

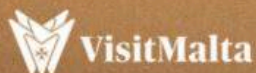


# The Voice of the Maltese

*We are for the Greater Malta*



An online newspaper, with fortnightly print and digital editions



*The winter solstice in the Northern Hemisphere occurs between 21-22 December. Photo of Xewkija, Gozo, taken by Kappa Vision / Jean-Paul Borg.*

# Roundup of Maltese News

compiled by **Brian Decelis**

## Thousands gather to cheer in the New Year

Thousands of people celebrated together to welcome the beginning of 2024 in Valletta, Cottonera and in Gozo. It was estimated that the crowd in Valletta alone exceeded 50,000, with several thousands more gathering in Birgu and in Victoria.

The celebrations in St George's Square, with the participation of a large number of loved and renowned Maltese singers and musicians, were the culmination of a whole month of events organised by the Valletta Cultural Agency as part of the series 'Christmas in the Capital'.



Photo: DOI

The night started with Lara and the Jukeboys band. Then it was up to the The Palace String Orchestra led by Ryan Paul Abela together with an outstanding line-up of some of Malta's top local talent including AIDAN, Drakard, Klinsmann, Jasmine, Megan May, Sarah Bonnici, as well as special guest Emma Muscat.

For the second consecutive year, the Local Councils of Birgu, Bormla, Isla, and Kalkara, and r-Reġjun Port, presented Cottonera New Year's Eve 2024.



Photo: Clint Camilleri, Minister for Gozo, via Facebook

A performance by the singer Kurt Calleja and his band was followed by the crowd-pleasing sounds of the popular band The Travellers leading up to midnight with DJ Luca Lorenzo, in an evening

hosted by the comedians duo known as Danusan.

Popular Dutch Europop group The Vengaboys took the stage in Victoria, Gozo with a lineup of local talent, including the DCapitals Big Band, Ozzy Lino, Micimago, and Ryan Spiteri.

## Fast track process for skilled workers

Identità – the government agency responsible for visas in Malta – has announced details of its new 'Specialist Employee Initiative' that seeks to fast track applications from third-country specialist workers.

If an employer is unable to find a Maltese or EU worker to fill a role, university graduates being offered employment in professional or technical roles earning at least €25,000 will have their application processed within 15 days. A minimum of three years work experience in a position directly related to the proposed position may be offered in lieu of the qualification.



Image from Identity Malta website

This scheme is being billed as an extension of the Key Employee Initiative which fast-tracks applications of managerial or highly technical persons earning a minimum of €35,000 within 5 days.

The government has indicated that population growth is of concern, with Finance Minister Clyde Caruana calculating that the current population would need to increase to 800,000 unless a new economic model to be developed.

It is however acknowledged that the local supply of workers does not meet demand, which has led to an increase of foreign workers from 15,000 in 2012 to 97,000 in 2022, a third of whom being EU citizens. The schemes run by Identità are aimed to address the lack of skilled workers.

It has also been announced that non-EU workers seeking employment in tourism as well as in the care of the elderly will be required to hold a skills card. The training and assessment programme for the card will include an English test and ensure that they have a basic knowledge of Maltese.

The skills card for the tourism sector for non-EU workers was originally meant to be introduced as from this month – now postponed to March 2024 – with plans to expand it to include Maltese and EU workers in 2025.

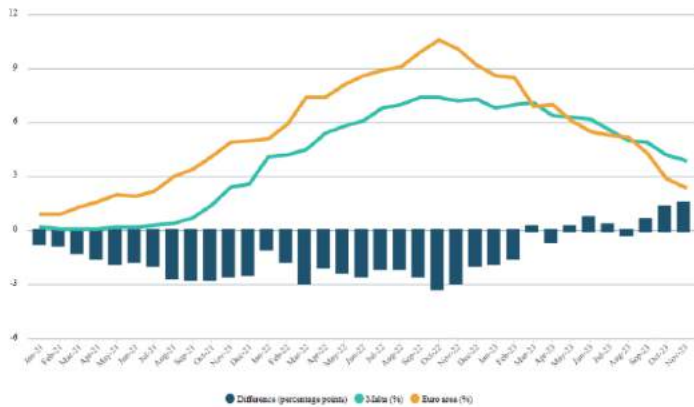
## Malta's inflation falling slower than the euro area

Although the annual rate of inflation in November was down from 4.2 per cent to 3.9 per cent, figures released by the National Statistics Office show that this was still 1.5 percentage points higher than the 2.41 per cent registered for the euro area.

This seems to confirm the perception by many that inflation in Malta seems to be stubbornly stuck on a high rate when compared to the state of play within the European Union. Although in the latter this had gone up to more than 11% a year or so ago, according to figures published by Eurostat, this has continued to go down below Malta's trajectory.

In November, the largest upward impact on annual inflation was registered in the food, restaurants and housing indexes, mainly due to higher prices of bakery products, restaurant services and rents, respectively. Communication bucked the trend reflecting better deals on mobile phone services.

All-items HICP in Malta and the euro area



## New Year's day murder in Rabat



A 27-year-old man from Rabat, was shot dead after he was allegedly involved in an argument with another person where a firearm was used in the area of Nigret on the afternoon of New Year's Day.

