministry spokesman announced that the Ministry would shortly appoint an adjudicating committee to assess the eight offers submitted for bus ticketing machines. The tender for the machines was issued last year, after the Public Transport Authority submitted five options on how public transport could be overhauled.

6 February 2001 The Malta Tourism Authority launched a television advertising campaign in Britain as part of its promotional efforts there. The campaign is being supplemented by an advertising campaign in the British press which includes *The Times, The Daily Mail, The Daily Telegraph, The Sunday Times,* and *The Mail on Sunday*.

7 February 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami called General Workers’ Union general secretary Tony Zarb and Metal Section secretary Tony Coleiro for a meeting in Parliament over the contract of work on the US ship *La Salle*. At the end of the meeting, the Prime Minister said that there would be another meeting with the GWU regarding the matter.

7 February 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami was presented with a copy of a report entitled *Representation and Participation: Ensuring Quality Student Representation* by Karl Gourder, president of the University Students Council. Dr Fenech-Adami said that he was prepared to consider any requests to improve student participation and see what could be done. However, said the Prime Minister, the council’s ideas should first be discussed within the university.

7 February 2001 Education Minister Louis Galea said that the General Workers’ Union report on the impact of European Union membership was riddled with mistakes, making it impossible for workers to take an informed decision. Dr Galea was speaking during a news conference.

7 February 2001 Minister of Foreign Affairs Joe Borg met Miodrag Perisic, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in Valletta. During the meeting,
the strengthening of bilateral relations between Malta and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia at the economic and political level were discussed.

7 February 2001 A Curia statement announced that Pope John Paul II would be arriving in Malta from Syria on May 8. The visit forms part of a Jubilee pilgrimage in which the Pope will retrace the steps of the Apostle Paul.

8 February 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami stated that, while the referendum would give people a say over whether Malta should join the EU or not, they had absolutely no say about globalisation and its effects. “Restructuring, competition and improving economic efficiency are not a choice,” he said. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing the Union Haddiema Magħqudin general conference.

8 February 2001 The Prime Minister stated that he was expecting work on the USS La Salle to be carried out as scheduled. Dr Fenech-Adami referred to the La Salle contract at an activity in Gzira and later at the UHM general conference.

8 February 2001 Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that the biggest shortcoming in the GWU report on EU membership was that it concealed crucial aspects related to social policy, when this was supposed to be the focus of the union. Dr Gonzi was speaking during a news conference.

8 February 2001 Foreign Minister Joe Borg announced that hunting and trapping were expected to feature in EU membership talks during talks on the environment chapter in the first half of this year. Dr Borg was speaking in Parliament.

8 February 2001 The EU Commissioner for Enlargement, Gunter Verheugen, arrived in Malta last night for a two-day visit. He was greeted by Foreign Minister Joe Borg. Mr Verheugen was due to meet Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami and Opposition Leader Alfred Sant.

8 February 2001 The EU’s Principal Administrator for employment, industrial relations and social affairs, Johan ten Geuzendam, said that EU citizens seeking jobs in Malta would not be entitled to social security while looking for work, and might be expelled if they failed to find employment within a limited time. Mr Geuzendam was a speaker at the UHM general conference.

8 February 2001 The Government and the Malta Union of Teachers signed an agreement aimed at easing the implementation of the national minimum curriculum and open job opportunities for new university graduates in education. Education Minister Louis Galea said that the agreement, an addendum to a 1994 agreement, would help improve the quality of education.

8 February 2001 A Lm1.1 million contract for the export of tuna fish caught in Maltese waters was signed by the Koperattiva Nazzjonali tas-Sajd and Spanish company Ricardo Fuentes. The contract is the largest to be signed in the history of Maltese fishing.

8 February 2001 Raphael Vassallo, AGM Personal Lending of Bank of Valletta, announced that over the past three years turnover by Mastercard/VISA at BOV merchant establishments had increased by 52 percent, exceeding the Lm40 million mark. The number of merchant establishments equipped with an Electronic Point of Sale terminal over the same period increased by 45 percent, reaching 2,400 outlets.

8 February 2001 Two EU information booths with access to websites providing information about different aspects of European education were officially launched at the University library. Present at the launch was the Parliamentary Secretary in the Education Ministry, Jesmond Mugliett.

9 February 2001 EU Commissioner for Enlargement Gunther Verheugen said that a special arrangement based on the concept of “picking what you like and leaving the rest aside” was not an option open to Malta. Mr Verheugen was addressing a joint press conference with Foreign Minister Joe Borg.

9 February 2001 Foreign Minister Joe Borg said that he had discussed with Mr Verheugen the accession process and the possible time frames that one would envisage with regard to membership. Dr Borg was speaking at the joint press conference.
9 February 2001 Mr Verheugen described the progress that Malta had made over the past two years as impressive adding that Malta’s prospects were very good. Mr Verheugen was speaking at the joint press conference.

9 February 2001 Mr Verheugen said that he had had a friendly and open exchange of views with Leader of the Opposition Alfred Sant and the two had agreed to disagree on Malta’s membership application.

9 February 2001 A Parliamentary delegation attended the Second Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary forum in Brussels. The delegation, led by Speaker Anton Tabone, was composed of Government MPs Victor Galea Pace and Carmelo Mifsud Bonnici and Opposition MPs Leo Brincat and José Herrera.

9 February 2001 Slovak Republic Ambassador Jozef Miklosko presented his diplomatic credentials to President Guido de Marco, at the Palace, in Valletta. Dr Miklosko takes over from Rudolph Zelenav.

9 February 2001 President Guido de Marco met Giovanni Franciscis from the University of Naples at the Palace, in Valletta. They discussed a report on the state of the presidential palace that Mr Franciscis had drawn up for the Valletta Rehabilitation Project.

9 February 2001 The Malta-EU Information Centre announced that it had handled 1,137 requests for information during January 2001. The most frequently asked questions were on education, free movement of persons, health and safety, the Leonardo programme, SMEs, and training.

10 February 2001 EU Enlargement Commissioner Gunther Verheugen addressed the Foreign Affairs Committee and met President Guido de Marco at the Palace in Valletta. Mr Verheugen was also taken on a helicopter tour of Malta and on a brief visit to Gozo.

10 February 2001 Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that the Government was considering incentives to help restaurants that specialised in Maltese food. Dr Refalo was speaking at a seminar at the Mediterranean Conference Centre, in Valletta.

10 February 2001 The President’s wife, Violet de Marco, the Prime Minister’s wife, Mary Fenech-Adami, and the wife of the Minister of Health, Maria Deguara, visited Boffa Hospital to distribute presents to patients to mark World Day of the Sick. The three ladies were accompanied by Health Minister Louis Deguara.

10 February 2001 Figures released by the Employment and Training Corporation show that, unemployment in Gozo between February 2000 and last month had fallen every month except for the months of July and October.

10 February 2001 Figures released by the Central Office of Statistics show that over three million passengers used the Malta-Gozo ferries last year. This is an increase of 3.8 per cent over the previous year.

12 February 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that EU membership needed to be tackled as a national issue. A vote for the EU, he said, would be a vote for peace and economic growth. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking in Gozo.

12 February 2001 Education and Culture Minister Louis Galea said that one of the purposes of the new Heritage Act would be to bring about closer collaboration in rehabilitation projects carried out by local councils, the Museums Department, the Government’s restoration unit, and the Planning Authority. Dr Galea was addressing members of the Bureau of the International Committee of Historical Towns and Villages, which met in Malta.

12 February 2001 Parliamentary Secretary in the Home Affairs Ministry George Pullicino announced that the Government was considering a scheme for the voluntary registration of vacant properties so as to establish the number of vacant units. Mr Pullicino was speaking at Floriana.

13 February 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami announced that Malta had donated a token sum of Lm20,000 to the Government of India as an expression of sympathy following last month’s earthquake. Malta had also donated Lm10,000 to El Salvador, following the earthquake there. The Prime Minister was replying to a Parliamentary Question.
13 February 2001 *Fitch*, the international rating agency, affirmed Malta’s ratings at long term foreign currency ‘A’ and short-term at F1, and long-term local currency of ‘AA-’ (AA minus). It said these ratings applied to senior unsecured debt of the Maltese Government. The outlook for the ratings was stable.

13 February 2001 *Fitch* also said that a Maltese decision not to join the European Union would damage the country in investors’ eyes and the credit outlook for Malta “would become more risky”.

13 February 2001 Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that an advance team of 25 Americans were in Malta to make the final preparations for Malta Drydocks to carry out the work on the USS *La Salle*.

13 February 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli said that, as Malta intensified its efforts to join the EU, it became even more important to ensure that parallel efforts were made to build up the capacity to adopt the *acquis communautaire*. Mr Dalli was speaking during a workshop organised by the TAIEX Office of the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Enlargement, in cooperation with the Finance Ministry and the Commission’s Directorate General for the Budget.

13 February 2001 The Malta External Trade Corporation announced that it had sent a group of 20 businessmen on a trade mission to the Arabian Gulf. During the visit, the group was scheduled to meet the Chambers of Commerce of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, respectively.

13 February 2001 Maltacom Group chairman Maurice Zarb Adami announced that Maltacom subsidiary *Datastream Limited* had launched what he described as the fastest Internet access speeds ever made available in Malta. The new service utilises ADSL technology.

13 February 2001 A spokesman for *Hilton International* announced that Hilton Malta had ended the year 2000 ranking first in terms of overall guest satisfaction levels among over 80 Hilton hotels in Europe and the Middle East. Hilton Malta was also top in terms of the guests’ estimation of hotel staff.

13 February 2001 Weather reports from the meteorological office of Malta International Airport are now available on *Vodafone*’s SMS Flash Service for mobile phone subscribers. The weather bulletins are updated by meteorological office staff every 12 hours, at 0600 and at 1800.

14 February 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the indications were that the earliest date for the EU referendum was between February and March 2003. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking during a live interview on *Smash TV*.

14 February 2001 The Prime Minister said that, if the Malta Drydocks did not take up the USS *La Salle* contract, it would have to fork out $2 million in penalties. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking during a live interview on *Smash TV*.

14 February 2001 Two reports commissioned by the Office of the Prime Minister urge the Government to immediately start the process of preparations on the action Malta needed to take in order to successfully bid for EU structural funds upon accession. A briefing note on the reports was tabled in Parliament by Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami during Question Time.

14 February 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami opened the new Commerce Division within the Economic Services Ministry at Lascaris, in Valletta. Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici, Parliamentary Secretaries George Hyzler and Edwin Vassallo, and the Head of the Civil Service, Joseph R Grima, were present for the inauguration.

14 February 2001 Attorney General Anthony Borg Barthet, in a letter to the Prime Minister, confirmed his 1996 advice to the Government that work on US Navy vessels at Malta Drydocks would not violate the Constitution.

14 February 2001 Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici warned that cancellation of the contract for repair work on the US Sixth Fleet ship *La Salle* would be a major blow to the shipyard in every sense.
14 February 2001 Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said, in reply to a Parliamentary Question, that the Social Services Department did not recognise same-sex marriages contracted abroad. The Minister added, however, that the Department was not the competent authority to recognise marriages in Malta and abroad.

14 February 2001 Tourism Minister Michael Refalo presented awards launched by *The Definitive(ly) Good Guide to Restaurants* to twenty-nine restaurants in Malta and Gozo. The awards were based on overall rating, but also individual food, service and ambience ratings, value for money, and other criteria.

14 February 2001 George Micallef, chairman of the Product Planning and Development Directorate of the Malta Tourism Authority, said that as from April 1, developers of tourist accommodation would have to obtain clearance from MTA before applying to the Planning Authority for a development permit. Mr Micallef was speaking during a news conference at the MTA offices, in Valletta.

14 February 2001 The Central Office of Statistics announced that tourist arrivals last year had gone up by 1,483, to 1,215,713, over the figure for 1999.

14 February 2001 According to the Central Office of Statistics, the inflation rate in December had gone down to 2.37 per cent, from 2.56 in November. The retail price index had also gone down, by 0.51 per cent, and reached 113.51.

14 February 2001 The Malta External Trade Corporation and Bank of Valletta signed a three-year cooperation agreement to continue assisting local industry. The Bank has supported Metco’s trade missions abroad for a number of years.

14 February 2001 The Malta Tourism Authority aired the first of a series of television messages aimed at improving awareness of tourism. The first spot focused on the extensive impact of tourism on the island's economy and the benefits derived by the population at large.

15 February 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami stated that the uncertainty over Malta’s EU membership had a negative impact on international investors’ perception of Malta. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at the Federation of Industry’s annual conference, which had as a theme *The Maltese Economy – is it delivering*.

15 February 2001 Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that attempting to resolve the welfare gap by simply reducing social expenditure would be shortsighted and would inevitably have an economic boomerang effect. Dr Gonzi was speaking on the theme *The welfare gap – action now*, at the Federation of Industry’s annual conference.

15 February 2001 Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that the Government intended to stop the importation of leaded petrol in the future. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking on the theme *The environment – facing reality*, at the Federation of Industry’s annual conference.

15 February 2001 Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici announced the setting up of the Malta Enterprise Board. The board is to exploit synergy between MDC, Metco, IPSE and Mimcol. Prof. Bonnici was speaking at the Federation of Industry’s annual conference.

15 February 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli said that the new orientation for state initiatives was based far less than in the past on detailed controls and public investment. Mr Dalli was speaking at the Federation of Industry’s annual conference.

15 February 2001 President Guido de Marco visited the site of the recent archaeological findings at Mdina. Among the most important finds are two walls which seem to confirm documentation that a massive military structure had existed in 12th century Mdina.

15 February 2001 The Central Office of Statistics said that the value of fresh fruit and vegetables in the year 2000 had declined by 8.3 per cent, from Lm7.4 million in 1999, to Lm6.8 million.

16 February 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami warned that, unless there were enough drydocks workers willing to work on the US Navy contract, financial assistance to the ‘yard would be stopped forthwith. “We have to stand up and be counted,” he said in a televised address to the nation.
• 16 February 2001 President Guido de Marco described drug abuse as an illness that can only be overcome with determination and a want to succeed. Prof. de Marco was speaking during a donation ceremony at the Santa Maria Community in Hal-Farrug, Luqa. The Santa Maria Community is a residential programme for young people with a drug dependency problem.

• 16 February 2001 Paul Mifsud, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of the Environment, announced that EU-appointed consultants would be drafting a solid waste management strategy report for the Maltese Islands. Mr Mifsud was speaking at a news conference.

• 16 February 2001 Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that the new Business Promotion Act would lay more emphasis on the concept of ‘value-added’ than before. Prof. Bonnici was speaking at a breakfast meeting for businessmen, organised by financial services company KPMG, at the Le Meridien Phoenicia.

• 16 February 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that the construction industry had recovered and the number of people employed in the sector had increased from 5,399 in 1999, to 5,901 last year, an increase of 9.3 percent.

• 16 February 2001 MIDI Chief Executive Benjamin Muscat said that two thirds of the development at Tigné by MIDI plc would be completed in three years’ time. The development at Tigné forms part of a large project that includes Manoel Island. Mr Muscat was speaking on the site of the project.

• 16 February 2001 Parliamentary Secretary in the Home Affairs Ministry George Pullicino said that the Planning Authority was proposing the setting up of a business incubation unit at Ta’ Qali. Mr Pullicino was speaking at the launch of a development brief for Ta’ Qali Crafts Village. Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg and Parliamentary Secretary in the Economic Services Ministry Edwin Vassallo were also present.

• 16 February 2001 Education and Culture Minister Louis Galea told Parliament that Government expected to spend Lm45,000 on the restoration of prehistoric temples this year. The sum of Lm19,700 has been allocated for maintenance. The temples are Hagar Qim, Ggantija, Mnajdra, Tarxien and Skorba.

• 16 February 2001 The Civil Protection Unit, working with the Armed Forces and members of the Environmental Department, dispersed an oil slick measuring some 10 meters wide by 10 nautical miles in length, lying some 12 nautical miles off the east coast of Malta.

• 16 February 2001 Gozo Channel has bought a navigator bridge simulator. The new equipment allows navigators to train in a simulated environment that includes the re-creation of different environmental ambience like waves, currents and winds.

• 17 February 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami recalled that, when Parliament was debating the non-alignment clause in the years 1986-7, as Leader of the Opposition he had queried whether the two superpowers would exist indefinitely. Karmenu Mifsud Bonnici, then Prime Minister, had replied that if the superpowers ceased to exist, the clause on non-alignment would become outdated. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at a meeting for candidates contesting the forthcoming local elections.

• 17 February 2001 The Prime Minister said that about 300 workers having the required skills would be needed for work on the USS La Salle. Dr Fenech-Adami was a guest on the TVM programme, Xarabank.

• 17 February 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Malta EU Information Centre had, last year, commissioned two surveys about the European Union. The work was carried out by Misco, and the results were submitted to the Core Group of the Malta EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC). Dr Fenech-Adami was replying to a Parliamentary Question.

• 17 February 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that 1.4 tons million tons of solid waste had been disposed of at Maghtab and Sant Antnin last year. This figure represents an increase of 18 per cent on that for 1999. Dr Zammit Dimech was addressing the fourth session of the NSTF-Malta Student Science Forum.
• **17 February 2001** The Parliamentary Secretary in the Economic Services Ministry, George Hyzler, said that the Government was working to provide tax incentives for film production companies. Dr Hyzler, together with Malta Film Commissioner Winston Azzopardi, was discussing the film industry’s achievements and projects for the future, at St George’s Bay.

• **17 February 2001** A consortium, made up of BNP Paribas, Bank of Valletta, Advocates Micallef and MDP Group, has been appointed as adviser for the privatisation of Malta International Airport plc. BNP Paribas is lead adviser. The accountants and auditors for the exercise are KPMG.

• **17 February 2001** The European Commission forwarded a second installment of Lm10,000 in assistance for the co-ordination of the Euro-Mediterranean Youth Action Programme in Malta, national co-ordinator Giovanni Buttigieg said. The Euro-Mediterranean Youth Action Programme is an EU-sponsored initiative that helps with funding for exchanges, voluntary service, and networking of young people in Europe and the Mediterranean.

• **18 February 2001** The General Secretary of the General Workers’ Union informed the Prime Minister that the National Council of the GWU had agreed that the contract on USS *La Salle* should be honoured. The work on USS *La Salle* is therefore to be carried out. Dr Fenech-Adami said that he was pleased that “national interest and common sense had prevailed”.

• **18 February 2001** Malta Drydocks Chairman John Cassar White announced that the USS *La Salle* is to enter Malta Drydocks for repairs on March 29.

• **18 February 2001** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech announced that, over the next three years, the Government was planning to tackle the restoration of Vilhena Palace in Mdina, the underlying bastions, as well as a rehabilitation plan for Valletta. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking during a seminar on *Forts, Fortifications and Historical Buildings*, organised by the Italian Cultural Institute in collaboration with the University of Bologna.

• **19 February 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami proposed that there should be a nationwide discussion about the concept of neutrality with a view to changing the Constitution to make it more relevant to today’s situation. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at Hamrun.

• **19 February 2001** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that some 50 companies had shown interest in the development and running of an integrated waste management system and had collected the tender documents related to the project. Dr Zammit Dimech was addressing a political conference in Paola.

• **19 February 2001** Interior Minister Tonio Borg announced that over 2,000 persons had acquired Maltese citizenship since the Government introduced the Dual Citizenship Act in February last year. Of these, 1,458 were Maltese who had re-acquired their Maltese citizenship after losing it when they had become citizens of other countries. Dr Borg was addressing a political conference in Munxar, Gozo.

• **19 February 2001** Kate Bonello Sullivan, President of the Malta Association of Women in Business, won the Euro-Mediterranean Women’s Solidarity Award for her project proposal entitled *Information/Education Centres for Women in the Euro-Mediterranean countries*. The award is given by the European Economic and Social Committee.

• **20 February 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Government was to embark on a five-year, Lm60 million plan to build more state schools as well as rehabilitating and upgrading existing ones. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking to reporters after the usual Monday Cabinet meeting.

• **20 February 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the debate in Parliament on the amendments to the Planning Authority law would start in the coming days. The Prime Minister said that the aim behind the amendments was to create a more customer friendly authority, with fewer bureaucratic procedures.

• **20 February 2001** Dr Harry Vassallo, Chairman of *Alternattiva Demokratika*, called on a court to declare null and void the provision of the Constitution that lays down the use to which Malta Drydocks can be put. Dr Vassallo made his requests in a constitutional application he filed in the Civil Court against the Prime Minister in which he referred to Article 1 (3)(e) of the Constitution.
20 February 2001 Civil Protection Department Director Peter Cordina said that the department had received 4,606 requests for help during the year 2000. This figure is an increase of more than five per cent over the figure for 1999.

21 February 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that today the Soviet Union no longer existed and former Communist countries were now democratic. “If the Drydocks can repair everyone’s vessels, why should it not repair American ones?” he asked. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at Mellieha.

21 February 2001 Foreign Minister Joe Borg said that membership of the EU could not be viewed in isolation but had to be complemented by an active pursuit of the common interests of the Mediterranean region. Dr Borg was addressing a Foreign Ministry meeting of Malta’s Honorary Consuls in Italy.

21 February 2001 Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that Enemalta’s decision to import low-sulphur diesel was taken in an effort to improve air quality.

21 February 2001 Transport Minister Censu Galea said that road improvement was slowly gaining ground. He said that road works were underway in over 20 localities and work on three arterial roads, which is estimated to cost Lm4 million, would be starting within the next two weeks.

21 February 2001 Education Minister Louis Galea said that, so far this scholastic year, the sum of Lm6.4 million had been handed over by the Government to the Church in connection with Church schools. Dr Galea was replying to a Parliamentary Question.

21 February 2001 European Union Programme Unit national coordinator Joe Sammut said that 100 students had benefited from Erasmus, while 23 schools had taken part in Comenius. EUPU offers young people the opportunity to take part in exchanges and voluntary work abroad.

21 February 2001 Lecturers from nine universities in Europe will next week be joining academic staff and students from the University of Malta for a one-week intensive programme of lectures and discussions on the theme of social exclusion in Europe. The event is being co-financed by the European Commission under its Erasmus Programme and coordinated by the Erasmus University of Rotterdam in collaboration with the University’s Workers’ Participation Development Centre.

21 February 2001 The National Audit Office, in a report entitled Promoting Heritage Sites, concludes that an effective marketing strategy could make the Museums Department self-sufficient. In 1999, over 1.24 million persons visited the various museums and archaeological sites, generating revenue amounting to Lm880,000.

21 February 2001 Paul J Barbara has been appointed Head of the Tax Compliance Unit with immediate effect, according to a Legal Notice in yesterday’s Government Gazette.

21 February 2001 Reno Camilleri has been appointed the first chairman of the board of the Malta Statistics Authority, which will start functioning on March 1. The Authority was set up by a Legal Notice published in yesterday’s Government Gazette.

21 February 2001 Charles Mercieca has been elected President of the Maltese-American Chamber of Commerce. He succeeds James Satariano.

22 February 2001 President Guido de Marco described relations between Italy and Malta as very special, dictated as they were by history, culture, and the geographical position of both countries. Prof. de Marco was speaking to Italian consuls to Malta at the Palace, in Valletta.

22 February 2001 Dutch Secretary of State Dick Benschop said that he had discussed various issues related to Malta's EU membership bid and had been made aware of Malta’s negotiating position. Mr Benschop was speaking at a joint press conference with Foreign Minister Joe Borg.

22 February 2001 Lydie Polfer, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and External Trade of Luxembourg, said that Malta had made steady progress in catching up with the most advanced applicant countries and was well placed to make further advances.
22 February 2001 Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that the Government was to publish a White Paper on the amendments to the Conditions of Employment (Regulations) Act in about three months’ time. Dr Gonzi was addressing a news conference on the launch of Anthony M Abela’s study entitled *Values of women and men in the Maltese Islands: A comparative European perspective.*

22 February 2001 Karl Gouder, president of Kunsill Studenti Universitarji, presented copies of a study entitled *The reform of the educational system at the University* to Education Minister Louis Galea and University Rector Roger Ellul Micallef.

22 February 2001 Maltapost Chairman Frank Dimech said that the company had embarked on an extensive refurbishment programme in its 28 branches to transform itself from a government department to a commercial enterprise. Mr Dimech was speaking during a visit to the recently refurbished Qormi branch.

22 February 2001 Following an agreement signed between the Planning Authority and the Association of Local Councils, local wardens will be responsible for ensuring that buildings and billboards in their localities comply with PA regulations.

22 February 2001 Bank of Valletta is supporting the Institute of Financial Services Practitioners with the setting up of a permanent secretariat. The institute has among its aims that of promoting the continued development of the financial services industry.

22 February 2001 The Malta Tourism Authority will be holding *Alarme!*, a re-enactment of garrison life and drills, at Fort St Elmo, Valletta, on the last Sunday of each month. *Alarme!* will complement the MTA’s *In Guardia!* parades.

23 February 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that he agreed that the part of the constitutional provision on non-alignment which speaks about two superpowers was no longer valid. He called on the Civil Court to decide the application filed by Dr Harry Vassallo limitedly in that respect. Attorney General Anthony Borg Barthet signed the reply.

23 February 2001 Luxembourg’s Deputy Prime Minister Lydie Polfer said that in Nice the most important goals had been reached. The Nice conclusions, said Ms Polfer, were a very good result for the smaller counties and candidate countries’ future in the EU. Ms Polfer was speaking at a joint news conference with Foreign Minister Joe Borg.

23 February 2001 Central Bank of Malta Governor Michael Bonello said that Malta has been living beyond its means for far too long and action was needed without further delay. “The time of reckoning has come,” warned Mr Bonello. The Governor was speaking at a Business Breakfast, organised by the *Le Meridien Phoenicia* and *The Malta Business Weekly*.

23 February 2001 Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that *Air Malta* was to increase its services to the UK by four flights a week to meet increasing demand in summer. Prof. Bonnici was speaking at the launch of the airline’s Travel Trade Directory.

23 February 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that the Government had to ensure the reduction, re-use, and recycling of as much waste as possible so that as little waste as possible was sent to landfills. Dr Zammit Dimech was addressing the 7th *Malta Industry Environment Conference* on the subject of integrated solid waste management strategy, organised by the Federation of Industry and the Environment Ministry.

23 February 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that the Malta Resources Authority, set up earlier this month, planned to embark on a process for the liberalisation of local resources, mainly energy. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking at the launch of the Authority at the Ministry, in Floriana.

23 February 2001 Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg presented the sum of Lm5,000 to Emigrants’ Commission Director Mgr. Philip Calleja in recognition of the Commission’s work among refugees in Malta.

23 February 2001 Constantin Yerocostopoulos presented his diplomatic credentials to President Guido de Marco as the Greek Ambassador to Malta.
• **23 February 2001** Borys Hudyma presented his diplomatic credentials to President Guido de Marco as the Ukrainian Ambassador to Malta.

• **23 February 2001** The Malta Council for Science and Technology launched the User-Friendly Information Society Programme with a public briefing session. The programme forms part of the EU *Fifth Framework* programme.

• **23 February 2001** Director of Veterinary Services Lino Vella said that pork available on the local market posed no threat to public safety. Together with a number of other countries, Malta has banned the importation of all pork, beef, lamb and mutton from the United Kingdom until further notice. The ban came about following the outbreak of Foot-and-mouth disease in that country.

• **24 February 2001** Malta International Airport Chairman Lawrence Zammit said that MIA was “a living and clear example of the success of a public-private partnership”. Mr Zammit was speaking at the presentation of the *Annual Statistical Review 2000*.

• **24 February 2001** The British magazine *Living in Retirement* published a feature entitled ‘Malta – Your home in the Med?’ The writer of the article argues that Malta’s past British connections, its mild winters, and its friendly atmosphere make the Island the ideal retirement location for British citizens.

• **24 February 2001** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that the Housing Authority was constantly revising its policies to ensure that its resources were targeting those beneficiaries having most needs. Dr Gonzi was speaking at the announcement of sale of ninety-nine housing units in seventeen localities in Malta and Gozo.

• **24 February 2001** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi presented the *People Management and Satisfaction Awards* for the year 2000. The presentation was organised by the Employment and Training Corporation.

• **24 February 2001** Education Minister Louis Galea said that the law on heritage was expected to be in place by the end of this year. The heritage law will enable the Government to eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy and pave the way for museums to become autonomous structures.

• **24 February 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that the conversion job on the tanker *Northia* was proceeding on target. The Minister was speaking on-site, after being shown around the work being carried out on the tanker by Malta Drydocks Project Manager David J Kahlbom.

• **24 February 2001** *Airtours* Chairman David Crossland announced that he had come to Malta to find the ideal location to set up a Mediterranean-style village. Mr Crossland’s company in July 2000 bought out the faltering *Frosch Touristic*.

• **25 February 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami listed the major changes the party in government had brought about since being elected in 1987. Dr Fenech-Adami who was speaking at a seminar said that the next big step was membership of the European Union.

• **25 February 2001** *Maltacom* Chairman Maurice Zarb Adami announced that the company was preparing to start providing a ‘video on demand’ service on home television sets via telephone lines. Maltacom has signed an agreement with British firm *Yes Television plc* to start technical trials for the provision of the service.

• **26 February 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that change was taking place all around us and we should not be afraid of it; on the contrary, we should seize the opportunities presented by it. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at Qormi.

• **26 February 2001** *San Andrea Consortium* submitted its proposal to the Planning Authority to build a Lm15 million tourist-complex at the White Rocks. The project is to comprise 500 rooms, 1,000 beds, shops, restaurants, conference rooms, sports facilities and two swimming pools.

• **27 February 2001** President Guido de Marco was presented with a copy of the publication *Fortress Colony: The Final Act, 1954-64* by Prof. Joseph Pirotta.
• **27 February 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici was in Turin for discussions on potential Italian investment in Malta. Prof. Bonnici was accompanied on his visit by Lawrence Zammit, Chairman of the Malta Development Corporation, and by Joseph Zahra, Chairman of Bank of Valletta.

• **27 February 2001** Valletta Fund Management General Manager Charles Borg launched the *Vilhena Top 100 Fund*, which invests in the world’s top 100 companies. The minimum investment in the fund is a lump sum of US$2,500, or a savings plan of US$50 per month at a fixed US$1 per share.

• **28 February 2001** Outgoing US Ambassador Kathryn Proffitt said that she hoped that the *La Salle* contract would lead to more commercial work for Malta Drydocks. Ms Proffitt was speaking to reporters following a farewell call that she made on Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami at his office in Parliament.

• **28 February 2001** Education Minister Louis Galea said that the Government was this year allocating Lm1.26 million to fund Malta’s participation in *Leonardo*, *Socrates*, the *Youth* programme, as well as the *Fifth Framework* programme. Dr Galea was speaking at the launch of the *Youth* programme.

• **28 February 2001** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo officially launched a Quality Service Charter at the Institute for Tourism Studies. Minister for Justice and Local Government Austin Gatt, who was present for the launch, said that this was the 28th Quality Service Charter being awarded.

• **28 February 2001** The Armed Forces of Malta is once again recruiting soldiers, as well as officer cadets, on an initial 12-month engagement. Information on the new engagement can be obtained from the government website at [www.magnet.mt/gazette/employment/appli.htm](http://www.magnet.mt/gazette/employment/appli.htm)

• **28 February 2001** The Malta Maritime Authority announced that *Kristal*, a Maltese-registered tanker carrying molasses from Karachi to Amsterdam, broke in two off Spain's Atlantic coast, leaving three crew members dead and another eight missing. The Authority said that its Merchant Shipping Directorate was actively investigating the incident.

**MARCH**

• **1 March 2001** The Chairman of the Core Negotiating Group, Richard Cachia Caruana, said that in its negotiations with the E, the Government intends proposing a special package for Maltese farming containing all the elements to address Malta’s very specific needs. Mr Cachia Caruana was speaking at a conference organised by the Malta-EU Information Centre on the state of negotiations between Malta and the EU, held at the Mediterranean Conference Centre, in Valletta.

• **1 March 2001** Foreign Minister Joe Borg said that, if one were to take a reasoned approach, one would find that there was no alternative to EU membership. Dr Borg was speaking at a conference on the state of negotiations between Malta and the EU.

• **1 March 2001** The EU Commissioner for Enlargement, Gunther Verheugen, said that it was premature to decide ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to membership at the present stage. He advised the audience to wait until everybody knew what kind of product they had and then make up their mind and decide. Mr Verheugen was speaking in a video address shown at the conference on the state of negotiations between Malta and the EU.

• **1 March 2001** The Head of Delegation of the European Commission in Malta, Ronald Gallimore, said that the right of access to information was one of the key principles underlying EU policies. Mr Gallimore was speaking at a conference on the state of negotiations between Malta and the EU.

• **1 March 2001** According to the second *European Schools Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs* only a small number of Maltese 16-year-olds had not sampled alcohol. The results of the second *ESPAD* report were presented by Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi and *Sedqa* Chief Executive Sina Bugeja.
1 March 2001 Education Minister Louis Galea said that Malta could no longer survive as a bilingual country and students should learn as many as four languages. Dr Galea was speaking during the inauguration of the Immersion Project at the French Resource Centre of the Junior Lyceum, in Msida.

1 March 2001 American Ambassador Kathryn Proffitt was joint winner of the first annual Grant Thornton Award for Enterprise and Foreign Direct Investment in Malta. The Ambassador was granted the award in recognition of her “enthusiastic and outstanding effort to promote US investment in Malta and trade between the two countries”.

1 March 2001 Malta hosted the Second Euro-Mediterranean Forum of Women Parliamentarians. The forum was attended by delegations from nineteen countries as well as a delegation from the European Parliament.

2 March 2001 Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander A Avdeyev had talks with Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami and Foreign Minister Joe Borg. The discussion at Auberge de Castille focused on international issues of mutual interest, including the situation in the Middle East and the Balkans, and EU relations.

2 March 2001 Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that Government would be setting up a National Commission for the Family, as well as increase state contributions for foster care and for children in homes. Details of the Government’s intentions were announced at the premises of the Cama Movement, in Paola.

2 March 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that the Ministry had spent around Lm2.2 million on embellishment projects in various parts of Malta. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking at Ghar Lapsi, where one such embellishment project was carried out with the co-operation of Siggiewi Local Council.

2 March 2001 Transport Minister Censu Galea said that work on a Lm12 million project to improve Cirkewwa and Mgarr Harbours was well under way and due for completion in mid-2003. Mr Galea was speaking during a tour of the two sites.

2 March 2001 Tourism Minister Michael Refalo inaugurated an ‘educational vineyard’ at the Institute of Tourism Studies to give students the chance to gain hands-on experience in viticulture. The inauguration took place in the presence of students who follow the Food and Beverage course.

2 March 2001 Alex Agius Cesareo presented his credentials to the President of Slovenia, Milan Kucan, as Malta’s non-resident Ambassador to Slovenia.

2 March 2001 Malta banned the importation of animal fodder from the United Kingdom in view of the outbreak of the foot-and-mouth disease in that country. The ban also included hay and straw.

2 March 2001 Language Travel Magazine reported that Malta had taken over the top language travel destination for German students from the United Kingdom.

2 March 2001 The Executive Director of Merchant Shipping at the Malta Maritime Authority, Lino Vassallo, told Reuters that following the Erika disaster major efforts had been made to improve safety of vessels flying the Maltese flag.

2 March 2001 The Head of the Missione Archeologica Italiana in Malta, Prof. Antonia Ciascia, died at her home in Italy on the night of Wednesday, 28th February. Ms Ciascia was 70.

3 March 2001 The Government’s Treasury Department announced the issue of Lm30 million in government stocks at 6.65 per cent interest, maturing in 2016. The issue will be the first of four, projected for this year and announced recently by the Government.

3 March 2001 Health Minister Louis Deguara said that despite efforts to highlight the detrimental effects of smoking, more and more young people were becoming addicted. Dr Deguara was opening a two-day international meeting, called by the World Health Organisation and hosted by the local Health Protection Department, to draw up an action plan for a Tobacco-Free Europe.
• **3 March 2001** President Guido de Marco stressed the importance of securing a future for disabled children once their parents were no longer around to help them. Prof. de Marco was speaking during a visit to the Eden Foundation’s premises, in Bulebel.

• **3 March 2001** The Second Euro-Mediterranean Forum for Women Parliamentarians discussed *Globalisation and its Effects on Women*. Parliamentarians from 21 countries took part in the forum, presided over by Forum President Dolores Cristina.

• **3 March 2001** The Government published a Bill proposing the setting up of a *Malta Council for Economic and Social Development*. The new council will be replacing the Malta Council for Economic Development and will have the task of advising Government on issues relating to sustainable economic and social development.

• **4 March 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that local councils were no longer an experiment but were a project which had succeeded. He added that the Bill being debated in Parliament, calling for local councils to be entrenched in the Constitution, was ample proof of this. The Prime Minister was speaking at the Local Councils’ annual conference.

• **4 March 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami pledged Government support for the elderly. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking on the inauguration of a new residential block at St Vincent de Paul Residence, in Luqa.

• **4 March 2001** Justice and Local Government Minister Austin Gatt initiated an agreement between the Association of Local Councils and Faces Consultants Ltd. Following this agreement, the company will be renovating some 330 bus shelters around Malta at no cost to the taxpayer.

• **4 March 2001** Health Minister Louis Deguara said that positive talks were in hand for Health Centres to start reopening during the whole week. Dr Deguara was speaking at Qormi.

• **5 March 2001** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi announced that agreement had been reached between the Ministry and the Westin Dragonara Resort for the company to provide Ministry employees with five-star training in customer relations. The training will be given on the basis of *Westin* programmes, known throughout the company as *Service Westin Style Worldwide*.

• **5 March 2001** Prof. Mario Vassallo and Dr Lydia Sciriha will be directing a survey of the Maltese people’s knowledge of languages. The survey is being carried out for the University’s *Socrates* office in association with the Directorate of Education and Culture of the European Commission. It replicates a Europe-wide study conducted in December.

• **6 March 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that, according to provisional figures, Malta’s gross domestic product per capita last year was Lm3,975. This figure corresponds to approximately 53 per cent of the EU average.

• **6 March 2001** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that the Lm16 million Cottonera project was on schedule for completion by the year 2003. Details about the project were given during a tour on site.

• **6 March 2001** Stringent precautions are being taken to safe-guard the 112,000 livestock in Malta, including cattle, pigs, goats, sheep and lambs, against the foot-and-mouth disease. At Malta International Airport, mats have been placed in the Arrivals lounge, ensuring that each person entering Malta walks across two metres of disinfecting mats. The same precautions are being taken in all European airports.

• **6 March 2001** The American Centre is receiving applications for the 2001 *Salzburg Seminar* fellowships. The *Salzburg Seminar* is an opportunity for the promotion of exchanges of ideas and sharing of experiences as well as the promotion of professional contacts.

• **7 March 2001** Minister of Foreign Affairs Joe Borg had a meeting with the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Robin Cook, at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London. Dr Borg was on an official visit to the UK prior to joining Prime Minister Fenech-Adami in Berlin.
• **7 March 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami is in Germany where he will be meeting German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder in Berlin today. The two leaders are expected to have discussions on bilateral relations and on Malta’s application to join the EU.

• **7 March 2001** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi announced that the Government was currently considering a proposal to equally divide social security benefit payments between the wife and the husband. Dr Gonzi was speaking during the presentation of a study, commissioned by the Commission for the Advancement of Women, that seeks to explore women’s hidden contribution to the Maltese economy.

• **7 March 2001** Camper & Nicholson Chairman Nick Maris said that the Cottonera Marina would start operating by the third or fourth quarter of this year. If all went according to plan, Mr Maris said, the marina was expected to be fully operational by spring of next year.

• **7 March 2001** Fifty-eight police recruits undergoing training at the Police Academy are doing community work at various institutions and homes for the elderly. The community work is within the training programme and is aimed at raising awareness among the young recruits of the need to help the less fortunate and to instill in them a sense of service towards society.

• **7 March 2001** The Department of Information will be publishing the official results of the Local Councils elections on the official government website at **www.magnet.mt**. Publication will start on the night of Saturday 10th March and carry on up to the end of the counting process.

• **8 March 2001** German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder expressed Germany’s strong support for Malta’s EU membership. Mr Schröder was addressing a joint press conference at the office of the Federal Chancellor together with Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, following talks and a working lunch.

• **8 March 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami told reporters during the joint press conference with Mr Schröder that he had explained to the German Chancellor the demands for transition periods or special arrangements that Malta was making in certain difficult chapters.

• **8 March 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami held talks with the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Han-Ulrich Klose, at the German Bundestag. Dr Fenech-Adami also met the Mayor of Berlin, Eberhard Diepgen, at the Berliner Rathaus, the official seat of the Berlin Local Government.

• **8 March 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami expressed the hope that, by the end of June, decisions would have already been taken by the EU on some of the requests made by Malta for transition periods and other special arrangements. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at the European Commission’s representative office, in Berlin.

• **8 March 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that Enemalta was making a profit on the sale of petrol but a loss on diesel sales, especially now that diesel of much better quality was being imported. Prof. Bonnici was replying to a Parliamentary Question.

• **8 March 2001** The Police Force launched a Quality Service Charter. The force is to be boosted by the installation of a new automated vehicle location system in a bid to respond to emergencies in as short a time as possible. Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg and Justice and Local Government Minister Austin Gatt were present at the launch.

• **8 March 2001** Malta Tourism Authority Chairman John Grech said that tourist interest in Malta was on the increase. Dr Grech was speaking during a visit by Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami to the prestigious International Tourism Fair, held in Berlin.

• **8 March 2001** The President and Mrs de Marco presented specialised apparatus, white goods, and financial aid worth Lm17,000 to ninety-eight individuals and philanthropic institutions on behalf of the Malta Community Chest Fund. The presentation, at the Palace in Valletta, was the first of its kind this year.

• **8 March 2001** European Commission official Barney Trench, who is responsible for education and culture, said in an interview that Malta had been very fast in participating in EU education
programmes. "I think that the activity of the Socrates national agency and the committee that coordinates Malta's participation in these programmes is exemplary," said Mr Trench.

- **8 March 2001** A government statement said that the Maltese High Commission in London had put up a stand promoting Malta at a reception at the British Foreign Office. The statement said that the stand promoted Malta as a tourist destination.

- **9 March 2001** The German State Minister for European Union Affairs, Christoph Zopel, expressed confidence that Malta will close its EU negotiations next year. Mr Zopel was speaking to reporters following an unscheduled meeting in Berlin with Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami. The meeting took place at Mr Zopel’s own request.

- **9 March 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami inaugurated Malta’s new Embassy in Berlin. Dr Fenech-Adami also witnessed the signing of a new double taxation agreement by Foreign Minister Joe Borg and German Secretary of State Wolfgang Ischinger.

- **9 March 2001** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi announced that women’s participation in the working world had seen a substantial growth, and the progress registered was expected to bring about changes in working conditions and the structure and mobility of the labour market. Dr Gonzi was speaking in the absence of the Prime Minister, at the presentation of the Commission for the Advancement of Women’s Annual Report on the occasion of Women’s Day.

- **9 March 2001** The National Statistics Office issued a statement containing salient indicators on women on the occasion of International Women’s Day.

- **9 March 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli said that Maltese firms were estimated to have invested Lm7.7 million in Tunisia in the past five years. The information was given in reply to a Parliamentary Question.

- **9 March 2001** Agriculture Minister Ninu Zammit said that the Ministry had drawn up a contingency plan in case foot-and-mouth disease broke out in Malta. Mr Zammit said that, if Maltese livestock were to require vaccination, the Ministry had reserved 100,000 doses that could be imported within three days.

- **9 March 2001** Canadian High Commissioner Robert Fowler presented his letters of commission to President Guido de Marco at the Palace. Mr Fowler, who is resident in Rome, has taken over from former High Commissioner Jeremy Kinsman.

- **9 March 2001** Nigerian High Commissioner Lawan Gana Guba presented his letters of commission to President Guido de Marco at the Palace. Mr Gana Guba, who is resident in Tripoli, succeeds Prof. Dandatti Abdulkadir.

- **9 March 2001** Malta Tourism Authority Chairman John C Grech announced a new initiative called Valletta evenings – a city alive. The initiative is designed to turn the capital city into a cultural, historical, and lively haven.

- **10 March 2001** Local Council elections are due to be held today in 22 towns and villages spread over Malta and Gozo that together represent one third of the population. Elections in these localities were last held in 1998.

- **10 March 2001** Education Minister Louis Galea said that faith and tradition, language and architecture, customs and modes of thinking, legislation and social structures, all make the Maltese part and parcel of Europe. They also prove that our identity is even larger than that. Dr Galea was speaking to students at a conference about the values of a united Europe.

- **10 March 2001** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech met EU Environment Commissioner Margot Wallstrom to discuss her coming visit to Malta at the end of April. Dr Zammit Dimech was in Brussels in anticipation of the European Environment Council meeting.

- **10 March 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that employment in the telecommunications sector at the end of December had reached 2,350, a rise of 150 over the previous year. Prof. Bonnici was speaking at the presentation of the ISO 9002 Quality Award to Datatrak Systems Ltd, at Mosta Technopark.
• **10 March 2001** Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg said that the Government’s scheme for the lease of farmland had turned out to be a huge success, with over 12,000 applications submitted since September 2000. The scheme is aimed at giving farmers title to land they have been tilling without title or under shared title. Dr Borg was speaking at a news conference.

• **10 March 2001** Tug Malta Chairman John Sullivan announced that the company had made a profit of Lm524,000 before tax in the financial year ending September 2000. This figure is 14 percent lower than the profit registered during the previous year. Mr Sullivan was speaking during the company’s annual general meeting.

• **10 March 2001** Martin Rossignaud, Air Malta Group Head (Commercial), announced that 52 local and 52 foreign exhibitors would be taking part in the 8th edition of Amitex, Air Malta’s International Travel Exhibition. The fair is to be held between the 14th and 18th March, at the Trade Fair Grounds, in Naxxar.

• **10 March 2001** The National Office of Statistics announced that participation at the University of the Third Age at the beginning of academic year 2000/2001 stood at 850, compared to the 949 of the year before.

• **10 March 2001** Former President Ugo Mifsud Bonnici inaugurated an exhibition of works by Victor Pasmore at St James Cavalier, in Valletta. Works by Pasmore’s wife Wendy and his son John are also included in the exhibition.

• **11 March 2001** The University Students Council launched the Students Rights Charter during a higher education conference entitled *Students Rights: a Necessity or a Privilege?* The charter was prepared and commissioned by the Education Commission and will now go before the University Senate for approval as University policy.

• **11 March 2001** *Go Mobile* announced that its roaming service is now available in major travel destinations around Europe to all Go Mobile post-paid subscribers. Roaming service is a service that enables a Go Mobile subscriber to use his/her mobile phone while travelling abroad.

• **12 March 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that in the present circumstances he was satisfied with the result of last Saturday’s Local Council elections. Dr Edward Fenech-Adami was addressing a televised news conference on the result of the elections in which Nationalist Party candidates won 48.1 percent of the vote and Labour Party candidates won 49.3 percent.

• **12 March 2001** The Malta-EU Information Centre said in a statement that Malta would be entitled to the highest level of financial support from the EU’s Structural and Cohesion Funds. This results from the fact that Malta’s gross product has been calculated at 52 percent of the European Union Average.

• **12 March 2001** Irish banker Jim Ruane said that he noted Malta’s willingness to abandon protectionism. Mr Ruane was addressing a capital markets seminar organised by the Financial Services Section of the Malta Chamber of Commerce in collaboration with Bank of Valletta.

• **13 March 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Government was “keeping its ears to the ground to see how people are reacting to government policies”. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking following a Cabinet meeting at which the results of the local elections were discussed.

• **13 March 2001** The Prime Minister said that the Armed Forces had no plans to send further missions to the Balkans. Dr Fenech-Adami said that, during the year 2000, the AFM had sent three missions to Kosovo, each consisting of 23 soldiers. The total cost of these missions was Lm40,127. The Prime Minster was replying to a Parliamentary Question.

• **13 March 2001** The University of Malta conferred the degree of Doctor of Literature (*Honoris Causa*) on President Guido de Marco.

• **13 March 2001** President Guido de Marco, accompanied by Education Minister Louis Galea, left Malta for state visits to Bulgaria, the Republic of Slovenia, and the Slovak Republic.
13 March 2001 Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that a task force set up by the Social Policy Ministry was evaluating child-care facilities in Malta, and would be identifying people qualified to provide such a service. Dr Gonzi was speaking during the presentation of certificates to 23 women who completed a course on empowerment.

13 March 2001 Education Minister Louis Galea announced that an annual recurrent expenditure of Lm6 million, spread over the next four years, would be needed to put into practice the national minimum curriculum. The curriculum will form the basis of the educational system in state, church and private schools.

13 March 2001 Education Minister Louis Galea said that Malta must ascertain that its knowledge of English and other languages was strengthened. The Minister was speaking at the opening of a Council of Europe seminar, organised as part of the European Year of Languages. The theme of the seminar was Language teaching today and tomorrow.

13 March 2001 A group of 16 Gozitan students are to visit Austria as part of an exchange programme organised under the EU’s Comenius programme. Last November a group of students from a school in Vienna visited Gozo to learn more about the Maltese language and Gozitan folktales and legends.

13 March 2001 The Central Bank of Malta issued licences to two new financial institutions, bringing to twelve the total number of institutions operating in and from Malta. The new institutions are LM Factors Ltd and Medarea Forex Services Ltd.

14 March 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that there would be new developments and more activity at the Stock Exchange this year as a result of the privatisation process, as well as the issue of around Lm30 to Lm50 million worth of government stocks. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking during the inauguration of the new premises of Bank of Valletta Stockbrokers Ltd.