The suspect who allegedly shot twice the victim was arrested in the same locality after almost three hours on the run, police said.

A spokesperson told the media that the alleged shooter's motive was not known.

This was a rare occurrence for a murder in broad daylight in Malta.

## Scathing Auditor General's report over government spending

The latest Annual Audit Report on the Public Accounts for 2022 presented by the Auditor General, Charles Deguara, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Dr Anglu Farrugia, reveals a number of shortcomings in Government's operations.

Some of the key findings identified were the following:

- Limited internal controls and lack of segregation of duties.
- Habitual bypassing of procurement regulations, including irregular use of negotiated procedures, services rendered under expired contracts and lack of necessary approvals.
- Weaknesses in the payroll system, leading to incorrect calculation of allowances and regular use of overtime, often unauthorised.
- Insufficient enforcement on amounts due to Government.
- Lack of audit trail and Standard Operating Procedures.

These findings follow 26 audit reports on the operations of several

public sector entities including 17 ministries. The National Audit Office has judiciously analysed the level of compliance of various expenditure and revenue items with prevailing rules and regulations.

The Report gives over 250 relevant recommendations which are meant to address the shortcomings identified during these reviews and thus promote good governance and best practice in Government's operations.

One of the ministries – that for Active Ageing – is singled out for its frequent use of negotiated procedures (allowing the usual public tendering procedures to be bypassed) as well as that of continuing to use service providers after their contracts had expired.

The Gozo Ministry was found to have creatively found a way of habitually bypassing procurement regulations by splitting projects into multiple contracts each costing just under €10,000 – which is the maximum limit of expenditure allowed before a public tender needs to be issued.

This same ministry was also found in breach of recruitment regulations with the direct engagement of personnel without the approval of the finance ministry.

But it was not all bad news from cover to cover: the Malta Council for Science and Technology was praised for its practice of independently auditing projects before issuing final payments, highlighting its "accountability, transparency and overall good governance."

## New education strategy launched

A new education strategy with three main pillars of Wellbeing, Growth and Emancipation, and Equity and Inclusion has been launched for public consultation following some two hundred meetings with educators, parents, students, and other stakeholders.

Minister for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation Clifton Grima said that through the Strategy our country has a system that better helps all students to develop their full potential while reaching all their aspirations – A strategy that will put the person in the center.

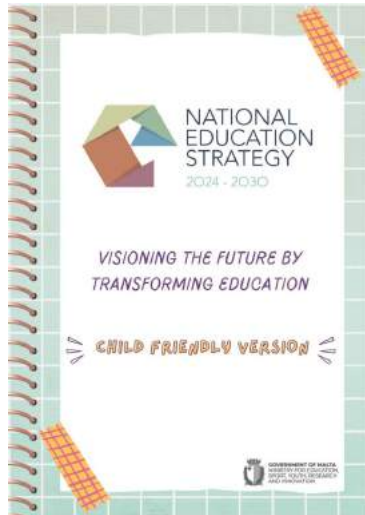


Photo: DOI - Pierre Sammut

"We want to see our children succeed and that is why we are renewing our commitment to give the best educational experience, quality education. A strategy that sees that our educational system adapts more to the needs of children and not the other way around. We want to make sure that our education system is preparing students in the best way for the world of work. This is why this strategy will transform the educational sector," said Minister Grima.

The theoretical framework of the National Education Strategy 2024-2030 is based on the concept of transformation, a process that recognizes past achievements and builds on them, while at the same time orienting itself to the demands of the future.

"Through 36 measures and 120 initiatives we will continue to see a transformation in education that will support professionals in this sector, as well as students. Through the change from initiatives to programs, we will be ensuring the holistic development of students. While through the Family-Community-School Link program it will be helping families, involving communities and supporting schools through an integrated approach. We want to continue with a dialogue with all the parties concerned to work and collaborate together," said the Permanent Secretary within the Ministry for Education Matthew Vella.



Among the proposals the strategy includes mental health support for teachers, more time for physical activity for students and increased participation by parents in school life.

And in what could also be seen as an innovative way to engage young students in the consultation process, a child-friendly version of the document was also published.

## Malta's employment rates increase

In July 2023, registered full-time employment increased by 7.5 per cent, while part-time employment as a primary job increased by 3.0 per cent when compared to July 2022.

Moreover, according to a recent Eurostat report, Malta recorded the highest quarter-over-quarter growth in employment across the EU during the third quarter of this year, double that of second placed country Belgium at over one percentage point.

This contrasts sharply with the rest of the EU where the average rate of employment contracted, included for some of the largest countries such as France and Germany. Indeed Malta was one of only 11 countries which saw their employment rise.

The National Statistics Office said that administrative data provided by Jobsplus show that, over a period of one year, the labour supply (excluding part-timers) increased by 7.5 per cent, reaching 274,014. This was mainly attributed to a year-on-year increase in the full-time registered employment (19,132) and a decrease in registered unemployment.

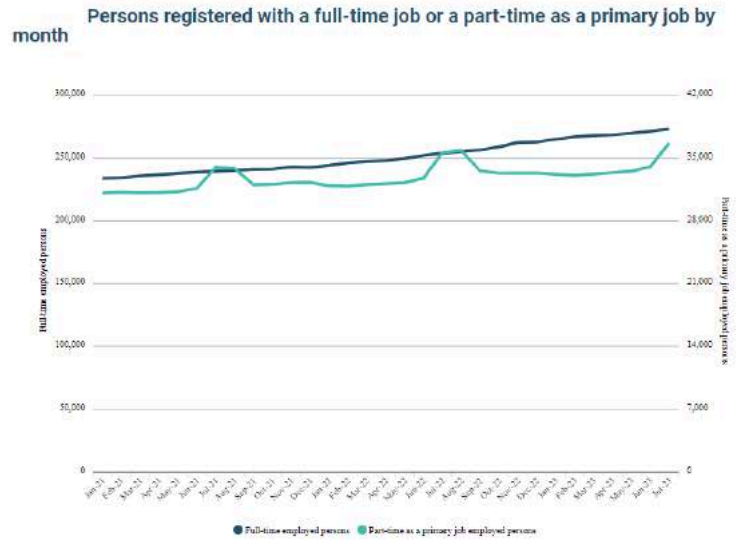
Administrative and support service activities and Accommodation and food service activities contributed mostly to the increase in employment, when compared to July 2022.

Full-time employment in the private sector went up by 19,050 persons to 221,706 whereas that in public sector increased marginally by 82 persons.

The number of persons registered as full-time self-employed rose by 799.

Registered part-time employment in July 2023 increased by 6.2 per cent when compared to the corresponding month in 2022. The sectors that contributed mostly to the overall increase were Professional, scientific and technical activities followed by Transportation and storage sector.

The number of part-timers who also held a full-time job amounted



Source: National Statistics Office, Malta

to 41,357 up by 9.3 per cent, when compared to the corresponding month in 2022. Employed persons whose part-time job was their primary occupation totalled 36,666 up by 3.0 per cent when compared to the same month in 2022.

Figures given by Home Affairs Minister Byron Camilleri in parliament said that last year Malta issued over 27,500 residents for workers from non-EU countries, more than three times the number of the previous year.

But as cries of overpopulation concerns increase, Identità CEO Mark Mallia has stated that the problem is not foreign workers but that Malta is bringing in more workers than it needs without the specific skills needed.

## Teenagers may become mayors too

In what was described as "groundbreaking legislation" by local government minister Owen Bonnici, 16 and 17-year-olds may become mayors and deputy mayors following the next local council elections to be held in June.

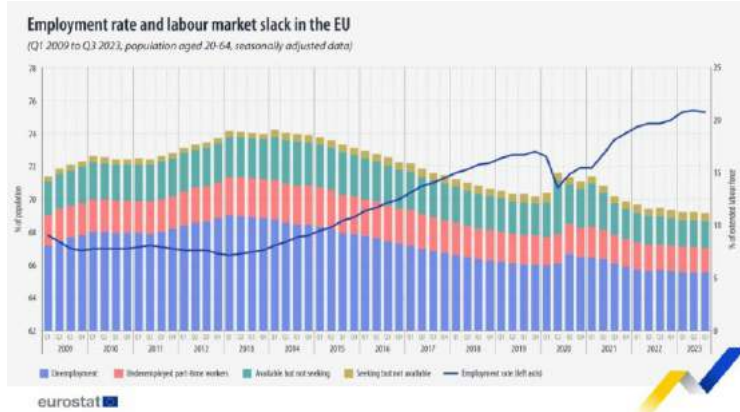
Until now, such teenagers were able to vote and contest in local council elections but not could not be appointed to a mayorial position if they obtained the highest number of votes. But all this is to change once President George Vella signs into law a bill unanimously approved by Parliament.



"Teenage Fashion 2009" by garryknight is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

Both parties represented in parliament had promised such a move in their respective electoral manifestos. But not everybody was happy with such a change – in what could be a hint at the Association of Local Councils' Executive Secretaries' earlier opposition, the bill makes the council's mayor and executive secretary "jointly responsible" legally, thereby shifting more burden on such secretaries.

While persons under 18 are not allowed to do so (among many other things such as driving), the new law will allow mayors under



18 to enter into contracts and be signatories on documents such as cheques on the local council's behalf.

While many – including current mayors – had stated that lack of life experience would deter such mayors to be effective in their role, others felt that their youthful enthusiasm would make up for it.

But we now just need to wait and see what's going to happen at the next local council elections in June as there have been reports that parties are struggling to recruit new candidates to contest such elections!

## PM announces a surprise cabinet reshuffle

Prime Minister Robert Abela carried out a cabinet reshuffle that was not expected to take place – reportedly even by his own cabinet – just under two years since the last general election.

Although no official reason was given, it might have been as a result of the surveys that have been carried out over the past months that indicated that some Labour Party supporters were having doubts about their own party's effectiveness in power.



PM with new Transport Minister Chris Bonett. Photo via Facebook

Nevertheless, the reshuffle was at least partly brought about by Malta's nominee as EU commissioner later on this year – current Deputy Minister Chris Fearne who until yesterday was also responsible for health.

In fact, the new Health Minister Jo Etienne Abela could be considered one of the two main 'climbers' having this responsibility added onto his previous one for the elderly.