14 March 2001 Bulgarian Prime Minister Ivan Kostov said that Bulgaria was keeping a close eye on countries like Malta, which were at an advanced stage in negotiations with the EU. Mr Kostov was speaking following a meeting with President Guido de Marco in Sofia, Bulgaria.

14 March 2001 Justice Minister Austin Gatt announced that the Government was aiming to conclude the administrative reform process in the law courts by the end of the year. Dr Gatt was speaking at the presentation of 41 letters of promotion to court employees.

14 March 2001 According to figures released by the National Statistics Office, the rate of inflation in January 2001 stood at 2.15 per cent, down from 2.37 per cent in December 2000.

14 March 2001 Malta and the United States signed an agreement on mutual administrative assistance between their Customs administrations. Deborah Bolton, Charge d’Affaires for the United States, and Alfred J Pace, Comptroller of Customs, signed the agreement at Customs House, Valletta.

14 March 2001 Air Malta placed 27th out of 61 airlines, in a customer survey carried out by the UK Holiday Which? magazine. Air Malta scored higher than major airlines such as Alitalia, Lufthansa and Air France.

14 March 2001 Tourism Minister Michael Refalo attended the launch of the 49th edition of The Malta Yearbook.

14 March 2001 Melita Cable Chairman Joe Gasan launched the Digital Interactive Hub, that is the first stage of a project costing close to Lm50 million over the next three years. The DIH site development marks the beginning of what Mr Gasan described as ‘the next generation’ of technologies and services.

14 March 2001 The ban on the importation of meat and meat products was extended to apply to products coming from all EU countries, following the spread of the foot-and-mouth disease from the UK to another EU member state. The ban applies to live cattle, sheep, goats and pigs, their fresh or frozen meat, and raw materials and waste obtained from them, with the exception of milk.
14 March 2001 Thirty members of Special Olympics (Italy) were in Malta on an exchange visit to compete with Maltese athletes in swimming and athletics. Mr Paul Micallef from the Special Olympics (Malta) said the organisation helped to encourage sports tourism.

15 March 2001 President Guido de Marco was involved in a serious traffic accident while travelling to Sofia, the capital city of the Republic of Bulgaria, where the President was on a State Visit. The accident left one Bulgarian national dead and seven injured. Prof. de Marco and the rest of the delegation escaped unhurt; however, the official photographer accompanying the delegation sustained injuries.

15 March 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said in Parliament that he had personally spoken over the telephone to President de Marco, in Sofia. Dr Fenech-Adami regretted the loss of life and augured those injured a speedy recovery. The Prime Minister’s sentiments were also expressed by the Opposition Whip and the Speaker of the House.

15 March 2001 Speaker Anton Tabone presented the members of the House Business Committee with a report drawn up by former President Ugo Mifsud Bonnici on a revision of Standing Orders of the House of Representatives.

15 March 2001 Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that union with Europe would free Air Malta from restrictive air service agreements that shackled the airline’s operational ability. Dr Refalo was speaking during the inauguration of Amitex, Air Malta’s International Travel Exhibition.

15 March 2001 The National Statistics Office announced that the total number of tourists for the year 2000 was 1,215,713, that is 1,483 more than the total arrivals in 1999. Tourism earnings last year were estimated to have reached Lm268.5 million, a drop of Lm2.9 million, or 1.1 per cent, over the figure for the previous year.

15 March 2001 Dr Lino Vella, Director of Veterinary Services, launched an appeal to the public, and particularly to animal breeders and farmers, to follow the directives being issued to prevent the foot-and-mouth disease from reaching Malta. The Government also launched Hot Line 79592450 for those requiring urgent information about the measures being taken.

15 March 2001 The Meteorological Office at Malta International Airport started providing an upgraded telephone weather information service. The public may now phone on 543848 in order to obtain a 24-hour or three-day weather forecast over the Maltese Islands. Weather information is also available on MIA’s website at www.maltairport.com

16 March 2001 President Guido de Marco, accompanied by Education Minister Louis Galea, arrived in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Prof. de Marco had meetings with Slovenian President Milan Kucan and Foreign Minister Dimitji Rupel.

16 March 2001 President Guido de Marco said that new and old challenges facing the United Nations necessitate a meaningful reform aimed at retaining the relevance of the UN in world affairs, especially in issues that directly affect the peace and stability of its member states. Prof. de Marco was speaking during a lecture on The United Nations: What Future? at Saint Kliment Ohridiski University, in Sofia.

16 March 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami met photographer Lino Arrigo Azzopardi at the airport when the latter was flown back to Malta in a hospital plane. Mr Arrigo Azzopardi suffered fractures to his pelvis, ribs and leg while accompanying President de Marco on a state visit in Bulgaria.

16 March 2001 Justice Minister Austin Gatt tendered his resignation from minister to Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami following the arrest of a member of Dr Gatt’s private secretariat. Dr Fenech-Adami said that the alleged case was something private and had nothing to do with the employee’s work at the Ministry.

16 March 2001 Foreign Minister Joe Borg had meetings with his Cypriot counterpart Ioannis Kasouliades, as well as with Cypriot Chief Negotiator George Vassiliou. They discussed the present state of EU membership negotiations between the EU and the two respective countries. Dr Borg was on a visit to Cyprus.

16 March 2001 Justice Carmel A. Agius was elected judge in the International Tribunal for Criminal Cases in former Yugoslavia. The tribunal was set up in 1993 by the United Nations Security Council.
to hear cases of alleged serious violation of the International Humanitarian Law in the territories of the former Yugoslavia at the beginning of the 1990s.

- **16 March 2001** The National Statistics Office announced that the average annual gross salary earned by people from their main occupation stands at Lm5,014. The source of this information is the preliminary result of the first Labour Force Survey, carried out in June 2000.

- **16 March 2001** Prof. Roger Ellul-Micallef was unanimously reconfirmed Rector of the University of Malta at an extraordinary meeting of the University Council. Prof. Ellul-Micallef became Rector in 1996 after having served as pro-Rector for the previous five years.

- **17 March 2001** The National Statistics Office released figures aimed at providing a broad and comprehensive analysis of the country’s cultural scene. This follows the launch by the office a few months ago of a culture statistics programme.

- **17 March 2001** The Malta Arbitration Centre and the Malta Insurance Association reached an agreement on motor claims arbitrations that encourages traffic and collision disputes to be settled by arbitration. Max Ganado, Chairman of the Centre, and Lino Ferris, President of the Association, signed the agreement on behalf of their respective organisations.

- **17 March 2001** Ian Micallef, who is Mayor of Gzira and President of the Association of Local Councils, was appointed by the European Congress for Regional and Local Authorities to draw up a report on local democracy in Cyprus. Mr Micallef will be visiting the Cyprus next week.

- **17 March 2001** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that 101 students and apprentices in the vocational sector would be following Leonardo programmes in European colleges. The students will receive training in industrial design, health care, electrical and mechanical technology, industrial electronics, as well as trade and enterprise.

- **18 March 2001** President Guido de Marco and Slovak President Rudolf Schuster agreed to lay down the necessary foundations to stimulate trade between the two countries. President de Marco was on a two-day state visit to Slovakia.

- **18 March 2001** The Prime Minister and Mrs Fenech-Adami were the guests of honour during a soirée at the Corinthia Palace Hotel. The evening featured a spectacular show of music, theatre, singing and dancing entitled An Iarlais (The Changeling) held in celebration of St Patrick’s Day.

- **19 March 2001** President Guido de Marco, accompanied by Education Minister Louis Galea, returned to Malta following an official visit to three EU applicant countries. Prof. de Marco was given a warm welcome at the VIP Ministerial Lounge by Acting President George Hyzler, Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, and Speaker Anton Tabone.

- **19 March 2001** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that occupational accidents cost an estimated Lm25 million to Lm30 million each year. Dr Gonzi was speaking during a discussion regarding Health and Safety at the Workplace, in Sta. Venera.

- **19 March 2001** Bank of Valletta Chairman Joseph Zahra announced that the bank was replacing almost half of its automated teller machines with new, modern machines. Mr Zahra said that the bank was collaborating closely with the National Commission for Persons with Disability to provide improved accessibility for all, especially those with special needs.

- **20 March 2001** The Chief Government Veterinary Officer, Lino Vella, announced that a contingency plan running into 400 pages had been drawn up against a local outbreak of the foot-and-mouth disease. Mr Vella said that a summary of the contingency plan would be distributed among veterinarians as it highlights the immediate action that would need to be taken in case the disease was detected.

- **20 March 2001** The response by the Maltese to the opportunity to visit museums and historical sites free of charge over the past three Sundays was very encouraging. Visitor figures at the War Museum and the Museum of Archaeology in Valletta during this period show an upsurge in attendance.

- **20 March 2001** The Malta Tourism Authority and the Xara Palace Hotel of Mdina will be hosting the British travel press and trade to a reception at Malta House in London on the 29th March, under the
auspices of High Commissioner George Bonello du Puis. The aim of the promotion is to raise awareness of Malta as a cultural destination.

- **21 March 2001** Maltacom College International Ltd and the International Telecommunication Union’s Global Telecommunication University and Training Institute signed an agreement setting up a training project in Malta for on-line distance learning in telecommunications for participants from developing countries. The signing took place at Maltacom’s head office, in Blata l-Bajda.

- **21 March 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami launched the on-line training project at Maltacom College, in Swatar, shortly after the signing of the agreement between Maltacom and ITU’s training college. Dr Fenech-Adami said that the new venture would offer the opportunity of high quality education in telecommunications technology to anyone, anywhere, and in particular to developing countries.

- **21 March 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli said that any increases in salaries should be tagged to increases in productivity. He appealed to organisations and individuals for understanding and requested them to stop resisting the Government’s attempt to cut the deficit. Mr Dalli was visiting the former Garrison Church in Valletta, which will shortly host the new Stock Exchange.

- **21 March 2001** The Malta Maritime Authority announced that *Balu*, a Maltese-registered chemical tanker carrying 8,000 tons of sulphuric acid, had sunk in the Bay of Biscay in conditions reaching gale force 10. *Balu*’s crew was rescued by two other ships in the area following a distress call. Transport Minister Censu Galea said that, from initial reports, there did not seem to be any significant harm to the environment.

- **21 March 2001** Education Minister Louis Galea inaugurated the Centru Mikiel Anton Vassalli, a new extension to the University of Malta. The new centre was designed by Prof. Richard England.

- **21 March 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici led a Maltese delegation in talks with the World Trade Centres Association, in New York. The WTCA is a non-profit, non-political association dedicated to the establishment and effective operation of world trade centres as instruments for international trade expansion.

- **21 March 2001** Justice Minister Austin Gatt announced that the Government had set up a Translation Service Unit to deal with the translation into Maltese of the *acquis communautaire*. Dr Gatt said that the step had been taken to strengthen Maltese identity in the EU.

- **21 March 2001** Representatives of the European Economic and Social Committee of the European Commission are visiting Malta at the invitation of the Malta Council for Economic Development. The group is to draft an opinion on *Malta on the Road to Accession* for presentation to the EU authorities.

- **22 March 2001** The Head of the EU delegation in Malta, Ronald Gallimore, said that the earlier the *acquis communautaire* was implemented, the greater a country would benefit from the EU’s rules and regulations. The Ambassador was speaking during a half-day seminar organised by the Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association in collaboration with the Tourism Ministry.

- **22 March 2001** Minister of Tourism Michael Refalo said that Maltese legislation already covered a vast segment of the spectrum regulated by the EU Directives. Dr Refalo was closing the seminar organised by the MHRA in collaboration with the Tourism Ministry.

- **22 March 2001** The Maltese Maritime Authority moved swiftly to investigate the loss of the acid tanker *Balu* and to stem growing concern that three of the last four tankers to sink in European waters flew the Maltese flag. “We have launched the investigation already,” Malta’s Executive Director of Merchant Shipping, Lino Vassallo, told Reuters.


- **22 March 2001** Malta International Airport last year handled 13,699 metric tonnes of cargo, a 9.7 per cent increase over the figure for 1999. The source of this information is the Annual Statistical Review 2000, published by Malta International Airport plc.
22 March 2001 The Malta Tourism Authority and Bay Street Complex in Paceville joined forces to set up a Tourist Information Centre at the complex. The MTA already has information offices at Malta International Airport, City Gate, and Mgarr in Gozo.


22 March 2001 A 50-man contingent from the Armed Forces of Malta took part in a three-day peacekeeping exercise called Caschi Blu, at the Pembroke Ranges. The AFM said that the programme of events was planned by the Italian Military Mission’s training branch.

23 March 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Careers Convention had three main aims, namely to serve as a bridge between formal education and the labour world, to show what development was taking place in the country, and to serve as a catalogue of the work opportunities that were available. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking during the opening of the 12th Careers Convention, in Victoria, Gozo.

23 March 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami inaugurated Gasan’s new automotive centre in Mrieħel. The Prime Minister described the company as a model employer and said that Malta needed more entrepreneurs with foresight in order for the country to be competitive.

23 March 2001 A study group from the European Economic and Social Committee, led by rapporteur Kenneth Walker, met Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi and Opposition Leader Alfred Sant, as well as representatives of trade unions and employers’ associations. The group was in Malta at the invitation of the Malta Council for Economic Development.

23 March 2001 Justice Minister Austin Gatt said that the Government was committed to carrying out the needed reforms in the IT sector and had already spent Lm70 million on the Government’s IT sector in just three years. Dr Gatt was speaking on the occasion of the issue of the Request for a proposal for a strategic partnership for the e-government initiative.

23 March 2001 Education Minister Louis Galea conferred MBA degrees on twenty-eight students who graduated from the Maastricht School of Management’s Outreach Programme, organised by the Malta Institute of Management in collaboration with MSM. Twenty-three other students received Diplomas in General Management.

23 March 2001 Maltacom made a pre-tax profit of Lm13.7 million during financial year 2000, a rise of 4.5 per cent over the 1999 figure. Details of the Financial Report were given by group Finance Director Edgar Borg, at a presentation at the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza.

23 March 2001 The new Ambassador of the Sovereign Military Order of St John of Jerusalem, Rhodes and Malta, Giampietro Nattino, presented his diplomatic credentials to President Guido de Marco at the Palace, in Valletta. Dr Nattino is also consultant at the Holy See’s Economic Affairs Prefecture.

23 March 2001 Bank of Valletta appointed Mr Franco Farrugia as head of its four representative offices in Australia. The offices are located in Melbourne, Sunshine, Blacktown and Sydney. Sydney-based Mr Farrugia will be responsible for the entire BoV operation in Australia.

23 March 2001 Air Malta announced that Maltese nationals travelling to Dubai no longer needed visas. Travellers would be issued with entry permits on arrival. Such permits are issued free of charge.

24 March 2001 Tourism Minister Michael Refalo announced that the 32 language schools of Malta and Gozo draw over 35,000 students a year to Malta. The majority of students come from Germany, France, Scandinavia and Italy. Dr Refalo was addressing the general assembly of the French national office for language holidays, the Office National De Garantie Des Sejours et Stages Linguistiques, at St Andrew’s.

24 March 2001 The Malta Tourism Authority launched a range of promotional material to be utilised in its overseas promotional efforts. These brochures, initially produced in English, French, German,
Italian and Dutch, were designed in France and will form part of a presentation pack to be distributed in Malta’s core tourism market.

- **24 March 2001** Malta Directories Ltd, publishers of the first edition of the Malta Business Directory, said that the directory is being distributed to over 25,000 businesses, as well as to households in Malta. Free copies of the directory on CD may be obtained on tel. 330646. The directory is also available on internet, at www.maltadirectories.com

- **24 March 2001** The Malta Film Commission took part in the prestigious *Locations 2001 Global Expo* at the Los Angeles Convention Centre. The MFC said that, boosted by the recent success of the epic movie *Gladiator*, more and more filmmakers were looking at the Island as a serious and favourable film location.

- **24 March 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that Malta’s European Union membership could prove to be invaluable in helping Libyan companies expand their operations and sales to Europe, especially to EU countries. Prof. Bonnici was speaking at the official opening of the Malta Commercial Office, located at 195 Great Al Fateh Tower, Tripoli.

- **24 March 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli said that he would prefer to see the analysis of the local financial market done by independent individuals rather than by stockbrokers. Mr Dalli was addressing a seminar that had as its theme *A cultural void: Media analysis of the Stock Exchange*, organised by *The Business Times*, at Attard.

- **25 March 2001** The Apostolic Nuncio confirmed with the Government that Pope John Paul II will visit Malta on May 8 and 9. The highlight of the Pope’s visit to Malta will be the beatification of Dun Gorg Preca, founder of the Society of Christian Doctrine (MUSEUM).

- **25 March 2001** Summertime started yesterday at 0200 hours when clocks were put forward one hour, bringing Malta time two hours ahead of GMT. Summertime ends at 0300 hours on October 28.

- **25 March 2001** The temperature soared to 29.5 degrees Celsius, a record for this time of year, and 13°C above the average. The previous highest temperature for March was 28.9°C, recorded on March 29, 1952.

- **25 March 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Government would be negotiating with the EU to gain the best possible conditions for agriculture. In this way growers would be able to keep tilling the land and consumers would be able to buy home-grown products. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at Zebbug.

- **26 March 2001** A statement issued by the office of the President announced that President Guido de Marco had undergone a trans-urethral resection (removal of the prostate gland) at St Luke’s Hospital. The surgical intervention was carried out by Mr Karl German. The statement said that Prof. de Marco was in a ‘good and stable condition’ following the intervention.

- **26 March 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that, in negotiations with the EU, the Government was committed to obtaining the best conditions possible for agriculture. In this way growers would be able to keep tilling the land and consumers would be able to buy home-grown products. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing the party annual general council.

- **26 March 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli said that the Tax Compliance Unit had concluded benchmarking exercises related to six professions and businesses. Mr Dalli was speaking at the concluding session of the party general council.

- **27 March 2001** A statement issued by the office of the President said that Prof. Guido de Marco was convalescing at St Luke’s Hospital following surgery on Sunday for benign prostatic hypertrophy.

- **27 March 2001** President Guido de Marco’s Honorary Membership of the Order Stara Planina, conferred on him by President Stoyanov during Prof. de Marco’s recent trip to Bulgaria, was recognised, according to *The Government Gazette*.

- **27 March 2001** Bulgarian President Peter Stoyanov was appointed Honorary Member of the National Order of Merit in the grade of Companion of Honour with Collar, according to *The Government Gazette*. 
• 27 March 2001 Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Borg said in Parliament that money paid by the Government or approved for payment to Non-Government Organisations and constituted bodies in connection with EU-related studies, between 1999 and 23 March 2001, totalled Lm378,140. Dr Borg was answering a Parliamentary Question.

• 27 March 2001 Agriculture Minister Ninu Zammit said that, between 6,000 and 7,000 tons of potatoes would be exported to the Netherlands between this month and the end of May. Mr Zammit was speaking during a visit to the potato grading station, at Ta’ Qali.

• 27 March 2001 Gozo Minister Giovanna Debono said that Gozo Channel ferries had operated 314 trips and carried 51,564 people and 12,412 vehicles between 15-19 March 2001. Ms Debono was answering a Parliamentary Question.

• 27 March 2001 Projections, a Young Enterprise team from St Aloysius College, won top prize in the YE European Trade Fair, held in Norway over the weekend. Projections won the award for best overall company at the fair, competing against 113 other teams from 19 countries. The team produces ceramic night lamps.

• 28 March 2001 A statement issued by the office of the President said that Prof. Guido de Marco had been discharged from hospital. The statement said that, for the moment, the President would be carrying out his duties mainly from San Anton Palace.

• 28 March 2001 The Chairman of the Malta-EU Core Negotiating Group, Richard Cachia Caruana, said that the relatively simple chapters had been closed. “We are now entering into a new phase when we will be dealing with issues of a more complicated nature.” Mr Cachia Caruana was addressing a press briefing.

• 28 March 2001 The Head of the Malta-EU Information Centre, Simon Busuttil, said that MIC would welcome every initiative that would add to the level of information on the EU. Dr Busuttil was referring to the European Commission communication strategy for Malta.

• 28 March 2001 MIC Head Simon Busuttil, in an open letter to MPs, denied that the Centre was indoctrinating students in favour of EU membership. Dr Busuttil was reacting to a motion being moved in Parliament today by Opposition spokesman Evarist Bartolo in which Mr Bartolo says there is a systematic campaign of indoctrination among schoolchildren in favour of Malta’s membership of the European Union.

• 28 March 2001 The Malta Statistics Authority said in the provisional balance of payments statement for 2000 that the current account balance had deteriorated by Lm176.9 million, from a net deficit of Lm49.3 million in 1999 to a net deficit of Lm226.2 million in 2000.

• 28 March 2001 Figures published by the Department of Health Information show that the anticipated millennium baby boom never happened. Indeed, the number of births in 2000 actually declined by five in comparison to the previous year. Birth statistics show that 2,169 male and 2,205 female infants were born last year.

• 28 March 2001 The Lotto Department announced that the Super Five lottery would become more difficult as from next week, when the valid numbers go up from 39 to 42, to raise the odds from one in 575,757 to one in 850,668. The changes were introduced in order to achieve more top prize rollovers from one week to the next, resulting in bigger jackpots. The initial jackpot was also raised from Lm30,000 to Lm40,000.

• 28 March 2001 The United Arab Emirates recently decided that citizens of Western Europe, including Malta, as well as the US, Canada, and other countries, may enter the country without a prior entry visa. Visas are to be issued on arrival.

• 28 March 2001 The Parliamentary Secretary in the Economic Services Ministry, George Hyzler, and Film Commissioner Winston Azzopardi, had a meeting with Academy Award winning producer Branko Lustig, in Morocco. Mr Lustig and director Ridley Scott have expressed interest in working on a film based on an event from Malta’s chequered history.
**29 March 2001** An Opposition motion for a stop to a “systematic campaign of indoctrination” about EU membership in schools was rejected by the House of Representatives. The House approved an amended version, moved by Education Minister Louis Galea, saying that the House approved teaching on Europe that was free of partisan politics and based on the perspective of the national curriculum.

**29 March 2001** Local Government Minister Austin Gatt said that the Government was looking into how to devolve more power to local councils, even at a regional level. Dr Gatt was speaking at the swearing-in ceremony of councilors elected in the March elections representing twenty-two towns and villages.

**29 March 2001** The Environment Ministry announced the formation of an adjudicating board that will choose between the proposals submitted by the two consortia that deposited their proposal by yesterday’s deadline for plans to provide a new entrance to Valletta. The bidders are Civitas Consortium and 15 Sixty Six Consortium.

**29 March 2001** The flagship of the United States’ Sixth Fleet, the *USS La Salle*, sailed into port for repair work at Malta Drydocks. The Malta Drydocks won the *La Salle* contract, beating other docks around the Mediterranean to the contract, worth $7.7 million.

**29 March 2001** British High Commissioner Howard Pierce said that, in spite of the serious foot-and-mouth disease outbreak in the United Kingdom, there was no reason for anybody to cancel or postpone visits to the UK. He pointed out that the foot-and-mouth virus posed no risk to humans. Mr Pearce was addressing a news conference at the British High Commission.

**29 March 2001** The Treasury Department said that the public had shown significant interest in the Government’s Lm30 million stock issued this month, averaging a Lm5,000 investment per application. The number of auction offers reflected what could be considered as a normal trend, the Department said.

**29 March 2001** The National Statistics Office said that unemployment in January had gone up by 98 to 6,681, from 6,583 in December. The labour supply went up by 296, to 147,996, from 147,700 the previous month. At 4.5 percent, the unemployment rate was similar to the previous month’s level, the office said.

**30 March 2001** Estonian Prime Minister Mart Laar arrived in Malta for a short visit during which he is due to have talks with Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami. The talks are expected to focus on the EU enlargement process since both Malta and Estonia are applicant countries.

**30 March 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami toasted the health of Estonian Prime Minister Mart Laar and the prosperity of the people of Estonia. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at a Dinner hosted in honour of Mr Laar, at Auberge de Castille.

**30 March 2001** The Chairman of the Malta-EU Core Negotiation Group, Richard Cachia Caruana, said that the more sensitive issues on the table of discussions could not be negotiated exclusively on the basis of technical discussions relating to the strict letter of the *acquis*. The wider aspects of the economic and social implications also needed to be considered. Mr Cachia Caruana’s written statement was presented to the Fifth Meeting of the Accession Conference at Deputy Level, in Brussels.

**30 March 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that the Malta Development Corporation last year had approved no fewer than 59 new projects and expansions of existing enterprises, with a projected capital investment of Lm20.6 million. Prof. Bonnici was speaking at the official opening of the Italian company Malta Moulds Ltd, in Hal Far.

**30 March 2001** Education Minister Louis Galea said that, in the near future, public library clients would be able to access an on-line library system containing a database of all books available from public libraries in Malta and Gozo. Dr Galea was speaking at the official opening of the central library’s customer care unit.

**31 March 2001** The President and Mrs de Marco hosted Prime Minister Laar and his delegation to luncheon at San Anton Palace. Next May, President de Marco is due to make a state visit to Estonia.
31 March 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the EU’s enlargement policy had featured high on the agenda of the meetings held between the two Prime Ministers. Both countries went into the details of their respective negotiating position. Dr Fenech-Adami was talking to journalists, at Auberge de Castille.

31 March 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that there was space for excellent co-operation between Malta and Estonia. A double taxation agreement would be signed in the coming months. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at a joint press conference, at Auberge de Castille.

31 March 2001 Estonian Prime Minister Mart Laar said that, as the EU absorbed new members, there would soon come a time when the so-called smaller countries would, together, outweigh their larger counterparts. Mr Laar was speaking to business organisations and trade unions at the Chamber of Commerce.

31 March 2001 President Guido de Marco unveiled a monument to Antonio Sciortino, at Zebug, Malta. The monument, designed by artist Marco Cremona, is a re-interpretation of Sciortino’s sculpture entitled Speed.

31 March 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli announced that he would soon be meeting the organisations representing the first six sectors for which an income benchmark is being worked out. Following these meetings, Mr Dalli would then be presenting the set of benchmarks to the Malta Council for Economic Development.

31 March 2001 Minister for Tourism Michael Refalo announced a yearlong programme of activities involving all government ministries, departments, statutory bodies and agencies in support of ecotourism. The year 2002 has been designated by the United Nations as the International Year of Ecotourism. Dr Refalo was inaugurating an exhibition of photographs by Dr Adriana Vella from the Biological Conservation Research Foundation.

31 March 2001 European Court of Auditors President Jan Karlsson stated that he was deeply impressed with Malta’s financial systems. He said that he had a highly positive first impression of its institutions and rate of preparation. Mr Karlsson was leading a delegation on his first contact visit to the National Audit Office of Malta.

31 March 2001 The Prime Minister of the Republic of Tunisia, Mr Mohamed Ghannouchi, will be paying an official visit to Malta between Thursday 5 April and Friday 6 April 2001. During his visit, Prime Minister Ghannouchi will have official talks with the Prime Minister at Auberge de Castille.

31 March 2001 Veterinary Services Director Lino Vella assured Maltese consumers that local meat was totally BSE-free. Testing for BSE started at the beginning of the month.

APRIL

1 April 2001 President Guido de Marco and Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami yesterday led a wreath laying ceremony at Freedom Monument, in Vittoriosa, on the occasion of Freedom Day. 31st March marks the withdrawal of the British forces in 1979 after a military presence lasting 180 years.

2 April 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that countries in Europe are all for joining the European Union because EU membership was the best way a country could meet the huge changes that were taking place in the world.

2 April 2001 The Institute for the Promotion of Small Enterprises and the Gozo Business Chamber held an information meeting for Gozitan furniture manufacturers to inform them about recommendations contained in the Report on the Maltese Furniture Sector. More information about the report, or about any of IPSE’s activities in the furniture sector, can be obtained on e-mail at info@ipse.org.mt

3 April 2001 Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici officially opened the FAL Malta factory at the Mosta Technopark. The new company forms part of the Funkanlagen Leipoldt OHG
communications technology group, set up in Germany 10 years ago. The factory produces and assembles GSM modems and GPS receivers, for export.

- **3 April 2001** The members of the integrated solid waste management project adjudicating board opened nine proposals during a public meeting at Project House, in Floriana. The submitted proposals range from one costing Lm3.5 million, to one costing Lm139.5 million.

- **3 April 2001** Foreign Minister Joe Borg tabled in Parliament a copy of the position paper on financial control, following last week’s accession talks meeting in Brussels. The paper proposed that a Financial Intelligence Unit would be set up, with a view to strengthening the existing infrastructure relating to the prevention of money laundering.

- **3 April 2001** Parliament approved through all stages a bill to entrench Local Councils in the Constitution. All Members present voted in favour of the bill. The bill needed the support of two-thirds of the members of the House to be entrenched in the Constitution.

- **3 April 2001** The Mediterranean Conference Centre featured in *TW Tagungs Wirtschaft/Convention Industry Magazine*, an international magazine for conference and incentive travel professionals. The March issue of the magazine, published in English and German, was dedicated to the Maltese Islands.

- **3 April 2001** The Government of Malta has appointed five new Honorary Consuls. These are Mr Jean F Buhagiar, who was appointed Honorary Consul for Malta in Marseilles; Mr Hugh R Cassar, Honorary Consul for Malta in Los Angeles; Dr Branko Vukmir, Honorary Consul of Malta in Zagreb, Croatia; Mr Josef Walch, Honorary Consul for Malta in Linz, Austria; and Mr Ernest Perez, Honorary Consul for Malta in Cagnes sur Mer, France.

- **4 April 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami had a meeting with French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin as part of his official visit to France. Dr Fenech-Adami described the discussions as a “way of establishing more intimate relations between the two peoples”.

- **4 April 2001** European Union Ambassador Ronald Gallimore said that the European Commission had no intention of interfering in the political debate on EU accession. Mr Gallimore was speaking at a roundtable conference for journalists and EU information providers, organised by the Malta-EU Information Centre.

- **4 April 2001** The Governor of the Central Bank, Michael C Bonello, said in the CBM Annual Report for 2001, that economic growth was expected to grow within a 4.0 to 4.5 percent range. The report was tabled in Parliament.

- **4 April 2001** The National Statistics Office announced that February’s retail price index had rise by 0.31, or 0.27 percent, over the January index, to reach 113.26. The rate of inflation for February stood at 2.01 percent.

- **4 April 2001** The National Statistics Office said that the number of registered mobile phones had risen by 367 percent between December 1999 and December 2000. This means that, at the end of 2000, a total of 29.1 percent of the population owned a mobile phone.

- **4 April 2001** The Military History Unit of the Museums Department is undertaking conservation and restoration work of five of the most important pieces of armour at the Palace armoury. The restoration work forms part of the second phase of the Bank of Valletta millennium project.

- **4 April 2001** The Malta Tourism Authority chairman, John C Grech, launched the sixth Valletta: History and Elegance Festival. The festival is due to be held between 6th and 22nd April.

- **5 April 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said at the end of his visit in France that President Jacques Chirac had reassured Malta of France’s support in its EU bid. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking to journalists following a meeting with French President Jacques Chirac at the Palais Élysées.

- **5 April 2001** The Maltese Embassy in Paris organised *Malta Week*. The ‘week’ advertised Malta as a financial centre, as an economic centre, as a cultural centre, and as a tourist centre.
Vincent Grech, a senior officer at the Finance Ministry, told the House public accounts committee that the Ministry of Finance planned to set up a task force to study the mobility requirements of every government ministry and department.

The Parliamentary Secretary in the Home Affairs Ministry, George Pullicino, described how countries could benefit from the EU Urban Community Programme that provides money for urban regeneration. Mr Pullicino was speaking at Siggiewi.

Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg said that police information equipment was being upgraded to step up the fight against the modern criminal. “Since the criminal is becoming more organised, the police force cannot fall behind,” Dr Borg told a passing-out parade, held at Fort St Elmo.

Tunisian Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouci started a two-day official visit in Malta. Mr Ghannouci was accompanied by Secretary of State Youssef Mokaddem and Trade Minister Tahar Sioud.

Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici had talks with Tunisian Trade Minister Tahar Sioud. Prof. Bonnici said that the discussion had focused on how trade between the two countries could be strengthened.

The traffic signs’ and carpenters’ co-operatives in the Manufacturing and Services Department within the Environment Ministry signed an agreement with the Government through which they will be financially autonomous.

Maltese schools were invited to join a major online European event called eSchola, aimed at helping schools in Europe learn from each other, via the internet, about how information and communication technology can be used to raise the quality of education. eSchola will take place from May 7 to 11 and forms part of the programme of the Swedish Presidency of the EU. The eSchola website is at http://eschola.eun.org/

Government MP Michael Asciak attended a meeting of the Council of Europe’s Committee on Human Rights, in Paris. Dr Asciak presented his report as rapporteur on the Human Genome Project and on transplants of human organs.

The Malta Tourism Authority’s office in Paris announced that it had carried out a number of promotional activities in the first three months of the year. They included a poster campaign on buses in a number of cities, and the distribution of Malta postcards in theatres and restaurants all over Paris and on the TGV Eurostar and Thalys train network.

The National Statistics Office announced that the per capita residential care expenditure at St Vincent de Paul last year averaged Lm6,906. The NSO said that the state-supported residential homes for the elderly catered for 1,465 persons last year. The day-care centres provided services to 770 persons.

Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami hosted Tunisian Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouci to Dinner at Auberge de Castille. In a speech, Dr Fenech-Adami recalled how the close collaboration between the Maltese and Tunisian Governments had borne fruit, not only in bilateral relations, but also at multilateral level. “It is expected that, as a member of the European Union, the Government of Malta will be able to contribute to the strengthening of solidarity between all the countries of the Mediterranean,” said Dr Fenech-Adami.

Pope John Paul II wrote to President Guido de Marco about his forthcoming visit to Malta next month. The Pope thanked the President and the Maltese Government for making it possible for him to make the Jubilee Pilgrimage in the footsteps of St Paul.

Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that Malta and Tunisia had agreed to make a strong effort to create a free trade zone between the two countries. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at a joint news conference with Tunisian Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi, at Auberge de Castille.

Tunisian Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi said that Malta was both a neighbour and a friend. He said that his country had no dispute with Malta over the median line. Mr Ghannouchi
was replying to a question at a joint news conference with the Maltese Prime Minister, at Auberge de Castille.

- **7 April 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli said that in 1999, total premium income in non-life business, at Lm34.5 million, represented 2.38 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product. Mr Dalli was speaking at the Malta Insurance Association Assembly.

- **7 April 2001** The Cabinet turned down a controversial application filed by the Xaghra local council for the building of a sports complex near the Ggantija temples. The application had raised the ire of environmental groups.

- **7 April 2001** The National Statistics Office said that investment in manufacturing had more than doubled last year when compared to 1999, with total net investment rising from Lm35.1 million in 1999, to Lm74.8 million in 2000.

- **8 April 2001** Israeli tour operator Airtour Israel features Malta's most popular hotels, local nightlife, casino holidays, as well as combination packages with Sicily and mainland Italy in its 2001 summer brochures. The brochures, in English and Hebrew, are being distributed among members of the travel trade in Israel.

- **8 April 2001** EU Environment Commissioner Margot Wallstrøm said that the European Commission had explained to the Maltese Government that no transitional periods would be accepted for transposition and implementation of EU legislation concerning nature protection. Ms Wallstrom was speaking in an interview with Crossroads, a monthly supplement issued with The Sunday Times newspaper by the Malta-EU Information Centre.

- **9 April 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli said that he would conclude discussions with organisations representing professions and business sectors over six benchmarking exercises before presenting the exercises to Cabinet. The exercises were drawn up by the recently set up Tax Compliance Unit.

- **9 April 2001** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that over 1,500 delegates were expected to attend a conference being organised in Malta in June by the pharmaceutical giant Pfizer. Dr Refalo was speaking on his arrival from a promotional event in France.

- **9 April 2001** EU Enlargement Commissioner Gunter Verheugen was reported by The European Voice as saying that countries bidding to join the EU should have the right to stop foreigners from buying farmland and holiday-homes for years after membership. Mr Verheugen was speaking at a Friends of Europe meeting, in Brussels.

- **10 April 2001** President Guido de Marco said that he was pleased to have been able to keep in close touch with every sector of the population. Prof. de Marco was looking back on his second year as Head of State in an interview with The Times newspaper.

- **10 April 2001** Palestinian President Yasser Arafat wrote a personal letter to President Guido de Marco on the occasion of Freedom Day. The two Presidents also had a telephone conversation in which they discussed the Middle East and the steps necessary to rekindle the peace process.

- **10 April 2001** According to the Malta Broadcasting Authority's radio and television audience survey, fewer listeners were tuning in to the three radio stations featuring discussion and phone-in programmes, Super 1 Radio, RTK, and Radio 101. Music stations Capital Radio and Calypso Radio, on the other hand, saw their audience share increase by 6.9 per cent and 5.3 per cent respectively. The MBA study was conducted in the period 15-21 February 2001.

- **10 April 2001** Saviour Gauci presented his credentials as Malta’s Ambassador to the Emir of Kuwait, Jeber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

- **11 April 2001** Maltese prosecutors have set in motion proceedings for the extradition of Egyptian national Mohammed Abdel Monem Abbas Aly, wanted by Turkey for the murder of a British librarian. Malta had, to date, consistently refused to extradite Abbas Aly because Turkey had the death penalty on its statute books and Maltese law does not allow the extradition of a person to face execution. A Turkish general amnesty handed down a few months ago led to the shelving of the death penalty.
**11 April 2001** Italian authorities were seeking the extradition of Raymond Gauci, 45, of Mosta, and Anthony Bartolo, 42, of Qormi, for alleged conspiracy in the ferrying of illegal immigrants to Sicily. The two men were taken to court as police formally requested their extradition for trafficking in immigrants.

**11 April 2001** According to the Civil Aviation (Denied Boarding Compensation) Regulations 2001, published in *The Government Gazette*, airlines will have to pay compensation to passengers who book a flight but are denied boarding. The new regulations come into effect on 1st November 2001.

**11 April 2001** Director of Information Emanuel Abela presented Archbishop Joseph Mercieca with a copy of a video recording showing the funeral of Dun Gorg Preca. The video is drawn from footage shot by DOI cameramen and which now forms part of the departmental archives. Dun Gorg, founder of the Christian doctrine society MUSEUM, died on 26th July 1962.

**11 April 2001** Official figures released by the National Statistics Office show that public libraries, in 1999, lent out fewer books than in 1998. The libraries made up for this drop by issuing more journals, CD-Roms, videos and audio-cassettes. Figures for 2000 are not yet available.

**11 April 2001** A parliamentary resolution approved the concession of an area of land measuring 1,663 square metres to the Aviation Museum at Ta' Qali. The contract was signed by Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg and by Ray Polidano, Director General of the Aviation Museum Foundation, and David Spiteri Staines, Secretary.

**12 April 2001** The Prime Minister and Mrs Fenech-Adami left Malta for a private holiday. They are expected to return to Malta on April 20. Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi is Acting Prime Minister.

**12 April 2001** The Head of Malta's Core Negotiating Group, Richard Cachia Caruana, said that it was premature to comment on what the final EU position will be regarding the proposal by the European Commission to delay full rights of freedom of movement for workers in new member states. The proposal, as announced, would apply to all applicant countries except Malta and Cyprus.

**12 April 2001** Dr Stephen Gatt was made a Member of the Order of Merit by President Guido de Marco at an investiture ceremony held at The Palace in Valletta. Dr Gatt, a specialist in anaesthesia and intensive care, is based at the Prince of Wales and Prince Henry Hospital, in Sydney, Australia. He is also President of the Federation of Maltese Living Abroad.

**12 April 2001** President Guido de Marco inaugurated a Peace Museum, at Pope John XXIII Peace Lab complex, in Hal Far. Founder-Director Fr Dionysius Mintoff said that the mission of the museum would be to foster a greater awareness of cultural diversity and the heritage of mankind.

**12 April 2001** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that, over the past 20 years, a total of 185,510 properties had changed hands, at a collective value of nearly Lm1.4 billion. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking at a joint press conference with Finance Minister John Dalli.

**12 April 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici underlined the responsibilities of the new Malta Statistics Authority to gather and process statistics objectively, independently, and free from any pressure. Prof. Bonnici was addressing the Authority's board.

**12 April 2001** The Cabinet decided that, on the occasion of the Pope's visit to Malta on May 8 and 9, May 9 would be a day off work for public sector employees, except those providing essential services. The decision was announced in a circular sent to Permanent Secretaries, Directors General and Heads of parastatal organisations, by OPM Permanent Secretary Joseph R Grima.

**12 April 2001** The Institute for the Promotion of Small Enterprise announced that it was taking part in *Promomed*, an EU-supported project focusing on the craft of jewellery production in France, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine and Malta. The *Promomed* project seeks to promote local competitiveness and develop the capabilities of the jewellery producing communities in the participating nations.

**12 April 2001** David Elyan donated a collection of five 'School Print' lithographs to the National Museum of Fine Arts. The donation consists of *The Bird* by Georges Braque, *The Band* by Raoul Dufy, *Composition* by Pablo Picasso, *The Dancer* by Henri Matisse, and *King of Hearts* by Fernand
Leger. This donation follows Mr Elyan's recent donation to the University library of an extensive collection of inscribed first editions of Anglo-Irish literature.

- **12 April 2001** Air Malta announced that it had received a notice saying that Maltese travelling to the United Arab Emirates would once again require a visa, a requirement that had been removed late last month. A Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman said that the Ministry had not received any official communication from United Arab Emirates authorities regarding the change.

- **14 April 2001** Jacques R Saade, Chairman of the French shipping line CMA-CGM Ltd, recently met Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami and senior government ministers and officials. CMA-CGM is expected to be one of the main contenders in the privatisation of the operations and management of the Malta Freeport.

- **14 April 2001** The Malta External Trade Corporation announced that a group of 27 Maltese businessmen on a trade mission to Libya had attended around 200 business meetings in Benghazi and Tripoli. A number of participants had been given trial orders.

- **14 April 2001** The National Statistics Office announced that the labour supply had risen by 401 in February over the figure for the previous month. The number of gainfully occupied had risen by 378, and that of registered unemployed by 23.

- **14 April 2001** Domestic exports rose by Lm9.7 million, from Lm65.1 million to Lm74.8 million in January this year, while imports rose from Lm97.2 million to Lm109.9 million. The figures were published by the National Statistics Office.

- **14 April 2001** Ian Miller was appointed Honorary Consul for Malta in Jersey, Channel Islands; George Spassov was appointed Honorary Consul for Malta in Varna, Bulgaria; and Simon Mifsud was appointed Honorary Consul for the Republic of the Seychelles.

- **15 April 2001** A Museums Department statement announced that Imnajdra Neolithic temple had been the victim of "tragic and irreparable" vandalism. Around 60 megaliths had been dislodged from their position and some of them had suffered severe damage in the process. Police investigations are in hand.

- **16 April 2001** Education Minister Louis Galea said that, previous to the day before, the main danger to the monuments had been expected to come from the elements. “No one expected this cultural terrorism,” he said. Dr Galea was commenting on the weekend’s vandalism at Imnajdra temples.

- **17 April 2001** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi announced that a Gender Equality Bill would be moved in Parliament shortly. Dr Gonzi was addressing a gender training workshop for senior civil servants.

- **17 April 2001** The Government of Malta and the Government of the Principality of Monaco announced in a joint communiqué the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, Ambassador Walter Balzan, signed on behalf of the Government of Malta, while the Permanent Representative of the Principality of Monaco, Ambassador Jacques L. Boisson, signed on behalf of the Government of the Principality of Monaco.

- **17 April 2001** Education Minister Louis Galea announced that the police and the army had been deployed to provide security at Imnajdra and other national heritage monuments. Dr Galea said that, with immediate effect, the site would be manned 24 hours a day.

- **17 April 2001** Island Publications have issued the 11th edition of The Island Travel Yearbook. The book provides speedy access to the names, addresses, communications details, and personnel information for all companies involved in Malta's travel industry.

- **17 April 2001** Bank of Valletta International, the private banking arm of the Bank of Valletta Group, announced a new equity-linked euro deposit for the bank's international clients. Further details can be obtained from BOVI on e-mail privatebanking@bovi-malta.com

- **17 April 2001** Visitors to Valletta this week will be regaled with the colourful Festival of History and Elegance. The festival is being organised for the sixth time by the Malta Tourism Authority.
17 April 2001 Maltapost announced that it would be issuing a set of two commemorative stamps to mark the Pope's visit to Malta and the beatification of Dun Gorg Preca. Further information is available on e-mail info@maltapost.com

18 April 2001 Joseph Licari, Malta's Permanent Representative to the Council of Europe, argued that Malta's relations with the European Union could follow one of six possible options. Dr Licari was expanding on the theme Euro-Med Partnership, at the Malta Chamber of Commerce.

18 April 2001 Ray Bondin, Chairman of the International Council of Monuments and Sites (Malta), announced that the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO had expressed its concern that such a thing as the vandalism at Mnajdra could happen, and would be asking to send a delegation to Malta to assess the damage caused. The International Council is a consultant body to the UNESCO Committee.

18 April 2001 Prof. Joseph Zammit Maempel, who was one of the Maltese pioneers in cardiology, died at age 88.

19 April 2001 Transport and Communications Minister Censu Galea said that, as of March, the number of registered vehicles in Malta was 282,000. Mr Galea was speaking at the inauguration of the Motor Fair, at the trade fair grounds, in Naxxar.

19 April 2001 Lloyds List, the newspaper of the maritime industry, reported that the French line CMA-CGM Ltd might leave Malta Freeport in favour of Cagliari International Container Terminal. Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that he was not alarmed by the report. “Such reports about companies considering other options are common and are often part of a strategy to ensure they get competitive prices.”

19 April 2001 Malta Tourism Authority Chairman John C Grech said that more than 38,000 divers visit Malta each year. Counting their families, the industry attracts approximately 60,000 tourists annually. Mr Grech was addressing a conference organised by the MTA in collaboration with the Professional Diving Schools Association.

20 April 2001 Representatives of over 40 Green parties and 11 Members of Parliament meeting in Canberra expressed their condemnation of the act of vandalism at Mnajdra, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. They also called on the Maltese Government to ensure full security to all heritage sites located in Malta for the benefit of present and future generations of all peoples of the world.

20 April 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli said that it was important that a unit be set up to liaise between the Government and the private sector on the setting up of the Public Private Partnership. Mr Dalli was speaking during a breakfast meeting organised by the Malta Institute of Management, at Gzira. The theme of the meeting was Financing Public Service Capital.

20 April 2001 Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that the manufacturing sector had seen increases in sales, exports, value-added, and employment. Prof. Bonnici was speaking at the launch of the Mosta Technopark Tenants Association.

20 April 2001 The National Statistics' Office announced that, in the year 2000, the American and Asian markets had overtaken the EU market as the most important destination for Maltese high technology exports. The value of such exports to America and Asia totalled Lm507 million, as against Lm166.9 million in the case of the EU.

20 April 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that sales of property in the last three years had increased by Lm70 million, from Lm132 million in 1998, to Lm178 million in 1999, to Lm202 million in 2000. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking during the 10th annual conference of the Chamber of Engineers.

20 April 2001 Abdel Rahman Al-Gondi, the head of the legal office within the people's committee of justice and public security, led a Libyan delegation in meetings with a Maltese delegation headed by Home Affairs Ministry Permanent Secretary Louis Cilia. The delegations discussed ways to implement the 1994 agreement that provided for the transfer of sentenced prisoners between Malta and Libya.
• **20 April 2001** New Dutch Ambassador to Malta Jonkheer Loudon presented his diplomatic credentials to President Guido de Marco at the Palace, in Valletta. Mr Loudon will be resident in Rome.

• **20 April 2001** Mr Martins Perts, who is the new Latvian Ambassador to Malta, presented his diplomatic credentials to President Guido de Marco at the Palace, in Valletta. Mr Perts will be resident in Rome.

• **20 April 2001** The Malta Tourism Authority today launches the *Valletta Evenings - City Alive* initiative. The initiative is another attempt to restore life to the capital city in the evenings.

• **21 April 2001** Hundreds of people took part in a protest march down Republic Street in Valletta in condemnation of the vandal attack that vandalised the *Mnajdra* temples. At the end of the march, representatives of several organisations presented President Guido de Marco with a resolution calling on the Government to provide proper security at heritage sites.

• **21 April 2001** Addressing marchers protesting against the vandalism at *Mnajdra* assembled at Palace Square, President Guido de Marco said that the marchers’ participation showed the people's resolve towards the regeneration of love for our country. “Never again should this type of disfigurement to the nation's dignity be caused,” he said.

• **21 April 2001** A Parliamentary delegation attended the second part of the 2001 Ordinary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, in Strasbourg. The delegation was led by Government MP John Vella and included Government MP Michael Asciak and Opposition MP Joe Debono Grech.

• **21 April 2001** Justice Minister Austin Gatt announced that the process of finding a strategic partner to develop and implement the *e-government* initiative was under way. Dr Gatt said that several foreign companies had shown an interest and attended the briefing session held last week.

• **22 April 2001** Government will this year be handing out the sum of Lm218,100 to 65 organisations to help them disseminate information about the European Union to their members. This information is carried in the latest issue of *Aggornat*, the Malta-EU Information Centre newsletter.

• **22 April 2001** Thousands of Maltese paid homage to Dun Gorg’s corpse at the MUSEUM Chapel, in Blata l-Bajda. Dun Gorg Preca is to be beatified by the Pope in Malta on May 9.

• **23 April 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami made a strong appeal to the public to come forward with any information that could lead to the arrest of those who vandalised the *Mnajdra* temples. Dr Fenech-Adami was giving his first reaction to the attack since his return from abroad.

• **23 April 2001** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that the forecast for tourist arrivals in May was promising, and the number of arrivals might even exceed last year's. Dr Refalo was speaking during an activity organised by the Malta Food and Cookery Association.

• **23 April 2001** A statement released by the Ministry of Finance announced that Finance Minister John Dalli took part in the first informal *Ecofin* meeting between Finance Ministers of EU member states and candidate countries, in Malmo, Sweden. The statement said that the meeting had discussed the challenges of economic policy-making in the pre-accession phase and financial stability in the EU and candidate countries.

• **23 April 2001** The *Valletta: History & Elegance Festival* organised by the Malta Tourism Authority reached a climax with the spectacular re-enactment of the celebrations marking the election of Grand Master de Wignacourt, which took place in 1601.

• **24 April 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said in Parliament that a Bill on the protection of the cultural and historic heritage prepared just before the 1996 elections had now been updated and would be published shortly. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking during the debate on a motion moved by Opposition Education and Culture spokesman Evarist Bartolo condemning the *Mnajdra* violence.
• 24 April 2001 Education Minister Louis Galea distributed copies of a Cultural Heritage Strategic Plan to the media. Dr Galea said that the plan was a compilation of proposals that the Ministry of Education and Culture had been working on since 1998, when the party in government was returned to office.

• 24 April 2001 Minister of Foreign Affairs Joe Borg listed in Parliament the derogations and transitional periods requested by the Government as part of negotiations with the European Union in the chapter on the Environment. Dr Borg was answering a Parliamentary Question.

• 24 April 2001 Two consortia, chaired by entrepreneur Albert Mizzi and architect Joe Cassar respectively, submitted tender documents for the Lm40 million development of the capital's entrance, City Gate. The documents submitted by *Civitas Consortium* and *1566 Consortium* were opened publicly by the adjudication committee and the technical committee that had been set up to evaluate the tender documents.

• 24 April 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli said in Parliament that overseas investment by Maltese nationals in 2000 had totalled Lm46.1 million. Mr Dalli said that the figure for the first quarter of this year was being provisionally put at Lm10.25 million.

• 24 April 2001 Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici announced that Gozo Channel Co. had sold the former Gozo ferry *Ghawdex* for $180,000. Prof. Bonnici was answering a Parliamentary Question.

• 24 April 2001 The Employment and Training Corporation launched its new *Job Experience Scheme*, aimed at exposing job seekers lacking work experience to the working world. The launch was held at the General Soft Drinks Co. Ltd, the first sponsoring organisation to take on board school-leavers.

• 24 April 2001 A Maltese registered tanker, the *Gudermes*, was damaged following a collision in the English Channel with the French fishing boat, the *St Jacques* and some 110 tonnes of oil were spilled into the water. Transport Minister Censu Galea said that the incident was considered to be minor.

• 24 April 2001 The Adam-Picture Box production of *The Great Siege of Malta 1565* was the featured documentary at the recent New York Film and Video Festival. Over 1,000 films, shorts, and documentaries from all over the world had been submitted for screening, and just over 100 had been selected.

• 25 April 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami signed the deed setting up the Foundation for Educational Services. The foundation will offer special care to children who have fallen behind in their education.

• 25 April 2001 UNESCO Director General Koïchiro Matusuura said that the vandalism at *Mnajdra* proved that in Europe, as elsewhere, the heritage of humanity was not sheltered from human ignorance. The International Council on Monuments and Sites is shortly to send a mission to prepare a report on the damage.

• 25 April 2001 Officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries had talks with their counterparts from the Commission of the European Communities regarding a trade agreement on fish. The agreement grants concessions to Malta on fish exported from Malta to the European Union.

• 25 April 2001 Foreign Minister Joe Borg told Parliament that Malta had made six reservations with regards to the European convention on laundering, search, seizure and confiscation of the proceeds from crime that it ratified in November 1999. Dr Borg was answering a Parliamentary Question.

• 25 April 2001 Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi announced at a dialogue meeting that the Social Policy Minister, together with the Finance Minister, would be meeting the social partners in the coming days to discuss the setting up of a Guarantee Fund. Dr Gonzi said that the fund would allow workers, made redundant because of the bankruptcy of their employer, to receive their salaries.

• 25 April 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli said that, since January 1999, the VAT Department had taken action through judicial letters against 687 persons for the recovery of VAT payments. Mr Dalli was replying to a Parliamentary Question.

• 25 April 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that the proposed Environment Protection Act and subsidiary legislation was being published in the form of a consultation document.
The amended draft, which would take into consideration the public's feedback, would be presented to the Cabinet for approval by June and presented to Parliament before the summer recess.

- **25 April 2001** The Merchant Shipping Directorate of the Maritime Authority began investigating the collision between the Maltese registered tanker *Guedermes* and the French fishing vessel *St Jacques*. The Authority said that, from preliminary investigations, it did not appear that the *Guedermes* was at fault for the accident.

- **25 April 2001** The Bank of Valletta Group recorded a pre-tax profit of Lm6.8 million for the six-month period ending on March 31. This marks a drop of Lm4.1 million when compared to the Lm10.9 million pre-tax profits recorded for the corresponding period last year.

- **25 April 2001** APS Bank announced its financial results for the year ended December 31. The bank’s pre-tax profits increased from Lm772,616 in 1999 to Lm1,307,216 in the year 2000.

- **25 April 2001** GasanMamo Financial Services Chairman Joseph Gasan announced that the company had teamed up with *Edinburgh Fund Managers plc* of Scotland to provide investment opportunities for local investors. Mr Gasan was speaking at the launch of the company, at Floriana.

- **25 April 2001** Prof. Frederick Fenech was appointed Director of the United Nations’ *International Institute on Ageing* by the Maltese Government in agreement with the UN Secretary General. The appointment is for an initial period of three years from April 21.

- **25 April 2001** A Curia statement announced that the Pope had approved two decrees stating that two cases of extraordinary healing through the intercession of the Venerable Nazju Falzon and the Venerable Adeodata Pisani had been confirmed as miraculous by the Holy See’s Congregation for the Causes of Saints and the Ordinary Congregation of Cardinals. This opens the door to the two persons’ beatification along with Dun Gorg Preca during the Pope’s Malta visit, on May 9.

- **26 April 2001** Arhi Palosuo, the Head of the team negotiating with Malta within the Enlargement Directorate General of the European Commission, said that Malta had shown it was possible to catch up with the applicant countries that had started negotiations two years before. Mr Palosuo was speaking to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy of the European Parliament, in Brussels.

- **26 April 2001** The Chairman of Malta's Core Negotiating Group, Richard Cachia Caruana, said that he was confident that Malta would be able to conclude negotiations during the first part of next year and be ready for membership by the end of 2002. Mr Cachia Caruana was addressing the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy of the European Parliament, in Brussels.

- **26 April 2001** Health Minister Louis Deguara said that, although the Government's health services provide universal coverage, there was significant private sector activity. This activity accounted for approximately 40 per cent of the total health care expenditure in Malta. Dr Deguara was speaking on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of BUPA operations in Malta, at St Julian’s.

- **26 April 2001** Local Government Minister Austin Gatt said that the warden system would be viable if it were run on a regional basis. Neighbouring councils, however, had to show a greater sense of solidarity and share out the costs, he said. Dr Gatt was addressing a news conference at the Ministry, in Valletta.

- **26 April 2001** An IMF delegation headed by Peter Doyle, Deputy Division Chief - European Department, had separate meetings with the General Workers' Union and the *Union Haddiema Magħqudin*. Various issues related to the situation in the country, as well as EU membership, were discussed.

- **26 April 2001** Education Minister Louis Galea has reconstituted the National Festivities Committee and set up the National Folklore Commission. The National Folklore Commission replaces the Carnival Commission.

- **27 April 2001** EU Environment Commissioner Margot Wallström said that she saw no big hurdles for Malta related to the environment that could not be overcome in the negotiations. Even the issue of
hunting, she said, could hopefully be resolved. Ms Wallström was speaking during a public meeting at the University of Malta.

- **27 April 2001** The National Statistics Office announced that tourist arrivals in March had increased by 3.7 per cent, to 85,108, over the figure for the same month last year. Arrivals in the first quarter had increased by 1.5 per cent, to 185,053.

- **27 April 2001** The Parliamentary Secretary in the Home Affairs Ministry, George Pullicino, said that it was important for the Planning Authority to organise more events to raise public awareness about its role. Mr Pullicino was speaking at the launch of *Open Door*, a scheme through which small groups of people could visit the PA offices.

- **27 April 2001** The University of Malta conferred honorary degrees on former University Rector Rev. Prof. Peter Serracino Inglott; the Curator of the Mdina Cathedral Museum, Mgr. John Azzopardi; and Malta's first SRN and the founder of the first nursing school in Malta, Sr Aldegonda Farrugia. The *Honoris Causa* degrees were conferred by University Chancellor John Rizzo Naudi at a ceremony at the Jesuits' Church, in Valletta.

- **27 April 2001** Film Commissioner Winston Azzopardi announced that the 20 film productions shot in Malta last year had generated $8 million for the economy. Mr Azzopardi was speaking at a business breakfast.

- **28 April 2001** Malta marked the 59th anniversary of the award of the George Cross to the Island with an ecumenical and wreath-laying ceremony at the Siege Bell Monument. The ceremony commemorated and honoured all those who had fallen in defence of the Island during the war. President Guido de Marco was among those who laid wreaths at the foot of the monument.

- **28 April 2001** Australian High Commissioner Iain Dickie unveiled a plaque commemorating Maltese migrants who had left Malta during the 19th and 20th centuries, at the Upper Barrakka Gardens, in Valletta. The plaque also marks last year's Malta Convention for Leaders of Maltese Associations Overseas.

- **28 April 2001** A group of students and tutors from the Emvin Cremona Art and Design Centre left for the UK to take part in the Mobility Project forming part of the EU *Leonardo da Vinci* programme. Government estimates that a total of 190 students, tutors and workers would benefit from the *Leonardo* programme.

- **28 April 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami officially inaugurated the new air traffic control centre at Malta International Airport. Dr Fenech-Adami said that the recently set up Malta Air Traffic Services plc would shortly be taking over responsibility for the new air traffic control centre.

- **28 April 2001** EU Environment Commissioner Margot Wallström said that the European Commission had made it clear to all candidate countries, including Malta, that it wanted requests for transition periods to be as few and as short as possible. Ms Wallström was speaking at a joint news conference with Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech at St James Cavalier, in Valletta.

- **28 April 2001** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi announced that the Government would soon be introducing the National Vocational Qualification. He said that NVQs would provide accreditation and recognition, either of prior learning or of experience, and would serve to enhance job mobility within both local and European labour markets. Dr Gonzi was presenting Journeyman certificates to 234 apprentices who had completed the Extended Skill Training Scheme and the Technical Apprenticeship Scheme.

- **28 April 2001** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo emphasised the need for Valletta to attract young inhabitants and criticised the delay in the issue of permits for a road renovation project in the capital city. Dr Refalo was speaking on the needs of Valletta during a conference organised by the Malta Tourism Authority.

- **29 April 2001** The Cardio-thoracic Unit at St Luke's Hospital has performed its 2,000th heart operation. Health Minister Louis Deguara congratulated the team on its good work and wished the patient a speedy recovery.
• **29 April 2001** President Guido de Marco, in the presence of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, presented twenty-seven youths with the President's Gold Award. The award, formerly known as the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, was launched by Prince Philip himself in 1956.

• **30 April 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami described the present as a unique historical moment for the country because the time for important decisions was getting closer. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at Zurrieq.

• **30 April 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami paid visits to the head office of APS Bank in Floriana, Vodafone in Birkirkara, and Melita Cable in Madliena. While at the respective workplaces, Dr Fenech-Adami stopped and chatted with employees, directors and managers.

• **30 April 2001** Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Social Policy Lawrence Gonzi said that latest unemployment figures, which still have to be published, show that during April unemployment stood at 4.3 per cent, that is, around 6,500.

• **30 April 2001** The National Office of Statistics said that total exports last February declined by Lm6.3 million to Lm73.8 million, from Lm80.1 million a year earlier. Total imports went down by Lm7.4 million to Lm102.5 million, from Lm109.9 million last year.

• **30 April 2001** British archaeologist Henry Cleere is to visit Malta between May 10-13 to draw up a report for UNESCO on the damage caused by vandals at Mnajdra. Dr Cleere is co-ordinator for world heritage of Icomos, the International Council on Monuments and Sites.

**MAY**

• **1 May 2001** President Guido de Marco said that, while there was no political consensus over the relations Malta should have with the European Union, unions had a responsibility to give their members accurate information on the issue. Prof. de Marco was addressing the Council of the Union Haddiena Maghqudin on the occasion of Workers' Day.

• **1 May 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Government intended forging ahead with the privatisation process in the sectors mentioned in the last Budget. However, it now realised that, "when it comes to public assets it's better to obtain consensus beforehand". Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing representatives of trade unions and constituted bodies.

• **1 May 2001** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that the Cabinet had approved nominees for the Occupational Health and Safety Authority under the Chairmanship of Ms Simone Borg. Dr Gonzi was speaking at the launch of the Quality Service Charter at the Department of Industrial and Employment Relations, in Valletta.

• **1 May 2001** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi launched a new community work scheme aimed at helping the long-term unemployed. The scheme targets job seekers aged over 40 who have been registering for employment for over a year.

• **1 May 2001** The Government published its negotiating position papers on Chapters which are still being discussed with the European Union as part of membership talks. The Chapters in question cover areas about which the Government is seeking special concessions in the form of either transitional periods or derogations.

• **1 May 2001** Go Mobile announced that, to date, it had sold over 38,000 lines. The company said that it expects to hit the 40,000 mark some time next week.

• **1 May 2001** Maltapost is to issue a commemorative stamp issue on Friday 4th to mark the upcoming Papal visit and the beatification of Dun Gorg Preca, Nazju Falzon and Adeodata Pisani.

• **2 May 2001** President Guido de Marco left on a two-day State Visit to Estonia. Prof. de Marco was accompanied by Local Government Minister Austin Gatt who was expected to sign a double taxation agreement on behalf of the Government.
**2 May 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami expressed his determination to do only what he believed was right. He said that he was not prepared to abandon his principles. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at Ta’ Qali.

**2 May 2001** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi announced that important amendments to the law on co-operatives to be published in the coming days would make it easier for new co-operatives to be registered. Dr Gonzi was speaking at the opening of the new offices for the co-operative federation APEX.

**2 May 2001** Agriculture Minister Ninu Zammit said that EU accession in the short term implied a high cost to Malta’s agriculture. However, in the long term, it could be an opportunity to promote a deep change in the sector. Mr Zammit was speaking at an international conference for agriculture ministers from Central and Eastern European countries.

**2 May 2001** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech told Parliament that the Government had received two proposals from companies interested in setting up wind-turbine farms. The statement was made when the House debated, and later approved, a motion for Malta to ratify the International Energy Charter.

**2 May 2001** 48 per cent of European citizens interviewed support Malta's membership bid, while 30 per cent are against. These figures result from the latest *Eurobarometer* survey carried out.

**3 May 2001** President Guido de Marco and Estonian President Lennart Meri discussed the relations between Malta and Estonia and the prospects of strengthening the ties between the two countries. The meeting between the two Heads of State was held in the Estonian capital of Tallinn.

**3 May 2001** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that no fewer than 10,470 applicants for the children's allowance had failed to declare a total of Lm5 million in interest from bank deposits. This represents undeclared bank deposits of Lm101 million. Dr Gonzi was addressing a press conference.

**3 May 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici announced that Methode Electronics Malta Ltd would be investing about Lm3 million and taking on a further 100 employees by the end of the year. The Minister was speaking to reporters after being shown round the new extension being added to the 12,000 square-metre plant, at Mriehel.

**3 May 2001** Maltacom’s Chief Executive Officer Stephen Muscat reported a 9% rise in turnover over the 1999 figure, to Lm48.1 million. Mr Muscat was speaking during the company’s annual general meeting.

**3 May 2001** Malta Stock Exchange Chairman Alfred Mallia said that the exchange was feeling the need for a review of the Malta Stock Exchange Act and its bylaws, particularly where the exchange’s powers of investigation were involved. Mr Mallia’s comments were reported in the exchange's annual report, tabled in Parliament.

**3 May 2001** *Rai Tre* will be shooting a programme on the Island's archaeological and anthropological sites and history. The programme will form part of the popular series *Turisti per caso*. The event was announced during a news conference by Robert Zammit, Malta International Airport (Milan Office) Director.

**4 May 2001** President Guido de Marco met Estonian Prime Minister Mart Laar, at Talinn. During the meeting, both leaders expressed a desire to see a strengthening of co-operation between the two countries.

**4 May 2001** Justice and Local Councils Minister Austin Gatt signed an agreement for the avoidance of double taxation between Malta and Estonia. Dr Gatt was accompanying President de Marco on a state visit to Estonia.

**4 May 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that, although he did not rule out a Cabinet reshuffle at the appropriate time, he did not feel that the time was ripe for a reshuffle now. Dr Fenech-Adami was being interviewed by *The Times* newspaper.
• 4 May 2001 Government MP Francis Agius, a member of the Maltese Parliamentary Delegation to the Council of Europe, was elected President of the Council's Sub-Committee for Agriculture and Fisheries.

• 5 May 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami stressed the importance of the Planning Authority's initiative to set up a team to speed up the application process for major projects. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking during a visit marking a PA open week.

• 5 May 2001 Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi announced that the European Commission had approved a grant of 700,000 Euro (Lm282,000) in technical assistance to the newly set up Occupational Health and Safety Authority. The authority replaces the Commission for Occupational Health and Safety.

• 5 May 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli said that he admired the way China was restructuring, a process resulting in massive improvements in economic activity and the quality of life. Mr Dalli was speaking to Mr Huang Ju, Head of a delegation from the political bureau of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, who was on a visit to Malta.

• 5 May 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech had a meeting with Costas Themistocleous, the Cypriot Minister of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment, in Nicosia. The two ministers discussed the future EU membership of Cyprus and Malta and bilateral co-operation in the environmental field.

• 5 May 2001 Bank of Valletta Chairman Joseph Zahra said that the enormous volume of information available was changing the way markets operated, leading to restructuring of businesses and opening up opportunities to create wealth. Mr Zahra was speaking during the ninth edition of the bank’s Annual Gozo Conference.

• 6 May 2001 President Guido de Marco said that the Maltese people were ever aware of their Mediterranean and European heritage, identity and responsibilities. These two aspects not only complemented each other, he said, but also enriched the people. Prof. de Marco was speaking on the theme Europe: Its Values, Its Future, at Tartu University, in Estonia.

• 7 May 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the decision whether or not Malta should join the European Union was a national one and should not be taken for partisan interests. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at a meeting to mark Europe Day, at Ta’ Xbiex.

• 7 May 2001 Finnish Member of the European Parliament Piia Nora Kauppi said that a small country like Malta would only benefit from EU membership. While big countries like Germany could survive alone, small countries could not, she said. Ms Kauppi was addressing a breakfast meeting.

• 8 May 2001 The Government acceded to union requests for time-off-in-lieu to workers providing essential services during the Pope’s visit to Malta. The General Workers’ Union, the Union Haddiema Maghqudin, and the Malta Union of Midwives and Nurses welcomed the decision.

• 8 May 2001 Tourism Minister Michael Refalo highlighted the need to promote growth in tourist arrivals in the off-peak period. Dr Refalo was speaking during a news conference launching a policy review with a view to boosting figures during the traditionally lean months.

• 8 May 2001 The Treasury Department announced a new issue of Lm30 million in government stocks at 6.45 per cent with interest maturing in 2014. This is the second of four projected issues as announced in the calendar of issues for this year.

• 8 May 2001 The Report on Government Transport proposed recommendations aimed at enhancing the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of the transport function. The report was submitted to Speaker Anton Tabone for presentation in the House of Representatives, in accordance with sub-paragraph 8(b) of the First Schedule of the Auditor General and the National Audit Office Act, 1997.

• 8 May 2001 A delegation from the Kuwait-Malta Parliamentary Friendship Group visited the Malta Development Corporation, the Malta Financial Services Centre, and the Malta External Trade Corporation. The group was in Malta to further enhance the good relations that exist between the two countries and to promote relations between the two respective Parliaments.
8 May 2001 The European Computer Driving Licence, a Europe-wide qualification that enables people to demonstrate their skills and competence as computer users, has been launched in Malta. The ECDL is approved and supported by the Council for European Professional Informatics Societies, which represents a quarter of a million experts across 17 European countries.

8 May 2001 President Guido de Marco welcomed Pope John Paul II to the Island. Malta was the last stop in the Pontiff’s journey retracing the steps of St Paul the Apostle from Damascus to Rome. His Holiness was then taken to the Palace, in Valletta, where he had short meetings with President de Marco, Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, and Leader of the Opposition Alfred Sant.

9 May 2001 The National Statistics Office announced that the number of registered unemployed in March had dropped by 113 from the previous month, to 6,591, or 4.4 per cent.

10 May 2001 A milestone in the millennial history of the Church in Malta was reached when Pope John Paul II beatified Dun Gorg Preca, Nazju Falzon, and Sister Maria Adeodata Pisani. Loud applause broke out as the Pope declared the three persons blessed and announced their feast days. The beatification ceremony was held on the Granaries, in Floriana.

10 May 2001 Pope John Paul said that the Maltese had a unique vocation to be builders of bridges between the peoples of the Mediterranean basin, between Africa and Europe. “The future of peace in the world depends on strengthening dialogue and understanding between cultures and religions. Continue in your traditions of hospitality, and continue in your national and international commitment on behalf of freedom, justice and peace.” The Pontiff was speaking at the end of his brief visit to Malta.

10 May 2001 President Guido de Marco promised the Pope that, in years to come, the Maltese would learn, through the Pope’s own message of peace, “to use their geographic location to be in the service of peace”. Prof. de Marco was delivering his Address at the departure ceremony, at Malta International Airport.

10 May 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that Malta would hold a referendum in 2003 on whether to join the European Union. He said that the Yes vote was expected to prevail. Dr Fenech-Adami was being interviewed by Reuters correspondent Gilles Trequesser.

10 May 2001 Middle Sea Valletta Life Assurance Chairman Joseph Zahra said in a statement that the volatility in the local and international capital and investment markets had had a negative impact on the overall investment return of the company. Profits before tax had gone down to Lm0.4 million.

11 May 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, Education Minister Louis Galea, Director General of Education Charles Mizzi, and Foundation Chairman Mario Callus signed the deed setting up the Foundation for Tomorrow’s Schools. The foundation aims to make school construction, refurbishment and maintenance more effective, faster and better organised.

11 May 2001 Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that he hoped to present San Andrea Consortium’s proposal for the Lm14 million White Rocks project to Cabinet by mid-June. Dr Refalo was speaking to reporters after meeting with Bernardo Cabot, Director of Sol Melia’s hotel owner relations.

11 May 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that a section was being set up within the Building Construction Industry Department to tackle Health and Safety. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking at a conference held by the Building Industry Consultative Committee on health and safety at work.

11 May 2001 Louis Cilia, Permanent Secretary at the Justice Ministry and Ms Kristina Rennerstedt, Secretary of State at the Swedish Justice Ministry, signed a new co-operation treaty to combat drug trafficking and organised crime. Present for the ceremony were Police Commissioner George Grech and Assistant Commissioner Michael Cassar.

11 May 2001 The Malta-EU Information Centre published the second issue in a series of booklets with answers to the most frequently asked questions by the Maltese on EU membership. The booklet, in English and Maltese, deals specifically with the business community and the self-employed.
• **11 May 2001** Henry Cleere, the World Heritage Co-ordinator of the International Council for the Conservation of Monuments and Sites, visited *Mnajdra* temple to assess the damage caused by vandals and draw up a report. The report is to be presented to the bureau of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee when it convenes in Paris, in June.

• **11 May 2001** Prof. Anthony Frendo of the University of Malta delivered a 90-minute talk on the Megalithic Temples and the Phoenicians in Malta during a Malta evening organised by the Maltese Embassy in Washington. The *venue* for the talk was the Ring Theatre of the Hirschhorn Museum.

• **12 May 2001** The Commission for the Administration of Justice launched a Code of Ethics for members of the Judiciary. President Guido de Marco, Commission Chairman, described the code as "an exercise in accountability that, in substance, was drawn up by the Judiciary itself and to which the Judiciary had subscribed". The launch took place at the Palace, in Valletta.

• **12 May 2001** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that the 1995 amendments to Rent Laws had had zero effect on opening up the market for rent. A change in perception among owners was required, he said. Dr Gonzi was speaking during a press conference attended by Housing Authority chairperson Marisa Micallef Leyson.

• **12 May 2001** Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg announced the publication of a Bill that would enable Government to return land expropriated under the Building Development Areas Act that is no longer needed for a public purpose. "Private property used to be taken by the Government at the stroke of a pen, and the new law will enable the Government to also return such land at the stroke of a pen," said Dr Borg.

• **12 May 2001** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that the Government would have spent Lm8 million by the end of the year on embellishing the promenades of Bugibba, Qawra, Marsaxlokk, Marsascala, Sliema, St Julian’s and Birzebbuga. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking to reporters during a visit to the Sliema/St Julian’s promenade.

• **12 May 2001** The Tax Free Marketing Group said that, between April 2000 and March 2001, sales at Malta International Airport’s *Tax Free* shops had soared to Lm11.8 million, an increase of Lm600,000 over the previous corresponding year. The new figures translate to Lm13,127 per square metre of retail space.

• **12 May 2001** Bank of Valletta took part in the 3rd International Fair *Expofinances 2001*, held in Tunis. The fair was inaugurated by Tunisian Finance Minister Tawfiq Baccar.

• **13 May 2001** Manchester United and England football star Gary Neville entered into a two-year exclusive agreement with Air Malta and the Malta Tourism Authority through which Neville will be promoting Malta as a tourist resort. Celebrity endorsements constitute a popular and cost-effective promotional tool in creating awareness and generating interest in particular products.

• **13 May 2001** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech announced that the Environment Protection Act, to be moved in Parliament and debated before the summer recess, would include fines of up to Lm100,000 or two years’ imprisonment. Dr Zammit Dimech was addressing a seminar on the proposed legislation.

• **13 May 2001** Foreign Minister Joe Borg attended the Eighth Ministerial Meeting of the Mediterranean Forum, in Tangier, Morocco. The forum dealt with Mediterranean co-operation and divisions, regional integration and investment, heritage promotion, security, and the Middle East.

• **13 May 2001** Since November 2000, seventeen Maltese officials have participated in seminars organised by the European Institute of Public Administration. The Malta Government, represented by the Staff Development Organisation in the Office of the Prime Minister, became an associate member of the EIPA in October 2000.

• **14 May 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli advised small investors not to panic and sell their shareholdings when share prices appeared to go down. Companies quoted on the Malta Stock Exchange were sound, and they would stabilise and appreciate in value as they expanded, he said.

• **14 May 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that EU membership was not an option for most southern and eastern Mediterranean countries. The Euro-Med process therefore needed to
develop an additional dimension if its vision of a dynamic Euro-Med Free Trade Area were to be realised. Prof. Bonnici was addressing a meeting for trade ministers from candidate countries, in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

**15 May 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami left for Brussels to attend an EU meeting for Defence Ministers, open also to candidate countries. The meeting is a follow-up to a similar meeting held last November, at which Malta agreed to provide an AFM platoon to be deployed on humanitarian and rescue missions within the new EU Rapid Reaction Force.

**15 May 2001** Education Minister Louis Galea said that education had to steer away from the notion that one is educated to do a specific job for life. Job mobility required a flexible system of education that inspired training, learning and development. Dr Galea was speaking at the launch of *Lifelong Learning*.

**15 May 2001** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo urged a change in culture, outlook and practices in the tourism industry. Dr Refalo was announcing the new policy directions that he had given to the Malta Tourism Authority.

**15 May 2001** The National Statistics Office announced that, during the first quarter of this year, 565,939 passengers had used the Malta-Gozo ferries to cross between the islands. This is an increase of 25,741, or 4.8 per cent, over the same period last year.

**15 May 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that, over the past five years, Gozo Channel Co. had forked out Lm4.5 million in subsidies to passengers. Prof. Bonnici was answering a Parliamentary Question.

**15 May 2001** Twenty international betting offices online have chosen Malta for their offshore betting operations. The new companies were attracted by the country’s low tax rebates and corporate tax rates.

**15 May 2001** UN based Maltese lawyer Alexander Borg Olivier is the architect of a new constitution for Kosovo. Dr Borg Olivier said that the constitution had been accepted by the parties involved and approved by the UN Security Council.

**16 May 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that Malta welcomed the opportunity of taking an active part in the European Security and Defence Initiative. He said that Malta was aiming to have three fully trained platoons by the end of 2002, and a fourth, and possibly fifth platoon, by the end of 2003. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing the EU Defence Ministers Meeting, in Brussels.

**16 May 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami telephoned Silvio Berlusconi to congratulate him on winning the Italian elections and to wish him success in running the country. Mr Berlusconi assured the Prime Minister that his Government would continue to strengthen relations between Malta and Italy.

**16 May 2001** The National Statistics Office announced that government debt at the end of 2000 amounted to Lm925 million. It had decreased in the first quarter of this year to Lm919.4 million.

**16 May 2001** Figures published by the National Statistics Office show that, in the course of last year, the Gross Domestic Product increased nominally by Lm101.1 million or 6.9 per cent over the previous year. In real terms it went up by Lm63.0 million or 4.7 per cent. The Gross National Product grew by a nominal Lm22.4 million or 1.5 per cent over the previous year. In real terms GNP contracted by 0.6 per cent when compared to the previous year.

**16 May 2001** The Central Bank of Malta said that domestic demand conditions were not likely to improve substantially in the short-term. However, a mild recovery could be anticipated as a result of the salary rise given to civil service employees and to the slower pace of fiscal tightening.

**16 May 2001** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that the Family Court was expected to become operational by the end of the year. Dr Gonzi was speaking at a news conference to announce the setting up of the National Commission for the Family.

**16 May 2001** *Baxter (Malta) Ltd*, an American firm making medical equipment, announced a Lm5 million expansion. At present the firm employs 400 workers but it plans to raise the workforce by 100 on expansion.
• 16 May 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech launched the official register of building tradesmen and contractors. The new system will provide the Government with better and more detailed information about the number of tradesmen and contractors in the construction sector, as well as the capabilities of each individual.

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• 16 May 2001 The Malta High Commission in London participated, along with other Embassies and High Commissions, in the International Spring Fair, in Kensington Town Hall. The fair is an annual charity event that offers on sale a wide variety of indigenous products. High Commissioner George Bonello Du Puis and Mrs Bonello Du Puis co-ordinated Malta’s participation.

• 16 May 2001 The Malta Communications Authority announced that the new national numbering plan for Maltacom telephone and fax numbers is to be introduced in the last quarter of this year.

• 17 May 2001 Pope John Paul II referred to his recent pilgrimage in the footsteps on St Paul. He said that, for the second time, he had experienced the warm welcome of the Maltese. The Pope was attending a general audience at the Vatican.

• 17 May 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Office of the Prime Minister had chartered a private aircraft eight times so far in this legislature. Dr Fenech-Adami said that the decision to charter private aircraft was taken after consideration of time and cost factors. The Prime Minister was replying to a Parliamentary Question.

• 17 May 2001 Foreign Minister Joe Borg met Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister Louis Michel, in Brussels. Mr Michel reiterated Belgium’s support for Malta’s inclusion in the EU in the first enlargement.

• 17 May 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli said that expressions of interest had been received from 14 companies interested in the privatisation of Malta Freeport. Mr Dalli was replying to a Parliamentary Question.

• 17 May 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli said that Maltese citizens who had funds invested abroad, and who were concerned that information on their assets could be revealed, should take advantage of the strict confidentiality rules enforced in Malta. Mr Dalli was referring to notices being sent by UK banks to Maltese depositors/investors informing them that details of their assets could be supplied to the governments of other countries.

• 17 May 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that property sales in recent years had grown at a faster rate than investment in the building and construction sector. Over the past six years, Dr Zammit Dimech said, investment in the sector totalled Lm630 million, while Lm893 million worth of property had been sold. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking at the opening of the ninth Property, Construction and Home Improvements Fair.

• 17 May 2001 Transport and Communication Minister Censu Galea said that twenty-nine per cent of the Maltese population now owned a mobile phone, compared with 6.3 per cent at the end of 1999. Mr Galea was delivering a message to mark the International Telecommunications Union’s World Telecommunications Day.

• 17 May 2001 The Malta High Commission in London last week set up a stand at an event in Edinburgh to promote the Island as a tourist destination and provide information about its EU membership bid. The High Commission took part in activities organised by the European Commission to mark Europe Day 2001.

• 17 May 2001 Malta Financial Services Centre chairman Joe Bannister said that the bills and structures being proposed by the MFSC to regulate the activities of international trading companies were in line with the standards on taxation established by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Prof. Bannister was speaking during the opening of a seminar on the theme Tax competition - not always harmful.
• **17 May 2001** Gozo Channel Chairman John E. Sullivan announced that the company expected to take delivery of its third new ferry, the *Malita*, at the end of the year. Mr Sullivan was addressing the company’s annual general meeting.

• **17 May 2001** Broadcasting Authority Chairman Joseph Pirotta said that the authority is to send two groups of broadcasters to Ireland to learn about gender awareness. The broadcasters will be on two-week placements at *Radio Telefis Eiteann*. The *Leonardo da Vinci* programme is covering most of the costs, including transport, accommodation, and course fees.

• **18 May 2001** Sedqa, the agency against drug and alcohol abuse, called on the Government to raise the legal drinking age limit from 16 to 18. The proposal is one of several submitted to the Government to combat what *Sedqa* described as ‘a national problem’.

• **18 May 2001** Foreign Minister Joe Borg signed a double taxation agreement with his Lithuanian counterpart Antanas Valionis, at Vilnius.

• **18 May 2001** Lino Callus, Chairman of the Institute for the Promotion of Small Enterprises, said that the institute was setting up the Kordin Business Incubation Centre to actively encourage an entreprenuring spirit. Mr Callus was speaking during the media launch of the centre. Further information about the centre is available from Ing. Ray Muscat at IPSE, on tel. 233838.

• **18 May 2001** Transport Minister Censu Galea said that the number of ships calling on Mediterranean ports was expected to increase by 20 per cent in the coming years. Mr Galea was delivering the opening speech at a conference on maritime transport, entitled *Where is Maritime Malta heading?* organised by the Chartered Institute of Transport in Malta.

• **18 May 2001** The National Statistics Office said that, in the first quarter this year, total exports increased by Lm3.7 million to Lm242 million. Total imports reached Lm332.7 million, an increase of Lm7.8 million or 2.4 per cent over the same quarter last year.

• **19 May 2001** Moody’s Investors Service reaffirmed its A3 rating and a negative outlook for Malta, and issued a strong warning that the country’s indecision on European Union membership was a major worry for the Island’s economic prospects. Finance Minister John Dalli made the report available to the media at a news conference during which he also gave his reaction to the report.

• **19 May 2001** The Maltese Embassy in Paris put up a stand about Malta during activities organised recently by the French European Movement to celebrate *Europe Day 2001*, in Paris. The stand, organised with the assistance of the Malta Tourism Authority office in Paris, provided general information on Malta’s EU accession process and promoted Malta as a tourist destination.

• **19 May 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli stressed that he would resist the exorbitant claims for salary increases being made by the trade unions. "Every increase in salary has to be paid either through higher productivity or by raising taxation. I will resist any attempt to pressurise the Government to raise taxes," Mr Dalli said. The Minister was reacting to the *Union Haddiema Maghqudin*’s decision to carry out the first of its lightning strikes in protest over unresolved expired collective agreements.

• **19 May 2001** The Social Policy Ministry, which is responsible for industrial relations, said that the claims being made by the *Union Haddiema Maghqudin* at the Malta Maritime Authority would mean an increased burden of Lm110,000 for the authority. The Ministry said that the same situation was being encountered in other authorities, corporations and government agencies, making it impossible for negotiations to be finalised.

• **19 May 2001** Social Policy Ministry Lawrence Gonzi said that Government was proposing to transform the Family Welfare Department into a Regulator in the future. Dr Gonzi was speaking during the launch of *Appogg*, the Social Welfare Services Agency that has taken over from the Social Welfare Development Programme.

• **19 May 2001** Health Minister Louis Deguara said that the Government was finalising plans for the total restructuring of the Health Ministry that would involve the Ministry ceasing to be a direct provider of health care services and becoming a purchaser and regulator of services. Dr Deguara was speaking at the World Health Organisation Assembly, held in Geneva.
• **19 May 2001** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that the first three months of this year had seen an increase of 24 per cent in French tourists when compared to the same period last year. Dr Refalo was speaking on the occasion of the presentation of the book *Splendours of Malta* to President Guido de Marco.

• **19 May 2001** A Parliamentary delegation attended the 24th Conference of European Affairs Committees of the National Parliaments of the European Union, the European Parliament, and the Parliaments of the Applicant States, at Stockholm. The delegation was led by John Vella MP and included Government Member Michael Frendo and Opposition Member George Vella.

• **20 May 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the best way for Malta to attract foreign investment was through membership of the European Union. Dr Fenech-Adami said that the latest Malta report by *Moody’s Investors Service* confirmed this.

• **21 May 2001** President Guido de Marco wrote to the Pope to thank him for his visit to Malta and to send greetings on the Pontiff’s 81st birthday.

• **21 May 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Government was ready to improve its communication with the electorate over Malta’s application to the EU. Dr Fenech-Adami said that it would not be a matter of propaganda, but of persuasion based on the truth.

• **21 May 2001** Central Bank Governor Michael Bonello said that wage increase demands should reflect increases in productivity as these would otherwise affect Malta’s competitiveness and would ultimately lead to job losses and higher inflation. Mr Bonello was speaking in the context of the *Moody* report.

• **21 May 2001** Twenty Kuwaiti students are to be sent by the Government of Kuwait to read for degrees at the University of Malta, mainly in the areas of medicine and pharmacy. This decision comes in the wake of a visit to Malta by a high-level delegation from the Kuwaiti Higher Education Ministry.

• **21 May 2001** British newspaper *The Sunday Express* reported that Gozo was being promoted as the ideal Mediterranean tourist destination for a walking holiday. British agents *Headwater Holidays* have to date booked 570 tourists for walking tours in Gozo.

• **22 May 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami told reporters after a Cabinet meeting that he was confident that discussions would continue towards finding a solution in the interest of the nation to industrial disputes at the Malta Maritime Authority and the Housing Authority. There was no reason why an agreement should not be reached, said Dr Fenech-Adami.

• **22 May 2001** The Maritime Authority filed a judicial protest in the Civil Court holding the *Union Haddiema Maghqudin* responsible for damages during industrial action at the authority.

• **22 May 2001** President de Marco toured Enemalta Corporation’s gas and petroleum divisions. The President visited the gas storage division at Qajjenza and, later on, the petroleum division at Birzebbuġa. Prof. de Marco also visited the *Has-Saptan* complex.

• **22 May 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said in Parliament that the Lm2.1 million contract for a gallery connecting the Delimara Power Station to a site known as the Refuse Disposal Centre, in Marsa, had been won by *Rockcut Ltd*. The Minister said that the contract specifies that the work should be completed within two years.

• **22 May 2001** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that building contractors working in tourist zones would be limited to working set hours between July and September in order to minimise inconvenience to third parties. The agreement was endorsed by Cabinet.

• **22 May 2001** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that the solid waste management strategy report would be finalised by the end of May and would then be open for consultation. The Minister said that a preliminary copy of the report, being prepared by consultants commissioned and paid for by the EU, had been passed on to the Government.
• 22 May 2001 The President’s wife, Violet de Marco, made a visit to Tunisia at the invitation of the wife of the Tunisian President, Leila Ben Ali. In Tunisia, Mrs de Marco met Mme Ben Ali, and Minister for Women and Family Affairs, Naziha Zarrouk.

• 23 May 2001 Tourism Minister Michael Refalo led a government delegation for a meeting of the World Tourism Organisation Commission for Europe, in Budapest. Parliamentary Secretary Edwin Vassallo accompanied Dr Refalo.

• 23 May 2001 The Planning Authority announced that a Legal Notice that comes into effect on June 1 would extend the list of developments that do not require a full permit from the Planning Authority. The notice, Development Notification Order 2001, will make it easier, faster, and cheaper for clients to carry out certain types of development.

• 23 May 2001 The Small Business Efficiency Unit found that the Police Corps and the Inland Revenue Department were the major regulatory constraints to small and medium-sized enterprises. The Unit’s first report analyses remarks or complaints received from entrepreneurs about the service provided by government entities.

• 23 May 2001 The Institute for the Promotion of Small Enterprise announced that it would be setting up the Malta Furniture Manufacturers’ Trade Group. The group will aim to improve the standards of locally made furniture in order to be able to meet the challenge that foreign producers would offer once levies on imported furniture are removed.

• 23 May 2001 The US Embassy presented the University of Malta with a complete set of historical consular dispatches between Malta and the United States (1801-1896) on microfiche. The collection traces the development of relations between the two countries and includes communications relating to early visits of the American Navy to Malta.

• 24 May 2001 A delegation from the Council of Europe Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment concluded a routine visit to Malta. The delegation met the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Social Policy, Lawrence Gonzi; Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg; and Health Minister Louis DeGruara. It also held talks with Attorney General Anthony Borg Barthet, and Ombudsman Joe Sammut.

• 24 May 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli repeated his argument that when unions submitted claims for high wage rises without good reason they were putting pressure on the Government to raise taxes. Mr Dalli was speaking in Parliament during Question Time some hours after the end of a three-hour strike called by the Union Haddiema Maghqudin over delays in collective agreement bargaining.

• 24 May 2001 The Central Bank of Malta said experience had shown that the benefits of a devaluation in an economy like Malta’s tend to be short-lived. The Bank was reacting to remarks made in Parliament.

• 24 May 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech signed the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants - POPs. The convention has been signed by over 100 countries.

• 24 May 2001 The Malta Tourism Authority announced that its Stockholm office had been voted as ‘the tourist office offering the best personal service’ of the 41 European tourist offices in Sweden. The results were featured in a leading Swedish newspaper.

• 24 May 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli said in reply to a Parliamentary Question that the Government last year issued 292 permits for foreigners to buy immovable property in Malta. Mr Dalli said that the value of the property involved was of Lm21.3 million.

• 25 May 2001 Greek Prime Minister Constantinos Simitis said that Greece’s stand on the next enlargement of the European Union was that the southern dimension of the EU would be strengthened by admitting Malta and Cyprus as members. Mr Simitis was speaking at the start of an official visit to Malta.

• 25 May 2001 Following talks between the two Prime Ministers at Auberge de Castille, two agreements were signed. The agreements cover civil protection, and the fight against drugs, organised crime and illegal migration.
• 25 May 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that EU membership was both in Malta’s interest as well as in the EU’s own interest. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing a joint press conference with Greek Prime Minister Mr Simitis.

• 25 May 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that, as in the case of Greece, Malta looks on EU membership as an incentive, and a means of support, to implement the changes and restructuring that is required in our society. Dr Fenech-Adami was drinking to the health of Mr Simitis.

• 25 May 2001 Greek Prime Minister Mr Simitis said that Greece supported and encouraged the perspective of Malta’s accession. “We believe that it could substantially contribute to the stabilisation of the Mediterranean, benefit the Union and enhance its Mediterranean component.” Mr Simitis was toasting the Maltese Prime Minister.

• 25 May 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech gave notice of a motion in Parliament for the approval of the Cruise Passenger Terminal contract with the Viset Consortium. The contract’s details have now been finalised. The development was welcomed by the consortium, which has been negotiating the contract for about three years.

• 25 May 2001 Speaker of the House of Representatives Anton Tabone made an official visit to Slovakia as guest of Jozef Migas, Speaker of the National Council of the Slovak Republic. Mr Tabone was accompanied by Government MP Victor Galea Pace and Opposition MP Joe Mizzi.

• 25 May 2001 Datuk Shapii Bin Abu Samah is the new High Commissioner of Malaysia to Malta, and Alberto Montagne Vidal is the new Peruvian Ambassador. The two diplomats presented their credentials to President Guido de Marco at the Palace, in Valletta.

• 26 May 2001 The Greek Prime Minister said that, on balance, 20 years of EU membership had proved to be a very positive experience for Greece. Mr Simitis was speaking to reporters at the Palace, in Valletta, following a meeting with President Guido de Marco.

• 26 May 2001 Education Minister Louis Galea said that the European Union membership debate should focus on the problems Malta would face if it stayed out of the EU, and not on whether or not it should join. Dr Galea was speaking during a seminar organised by the Malta Union of Teachers on the theme of Malta on the threshold of accession to the EU, at Qawra.

• 26 May 2001 The Staff Development Organisation in the Office of the Prime Minister held a seminar on How the European Union Operates. The seminar was targeted at the newly appointed Directors of the Office of Review in the Public Service. These Directors will be responsible for addressing the changes and initiatives to be undertaken to enable each Ministry to prepare itself for EU accession.

• 26 May 2001 An exhibition on Malta’s archaeological heritage, entitled Sacred spaces in pre-history Malta: 5000 - 2500 BC, is being held as part of the cultural activities for the Small Nations Games, in San Marino. The games are expected to be attended by three million people.

• 27 May 2001 Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that it was high time that the Means Test, which determined whether persons qualified for the old age or non-contributory pension, should be reviewed and revised. Dr Gonzi was addressing the Annual General Conference of the National Association of Pensioners, held at Dar l-Emigrant, in Valletta.

• 27 May 2001 Commenting on the dispute over the pending collective agreements, Finance Minister John Dalli said that the Government would not buckle under pressure. The Minister said that the Government’s position had not changed despite a week of industrial unrest during which the Union Haddiema Magħqudin had ordered a series of lightning strikes, notably at the Malta Maritime Authority.

• 27 May 2001 Transport Minister Censu Galea said that the new Transport Authority would be responsible for Public Transport, the Roads Department, the Department of Licensing and Testing, as well as the Traffic Control Board. The Minister said that the authority would start to function in June. Mr Galea was addressing the members of the Rent-a-Car Association.
27 May 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli said that the country needed an injection of discipline, and people should not criticise the medicine but should attack its misuse. Mr Dalli was addressing the members of the Rent-a-Car Association.

27 May 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech announced that two calls for tenders had been made for consultancy services to install the necessary infrastructure in order for Malta to be in line with the EU directive on the treatment of urban sewage. The infrastructure would be in place by 2005. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking at the first session of a regional conference organised by the GEM Foundation, at Salina Bay.

27 May 2001 The President’s wife, Mrs Violet de Marco, is back in Malta after a visit to Tunisia during which she was the guest of the Tunisian President’s wife, Leila Ben Ali. Mrs de Marco visited various social projects being undertaken by the Tunisian Government.

28 May 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami appealed to the trade unions to be serious and responsible in their pay claims when negotiating collective agreements, and to keep the country’s situation in perspective. Dr Fenech-Adami was concluding a seminar in Sannat, Gozo.

28 May 2001 Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that trade unions should not look only at wage increases when they negotiated collective agreements. He appealed to them to keep in mind the whole package, including conditions of work. Dr Gonzi was speaking at Zurrieq.

28 May 2001 A plaque to commemorate the late Sir Maurice Dorman, the last British Governor of Malta, was unveiled during a service at St Paul’s Anglican Pro-Cathedral. The plaque was provided and designed by Joanna Oswin, Sir Maurice’s daughter, and her husband Charles.

28 May 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami took a strong line about the new industrial strife at the Freeport, warning that the Government was ready to take all the necessary steps permitted by law to deal with the situation. The Freeport, paralysed by the General Workers’ Union last week, was again hit by an indefinite go slow strike after negotiations between the union’s port workers’ section and the Freeport management broke down.

29 May 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami hinted that he might hold the referendum on European Union membership in tandem with the general election. Dr Fenech-Adami made his comments in Virtwali, a television interview transmitted by PBS.

29 May 2001 Foreign Minister Joe Borg revealed that Malta had requested the European Union to grant it eight transition periods related to the Environment, in EU membership talks. The requests were listed in a position paper tabled in Parliament.

29 May 2001 Education Minister Louis Galea told Parliament that government departments and parastatal bodies have reported that they have 1,300 vacancies for summer-work by University students.

29 May 2001 Transport Minister Censu Galea announced that 4,180 vehicles had been scrapped during the year 2000. However, 13,044 new vehicles had been registered during the same period. Mr Galea was replying to a Parliamentary Question.

29 May 2001 The number of workers at the shipyards had, since 1990, dropped by 2,445, from 5,993 to 3,548. At Malta Drydocks, the workforce declined from 3,975 in 1990 to 2,734 today. The workforce at Malta Shipbuilding totalled 2,018 in 1990 and now stands at 814. These figures were given in Parliament by Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici.

29 May 2001 Richard Cachia Caruana, Chairman of the Core Negotiating Group, said that the Government was prepared to consider publishing reports it had commissioned on the impact of EU membership. Mr Cachia Caruana was addressing the 15th meeting of the Malta Joint Parliamentary Committee, held at St George’s.