PM address Labour Party supporters. Photo via Facebook

Another major 'promotion' has been that for Chris Bonett who has been appointed to one of the most high-profile portfolios – transport and infrastructure – elbowing out in the process the biggest surprise of the reshuffle: Aaron Farrugia being left out of cabinet completely.



Photo: DOI - Clifton Fenech

In spite of the rumours that were swirling around, at the end of the day besides the above almost all the cabinet members retained their portfolios, with some changes for a few. Among these one can mention the Planning portfolio shifting onto Clint Camilleri who also retains Gozo, and Miriam Dalli losing Enterprise.

Malcolm Paul Agius, Omar Farrugia, and Glenn Bedingfield were given Parliamentary Secretary positions for the first time.

The opposition Nationalist Party claimed that the PM had ended up doing a 'pseudo' reshuffle due to pressure from his ministers.

## More band clubs to be 'saved'

There have been several threats over the years for band clubs to be evicted from the premises they had occupied for decades due to legal issues over rent laws. Many band clubs do not own their premises and were therefore risking to end up without a place from which they can function.

The government has stepped in to purchases such premises to allow them to continue to serve the respective band clubs under reasonable rent terms to be paid to the government.

Earlier this year, agreements were successfully reached with the owners of the Maria Regina Band Club of Marsa; Stella Levantina Band Club of Attard; Circolo San Giuseppe Filarmonica Sagra Famiglia of Kalkara, Anici Band Club of Qormi, Stella Maris (Sliema) and Antoine de Paule Band Club (Paola)..

The government has now announced that promise-of-sale agreements were formalised for an additional five properties: St. Mary Band Club of Mosta, St. Peter in Chains Band Club of Birzebbuga, 12th May of Żebbuġ Malta, St. Andrew Society of Lija and the St. Helen Band Club (Duke of Connaught's Own) of Birkirkara.

The government's investment in the final acquisition of these five properties amounts to €10,397,000. This amount is combined with the sum of €5.8 million, representing the acquisition of the six buildings announced earlier in March of this year.

When announcing these acquisitions Minister for National Heritage, the Arts, and Local Government Owen Bonnici highlighted the importance of this ongoing initiative, particularly in light of the Maltese festa's recent inscription as Intangible Heritage of Mankind by UNESCO.

Indeed the band clubs are considered to be the fulcrum of the



Photo: DOI - Clifton Fenech



Photo: DOI - Clifton Fenech

external festivities with their marches as well as may organizing the elaborate firework displays and other activities.

## More females in tertiary education but graduate numbers drop

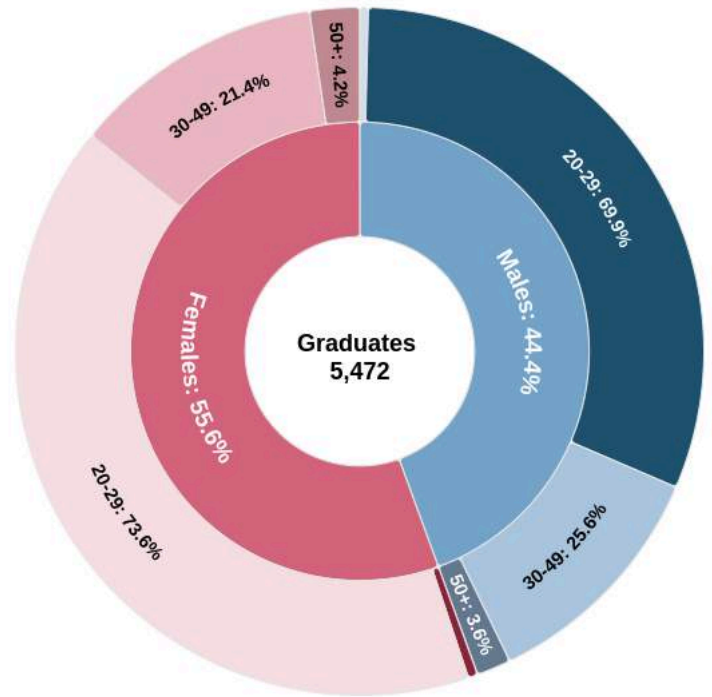
Latest statistics by the National Statistics Office of Malta (NSO) reveal that more than half of tertiary graduates (55.6 per cent) were females. Indeed, females surpassed males in all levels of tertiary education except for doctorates.

The latest data by the NSO also indicates a reduction of the number of tertiary-level graduates – totalling 5,472 during 2022 – equivalent to a decrease of 2.2 per cent over the previous year. However this has followed a drastic increase in 2021 when the number of graduates had reached 5,597 over 2020's 4,629.

There has also been a marked increase in foreign graduates. During 2022, foreign graduates totalled 1,359, equivalent to 24.8 per cent of total tertiary-level graduates, increasing by 10.6 percentage points over the previous year. EU citizens (other than Maltese) comprised the largest proportion of all foreign tertiary graduates (57.8

per cent).

The statistics also show that the 'Business, administration and law' field of study was by far the most popular amongst tertiary graduates in 2022, accounting for more than one third of the total at 34.6 per cent. This was followed by graduates in the 'Health and welfare' field of study at 19.6 per cent. 'Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary' was the least popular field of study among tertiary graduates, amounting to 0.3 per cent.