29 May 2001 Arhi Palosuo, the EU’s Chief Negotiator, said at the same meeting that Malta would be eligible for pre-accession funds under the Objective 1 programme. It was hoped, he added, that the Island would not need these funds forever.
• 29 May 2001 Richard Cachia Caruana, Chairman of the Core Negotiating Group, said that Malta would need special arrangements in connection with the Free Movement of Capital, particularly in the purchase of secondary residences by foreigners. The same applied to the Free Movement of People. Mr Cachia Caruana was addressing the Malta JPC.

• 29 May 2001 Education Minister Louis Galea, Co-chairman of the JPC, told the meeting that Malta should, like Luxembourg, have six and not five MEPs, and four and not three members in the EU Council of Ministers.

• 29 May 2001 EU Ambassador Ronald Gallimore commended Malta for the considerable progress made in the alignment of its legislation with that of the EU and the “continued reduction of its budget deficit and the liberalisation of the economy”. The EU Commission, he said, had set aside 38 million Euros, that is about Lm15 million, to assist Malta in this adjustment process. Mr Gallimore was addressing the Malta JPC.

• 29 May 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli said that Malta should not be put on the same template as other candidate countries because it was a unique case. One should also take into account the country’s political dimension, said the Minister. Mr Dalli was addressing the Malta JPC.

• 29 May 2001 Luigi Cocilovo, a Member of the European Parliament representing Italy’s Partito Popolare Italiano and Co-chairman of the 15th meeting of the EU-Malta Joint Parliamentary Committee, said that the EU cannot impose or dictate conditions on individual candidates. However, it was unrealistic for candidate countries to expect special arrangements.

• 30 May 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami inaugurated a state-of-the-art passenger and car ferry, designed and built in Norway for the Virtù ferry service. Dr Fenech-Adami said that the new service would enhance historical, cultural and commercial ties between Malta and Sicily and complement the Malta Tourism Authority’s efforts to attract more tourists from Sicily.

• 30 May 2001 The National Statistics Office announced that government debt at the end of April stood at Lm938.9 million. This is a five per cent increase over the amount outstanding at the end of April last year. Public debt servicing costs were Lm20.3 million, an increase of 2.5 per cent.

• 30 May 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli said that a corporation with good corporate governance would become more highly esteemed, and would reach out effectively to more end-consumers than ever. Mr Dalli was speaking at a corporate governance workshop, organised by the Institute of Directors in association with the Malta Financial Services Corporation, in Attard.

• 30 May 2001 EU expert Edouardo d’Amico told local guides that it was unlikely that Malta would be flooded with tourist guides from other EU states if Malta joined the European Union as guides normally specialised in one area. Dr d’Amico was speaking at a seminar for guides at which he and co-expert Richard Skinner presented a report commissioned and funded by the European Union called Assessment of the Impact on Maltese Tourist Guides following Harmonisation with the Acquis Communautaire and the Quality of Guided Tours in Malta.

• 30 May 2001 The Minister for Transport and Communications, Censu Galea said that the transport authorities planned to install equipment on all route buses in order to be able to monitor their movements continuously. He said that the system could serve to reduce complaints about buses arriving late or missing trips. Mr Galea was replying to a Parliamentary Question.

• 30 May 2001 Justice and Local Government Minister Austin Gatt said that leading international hardware and software companies had expressed an intention to become a strategic partner with the Government for the e-government initiative. The feedback on the Government’s call for proposals had been ‘marvellous’, said Dr Gatt.

• 30 May 2001 Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg said that, since February 2000, a total of 1,795 people had been informed they could retain dual citizenship. The Minister said that another 1,064 had acquired, or re-acquired, Maltese citizenship. Dr Borg was answering a Parliamentary Question.
• **30 May 2001** Agriculture Minister Ninu Zammit said that growers of potatoes for export were being urged to set up producer organisations which would eventually take over the entire export process. Mr Zammit was speaking at a news conference.

• **30 May 2001** A government statement denied that an expense allowance given to top civil servants was to compensate for the tax on fringe benefits. The statement said that the allowance was part of a compensation package for Directors, Director Generals and Permanent Secretaries who were on a three-year appointment contract.

• **31 May 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli said that the Government considered the launch of indigenous funds to be of significant importance to Malta. Indigenous funds are conceived locally, registered locally and provide a wide range of investment opportunities, both locally and overseas. Mr Dalli was speaking at the launch of *Gasan Fund Management Ltd*.

• **31 May 2001** Local Government Minister Austin Gatt announced that leading multinationals such as Microsoft, IBM and Telecom Italia were among the 58 companies that had expressed an interest in becoming the Government’s strategic partner for the e-government initiative. Dr Gatt was addressing a press conference.

• **31 May 2001** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo announced that the Institute for Tourism Studies had restructured its craft and technical courses to meet the high demand for trained personnel in the hospitality industry. Two new one-year foundation programmes offer generic vocational education combined with specific skills in food and beverage service together with either food preparation and production or accommodation services.

• **31 May 2001** *Maltacom* registered a turnover of Lm11.6 million in the first quarter this year, representing an increase of 9.2 per cent over the figure for the same period last year. Details about the first quarter financial results were announced by *Maltacom* at a news conference, in Floriana.

• **31 May 2001** The Malta-EU Information Centre placed the negotiating position papers on Environment and Customs Union on its website at [www.mic.org.mt](http://www.mic.org.mt). The papers were tabled in Parliament by Foreign Minister Joe Borg.

• **31 May 2001** Foreign Minister Joe Borg said that the Malta-EU Information Centre had, since its setting up, used Lm455,323 from funds channelled through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It had also been given an additional Lm20,368 by the Delegation of the European Union in Malta. Dr Borg was replying to a Parliamentary Question.

• **31 May 2001** The Malta-EU Information Centre inaugurated a new information initiative with a series of information sessions held with the public at local councils. Sessions are held on a question-and-answer basis. The first session was hosted by the Msida local council.

• **31 May 2001** Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg said that 755 EU nationals and 166 workers from EU applicant countries held a permit to work in Malta. Dr Borg was replying to a Parliamentary Question.

• **31 May 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that the number of Maltese who had travelled abroad last year rose to 188,737 from 179,547 in the previous year. 167,889 Maltese had gone abroad in 1996, 171,677 in 1997, and 166,741 in 1998. The information was given in reply to a Parliamentary Question.

• **31 May 2001** A Court of Appeal found that a stand taken by the *Union Haddiema Maghqudin* over budget measures in 1998 was considered a trade dispute. But, at the same time, the court found that the blocking of the gates at the Freeport was illegal and abusive. The court was delivering judgement in an appeal filed by the *Union Haddiema Maghqudin* against Freeport Terminal (Malta) plc.
**JUNE**

- **1 June 2001** Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg said that marriages conducted solely at the Civil Registry had increased by more than a third in the past five years, reaching 449 last year. Dr Borg was speaking during a presentation of certificates to a number of persons who had attended a course on the registration of marriages.

- **1 June 2001** Justice Minister Austin Gatt said that a government White Paper due for publication proposed that married couples seeking legal separation must have a three-month period of conciliation and mediation before court proceedings. Dr Gatt said that he was concerned with the rise in separation cases, now approaching 20 per cent of the current annual rate of marriages.

- **1 June 2001** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that, when it came to the environment, Malta needed to take a series of measures and build a strong human resources sector to overcome centuries of ‘ingrained attitudes’. Dr Refalo was addressing a seminar on Tourism and the Environment organised by the Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association in collaboration with the Tourism Ministry.

- **1 June 2001** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech warned that irreparable damage could be caused to the environment if the three negative aspects of activity in the manufacturing sector - the use of energy, the production of waste, and pollution - were ignored. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking at a ceremony introducing the Environment Award to Industry.

- **1 June 2001** President Guido de Marco and his wife Violet, on behalf of the Community Chest Fund, presented Lm23,500 in financial aid, specialised equipment, and white goods to 94 philanthropic institutions and individuals with special needs.

- **1 June 2001** Malta has closed another three Chapters of the **acquis** and opened two new ones. The chapters closed deal with Free Movement of Goods, Free Movement of Services, and Energy. The new chapters relate to the Environment and Customs Union.

- **2 June 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli referred to the Bill dealing with the workings and composition of the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development currently being debated in Parliament. He said that 80 per cent of the suggestions put forward by the social partners had been incorporated in the bill. Mr Dalli was speaking to reporters.

- **2 June 2001** Justice Minister Austin Gatt said that he hoped that the family division within the Civil Court - to be known as the Family Court - would be operational as from early next year. Dr Gatt was addressing a news conference.

- **2 June 2001** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that schools of English drew some 40,000 students annually, employed hundreds of teachers, and operated to the direct benefit of over 1,000 host families. Dr Refalo was speaking after a meeting with heads of licensed English language schools.

- **2 June 2001** The National Statistics Office announced that, between 1997 and 1999, the number of paid admissions to museums rose by 43.4 per cent. The increase in admissions was of 154,509, to reach 510,349 in 1999.

- **3 June 2001** President Guido de Marco unveiled a plaque on the façade of a house in Tarxien where Francesco Crispi, one of the most important figures of 19th century Italy, was said to have lived during his exile in Malta, in 1853-54. The ceremony was attended by various members of the Cabinet.

- **4 June 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that **ST Microelectronics** was transferring its Nortel Networks’ silicon semiconductor production to Malta from Ottawa. Prof. Bonnici said that **ST Microelectronics** had decided on the move because of the high level of efficiency of the Maltese workforce.

- **4 June 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli said that it was vital for Malta to be seated at the table where the most important decisions were being taken. That was why, he said, it made sense for Malta to join the EU. Mr Dalli was speaking at Qormi.
• **5 June 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Government had agreed to publish all studies carried out in connection with those Chapters that have been concluded in negotiations with the European Union. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking to reporters after the weekly Cabinet meeting at Auberge de Castille.

• **5 June 2001** The Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry for Economic Services, George Hyzler, led a delegation for the meeting of Trade Ministers of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, in Brussels. The main objective of the meeting was to re-invigorate the trade chapter of the partnership.

• **5 June 2001** Bank of Valletta Chairman Joseph Zahra presented Lm18,954 to President Guido de Marco in aid of the Community Chest Fund. The money was collected between April 2000 and March 2001 in the boxes placed at BOV branches. Other funds came from the bank’s annual Cents for Charity campaign.

• **6 June 2001** The European Union’s Council of Ministers gave a mandate to the European Commission to negotiate framework agreements with Malta, Cyprus and Turkey for their participation in EU programmes like the research and development programme or education and vocational training programmes. This approach was proposed on the initiative of Günter Verheugen, the Commissioner responsible for enlargement.

• **6 June 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli said that the next step in the privatisation of the Public Lotto Department would be the submission of tenders from interested parties. He said that the Government would start receiving offers in August. Mr Dalli was speaking in an interview on RTK Radio.

• **6 June 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici toured the site of the new underground tunnel between the Delimara power station and the Marsa distribution centre. Work on the eight-kilometre tunnel started last January and should be completed by 2003. Over 600 metres have already been excavated.

• **6 June 2001** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that the theme of this year’s Environment Day, *Connect with the World Wide Web of Life*, reflected the importance of communication in the continuous fight to safeguard the environment. Dr Zammit Dimech was addressing some 1,500 school children at Freedom Square, in Valletta.

• **6 June 2001** Agriculture and Fisheries Minister Ninu Zammit said that the Government would be insisting on a special package for agriculture in its negotiations for European Union membership. This package would include special supply measures and special support measures, said Mr Zammit.

• **6 June 2001** The Malta Communications Authority expressed concern that Maltacom’s stake in Vodafone (Malta) had not been sold as required by the national plan for the reform of the telecommunications sector. The Authority directed Maltacom to appoint a mandatory to act on its behalf in the holding and administration of its shareholding in Vodafone Malta Ltd, and instructed Vodafone to co-operate towards enabling the sale of Maltacom’s shares.

• **6 June 2001** The National Statistics Office announced that the rate of inflation in April 2001 stood at 1.91 per cent, down from 1.92 per cent the previous month. In April 2000, the inflation rate had been 2.52 per cent.

• **6 June 2001** President Guido de Marco paid a visit to Xaghra, Gozo, at the invitation of the mayor. This was the first of a series of planned visits to local councils.

• **6 June 2001** At least 10 Romanian workers were killed in an explosion on an empty Maltese-registered oil tanker undergoing repair work in the Black Sea port of Constanta. In a statement, the Malta Maritime Authority said that the Authority was due to send a casualty investigator to the shipyard in order to obtain first-hand information about the accident.

• **7 June 2001** The four members of the Electoral Commission nominated by the Leader of the Opposition resigned. In a letter to President Guido de Marco they said that, given the prevailing situation, they were no longer in a position to carry out their duties according to law.

• **7 June 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami deplored the resignation of the four Commissioners in a statement in Parliament. Dr Fenech-Adami accused the four of echoing what the Leader of the Opposition was saying about the electoral process.
• **7 June 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Church in Malta couldn’t be a spectator in the EU debate. He said that the church should adopt a prudent position on the issue and not give in to political pressure as it had done in the past. Dr Fenech-Adami was being interviewed by *The Times* newspaper.

• **7 June 2001** Belgian State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Annemie Neyts said that it was ultimately up to the Maltese to make up their minds, but she advised the Maltese to be in favour of joining the EU. "It is more pleasant to be part of a large family than to be on your own." Ms Neyts was on a one-day visit to Malta.

• **7 June 2001** Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg said that the arguments Malta was making in EU membership talks on the purchase of secondary homes in Malta by EU citizens were not aimed at discriminating against anyone, but at underlining the fact that Malta had particular circumstances that needed to be considered. Dr Borg was speaking in Parliament.

• **7 June 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli said that, following the publication of newspaper advertisements in Malta and abroad calling for expressions of interest in the privatisation of *Kordin Grain Terminal*, nine companies had expressed an interest. Mr Dalli was replying to a Parliamentary Question.

• **7 June 2001** *Maltpost* chairman Frank Dimech announced that the company was working on the implementation of a five-year strategic plan. The plan was aimed at making the company an independent and viable entity, and would prepare it for eventual privatisation once postal services were liberalised. Mr Dimech was speaking during the inauguration of a new branch featuring the new corporate identity and livery.

• **7 June 2001** President Guido de Marco presented the John XXIII Award for Kindness to Year 6 students at St Dorothy’s School, Zebug. This was the first time that the Peace Laboratory decided to give the award to an entire class rather than to a particular individual.

• **7 June 2001** Lawrence Zammit, Chairman of the Malta Development Corporation, said in the Corporation’s annual report for 2000 that, of all EU applicant countries, Malta last year had the highest rate of foreign direct investment *per capita*. Mr Zammit was quoting a survey by Dresdner Bank.

• **7 June 2001** Readers of *TTG Russia*, the leading travel newspaper in Russia, judged the Malta Tourism Authority’s Moscow office as being the most active tourist office in Russia. Last year some 19,000 tourists came to Malta from Russia.

• **7 June 2001** Magistrate Joseph Cassar found that there was sufficient evidence at law to justify the extradition of Mohammed Abdel Monem Abbas Aly to Turkey. The Turkish authorities are seeking to charge Aly with the murder of English national Edgar Fernandez.

• **7 June 2001** Forty operational and 20 supervisory staff from hotels and restaurants in Malta will be undergoing on-the-job training in Ireland after applications by the Malta Tourism Authority to participate in the EU *Leonardo Mobility and Exchange Programme* were accepted. The MTA’s partner in the project is the Council for Education and Recruitment and Training, the state training agency for the tourism industry in Ireland.

• **8 June 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that *Comparex Netherlands BV*, an international oil company, was in final negotiations to take over the *Northia* ship conversion project from Norwegian firm *Brovig* which, last month, ran into financial problems. Prof. Bonnici was speaking during an Open Day at Marsa Shipbuilding.

• **8 June 2001** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that Government had no intention of changing the Industrial Relations Act to bring Maltese law into line with the amendments made in the UK in 1982, following last week’s Appeal Court’s ruling on industrial actions over budgetary measures. Dr Gonzi said that the solution to industrial unrest was not the removal of the right to strike, but to get everybody on board to negotiate.

• **8 June 2001** Anton Tabone, Speaker of the House of Representatives, told Members of Parliament that it was up to them to uphold the standing of the House as the country’s highest institution. Mr Anton Tabone was speaking at the *Sette Giugno* wreath-laying ceremony at Palace Square, in Valletta.
8 June 2001 Opposition MPs did not attend the Sette Giugno commemoration ceremony. Opposition Leader Alfred Sant said that this was in protest against the Prime Minister’s speech in Parliament about the Electoral Commission.

8 June 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami congratulated Prime Minister Tony Blair on his electoral victory. Dr Fenech-Adami said that the election results represented not only a great victory for Blair personally but also for the future of Europe.

9 June 2001 EU Commissioner for Enlargement Guenter Verheugen, commenting on the Irish ‘No’ vote, said that the Irish rejection would not stop expansion despite a requirement for all EU states to ratify the treaty. "We would continue the process with the same speed and the same quality," he told reporters during a visit to Slovenia.

9 June 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami described the result of the Irish referendum as a selfish decision. "In my opinion the result shows that the Irish people do not want to share the benefits of membership with potential new member states.” Dr Fenech-Adami was being interviewed by The Times newspaper.

9 June 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli said that Malta would be a net receiver of EU funds. He said that this would help to speed Malta’s development. Mr Dalli was addressing an investment promotion seminar in the financial services sector, in Geneva.

9 June 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that electricity generation in Malta had risen from 1,440 million kWh in 1992 to 1,840 million kWh in 1999. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking at the Foundation for International Studies, in Valletta.

9 June 2001 The National Statistics Office announced the results of two pilot labour force surveys. The surveys show unemployment standing at 10,458 (6.8 per cent) in May last year, and at 10,151 (6.5 per cent) in December 2000. Prior to the labour force surveys, labour market data was compiled using figures compiled by the Employment and Training Corporation.

10 June 2001 Local Government Minister Austin Gatt said that local councils had a right not to operate the local wardens system. However, no council had the right to decide against law enforcement in its locality in a way that created republics where national laws were not respected. Dr Gatt was addressing a meeting of the Local Councils Association.

11 June 2001 The Probation Bill 2001 was published in The Government Gazette. The Bill provides for the introduction of community service for offenders and the award of damages to victims of crime. It also aims to align the probation service with developments since the inception of the probation service in 1957.

12 June 2001 Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi insisted that there was nothing that was conflicting between the results of the labour force survey announced last week by the National Statistics Office and unemployment figures given by the Employment and Training Corporation. He said that the two systems were different. Dr Gonzi was speaking in Parliament.

12 June 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that the proposed contract for the development of the sea passenger terminal project by the Viset consortium was due to be completed within four years. The project was being discussed by an ad hoc Parliamentary Committee.

12 June 2001 Chinese Ambassador Yang Guirong and his wife Li Wencai presented President Guido de Marco and his wife Violet with a hand-woven carpet from the coastal city of Tianjing in China. The carpet is a gift from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China.

12 June 2001 The Parliamentary Secretary in the Economic Services Ministry, George Hyzler, confirmed that a mini-series treating the dramatic story of Julius Caesar was to be filmed at Fort Ricasoli. The contract is expected to be signed by the end of the week.

13 June 2001 Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Borg welcomed the ‘qualitative step forward’ that had been made in the negotiations for Malta’s accession to the European Union. Dr Borg was speaking at the fourth meeting of the EU accession conference at ministerial level, held in Luxembourg.
• **13 June 2001** The Chairman of the European Affairs Committee of the German Parliament, Freidbert Pflüger, said that the negative outcome of the Irish referendum on the Treaty of Nice would not be a setback for the enlargement process of the European Union. Dr Pflüger was speaking to Maltese reporters following a meeting with Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, at *Auberge de Castille*.

• **13 June 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli ruled out a wage freeze. However, he insisted that the Government would not give salary increases that simply resulted in hiking up costs. Mr Dalli was being interviewed by *The Times* newspaper.

• **13 June 2001** The Government, through its Privatisation Unit, is calling for expressions of interest in the proposed privatisation of Malta International Airport. Advertisements in this sense have appeared in the June 9 edition of *The Economist* and the June 12-18 edition of *Flight International*.

• **13 June 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici announced that an action plan for the printing industry had been prepared by the Institute for the Promotion of Small Enterprise and the Malta External Trade Corporation. Prof. Bonnici was speaking at the launch of the *Analysis Report on the Maltese Printing Sector*.

• **13 June 2001** Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg said that, this year alone, some Lm3 million was paid to 311 owners of expropriated land. Dr Borg was speaking to the media at the Government Property Division, at *Auberge de Baviere*, in Valletta.

• **13 June 2001** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that Government was retaining the right to use berths alongside the proposed cruise passenger terminal in Grand Harbour in case of emergency and in other cases to be agreed upon with the developers. Dr Zammit Dimech was addressing a Parliamentary Committee discussing the proposed contract for the building of the terminal by the *Viset* consortium.

• **13 June 2001** Justice Minister Austin Gatt said that the Government would shortly be setting up a forum for local Internet Service Providers with a view to polling all resources and exploiting all communications opportunities. Dr Gatt was giving his comments to reporters after touring the offices of *Terranet Ltd*, in Balzan.

• **13 June 2001** The January-March survey by the Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association shows that the hotel industry showed an improved operational performance this winter, compared to the same period last year. The findings of the survey were presented to association members, at St Julian’s.

• **13 June 2001** Figures published by the National Statistics Office show that the number of tourists visiting Malta in the first four months of this year was 292,852, a drop of 2.4 percent over the figure for the same period last year.

• **13 June 2001** Architect Alex Torpiano, in charge of the reconstruction of the 5,000-year old *Mnajdra* temple ravaged by vandals on April 13, announced that reconstruction work on the temple had started. Mr Torpiano said that most of the damage had been done in the middle temple, although the lower temple had also been hit.

• **13 June 2001** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech announced that, since 1999, Lm4.4 million had been spent on restoration and conservation work. This does not include the Lm3.7 million spent on the restoration of St James Cavalier. Dr Zammit Dimech made his comments on the site of the newly restored *Torri tal-Hamrija*, at Qrendi.

• **13 June 2001** The Foreign Ministry said in a statement that it was insisting that John Sullivan, a Maltese national wanted by Italy for smuggling, did not have to spend a day longer than necessary in a Greek jail. Mr Sullivan’s lawyers said earlier this week that the Greek authorities had failed to execute an extradition order that had been handed down by the Greek Supreme Court.

• **13 June 2001** The Maltese Embassy in Berlin, in collaboration with the Malta Tourism Office of Frankfurt, put up a Malta stand in the *Fest der Kulturen*, in the German capital. The stand, which promoted Maltese history and culture, laid particular emphasis on the teaching of the English language and underwater sport.
• 14 June 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami announced that representatives of the Government and of the Opposition would meet soon to discuss technical issues related to the electoral process. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking to the media.

• 14 June 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Civil Service was responding positively to new challenges that lay ahead. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing a press conference to launch Public Service Week.

• 14 June 2001 Justice Minister Austin Gatt announced that over one million visits had been made to the internet site that carries the laws of Malta since its launch in November 2000. Dr Gatt was addressing a news conference.

• 14 June 2001 Spanish giant hotel chain Sol Melià signed a management agreement with Suncrest Hotels plc, a subsidiary of AX Holdings, to take over the management of the Suncrest Hotel in Qawra. The agreement was signed at Sol Melià’s headquarters in Palma de Majorca, on June 7.

• 14 June 2001 Maltacom donated Lm30,177 to the Malta Community Chest Fund. President Guido de Marco received the money when he made a visit to the company Head Office and to subsidiary Go Mobile, in Marsa.

• 14 June 2001 The eighth edition of the joint Italo-Maltese exercise Canale 2001 will be carried out at sea off Augusta, Sicily, between 15 – 22 June. The exercise is aimed primarily at enhancing cooperation and friendship among the armed forces of Italy and Malta, as well as other countries involved in the Euro-Mediterranean ongoing process.

• 14 June 2001 A BBC television crew was in Gozo to film a holiday documentary programme featuring walking tours on the island. The film is set to be broadcast to over 10 million viewers next October.

• 15 June 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the consensus at the summit of the European People’s Party was that, despite Ireland’s rejection of the Treaty of Nice in a referendum, enlargement should proceed according to schedule. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking to reporters in Gothenburg, Sweden.

• 15 June 2001 The Ministry of Education announced a scheme whereby parents who send their children to private schools would be eligible for a tax rebate.

• 15 June 2001 Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici announced that over Lm2 million worth of furniture was exported last year. The Minister was speaking during the presentation of the ISO 9001 Quality Certificate to Southern Holdings, furniture manufacturers.

• 15 June 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that the Government was analysing the final strategy report on how it should tackle integrated waste management. The report was commissioned and financed by the European Commission and handed to the Government at the beginning of this month.

• 15 June 2001 Local Government Minister Austin Gatt said that so far the Government had invested between Lm80 million and Lm90 million in information technology in the public sector. The Minister was paying a courtesy visit to the Malta Information Technology and Training Services (MITTS).

• 15 June 2001 President Guido de Marco received the diplomatic credentials of Elsa Kelly and Miodrag Lekic as Ambassadors of Argentina and Yugoslavia respectively. Both Ambassadors will be residing in Rome.

• 15 June 2001 General practitioners from Europe attended the spring meeting of the European Union of General Practitioners hosted in Malta by the Medical Association of Malta. The Union encompasses national, non-governmental and independent organisations representing general practitioners in the EU, EFTA and other European countries.

• 15 June 2001 The Malta tourism office in London was voted Best UK-based Mediterranean Island Tourist Office in the ‘2001 Selling Short Breaks Travel Awards’. Last year, the title was won by Spain.
• **15 June 2001** A Parliamentary delegation led by Government MP Anthony Abela, and comprising of Opposition MPs Charles Mangion and Carmelo Abela, attended the 32nd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference of the British Islands and the Mediterranean Region. Also participating at this conference was Government MP Mario Galea, who is Regional Representative and member of the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

• **16 June 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, referring to the Irish referendum result, said that the blame lay not with the Irish public, who had exercised their democratic right, but with the people who had failed to convey the message about Europe. He added that his Government would not be complacent when it came to explaining the EU to the Maltese. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking to Maltese reporters in Gothenburg, where he was attending the EU Summit.

• **16 June 2001** The President of the European Parliament, Nicole Fontaine, said that she hoped that Malta would have the chance to take part in the 2004 elections. Ms Fontaine said that the process of enlargement should not slow down as a result of the Irish referendum. Ms Fontaine was speaking at Gothenburg.

• **16 June 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that the new Food Safety Act that would replace the existing Food, Drugs and Drinking Water Act would include a much-improved range of control measures to ensure flexibility and efficacy in food control. Prof. Bonnici was speaking at the World Food Safety Organisation conference on the impact of food safety control, at St Julian’s.

• **16 June 2001** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo revealed that close to 1,000 young men and women were following hospitality and catering training courses at the Institute of Tourism Studies. Dr Refalo was speaking during a graduation ceremony held at the Mediterranean Conference Centre.

• **17 June 2001** Swedish Prime Minister Goran Persson said that EU leaders had set a realistic timetable for negotiations to be concluded by the end of 2002. The best-prepared applicants would be able to participate as members in the elections to the European Parliament in June 2004. Mr Persson was addressing a press conference, at the EU Gothenburg Summit.

• **17 June 2001** EU Commission President Romano Prodi said that there would be no big problems for Malta in its EU negotiations. He added, however, that the Islands’ lack of political will on the issue was its biggest hurdle. "For Malta, the problem is not the difficulty of negotiations, but a clarification of your political will.” Mr Prodi was addressing the Maltese media, at Gothenburg.

• **17 June 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli said that economic policies implemented during past years had begun to show positive results. "Latest economic indicators present an optimistic outlook and we are confident that the economy’s growth momentum can and will be sustained in the future," he said. Mr Dalli was addressing accountants at the annual dinner of the Malta Institute of Accountants, at Floriana.

• **17 June 2001** Education Minister Louis Galea published the statutes of five new institutes within the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology, which was re-established last August. The statutes relate to the Institute for Information and Communication Technology, the Institute for Building and Construction Engineering, the Institute for Art and Design, the Institute for Electronics Engineering and the Institute for Business and Commerce.

• **17 June 2001** Education Minister Louis Galea said that the debate about Life Long Learning (LLL) would challenge educational institutions to change in order to remain relevant to the needs of society. Dr Galea was speaking during the opening of a one-day national consultation conference on LLL, at Ta’ Xbiex.

• **17 June 2001** Local Government Minister Austin Gatt said that Cabinet was discussing a law aimed at changing the licence administration method. For the first time, Dr Gatt said, councils would decide which licences should be issued, rather than simply serve as a point of reference.

• **17 June 2001** Elsa Diana Rosa Kelly, who is the Ambassador of Argentina to Malta, presented a portrait of Giovanni Battista Azopardo to the Maritime Museum. Azopardo was a Maltese sailor of fortune from Senglea who played a leading role in Argentina’s struggle for independence and was the founder of the newly independent country’s navy.
18 June 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami laid the foundation stone of the new Cottonera Sports Complex. The Complex, expected to cost Lm2 million, is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2002.

18 June 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that he believed that the Maltese electorate would ultimately decide that Malta’s place was in the EU. The Prime Minister had been asked by The Times newspaper how optimistic he was of a ‘Yes’ vote in a future referendum on the EU, a day after the conclusion of the Gothenburg Summit.

19 June 2001 The Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic, Mikulas Dzurinda, started a two-day official visit to Malta. Mr Dzurinda was accompanied by Slovak Health Minister Roman Kovac and Jan Figel, State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Chief Negotiator with the European Union.

19 June 2001 Slovak Prime Minister Mikulas Dzurinda said that 75 percent of the Slovak population was in favour of EU membership; 52 percent was in favour of Slovakia becoming a member of NATO. The Slovak premier was addressing business leaders at the Chamber of Commerce.

19 June 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami pledged Malta’s support to Slovakia in its bid to gain a seat as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for the year 2006 to 2007. Dr Fenech-Adami was hosting visiting Slovak Premier Mikulas Dzurinda to dinner at Auberge de Castille.

19 June 2001 Slovak Prime Minister Mikulas Dzurinda said that, following the agreement on Health, he would like to see co-operation between Malta and Slovakia expand in areas of culture, education, health, science, and youth. The Slovak Premier was being hosted to dinner by Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami.

19 June 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that information on oil exploration would be given when there were concrete developments to report. Dr Fenech-Adami was replying to a Parliamentary Question.

19 June 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that a total of 884 new employees had joined the Public Service between September 11, 2000 and May 8, 2001. Dr Fenech-Adami was answering a Parliamentary Question.

19 June 2001 Joseph R Grima, Permanent Secretary at the Office of the Prime Minister and Head of the Public Service, formally opened an exhibition on the services provided to the public by the Ministries for Social Policy, Education, Health, and the Environment. The exhibition, which forms part of Public Service Week, is housed at the Centre for Creativity, St James Cavalier.

19 June 2001 The Malta-EU Information Centre announced that the Gross Domestic Product for the fourth quarter of 2000 had risen to 53 per cent. The figure is based on the results of the 1998 European Comparison Programme published by the OECD and Eurostat.

19 June 2001 Employment in firms sampled by the National Statistics Office for the first quarter of this year rose by 169 to reach 21,597, compared to figures for the first quarter of 2000. Most employment was generated within the radio, TV and communications sub-sector, the NSO said, where employment had gone up by 150 to reach 3,133.


20 June 2001 The Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic, Mikulas Dzurinda, said that he fully understood Prime Minister Fenech-Adami’s argument in favour of EU membership, and why he wants to see Malta form part of the EU as soon as possible. Mr Dzurinda was speaking at a joint press conference with the Maltese Prime Minister at Auberge de Castille.

20 June 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that a referendum on EU membership would be held some time after negotiations were concluded, that is by the end of 2002. Dr Fenech-
Adami was speaking at a joint press conference with the Slovak Prime Minister, at Auberge de Castille.

- **20 June 2001** The Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives discussed the chapters on the Free Movement of Goods and that of Services, on which negotiations with the EU were provisionally closed. The Foreign Affairs Committee meets again on June 27.

- **20 June 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that since the beginning of this year, 147 government officials in grade five or higher had been granted an increased expense allowance. The Prime Minister was answering a Question in Parliament.

- **20 June 2001** Education Minister Louis Galea said that the parents of 5,867 students in private schools were expected to benefit from the recently announced tax rebates on school fees. Dr Galea was answering a Parliamentary Question.

- **20 June 2001** Permanent Secretary at the Office of the Prime Minister Joseph R Grima referred to ‘the quiet revolution that had taken place within the Public Service’. Mr Grima was opening a press conference by Permanent Secretaries, as part of the programme of events of Public Service Week.

- **20 June 2001** Speaker of the House of Representatives Anton Tabone received Gerhard Kunz, the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany. Mr Kunz’s posting in Malta is due to end in the near future.

- **20 June 2001** The National Statistics Office said that the Government’s ordinary revenue in the first five months this year had gone up by Lm13.3 million, or 5.4 per cent, to Lm258.2 million. On the other hand, expenditure increased by Lm29.7 million, or 10.5 per cent, and amounted to Lm312.9 million.

- **20 June 2001** All three members on board an Italian Military Mission helicopter taking part in Exercise Canale 2001 were rescued safely when their helicopter developed technical problems and dashed into the sea, 37 nautical miles east of Augusta, Sicily. The Italo-Maltese planning group later decided that the exercise was to continue as scheduled.

- **20 June 2001** The Emigrants’ Commission in Valletta has organised the first virtual migration museum. The website address is: [www.maltamigration.com](http://www.maltamigration.com)

- **21 June 2001** Foreign Minister Joe Borg, accompanied by Richard Cachia Caruana, Head of the Core Negotiating Group, addressed a press conference on the subject of impact studies commissioned in preparation for EU membership. On the occasion, the Government released 37 impact studies commissioned by seven Ministries. Copies of these reports are available on the MIC website at [www.mic.org.mt](http://www.mic.org.mt)

- **21 June 2001** Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Borg tabled in Parliament the position papers on the chapters dealing with the freedom of movement of persons and taxation. Discussions on the two chapters with the European Union have been provisionally closed.

- **21 June 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli said that the Maltese authorities currently did not have access to information on deposits made by Maltese citizens in foreign financial institutions except within the context of double tax agreements. The situation would change when the OECD-proposed exchange of information procedures came into force. Mr Dalli was answering a Parliamentary Question.

- **21 June 2001** Ombudsman Joseph Sammut said that the number of complaints being received by the Ombudsman seemed to have stabilised at an average of 50 a month. Mr Sammut presented the annual report of his Office at a news conference. The report had earlier been tabled in the House of Representatives.

- **21 June 2001** Government MP John Vella attended the First Part of the 47th Session of the Assembly of the Western European Union, the interim European Security and Defence Assembly. The session was held at the Palais D'Iéna, in Paris, between the 18th and 20th June 2001.
22 June 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the invitation to the Malta Labour Party to participate in the Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC) was still open. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking on Net Television.

22 June 2001 Senior officials of the Nationalist Party and the Malta Labour Party met to discuss technical issues about the electoral process. The meeting, which lasted for more than an hour, was held at Nationalist Party headquarters.

22 June 2001 Ambassador Victor Camilleri signed an agreement signifying Malta’s participation in the European Union’s Fifth Framework Programme. The agreement will go down on record as the first agreement between Malta and the EU to be signed in the Maltese language.

22 June 2001 Environment Minister Zammit Dimech toured the works being carried out on the Lm16 million Cottonera project. The Minister said that he was happy with the progress of the project so far. The project is expected to be completed in 2003.

22 June 2001 President Guido de Marco and Mrs de Marco will be paying an official visit to China from July 1 to 8. Prof. de Marco will be accompanied by Foreign Minister Joe Borg.

23 June 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami and Italian Ambassador Giancarlo Riccio followed the last day of the Canale 2001 exercise, in Sicily. Dr Fenech-Adami thanked all those who took part in the exercise and said that he hoped that the co-operation between the Italian and Maltese forces would continue for years to come.

23 June 2001 The National Folklore Commission, which was set up recently by the Education Ministry, organised its first activity by reviving the traditional St John’s bonfire. The event was held at the Lower Barrakka, in Valletta.

23 June 2001 Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that the Government was presently engaged in slum clearance projects at Msida and Cospicua, with a similar project for Floriana in the pipeline. Dr Gonzi was speaking on the site of the Msida demolition works.

23 June 2001 Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici hailed the completed work on the US Sixth Fleet flagship USS La Salle as an indication of the yard’s ability to earn its living and generate profits. Captain Charles A. Hautau, Commanding Officer of the flagship also praised the work, adding that the welding and the craftsmanship of the steelworks at the yard was "by far the best we have ever seen".

23 June 2001 Mario Grech, Chairman of Middlesea Insurance plc, said that the company had made a pre-tax operating profit of Lm1.4 million during 2000, compared with Lm1.8 million registered in the previous year. Mr Grech was addressing the company’s annual general meeting.

23 June 2001 Government MP Helen D’Amato and Agenzija Appogg chief executive officer Joe Gerada attended the XXVIIth session of the Conference of European Ministers responsible for Family Affairs, in Slovenia. The theme of the conference was Reconciling working and family life.

23 June 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami presided over the Public Service Week merit award ceremony. Dr Fenech Adami awarded merit awards to five officials who had distinguished themselves at their place of work, and to nine other officials who had been instrumental in the introduction of a Quality Service Charter in their department or section.

23 June 2001 The National Statistics Office said that imports of leaded petrol had declined from 153.2 million litres in 1995 to 47.8 million litres last year. The importation of unleaded petrol meanwhile surged from 6.6 to 33.3 million litres.

24 June 2001 Malta is proposing a special arrangement with the EU on Freedom of Movement of workers providing an unprecedented seven-year period during which Malta would have the right to put into effect strong safeguards. The safeguards would include the right, in the case of a threat of urgent and exceptional disruption to Malta’s labour markets, to suspend the full application of the acquis communautaire.
• 25 June 2001 The Kerygma Movement awarded a trophy to Assistant Commissioner Michael Cassar and the Drug Squad, in appreciation of the efforts put in to save young people from drug merchants. Mr Cassar said that he did not want to see more drug-related deaths.

• 25 June 2001 The Malta Maritime Authority and the Malta Drydocks participated in the 18th edition of the Nor-Shipping Exhibition 2001, held in Oslo, Norway. The four-day event was visited by around 13,500 visitors.

• 26 June 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Cabinet had decided to publish the integrated waste management plan so that public consultation could be held for a period ending on the 21st August. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking following the usual weekly Cabinet meeting.

• 26 June 2001 The Leader of the House, Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi, told a meeting of the House Business Committee that the Government intends to move a motion for the impeachment of Justice Anton Depasquale. The motion, first moved in Parliament in 1996, had never been debated.

• 27 June 2001 Malta successfully negotiated a safeguard with respect to the right of EU citizens to seek work in Malta after membership; at the same time, Malta also secured the right of Maltese citizens to seek work in the EU immediately upon membership. This was the key result of the seventh meeting of the accession conference held in Brussels between Malta and the EU. The Maltese delegation was led by the Chairman of Malta’s Core Negotiating Group, Mr Richard Cachia Caruana.

• 27 June 2001 Mr Richard Cachia-Caruana, Chairman, Core Negotiating Group, said that Malta had provisionally closed the Chapter on Free Movement of Persons. This brings the number of chapters opened for negotiations to twenty-eight, with seventeen being provisionally closed. Mr Cachia-Caruana was addressing the 7th Meeting of the EU Accession Conference, in Brussels.

• 27 June 2001 The Government has published a Bill that proposes wide-ranging reforms to the Criminal Code. The Home Affairs Ministry said that the 15-clause bill amounted to the most substantial reform to the Criminal Code since 1853, when the present code was drawn up.

• 27 June 2001 Italian Minister for Community Affairs Rocco Buttiglione wrote to Foreign Minister Joe Borg to thank him for his letter of congratulations on his appointment in the new Italian Government. Mr Buttiglione expressed the hope that he would be able to visit Malta in the near future.

• 27 June 2001 Malta’s performance as a flag state ranks 18th out of 37 flag states, according to an index developed by the Seafarers International Research Centre at Cardiff University. Shipping newspaper Lloyds List described the Flag State Conformance Index as ‘a highly accurate and robust means of measuring the performance of flag states on a wide range of variables’.

• 27 June 2001 Malta Tourism Authority Chairman John Grech said that research had indicated that there was a good deal of scope for Malta to pursue how eco-tourism and walking tours could be exploited as niche markets. Mr Grech was addressing an MTA seminar in the series Achieving Together: Success through Synergy.

• 27 June 2001 Most of the 70 megaliths knocked down by vandals at Mnajdra on April 13 are now back in place. The temple is still closed to the public but reconstruction work is expected to be completed by next week.

• 27 June 2001 The Department of Information has launched a new website. The information contained in the previous website has been restructured, rendered more user-friendly, and transferred to the new site at www.doi.gov.mt

• 28 June 2001 The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement that the agreement reached on the free movement of workers was a major breakthrough in the negotiations between Malta and the EU. It also clearly demonstrated the European Union’s sensitivities to Malta’s needs, continued the statement.

• 28 June 2001 The Malta Financial Services Centre launched a three-year global marketing initiative called e-moneymalta. The initiative seeks to position Malta as the world’s first dedicated e-money enterprise zone. Finance Minister John Dalli welcomed the initiative.
28 June 2001 The Malta Embassy in Berlin, in collaboration with the Malta Tourism Office in Frankfurt, mounted an attractive tourist stand at the main hall the annual Sommer Fest, held at Potsdam. About 6,000 people, guests of Brandenburg Prime Minister Manfred Stolpe, attended the fest.

29 June 2001 Foreign Minister Joe Borg said that, in Malta, different mechanisms and consultative agencies had been established so as to guarantee the participation of the widest spectrum possible in the preparation of Malta’s negotiations with the EU. Dr Borg was speaking in a colloquium on the Future of Europe, organised by the Royal Institute of International Relations of Belgium.

29 June 2001 The Chairman of the Core Negotiating Group, Richard Cachia Caruana, argued that embarking on a strident Yes campaign now would backfire by the time the referendum on EU membership was held in two years’ time. Mr Cachia Caruana was speaking at a business breakfast organised by the Malta Business Weekly.

29 June 2001 The President of Malta and Mrs de Marco left for an official visit to the People's Republic of China. President de Marco was accompanied by Minister for Foreign Affairs Joe Borg.

29 June 2001 Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that, out of a total of 57 new projects and expansions approved by the Malta Development Corporation last year, 12 including one expansion originated from Germany. Prof. Bonnici was speaking at the official launch of UWT International Ltd, at Corradino industrial estate.

29 June 2001 Justice and Local Government Minister Austin Gatt said that the Government was to team up with local councils to offer residents in different localities a wide range of public services through the internet. Dr Gatt was speaking at a news conference.

29 June 2001 Archbishop Mgr Luigi Gatti is relinquishing his post as Apostolic Nuncio to Malta and Libya following his appointment as the Nuncio to Lebanon. Mgr Gatti, who is resident in Malta, was appointed to his Malta post in June 1998.

30 June 2001 Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici urged the Opposition and the General Workers’ Union to seriously consider a motion presented by the Prime Minister to the Speaker of the House of Representatives which, if approved, would allow Malta Drydocks to tender for more work on US navy ships. Prof. Bonnici said that the drydocks could not afford to lose work on naval ships if it were to remain viable.

30 June 2001 Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici announced that over the past 13 years, the Government had invested no less than Lm11 million to restructure and modernise the civil aviation section which currently forms part of Malta International Airport. Prof. Bonnici was speaking following the commissioning of three new Rosenbauer Panther fire tenders.

30 June 2001 Maltese and tourists alike flocked to Buskett to celebrate the traditional agrarian feast of Imnarja and partake of the local fare of fenkata and wine. Agriculture Director General Franco Serracino Inglott presented the trophies on behalf of Agriculture Minister Ninu Zammit, who could not attend.

JULY

1 July 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that agreement had been reached between Malta and the European Union on the key aspects of free trade and it no longer made any sense to talk about a free trade area between Malta and Europe as an abstract ideal. Dr Edward Fenech-Adami was speaking at the inauguration of the 44th Malta International Fair, at the Trade Fair Grounds in Naxxar.

1 July 2001 Prof. Juanito Camilleri, Chief Executive Officer of Go Mobile, announced that seven months after the launch of the company’s mobile telephony system, the client base of the company exceeded 50,000. Prof. Camilleri attributed the company’s rapid success to value for money, customer care and quality of service.
2 July 2001 The Director of Fisheries mediated over a four-hour meeting between Maltese and Italian fishermen in the dispute over a tuna pen. The dispute arose when Maltese fishermen took over an Italian pen containing tuna lured to the surface by Maltese fishermen. The pen contains an estimated Lm150,000 worth of tuna and is now anchored about a mile off Xrobb l-Ghagin.

3 July 2001 President Guido de Marco met Chinese President Jiang Zemin and invited him to visit Malta. Prof. de Marco was on a state visit to China.

3 July 2001 Foreign Minister Joe Borg signed an agreement with the Chinese Deputy Minister responsible for external trade, Zhou Kern. Under the agreement, the Chinese Government granted Malta three million yuan - about Lm160,000. Dr Borg was accompanying President de Marco on a state visit to China.

3 July 2001 Environment Ministers of European Union candidate countries will be meeting in Malta next year to co-ordinate preparations in the area of the environment in view of EU membership. Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech made the invitation while attending an Environment Ministers’ Meeting in Istanbul, Turkey.

3 July 2001 A study prepared for the Ministry of Transport and Communications entitled An impact assessment study on the adoption of the EU acquis communautaire dealing with ship registration is available to the public. Copies of the study may be obtained from the Malta-EU Information Centre website at www.mic.org.mt or from the Foreign Ministry on tel. 247223.

4 July 2001 President Guido de Marco inaugurated the new Maltese Embassy in Beijing. Saviour F. Borg, Ambassador to the People’s Republic of China, made a welcoming address. President de Marco, accompanied by Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Borg, was on an official visit to China.

4 July 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that it was the Government’s intention that, when the new hospital opened in early 2003, it would operate under autonomous management. Hospital autonomy would, therefore, have to be in place by then. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at the construction site of the new hospital, at Tal-Qroqq.

4 July 2001 Malta’s High Commissioner in London George Bonello du Puis was appointed chairman of the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation. The CFTC provides technical assistance to various Commonwealth countries.

4 July 2001 The tuna fishing dispute between Maltese and Italian fishermen was wrapped up as the disputed 45-ton live tuna catch was returned to the Italians. Director of Fisheries Anthony Gruppetta said that the haul was returned as had been agreed upon with the National Fisheries Co-operative.

5 July 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli said that, as long as there was a deficit, the national debt would continue to rise. What the Government had done was to slow the increasing pace of national debt. Mr Dalli was addressing The Malta Business and Financial Times’ business breakfast. The theme of the business breakfast was The right and wrong interpretations of economic indicators.

5 July 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech announced that the implementation of the integrated waste strategy would cost between Lm68.2 million and Lm73.4 million. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking at the launch of the draft waste management strategy.

5 July 2001 Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that the Government was drawing up a new document regarding the development of Malta’s industrial strategy. Prof. Bonnici was speaking during the launch of this year’s annual Award for Achievement in Industry.

5 July 2001 Local Government Minister Austin Gatt said that it was vital for all the Internet Service Providers to work together in a spirit of collaboration, rather than constantly battling each other. He announced that the eMalta Commission was to launch a permanent working-group to bring together all the ISPs. Dr Gatt was speaking during a visit to the operational centres of Melita Cable and its subsidiary company, Video-On-Line.

5 July 2001 Bank of Valletta signed a 100 million euro syndicated term loan. BoV Chairman Joseph Zahra said that, when the bank had decided to raise the loan, it had planned to target the amount of 75 million euro. Mr Zahra was speaking during the signing ceremony, held at San Gorg Corinthia Hotel.
• 5 July 2001 Health Minister Louis Deguara said that, had the Maltese patients who underwent heart surgery in Malta over the past five years been sent abroad, as used to be done in the past, the costs would have reached Lm9 million. Dr Deguara was replying to a Parliamentary Question.

• 5 July 2001 A team led by Davide Mengacci from the Rete 4 programme Fornelli d’Italia was in Malta to shoot a feature programme here. The visit was made possible by the Tourism Authority.

• 6 July 2001 The Maltese and Chinese authorities announced that Chinese President Jiang Zemin will be paying a state visit to Malta on July 23. The Chinese President’s visit will be the final leg of a tour that will take in Russia, the Ukraine and Moldovia.

• 6 July 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli said that the setting up of Barclays International Investments (Malta) Ltd was another call for those with investments abroad to repatriate their savings. Mr Dalli said that they could now make good use of the financial infrastructure that had been built in Malta. The Minister was speaking at a press conference called by Barclays Private Clients, the wealth management arm of Barclays Bank.

• 6 July 2001 Enemalta Chairman Robert Ghirlando announced that, on 1st January 2002, the nominal electricity supply voltage was to be changed from 240 volts to 230 volts to conform to the power supply systems in the rest of Europe.

• 6 July 2001 Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg said that Maltese Embassies abroad had issued 1,822 passports to people who had qualified for dual citizenship. Dr Borg was replying to a Parliamentary Question.

• 6 July 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech announced that work on the restoration of the exterior of St Catherine of Italy church in Valletta had been completed. The restoration was funded through the fourth Italo-Maltese financial protocol and was carried out by Iteras, an Italian firm of restorers. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking while on a visit to the church.

• 7 July 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami visited the Grand Hotel Mercure Coralia San Antonio, in St Paul’s Bay. He expressed his satisfaction that Maltese operators were going into joint ventures with established foreign companies. The hotel is owned by Munro Philips Co. Ltd, and was acquired through a joint venture between Seabank Hotels and Alpine last year. Grand Hotel Mercure Coralia San Antonio is managed by top French operator Accor.