Percentage Distribution of Tertiary Graduates by Sex and Age Group.  
Source: National Statistics Office

# Mix-xena tal-ħajja Maltija

miġbura minn Ġużè Camilleri

## Teftufiet

**Drones:** Kumpanija Maltija rreġistrata f'Malta bl-isem ta' Dronamics Europe Airlines qed twettaq proġett bl-għan aħħari li tkun mal-ewwel kumpaniji fl-Ewropa u fid-dinja li jkollha *drones* kapaċi jwasslu merkanzija f'postijiet remoti.

Il-proġett, li qed taħdem fuqu Dronamics, huwa simili għal dak tal-garr tal-merkanzija minn ajruport għall-ieħor permezz tal-linji tal-ajru tal-merkanzija, iżda f'dan il-każ jsir biss permezz ta' *drones* li ma jkollhomx bżonn ekwipaġġ biex iwasslu l-merkanzija minn post għall-ieħor.

Kull *drone* ikun kapaċi jgħorr 350 kilo ta' merkanzija. Il-vjaġġ tad-*drone* jista' jkun sa elfejn u ħames mitt kilometru li hija distanza raġjonevoli għal dawk li jkunu jridu jibgħatu l-merkanzija minn post għall-ieħor. Dan il-mudell, imsejjaħ Black Swan, huwa manifatturat f'Sydney fl-Awstralja, mill-intrapriża Quickstep.

Il-kumpanija qed tipprogetta li l-ewwel titjiriet tad-*drones* bil-merkanzija jibdwu aktar tard din is-sena.

**Assistenza Soċjali:** Malta għandna sistema ta' għajjnuna soċjali avvanzata sewwa li tilhaq il-bżonnijiet ta' dawk li jeħtieġuha.

Biss, il-Gvern dejjem jimmira biex kemm jista' jkun, inqas u inqas nies ikollhom bżonn din l-għajjnuna soċjali u għalhekk minn żmien għal żmien jagħmel miżuri biex jgħin lil dawk li jkunu fuq din l-għajjnuna, biex ikunu jistgħu jfendu għal rashom.

Hekk fl-2014 ittiegħu miżuri li wasslu biex dawk li jkunu fuq il-benefiċċji soċjali iktar ikun jaqblilhom li jmorru jaħdmu milli jibqgħu fuq l-għajjnuna soċjali

Permezz ta' din l-iskema, min ikun fuq il-benefiċċji soċjali, jekk isib



Ritratt: Dronamics Europe Airways

xogħol, minbarra l-paga li jaqla' minn dak ix-xogħol, jieħu wkoll parti mill-benefiċċju li jkun qed jieħu għal perjodu ta' tliet snin.

U jidher li dan il-proġett qed jirnexxi, għaliex in-numru ta' nies fuq il-benefiċċji soċjali naqas b'mod drastiku. Infatti dawk il-persuni li huma fuq l-assistenza soċjali huma ftit aktar minn terz l-ammont li kien hemm għaxar snin ilu.

Importanti wkoll hija li l-probabbiltà li persuna fuq il-benefiċċji timxi għad-dinja tax-xogħol iżjed milli irdoppja, la darba li timxi għal dak ix-xogħol il-probabbiltà li tibqa' fih żdied ukoll.

**Hxuna:** Illum isiru rapporti kważi dwar kollox, fosthom dwar il-hxuna (nippreferi nuża din dil-kelma f'flok 'obeżità' li qed jużaw il-gurnali Maltin, biex spiċċajna bil-kelmiet obezi f'flok hoxnin, obeza f'flok hoxna, eċċ, eċċ).

U allura t-titlu li għabu l-gurnali Maltin dwar dak li häreġ mill-istudju tal-WHO (World Health Organisation), ..... erġajna nuzaw kelma barranija f'flok l-Organizzazzjoni Dinjija tas-Saħħa ..... jaqra hekk:

"Malta sabet ruħha minn ta' quddiem f'battalja kontra l-piż hekk kif aktar minn 50% tal-adulti fl-Unjoni Ewropea huma obezi."

Attwalment Malta mhux biss hija minn ta' quddiem fejn tidhol il-hxuna, imma hija fl-ewwel post, billi huwa stmat li 64.8% tal-adulti Maltin jaqgħu fil-kategorja tal-hoxnin għax għandhom piż aktar milli support.

Skont ir-Rapport dwar l-Obeżità Reġjonali Ewropea 2022 tal-WHO irrappurtat mill-gurnal *Ilum*, 64.8% tal-popolazzjoni adulta f'Malta għandha piż żejjed (*overweight*). Huma biss 33.6% tal-Maltin adulti li meqjusa li għandhom piż normali, għax barra l-hoxnin hemm ukoll 1.6% li għandhom piż inqas milli suppost.

Barra minn hekk, skont l-istatistika fl-2019, Malta rreġistrat l-ogħla rata ta' irġiel li għandhom hxuna żejda (30.6%) mill-pajjiżi kollha Ewropej, mentri li r-rata tan-nisa kienet fost il-baxxi (26.7%).

It-tieni post hemm il-Kroazja, b'punt percentwali ta' differenza (64.7%).

Il-pajjiżi li rreġistraw l-inqas rata ta' hxuna fl-Unjoni Ewropea kienu l-Italja (45.7%), Franza (47.2%) u Lussemburgu (48.4%).

L-aħbar ma tantx sabiha għal dawk li għandhom piż aktar milli suppost hi li skont l-Organizzazzjoni għall-Kooperazzjoni u l-Iżvilupp Ekonomiċi (OECD) u l-Organizzazzjoni Dinjija tas-Saħħa (WHO), il-piż żejjed u l-obeżità kollettivament inaqqsu kważi tliet snin mill-għomor ta' bniedem.

**Għandhom darhom:** Il-Maltin u l-Għawdxin minn dejjem stinkaw kemm felhu biex jekk jista' jkun ikunu s-sidien tar-residenza tagħhom. Għal żmien twil din kienet dar, għalkemm illum hafna koppji u oħrajn jgħixu go appartamenti u mhux djar, imma xorta hija proprjetà tagħhom.

U b'riżultat ta' dan, skont rapport tal-pubblikazzjoni interattiva Housing Europe, 82.6% tal-popolazzjoni Maltija huma sidien ta' djarhom, filwaqt li huma biss 17.4% jgħixu fil-kera. 82.6% hija figura għolja hafna, meta mxebbha ma' pajjiżi oħra tal-Unjoni Ewropea.

Attwalment jekk niehdu pajjiżi Ewropej individwalment insibu li fil-Germanja, il-maġġoranza (53%) jgħixu f'post mikri. Din it-tendenza tinsab ukoll fl-Awstrija u d-Danimarka fejn dawk li jgħixu f'post mikri huwa ta' 49% u 40% rispettivament.

**Maru Għawdex:** Kif jgri f'hafna mill-pajjiżi Ewropej, anke f'Malta jkun hemm moviment qawwi tal-poplu li jfittex biex fi żmien il-festi tal-Milied u l-Ewwel tas-sena jgħid minn daru għal xi żjara f'xi pajjiż iehor.

U jidher li, filwaqt li numru konsiderevoli ta' Maltin u Għawdxin, irhewla lejn xi pajjiż barra minn xtutna, hafna mill-Maltin għażlu li jgattgħu xi jiem f'Għawdex.

Fil-fatt bejn l-20 ta' Diċembru u l-1 ta' Jannar qasmu lejn Għawdex madwar 100,000 persuna. Din kienet zieda ta' 4.5% fuq dawk li qasmu lejn Għawdex is-sena li għaddiet.

Sintendi dan l-influs ta' Maltin u barranin f'Għawdex wassal kummerċ tajjeb kemm għas-sidien tal-lukandi u postijiet oħra ta' akkomodazzjoni kif ukoll għall-hwienet u r-ristoranti.

Jidher li Għawdex qed jistabilixxi ruhu fost il-Maltin, bħala l-gżira tal-vaganzi tal-Milied u l-Ewwel tas-Sena.

## L-Arcisqof ta' Malta favur li qassisin jizzewgu

Filwaqt li kulhadd kien qed jaqra u jikkellm dwar it-tibdil li sar fil-kabinett propju l-bieraħ fil-għaxija.... aħbar li kienet qed tiddomina l-midja lokali, tfaċċat aħbar oħra li xejn ma kienet mistennija.

Dan meta *The Sunday Times* habbret b'ittri kbar:

**Watch: Priests should have option to marry – Archbishop Charles Scicluna**

Din l-istqarrija min-naħa tal-Arcisqof Mons Charles Scicluna saret waqt intervista tiegħu mal-gurnalista ta' *The Sunday Times*, Mark Lawrence Zammit.

L-Arcisqof sostna li l-Knisja għandha tirrevedi r-regoli tagħha biex tagħti l-għażla lill-qassisin Kattoliċi biex jizzewgu.

Sostna kif wasal iż-żmien li dan jigi diskuss serjament, u jittiehdu deċiżjonijiet tangibbli.

Huwa zied li diġà tkellem dwar is-sugġett fil-Vatikan iżda jirrikonoxxi li mhix fil-mertu tiegħu li jiehu deċiżjoni. Għax hu l-Papa biss li jista' jiehu deċiżjoni dwar dan.

L-Arcisqof qal li din hija l-ewwel darba li qed jikkellm dwar is-sugġett fil-pubbliku, u jaf li għal xi whud kapaci tidher il-kontra tan-norma reliġjuża, iżda staqsa għaliex għandna nitilfu zagħżuġh li kapaci jkun qassis tajjeb, minhabba li jkun jixtieq jizzewweġ.

Zvela li diġà tlietna qassisin tajbin, għax għażlu li jizzewgu.

Dibattiti dwar ir-regola tal-Knisja li ma tħallix qassisin jizzewgu, ilhom isiru għal għexieren ta' snin, iżda l-awtoritajiet lokali tal-Knisja dejjem iddefendewha u nsistew li l-hajja ta' qassis għandha tkun iddedikata esklussivament għall-Knisja u l-komunità.

L-Arcisqof irrikonoxxa li ċ-ċelibat xorta għandu jibqa' jzomm postu fil-Knisja, iżda l-qassisin għandhom jingħataw l-għażla li jizzewgu, bħalma jsir fi Knejjes oħrajn.