• 7 July 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that fishermen had to make an evaluation on how they wished to continue practising their profession. He said that the Government was willing to help them ensure that they continued earning a living. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking in Parliament during Question Time.

• 7 July 2001 The National Statistics Office said that total imports had gone down by Lm105.8 million, or 18.4 per cent, to Lm469.5 million. Total exports declined by Lm60.3 million, or 14.6 per cent, to Lm353.9 million. The visible trade gap narrowed by Lm45.5 million, to Lm115.6 million, in the first five months this year, over the figure for the same period last year.

• 7 July 2001 The National Statistics Office announced that the retail price index in May had gone up by 1.10 points, or 0.96 per cent, over that for April, and had reached 115.62. The inflation rate during May stood at 1.89 per cent compared to 1.91 per cent in April.

• 7 July 2001 The Malta-EU Information Centre weekly bulletin Aggornat announced that the European Parliament had unveiled a new website that contains information on how the European Parliament works, its powers, and a glossary about the institution. When work on the site is finalised, the information will be available in all the languages of the member states and candidate countries. The page can be accessed at http://www.europarl.eu.int/presentation/default.htm.htm

• 7 July 2001 The Maltese Embassy in Rome co-ordinated an evening of activities for the Maltese community in Italy to mark the traditional feast of Imnarja. Over 200 members of the Maltese community in Italy took part.

• 8 July 2001 President Guido de Marco said that Maltese entrepreneurs should explore the possibilities of tapping the emerging Chinese market. "The fast pace along which the economy in China is
developing makes it one of the most exciting markets now and in the years ahead,” Professor de Marco said. The President was talking to reporters who accompanied him on his China visit.

- **8 July 2001** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi announced that the *Co-operative Societies Act* could be on the statute book by the end of October. Dr Gonzi was speaking on the occasion of the United Nations International Day of Co-operatives, at Qawra.

- **9 July 2001** Dr Godwin Debono, Director of the Oil Exploration Division in the Office of the Prime Minister, announced that TGS-NOPEC Geophysical Company ASA had made a 2-D survey of offshore Malta. Dr Debono said that the new seismic data on geological conditions around Malta and the prospects of oil and gas deposits had been handed in to the Government.

- **10 July 2001** The European Parliament’s Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy discussed a report about Malta’s application for membership and the state of negotiations. The report still has to be approved in the plenary session of the European Parliament, in October or November.

- **10 July 2001** The Malta-EU Association Committee, meeting in Valletta, decided that fish reared in Maltese fish farms would be exempt from duty when exported to EU countries in a year’s time. The committee is made up of representatives of EU member states and representatives of the Government, led by the Chairman of the Core Negotiating Group, Richard Cachia Caruana.

- **10 July 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli returned from Iran where he headed a delegation for talks on economic and commercial co-operation. In Iran, Mr Dalli had talks with Hossein Namasi, the Iranian Minister of Finance and the Economy.

- **10 July 2001** Minister for Economic Services Josef Bonnici returned from Iceland where he had meetings with Ms Valdgerdur Sverrisdottir, Minister of Industry and Commerce, and with Mr Sturla Boovarsson, Minister of Communications. The visit was prompted by the acquisition of *Pharnamed Ltd.* in Malta by the Icelandic pharmaceutical company *Delta Ltd.*

- **10 July 2001** Tourism pioneer Alfred Cassar Reynaud retired from his post of Chief Executive of the Malta Tourism Authority. Major Cassar Reynaud is succeeded by Mr Leslie Vella.

- **10 July 2001** The Ministry of Social Policy’s Commission for the Advancement of Women expressed satisfaction at a Management and Personnel Office circular regarding the appointment of public officers who are away from work on maternity and paternity leave.

- **11 July 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami announced that the Government would be making an *ex-gratia* payment as compensation to 108 individuals who had lodged complaints before the Commission for the Investigation of Injustice but were left without a remedy. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at a news conference at *Auberge de Castille*.

- **11 July 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli said that Malta had set a precedent in the world of international finance by unilaterally taking corrective measures in the offshore regime. Mr Dalli was speaking at the opening of the third meeting of the *Global Forum Working Group on Effective Exchange of Information*, at St Julian’s.

- **11 July 2001** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that restoration work on Scamps Palace, in Cottonera, set to open as a casino next August, had cost about Lm2 million. This figure did not include the cost of material, furniture and equipment. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking during a visit to the palace.

- **12 July 2001** Parliament started debating a motion asking the President to remove Mr Justice Anton Depasquale from office because he had abandoned his duties. Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami moved the motion.

- **12 July 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Government would be investigating claims made by Iraqi illegal immigrants in Sicily that their ill-fated trip had started from Malta. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking in Parliament.

- **12 July 2001** The Maltese Embassy in Berlin took part, along with fifteen other embassies, in the *All Nations Festival* organised by the Berlin Association for International Co-operation. The initiative was
meant to familiarise the city’s population with the work and activities of the embassies, following their move from Bonn to Berlin.

- **12 July 2001** The Malta-EU Information Centre has completed a first round of information sessions with the public in local council premises. Sessions were held on an informal Question-and-Answer basis in six localities.

- **13 July 2001** An agreement for the promotion and reciprocal protection of investment has been reached between Malta and Croatia. The agreement was signed in Zagreb by Finance Minister John Dalli and Croatian Economy Minister Goranko Fizulic.

- **13 July 2001** *Maltacom* signed an agreement with Italian telecommunications giant *Equant*. Under the agreement, *Maltacom* will market, sell and support, under joint *Equant* and *Maltacom* branding, a portfolio of services aimed primarily at business clients.

- **13 July 2001** The Malta Tourism Authority’s planning and development directorate announced that it was organising an intensive three-year programme of events in a drive to attract more tourists to Malta in off-peak months. The Authority said that, with the early announcement of the calendar, tour operators could promote the events with their clients in advance.

- **13 July 2001** The Malta Tourism Authority co-ordinated a number of events in the southern French harbour of *Le Lavandou* as well as in Malta in connection with the seventh yacht race *La Bordee Maltaise*. The MTA’s Paris office helped to co-ordinate the activities.

- **13 July 2001** The *De Angelis Group* is to start shooting a two-part series based on the historical figure of *Julius Caesar* next October. The film will be shot at Fort Ricasoli and it will have a budget of $17 million.

- **14 July 2001** Parliament approved a motion calling on Malta Drydocks to seek work similar to that recently concluded on the *USS La Salle*. Opposition MPs led by Dr Alfred Sant walked out as soon as Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami rose to move the motion. The Prime Minister described the Opposition’s behaviour as an abdication of responsibility.

- **14 July 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici told Parliament that Malta Drydocks had won a $1.5 million contract for work on a US tanker, and it was negotiating three other major projects. Prof. Bonnici was speaking during the debate on a motion moved by the Prime Minister praising the dockyard for its work on the *La Salle* and urging it to seek similar contracts.

- **14 July 2001** The Government announced a stock issue of Lm30 million, with the option to increase the offer to Lm40 million. The issue has an interest rate of 6.25 per cent per annum.

- **14 July 2001** *Greenpeace* activists abseiled down the chimney of St Luke’s Hospital in protest against the use of incineration to dispose of waste at the hospital. The Ministry for the Environment and the Ministry of Health later said in a joint press release that the Waste Management Strategy referred to by *Greenpeace* was in draft form. The statement invited the public, and also *Greenpeace*, to submit their suggestions about the findings of the report.

- **15 July 2001** Ambassador Salvino Busuttil was the guest of honour at the annual meeting of the Maltese-French association *Les Amis de Malte de Toulouse*, which took place in the mayoral hall of the village of Saint-Saardos, near Toulouse. Over 400 Maltese attended the gathering.

- **15 July 2001** The Council of Europe has appointed Professor Henry Frendo a full member of its newly constituted committee of independent experts on European local and region government affairs. Prof. Frendo will monitor and report on developments in the sphere of devolution of the Maltese Islands and elsewhere.

- **15 July 2001** Austrian Foreign Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner underlined Austria’s support for Malta’s membership to the Union. Dr Ferrero-Waldner was speaking during a meeting she had with Foreign Minister Joe Borg, who was on an official visit to Austria. Dr Borg was accompanied during the meeting by Mr. Richard Cachia Caruana, Chairman of the Core Negotiating Group.

- **15 July 2001** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that tourism performance was progressing as forecast. Dr Refalo was speaking during a visit to the Waterfront Hotel, in Gzira.
16 July 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli said that the Government had no intention of intervening in the Price Club issue. “The private sector must see how to carry out its own business,” said Mr Dalli. The Price Club chain owes some Lm8.5 million to 200 creditors and has issued discharge notices to its 400 employees.

16 July 2001 Metamorphic, a team from the Junior College, has won the HSBC 13th Young Enterprise Company of the Year Award. Metamorphic will now be meeting teams from 20 other European countries in the European finals, in Moscow.

17 July 2001 Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg said that the police had initiated investigations regarding possible Maltese involvement in the ferrying of illegal immigrants to Ragusa, in Sicily. Dr Borg said that they had contacted the Italian police for any help these could provide, however, information relayed back from Italy was still inadequate.

17 July 2001 Transport and Communications Minister Censu Galea predicted that higher demand for better sea-transport links in the Mediterranean over the next decade would necessitate the upgrading of marine transport systems. Mr Galea was speaking at the launch of Euro-Mediterranean cruises from Malta, at Palazzo Parisio in Naxxar.

17 July 2001 Transport and Communications Minister Censu Galea said that the Institute for Maritime Studies was a realisation of the commitment by successive Maltese governments in the field of maritime training. Mr Galea was speaking at the opening of a seminar on assessment, examination and certification of seafarers in Malta, at the Radisson SAS Baypoint.

17 July 2001 The white pages of Maltacom’s telephone directory are now available online. Justice Minister Austin Gatt hailed the development as a major achievement and a significant step in improving services to the public. The site may be visited at www.maltacom.com

17 July 2001 Maltacom chairman Maurice Zarb Adami said that the company is testing the technology for interactive television, and is planning to introduce the internet on television by March 2002. Mr Zarb Adami said that the company already has the infrastructure required to carry out this project.

17 July 2001 Bank of Valletta, one of the founder members of the Mediterranean Bank Network, hosted the sixth annual meeting of the network’s banking activities subcommittee, at the Corinthia San Gorg Hotel, in St Julian’s. The meeting was attended by representatives of the foreign banks in the network.

18 July 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli said that the Government intends to introduce accruals accounting in its departments within the next few years. Mr Dalli was speaking during a conference marking the fourth year since the setting up of the National Audit Office, at the Mediterranean Conference Centre in Valletta.

18 July 2001 Joseph R. Grima, Head of the Public Service and Permanent Secretary at the Office of the Prime Minister, told the conference that the Public Accounts Committee added considerable weight to the Auditor General’s reports as a mechanism of accountability. The conference was also addressed by Sir Alan Bailey, former UK Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Transport.

18 July 2001 Education Minister Louis Galea launched the Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology prospectus. The College will be opened next October and will comprise six institutes catering for electronic engineering, building and construction, information technology and communications, business and commerce, art and design, and maritime studies.

18 July 2001 Justice Minister Austin Gatt launched an Internet Services Provider Group, uniting the relevant players in the government and private sector with the aim of making the internet more accessible to the public. The role of the group, set up under the umbrella of the e-Malta Commission, is to disseminate IT in Malta.

18 July 2001 Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg said that the police had registered significant successes in the fight against crime, particularly against the trafficking of drugs. Dr Borg was inaugurating the new police administration complex and lock-up.
• **18 July 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that, in the past, the idea of foreign investment was mainly associated with manufacture and not so much with retail trade. However, in view of the globalisation of economic activity, such considerations also applied to every sector of economic activity. Prof. Bonnici was speaking in Parliament.

• **19 July 2001** Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg said that the Maltese and the Libyan Governments had decided to work harder to implement the 1995 security co-operation agreement between the two countries. Dr Borg was speaking following his recent visit to Tripoli.

• **19 July 2001** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo launched the global code of ethics for tourism, in Malta. Dr Refalo said that the code was a mode of conduct for public and private stakeholders in tourism. The code has been approved by the World Tourism Organisation general assembly.

• **19 July 2001** Malta Tourism Authority Chairman John C. Grech announced that the MTA had embarked on a landscaping scheme for a greener Malta. Dr Grech was speaking at the launch of the campaign at the Mediterranean Conference Centre, in Valletta.

• **19 July 2001** Michael C. Bonello, Governor of the Central Bank, reacted strongly to rumours that the Government might be considering devaluing the lira. Addressing the House Public Affairs Committee Mr Bonello insisted that there was no imminent danger to the country’s reserves.

• **19 July 2001** The National Statistics Office said that the volume of landings at the fish market during the first six months of this year had dropped by 153,045 kilograms to 339,195 kilograms, compared to the same period last year. The price of fish rose from an average of Lm1.89 per kilogram last year to Lm2.60 per kilogram this year.

• **19 July 2001** More than 20,000 persons visited the Malta Pavilion at the International Fair of Malta. The theme of the pavilion this year was *L-Unjoni Ewropea u Int.*

• **19 July 2001** *Enemalta* recorded the highest ever demand for electricity in summer. The Corporation said that the load rose to 348 megawatts, an increase of 4.5 per cent. Last year’s summer peak load was 333 megawatts, registered on August 28.

• **20 July 2001** *Hardman Resources NL* of Australia is planning to start drilling an offshore oil exploration well off the south-east coast of Malta next year. This information results from the company’s latest quarterly report. *Hardman* was granted an oil exploration licence in 1998.

• **20 July 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici announced that employment in manufacturing had grown by 250 in the first five months of this year. Prof. Bonnici was speaking at the *Metallform (Malta) Ltd* factory, at Hal-Far industrial estate.

• **20 July 2001** *Enemalta* entered into a standardisation agreement with technology partners *Computer Solutions Ltd* and *Microsoft Eastern Mediterranean*. *Enemalta* said that the move was part of its overall business strategy to identify and harness the right technology framework in order to expand its operations, develop e-business services, and initiate new projects.

• **20 July 2001** Transport Minister Censu Galea said that bus-owners had applied to replace 142 out of a total of 500 buses on the roads. Mr Galea was speaking at the launch of a Chinese-built low-floor bus designed by *King Long United Automotive Industry*.

• **20 July 2001** New German Ambassador to Malta Georg Merten presented his diplomatic credentials to President Guido de Marco. Prior to his Malta appointment Mr Merton worked in the German Foreign Office, the Embassies in Caracas, Lagos and Brazzaville, and was Head of the German Information Centre in New York.

• **20 July 2001** *Maltacom* announced that the new microwave link between Malta and Sicily had substantially improved the international transmission system. *Maltacom* said that the new system also meant that, in the remote eventuality of a fault in the submarine cable between Malta and Sicily, all international services would continue to be provided normally.

• **20 July 2001** Italy sent a second formal request for the extradition of two Maltese men wanted for ferrying immigrants to Sicily after collecting more evidence against them. A first request for
extradition had been denied after a magistrate ruled that the charge of conspiracy in ferrying illegal immigrants to Sicily was not contemplated in Maltese law and could not be considered as an extraditable offence.

- **21 July 2001** President Guido de Marco questioned the wisdom of putting 16-year-old drug abusers behind bars. "If prison is the university of delinquency even for mature people, what is it for those of the immature age of 16?" he asked. The President was delivering the keynote speech in a national conference titled *Id-Drogat Malti... Anonimu, Kriminal jew Marid?* organised by the National Youth Council.

- **21 July 2001** Russian President Vladimir Putin sent a letter of good wishes to President Guido de Marco on the latter’s seventieth birthday. The letter was handed to President de Marco at the Palace by Russian Ambassador Sergey Zotov.

- **21 July 2001** Russian Ambassador Sergey Zotov presented a collection of Russian and English books to the Central Public Library on behalf of the Russian Centre for International Scientific and Cultural Co-operation. Last year the Central Public Library sent several books in Maltese to the Moscow State Library of Foreign Literature.

- **21 July 2001** Figures published by the National Statistics Office show that tourist arrivals in the first five months of this year had dropped by 4,214 compared to the figure for the same period last year. However, arrivals in May alone showed an increase of 2,840 over the same month in 2000.

- **21 July 2001** The National Statistics Office said that the shortfall between ordinary revenue and total expenditure in the first half of this year, less the contribution to the sinking fund in respect of local and foreign loans, amounted to Lm54.5 million. This figure is an increase from the Lm39 million for the same period last year.

- **21 July 2001** Provisional statistics supplied by the Central Bank of Malta show that government debt outstanding at the end of June stood at Lm974.2 million, up by Lm93.4 million, or 10.6 per cent, from Lm880.8 million outstanding at the end of June last year.

- **22 July 2001** Prof. Guido de Marco, President of Malta, celebrated his 70th birthday on Sunday, 22nd July.

- **22 July 2001** Richard Muscat, Malta’s Ambassador to Ireland, returned from a visit to Dublin, where he had meetings with various authorities and personalities. The highlight of Mr Muscat’s visit was a brief meeting with Mr Bertie Ahern, Prime Minister of Ireland.

- **23 July 2001** The Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition traded charges over the Electoral Commission. The Prime Minister accused Dr Sant of abdicating his duties under the Constitution, and of seeking to gain political mileage through what Dr Fenech-Adami described as ‘gimmicks’.

- **23 July 2001** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that there was a 20 per cent increase in the volume of tourism from France between January and May compared to the same period the previous year. Dr Refalo attributed the increase to higher frequency of flights operated by Air Malta from France.

- **23 July 2001** The Malta Tourism Authority has published *The Malta Tourism Digest*. The digest contains information obtained from research on a number of tourism-related topics. Details about the digest can be obtained on e-mail at research@maltatourismauthority.com

- **23 July 2001** The Malta-EU Information Centre announced in its weekly bulletin that a survey had shown that it ranked fourth as the source of information on the EU. In a similar survey carried out in 2000, only 8.1 per cent had considered the centre to be their source for information on the EU.

- **24 July 2001** Chinese President Jiang Zemin, accompanied by his wife Madame Wang Yeping, yesterday arrived on a state visit that aimed, in the President’s own words, to raise Sino-Maltese relations to a new high. Mr Jiang was met at the airport by President Guido de Marco and by Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami.

- **24 July 2001** President Guido de Marco hosted a state dinner in honour of Mr Jiang at the presidential residence in San Anton. During the state dinner the two presidents spoke about the strong ties binding
the two countries. President de Marco said that Malta looked forward to keeping up the momentum of excellent relations. In his reply President Jiang said: “We have every reason to conclude that China and Malta are all-weather friends that have withstood the test of time.”

- **24 July 2001** The President, acting on the advice of the Prime Minister, appointed four Electoral Commissioners to replace four others who had resigned. Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami had said in Parliament that he was in duty bound by the Constitution to ensure that the Electoral Commission was constituted and functioning.

- **24 July 2001** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that Malta was expected to join 178 countries and combat climate change by ratifying the Kyoto Protocol prior to the Johannesburg Summit in September next year. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking upon his return from Bonn.

- **24 July 2001** The President of the United Nations, Harri Holkeri, described President Guido de Marco as an international personality recognised for serving his country and the international community with dedication in various capacities. This message was read out at a reception, given by Mr and Mrs Daniel Vella, in New York, to celebrate President de Marco’s 70th birthday.

- **24 July 2001** Figures released by the National Statistics Office show that internet subscriptions had risen by over 20 per cent in the first quarter of this year. The subscriptions reached 41,538 in March 2001, up from 34,409 in December 2000.

- **25 July 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami was invited to visit China by his Chinese counterpart, Zhu Rong Ji. The invitation was relayed to Dr Fenech-Adami by President Jiang during talks yesterday at Auberge de Castille.

- **25 July 2001** Malta and China yesterday signed an agreement establishing a Chinese cultural centre in Malta for the Mediterranean region. The agreement was signed at Auberge de Castille by Yang Guirong, Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China, and by Gaetan Naudi, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in the presence of President Jiang and Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami.

- **25 July 2001** President Guido de Marco is to feature in the United Nations Intellectual History Project as one of the personalities who have influenced the history of the UN. President de Marco will be in the company of former South African President Nelson Mandela, former Irish President Mary Robinson, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and former UN Secretaries-General Pérez de Cuellar and Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

- **25 July 2001** Agriculture Minister Ninu Zammit told Parliament that the planned gradual lifting of levies on imported agricultural produce would be paralleled by compensation to producers aimed at ensuring that Maltese produce remained competitively priced. The Minister was replying to Parliamentary Questions.

- **25 July 2001** Malta Communications Authority Chairman Joseph Tabone announced that the MCA was receiving enquiries from European companies interested in providing fixed telephony services in Malta once the sector is fully liberalised in 2003. Mr Tabone was addressing a news conference called to explain the new eight digit numbers for fixed and mobile telephony.

- **26 July 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said in Parliament that the Tribunal for the Investigation of Injustices had so far upheld complaints in 159 cases and recommended remedial action. Dr Fenech-Adami said that 108 cases had been concluded.

- **26 July 2001** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that the 51 measures outlined in the recently drawn up report by Carl Bro Global Environment Consortium to manage wastes would require an investment of between Lm68 million and Lm73 million. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking during the annual seminar organised by the Malta Institute of Waste Management that, this year, discussed the solid waste strategy for the Maltese Islands.

- **26 July 2001** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech announced that, since 1987, approximately Lm12 million had been spent on restoration works in Valletta. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking during a visit to Great Siege Square, in Valletta.
• **26 July 2001** Seven Maltese students were awarded gold medals of excellence for their outstanding achievement in the 1999 series of *City and Guilds* examinations. Eighty-four medals have been awarded world-wide.

• **26 July 2001** The Parliamentary Secretary in the Home Affairs Ministry, George Pullicino, said that the Government was drawing up a two-year forestation plan. The plan would be carried out in partnership with the private sector. Mr Pullicino was speaking at a Planning Authority meeting that discussed tree planting and landscaping schemes.

• **26 July 2001** The National Statistics Office said that 10.3 million kilograms of fresh fruit and vegetables marketed during the second quarter of the year had yielded Lm1.98 million. The volume represents a decrease of 15.8 per cent in quantity but an increase of 10.2 per cent in sales value over the same period last year.

• **27 July 2001** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo announced that Malta was the first country in Europe to be designated an approved destination country by the Chinese Government. Dr Refalo was speaking at a news conference with Chinese Ambassador Yang Guirong.

• **27 July 2001** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo appointed a committee to co-ordinate activities on eco-tourism throughout 2002. The United Nations has designated 2002 as *The International Year of Eco-tourism*.

• **27 July 2001** An agreement for offshore oil exploration in an area to the south of Malta has been signed between the Government and a consortium led by Pancontinental Oil & Gas NL of Australia. The agreement followed technical presentations by the Government at international oil conferences and lengthy discussions with four groups of companies that expressed interest in the licensed area.

• **27 July 2001** Malta’s qualities as a venue for meetings and conventions were highlighted in two major European magazines that specialise in conference and incentive travel. *Conference and Incentive Management* magazine carried an article entitled ‘Meetings with added value’, while *Tagungs Wirtschaft: Convention Industry* featured Senglea on its front cover.

• **27 July 2001** *Air Malta* is to terminate its schedule operations to the Gulf region, with the last flight operating on September 10. The national airline had started operating the route at the time when the United Nations was imposing sanctions on Libya.

• **28 July 2001** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said in Parliament that the Government had not yet been presented with the final report of the National Welfare Reform Commission and that he could not, therefore, comment on the subject at the moment. Dr Gonzi had been asked whether he could, in the public interest, clarify the situation with regard to the retirement age and what plans existed for the future.

• **28 July 2001** A government statement announced that Maltese citizens travelling to the Sultanate of Oman might now obtain a visa, valid for a 14-day visit, directly on arrival at Seeb International Airport. The statement said that it was not necessary to have an Omani sponsor.

• **28 July 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that China had made a grant of Lm300,000 to Malta during meetings of the Joint Economic Committee between the two countries. Prof. Bonnici said that the Government had opted to use the funds for the purchase of equipment for Malta Drydocks, which proposal was welcomed by China. The Minister was replying to a Parliamentary Question.

• **28 July 2001** Foreign Minister Joe Borg said in reply to a Parliamentary Question that the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Malta and China would be marked next year. Dr Borg said that details about the programme would be announced closer to the date.

• **28 July 2001** Talks aimed at stepping up co-operation in the fight against illegal trafficking of humans were held between senior Maltese and Sicilian police officers in the presence of officials from the Attorney General’s office. Police Commissioner George Grech headed the Maltese side, while Carmelo Casabona, Ragusa’s most senior police officer, headed the Italian delegation.

• **29 July 2001** Foreign Minister Joe Borg said that the Government would be finalising the special package for the agricultural sector in the EU negotiations in the coming weeks. The package was
expected to include a detailed programme for the dismantling of levies and a mechanism that would be installed to compensate the local farmers. Dr Borg was being interviewed by *The Sunday Times* newspaper.

- **30 July 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that a call for expressions of interest for the development of a World Trade Centre in Malta was expected to be issued in the coming weeks. There are about 300 World Trade Centres in cities all over the world.

- **30 July 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici gave an overview of Malta’s economic situation and highlighted the Island’s challenges for the coming years. Prof. Bonnici was chairing the Enterprise Board Advisory Council which is made up of 12 members of Maltese origin who have made a name for themselves in the economic field or other sectors abroad.

- **31 July 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami visited the restored Scamps Palace, at Vittoriosa. The lavish palace is to operate as the Casino’ di Venezia. Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech, Tourism Minister Michael Refalo, and Port Cottonera Ltd chairman John Ripard were present.

- **31 July 2001** Education Minister Louis Galea said that the Cabinet of Ministers had discussed proposals aimed at better promoting and safeguarding the Maltese language. Dr Galea was speaking during Question Time, in Parliament.

- **31 July 2001** Education Minister Louis Galea said that through the National Minimum Curriculum the authorities had made a conscious choice for inclusiveness, recognising and exploiting diversity, believing that this would enhance the chance for the common good. Dr Galea was making the opening speech of the first *Let Me Learn* international conference, being held over three days at the New Dolmen Hotel, in Qawra.

- **31 July 2001** Education Minister Louis Galea announced at a news conference that all students who had completed secondary school or trade school would be receiving a prospectus detailing all the courses offered by the Government’s post-secondary institutions. The information is also available on internet at [www.education.gov.mt](http://www.education.gov.mt)

- **31 July 2001** Health Minister Louis Deguara said that an autonomous Medicines Regulatory Authority to be set up next year would be taking over from the Medicines Regulatory Unit. Dr Deguara was speaking at the opening of a one-day seminar on the regulatory framework and practical implementation of good distribution practice of pharmaceutical products.

- **31 July 2001** The Central Bank Quarterly Review for June 2001 said that the current account deficit was expected to narrow to a more sustainable level. The review analyses domestic and international economic and financial developments during the first three months of the year. The Quarterly Review is available on the Central Bank’s website at [www.centralbankmalta.com](http://www.centralbankmalta.com)

- **31 July 2001** The National Statistics Office said that the Gross Domestic Product at market prices had increased, nominally, by 5.2 per cent to Lm386.7 million in the first quarter of this year when compared to Lm367.4 million in the same period last year. In real terms the GDP is estimated to have increased by 2.1 per cent in the period under review.

- **31 July 2001** The House of Representatives rose for its summer recess on Monday, 30th June. It will meet again on Monday, 17th September.

### AUGUST

- **1 August 2001** A foundation to run St John’s Co-Cathedral for a renewable term of five years was set up by a notarial act signed by Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami and Archbishop Joseph Mercieca. The government-appointed president of the foundation is Vincent Galea.

- **1 August 2001** Irish Education Minister Michael Woods announced that an agreement to establish stronger ties in education, research and information technology between Ireland and Malta was being drafted. Mr Woods was speaking at a news conference at the end of a working visit in Malta.
1 August 2001 Prof. Antonio Scipioni presented Tourism Minister Michael Refalo with a report highlighting weaknesses in the travel and tourism services sector in Malta. The report was drawn up by foreign experts on the application of the _acquis communautaire_ in the sector.

1 August 2001 The Accountant General said that the Lm40 million government stock issue of 6.25 per cent maturing in 2011 was fully subscribed three days after it was issued. The offer was closed on July 26 instead of July 28 as originally scheduled.

1 August 2001 Next winter _Air Malta_ is to introduce two additional services on Mondays to Birmingham and Manchester. Air Malta operates 35 weekly services to six airports in the UK with a further 15 weekly services added from July to September.

1 August 2001 The Euro-Mediterranean Centre on Insular Coastal Dynamics announced that the plume from the Mount Etna volcano which was originally expected over Malta passed over the Islands briefly at about 3 p.m. yesterday. Both the Meteorological Office and the ICOD have predicted that the plume will hover over the Islands today.

2 August 2001 Malta was one of six candidate countries that joined the European Union’s Environment Agency. This was the first time an EU body has taken on EU candidates as full members.

2 August 2001 The _Casinò di Venezia_ was officially inaugurated by President Guido de Marco in the presence of renowned Italian TV personality Simona Ventura, who was the guest of honour, and the mayor of Venice Paolo Costa.

2 August 2001 Go Mobile launched _Go on Holiday_, a 30-day mobile phone connection. The Go on Holiday pack is ideal for use by tourists and visitors. It costs Lm10 and includes Lm7 worth of talk-time as well as a disposable SIM card and a user guide. For further assistance on Go on Holiday one can contact Go Mobile’s customer care on 79 222146.

2 August 2001 _Vodafone_ launched a new service, the General Packet Radio Service. The GPRS enables Vodafone contract subscribers to access data services such as internet through their laptops or PCs using their mobile phone as a connection.

3 August 2001 A statement issued by the Ministry of Agriculture said that levies on the importation of agricultural products were to be phased out over a number of years. The statement said that the system was intended to provide producers with reasonable revenue while the sector was being restructured in a positive direction.

3 August 2001 President Guido de Marco received a delegation of twenty-nine citizens of Maltese origin from the town of Tavernes de Valldigna in Valencia, Spain. The visitors were led by the mayor, Perez Mifsud, who is also of Maltese origin.

3 August 2001 Bank of Valletta launched the BOV Visa Platinum Card, which offers a minimum credit limit of Lm5,000 as well as other benefits. Speaking at the launch, bank chairman Joseph F.X. Zahra said that Platinum cardholders would automatically be entitled to life assurance to cover outstanding liabilities up to a maximum of Lm3,000.

4 August 2001 Tourism Minister Michael Refalo launched new degree courses in Tourism Studies that can be followed at the University of Malta as from academic year 2001/2002. The courses lead to BA and BA (Hon.) degrees.

4 August 2001 The National Statistics Office announced that, in June, total exports went down by 9.9 per cent to Lm80.3 million from Lm89.1 million in the same month last year. Total imports declined by 22.7 per cent to Lm104.1 million from Lm134.6 million.

4 August 2001 Figures published by the National Statistics Office show that inflation had gone up to 1.95 per cent in June, from 1.89 per cent the previous month. The retail price index went up by 0.11 per cent, bringing the index for June up to 115.75.

5 August 2001 The International Monetary Fund praised Malta’s economic performance for the past two years. It warned, however, that proposed expenditure initiatives needed to be implemented with
urgency if the fiscal deficit targets were to be secured alongside securing progress towards reducing the share of tax in the Gross Domestic Product.

- **6 August 2001** Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that the first decision the people would have to decide on was going to be whether Malta should join the EU. Dr Gonzi was speaking on *Radio 101*.

- **7 August 2001** Foreign Minister Joe Borg said that the Government was determined to present strong arguments to the European Union to deter the introduction of VAT on food and medicinals. Dr Borg was addressing a news conference.

- **7 August 2001** The Malta High Commission in Australia organised the launch of a youth project in Sydney aimed to encourage young people to take more interest in Malta and the Maltese heritage. The youth project was launched with success in Canberra and Melbourne last year.

- **7 August 2001** A narrative history of the National Audit Office and its predecessors has been published by the NAO. The book, *Guardian of the Public Purse: A History of State Audit in Malta*, was written by Godfrey Pirotta and Edward Warrington.

- **7 August 2001** Figures issued by the National Statistics Office show that the number of reported traffic accidents in the second quarter of the year reached 3,337. This is an increase of four per cent over the same quarter last year.

- **8 August 2001** President and Mrs de Marco distributed financial aid, special apparatus and white goods to various philanthropic organisations, on behalf of the Malta Community Chest Fund. The total sum presented was LM13,798.

- **8 August 2001** The Parliamentary Secretary in the Economic Services Ministry, Edwin Vassallo, said that the 331 new businesses set up during the first quarter of the year were a sure sign of the economic stability and public confidence prevalent in the country. Mr Vassallo was addressing the Birkirkara business community.

- **9 August 2001** *Standard and Poor’s*, one of the world’s leading credit agencies, confirmed their ratings for Malta and gave it a stable outlook. In their statement, Standard and Poor’s commented on the positive indicators that are noticeable in the Maltese economy, especially the improvements registered in the Budget balance.

- **9 August 2001** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi and Education Minister Louis Galea addressed a news conference on the new Basic Employment Passport Scheme run by the Employment and Training Corporation, at Stepano Zerafa School in Naxxar.

- **9 August 2001** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech told a news conference that the second edition of the State of the Environment report had been commissioned. The Minister said that the report should be presented to the Government by the end of June next year.

- **9 August 2001** Director of Traffic Paul Galea announced that the Traffic Department planned to introduce a three-year provisional driving licence for new drivers later on this year. Under the new system, traffic offences would be assigned a range of penalty points and a person accumulating 12 penalty points within the three-year period would have his driving licence withdrawn.

- **9 August 2001** Malta and Australia signed a memorandum of understanding for the exchange of information on the smuggling of people. Ives De Barro, the Maltese High Commissioner in Australia, signed on behalf of the Government, while Andrew Metcalfe, the Acting Secretary of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, signed on behalf of the Australian Government.

- **9 August 2001** Pope John Paul nominated Archbishop Luigi Conti as Apostolic Nuncio for Malta. Mgr. Conti will succeed Archbishop Luigi Gatti who, last June, was nominated Apostolic Nuncio in Lebanon.

- **10 August 2001** Malta ranked second in a World Health Organisation health service efficiency league table, up from fifth place in a similar table last year. Oman was at first place, with Italy placing third and France fourth.
10 August 2001 The Government of Malta appointed Mr William H. Weiss as Honorary Consul for Malta in Seattle, with jurisdiction over Washington State. Mr Weiss can be contacted on e-mail: smom10@juno.com

10 August 2001 Mr Ernest Flamini is Honorary Consul for Malta in Prague, with jurisdiction over the Czech Republic. Mr Flamini’s e-mail address at: flamini@attglobal.net

10 August 2001 The Consul General of Malta in the United States, Alfred Farrugia, was elected for the second term as President of the Consular Corps of Washington, DC. The Consular Corps is responsible for the organisation of social activities as well as the promotion of a number of consular and economic activities. It is also responsible for establishing and strengthening ties with various educational and cultural institutions in the United States.

10 August 2001 The Malta-EU Information Centre in July handled 1,120 requests for information on the EU. Information from MIC may be requested on e-mail address: euinfo.mic@magnet.mt

11 August 2001 Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that the Government was hoping that the National Commission for Welfare Reform would continue with its work leading to a final report with concrete recommendations. Dr Gonzi was reacting to statements made by various unions and constituted bodies criticising the conclusions of an unpublished draft report.

11 August 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that he hoped there would be further co-operation between voluntary non-government organisations and the Government to safeguard Malta’s historical and cultural heritage. Dr Zammit Dimech was inspecting restoration works being carried out on the roofs of Fort Rinella by Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna aided by the restoration unit of the Environment Ministry.

11 August 2001 Employees of the Westin Dragonara Resort agreed to make a monthly contribution in aid of UNICEF. Actor Roger Moore, UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, personally wrote to thank the Westin Dragonara employees for their initiative.

13 August 2001 Camper and Nicholsons’ Managing Director Simon Arrol said that the level of interest shown in the Cottonera Yacht Marina by owners and captains of super yachts has been exceptional, even in advance of the start of any serious marketing. The recent opening of the casino on Vittoriosa Wharf had also helped to promote the marina in international circles, said Mr Arrol.

14 August 2001 Education Minister Louis Galea said that the Foundation for Tomorrow’s Schools would in the next eight years be investing over Lm60 million in state schools. Dr Galea was speaking during a visit to Sir Temi Zammit school in Mtarfa and Lorenza Gafa school in Vittoriosa.

14 August 2001 The Government’s Privatisation Unit announced that three consortia, each with foreign representation, had tendered for the privatisation of the management of the Lotto Department. The call for proposals opened on May 15 and closed yesterday at midday.

14 August 2001 The Court of Criminal Appeal ordered the extradition of Egyptian Mohammed Abdel Monem Abbas Aly to Turkey for the murder of a British librarian. Mr Justice Vincent De Gaetano dismissed all the pleas filed by Aly on appeal and ordered the extradition after the lapse of 15 days.

15 August 2001 Education and Culture Minister Louis Galea launched the Cultural Heritage Bill. The Bill seeks to improve the protection, the presentation, and the conservation of Malta’s cultural heritage, especially through the setting up of newer, more effective structures.

15 August 2001 Dr Philip Farrugia Randon is the president of the newly formed National Book Council. The council, set up by the Ministry of Education, aims to bring together several initiatives promoting Maltese books.

16 August 2001 Gozo Minister Giovanna Debono announced that the island had registered a 62 per cent increase in hotel occupancy during the first half of the year when compared to the same period in 1998. In the first six months of this year, 17,814 Maltese booked a hotel room in Gozo, compared to 8,617 in 1998.
• 16 August 2001 The University of Malta scored a resounding success in the selection process for the awarding of grants under the European Commission’s Jean Monnet Project for European Integration Studies. Four out of the five Maltese applications submitted were successful.

• 17 August 2001 Education Minister Louis Galea announced the adoption of a new policy document on the inclusion of students with disability in mainstream education. Entitled Inclusive education - policy regarding students with a disability, the document has been developed by members of the ministerial committee on inclusive education.

• 17 August 2001 The ninth edition of the Malta International Air Show 2001 is to be held at Luqa on September 22 and 23.

• 18 August 2001 Transport Minister Censu Galea said at a press conference that, now that the project for Crown Works/Horn Works had been approved by Cabinet, the Government was to immediately start working on the development of a Park-and-Ride scheme proposed by the Planning Authority. The Parliamentary Secretary in the Home Affairs Ministry, George Pullicino, attended the press conference.

• 18 August 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami commented that the 16th Kerygma volleyball marathon was like ‘an oasis in the desert’. He said that it was wonderful to see so many young people dedicate their time to solidarity. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking during a visit to the marathon, at the trade fair grounds, in Naxxar.

• 18 August 2001 The Human Resources and Support Services Directorate within the Malta Tourism Authority announced that sixty operational and supervisory men and women from hotels and restaurants in Malta would be undergoing training in hotels and restaurants in Ireland. The placements are being funded by the European Union’s Leonardo Mobility and Exchange Programme.

• 18 August 2001 Maltacom is to install a new billing and customer care system. The contract for the equipment was signed by Maltacom Chairman Maurice Zarb Adami and by Louis Hall, Managing Director of Cerillion Technologies Ltd. The new system will lead to improved customer service, more products and services, discount schemes, additional payment methods and web-based services.

• 19 August 2001 Charles Vassallo, Malta’s Honorary Consul in San Francisco, made a personal donation of $3,000 to three charitable institutions and to an animal care society, at the Palace in Valletta.

• 19 August 2001 Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that work to control water loss from the distribution system had contributed to lower production even though consumption had increased. The Minister was speaking during a visit to the reverse osmosis plant in Pembroke.

• 20 August 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that Tunisia was denying the existence of a problem solely with Malta regarding the Continental Shelf and was opining that the disputed area also concerned Italy and Libya. In this regard, Dr Fenech-Adami said, Tunisia had proposed quadrilateral talks.

• 21 August 2001 Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that what tourism needed was further investment in amenities and facilities such as golf courses, sport and culture-oriented attractions, marinas, country walks and other environmentally friendly activities. Dr Refalo was speaking during a presentation ceremony attended by Gozo Minister Giovanna Debono.

• 21 August 2001 The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Anton Tabone, met a Libyan delegation led by the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Soleiman Al-Shahoumi. The two sides discussed questions relating to the Mediterranean within the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

• 21 August 2001 The Malta High Commission in Australia jointly with the Australian Capital Territory Chamber of Canberra organised a trade seminar for companies based in Canberra. The aim of this seminar was to introduce Malta as an ideal business partner for Australian companies wishing to expand their activities in North Africa, Europe and the Middle East.

• 21 August 2001 Thomas Murphy is the new Deputy Chief of Mission at the US Embassy in Malta. He succeeds Deborah Bolton who ended her assignment in Malta last month. Before assuming his post in Malta Mr Murphy served as Consul General in Chiang Mai, Thailand.
22 August 2001 Malta formally ratified the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which prohibits the conduct of nuclear weapons test explosions or any other nuclear explosion. Malta’s permanent representative to the United Nations deposited Malta’s instrument of ratification of the treaty with the UN Secretary General last month.


22 August 2001 Education Minister Louis Galea said that no fewer than 58 companies under the umbrella of 16 consortia had expressed an interest in becoming the Government’s strategic partner for the e-government initiative. Dr Galea was making his keynote speech on e-culture at a conference organised by the International Telecommunications Union in collaboration with the UK Telecommunications Academy and Cable & Wireless.

22 August 2001 Education Minister Louis Galea announced that University and post-secondary school students were to be supplied with a smart card for the purchase of books and other educational material under the stipend system. The card is to be introduced in the next academic year. Dr Galea was speaking at a news conference at the Education Ministry, in Floriana.

22 August 2001 Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said at a press conference that the Planning Authority had extended the original concept of the Marine Aquarium Project to encompass a more extensive stretch of land in Qawra. Dr Refalo said that the project was in line with the Government’s policy to promote attractions that highlighted local, cultural and ecological systems.

22 August 2001 Figures published by the National Statistics Office show that in the first seven months of the year ordinary revenue had increased by Lm19 million while total expenditure had gone up by Lm26.4 million. As a result, the shortfall between ordinary revenue and total expenditure in the same period amounted to Lm68.9 million, up from a comparable shortfall of Lm61.5 million during the same period last year.

22 August 2001 Three works by ceramist George Muscat have been included in an exhibition titled Ulisse ritorna nella costa degli Dei, presently touring Calabria, Italy. Mr Muscat’s participation in the exhibition was made possible by the Malta Embassy in Rome.

23 August 2001 The Planning Authority launched the consultation draft of a minerals subject plan. The draft plan, prepared by Entec UK Limited, deals with the supply and demand of soft and hard stone and the ways and means that should be employed to reduce the adverse effect of quarrying on the environment and other social implications.

23 August 2001 Gozo Minister Giovanna Debono and Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech inaugurated the first Management Plan for Ir-Ramla Coastal Area, in Gozo. The ceremony took place on site.

23 August 2001 Education Minister Louis Galea said that the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology was an alternative route to University and had been developed to nurture young people with a practical rather than an academic inking. MCAST would also be giving students who had not managed to obtain their basic education another chance. Dr Galea was speaking to students attending the Institute of Information and Communication Technology.

23 August 2001 A Ministry of Home Affairs statement assu red the public that the special powers of the Security Service were used solely against people suspected of committing serious crime as stipulated in the Security Services Act. It denied media reports that the service had broken the law or acted without authorisation.

23 August 2001 Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that complaints against Maltese hotels that had appeared on the Virgin website were being investigated. The hotels involved were in the Bugibba/Qawra area. Dr Refalo was speaking at a ‘thank you’ outing for Ministry and Tourism Authority staff.

24 August 2001 The Maltese Language Board launched the report Strategija ghall-Ilsien Malti at St James Cavalier Centre for Creativity, in Valletta. Education Minister Louis Galea said that the Board
had been asked to analyse the situation regarding the Maltese language and to suggest an appropriate and professional structure to promote it in the light of the Island’s bi-lingualism.

- **24 August 2001** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that all regulatory powers at present held by the Ministry and the Department responsible for Tourism, through the Hotels and Catering Establishments Board, would be transferred to the Malta Tourism Authority by the end of the year. The Minister was speaking during a meeting with four newly recruited MTA officers.

- **24 August 2001** Next year Malta will join the rest of the world to mark the *International Year of Eco-tourism*. The Ministry of Tourism has set up two action committees to co-ordinate the proposed projects of the various ministries and government departments.

- **24 August 2001** Figures released by the National Statistics Office show that total exports in July this year dropped by Lm20.4 million, to Lm67.5 million. Total imports also went down, by Lm22.2 million to Lm105.4 million, when compared to the figures for the same month last year.

- **25 August 2001** According to figures released by the National Statistics Office tourism was holding its own in spite of the decline of the German market. Figures for the first six months of the year dropped to 528,974 from 533,416 in the same period last year.

- **25 August 2001** The Malta Tourism Authority’s office in Frankfurt carried out a personalised mailing exercise that targeted 740 German travel organisers. The mailing exercise was one of the initiatives the MTA’s Marketing and Promotion Directorate took in order to restructure the German market to Malta following developments which took place in this market late last year.

- **25 August 2001** Two British managers, David Kalboum and Christopher Bell, have just been recruited by Malta Drydocks. Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that the Government’s decision to recruit Mr Kalboum and Mr Bell showed its determination to restructure the ‘yard sector in a professional manner.

- **26 August 2001** A White Paper on Sports was published during a half-day seminar at the Mediterranean Conference Centre. The seminar was addressed by Education Minister Louis Galea, by Parliamentary Secretary for Sport Jesmond Mugliett, and by Dr Robert Tufignon who drafted the White Paper.

- **26 August 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli was in Cyprus for high level talks on EU accession and other issues. During the visit, Mr Dalli met his Cypriot counterpart, Takis Klerides, as well as the Cypriot Chief Negotiator for EU accession, George Vassiliou.

- **27 August 2001** The Prime Minister, accompanied by Mrs Fenech-Adami, started a short private visit in Italy. Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi will be Acting Prime Minister in the absence of Dr Fenech-Adami.

- **28 August 2001** Belgian Finance Minister Didier Reynders, whose Government holds the EU Presidency until the end of this year, said that it was possible for Malta to obtain, in negotiations with the EU, an exemption on the introduction of VAT on food and medicinals. Mr Reynders was speaking to the press following meetings with Finance Minister John Dalli and Foreign Minister Joe Borg.

- **28 August 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli said that the Government’s plan to reduce the financial deficit was very much on track and he was expecting to be able to cut it down to Lm85 million by Budget Day. Mr Dalli was speaking following a ministerial activity.

- **28 August 2001** US Ambassador Designate Anthony Gioia visited the amphibious assault ship *USS Kearsarge*, in Malta on a four-day visit. Mr Gioia is to present his credentials to the President within a few weeks.

- **29 August 2001** Hetronic Malta announced that the company was to expand its operations, raising its workforce from the current 82 to 120 by 2004. The announcement was made during a visit to the company by Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici.

- **29 August 2001** Maltacom Chairman Maurice Zarb Adami announced that the Group’s net profit after tax for the first six months this year had dipped by 17.3 per cent, to Lm4 million, compared with
Lm4.8 million for the same period last year. The drop was registered despite the fact that turnover went up by 8.9 per cent to Lm24.2 million.

- **29 August 2001** Local Councils Association President Ian Micallef said that as from the first week of September electronic maps were to be installed in local council offices. The maps would pinpoint the exact location of wardens.

- **29 August 2001** The MasterCard service was back in operation after a fault in the satellite link to the authorisation centre had users, mostly tourists, unable to withdraw cash or use their cards at ATMs. Bank of Valletta said that the fault had materialised following last week’s heavy thunderstorm.

- **29 August 2001** A Maltese-registered ship, *Buff Bay*, sank some 200 miles off the south-east coast of Mauritius. All 16 crewmembers of the ship were reported to be safe on board the Cyprus-flagged ship *Barnhard*. The Merchant Shipping Directorate of the Malta Maritime Authority said that it was investigating the sinking.

- **29 August 2001** Col Vincenzo Gargano will today take over as commander of the Italian military mission in Luqa from Col Gianluigi Covini. The Italian Military Mission has been in Malta since 1973, with a team of approximately 48 members.

- **29 August 2001** Pop idol Madonna is due in Malta next month to star in a film directed by her husband, Guy Ritchie. The shooting in Malta of the romantic comedy *Swept Away* starts towards the end of September and should last about three weeks.

- **30 August 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli said that the Government planned to launch a new flexible scheme for the repatriation of funds invested abroad. Mr Dalli estimates that at least Lm1 billion are invested abroad illegally.

- **30 August 2001** Prof. Edward Scicluna, Chairman of the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development, said that consultation by the Government on the Budget was being held at MCESD level. Prof. Scicluna said that all constituted bodies and unions on the Council were taking part in the consultation process.

- **30 August 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that Enemalta plans to move its storage facility from Birzebbuġa to a new site at Has-Saptan. Prof. Bonnici said that Enemalta’s move to a new site was part of a plan to upgrade the site and increase storage capacity following an EU guideline.

- **30 August 2001** Government MP Anthony Abela led the Malta delegation to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, held in Australia. Government MP Frederick Azzopardi and Opposition MP Joe Mizzi formed part of the delegation. Government MP Mario Galea chaired the regional meeting of the British Islands and the Mediterranean Region.

- **30 August 2001** Six local councils became the first councils to sign an agreement that would enable them to identify the precise location of each and every warden on duty at a particular time. Local Councils Association President Ian Micallef said that two out of ten Joint Committees that represent local councils had signed the agreements.

- **31 August 2001** Education Minister Louis Galea launched a policy document reflecting the Government’s commitment to an overall vision for the encouragement of public and private exploration of culture and arts. The Minister said that, for the first time, Malta now had an extensive written document outlining strategies for the democratisation of culture within an inclusive and holistic national perspective.

- **31 August 2001** Malta International Airport handed over two fire engines to Enemalta and Malta Drydocks. The two vehicles were bought by the Government in 1991 with funds donated under the Italo-Maltese financial protocol.

- **31 August 2001** The National Statistics Office said that the inflation rate in July stood at 2.04 per cent, up from 1.95 per cent the previous month. The retail price index went up by 0.56 points, or 0.48 per cent, over June to reach 116.31.
SEPTEMBER

1 September 2001 Tourism Minister Michael Refalo announced that the Malta Tourism Authority had obtained funding worth Lm80,000 under the EU Leonardo programme. This money would be used for tourism employee training overseas. Dr Refalo was speaking during a presentation at the Centre for Creativity in Valletta.

1 September 2001 Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that the Malta Development Corporation and Metco were in contact with an internationally renowned Japanese company that was seriously considering establishing a presence in Malta. Prof. Bonnici was being interviewed by a crew from Japanese television station TV Tokyo Channel 12, in Malta to produce a news feature on the economy.

1 September 2001 A Central Bank statement said that the Monetary Policy Council had lowered the Central Bank’s central intervention rate and the discount rate by 25 basis points to 4.5 per cent. The Council arrived at the decision after considering recent international and domestic economic and financial developments, within the context of the objectives of the bank’s monetary policy.

1 September 2001 The Malta Stock Exchange announced that work on its new offices was about to be completed. The new Exchange is to be officially opened on October 6.

1 September 2001 Government MP John Vella, leader of the Malta delegation to the Council of Europe, attended the meeting of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee of the Council of Europe, in Prague. He was accompanied by Opposition MP Joe Debono Grech.

3 September 2001 Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that this Government had the best record for achievement. Dr Gonzi was addressing a conference at Senglea.

3 September 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that EU regulations on the environment would be beneficial for Malta as they had been for the rest of Europe. Dr Zammit Dimech was addressing the same Senglea conference.

3 September 2001 Health Minister Louis Deguara said that Malta would not be able to treat British patients in government hospitals until it joined the European Union. Dr Deguara was reacting to the British Government’s new policy allowing British patients to seek state-funded treatment abroad.

3 September 2001 Agriculture Minister Ninu Zammit said that levies on agricultural products would be removed gradually, irrespective of European Union membership. The Minister was speaking at the presentation of prizes at an animal show held in the gardens of Buskett.

3 September 2001 Malta Freeport Chairman Marin Hili was quoted as saying that the Freeport could comfortably accommodate a further 600,000 containers at the port each year, alongside the one million it already handles. Mr Hili’s comments feature in an article written by Barry Cross in the latest issue of Cargo Systems.

4 September 2001 The Ministry of Foreign Affairs launched a new website that can be accessed on www.foreign.gov.mt. Speaking during the launch, Foreign Minister Joe Borg said that the website followed a database approach, enabling searches to be more specific and more easily available.

4 September 2001 Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici attended the official celebrations marking the 32nd anniversary of the Libyan revolution. Prof. Bonnici was accompanied by Malta Drydocks Chairman John Cassar White, and by Louis Grech, Chairman of Air Malta.

4 September 2001 The Ministry for Social Policy announced that it was accepting nominations for this year’s Worker of the Year Award. Nomination forms may be downloaded from the ministry website at http://www.msp.gov.mt

5 September 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that the Government wanted to put hunters’ minds at rest at the start of the shooting season by giving them ‘a message in favour of the
hunting tradition’. However, said the Minister, hunters should do their utmost to ensure that laws were respected. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking at Buskett gardens.

- **5 September 2001** A task force chaired by Joe Vella Bonnici, and with Mario Callus and Fr Joe Borg as members, found that national radio and television station PBS required ‘major surgery’. The task force’s main proposals have been approved by the company’s Board of Directors and communicated to the Government and the General Workers’ Union.

- **5 September 2001** The Federation of Industry welcomed the interest rate cut announced by the Central Bank of Malta. The FOI said that the Central Bank’s move would encourage local banks to improve their credit terms, benefiting serious investors in the productive sectors of the economy.

- **5 September 2001** HSBC Bank Malta announced that it would reduce by 0.25 per cent its interest rates on personal and commercial lending linked to its base rate. The decision follows the recent announcement by the Central Bank of Malta of a cut of 0.25 per cent in its rates from 4.75 per cent to 4.50 per cent.

- **5 September 2001** The Malta High Commission in O’Malley, Canberra, in co-operation with Maltapost, organised an exhibition of Maltese stamps at the Chancery. Albert Farrugia, President of the Canberra Philatelic Society, delivered a talk on Malta’s history through its stamps.

- **6 September 2001** In a resolution on enlargement, the European Parliament called for the number of Malta’s EU Parliamentary seats to be increased from five to six. The proposed increase would place Malta on a par with Luxembourg.

- **6 September 2001** The National Youth Council declared itself in favour of EU membership on the grounds that Maltese youngsters stood to gain from it. The stand taken by the Council was based on a study, which it had commissioned in March, entitled Malta’s membership of the European Union: Implications for the youth sector.

- **6 September 2001** President Guido de Marco urged some 50 Maltese emigrants who visited him at the Palace in Valletta to cherish and be loyal to the country they had chosen to live in and to give it their utmost. At the same time, said the President, they should remember their roots, which gave them their identity, their typical Maltese qualities and their Catholic tradition.

- **7 September 2001** Mr Anthony Gioia presented his diplomatic credentials to President Guido de Marco as the new US Ambassador to Malta. Mr Gioia takes over from Ms Kathryn Proffitt.

- **7 September 2001** New Mexican Ambassador Rafael Tovar De Teresa presented his credentials to President Guido de Marco. The Mexican Ambassador is resident in Rome.

- **7 September 2001** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech reacted sharply to a recent documentary on British television that dealt with the state of Maltese bays. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking during a clean-up activity in Sliema.

- **7 September 2001** The Special Olympics Malta team finished fifth in the recent European Summer Games in Hungary, winning a total of 13 medals. A total of 1,800 athletes from 25 teams took part in the event.

- **7 September 2001** Mohammed Abdel Monem Abbas Aly, the Egyptian man wanted by Turkey to face trial for allegedly killing a British tourist three years ago, was extradited to Turkey. Extradition proceedings were started in court after the Malta Government received an assurance from Turkey that Abbas Aly would not be liable to the death penalty if convicted.

- **8 September 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Government had managed to start working on the implementation of 86 per cent of its 230 electoral pledges over the past three years and had already honoured 43 per cent of them. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at a news conference to mark the end of the third year of this administration.

- **8 September 2001** Dolores Cristina, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives, led a delegation of members and substitute members of the committee to China. The Foreign Affairs Committee was invited by its counterpart in the National People’s Congress of China.
• **8 September 2001** Bank of Valletta announced that, with effect from September 17, it was reducing its base rate by 0.25 per cent.

• **8 September 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that the volume of work at Malta Drydocks had reached a 10-year high. The ‘yard was bustling with activity, he said, so much so that it could not cope with the workload in certain areas.

• **8 September 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici launched the *Luqa Park Development Brief*, which aims to turn 103,000 square metres of derelict land into a trailer park, a centre for micro enterprises and a leisure park for the locality. A copy of the Development Brief may be viewed on the Planning Authority’s website at [http://www.pa-malta.org](http://www.pa-malta.org).

• **9 September 2001** The traditional September 8 celebrations started off with a pontifical High Mass of thanksgiving at St John’s Co-Cathedral in Valletta led by Archbishop Joseph Mercieca. President and Mrs Guido de Marco led the congregation that included Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, Speaker Anton Tabone, the Chief Justice, Dr Joseph Said Pullicino, and members of the Judiciary, Cabinet Ministers, MPs and members of the Diplomatic Corps.

• **9 September 2001** Marsa clinched the Open Category Shield of the September 8 Regatta held in Grand Harbour and made history for the club by also winning the shield for the Under-23 category. This is the eighth time that Marsa won the regatta.

• **9 September 2001** The new American Ambassador to Malta, Anthony Gioia, presented Finance Minister John Dalli with an X-ray machine that can scan the contents of containers. Mr Dalli is responsible for Customs.

• **10 September 2001** Foreign Minister Joe Borg took part in a meeting of the General Affairs Council of the European Union, in Brussels. Dr Borg said that such meetings were a new concept for the EU.

• **10 September 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that Libya had paid Lm3 million of the outstanding amount it owes Air Malta. Prof. Bonnici represented the Government at the official celebrations marking the 32nd anniversary of the Libyan revolution.

• **11 September 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami addressed the first meeting of the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD), at Auberge de Castille, in Valletta. The MCESD is the successor of the Malta Council for Economic Development and is regulated by a new law transferring responsibility for the forum from the Economic Services Minister to the Prime Minister. Prof. Edward Scicluna, who was the Chairman of the MCED, stays on as Chairman of the new council.

• **11 September 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Government would, in the coming weeks, publish a White Paper with proposals for a new Conditions of Employment Regulations Act. The Prime Minister made the announcement to the social partners at the first meeting of the new Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD), held at Auberge de Castille.

• **11 September 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli initiated remote trading at the new Malta Stock Exchange premises in Valletta. Mr Dalli said that all brokers were now linked electronically to the Stock Exchange and therefore did not need to visit the MSE building to deal from the floor.

• **11 September 2001** *Malta Shipbuilding Co. Ltd* completed the construction of a drilling scow barge prototype for *Alastair Offshore Services*, an American-registered company. The $1 million contract was completed on schedule and generated a profit for the company.

• **11 September 2001** Housing Authority Chairman Marisa Micallef Leyson announced that the Housing Authority, in collaboration with the state welfare services agency Appogg and the Department of Social Accommodation, was preparing to launch a housing *Care and Repair Service*. Ms Micallef Leyson was being interviewed by the Public Broadcasting Service.

• **12 September 2001** President Guido de Marco condemned the terrorist atrocities committed in Washington and New York and expressed solidarity with the President and people of the United States. Prof. de Marco telephoned US Ambassador Anthony Gioia immediately after the media broke the news of the tragedy.
• **12 September 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami described the events in Washington and New York as an enormous tragedy. “One still has to wait to learn what was behind it and hopes that effective ways would be found to combat terrorism,” Dr Fenech-Adami said.

• **12 September 2001** United States Ambassador Anthony Gioia expressed his great sadness at the events in the US. “I am also outraged that innocent people were the targets of terrorist acts,” Mr Gioia said in a statement.

• **12 September 2001** A report drawn up by the EU Economic and Social Committee concludes that, “in terms of economic, political and social development, and in relation to the progress made with the adoption of the acquis, Malta is well-placed to be in the forefront of states entering the EU”. Rapporteur Kenneth Walker announced the conclusions of the report at a news conference together with EU Ambassador to Malta Ronald Gallimore.

• **12 September 2001** Minister of Tourism Michael Refalo announced that he would be submitting a new package of incentives for the tourism industry for discussion by Cabinet. Dr Refalo said that the new incentives would substitute the package that had been designed in the early sixties. The Minister was speaking at the launch of Westin’s ‘Heavenly Bed’ at Palazzo Parisio.

• **12 September 2001** Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg, Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech, and Parliamentary Secretary George Pullicino announced new regulations about Environmental Impact Assessments. The regulations were announced at a joint news conference in the presence of Planning Authority Director Godwin Cassar and the PA Manager of the Environment Management Unit, Adrian Mallia.

• **12 September 2001** Senior police representatives from Malta and Libya met at Police General Headquarters in Floriana to discuss co-operation in the fight against crime and drug trafficking. The Maltese delegation included Commissioner George Grech and Assistant Commissioner Michael Cassar, as well as Home Affairs Ministry Permanent Secretary Louis Cilia. The Libyan side was led by Drug Section Head Ismael Karami El-Mabrouk.

• **12 September 2001** Bank of Valletta Group launched their ‘Financial Management Clinics’. Through the clinics, small business owners would be able to discuss problems they face in their general banking requirements, export finance and links to export marketing.

• **12 September 2001** The new Commander of the Italian Military Mission, Col Vincenzo Gargano, took over from his predecessor, Col Gianluigi Covini. Col Gargano is in Malta for a three-year-term.

• **12 September 2001** The Maltese Islands feature prominently in the September issue of *Residence*, one of the Netherlands’ premier interior design magazines. The article in question, which focuses on houses of prestige and quality interior decoration, was a result of an initiative of the Malta Tourism Authority’s office in Amsterdam.

• **12 September 2001** Gianfranco Pierantoni, Production Manager of *Julius Caesar*, the TV series to be shot in Malta and Bulgaria, announced that filming was due to start at the end of October. Mr Pierantoni announced that a total of between 20,000 and 30,000 extras would be required for the series.

• **12 September 2001** A joint exhibition of paintings and sculptures by Gozitan artists Victor Spiteri and Joe Xuereb was opened by Malta’s Ambassador to Germany, William C. Spiteri. The exhibition was organised by Mrs Ingrid Kidder, Vice-President of the Maltese-German Association.

• **13 September 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami announced that the Government was stopping all state subsidies to Malta Drydocks with immediate effect. Government’s decision was announced in a televised statement by Dr Fenech-Adami just over 12 hours after dockyard workers stormed into offices at Malta Drydocks, destroying computers and furniture.

• **13 September 2001** A government statement announced that Malta was to align itself with the European Union’s declaration on the terrorist attacks in the United States.
• 13 September 2001 A Malta Day was held at the Malta High Commission in London to mark Victory Day. The event was held in collaboration with the Maltese Culture Movement, the Association of Maltese Communities of Egypt, Malta Charities Association and the Maltese League.

• 14 September 2001 Mr Walter Balzan, Malta’s Ambassador to the United Nations, said that there was no indication of any Maltese having been among the victims of the bombing. Mr Balzan is based in New York.

• 14 September 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami stood firmly by his Cabinet’s decision to halt subsidies to the Malta Drydocks. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking following a meeting with the Drydocks Council at Auberge de Castille. Finance Minister John Dalli, Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici, and Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi attended the meeting.

• 14 September 2001 Minister of Finance John Dalli had a meeting with a business delegation from the Czech Republic. The Hon Consul of the Czech Republic for Malta, Tonio Casapinta, attended the meeting.

• 14 September 2001 Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that, despite the process of globalisation and turmoil on the international markets, the year ending September had been a record year in many respects. Dr Refalo was speaking on his Ministry’s performance in the past year.

• 14 September 2001 Maltacom extended its reduced rate of 10 cents per minute for calls to the United States until Tuesday, September 18. The Company introduced the reduced rate in a move to assist the many people in Malta anxious to track down relatives and friends stranded in the United States.

• 15 September 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, Archbishop Joseph Mercieca, Speaker Anton Tabone and US Ambassador Anthony Gioia joined President Guido de Marco to observe a three-minute silence in mourning for the victims of the terrorist attack on the United States. The ceremony took place at the Palace, in Valletta.

• 15 September 2001 Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi announced that discussions about the migration of services from St Luke’s to the new hospital in Tal-Qroqq were to start in the coming weeks. Dr Gonzi was addressing a seminar organised by the Malta Union of Midwives and Nurses.

• 17 September 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that it remained to be seen whether the General Workers’ Union accepted the document sent to it by Malta Drydocks. In this document the Dockyard Council lists four points viewed as necessary for the yard to regain credibility. Dr Fenech-Adami was participating in a radio programme.

• 18 September 2001 Parliament observed a minute’s silence in mourning for the victims of the US bombing. Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami stated that the attack was not only an act against the United States, but against civilisation. Opposition Leader Alfred Sant joined in the expression of solidarity made by the Prime Minister.

• 18 September 2001 The Security Committee said in its first ever report on the Security Service that the service was playing an invaluable role in assisting the forces of law and order in their fight against crime. The report was tabled in Parliament by Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami.

• 18 September 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli said that the Government planned to set up a Financial Intelligence Unit to deal with money laundering. Mr Dalli was delivering the opening speech at a one-day workshop on Combating money laundering, held by the Malta Financial Services Centre at the Hilton, in St Julian’s.

• 18 September 2001 A new company, Malta Air Traffic Service Ltd, has been set up to operate air traffic control and the engineering function related to air traffic control. The new company was formed to operate following the privatisation of Malta International Airport that is scheduled to come about by the end of the year.

• 18 September 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli said in Parliament that the Government had appointed Philippe Vlaemmincke of Vlaemmincke & Partners to give legal advice with regard to the privatisation of Public Lotto. Vlaemmincke & Partners are the legal advisers of the European Association for State Lotteries and Toto Companies and consultants to a number of governments on lotteries.
• **18 September 2001** Transport Minister Censu Galea said that the Maritime Authority had a revenue of Lm491,116 from cruise liner business between September 2000 and August 2001. The amount is made up of Lm473,716 from passenger tax and Lm17,400 from port dues. Mr Galea was replying to a Parliamentary Question.

• **18 September 2001** Malta ratified the European Convention on Cinematographic Co-production, in Strasbourg. The convention was signed by the Parliamentary Secretary in the Economic Services Ministry, George Hyzler, with Council of Europe Secretary General Walter Schwimmer.

• **18 September 2001** Figures released by the National Office of Statistics show that the stock of licensed motor vehicles at the end of June this year stood at 250,590, up from 243,692 at the end of the same month last year. Of this year’s total, 185,209, or 73.9 per cent, were private vehicles while commercial vehicles amounted to 43,390, or 17.3 per cent.

• **18 September 2001** Air Malta announced that, until further notice, all passengers should check in two hours ahead of scheduled departure time. The airline said that in making these arrangements it had in mind the safety and well being of its passengers.

• **18 September 2001** Jesmond Schembri, Maltese Consul in New York, said that so far no Maltese family or individual had contacted the Consulate to report missing relatives. Persons with Maltese names appearing on the Mayor’s list of missing persons might be second or third generation Maltese, Mr Schembri said.

• **19 September 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli announced that the Tax Compliance Unit had concluded a number of benchmarking exercises. He said that he would be discussing these exercises with the other social partners at the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development. Mr Dalli was speaking at a news conference that reviewed the work of the Finance Ministry during the past year.

• **19 September 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli said that Malta Freeport, Malta International Airport, Public Lotto, Mediterranean Offshore Bunkering Company, and the Kordin Grain Terminal were to be privatised by the end of the year. Mr Dalli was reviewing the work of the Finance Ministry during the past year.

• **19 September 2001** Foreign Minister Joe Borg said that EU membership talks on agriculture would only start after Malta had submitted the third part of its position paper on the sector, including proposals for a financial package as part of a Special Market Policy Programme for Maltese Agriculture. The Minister was replying to a Parliamentary Question.

• **19 September 2001** The Malta-EU Information Centre (MIC) announced that statements claiming that subsidies to the shipbuilding and ship-repair sectors must stop on membership were incorrect. Only operating aid, which is used directly to pay for wages, was illegal, MIC said.

• **19 September 2001** The new Environment Protection Act came into force designating the Environment Protection Department as the competent authority in terms of law. A set of 19 regulations has been issued under the Act, which treats various subjects related to the environment, such as water quality, air quality, waste and chemicals.

• **19 September 2001** Malta’s Ambassador to the United Nations, Walter Balzan, was elected one of the Vice-Presidents of the 56th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Mr Balzan was endorsed by the Western European and Others Group.

• **20 September 2001** Hundreds of people prayed for the victims of the terrorist attacks on the United States during Mass at St John’s Co-Cathedral in Valletta. Heading the congregation were President Guido De Marco and his wife Violet, Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, and Members of Parliament. American Ambassador Anthony Gioia and his wife Donna were also present. The function was organised by the Malta Emigrants’ Commission and the Maltese-American Association.

• **20 September 2001** At a joint press conference addressed by Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Borg, Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici, and Metco Chairman Anthony Diacono, the Government announced the launch of a programme of co-operation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Malta External Trade Corporation (METCO). Diplomatic staff working in the Embassies in Egypt,
The Netherlands and the High Commission in London are to be involved in specific trade promotion initiatives in addition to their usual duties.

- **20 September 2001** Agriculture Minister Ninu Zammit said that tests for BSE, or mad cow disease, were still being carried out on all cows slaughtered locally. They would continue to be carried out until the disease was completely eradicated in the countries where it was most rampant. Mr Zammit was speaking in Parliament.

- **20 September 2001** Central Bank Governor Michael C. Bonello said that, given its minuscule size, Malta could suffer but also gain as a result of the adverse economic situation resulting from the terrorist attacks on the United States. Mr Bonello was addressing the Public Accounts Committee, in Parliament.

- **20 September 2001** The Malta Freeport Corporation announced that last year it made a profit of $12.3 million compared to $4.3 million in the previous year. The figures were published as part of the Freeport Annual Financial Statement for 2000, tabled in Parliament.

- **20 September 2001** In the June quarter this year, total sales by large manufacturing enterprises amounted to Lm249.4 million, a drop of Lm33.7 million compared to the same period the previous year. The figures were released by the National Statistics Office.

- **20 September 2001** The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean turned down a Maltese proposal to establish a zone in the Central Mediterranean where fishing for blue fin tuna would only take place using long lines. The proposal was made by the Maltese Government and the National Fisheries Co-operative.

- **20 September 2001** The Central Bank released the first coin in a series commemorating distinguished Maltese personalities. The obverse side of the coin shows the Coat-of-Arms of the Republic of Malta and the year of issue, while the reverse of the first coin shows the name and portrait of Enrico Mizzi (1885-1950), with the words *Prim Ministru 1950* at bottom right.

- **21 September 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Government was willing to co-operate with all foreign governments who were determined to combat terrorism in all its forms. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at Floriana.

- **21 September 2001** The Public Transport Authority launched its own website at [www.maltatransport.com](http://www.maltatransport.com). The Authority also introduced a Freephone service on 0800 772393.

- **21 September 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici toured the premises of Infratec Pro, at Corradino Industrial Estate. The company is about to embark on a major expansion programme that will see it double its workforce by next year. *Infratec Pro* assembles rack monitoring systems and computer switching consoles.

- **22 September 2001** Archbishop Joseph Mercieca said that people expected to see politicians pulling the same rope for the benefit of the country. Mgr Mercieca was delivering the homily during Pontifical Mass at St John’s Co-Cathedral, as part of the activities marking the 37th anniversary of Independence.

- **22 September 2001** President Guido de Marco and Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami placed flowers at the foot of the Independence Monument. A fanfare was then sounded, and the national anthem played after a 21-gun salute was fired.

- **23 September 2001** A Foreign Ministry spokesman announced that Malta had associated itself with a declaration by the European Union committing itself to fight terrorism. EU leaders meeting in an emergency summit on Friday declared full solidarity with the United States and pledged support for any targeted actions it might take in response to the September 11 terrorist attacks.

- **23 September 2001** The Government said that its decision to halt subsidies to Malta Drydocks was unrelated to the issue of Malta’s membership of the European Union. The Government was reacting to a statement by the party in opposition.
• 23 September 2001 Malta’s capital joined some 1,500 cities in 32 European countries in holding the first mandatory car-free day in Valletta. The car-free initiative was a joint collaboration of the Valletta local council and the Environment Ministry.

• 24 September 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Government was prepared to keep injecting money into Malta Drydocks for a number of years provided that there was a concerted effort to make the yard viable in future. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking in Nadur, Gozo.

• 25 September 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami announced that the Cabinet had agreed that the restructuring plan which was intended to make the Drydocks viable would be drawn up by a task force presided over by a government minister. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing the media following the weekly Monday morning cabinet meeting, at Auberge de Castille.

• 25 September 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that Cabinet had agreed that Malta should fully co-operate with the countries that had embarked on a mission to eradicate international terrorism following the attacks on the United States. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking to the press following the cabinet meeting.

• 25 September 2001 Forty-eight officers and men from the Armed Forces of Malta are taking part in exercise Terra Ferma 2001, a joint Italian-Maltese exercise being held in the Persano military training area, close to Salerno. The exercise will end on October 5.

• 25 September 2001 The Environment Ministry’s Valletta Rehabilitation Project has commissioned a team led by Professor Heinz Leitner from Dresden University to restore the 16th century frescoes at the Palace, in Valletta, at a cost of Lm80,000. The frescoes are the work of Perez D’Aleccio Matteo.

• 26 September 2001 Foreign Minister Joe Borg said that Malta was prepared to abide by the US request to freeze the assets of suspected terrorists. “We have to monitor all developments and, where possible, and within our limitations, we will do our bit in the fight against terrorism,” the Minister said. Dr Borg was speaking to reporters shortly after launching a series of public meetings on the 37 EU impact assessment reports published last June.

• 26 September 2001 Foreign Minister Joe Borg said that the EU’s enlargement process was irreversible and would take place in 2004. “We are monitoring everything so as not to miss out on being in the first enlargement,” the Minister said. Dr Borg was speaking to reporters shortly after launching a series of public meetings on the 37 EU impact assessment reports published last June.

• 26 September 2001 Education Minister Louis Galea said that the Government had invested more than Lm7.5 million in information technology in the educational sector, attaining a high level of accessibility. Dr Galea was speaking at a news conference on the performance of the Education and Culture Ministry over the past year.

• 26 September 2001 Education Minister Louis Galea said that the financial situation of Public Broadcasting Services was unsustainable. PBS had to reorganise and reform itself to implement its mission as the public broadcaster. Dr Galea was speaking at a news conference on the performance of the Education and Culture Ministry over the past year.

• 26 September 2001 Provisional statistics supplied by the Central Bank of Malta show that government debt outstanding at the end of August stood at Lm1,007.3 million, up by Lm101.9 million, or 11.3 per cent, from Lm905.4 million at the end of August last year. The figures were quoted by the National Statistics Office.

• 26 September 2001 Bank of Valletta International Ltd merged with its parent company Bank of Valletta plc. The brand name BOVI will, however, be retained and the bank will continue to operate through the existing premises in Zachary Street and South Street, Valletta.

• 27 September 2001 The Central Bank and the Malta Bankers’ Association officially launched an awareness campaign to provide information about the introduction of euro notes and coins on January 1, and its implications for Malta. An information leaflet is available from branches of APS Bank, Bank of Valletta, HSBC and Lombard Bank.

• 27 September 2001 The National Office of Statistics published a concise set of data relating to the state of children in the Maltese Islands. The data was issued to mark the Children’s Summit, which
was due to be held in New York between September 19 and 21. The summit was cancelled following the September 11 attacks on the US.

- **27 September 2001** Today is ‘World Day of Tourism’, an event that has been marked every year since 1980, when it was instituted by the World Tourism Organisation. This year’s theme is *Tourism: A tool for peace and dialogue among civilisations.*

- **27 September 2001** *Maltacom* announced that all fixed line telephone numbers now have a ‘21’ prefix. However, until 30th April 2002, all subscribers can also be contacted using the old, six-digit numbers. The Corporation said that the introduction of the prefix had been achieved by the end of September in conformity with the deadline laid down in the National Plan for the Adoption of the Acquis.

- **27 September 2001** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that the final version of Malta’s waste management strategy would be presented to Cabinet for approval next week. The Minister was chairing a debate at the Bay Street Complex.

- **28 September 2001** Economic Minister Josef Bonnici announced that the Maltese clothing sector had experienced an expansion and the number of jobs had increased by 300 since 1st January 2001. Prof. Bonnici was speaking to reporters while on a visit to leading clothing firm *VF (Malta) Ltd.*

- **28 September 2001** *Enemalta Corporation* laid four kilometres of cable on land and on the seabed between Malta and Gozo to improve the electricity supply to Gozo. Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici, Gozo Minister Giovanna Debono, and Enemalta Chairman Robert Ghirlando saw the cable being laid between Santa Maria Bay in Comino and *Hondoq ir-Rummien* in Qala.

- **28 September 2001** The National Statistics Office announced that domestic exports dropped by Lm69.7 million, to Lm538.6 million, between January and August. Imports were also down, by Lm187.6 million to Lm769.3 million.

- **28 September 2001** The Central Bank announced that its Monetary Policy Council had lowered the reserve requirement ratio by one percentage point, from five per cent to four per cent of the banks’ deposit liabilities. The new ratio will come into effect from the beginning of the maintenance period that commences on 15th October 2001.

- **28 September 2001** The Employment and Training Corporation launched a training programme to encourage entrepreneurship. Called *Ibda Negozju Tieghek (INT),* the programme is aimed at promoting an enterprise culture among those interested in taking up self-employment.

- **29 September 2001** The Government released the terms of reference given to the task force for the restructuring of the shipyards. The terms of reference say that the objective is to ensure that a concrete and attainable plan is completed by the end of November for Malta Drydocks and Malta Shipbuilding to become economically and financially viable.

- **29 September 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that in the past 10 years the number of 16-year-old students who continued to pursue higher education had risen to just under 50 per cent from 23 per cent. Dr Fenech-Adami spoke at the inauguration of the Malta College of Art, Science and Technology (MCAST).

- **29 September 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that although there were excess staff at PBS, none of the Public Broadcasting Services employees would be laid off. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking during a social occasion.

- **29 September 2001** As from the 1st October 2001 Mr. George Borg assumes the duties of Chairman of IPSE Ltd. Mr Borg replaces Mr. Lino Callus who occupied the post of chairman for the last three years.

- **29 September 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli said that the Customs Department must implement the necessary restructuring and brace itself in order to be able to shoulder both old and new responsibilities. Mr Dalli was speaking during an activity marking Customs Day.
29 September 2001 Transport Minister Censu Galea launched the new Port Advisory Committee. The Committee was set up to advise the Government on how to improve operations within Grand Harbour.

29 September 2001 The Head of the EU Delegation in Malta, Ronald Gallimore, said that Malta’s environment would benefit from EU membership. Mr Gallimore was speaking at a seminar entitled The European Union and the Environment - transport, air quality and pollution, held at Ta’ Xbiex.

29 September 2001 The Planning Authority launched an online geographical information system in an effort to increase public accessibility to information related to land use planning. The service allows users to search and browse maps and photography as well as records of permits, enforcement actions and scheduled property. The information is available at www.pa-malta.org

29 September 2001 Middlesea Group posted a profit after taxation of Lm502,376 in the first six months of this year. The Board of Directors did not propose to pay an interim dividend in respect of the first six months of operations ended June 30 this year.

29 September 2001 The Australian High Commission has donated Lm535 to the Emigrants’ Commission following a fund-raising event held at St Julians. The funds will go towards the running of the Malta Virtual Migration Museum. The Museum can be found at www.maltamigration.com

29 September 2001 American queen of pop Madonna arrived in Malta to star in husband Guy Ritchie’s latest movie, entitled Love, Sex, Drugs and Money. Filming in Malta is scheduled to be completed by mid-October, when the production team will move to Sardinia.

30 September 2001 Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi was appointed to head the task force to try and revive the ailing shipyards. Commenting on his appointment, Dr Gonzi said that the restructuring of the yards was “the biggest ever challenge to the country, the Government, and also myself”.

30 September 2001 Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici hailed work on the 133,500-ton floating production storage and offloading unit Ikdam as the best advertisement for Malta Drydocks. The conversion job was the first major contract of its type to have been won by Malta Drydocks in nearly 20 years.

30 September 2001 Fr Angelo Seychell, or Dun Ang, as he is fondly known, won the Elderly Person of the Year award for his untiring dedication to persons with disabilities and to various charitable causes. Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami presented the award to Albert Tabone, of the National Council of the Elderly, who had nominated Fr Seychell and who received it on his behalf.

30 September 2001 The Finance Ministry said in a statement that no evidence had so far come to light to connect Malta with any individuals or organisations sought or named by the authorities in the United States and in United Nations Resolution 1368. The announcement follows a statement from First International Merchant Bank plc categorically denying what it termed ‘misleading information’ in a section of the media that may have led one to believe that FIMBank has contacts with Al Shamal Islamic Bank Sudan, a bank that the US Senate associates with Osama bin Laden.

OCTOBER

1 October 2001 Malta, the Canary Islands, Portugal, Madeira, Spain, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the Far East are being seen by the tourist industry as being safe tourist destinations in the current international climate. The Sunday Times of London carried a special report on the state of the tourism industry in the wake of the September 11 terror attacks on the United States.

1 October 2001 A remembrance service for US attack victims was held at St Paul’s Bay parish church. It was attended by President Guido de Marco, Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami and US Ambassador Anthony Gioia, among others. The service was originally due to be held at the Kennedy Memorial, but had to be moved indoors because of inclement weather.
2 October 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami stated that Malta Drydocks was able to pay out Lm762,000 in salaries to its employees following a government advance of Lm414,625. Dr Fenech-Adami said that the Government had decided to deduct from the balance a sum of about Lm47,000 which were the quantifiable costs resulting from the September 12 incidents at Malta Drydocks. The Prime Minister was speaking following the weekly Cabinet meeting.

2 October 2001 Chief Justice Joseph Said Pullicino warned that the administration of justice was under a concerted ‘emasculating’ attack but acknowledged that there could be elements at work within the judiciary which were colouring public perception. Chief Justice Said Pullicino was speaking at the ceremony marking the start of the forensic year.

2 October 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli said that it was unfortunate and highly irresponsible of foreign newspapers and a local media to falsely link Malta to a terrorist organisation’s finances. In the light of the seriousness of the issue foreign newspapers had agreed to rectify the reports, Mr Dalli said.

2 October 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli said that repercussions of the September 11 attacks on the US would probably be felt in the medium term in the tourism and manufacturing sector. “Still, I am optimistic that, after this shock, things will get back to normal,” Mr Dalli said. The Minister was being interviewed by The Times newspaper.

2 October 2001 A Malta-Commonwealth international workshop on banking and finance in small states opened at the Foundation for International Studies in Valletta. It covers a number of themes ranging from international banking to monetary policy and financial regulation. The workshop runs until October 12.

2 October 2001 University Rector Prof. Roger Ellul Micallef said that nowadays, more than ever, it was impossible to have a university that was cut off from the rest of the world. He said that the university had to meet the needs of the changing employment world and ensure that its students were taught both theory and practice. Mr Ellul Micallef was speaking at the start of the new academic year.

2 October 2001 According to preliminary findings, 65 per cent of students who qualified at the Institute for Tourism Studies continued to work in the tourism sector. This results from an ITS survey currently being finalised.

2 October 2001 The rate of inflation for August stood at 2.22 per cent, up from 2.04 per cent the previous month. The figures were released by the National Statistics Office.

3 October 2001 Parliamentary Secretary George Hyzler said that the Government intended to privatise Maltapost and liberalise the postal services. Dr Hyzler was speaking in Parliament.

3 October 2001 The Malta Tourism Authority announced that Malta is to receive unprecedented exposure on German television in the coming weeks. No fewer than seven stations will carry features on the Islands over the autumn season, the authority said.

3 October 2001 Local Government Minister Austin Gatt said that Local Councils’ income from the local wardens system amounted to just over Lm1.2 million in one financial year alone. Dr Gatt was speaking at a news conference on the financial situation of local councils.

4 October 2001 President Guido de Marco said that one could not remain neutral in the face of terrorism and its innocent victims. He said that terrorism remained terrorism irrespective of whether it happened in New York, Gaza, Tel Aviv or Belfast. Prof. de Marco was addressing the General Workers’ Union congress.

4 October 2001 President Guido de Marco said in his address to the GWU congress that he had gone through the Union’s 57-page document Twemmin and had realised that he was on the same wavelength with the union on a number of issues raised in it. The congress had as its theme The GWU - Justice in Society.

4 October 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that there were 727 new workers in the public service between January 1 and September 20 this year. He said 697 workers left the service during the same period. Dr Fenech-Adami was replying to a Parliamentary Question.
• 4 October 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that plans for the stabilisation, progressive restoration and eventual closure of existing waste dump sites, followed by aftercare and a return to beneficial use, must be prepared and implemented by the end of 2004. He said that the strategy involved an investment of Lm70 million. Dr Zammit Dimech was addressing a news conference.

• 4 October 2001 National Statistics Office director Mario Vella announced that an agriculture census is to be carried out by NSO. The census will be held between October 22 and November 11 and will collect detailed information about the country’s agricultural sector.

• 4 October 2001 A Parliamentary delegation comprising Foreign Affairs Committee member John Vella from the Government side, and Chris Cardona from the Opposition side attended the XXVth COSAC meeting, in Brussels. COSAC was set up following an agreement reached in 1989 between the Presidents of the Parliaments of the Member States of the European Communities on the need to strengthen the role of national parliaments.

• 4 October 2001 French Tourism Minister Michelle Demessine visited the Malta stand at the Top Resa tourism fair, which took place in Deauville between September 20 and 21. Malta was also featured during the fair in one of France’s most important weekly travel magazines, Tour Hebdo.

• 4 October 2001 The Malta Tourism Authority’s office in Moscow held its fifth Malta workshop on September 20. The workshop’s theme was Malta: More than meets the eye.

• 4 October 2001 Bank of Valletta is sponsoring two Maltese cultural weeks being organised by the Maltese embassy in Tripoli. This week’s event consists of an exhibition of paintings by Maltese artist Luciano Micallef at the Central National Library, in Tripoli.

• 4 October 2001 The Housing Authority tripled its rent subsidy for young people in search of suitable accommodation after leaving children’s homes. The subsidy now stands at Lm600 per annum for each apartment, the authority said.

• 4 October 2001 Air Malta and Lufthansa announced special fares for passengers holding Swissair tickets following the grounding of all Swissair aircraft. The two airlines said that this was a gesture towards passengers and they were not bound to provide such a service.

• 5 October 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that everyone had to be prepared to do away with old work practices that were no longer suitable in this day and age. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing the General Workers Union congress, at Qawra.

• 5 October 2001 Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg said that the crime rate between January and August was down when compared to the same period last year, the first time this had happened in five years. Dr Borg was addressing a news conference reviewing his third year in office.

• 5 October 2001 Cottonera Waterfront Group director architect Edward Bencini said that the Cottonera Waterfront project was on schedule and expected to meet its original date of completion - June 2003. The marina project alone involves a Lm4 million investment, while the rest of the project amounts to a combined investment of Lm12 million.

• 5 October 2001 Swissair resumed its flight operations to Malta with a scheduled flight in the afternoon. The decision to resume flight operations was taken after the Swiss Government made Lm123 million available to the airline.

• 6 October 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami visited the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, in Floriana. Referring to legislation on animal welfare being discussed in Parliament Dr Fenech-Adami said he hoped that the legislation will further contribute to an awareness of animal welfare. The occasion was National Animal Welfare Day.

• 6 October 2001 President Guido de Marco stressed the importance of preserving our national heritage so that the past could continue into the future. The President was speaking during a visit to Fort Rinella, in Kalkara.
• 6 October 2001 Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi announced that spending on pensions and other social benefits was up by £21 million this year over 1998. Dr Gonzi said that the Government was committed to keeping social benefits sustainable.

• 6 October 2001 Central Bank Governor Michael Bonello listed the options open to Malta in tackling the problem of remaining competitive in the face of globalisation and trade liberalisation. Mr Bonello was speaking during a conference on National competitiveness: the way to prosperity, organised by the Chamber of Commerce at the New Dolmen Hotel in Qawra.

• 6 October 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli announced that the Malta Financial Services Authority to be set up would be the single regulator of the financial market. Mr Dalli was speaking at a meeting of the Federation of European Stock Exchanges, in Valletta.

• 6 October 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli announced that the Government would be privatising a number of entities by the end of the first quarter of next year, as one way of reducing the deficit. Mr Dalli was addressing a meeting of the Federation of European Stock Exchanges.

• 6 October 2001 Transport Minister Censu Galea said that the Ports Consultative Council had been set up to keep abreast of developments in competing neighbouring ports that were ahead in their restructuring process. Mr Galea was speaking at the launch of the Council.

• 6 October 2001 Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici was the main speaker at an investment promotion seminar, in Vienna. The Malta Development Corporation said the seminar was part of its ongoing promotional campaign in Austria to position Malta as a potential location for Austrian investment.

• 6 October 2001 Permanent Representative to the United Nations Walter Balzan said that the search for funds linked to terrorists had so far proved negative. However, he added, full diligence and scrutiny would continue to be exercised. Mr Balzan was addressing the UN General Assembly in New York about measures to eliminate international terrorism.

• 6 October 2001 The Employment and Training Corporation introduced a part-time employment register on its website. The register enables workers who wish to work part-time to submit their details online. Employers looking for part-time workers may, in turn, access the website at www.etc.org.mt to propose employment.

• 7 October 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli inaugurated the new premises for the Malta Stock Exchange at the old Garrison Chapel, in Castille Place, Valletta. The building was restored at a cost of £1.5 million.

• 7 October 2001 The new task force, led by Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi, entrusted with the restructuring of the shipyards, held its first meeting. Following the meeting, Dr Gonzi, General Workers Union Secretary General Tony Zarb and Malta Drydocks Chairman John Cassar White all expressed their hope that solutions for the future of the shipyard would be found.

• 8 October 2001 The President of the European People’s Party group in the Council of Europe, René van der Linden, said that, if Malta were to withdraw its application for EU membership for the second time it would not be possible for the Island to join in the foreseeable future. Mr van der Linden was interviewed by The Times newspaper while on a two-day visit to Malta.

• 8 October 2001 The Malta Tourism Authority was instrumental in the publication of a detailed guide to Malta in French, recently published in France by leading travel guide book specialist, La Manufacture. The 265-page guide-book features hundreds of beautiful colour photographs of locations all over the Maltese Islands.

• 8 October 2001 Destination Malta, a new guide-book published by American Express, was published in both the English and French languages. The publication includes guides to good food and wine, hotels and services as well as ideas on where to shop for traditional arts and crafts.

• 8 October 2001 Amendments to the Competition Act approved by Parliament last November have come into force. Parliamentary Secretary George Hyzler explained that, as a result of these amendments, all public undertakings, except those exempted by the Minister for a special reason, now fell under the law.
• 9 October 2001 President Guido de Marco said that the Middle East situation had to be brought to the front burner of the international agenda in the fight against terrorism. “We cannot afford any possible excuse to those who want to use the Palestinian cause as a means for furthering terroristic activities,” Prof. de Marco said.

• 9 October 2001 Parliament unanimously approved a resolution laying down that Malta should continue to co-operate “according to its means and possibilities” in the fight against international terrorism. The motion was moved by Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami and seconded by Opposition Leader Alfred Sant. Winding up, Dr Fenech-Adami expressed his pleasure that the House was speaking with one voice in the fight against terrorism.

• 9 October 2001 US Ambassador Anthony Gioia said that the US was extremely pleased with the Maltese Government’s support in the light of the horrific September 11 attacks. “I am also personally pleased with the Maltese people and their personal support,” Mr Gioia said. The Ambassador was addressing his first press conference in Malta since his appointment last month.

• 9 October 2001 Acting British High Commissioner Philip Tissot issued a statement following the military action in Afghanistan saying that he did not believe there was “a specific threat to British interests in Malta”.

• 9 October 2001 The Russian Foreign Ministry issued a statement through its Embassy in Malta to say that terrorists had found shelter on Taliban controlled territory. “Terrorists, wherever they are - in Afghanistan, Chechnya, the Middle East or the Balkans - must know that justice will come upon them.”

• 9 October 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli warned tax evaders who were caught not to expect leniency. He said that the recently announced Investment Registration Scheme was yet another opportunity for Maltese investors who might still hold unregistered assets outside the country to regularise their position. Mr Dalli was speaking at a seminar organised by the Malta Institute of Taxation, on Manoel Island.

• 9 October 2001 Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici led a government delegation for the third meeting of the China-Malta Mixed Economic Commission. Prof. Bonnici was scheduled to have meetings at the China Federation of Industry and Commerce and with the Chinese Committee for Promoting International Trade.

• 9 October 2001 The National Statistics Office announced that a total of 41,515 foreign students attended an English language course in Malta last year. This signifies an increase of 6,009 students, or 16.9 per cent, over the previous year.

• 10 October 2001 Education and Culture Minister Louis Galea opened the debate in Parliament on the National Heritage Bill. The main aspects of the Bill are the setting up of a Superintendence of Cultural Heritage to assume the regulatory role for the sector, and of ‘Heritage Malta’, an agency that would manage state-owned museums and sites and which could also assign such sites to non-governmental organisations.

• 10 October 2001 Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg said that the crime rate in August and September had dropped by 17.2 per cent and 13.8 per cent respectively, compared to the same months last year. Dr Borg was speaking in Parliament.

• 10 October 2001 President Guido de Marco left for Geneva to chair the third meeting of the policy advisory committee of the World Intellectual Property Organisation. WIPO is a specialised agency of the United Nations with a mandate to administer intellectual property matters, such as international treaties, as well to assist governments and other organisations in the field.

• 11 October 2001 Commonwealth Secretary General Don McKinnon asked Government Whip Mario Galea to join a nine-member Commonwealth Election Observer Team to monitor and report on the presidential election in Gambia, due on the 18th October. Mr Galea currently occupies the post of Regional Representative of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

• 11 October 2001 The Police Commissioner declared that he was going out on indefinite vacation leave. Mr Grech said in a statement that he had taken the decision after the media reported the
conclusions of an inquiry into allegations against him of attempted rape. The duties of Commissioner were taken on by Deputy Commissioner Joseph Cachia, while Herbert Agius was appointed Acting Head of the Security Service.

- **11 October 2001** Former President Ugo Mifsud Bonnici and Prof. Mro Joseph Vella, on behalf of the Fondazzjoni Memorja Kulturali Nazzjonali, presented a CD of 17th century Maltese music to Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami. The presentation was held at the Prime Minister’s office in Parliament.

- **11 October 2001** Mr Joseph Scicluna, Permanent Secretary within the Ministry of Finance, said that Datatrak electronic tracking equipment was being installed on all vehicles owned or hired by the Government, in a bid to curb abuse and to replace a failing logging system. Mr Scicluna was addressing the House Public Accounts Committee.

- **11 October 2001** Revised employment figures published by the Employment and Training Corporation reveal that there were 5,000 fewer gainfully occupied people in 2000 than previously calculated. Published statistics had originally shown a figure of 141,117. The revised figures now show that the gainfully occupied population last year was 136,117.


- **12 October 2001** The British Health and Safety Authority and Ireland’s Health and Safety Authority are to provide advice to the Government on practical aspects of European health and safety law after they successfully bid for the work, in competition with other member states. The project will be funded for 12 months by the EU.

- **12 October 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici announced that, over the next three to four years Menrad Ltd would be investing Lm3.7 million on an expansion project at its Malta factory. Prof. Bonnici was speaking while on a visit to the Menrad factory at San Gwann Industrial Estate.

- **12 October 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that Air Malta would not be facing an easy year following the adverse effects the airline had suffered in the wake of the September 11 attacks on the US. Prof. Bonnici said, however, that he was convinced that Air Malta could overcome the challenge.

- **12 October 2001** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that, given the prevailing circumstances, the tourist figures for July were “quite acceptable” as most Mediterranean destinations had fared badly during the summer. The National Statistics Office shows the July figure at 150,510, that is 1.5 per cent below the figure for the same month last year.

- **13 October 2001** The June quarter reveals an exceptional turnaround in the current account balance, from a net deficit of Lm52.8 million during the June 2000 quarter to a net surplus of Lm1.8 million during the relative quarter in 2001. This results from a provisional statement on the international economic and financial transactions of Malta published by the National Statistics Office.

- **13 October 2001** Malta Information Technology and Training Services Ltd Chairman Joseph R Grima said that nearly 70 per cent of persons with a disability could utilise mainstream technologies with very minor changes at minimal cost. Mr Grima was speaking during a seminar entitled Ensuring Equal Opportunities through Information and Communication Technology.

- **13 October 2001** Licensing Department Director Paul Galea said that the old book-style driving licence document will over the next five years be phased out and replaced with a credit-card sized, plastic photo-card that can be conveniently placed in a wallet or handbag. The photo-cards are being issued in line with EU directives that maintain standardisation in design and colour in all driving licences across Europe.

- **14 October 2001** The European Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, Anna Diamantopoulou, is visiting Malta later this month to sign an agreement under which Malta and the Commission will together identify the most important strengths, weaknesses and challenges for the
Maltese labour market in the coming years. The Joint Assessment Paper will enable Malta to ‘shadow’ the European Employment Strategy even before it is required to do so as an EU member.

- **14 October 2001** The Home Affairs Ministry said that it would not hold back from repatriating Libyan prisoners so that they could serve their prison term in Libya. It said that an agreement for the transfer of prisoners between Malta and Libya and vice-versa was signed in 1995 and followed the lines of similar agreements with Council of Europe countries. The Ministry was reacting to a news report.

- **14 October 2001** President Guido de Marco explained his role as guardian of the Constitution. He spoke of political courage, saying that Presidents had to work hand in hand with the House of Representatives for the Constitution to be safeguarded properly. Professor de Marco was being interviewed on television.

- **14 October 2001** Malta International Airport announced that it had made a record pre-tax profit of Lm3.26 million in the year ending March 31, 2001. This is an increase of Lm366,000 over the previous year. Details of the financial results were given at a press conference addressed by MIA Chairman Lawrence Zammit, following the company’s annual general meeting.

- **14 October 2001** The Malta Tourism Authority announced that a survey it had carried out among tourists had shown that 91.8 per cent of respondents would like to visit Malta again and that 90.2 per cent would recommend Malta to friends. The overall results indicate that Malta is a good place in which to have a relaxing holiday and also that it is rich in history and culture.