Huwa spjega kif fl-ewwel millenju tal-eżistenza tal-Knisja, il-qassisin kienu jingħataw din l-għażla, u hekk għandu jerga' jkun.

L-Arcisqof Scicluna kompli jispjega kif raġel jista' jhobb mara, u fil-frattemp, irid jagħzel bejnha u bejn il-hajja ta' qassis, u ċertu qassisin ma jkunux jistgħu jkampaw ma' dawn l-emozzjonijiet u għalhekk jispicċaw f'relazzjonijiet sentimentali fil-moħbi.

Sintendi din l-istqarrija min-naħa tal-Arcisqof ftit li xejn kienet mistennija, għax għalkemm matul is-snin kien hemm xi membri tal-kleru li fethu f'għalqom dwar din il-materja... bil-konsegwenza li b'ilkemm ma kinux meqjusa bħala ribelli, hadd mill-awtoritajiet tal-Knisja lokali ma häreġ fil-bieraħ jgħid li hu favur li l-membri tal-kleru jingħataw ċans li jizzewgu.

Imma, fl-aħħar mill-aħħar l-affarijiet jinbidlu... u dan mhux biss għal raġunijiet ta' modernizmu, imma ukoll għax hekk ikun hemm bżonn biex l-affarijiet ikompli miexja 'l quddiem.

U fin-nuqqas serju ta' membri tal-kleru, pass bħala dan jista' jwassal biex jittaffa xi ftit dan in-nuqqas.



L-Arcisqof ta' Malta Mons. Charles Scicluna. Photo: Archdiocese of Malta

## Il-Maltin jifftu idejhom

U għal darb'oħra l-Maltin u l-Għawdxin, matul il-jiem tal-festi tal-Milied u l-Ewwel tas-Sena, fethu idejhom biex jgħinu fil-gbir li jsir ta' kull sena f'dawn iż-żminijiet, bl-ikbar kontribuzzjoni tkun dik favur il-Malta Community Chest Fund.

Il-Malta Community Chest Fund taf il-bidu tagħha lill-Gvernatur Sir Robert Laycock li fis-sena 1958 organizza għall-ewwel darba the Ball of the August Moon bl-iskop li jigbor fondi, dakinhar, għall-Malta Playing Fields Association.... għaqda li kienet tiegħu hsieb tforni u tmanjni l-apparat ta' diversi playing fields li kienet waqqfet madwar Malta u Għawdex.

Din l-attività baqgħet issir mill-Gvernaturi li ġew warajh. Biss wara lmenti minn diversi għaqdiet filantropiċi, il-Gvernatur Ġenerali, Sir Maurice Dorman, beda jgħaddi l-flus miġbura lil "Charity Chest" fejn bdiet id-drawwa li dawn il-flus imorru għal skopijiet karitattivi.

Meta fl-1974 Malta saret Repubblika, l-Ewwel President ta' Malta,

Sir Anthony Mamo, filwaqt li kompla bit-tradizzjoni, bidel l-isem f'dak ta' Community Chest Fund li l-iskop tiegħu kien li jgħin lil dawk l-għaqdiet u individwi fil-bżonn.

Maż-żmien l-isem inbidel mil-ġdid u sar the Malta Community Chest Fund.

Sadanittant il-ġbir ma baqax ikun ibbażat fuq dak li illum huma komunement magħruf bħala l-August Moon Ball, imma beda jsir ġbir ieħor, fosthom mill-attività msejja l-Istrina.

L-Istrina, li ssir l-għada tal-Milied saret l-ewwel darba fl-1995.

U mill-Istrina, din is-sena l-Community Chest Fund ġabret €5,279,000.

Għalkemm din is-somma kienet akbar minn dik tas-sena l-oħra, l-



Ritratt: President George Vella via Facebook

akbar somma li qatt ingabret kienet dik tal-2018 meta ngabru €7.1 miljun.

It-tieni l-akbar gabra li saret din is-sena kienet dik għad-Dar tal-Providenza fis-Siggiewi. F'din l-okkażjoni ngabru €1,520,517, zieda ta' €75,000 fuq is-sena l-oħra.

Interessanti l-fatt li fi tliet ġimgħat ingabru €7,507,153 f'zewġ kampanji differenti għall-karità u zewġ kampanji oħra ta' ġbir għall-partiti politiċi..

Imqabbel ma' sena ilu ngabru terz ta' miljun ewro aktar u ras għal ras f'dan il-perjodu l-Maltin taw €15 għal kampanji ta' ġbir ta' fondi organizzati. Dawn jigu sebgha u sittin ċenteżmu aktar milli taw is-sena l-oħra.

Dawn iċ-ċifri huma limitati għal kampanji organizzati fi żmien il-festi tal-Milied u l-ewwel tas-Sena u ma jghoddux il-hafna donazzjonijiet oħra privati li hu magħruf li jingħataw f'dan iż-żmien lil istituzzjonijiet differenti.

Sintendi ma dawn is-somom ta' flus li semmejna, il-Community Chest Fund, id-Dar tal-Providenza u l-partiti politiċi jagħmlu attivitajiet ta' ġbir oħra matul is-sena, barra donazzjonijiet oħra li jsiru lilhom.