- **15 October 2001** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo announced that Air Malta was expected to suspend its flights to Damascus, Beirut and possibly Cairo in the very near future, following the US military attacks on Afghanistan. He said that the airline was constantly reviewing and monitoring the situation together with the Malta Tourism Authority. Dr Refalo was addressing a news conference.

- **15 October 2001** The Institute for the Promotion of Small Enterprise and the Kunsill Studenti Universitarji signed a two-year partnership agreement in a bid to foster entrepreneurship among the student population. The agreement seeks to establish a synergy between the Kordin Business Incubation Centre and students, particularly those reading for degrees in engineering, design, IT, and related areas.

- **15 October 2001** Agriculture Minister Ninu Zammit said that the Agriculture and Aquaculture Department had asked the Armed Forces of Malta to provide protection to local fishermen fishing for lampuki following problems with Tunisian fishermen. Mr Zammit was giving an account of the work carried out by his Ministry during its third year in office.

- **16 October 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli said in a statement that by 2003 his Ministry would be putting into practice the accrual accounting system by preparing the first financial statement bearing the date December 31, 2003. Mr Dalli was rebutting a report appearing in a section of the media.

- **16 October 2001** Education Minister Louis Galea announced at Mellieha that the Foundation for Education Services had received a donation of Lm70,000 from the EU Gruntvig programme towards the setting up of the educational programmes Hilti and Id f’Id. Mr Galea said that the Maltese model would also be tried in seven other European countries.

- **16 October 2001** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo called on the Church in Malta to make more of its vast cultural heritage accessible to the Maltese public. The remarks were made during the debate in Parliament on the Cultural Heritage Bill.

- **16 October 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that it was too early to discuss any privatisation of Medigrain Ltd. Prof. Bonnici was replying to a Parliamentary Question.

- **16 October 2001** The VAT Department has introduced a new on-line service to help the public obtain information on the VAT law. The new service can be accessed at [www.vat.gov.mt](http://www.vat.gov.mt)

- **17 October 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Government had worked hard to generate confidence. Dr Fenech-Adami said, however, that confidence and trust could only be truly generated if we rose above our own egoistic expectations and considered national interests first and foremost. The Prime Minister was visiting the new premises of the Malta Stock Exchange, at Castille Place, Valletta.
• 17 October 2001 French Minister for European Affairs Pierre Moscovici said that, if Malta continued with its efforts, the Island would be in a position to make up for time lost and be one of the first countries to complete negotiations with the EU. Mr Moscovici was being interviewed by *The Times* newspaper prior to his visiting the Island.

• 17 October 2001 A spokesman for the Social Policy Ministry announced that the Government would be publishing a White Paper setting out new legislation that would make Malta’s industrial relations law fully compliant with the requirements of the ILO and the acquis communautaire. He dismissed as ‘misleading and factually incorrect’ the latest International Confederation of Trade Unions’ annual survey of violations of trade union rights that concluded that the right to strike remained heavily restricted for Maltese workers.

• 17 October 2001 Health Minister Louis Deguara said that construction of the hospital at tal-Qroq was on schedule; the first phase due to be completed by early 2003. Dr Deguara was speaking at a news conference to review the past year’s work at his Ministry.

• 17 October 2001 President Guido de Marco launched *Teenagers - Din l-Art Helwa*, the youth arm of the non-governmental heritage organisation. Prof. de Marco noted with sadness that not everybody was conscious of the country’s heritage.

• 17 October 2001 Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg was presented with a report about drug addicts by a task force set up by the National Youth Council. The task force had been set up to follow up last July’s national conference with the theme *The Maltese drug addict, anonymous, criminal or sick?*

• 17 October 2001 Agriculture Minister Ninu Zammit said in a message to mark *World Food Day* that it was vital for the country to look after and nurture its agricultural produce. “It is also important for us to remember those who have less than us and to play our part to help reduce world hunger,” Mr Zammit said.

• 18 October 2001 Richard Cachia Caruana, Chairman, EU Core Negotiating Group, said that the inclusion of candidate countries at the Conference on the future of Europe was evidence of the trust and confidence that are crucial to the successful outcome both of the enlargement process as well as the construction of our future Europe. Mr Cachia Caruana was making the introductory remarks at the conference, organised by the Malta-EU Information Centre, at the University of Malta.

• 18 October 2001 Minister for Europe of the Republic of France, Pierre Moscovici, said that if Malta joined the European Union it would find its place in the newly enlarged Union and make its voice heard. Mr Moscovici was speaking during the Debate on *The Future of Europe*.

• 18 October 2001 “Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements that first create a de facto solidarity,” said Foreign Minister Joe Borg during his intervention at the Debate on the Future of Europe. Dr Borg was repeating a phrase first uttered by French Foreign Minister Robert Schumann in May 1950.

• 18 October 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli said that Malta was probably the only country where capital gains on equity were tax-free. This concession had been given to entice companies to list and the population to invest in equities. Mr Dalli was replying to comments made by Ivan Burridge, Chairman of the College of Stockbroking Firms, during the Prime Minister’s visit to the Stock Exchange new premises.

• 18 October 2001 Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that the national employment rate at the end of 2000 stood at 54 per cent, meaning that the nation’s aggregate national human resource pool was working at half its capacity. Dr Gonzi was speaking at the annual conference of the Foundation for Human Resources Development.

• 18 October 2001 The National Statistics Office said that the Gross Domestic Product in real terms was down by Lm2.2 million, or 0.6 per cent, in the second quarter this year when compared with the same period last year. The figure declined to Lm347.2 million from Lm349.4 million.

• 18 October 2001 Director of Public Health Malcolm Micallef met Civil Protection director Peter Cordina to draw up a contingency plan in case of any suspected cases of anthrax. Dr Micallef said that the Health Authorities in Malta were following the guidelines available in Europe, particularly Britain.
18 October 2001 Tony Barbaro Sant, who is Maltapost’s public relations officer, announced that as a precaution against anthrax the company was providing employees handling foreign mail with masks and gloves. It was also setting down procedures on how to deal with any suspicious packages.

18 October 2001 The Malta External Trade Corporation, through its offices in Libya, will be organising a series of ‘Mini Business Missions’ during 2002. Further information on the range of services offered by the METCO Libya Office may be obtained from Anthony Tabone on tel. 21446186.

18 October 2001 Justice Minister Austin Gatt announced the setting up of an employers’ forum which, he said, would bring together the Employment and Training Corporation, educators and employer organisations to ensure that the education system meets the needs of industry. Dr Gatt was speaking at the opening of the Information Technology and Telecommunications Fair, being held at the Trade Fair Grounds, in Naxxar.

18 October 2001 Gejtu Vella, General Secretary, Union Haddiema Maghqudin, presented President Guido de Marco with a copy of a study on Malta-EU Relations: Exploring the Options. The study, commissioned by the Union, analyses the various possible options in Malta’s relations.

18 October 2001 The Italian Greens I Verdi raised the tuna dispute between Maltese and Italian fishermen in the Italian Parliament. The Italian Foreign Affairs Ministry said that it had already asked the Italian Agriculture and Forestry Ministry to enter into discussions with its Maltese counterpart to come up with a durable solution to the problem.

18 October 2001 The Consul-General of Malta in Victoria, Australia, Clemente Zammit, was awarded the degree of Doctor of the University (Honoris Causa) by the University of Technology of Victoria. In a message read out during the ceremony, Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that in conferring this degree to Mr Zammit, the University was honouring the achievements of an individual who had given exemplary service to Malta and the Maltese community in Victoria.

19 October 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the present challenge for the EU was to undergo the necessary internal changes while continuing to take collective decisions and, at the same time, safeguard the individuality of its members. Dr Fenech-Adami was delivering the closing speech at a two-day conference discussing The Future of Europe.

19 October 2001 The French Minister for Europe, Pierre Moscovici, said that if Malta joined the European Union the decision would have to be respected irrespective of whether a Nationalist or Labour Government was in office. Mr Moscovici was speaking at a joint press conference with Foreign Minister Joe Borg.

19 October 2001 Mark Butler, operations director of Dowty Automotive, announced that the company was investing Lm5 million over the next two years in the development of a new factory at Hal Far which may see the Malta plant becoming the centre for Dowty’s European operations. Mr Butler later showed Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici the plans for the new factory.

19 October 2001 Education Minister Louis Galea attended the 31st session of the UNESCO general conference, in Paris. The main themes of the conference were the eradication of poverty and the contribution of information and communication technology to the development of education, the sciences, and culture.

19 October 2001 A government statement announced the establishment of diplomatic relations with Sierra Leone. The document establishing diplomatic relations was signed in New York by the permanent representatives of both countries to the United Nations.

19 October 2001 The new Ambassadors of Austria and Colombia presented their diplomatic credentials to President Guido de Marco. The new Ambassador of Austria is Dr Alfons M. Kloss, while that of Colombia is Mr Fabio Valencia Cossio.

19 October 2001 An Air Malta spokesman announced that the company was to increase its fares on most of its routes by three per cent from November 1, in line with other international airlines. The decision was taken within IATA, the International Air Transport Association, and is aimed at making...
good for some of the expenses being incurred by the airline industry in the current international situation.

- **19 October 2001** The new company taking over troubled airline *Swissair* announced that it would be ceasing operations to Malta and closing down its local office. *Swissair* was expected to make its last flight to Malta on October 27.

- **19 October 2001** The German airline *Air Berlin*, which serves all the popular holiday destinations in the Mediterranean, is expected to start operating to Malta from December. It will be the second German airline to start flying to Malta this year.

- **20 October 2001** Mr Richard Cachia Caruana, Chairman of the EU Core Negotiating Group, said that since consensus over the EU was unfortunately not possible in Parliament, the building of consensus within society was of crucial importance. Mr Cachia Caruana was replying to a question on the position of the Malta Labour Party and the overall lack of political consensus on the issue of membership of the European Union, after he addressed the Royal Institute of International Affairs at Chatham House, in London.

- **20 October 2001** Foreign Minister Joe Borg announced that Ministry surveys had consistently shown that over 50 percent of the electorate felt Malta should join the EU. The Minister was speaking at a news conference reviewing his Ministry’s work over the past year.

- **20 October 2001** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that over one million working days were lost last year due to sickness or work-related accidents, costing the economy Lm7.2 million. Dr Gonzi was speaking during a visit to Gasan Enterprises, in Mrieħel.

- **20 October 2001** The Government has set up a Commission for the appointment of Court Experts in an effort to make more efficient use of expert witnesses in court. Justice Minister Austin Gatt said that the Commission would submit its report by March 31.

- **20 October 2001** Justice Minister Austin Gatt announced that international IT networking company *Cisco* is to open an academy in Malta. He said that the development was a clear indication of the confidence that Malta enjoyed with large international companies. Dr Gatt was taking part in a Broadcasting Authority television debate on Public Broadcasting Service.

- **20 October 2001** The Traffic Control Board within the Ministry of Transport and Communications has compiled and updated the Highway Code in consultation with the Police Department, the Licensing and Testing Department, and the Roads Department. The new edition of the Highway Code is being published by the Department of Information and is available in Maltese and English.

- **20 October 2001** Malta was featured in a destination report entitled ‘Amazing Malta’ in the latest issue of the Dutch magazine *Talkies*. Useful tips on where to stay and eat in Malta and Gozo are included in the report.

- **21 October 2001** Foreign Minister Joe Borg participated in the ‘Enlarged’ European Conference focusing on the fight against terrorism in Brussels. During the conference, Dr Borg spoke on the measures taken by Malta in the fight against terrorism and highlighted the resolve of the Maltese Parliament to work to combat terrorism by whatever means at Malta’s disposal.

- **22 October 2001** Foreign Minister Joe Borg said that anti-money laundering legislation was being reviewed and an independent financial intelligence unit was in the process of being set up. Dr Borg was speaking at a Brussels meeting grouping EU countries, candidate-states, and members of the European Free Trade Area that discussed the fight against terrorism.

- **22 October 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli insisted that Malta was not going through a recession. He urged those who were projecting this negative feeling to stop doing so unless they wanted to plunge the country into a real recession. Mr Dalli was speaking at the first public consultation meeting about the upcoming Budget, held at the *Le Meridien Phoenicia Hotel*, in Floriana.

- **22 October 2001** Government and tourism officials were due to meet to discuss the impact on tourism of the September 11 attacks on the United States. Finance Minister John Dalli, Tourism Minister Michael Refalo, Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici, Malta Tourism Authority, and *Air Malta* officials held a first meeting on the matter last week.
• **22 October 2001** The St Luke’s Hospital Management Committee launched a Patient’s Charter of rights and responsibilities, meant to empower patients and improve customer care. The launch coincided with *St Luke’s Day*.

• **23 October 2001** Roberto Antonione, Italian Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, said that the fifth financial protocol with Italy, covering a minimum three-year period, was being discussed. Mr Antonione was speaking during a joint press conference with Foreign Minister Joe Borg.

• **23 October 2001** President Guido de Marco described Islam as a message of peace. Prof. de Marco was visiting the *Mariam Al Batool School and Islamic Centre*, in Paola.

• **23 October 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli said that the Government did not intend selling Public Lotto. It would only be issuing a seven-year operating licence to a private operator. Once the seven years were up, the Government would have the option of either issuing the licence again or itself resuming the running of public lotteries. Mr Dalli was speaking in Parliament on the Lotteries and Other Games Bill.

• **23 October 2001** Minister Finance John Dalli said in Parliament that the Malta Financial Services Centre would eventually become the Malta Financial Services Authority. The Minister was answering a Parliamentary Question.

• **23 October 2001** *Maltapost* employees intercepted letters feared to contain the dreaded anthrax germ powder. One of the letters was addressed to the American Embassy in Floriana, two to the American Ambassador’s residence in Balzan, and one to the British High Commission in Floriana. Another letter believed to contain a powdery substance was received at *Super l* television.

• **23 October 2001** Health Minister Louis Deguara said in Parliament that the Health Division sits on the committee set up to follow recommendations by foreign experts, especially those issued by the British public health laboratory services, on the eventuality of microbiological attacks by terrorists. The Minister was answering a Parliamentary Question.

• **23 October 2001** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that the Government was scheduled to start talks with three short-listed consortia following the publication of the solid waste management strategy. Dr Zammit Dimech said that the adjudication board had recommended that negotiations should commence with the French-Maltese *Onyx-CGEA France/AX Holdings*, the German-Maltese *Staedtereiningung West Nolting GmbH & Co. KG/Polidano Brothers Ltd* and the French consortium *SITA*. Negotiations are set to start on November 2.

• **23 October 2001** Minister Louis Galea announced that, in the first year since the European Union Programmes Unit was set up, a total of 500 students, teachers, researchers, workers and educators had benefited and participated in the *Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates, Youth* and the *Fifth Framework* programmes of the EU. Dr Galea was speaking during an information seminar for education leaders and heads of school on Malta’s participation in EU programmes, in Floriana.

• **24 October 2001** Justice Minister Austin Gatt said that the Government had managed to reverse the trend of pending court cases that had been piling up year after year. Speaking at a news conference on the performance of his Ministry, Dr Gatt said that the backlog of cases had consistently dropped over the past year.

• **24 October 2001** The Government is again allocating funds to constituted bodies and representative organisations to assist them in keeping abreast of developments in the European Union, and to enable them to better educate their members about EU matters related to their respective fields of competence. The fund is being administered by a tripartite committee, composed of representatives from the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the latter as Chairman.

• **24 October 2001** Director General for Public Health Ray Busuttil said that seven letters containing powder which the Health Authorities suspect could be anthrax had been sent for tests in a specially sealed packet to Porton Down in Salisbury, UK. Porton Down is a biological and chemical warfare research centre run jointly by the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Health.
24 October 2001 The National Statistics Office announced that the inflation rate in September was 2.42 per cent, up from 2.22 the previous month. In September last year, the rate stood at 2.67 per cent. The retail price index went up by 0.31 per cent from August, and stood at 117.66.

24 October 2001 *Beauty*, one of the most popular lifestyle magazines in Austria, featured a full-colour eight-page spread on Gozo. The free publicity came about as a result of a press trip organised by the Malta Tourism Authority office in Austria.

24 October 2001 *Nestlé* will be distributing posters and leaflets to their entire supply chain of almost 800 outlets in the coming days, as part of an awareness campaign by the US-Malta Tragedy Relief Fund. The fund was set up by James Satariano, Chairman of the Institute of Directors, along with many friends of the American Embassy in Malta.

24 October 2001 Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg said that there were seven Afghans in Malta who had been granted refugee status by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees Dr Borg was replying in to a Parliamentary Question.

25 October 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that plans had been drawn up for the drilling of a new exploratory oil-well but the contract had not yet been concluded. Dr Fenech-Adami was replying to a Parliamentary Question.

25 October 2001 The Prime Minister left for a two-day official visit to Tunisia. Dr Fenech-Adami’s delegation included Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici and Malta’s Ambassador to Tunisia, Mario Costa.

25 October 2001 The Director General for European Integration at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rocco Cangelosi, said that he did not envisage any problems for Malta joining the European Union. Mr Cangelosi was speaking in a debate on Malta’s accession negotiations at the *Società Italiana per l’Organizzazione Internazionale*, in Rome.

25 October 2001 The Chairman of Malta’s EU Core Negotiating Group, Richard Cachia Caruana, said that since negotiations had started in February 2000, Malta had concluded negotiations on 17 of the 29 chapters on which it had started negotiations. These included chapters where special arrangements were requested to cater for Malta’s specific needs and characteristics. Mr Cachia Caruana was speaking at the *Società Italiana per l’Organizzazione Internazionale*, in Rome.

25 October 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli said that, as from next year, amendments to the Central Bank Act would give the Central Bank complete autonomy in laying down the country’s monetary policy. The changes in the Act would ensure that the Bank would not be subject to political intervention. The Finance Minister was speaking at the Malta Financial Services Centre, at Imrieihel.

25 October 2001 The MFSC has launched a guide for prospective investors entitled *Invest wisely: It’s your money*. Copies of the guide, in either Maltese or English, may be obtained from local council offices, bank branches, the Central Bank, and stockbrokers. It may also be downloaded from the internet at www.mfsc.com.mt/consumer

25 October 2001 The Attorney General, Anthony Borg Barthet, informed the Prime Minister in writing that, in his opinion, no prosecution was warranted against Police Commissioner George Grech. As stated, this opinion refers only to the question of criminal procedures and does not go into matters of disciplinary, administrative or other nature.

25 October 2001 A letter containing a powdery substance addressed to the US Embassy in Floriana was intercepted by *Maltapost* employees at the company’s head office, in Qormi. This is the ninth letter found to contain powder that the Health Authorities suspect might be anthrax. The letter was taken away by the Civil Protection Department and will be sent to the laboratories at Porton Down for analysis.

25 October 2001 Transport Minister Censu Galea said that 190,000 people, the equivalent of half of the population, now own a mobile phone. Mr Galea was speaking at a news conference on the performance of the Ministry of Transport and Communications.
25 October 2001 Parliamentary Speaker Anton Tabone received Thomas Kossendey, member of the German Bundestag. Mr Kossendey was on a familiarisation visit after having been appointed Commissioner for Contacts with the Maltese Parliament.

25 October 2001 Malta Tourism Authority Chairman John C. Grech announced that MTA would be launching a new website at the World Travel Market, in London. The website, at www.visitmalta.com, will be online on November 13.

26 October 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami told Tunisian Prime Minister Mohammed Ghannouchi that a Free Trade Agreement between Malta and Tunisia could be an opportunity through which Tunisia would be able to use Malta to tap the European market when the Island joined the European Union. Dr Fenech-Adami was heading a Maltese delegation on a visit to Tunisia aimed at strengthening diplomatic relations between the two countries.

26 October 2001 An official statement issued by the Health and Civil Protection Departments announced that no traces of hazardous substances were found in the letters intercepted in Malta and sent for tests in Britain.

26 October 2001 The Frankfurt Office of the Malta Tourism Authority organised a promotion exercise at Europa Park, Germany’s largest entertainment park. Corinthia Hotels International, Air Malta, and German based tour operator Malta Direkt Reisen supported MTA and helped to make the occasion a success.

26 October 2001 Foreign Minister Joe Borg participated in the extraordinary meeting of the Mediterranean Forum, held in Agadir, Morocco. The meeting was convened at the initiative of the King of Morocco, and provided an opportunity for Ministers of the Med Forum to discuss the growing internationalisation of the terrorist phenomenon, and the need to enhance co-operation among member-states regarding counter-terrorist policy.

26 October 2001 Malta and the European Union concluded negotiations on the Transport Chapter, making Malta only the second of the twelve candidates to provisionally close this chapter. The European Union also confirmed its acceptance of Malta’s requests for transition periods in four areas that fall under this chapter.

27 October 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami and Tunisian Prime Minister Mohammed Gannouchi agreed to speed up talks leading to the signing of a free trade agreement. The two Prime Ministers also agreed to ratify treaties that have been signed between the two countries. Dr Fenech-Adami and Mr Gannouchi were addressing the press at the end of Dr Fenech-Adami’s visit to Tunisia.

27 October 2001 The Treasury announced an issue of government stocks for an amount of up to Lm30 million, the third issue in the current 5.9 per cent Malta Government stocks maturing in 2009. It also announced a second issue of government stocks of up to Lm40 million at 6.35 per cent, maturing in 2013.

27 October 2001 A letter sent from Iraq was found to contain a powdery substance when it was opened at the offices of the Civil Abattoir, in Marsa. As in other cases of letters containing powder which could be anthrax, all the necessary measures against contamination were taken by the Health Authorities and the Civil Protection Department. The letter was sent to the UK for analysis.

28 October 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami cast doubts over the holding of the referendum on European Union membership. Dr Fenech-Adami did not exclude that the referendum might not be held should the Opposition continue to insist it would ignore its outcome. The Prime Minister was taking part in a public debate on EU membership, in Valletta.

28 October 2001 Anna Diamantopoulou, EU Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, said that the pre-accession period and the social acquis were not just about legislation. They also meant that applicant countries must prepare themselves to implement new policies. Ms Diamantopoulou was speaking at Malta International Airport at the end of her two-day visit to the Island.

28 October 2001 Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi made a case for the setting up of a trade union council, saying that he believed that the time had come for unions in Malta to be represented in one national body. Dr Gonzi was addressing a seminar organised by the General Workers’ Union, the Confederation of Malta Trade Unions, and the Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (CGIL).
• 28 October 2001 Tourism Minister Michael Refalo called for a decision to be taken about pending golf course applications. Dr Refalo was speaking during a visit to the Marsa golf course.

• 28 October 2001 Transport Minister Censu Galea announced that Malta’s outlook for cruise activity remained prudently optimistic, with 337 cruise liners expected to have called at Maltese ports by the end of the year. Mr Galea was speaking following the decision by Spanish giant travel group Pullmantur to make Malta a weekly port of call for its S/S Oceanic cruise liner.

• 28 October 2001 Summer time in Malta ended at 3 a.m. on Sunday 28th. Clocks were moved back one hour, bringing Malta time one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time.

• 29 October 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami denied that the country was in recession. He said that it would be a simplistic analysis to conclude that, because the Gross Domestic Product in real terms was down by Lm2.2 million, or 0.6 per cent, in the second quarter this year when compared with the same period last year, then the country was facing a recession. Dr Fenech-Adami was discussing the theme of globalisation.

• 29 October 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli announced that, in spite of the September 11 tragedy in the US, a number of multinational and international companies had shown an interest in the privatisation of Malta International Airport. Mr Dalli was speaking during a debate on privatisation.

• 29 October 2001 Health Minister Louis Deguara said that the Government expects to sign the Council of Europe Convention on Bioethics by the end of the year. Dr Deguara was speaking at the conclusion of the Bioethics Consultative Committee’s annual conference.

• 30 October 2001 The Prime Minister said that the International Institute on Ageing was setting up a sub-committee to draw up a document and declaration on Ethics in ageing for the Government’s consideration. Dr Fenech-Adami was addressing a conference hosted by the Institute that brought together participants from developing countries, NGOs, UN agencies, and regional commissions.

• 30 October 2001 President Guido de Marco stood up for the members of the judiciary, saying that there were in society iconoclasts bent on destroying society’s icons. Prof. de Marco was speaking at the Palace, in Valletta, during a ceremony in which he was presented with a copy of the informal statute of the Association of the Judiciary by Mr Justice Joseph Filletti and committee members of the association.

• 30 October 2001 A draft final report regarding The Administrative Capacity for Implementation and Enforcement of EU Environmental Policy in the 13 Candidate Countries points out serious deficiencies in the Environment Protection Department. It suggests that the Planning Authority should be given responsibility for handling environmental issues. The report was commissioned by DG Environment and prepared by ECOTEC (research & consulting) in association with the Institute of European Environmental Policy, London, the Finnish Environment Institute, and experts from applicant countries.

• 30 October 2001 Malta-EU Information Centre Head Simon Busuttil announced the launch of the Malta-EU Information Centre Stage for Maltese Journalists in Brussels. The project is the fruit of close collaboration between MIC, the Malta Press Club, the Department of Information and the Strickland Foundation. The project will enable thirty Maltese journalists to get first hand information on European Union matters, in Brussels.

• 31 October 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the Government was drawing up amendments of a technical nature to the law on referendum. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking in a radio talk show.

• 31 October 2001 Wednesday 21st November will be Budget Day. Finance Minister John Dalli revealed the date to the social partners within the Council for Economic and Social Development.

• 31 October 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech recapped his third year in office by making a strong appeal to the public, voluntary organisations, and government and constituted bodies, to work together and protect the environment. Dr Zammit Dimech was addressing a press conference at St James Cavalier, in Valletta.
• **31 October 2001** Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg appointed Charles Buttigieg Commissioner for Refugees. Applications for refugees were previously handled by the Refugees Section of the Emigrants’ Commission, headed by Mgr Philip Calleja.

• **31 October 2001** British educational trust *Bell International* opened its first language centre in Valletta. Present for the opening were Education Minister Louis Galea, British High Commissioner Howard Pearce, and the Chairman of the Board of Governors, Judy Little.

• **31 October 2001** Police Commissioner George Grech handed in his resignation to the Prime Minister, who “accepted it with regret”.

• **31 October 2001** Top Belgian consumer magazine *Test Achats and Test Aankoop* placed *Air Malta* in third place from a list of 119 air carriers flying to Europe. The national airline placed after *Singapore Airlines* and *Thai Airways*.

• **31 October 2001** Malta Tourism Authority’s promotional video entitled ‘Malta - The Meeting Place’ was awarded two diplomas by the 4th *International Tourfilm Festival*, in Split, Croatia. Some 50 countries took part in the festival.

**NOVEMBER**

• **1 November 2001** Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Borg met the Italian Minister for European Community Policies, Rocco Buttiglione, in Rome. The bilateral talks focused on Malta’s negotiations with the European Union.

• **1 November 2001** US Ambassador Anthony Gioia said that reports in a section of the foreign media saying that a US document considered Malta and Cyprus to be ‘problematic transhipment states’ were not accurate. Mr Gioia’s comments came in the wake of leakage to *Reuters* and *Associated Press* of a set of American proposals on how the US and the EU could co-operate to counter terrorism.

• **1 November 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici announced that Malta Drydocks had just won a $1 million contract for extensive works on a floating dock. Prof. Bonnici was speaking at a press conference in which he gave details about his Ministry’s performance over the past year.

• **1 November 2001** Health Minister Louis Deguara announced that the Health Ministry received 4,188 complaints about food hygiene and safety between January and October this year. Dr Deguara was speaking at the launch of the Health Inspectorate Quality Service Charter.

• **1 November 2001** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo announced that the Government had decided to set up a special fund for the Tourism Authority to promote Malta as a safe destination in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks. Dr Refalo was speaking at a news conference following a meeting with senior officials of the Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association.

• **1 November 2001** Local Government Minister Austin Gatt announced that one thousand people were to be surveyed in person to give their impressions of the government services which are provided electronically over the internet and their use of computer and internet. Dr Gatt said that the survey was to be carried out by private companies *Misco* and *KPMG*.

• **1 November 2001** Mr Justice Carmel Agius is to take up duties at The Hague, in The Netherlands, as Permanent Judge of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Mr Justice Agius was appointed magistrate in 1977 and judge in 1982. He is a member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague.

• **1 November 2001** The second quarterly labour force survey for this year carried out by the National Statistics Office shows that unemployment in June stood at 6.8 per cent. The NSO said that, in June, the estimated number of people in employment was 147,482, whereas the number of unemployed stood at 10,730.
• **1 November 2001** The Bank of Valletta group announced that it had made a pre-tax profit of Lm14.4 million in the financial year ending September 30. The profit represents a drop of Lm3.2 million over the profit made last year.

• **1 November 2001** President Guido de Marco was presented with a donation of Lm1,400 in aid of the Malta Community Chest Fund, by the Maltese Ambassador in Rome, Joseph Cassar. The money was collected through donations made by the Maltese Community in Italy on June 28 during the second Mnajra activity held in Rome.

• **1 November 2001** Director of Social Security Edward Ga tt was unanimously appointed Chairman of the Governmental Committee of the European Social Charter of the Council of Europe for the next two years. The Committee is the leading supervisory machinery that is entrusted with ensuring that contracting parties to the charter comply with the fundamental social rights of European citizens.

• **1 November 2001** Last month was the third driest October on record since the Meteorological Office was set up, in 1947. For October, the Meteorological Office recorded a mere 11mm of rainfall.

• **2 November 2001** The Whip of the Conservative Group in the European Parliament, Philip Bradbourn, said that Malta had made very good progress in its European Union membership negotiations. Mr Bradbourn was speaking to The Times newspaper during a visit to Malta.

• **2 November 2001** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi announced that records kept by the Employment and Training Corporation show there are about 1,600 persons with disability who are employed and a further 317 who were registered unemployed at end September 2001. Dr Gonzi was speaking at a workshop on access to the labour market for persons with disability, organised by the ETC.

• **2 November 2001** The National Statistics Office announced that fish landings in the first nine months this year had dropped by 16.4 per cent, to 657,030 kilograms. The wholesale value dropped by 9.6 per cent, to Lm1,333,062.

• **3 November 2001** A government statement announced that John Rizzo had been appointed Police Commissioner. The announcement said that the Prime Minister had taken the decision following consultation with the Public Service Commission as stipulated in Article 92 of the Constitution. Mr Rizzo takes over from Mr George Grech, who resigned last Tuesday.

• **3 November 2001** Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg praised the work of the police, saying that their success was reflected in the 13 per cent reduction of the crime rate this year compared with last year. Dr Borg was addressing 26 new police recruits.

• **3 November 2001** Local Government Minister Austin Gatt announced a controlled parking scheme for residents and shoppers in the Gozitan villages of Victoria and Fontana. The pilot project will serve as a basis for other such schemes across Malta and Gozo.

• **3 November 2001** The 16th meeting of the EU-Malta Joint Parliamentary Committee was held in Brussels. The meetings were held under the co-chairmanship of Government MP Michael Frendo for the Malta Parliament and Luigi Cocilovo for the European Parliament.

• **3 November 2001** A code of principles of good corporate governance, designed to provide those involved in corporate governance with a concise guide on the obligations of directors and how they may be performed, has been incorporated in the Malta Stock Exchange’s bye-laws. Copies of the report may be obtained from the MSE building, in Valletta.

• **3 November 2001** The Malta Tourism Authority has just published its Calendar of Events for 2002. The calendar is distributed at the major international travel trade fairs and exhibitions and is available from Tourist Information Offices in Malta and Gozo.

• **4 November 2001** Dr Fenech-Adami addressed a press conference in which he gave details about the performance of the Office of the Prime Minister over the past year. Dr Fenech-Adami said that the third year of his Government was a very intensive one in which the administration continued to achieve its aims as listed in the Party’s electoral manifesto. The full report presented by the Prime Minister may be viewed on the DOI website at [www.doi.gov.mt](http://www.doi.gov.mt)
Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami concluded the European Congress of Jesuit Alumni that had as its theme *Working for Others*. Dr Fenech-Adami said that the Government’s commitment to European integration was rooted primarily in its perception of the process as a vital step towards the re-unification of humanity as a whole, and the renaissance of true humanism.

A government statement said that the *CIHEAM-IAM Bari Report* had found that the path of Maltese agriculture, based on a fairly high level of protection from foreign competition, was unsustainable, and that the removal of levies was a long-term requirement, irrespective of EU membership. The report was one of many studies commissioned for the Ministry of Agriculture. It was one of the 37 impact studies published by the Government last June.

Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami encouraged farmers and herdsmen to tackle the challenges ahead with strength and courage, which is what the Government was doing. The Government’s agenda was not just to join the EU, said the Prime Minister, but to build a country that worked on modern procedures. Dr Fenech-Adami was speaking at a fruit and vegetable fair, organised at Ta’ Qali.

According to figures released by the National Statistics Office, government debt was 61.1 per cent of the annualised GDP in the second quarter this year. Countries must meet a 60 per cent ceiling if they are to be allowed to join the European Monetary Union.

Maltese Film Commissioner Winston Azzopardi and his British opposite number, Steve Norris, met to discuss a film co-production treaty. The meeting came in the wake of the signing by Malta of the Council of Europe Audio-Visual Convention.

Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Borg told the Joint Parliamentary Committee meeting in Brussels that he expected the European Union’s objective to take in new members by 2004 to be confirmed by next week, when the Commission publishes its annual reports on how individual candidates are progressing in the negotiations. Dr Borg said that it was generally agreed that the objective remained completely feasible, stressing that this was certainly the case so far as Malta was concerned.

Mr Richard Cachia Caruana, Chairman of the Core Negotiating Group, said that he was confident that the EU understood Malta’s need to restructure agriculture, a sector that related to an economic activity that was so characteristic of the country. Mr Cachia Caruana was addressing the 16th meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Committee, in Brussels.

Mr Eric Gerada-Azzopardi, Ambassador of Malta resident in Stockholm, presented his Letters of Credence to Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II of Denmark, at Amalienborg Palace, in Copenhagen.

Bank of Valletta is among 80 financial institutions in this year’s *Global Finance*’s annual list of the world’s best global, regional and country banks. In selecting these top banks, *Global Finance* considered criteria such as growth in assets, profitability, geographic reach, strategic relationships, new business development and innovation in products.

Housing Authority chairman Marisa Micallef Leyson announced that the Housing Authority was building smaller housing units in an attempt to address the problems faced by smaller families with housing problems. Ms Micallef Leyson said that the Maltese family was changing and parents often chose to have fewer children. “We must address these changing needs,” she said.

The Institute for the Promotion of Small Enterprise partly financed a four-day educational visit to Treviso, in Italy, of fourteen entrepreneurs from the furniture sector. IPSE is planning to organise more visits for other furniture manufacturers in the coming months.

President Guido de Marco called on Europe not to be reluctant in its pursuit of the Mediterranean agenda. He said that there was too much to lose and a future of peace and prosperity to gain. Prof. de Marco was speaking at the University of Heidelberg, in Germany.

European Union enlargement Commissioner Gunter Verheugen stated that the EU would respect the will of the Maltese people expressed in a democratic way when the Island concluded
its accession negotiations. Mr Verheugen made the comment in a joint declaration issued at the end of a Malta-EU Joint Parliamentary Committee Meeting, held in Brussels.

- **7 November 2001** Mrs Renilde Loecks, Belgian Director at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, representing the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, stated that Malta was among the most advanced candidate countries. Mrs Loecks was addressing the Malta-EU Joint Parliamentary Committee Meeting, in Brussels.

- **7 November 2001** Mr Richard Cachia Caruana, Chairman of the Core Negotiating Group, briefed the MPs present at the Malta-EU Joint Parliamentary Committee meeting in Brussels on the state of negotiations. Mr Cachia Caruana, commented on the free movement of capital, competition, agriculture, fisheries, taxation, social policy, regional policy, environment, justice, home affairs, and customs union.

- **7 November 2001** Foreign Minister Joe Borg attended the meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Euro-Mediterranean partner countries, in Brussels. The meeting aimed to reaffirm the relevance of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership in the present international context, following the terrorist attacks of the 11th September.

- **7 November 2001** Belgian Deputy Foreign Minister Annmarie Neyts promised Foreign Minister Joe Borg that she would be extending the Belgian Presidency’s support for Malta in the process of negotiations. Ms Neyts expressed her satisfaction at the rapid progress that Malta was achieving towards membership.

- **7 November 2001** The Central Bank of Malta said that it was likely that, for the second time this year, the forecast of the real GDP growth rate for the year would need to be lowered further. The CBM made its comment in its *Quarterly Review* which analyses domestic and international economic, and financial developments during the second quarter this year.

- **7 November 2001** The directors of *Easylink Ltd* presented Tourism Minister Michael Refalo with a user-friendly visual and interactive online tourism directory of Malta. 10,000 copies of the directory in CD form are to be distributed free among leading travel agents in Italy, Germany, France and England, as well as to Maltese Embassies all over the world. The directory can be viewed at [http://www.eyemalta.com](http://www.eyemalta.com)

- **7 November 2001** A Malta Tourism Authority advertisement featuring a vintage Maltese bus was recently awarded a Bronze in the annual travel advertising awards organised by the Chartered Institute of Marketing Travel Industry Group. The Gold and Silver in this category were awarded to *Virgin Atlantic* and *British Airways* respectively.

- **8 November 2001** Klaus-Georg Hengstberger, Vice-President of the IHK Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Stuttgart, said that German industry was looking with great interest at Malta’s application for EU membership. Mr Hengstberger was welcoming President Guido de Marco to a meeting of German businessmen and the Maltese chairmen of the Malta Development Corporation and Malta External Trade Corporation.

- **8 November 2001** According to a draft industrial policy document, it will take 75 years for Malta’s Gross Domestic Product and living standards to reach the EU average if local growth rates remain at the same level as over the last four years. The document was issued by Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici.

- **8 November 2001** The Government will be seeking partnerships with the private sector in the provision of services meant to give better value for money. A PPP Unit is being established within the Management and Personnel Office in the Office of the Prime Minister to drive this initiative.

- **8 November 2001** *Air Malta* Chairman Louis Grech called on airline employees to recognise the gravity of the situation following September 11 and to focus totally on the profitable survival of the company. In an internal circular to company employees, Mr Grech said that the attacks came in the wake of two years ‘plagued by uncontrollable factors like rising fuel costs and falling yields’.

- **8 November 2001** French oil company *TotalFinaElf* announced that it had been placed under judicial investigation, charged 50 million francs, and banned from transporting oil in ships more than 15 years
old. A French judge is probing the oil giant for causing huge marine and coastal pollution when its Maltese registered oil tanker *Erika* sank off France’s Atlantic coast in 1999.

- **9 November 2001** German Chancellor Gerhard Schröeder said that Malta was on the right track and he felt that being part of an integrated Europe was the right place for the Island to be. Mr Schröeder was addressing a joint press conference with President Guido de Marco at the Federal Chancellery, in Berlin.

- **9 November 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici told *Air Malta* employees that, in the face of lower demand, it was paramount for the company to reduce costs and show that it could be flexible. Company Chairman Louis Grech highlighted the internal measures the company intends taking, including a further rationalisation of routes.

- **9 November 2001** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo was invited by the World Tourism Organisation to sit on a 35-member crisis management committee of tourism ministers, national tourism organisations, and leisure sector CEOs during a meeting held in London. The Committee meeting was held a day before the world’s top tourism officials convened for the three-day World Travel Market.

- **9 November 2001** Spanish hotel giant *Sol Melia* officially took over the management of the *Suncrest Hotel*, potentially paving the way for a completely new tourist market. Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said at the inauguration that he considered *Sol Melia’s* presence to be a vote of confidence in Malta’s tourism industry.

- **9 November 2001** The National Statistics Office announced that the number of people registering for work in September stood at 4.8 per cent of the labour force, down from 4.9 per cent in August. The NSO said that there were 6,215 people registering under Part One of the employment register and 769 registering under Part Two.

- **9 November 2001** Lombard Bank Malta registered a profit before tax of Lm1.12 million for the financial year ending 30th September 2001, just over nine per cent down from the record Lm1.24 million for financial year 2000. The Bank’s audited financial statements were approved by its Board of Directors, meeting in Valletta.

- **9 November 2001** Mr Saviour P. Gauci, resident Ambassador in Saudi Arabia, presented his letters of credence as non-resident Ambassador to Bahrain to Sheikh Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, Emir of Bahrain, at the Al-Zahar Palace, in Manama.

- **10 November 2001** German Minister of State Christoph Zöpel said that the German Government had no doubt that Malta could become a member of the European Union before the next election of the European Parliament in the summer of 2004. Dr Zöpel was addressing Maltese reporters after a private meeting with President Guido de Marco, in Berlin.

- **10 November 2001** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that first indications of tourist arrivals for September and October this year show a drop in volume of about 5-6 per cent and 9-11 per cent respectively over the same months last year. Dr Refalo was speaking at a ceremony in which Julian Zarb, President of the Hotel and Catering International Management Association, presented him with books for the library of the Institute for Tourism Studies, in St George’s Bay.

- **10 November 2001** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that the number of construction workers had risen by 671 to 6,426 since 1998, reflecting a recovery in the industry. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking during the recent launch of courses for construction workers organised by the Building Industry Consultative Council.

- **11 November 2001** Mr Michael Zammit Cutajar, the retiring Maltese executive secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, was given a standing ovation by the 4,000 delegates attending the 7th Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC. The ovation followed the adoption of rules to ensure the implementation by major industrialised countries of the Kyoto Protocol on reducing greenhouse gases.

- **12 November 2001** Remembrance Day, in memory of the victims of the two world wars, was marked with a wreath-laying ceremony at the foot of the War Memorial, in Floriana. Wreaths were laid by President Guido de Marco, the Chief Justice, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Prime Minister, and the Leader of the Opposition.
• **12 November 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli categorically denied reports in a section of the media that the Government was planning to announce a devaluation of the Maltese lira in the Budget. Mr Dalli was speaking at St Julian’s.

• **13 November 2001** According to a draft programme presented to the committee by Leader of the House Lawrence Gonzi, the Budget Speech will be delivered on November 21. The Leader of the Opposition will give his reply on November 28 and the Prime Minister on November 30. The Appropriation Bill will be presented on December 12.

• **13 November 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli said that no accounts in Maltese banks had been frozen because of suspected links to terrorists following the September 11 attack on the United States. Mr Dalli was replying to a Parliamentary Question.

• **13 November 2001** Foreign Minister Joe Borg addressed the General Assembly of the United Nations, in New York. In his address, Dr Joe Borg underscored the political commitment of the Malta Government to the International Criminal Court and declared the intention of the Government to seek the ratification of the Rome Statute by the Maltese Parliament in the near future.

• **13 November 2001** Foreign Minister Joe Borg deposited the instruments of accession and ratification of four Conventions on terrorism. Dr Borg also ratified on behalf of the Malta Government the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in New York.

• **13 November 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that Malta would find it very difficult to envisage and agree in the foreseeable future to the total elimination of subsidies in agriculture. Prof. Bonnici was addressing the plenary session of the World Trade Organisation’s Ministerial Conference in Doha, Qatar.

• **13 November 2001** Government MP Victor Galea Pace and Opposition MP George Vella represented Malta at the Third Extraordinary Meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Forum, in Brussels. The meeting was chaired by Nicole Fontaine, President of the European Parliament, and by Abdelwahad Radi, President of the Chamber of Representatives of the Kingdom of Morocco.

• **13 November 2001** Mr Christian Zahra was re-elected as a Labour member of the Australian Federal Parliament for McMillan, Victoria. Mr Zahra was born in Malta in 1973 and is the youngest member of the Federal Parliament.

• **13 November 2001** The Malta Tourism Authority announced that travel magazine *Le Figaro Guide* had featured a full-colour spread on Gozo. The feature centred on places in Gozo that had served as locations for two films, namely *Christopher Columbus* and *The Count of Monte Cristo*.

• **14 November 2001** The European Commission’s Chief Negotiator for Malta, Arhi Palasuo, and EU Ambassador to Malta Ronald Gallimore presented a copy of *The E U Update Report on Malta* to Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, at Auberge de Castille. The report may be downloaded from the MIC webpage at http://www.mic.org.mt

• **14 November 2001** Mr Ahri Palasuo said that *The E U Update Report on Malta* showed that the Island had continued to make good progress over the past 12 months and that it was on track towards accession. Mr Palasuo was speaking at a joint press conference with Foreign Minister Joe Borg, the Head of Malta’s Core Negotiating Team, Richard Cachia Caruana, and Mr Ronald Gallimore.

• **14 November 2001** Foreign Minister Joe Borg said that *The E U Update Report on Malta* was very satisfactory and factual. The conclusions of the report showed that Malta could make it in the next enlargement and that it was meeting the political and economic criteria, Dr Borg said. The Minister was speaking at a joint press with the European Commission’s Chief Negotiator for Malta, Arhi Palasuo, Mr Richard Cachia Caruana, and Mr Ronald Gallimore.

• **14 November 2001** A strategy paper on enlargement released by the European Commission states that Malta and Cyprus were the only two applicant countries that have so far confirmed that they were functioning market economies able to cope with competitive pressure and market forces in the EU. This, the paper says, means that Malta and Cyprus are the two applicant countries that satisfy the Copenhagen economic criteria.
• **15 November 2001** According to figures released by the National Statistics Office, manufacturing sales in the radio, TV and communications sub-sector were down by Lm74.7 million to Lm98.1 million between July and September, a decrease of over 43 per cent from the same period last year. During the same period in 2000, the sales recorded by the sector amounted to Lm172.8 million.

• **15 November 2001** The latest Central Bank of Malta’s business perceptions survey shows that activity within the financial services sector is returning to normal. The survey, conducted in July and August this year, indicates that in the second quarter the Maltese economy was increasingly affected by the global economic slowdown.

• **15 November 2001** The Justice Ministry continued with its e-government campaign by allowing court judgements to be accessed on-line. The initiative was launched by Justice Minister Austin Gatt who said that this was the second e-government initiative taken in that sector. The first initiative, Laws-on-line, had scored 1.5 million hits since its launch in June 2000. The new link can be access at [www.justice.gov.mt](http://www.justice.gov.mt)

• **15 November 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami was presented with a copy of a two-volume study entitled *Antique Maltese Ecclesiastical Silver*, by Dr Jimmy Farrugia. The presentation was made by the author and by Progress Press Chairman Ronald Agius.

• **15 November 2001** Dr Philip von Brockdorff, age 42, was appointed Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. He had previously served as Director, Staff Development Organisation, at the Office of the Prime Minister.

• **15 November 2001** In a memorandum to Permanent Secretaries, Directors General and Directors in the Public Service, Civil Service Head Joseph R. Grima said that, in line with government policy to promote family friendly measures, the guidelines regarding maternity leave were being amended. The amendments would afford even greater flexibility in the administration of this facility.

• **15 November 2001** The Malta Tourism Authority launched its new website at the World Travel Market, in London. Visitors to the site, at [www.visitmalta.com](http://www.visitmalta.com), can do everything from reading about the history of the Maltese Islands to finding a car hire firm; from registering for e-mail newsletters to getting the information they need to plan a conference in Malta or Gozo.

• **15 November 2001** *Gruppo Video Mediterraneo* is opening a news bureau in Malta as part of its expansion policy. The bureau will be based at Ta’ Xbiex. GVM owns a number of TV stations, including *Video Mediterraneo, Video Uno,* and *Teletre,* as well as two radio stations and a bi-monthly magazine.

• **16 November 2001** Air Malta has decided to cancel a number of flights to London’s Gatwick Airport and combine passenger loads on its Heathrow route to cut costs. The airline was also looking into other routes to see where other cost-cutting measures could be introduced in view of the drop registered in air travel following the September 11 terrorist attack on the US.

• **16 November 2001** Crimsonwing Ltd, WET Automotive Systems (Malta) Ltd, and Cutajar Works Limited won the 2001 Award for Achievement in Industry. Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that the winners were proof of how local businessmen and craftsmen were successfully restructuring to face the global challenge and provide the high-quality products and services that were required.

• **16 November 2001** Interior Minister Tonio Borg made a rare appeal to the Courts to make sure that the penalties established by law were rigorously applied. Dr Borg also appealed to the Courts to be more careful in the application of bail. Bail should not be granted to people who were a danger to society, he said.

• **16 November 2001** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech, in his capacity as outgoing President of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties, delivered the inaugural address at the 12th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in Monaco. Dr Zammit Dimech highlighted the new Emergency Protocol to the Barcelona Convention, which is expected to be adopted by the Conference of Plenipotentiaries to be held in Malta next January.

• **16 November 2001** The new Ambassador of Slovenia to Malta, Vojko Volk, presented his diplomatic credentials to President Guido de Marco, at the Palace, in Valletta.
The National Statistics Office announced that early estimates of Malta’s international economic and financial transactions during the third quarter show a current account surplus of Lm5.2 million. This is a favourable turnaround of Lm10.4 million over the net deficit of Lm5.3 million recorded in the same period last year.

The National Statistics Office announced that the rate of inflation in October stood at 2.48 per cent, up from 2.42 in September. In October last year, inflation stood at 2.66 per cent.

The Malta Communications Authority launched a website giving information about its activities and the telecommunications industry. The address is http://www.mca.org.mt

Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the negotiation process underway with the European Union was leading to an improvement in the country’s standards of living. Dr Fenech-Adami said that recent developments had demonstrated how Malta’s place was in the EU, where it would strengthen its voice and sovereignty by sharing them with member states.

Government MP Michael Asciak attended a meeting for European Union member states and applicant countries on Food Safety and Health, in Berlin. The meeting was organised by the Committee on Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture of the Bundestag.

The Malta High Commission in London took part in the 35th Commonwealth Fair, in Kensington Town Hall. The event involved the selling of a wide variety of indigenous products, with the proceeds going to charity.

The ‘Sacra Famiglia’, a Dghajsa tal-Latini that, in the 19th and early 20th century was the only means of communication between Malta and Gozo, is to be restored to its former glory. Once restored, the former passenger and cargo boat will be donated to the Gozo Heritage Society Wirt Ghawdex.

The Accountant General announced that, both the 5.9% Malta Government Stock 2009 (III) Fungible issue, as well as the 6.35% MGS 2013 (II) issue, had been heavily over-subscribed.

Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi announced that persons in residential care because of mental health difficulties who undergo work experience would continue receiving social security benefits as long as their income does not exceed the national minimum wage. Dr Gonzi was speaking at the opening session of the Fourth Annual Convention of the Global Alliance of Mental Illness Advocacy Networks (Gamian-Europe).

Speaker Anton Tabone took part in a conference for Speakers of EU Parliaments, in Stockholm. The conference discussed ‘The Role of National Parliaments in the European Structure’, a Parliamentary input initiated by the Nice summit.

Local Government Minister Austin Gatt said that the Government had called on local councils, asking them whether they wanted to participate in a scheme to help people make fuller use of e-government. Dr Gatt was speaking during a meeting for mayors held in Gozo.

Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that, over the past three years, the country had regained confidence and direction. The number of gainfully employed had increased by 4,700 and the deficit had gone down from Lm150 million to Lm83 million. “I am proud to have led a Government with such a record,” said Dr Fenech-Adami.

Finance Minister John Dalli said that Government’s message in the Budget for 2002, to be presented on Wednesday 21st, would be that ‘the worst is over’. Mr Dalli was speaking at Pieta.

Irish Member of the European Parliament Nuala Ahern stressed the importance of Malta joining the European Union for the Island to make headway in environment protection. Ms Ahern was speaking at a press conference.
20 November 2001 A Financial Times supplement on Malta commented that the Island was wide-open to the effects of the downturn in the world’s economic climate as a result of the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington. The supplement quotes Economic Affairs Minister Josef Bonnici as saying: “At a time like this, it is much tougher for an Island to be isolated. The argument for entering a larger, more powerful unit, becomes all the stronger.”

20 November 2001 A Planning Authority study on transport envisages 370,000 vehicles on the roads by 2020, an increase of 123,000 vehicles over the current figures. Another study on employment requirements for the next 20 years forecasts a continued shift from the direct productive sector to the market services sector. Copies of the topic papers may be obtained from the Planning Authority or viewed on www.pa.malta.org

20 November 2001 Over 400 students with 26 different qualifications graduated from the University of Malta in the first of a series of ceremonies that will continue throughout the week.

20 November 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli said in reply to a Parliamentary Question that the Tax Compliance Unit was investigating 36 cases for tax evasion. Mr Dalli said investigations covered evasion of income tax, VAT, and customs.

20 November 2001 A Public Finance Management Bill is due to be published in the first quarter of next year. Finance Minister John Dalli gave the information in reply to a Parliamentary Question.

20 November 2001 Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that Air Malta carried 124,149 passengers in October this year, a decrease of 7,279 from the same month last year. Prof. Bonnici was speaking in Parliament.

20 November 2001 Bank of Valletta organised a four-day fact-finding mission to Tunisia, assisted by the Tunisian Embassy in Malta. The objective of the mission was to assess business opportunities, including the possibility of setting up joint ventures with Tunisian partners.

20 November 2001 The President of the European Parliament, Nicole Fontaine, said that Malta’s political role would be greatly enhanced as a member of the European Union. She dismissed claims that Malta would be ‘swamped’ upon membership. Ms Fontaine was speaking at a public lecture at the Aula Magna in the Old University Building, at Valletta.

20 November 2001 Ms Fontaine expressed support for Malta’s membership of the EU. “We are eagerly waiting for you. I hope that there will be the first Maltese Members of the European Parliament in 2004, if the Maltese will agree,” she said. Ms Fontaine was commenting to the press following talks with Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, at Auberge de Castille.

20 November 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli said that today’s Budget would be different from the Budget we would have had if the events of September 11 had not taken place. “We are passing through a period of uncertainty and we are more cautious. We have revised our growth rate. We also have to ensure that we keep sustaining our economic thrust.” Mr Dalli was speaking in an interview with The Times newspaper.

20 November 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli said that the Government estimated that it would collect an additional Lm40 million over the next five years as a result of the work of the Tax Compliance Unit. Mr Dalli was speaking at a news conference on the work of the unit.

20 November 2001 The National Statistics Office said that the Gross Domestic Product in real terms was down by 1.3 per cent in the third quarter this year, to Lm356.3 million. This is the second quarter in a row that the real GDP went down. In the second quarter it was down by 0.6 per cent when compared to the same period the previous year.

20 November 2001 Foreign Minister Joe Borg delivered a statement, on behalf of the Prime Minister, at a combined meeting of the Ministers of Defence and Foreign Affairs of EU member states, candidate states, as well as Norway and Iceland. The conference was held in Brussels.

20 November 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that Malta would eventually save between Lm3 million and Lm16 million annually as a result of improved air quality after the country adopted the EU’s environmental acquis. These statistics were presented in a report drawn up
by Ecotec for the EU on *The Benefits of compliance with the environmental acquis for the candidate countries*.

- **21 November 2001** Government is currently in the process of finalising the Special Market Policy Programme for Maltese Agriculture (SMPPMA). This special package, which will deal with the introduction of compensatory mechanisms in connection with the proposed programme for the progressive dismantling of agricultural and agro-industrial levies, will be discussed with individual sub-sectors during the course of two series of meetings.

- **21 November 2001** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo was invited by the World Tourism Organisation to sit on a Committee specifically established to deal with the effects on world tourism following the 11th September terrorist attack on the United States. The Committee is composed of Ministers for Tourism, public officials, leisure industry and airline bodies, and private sector representatives.

- **21 November 2001** An art exhibition by Dr Giuseppe Schembri is being held at the Malta High Commission, in Canberra. The exhibition was officially opened by the High Commissioner for Malta, Ives de Barro, in the presence of a number of members of the diplomatic corps and members of the Maltese and Australian communities.

- **21 November 2001** The new edition of *The Highway Code* has been published on the website of the Department of Information. English and Maltese versions of the code may be viewed at [www.doi.gov.mt](http://www.doi.gov.mt)

- **22 November 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli presented the Budget for 2002. In one of the shortest Budget Speeches of recent years, Mr Dalli said that the Government’s financial performance was better than projected, and today’s result will be tomorrow’s guarantee.

- **22 November 2001** The measures announced by Mr Dalli in his Budget speech included: a Lm1.50 cost of living adjustment; adjustment of tax bands for married couples who make a single tax declaration; upward revision of duty on tobacco products; higher prices for leaded petrol and diesel, lower prices for unleaded petrol and kerosene; a support scheme for the agriculture sector; the setting up of a Technology Venture Fund; the easing of Companies Act requirements for small businesses; and a foreign investment registration scheme.

- **22 November 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that the measures announced in the Budget for next year were expected to boost the economy. Addressing a press conference immediately after Finance Minister John Dalli ended reading the Budget Speech, Dr Fenech-Adami said that the Budget would continue to strengthen the country and was a sign that the Government was succeeding in tackling its financial deficit.


- **22 November 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that the Malta Export Trade Corporation had spent Lm900,000 on its participation at the *Expo* Fair, in Hanover. He said that the funds were spent on the design, building, transport and equipment of the Malta Pavilion, its rent and administration, as well as on activities related to *Malta Day*. Prof. Bonnici was replying to a Parliamentary Question.

- **22 November 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that the National Statistics Office was preparing to collect basic statistics on Gozo and would eventually issue a publication grouping statistics on the Island. Prof. Bonnici was replying to a Parliamentary Question.

- **22 November 2001** Transport Minister Censu Galea said that 233 Maltese-registered ships had been detained in foreign ports between January and October this year. Mr Galea gave the information in reply to a Parliamentary Question.

- **22 November 2001** Six local companies took part in the *Index Furniture and Interiors Fair*, held at the Dubai World Trade Centre last month. The Malta Export Trade Corporation co-ordinated the participation by the Maltese companies which exhibited a range of contract and household furniture, aluminium products, giftware and building materials.
**23 November 2001** One of the Government’s largest capital projects got off the ground with the signing of the contract for the Lm14-million cruise liner passenger terminal between Viset Plc and the Government. The signing ceremony was attended by Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech, Transport and Communications Minister Censu Galea, and Vicet chairman Joe Grioli.

**23 November 2001** Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that 2001 had been a year of ‘hard decisions’. He said that there would not be any going back on the decision to phase out the Tour Operator Support Scheme (TOSS). Dr Refalo was speaking at the Malta Tourism Authority’s annual conference on the theme Facing the future - a strategic response to the Maltese Tourism Industry, at St Julian’s.

**23 November 2001** The extraordinary and plenipotentiary Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman, Mr Yahya bin Abdullah bin Salim al-Araimi, presented his diplomatic credentials to President Guido de Marco, at the Palace, in Valletta. The Omani Ambassador is based in Rome.

**23 November 2001** Mr Sekouba Cisse, who is Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the republic of Mali, presented his diplomatic credentials to President Guido de Marco, at the Palace, in Valletta. Mr Cisse is based in Tripoli.

**23 November 2001** The Commission for the Advancement of Women issued a publication on Gender equality and family friendly measures in the Public Service. The publication, written by Angela Callus and Miriam Camilleri, highlights all the measures taken in the public service for employees to enjoy equal opportunities and to help them balance their work and family duties.

**24 November 2001** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi announced that a Labour Market Policy Committee was to be set up by the Government to analyse the present situation and draw up a national action plan on employment. The Committee will be headed by the Chairman and the CEO of the Employment and Training Corporation. Dr Gonzi was speaking during a seminar at St George’s Bay, organised by the ETC.

**24 November 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli said that he was “very optimistic about the future”. Mr Dalli was speaking at the annual dinner of the Malta Centre of the Chartered Institute of Bankers, at the Hilton.

**24 November 2001** Central Bank of Malta Governor Michael Bonello said that the Central Bank was actively considering an increase in the weight of the euro in the Maltese currency basket while reducing that of the other components. Mr Bonello was addressing the annual dinner of the Malta Centre of the Chartered Institute of Bankers.

**24 November 2001** The call for tenders for the export of tuna and the adjudication of the tenders will next year be handled jointly by Koperattiva Nazzjonali tas-Sajd and Ghaqda Koperattiva tas-Sajd Ltd. The agreement was signed at the Ministry in Valletta by the two co-operatives, by Fisheries Minister Ninu Zammit, and by Anthony Gruppetta, Director of the Department of Fisheries. Tuna represents the main source of income for Maltese fishermen.

**24 November 2001** President Guido de Marco said that the Commission for the Administration of Justice disagreed with a proposal contained in a Bill to alter the structure of the Commission. Prof. de Marco is the Chairman of the Commission.

**24 November 2001** Flyaway Tours has published its new winter brochure. The brochure includes city breaks to London and other popular destinations such as Rome, Paris, Vienna, Brussels, Amsterdam, and for the first time, Sofia.

**25 November 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli announced that the Government had short-listed four companies it would be negotiating with for the privatisation of Malta International Airport. The four companies are Vinci of France, the Vienna Airport, Spanish operator Cintra, and Alterra which runs Singapore Airport.

**25 November 2001** British Minister for Europe Peter Hain noted that the European Commission’s Annual Report had expressed itself on the excellent progress that Malta had made in preparing for EU accession. In an article distributed to the local media, Mr Hain explained how Britain was helping Malta in its bid towards EU membership.
• **25 November 2001** Alessio Camilleri, a care worker from Gozo, is the winner of the *Worker of the Year 2001* award. President Guido de Marco presented Mr Camilleri with the award.

• **26 November 2001** Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi urged the National Welfare Reform Commission to conclude its work without delay. Dr Gonzi said that it was important for the Commission to carry on with its work but stressed that the work had to be concluded as soon as possible. Dr Gonzi was speaking during an activity in Gozo.

• **26 November 2001** Agriculture Minister Ninu Zammit announced that the Government would be assisting the agricultural sector to the tune of Lm8 million over the next three years. The money is meant to help growers and herdsmen improve efficiency and raise the quality of their produce. Mr Zammit was addressing farmers at Zebbug.

• **26 November 2001** Government MP Francis Agius took part in an information seminar that focused on the EU’s policy on public health within the framework of enlargement, in Brussels. The seminar touched upon health-care systems in applicant countries, the European Commission’s public health policy, and new threats to public health.

• **26 November 2001** Malta has been re-elected to the council of the International Maritime Organisation for the period 2001-3. The 32 council members were elected from among those states having an interest in providing international shipping services and those with special interest in maritime transport or navigation.

• **27 November 2001** President Guido de Marco was presented with a commemorative medal by Tunisian Ambassador Abdessalem Hetira on behalf of Tunisian President Zine el Abidine Ben Ali. The medal was awarded by President Ben Ali in testimony of his high esteem and consideration for President de Marco.

• **27 November 2001** The Central Bank cut its central intervention rate and the discount rate by 25 basis points to 4.25 per cent. All other official interest rates quoted by the Central Bank have been lowered by 25 basis points. The decision was taken following a meeting of the bank’s Monetary Policy Council.

• **27 November 2001** The Government will be spending Lm9.3 million next year to build the required administrative capabilities in connection with the implementation of the *acquis communautaire*. This results from the second National Programme for the Adoption of the *Acquis*, tabled in Parliament.

• **27 November 2001** The European Union is to give the Cospicua local council around Lm25,000 annually. The town is participating in the EU MEDIS programme, which focuses on the tourism and cultural sectors.

• **27 November 2001** Italian film star Ornella Muti was a guest at the Casinó di Venezia in Vittoriosa recently, where she met casino chairman, Gianni Corradin. The casino is organising visits by various entertainment stars.

• **28 November 2001** Swedish Prime Minister Goran Persson heaped praise on the Government’s bid for European Union membership, saying that he considered Malta’s application to be in ‘pole position’ among all the applicant countries. Mr Persson, in Malta on a working visit, was speaking during a joint press conference with Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami.

• **28 November 2001** Foreign Minister Joe Borg had talks with his Swiss counterpart, Joseph Deiss, in Geneva. During the meeting, Dr Borg outlined the process of negotiations underway between Malta and the European Union.

• **28 November 2001** The death was announced of Guzè Cassar, aged 83. Dr Cassar served his country for many years as Deputy Leader of the Malta Labour Party, Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, and as Acting President of Malta. Tribute to his memory was paid by President Guido de Marco, Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, and Leader of the Opposition Alfred Sant, among others.

• **28 November 2001** The Ministry of Education announced that Conrad Thake had been appointed Chairman of the *Foundation for Tomorrow’s Schools*. The foundation, set up in May 2000, had been chaired by Mario Callus.
• 28 November 2001 The number of vessels registered under the Maltese flag at the end of September had declined to 3,055 (27.74 million gross tons) from 3,078 (27.99 million gross tons) in September 2000. The decrease came in the wake of the introduction of tighter inspection requirements for the registration of trading ships more than 15 years old. The figures appear in the annual report of the Malta Maritime Authority.

• 28 November 2001 The Parliamentary Secretary in the Economic Services Ministry, George Hyzler, announced that the Government was finalising a set of fiscal and financial incentives for the Film Industry in Malta. Dr Hyzler was speaking during the inauguration of a marketing and distribution seminar of MEDEA 2001, a European Commission-supported programme created to stimulate and promote the Euro-Mediterranean audio-visual industry.

• 28 November 2001 The National Statistics Office said that ordinary government revenue during the first 10 months of the year had increased by 6.6 per cent, reaching Lm525.7 million. Total expenditure during the same period amounted to Lm616.4 million, an increase of 8.2 per cent over the Lm569.6 million of last year.

• 28 November 2001 Bank of Valletta announced that the bank was embarking on a project to upgrade its Cashlink ATM network with a completely new IT system. The new system would make Cashlink ATMs more efficient with even faster transaction processing time.

• 28 November 2001 Foreign Affairs Ministry Permanent Secretary Gaetan Naudi said that, as a non-nuclear state, Malta’s nuclear legislation would mainly concentrate on setting up a regulatory body responsible for licensing, inspection and enforcement of safety standards. Mr Naudi was speaking at the Regional Workshop of the International Atomic Energy Agency, on the Effective Implementation of National Nuclear Legislation.

• 28 November 2001 Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that there were opportunities for Malta to become the trade centre of the Mediterranean region, while education and health services could also be offered to the region. Prof. Bonnici was speaking at the launch of the Careers Convention, organised on campus by the University Students’ Council.

• 28 November 2001 Forty-two schools participated in a Comenius Day activity, at Upper Barrakka Garden, in Valletta. Minister of Education Louis Galea attended the activity.

• 29 November 2001 A government statement said that Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami had advised the President to appoint Mr Justice Noel Arrigo as Chief Justice with effect from January 17, and lawyers Joseph Galea Debono and Tonio Mallia as judges with effect from January 18. Mr Justice Arrigo will be succeeding Chief Justice Joseph Said Pullicino who is retiring from the bench.

• 29 November 2001 Malta moved one step further in EU negotiations when it closed negotiations in the key area of social policy during another session of the conference on Malta’s accession to the European Union held in Brussels at the level of Deputies. Malta’s delegation was led by the Chairman of the Core Negotiating Group, Mr Richard Cachia Caruana.

• 29 November 2001 Ambassador Frans van Daele, on behalf of the Belgian Presidency, addressed the conference on Malta’s accession to the European Union at the level of Deputies, in Brussels. Mr van Daele expressed his satisfaction at Malta’s progress in negotiations in the light of what was reported in the Regular Progress Report on Malta recently published by the European Commission.

• 29 November 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli said that the Malta Financial Services Centre this year received eight reports of suspected transactions that could have been linked to money laundering. The reports are being investigated by the police. Mr Dalli was replying to a Parliamentary Question.

• 29 November 2001 Maltacom Chairman Maurice Zarb Adami announced that the company had registered after-tax profits of Lm6.6 million in the first nine months of the financial year, up to September 30. This figure is 15.3 per cent down on the Lm7.76 million profits made in the same period last year.

• 30 November 2001 Tourism Minister Michael Refalo said that the Budget for next year would provide tourism with the springboard for recovery following the terrorist attacks on Washington and New York on September 11. Dr Refalo was speaking at the annual general meeting of the Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association.
• 30 November 2001 Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that five companies were already operating from the Kordin Business Incubation Centre, and applications for another four were being processed. Prof. Bonnici was speaking during a visit to the Kordin Industrial Estate.

• 30 November 2001 The Federation of Industry signed a sponsorship agreement with Sea Malta Co. Ltd, paving the way for a series of initiatives between them. The agreement is the third partnership arrangement that the FOI, through its initiatives committee, has signed with major service providers in Malta. The first two were signed with Corinthia Hotels International and Bank of Valletta plc.

• 30 November 2001 Bank of Valletta said that it was reducing its base rate by 0.25 per cent. Interest rates on all loans and overdrafts denominated in Maltese Liri would be reduced by 0.25 per cent. BOV said the decision follows the announcement by the Central Bank of Malta of a reduction in its Central Intervention Rate and Discount Rate by 0.25 per cent.

• 30 November 2001 Sullivan Maritime Ltd, who are local agents for Sloman Neptun Shipping and Transport GmbH of Bremen, announced that Sloman Neptun had decided to include Malta as one of the ports of call on their North Continent/UK Service to North African destinations, primarily Tunisian and Libyan ports.

DECEMBER

• 1 December 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said there was no doubt that the Finance Minister’s Budget Speech showed that, despite problems, the country had moved forward, the Government’s finances were handled well, and the Government had achieved its target of reducing the deficit. During the past year, the Government had managed to strengthen the country and would continue to do so, so that it could meet new challenges, such as globalisation.

• 1 December 2001 Dr Fenech-Adami warned in Parliament that the Government would continue to clamp down on those who evaded taxes or under-declared their income so that they could receive social benefits. “The net is closing in on those who evade taxes,” the Prime Minister said during the Budget Debate.

• 1 December 2001 The Housing Authority has launched the second subsidised housing scheme this year, with a total of 186 housing units on offer to the public at subsidised rates. Speaking at the press conference, Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that the Government was selling property having a market value of Lm5.6 million at a subsidised amount of Lm3.7 million.

• 1 December 2001 A Planning Authority study on Housing says that the current supply of dwelling units is more than double the projected housing capacity required. The study was published for public consultation along with another on social facilities and community-care. The two studies are part of the structure plan review exercise currently being undertaken by the PA and examine land use implications over the next 20 years.

• 1 December 2001 Malta Communications Authority Chairman Joseph V. Tabone announced that the Authority was finalising a code of practice for internet service providers after concluding discussions with the ISP sub-section of the Chamber of Commerce. Mr Tabone was speaking at a forum on Clients’ rights in a liberalised telecommunications environment. Are you informed? at St Julian’s.

• 1 December 2001 Go Mobile and Maltacom Chairman Maurice Zarb Adami said that Go Mobile, which celebrates its first anniversary today, had doubled its original target of 30,000 subscribers. Addressing a press conference at the Hilton, Mr Zarb Adami said that Go Mobile was enjoying a healthy market share of 35 per cent, or 65,000 active users.

• 1 December 2001 The Health Department joined the rest of the world to launch its Aids awareness campaign with the theme “I care... do you?” In Malta, there have been 16 reported cases of Aids since 1989. Eleven of these have since died. A total of 122 Maltese have tested positive for HIV since 1995.
1 December 2001 President Guido de Marco visited the United Nations Headquarters, in Geneva. The visit was connected to a series of cultural events being organised by the Permanent Mission of Malta in Geneva, on the theme *Malta: Crossroads of Civilisations*. The events form part of the UN’s ‘2001: Year of Dialogue among Civilisations’.

1 December 2001 Drydocks Chairman John Cassar White insisted that any job cuts would have to take the form of early retirement voluntary schemes. “Redundancies and discharges are not being contemplated,” he maintained. Mr Cassar White said that the contents of an interview as published in *Lloyd’s List* and quoted in *The Times* newspaper did not reflect what he had actually said.

2 December 2001 Parliament approved the funding allocated to the Ministry of Finance, following a division, by 34 votes in favour and 30 votes against.

2 December 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that, evidently, the current levels of interest and concern regarding environmental issues were extremely high. The Ministry, he said, cognisant of the right and the duty of the public to know had, for the second year running, commissioned the *State of the Environment* report. Dr Zammit Dimech was speaking during the closing session of a Biology Symposium at the University.

3 December 2001 Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that the Housing Authority was investing Lm500,000 to make government apartments more accessible. Meanwhile, the Employment and Training Corporation was meeting the costs of training 24 persons with disability registered with the *Arka Foundation*. Dr Gonzi was addressing a conference in Kalkara.

3 December 2001 The investment registration scheme, announced by Finance Minister John Dalli during the Budget Speech, comes into effect today. This scheme permits persons who would have transferred their money overseas without the required permits, and who did not pay the relevant taxes regarding this investment, to regularise their position under the Income Tax and Exchange Control Acts. The scheme will continue to operate until 31st December 2002.

3 December 2001 Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici announced that an Irish pharmaceutical company was expected to set up a subsidiary in Malta in the coming months, following discussions on the subject by the Malta Enterprise Board’s advisory council. Prof. Bonnici was addressing the council, which is a body responsible to the Malta Enterprise Board, with the brief to plan strategy.

3 December 2001 Around 10,000 mail shots of a postcard outlining holiday packages in Malta were mailed in the USA to people with surnames of Maltese origin. The postcard encouraged the receivers to log onto www.aboutmalta.com and to take advantage of the very attractive prices for package holidays to Malta. The campaign is part of the ROOTS programme initiated by Tourism Minister Michael Refalo.

4 December 2001 The Cabinet discussed and approved a proposal to halve the 3,500 combined workforce of the two shipyards. The proposal is one of several made in a report on the restructuring of the shipyards, drawn up by a task force appointed by the Government, in September.

4 December 2001 Some 200 senior public officers discussed the issue of developing administrative capacity for the better implementation of EU-related legislation at a seminar organised by the Staff Development Organisation at the Office of the Prime Minister. The seminar was opened by Mr Joseph R Grima, Permanent Secretary at OPM and Head of the Public Service, and facilitated by Professor Phedon Nicolaides, from the European Institute of Public Administration, in Maastricht.

4 December 2001 Members of the Police, Armed Forces, Customs Department, the Management and Efficiency Unit, and of the Home and Foreign Affairs Ministries followed a course on the removal of border controls under the *Schengen Agreement*. The course was run by French expert Jean Claude Tasca.

4 December 2001 Professor Edward de Bono has suggested that a world centre for thinking could be set up in Malta. An international round table on new thinking was held recently at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, on the initiative of Prof. de Bono.

4 December 2001 The National Museum of Archaeology, together with the Malta Tourism Authority and the Maltese Embassy to Belgium and the EU, are organising an exhibition on Maltese prehistory.
in Brussels. *The Prehistoric Treasures of an Island: Neolithic and Bronze Age Malta c. 5000 - 750 BC* will be held at the KBC Bank, between December 11-16.

- **5 December 2001** Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Borg reiterated Malta’s absolute and unreserved condemnation of the terrorist acts of September 11. Dr Borg was participating in the Ninth Ministerial Meeting of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), held in Bucharest.

- **5 December 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli attended a meeting of Finance Ministers from European Union applicant countries, in Brussels. The meeting discussed the economic and fiscal policy of the applicant countries and the war that should be waged against the financing of terrorism by both applicant and member countries.

- **5 December 2001** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech presented STMicroelectronics with the *Environment Award for Industry*. Dr Zammit Dimech said that STMicroelectronics followed the Environmental Decalogue in all countries where it had set up manufacturing plants.

- **5 December 2001** Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech opened a seminar aimed at explaining how the EU will affect Malta’s environment. The seminar was one of five that are being organised for Malta’s business and industry communities by the Technical Assistance Information Exchange Office (TAIEX), in co-operation with the Malta Business Bureau.

- **6 December 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami met with the Foreign Affairs and European Affairs Committee in the Dutch Parliament. The two sides discussed, among other topics, EU enlargement and the progress achieved by Malta in its membership bid. Dr Fenech-Adami was on a working visit to Holland.

- **6 December 2001** The International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia formally requested Malta to join other countries in helping the tribunal to enforce sentences by keeping convicted war criminals in prison. Tribunal registrar Hans Holthius made the request when Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami visited the tribunal buildings at The Hague.

- **6 December 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami inaugurated the Malta Embassy at Scheveningseweg 2, 2517 KT, The Hague. The Embassy became operational in July this year, when Adrian Strickland became the first resident Ambassador.

- **6 December 2001** Social Policy Minister Lawrence Gonzi said that everyone needed to understand the importance of making streets accessible to all. Dr Gonzi was speaking at a seminar on the theme *Toroq ghal kulhadd*, organised by the National Commission Persons with a Disability to launch a leaflet with the same name.

- **6 December 2001** Transport Minister Censu Galea said that nearly 50 per cent of the population owned a mobile phone. In this, Malta compared favourably with other European countries in the penetration of telecommunications. Mr Galea was speaking at the inauguration of the Communications and IT fair, organised by students’ media organisation *Insite*, at the University.

- **6 December 2001** The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Anton Tabone, attended the 12th meeting of the President of the European Parliament with the Presidents of the Parliaments of countries participating in the enlargement process, in Brussels.

- **6 December 2001** The National Orchestra of Malta is to take part in five performances of Mozart’s opera *Cosi Fan Tutte*, in Palermo. The project is a joint venture between *Operalaboratorio* (Palermo), the Manoel Theatre, and the National Orchestra.

- **7 December 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami met Prime Minister Wim Kok and took part in a public debate at the Niewspoort international press centre, on the topic *Malta, Europe’s viable partner in the Mediterranean*. Dr Fenech-Adami also had an audience with Queen Beatrix during his two-day visit to The Hague.

- **7 December 2001** Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok announced that the Netherlands would soon be opening an Embassy in Malta. Addressing a joint news conference with Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, Mr Kok said that an office would be opened next year, with the Embassy opening at a later stage.
• **7 December 2001** The Government in a statement expressed concern over the future of the Middle East and the effect on the international situation in general, particularly in view of the progressive deterioration in the situation in the region over the past few days.

• **7 December 2001** Ten companies participated in a one-week trade mission to Italy. The mission was organised by the Malta External Trade Corporation with the support of Bank of Valletta and the Maltese-Italian Chamber of Commerce.

• **7 December 2001** The new Apostolic Nuncio, Mgr Luigi Conti, presented his credentials to President Guido de Marco.

• **7 December 2001** The Commission for the Advancement of Women within the Social Policy Ministry welcomed the amendments to the regulations and conditions of maternity leave. The commission viewed the initiative as “another family-friendly measure that promoted the well-being of the family, and as another step in the series of positive developments on the part of the Government that facilitated the advancement of women in the public sphere”.

• **8 December 2001** The Central Bank of Malta revoked, with effect from Friday 7th December, the banking licence issued in March 1999 to *Iktisat Bankasi T.A.S.* to operate a branch from Malta. The licence was revoked after the *Iktisat*’s banking licence in Turkey was withdrawn by the Turkish regulatory authorities.

• **8 December 2001** Malta Financial Services Centre warned investors to be well informed and cautious when considering investments in emerging market debt or in investment funds that are exposed to emerging market debt. The MFSC statement came after a number of Maltese investors contacted it, expressing concern over the value of their investments in sovereign debt issued by Argentina.

• **8 December 2001** A report drawn up by the European Commission shows that it will take Malta 30 years to reach 75 per cent of average EU purchasing power standards. The European Commission says in its report that the candidate-countries need to step up their efforts and design more ambitious growth strategies.

• **8 December 2001** Health Minister Louis Deguara said that, once the new *Tal-Qroqq* hospital opens, it would cost the Government Lm1.2 million a week to run, or Lm62 million annually. This figure does not include health centres or other health services. Dr Deguara was addressing 140 pensioners who were treated to a tour of the huge hospital site.

• **8 December 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that he believed Malta had the potential to be a base for aircraft maintenance and servicing and other related technical support services. The Minister was speaking during a conference on the air transport industry, held at the *Crowne Plaza*. Transport Minister Censu Galea also addressed the conference.

• **8 December 2001** The National Statistics Office said that total exports in October this year had dropped by Lm31.2 million to Lm67.6 million, from Lm98.8 million last year. Imports declined by Lm47.8 million to Lm108.5 million when compared to the same month last year.

• **9 December 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said in an interview with ‘Sunday Times’ supplement *Crossroads* that the Government would hold a referendum on the EU in 2003, following the conclusions of talks on European Union membership. “That is the scenario. However, I have to keep my options open because I cannot ignore a Labour Party which commands the support of just under 50 per cent of the electorate,” Dr Fenech-Adami said.

• **9 December 2001** Malta and Italy signed two agreements, one on the readmission of illegal immigrants and the other on money laundering. Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg signed on behalf of Malta and Italian Interior Minister Claudio Scajola signed on behalf of Italy.

• **10 December 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that were Malta to stay out of the EU, it would put itself at a disadvantage. “We should not be short-sighted by taking into account one’s personal interest. We should bear in mind the interest of our children and of the future,” said Dr Fenech-Adami. The Prime Minister was addressing a debate with the Leader of the Opposition for the benefit of members of the GRTU, Association of General Retailers and Traders, at their general meeting.
10 December 2001 The President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi, said that the Nice treaty gave Malta five seats in the European Parliament and not six like Luxembourg because it took populations into account and Luxembourg’s population was larger than that of Malta. Mr Prodi’s view on the policy was sought by a Maltese national during a live internet chat. The European Commission later released the full transcript of Mr Prodi’s chat.

10 December 2001 Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg announced that, following the agreement with Italy on the re-admission of illegal immigrants, the Government was working to reach similar agreements with North African countries, including Libya and Egypt. It was also working hard to sign extradition treaties with North African countries. Dr Borg was being interviewed by The Times newspaper.

10 December 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that it was estimated that, during this year, some 400,000 tons of waste from the construction industry would have been dumped in private quarries. A total of 11 private quarries are being used as dumping grounds for such waste, he said. Dr Zammit Dimech was taking part in a discussion in San Gwann.

10 December 2001 Agriculture and Fisheries Minister Ninu Zammit said that the Ministry was growing 7,000 olive trees from grafts of table olives and oil olives that would be planted in 2003. He reminded participants that this sector was greatly supported by the European Union, which provided an allowance or grant to countries producing olive trees and oil. Mr Zammit was addressing an information meeting at Mosta.

10 December 2001 A Sicilian trade delegation concluded a three-day visit to Malta during which a number of fruitful contacts between Sicilian and Maltese entrepreneurs were established. The mission was organised by the Malta Chamber of Commerce in collaboration with the Maltese-Italian Chamber of Commerce.

11 December 2001 A survey carried out in the 13 applicant countries by Eurobarometer revealed that 53 per cent of eligible respondents in Malta had indicated that they would vote in favour of EU membership. The survey was held in October and its findings were published by the European Commission.

11 December 2001 Tourism Minister Michael Refalo announced in Parliament that the Malta Tourism Authority would, next month, be offering gifts for tourists who place bookings for holidays between April and October. The gifts would consist of tourist services having a value of 100 euros or £60 sterling.

12 December 2001 The September 11 attacks on the US were remembered in a short ceremony at the Palace courtyard in Valletta, three months to the day after the attacks. The ceremony, led by President Guido de Marco, was attended by, among others, Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, Archbishop Mgr Joseph Mercieca, United States Ambassador Anthony Gioia, and Speaker Anton Tabone.

12 December 2001 The Parliamentary Secretary in the Economic Services Ministry, Edwin Vassallo, announced that a total of 501 new trade licences were issued between January and November this year. Most of the licences, he said, were in wholesale and retail trade and services.

12 December 2001 Psychologist Alfred Zammit Montebello died yesterday. He was 68. Born in Mdina in 1933, Mr Zammit Montebello was married to Carmen née Micallef and has four children, Ivan, Margaret, Lisa and Ann.

13 December 2001 During the fifth meeting of the conference on Malta’s accession to the European Union at Ministerial level, held in Brussels, Malta formally opened negotiations on the area of agriculture, the last remaining chapter where negotiations had still not commenced. The meeting also formally confirmed the provisional closure of negotiations on three areas during the past six months, namely, on free movement of persons, transport and social policy.

13 December 2001 During the year 2001, the National Audit Office carried out Regularity, Value for Money, and other audits concerning matters relating to financial year ended 31 December 2000.

13 December 2001 Parliament approved, by 33 votes in favour and 29 against, the Budget for next year and supplementary estimates to cover over-spending in a number of sectors this year. The
Appropriation Bill provided for total outlay of Lm538.2 million. The supplementary estimates were for Lm32.8 million.

- **13 December 2001** Air Malta Chairman Louis Grech said that the company was bracing itself for a turbulent period, with the events of September 11 having a dramatic effect on the airline industry. Mr Grech was speaking at a news conference to announce the financial results of the year ending March 2001, which left Air Malta group with losses amounting to Lm3.7 million.

- **13 December 2001** Transport Minister Censu Galea returned from Paris where he led a delegation for talks at the French Ministry for Equipment, Housing and Transport. The talks touched on various transport aspects, and included the establishment of a framework for developing co-operation between the two countries in the maritime sector.

- **13 December 2001** President Guido de Marco presented the book *The Sovereign Palaces of Malta* to the Grand Master of the Order of St John, Fra Andrew Bertie, and to former President of the Republic Censu Tabone, at the Palace. President de Marco wrote the preface to the book.

- **13 December 2001** The National Statistics Office announced that a total of 1.1 million passengers had used the Gozo Channel ferries to cross between Malta and Gozo during the third quarter this year, an increase of 44,547, or 4.1 per cent, over the same period last year. During the same quarter, the number of commercial vehicles carried by the Malta-Gozo ferries went down by 133, or 2.2 per cent, from 5,916 last year to 5,783.

- **14 December 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said in a Christmas and New Year message to migrants that Malta’s EU membership would not only benefit the Maltese living in Malta but all those Maltese living in other countries. An audio recording of the Prime Minister’s message is available in a downloadable MP3 format on the DOI website, at [www.doi.gov.mt](http://www.doi.gov.mt)

- **14 December 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that Malta was looking forward to participating in the European Union’s convention that will prepare for the Intergovernmental Conference of 2004. The Prime Minister was speaking to Maltese reporters in Belgium following a summit meeting of the European Peoples’ Party at Meise, ahead of the EU’s two-day summit at Laeken.

- **14 December 2001** On Republic Day President Guido de Marco, on behalf of the Government and people of Malta, awarded the *Midalja ghall-Qadi tar-Repubblika* to a number of Maltese citizens who had distinguished themselves in different fields of endeavour. PC Roger Debattista posthumously received the *Midalja Ghall-Qlubija* after he was killed in a bank hold-up. The Investiture Ceremony took place at The Palace, in Valletta.

- **15 December 2001** Finance Minister John Dalli and European Investment Bank Director General Terence Brown signed a framework agreement between Malta and the EIB in view of Malta’s prospective EU membership. The agreement was signed at the Finance Ministry, in Valletta.

- **15 December 2001** Bank of Valletta announced that the European Investment Bank had extended a global loan of 25 million Euro to Bank of Valletta for the long-term financing of various projects in different sectors of the economy. The formal signing took place at the Central Bank of Malta, in the presence of Central Bank and Finance Ministry officials.

- **15 December 2001** The new website of the Malta Tourism Authority registered 4.8 million hits between 9-30 November. The website can be viewed at [http://www.visitmalta.com](http://www.visitmalta.com)

- **15 December 2001** *Where Malta?* is a new tourist information and reference guide that serves as an introduction to the Maltese Islands. It highlights Maltese culture and history, and includes interviews with political figures, executives and organisations. The guide was launched by KI Marketing Creations.

- **16 December 2001** European leaders meeting in Laeken named Malta as one of the candidate candidates with the potential of concluding negotiations by the end of 2002, to join the EU in 2004. Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt said that now there was a very clear statement on enlargement: “We have now got the dates and mentioned the countries.”
16 December 2001 The leaders of the EU member countries approved the Laeken Declaration, setting up a convention to consider the key issues arising for the EU’s future development, and to try and identify possible responses. The convention is to be composed of representatives of member states and candidate countries, with former French President Valery Giscard d’Estaing as President. At the convention, Malta will be represented by a government representative and two Members of Parliament.

16 December 2001 Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said that he was looking forward to active participation by the Maltese delegates in the convention. Dr Fenech-Adami added that he hoped that the two MPs would represent the two local political parties.

16 December 2001 Environment Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that, in the New Year, Environment and Planning were expected to merge under one authority. This move would be in line with Government’s policy to distinguish between the regulatory and operational aspects of any matter. Dr Zammit Dimech was winding up the debate on the estimates of his Ministry in Parliament.

16 December 2001 President Guido de Marco launched this year’s Milied Hieni campaign, to raise money for the Community Chest Fund. Prof. de Marco lit a giant Christmas tree next to a large crib on Palace Square, in Valletta.

16 December 2001 Enemalta Chairman Robert Ghirlando confirmed that the corporation would be experimenting with its first wind-powered turbine in the near future. Prof. Ghirlando said that the turbine would be installed close to the power station, at Delimara. Professor Ghirlando was addressing a Meet the Press session, at the University of Malta’s Centre for Communication Technology.

16 December 2001 Malta withdrew its geographical limitation on refugees, in place since 1971 when Malta signed the UN Convention on the status of refugees. Malta Refugees Commissioner Charles Buttigieg represented Malta at a UN ministerial meeting in Geneva to mark the 50th anniversary of the convention.

17 December 2001 Finance Minister John Dalli confirmed that intense investigations had not uncovered any funds belonging to terrorist organisations. “We have carried out a complete scan of the situation in all financial organisations in Malta, and the result is negative,” said the Minister. Mr Dalli was speaking to The Times newspaper, following a public budget post-mortem, at Floriana.

18 December 2001 Former European Commission Vice-President Leon Brittan warned that a decision by Malta to opt out of the European Union would effectively mean the country would be politically isolated. Lord Brittan was speaking during a seminar organised by the Institute of Directors in association with the British High Commission on the theme How to succeed in Europe - The British business experience.

18 December 2001 Apostolic Nuncio Luigi Conti delivered the Pope’s New Year message to the President. Welcoming Mgr. Conti, Prof. de Marco said that peace and forgiveness had to be the pillars of any society and the basis for a better world.

18 December 2001 President Guido de Marco distributed Lm27,729 amongst 16 philanthropic organisations and 97 individuals. The money was collected by the Malta Community Chest Fund throughout the year.

18 December 2001 The EU Directorate General for Environment is organising competitions on the relation between environment and young people’s health. The winners will be invited to Brussels during Green Week 2002 to receive prizes from Environment Commissioner Margot Wallstrom.

18 December 2001 In his message to Maltese migrants, President Guido de Marco made reference to the tragic events that took place in Washington and New York on September 11th. He said that these tragic events also managed to bring family members closer together, as Maltese families sought to reassure themselves by making contact with their relations abroad.

20 December 2001 Malta and the European Union signed two agreements intended to assist Malta in its preparations for membership of the EU. Victor Camilleri, Malta’s Ambassador to the European Communities, and Ambassador Frans van Daele, on behalf of the Presidency of the European Council, signed the agreements in Brussels. The Ambassadors also exchanged the instruments of ratification for both agreements.
• **20 December 2001** Ms Marie-Helene Aubert, who is Vice-president of the National Assembly in France, said that the purpose of her visit to Malta was to prepare a report on the Island’s relations with the EU and to strengthen ties between the two countries. Ms Aubert was addressing a news conference at the French Embassy, at the end of a two-day official visit.

• **20 December 2001** Malta International Airport Chairman Lawrence Zammit announced that a new collective agreement had been signed with the General Workers’ Union and the Union Haddiema Maghqudin. Mr Zammit said that the agreement stipulates that 250 of the 500 workers at present employed with Civil Aviation have until February 19 to decide whether to remain employees of Civil Aviation or to join MIA.

• **20 December 2001** Culture Minister Louis Galea said that the Government would be issuing an international call for the setting up of a heritage park at Mnajdra and Hagar Qim stone-age temples. The park will be managed on the guardianship concept, run jointly by the Government and the investors. Dr Galea was speaking at the Museum of Archaeology in Valletta during the launch of the Temples Survey Project.

• **20 December 2001** The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Anton Tabone, announced that the House had held 215 sittings this year, in which 8,300 Parliamentary Questions had been put. The committees had met for 117 times and some 30 bills had been approved. Parliament rose for its Christmas recess after approving the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (Amendment) Bill.

• **20 December 2001** Culture Minister Louis Galea said that the Government would be issuing an international call for the setting up of a heritage park at Mnajdra and Hagar Qim stone-age temples. The park will be managed on the guardianship concept, run jointly by the Government and the investors. Dr Galea was speaking at the Museum of Archaeology in Valletta during the launch of the Temples Survey Project.

• **21 December 2001** A government statement said that the Cabinet had discussed the recommendations of the MIA Privatisation Adjudication Committee. The Cabinet had approved its recommendations and authorised the Finance Minister to instruct the Committee to immediately proceed with talks with Alterra Consortium that was being considered as the preferred bidder.

• **21 December 2001** The National Statistics Office announced that the balance of international payments in the third quarter this year had a net surplus of Lm6.6 million compared to a deficit of Lm5.3 million in the same quarter last year.

• **21 December 2001** The Chairman of Malta’s EU Core Negotiating Team, Richard Cachia Caruana, said that he envisaged that, during the first half of 2002, Malta would have disposed of almost all the non-financial chapters, if not formally, at least in substance. Those dealing with matters that have a direct bearing on financial structures would be concluded towards the end of 2002. Mr Cachia Caruana was interviewed by *The Times* newspaper.

• **22 December 2001** The National Statistics Office said that provisional statistics supplied by the Central Bank of Malta had shown that government debt outstanding at the end of November his year stood at Lm1,046.7 million. This is an increase of Lm142.8 million, or 15.8 per cent, from Lm903.8 million outstanding at the end of November 2000.

• **22 December 2001** Lombard Bank chairman Christian Lemmerich said that the bank had made a pre-tax profit of Lm1.12 million for the year ending September 30, marginally down from last year’s record profit of Lm1.24 million. Mr Lemmerich was speaking during the bank’s annual general meeting.

• **22 December 2001** Negotiations on property, one of the most important negotiating issues for Malta, were closed during a specially convened session of the conference on Malta’s accession to the
European Union, held in Brussels at the level of Deputies. Malta obtained a permanent special arrangement to retain restrictions on the purchase of property in Malta by foreigners, even after EU membership. Malta’s delegation was led by the Chairman of the Core Negotiating Group, Mr. Richard Cachia Caruana.

- **22 December 2001** Mr. Eneko Landaburu, Director-General for Enlargement in the European Commission, expressed his satisfaction at the closure of negotiations on property. He said that the arrangement with Malta on the acquisition of secondary residences by EU citizens was only acceptable to the EU because of Malta’s unique demographic and geographical situation and the permanent nature of the natural constraints it faces. In particular, he added, this arrangement could not set any precedent in the accession negotiations with any candidate country.

- **23 December 2001** Foreign Minister Joe Borg hailed the special concession made to Malta on the purchase of property by foreigners. Dr Borg said that the historic agreement with the European Union sealed a year of massive achievements in the Island’s negotiations towards membership. Dr Borg was addressing a post-mortem press conference together with the Chairman of the Core Negotiating Group, Richard Cachia Caruana.

- **23 December 2001** President Guido de Marco, Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi, Archbishop Joseph Mercieca and Opposition Leader Alfred Sant delivered their Christmas and New Year messages, at Freedom Square, in Valletta. Dr Gonzi deputised for Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami, who was unable to attend.

- **24 December 2001** The Prime Minister’s Christmas Broadcast to the Nation can be downloaded in mp3 format from [www.doj.gov.mt](http://www.doj.gov.mt). The Prime Minister’s Broadcast to Migrants is also available online from the same site.

- **24 December 2001** Transport and Communications Minister Censu Galea distributed Lm2,767 raised from the surcharge on the sale of Christmas stamps last year. The money was distributed amongst 20 voluntary and charitable institutions.

- **24 December 2001** The Central Bank urged the public to be on the alert for counterfeit money that might be in circulation during the festive season.

- **27 December 2001** President Guido de Marco said that important decisions were now on the horizon. He said that he firmly believed that the Maltese people had matured enough to choose the best roads for their own future and that of their children. Prof. de Marco was delivering his Christmas and New Year message.

- **27 December 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami said in his Christmas and New Year message that the Maltese economy had kept moving ahead over the past year, despite the world-wide economic downturn triggered off especially after September 11.

- **27 December 2001** The National Statistics Office said that the retail price index in November had risen by 1.66 points, or 1.42 per cent, over October to reach 118.48. The rate of inflation for the same month stood at 2.64 per cent.

- **27 December 2001** The National Statistics Office published, for the first time, statistics on Malta’s international investment position. The IIP is the balance sheet of the stock of external financial assets and liabilities. It covers the period from 1994 to 1999.

- **27 December 2001** Air Malta’s passenger traffic fell by 10.5 per cent over the past 12 months. The national airline also saw a huge fall in freight traffic of 34.7 per cent, when compared to the same period last year.

- **28 December 2001** Prime Minister Edward Fenech-Adami and Mrs Fenech-Adami left Malta for a holiday in Scotland. They are scheduled back on January 7. Dr Lawrence Gonzi is Acting Prime Minister.

- **28 December 2001** Government had talks with the Renaissance Consortium for the implementation of the *Connections Project*. The project will link Grand Harbour and Marsamxett through two tunnels.

- **28 December 2001** The National Library launched a Quality Service Charter, with information for the public on the services the library offers and the standards to be expected when using these services. Details on the charter are available on [http://www.servicecharters.gov.mt](http://www.servicecharters.gov.mt) or from the library pages on the Education Ministry’s own website at [www.education.gov.mt](http://www.education.gov.mt)

- **28 December 2001** The leader of Italy’s Communist Re-foundation Party, Fausto Bertinotti, paid a courtesy visit on President Guido de Marco at the Palace, in Valletta. Mr Bertinotti was in Malta on a private visit.

- **29 December 2001** Legal Notices 332 – 343, issued under the Environment Protection Act 2001 and published in *The Government Gazette*, amend regulations on a number of environmental subjects, including hunting and trapping.

- **30 December 2001** The seventh edition of the fund-raising TV programme *L-Istrina* collected a record-breaking Lm462,000. The money raised will eventually be given to the Malta Community Chest Fund to distribute between the *Federazzjoni ta' Organizzazzjonijiet ghall-Persuni b’Dizabilità, OASI Foundation, Equal Partners Foundation* and *Dar Merhba Bik*.

- **30 December 2001** As from 1st January, Malta Air Traffic Services Limited, a new government-owned company, will be providing air navigation within the Malta flight information region. Lawrence Zammit is Chairman of MATS.

- **31 December 2001** *Viset Consortium* brought forward by a number of weeks its original planning schedule for the Lm14 million project to develop part of the Grand Harbour into the Valletta Waterfront. Last November, the consortium had signed a lease agreement with the Government for the development of a Sea Passenger Terminal that covers the area extending from Customs House in Valletta to Pinto Stores in Lascaris Wharf.

- **31 December 2001** Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici said that he believed that Malta could only stand to gain from the introduction of the Euro. “We can only stand to benefit from the currency change. Travellers will experience stability and businesses will encounter no exchange risk.” Prof. Bonnici was speaking on the eve of the introduction of the new currency in 12 European countries.