Interessanti li fost il-kontribuzzjonijiet li ngħataw waqt l-attività tal-Malta Community Chest fund kien hemm l-għotja ta' €155,000 mill-BCRS (Beverage Container Refund Scheme), il-kumpanija li tiegħu hiesb il-ġbir tal-fliexken tal-plastik, hgieg u bottijiet tal-birra eċċ. Dawn il-flus ingabru billi dawk li jittgħu dawn il-fliexken u bottijiet fil-magni, jistgħu minflok jigbru flushom, jghadduhom lil din il-kumpanija biex imorru għall-karità.

Kontribut ieħor sinifikanti jsir mit-tfal tal-iskejjel primarji u sekondarji permezz tal-ġbir fis-sistema tal-piggy bank fejn it-tfal jagħtu l-għotja tagħhom fil-karus li jitqassam fl-iskejjel. It-tfal għabru bejniethom iktar minn €53,000

## Mill-gżira Għawdxija

migbura minn Charles Spiteri

### Programm fuq Radju Lauretana dwar il-Palestina u Gaza

L-għada ta' l-ewwel tas-sena filgħodu, jgħidni nhar it-Tlieta, 2 ta' Jannar 2024, Radju Lauretana, ir-Radju tal-Kommunita' ta' Għajnsielem, tella' programm speċjali ta' siegħa li fiha giet diskussa il-Palestina u speċjalment Gaza. Għajnsielem ilha snin twal torganizza Bethlehem f'Għajnsielem u għandha konnessjoni partikolari ma' din il-belt.

Il-programm sar minn Dr Ray Bondin, espert fuq il-wirt mondjali, li qabel Awwissu żar tlett darbiet Gaza fejn l-UNESCO qed tipprova tiprotegi monasteru Kristjan tar-raba' sekl u ta' San Hillarion.

Fil-programm ħadu sehem wkoll l-Arċipriet tal-Parroċċa ta' Għajnsielem, il-Kanonku Frankie Bajada u Lelio Spiteri li jmessi l-istazzjon.

Waqt il-programm saru kuntatti diretti mas-Sindku ta' Betlehem Hanna Hanina li tkellem dwar id-diffikultajiet kbar li għaddeja minnu l-Belt, hekk li din is-sena m'hemmxi turisti. L-ekonomija tiddipendi biss fuq it-turizmu. Lukandi u hwienet huma magħluqa.

Sar kuntatt wkoll mal-kappillan tal-knisja kattolika ta' Gaza Dun Gabriel Romanelli li spjega s-sitwazzjoni diffiċli li qed jgħixu fiha is-600 kattoliku li qegħdin kollha hemm b'nuqqas kbir ta' ikel li sar



(xellug) Lelio Spiteri u (lemin) Dr Bondin. Ritratt: Charles Spiteri

jiswa ħafna flus. Huwa spjega kif ġew sistemati is-60 ħandikappat, parti kbira musulmana, li jieħdu hiesbhom is-sorijiet ta' Mother Teresa u li wara li d-dar tagħhom giet attakata issa qed jgħixu fi iskola fil-post.

Fl-aħħar tkellem wkoll l-Ambaxxatur tal-Palestina għal Malta l-Eċċ. Tiegħu Fadi Hanania, li rringrazzja ħafna lill-Maltin għall-għajnuna li qed jagħtu.

Kulhadd wera tama fil-paċi, però l-paċi tidher 'l bogħod.

### Attivitajiet reliġjużi f'Għajnsielem

Il-Ħadd 7 ta' Jannar 2024, wara il-quddies tal-Familja fil-Knisja parrokkjali ta' Għajnsielem, fl-okkażjoni tal-festa tal-Epifanija sar il-bews tax-xbieha ta' Gesù Bambin.

Sar ukoll it-tberik ta' kuruni li t-tfal stess kienu ħadmu l-ġurnata ta' qabel waqt it-tieni sessjoni ta' Għajnsielem Kidz imtella' mill-Grupp Sinfonia del Sole fi hdan l-Għaqda Armar Għajnsielem.

L-Arċipriet Can. Frankie Bajada stieden lil kulhadd għal preparazzjoni tajba għat-tigdid tal-aggregazzjoni taż-żewġ knejjes parrokkjali mas-Santwarju tad-Dar Imqaddsa ta' Loreto meta fl-1 ta' Settembru 2024 jkun hawn fostna Mons Arcisqof Fabio dal Cin, Arcisqof Prelat tad-Dar Imqaddsa ta' Loreto, biex imexxi l-funzjonijiet principali tal-Festa Parrokkjali.

Il-Knisja Parrokkjali attwali u dik ta' qabilha ilhom aggregati mas-Santwarju Lawretan għal 40 u 100 sena rispettivament. Fid-dawl ta' dan it-tigdid qed tingħata importanza ikbar lill-pastorali mal-familji u maż-żgħażaġh.



**AUSTRALIA DAY**  
MALTESE COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF NSW



**Saturday 20 January, 2024  
2-4PM  
THE HOLROYD CENTRE  
11 Miller St, Merrylands**



Join us to recognise the contributions of the Maltese community, and Maltese-Australians who have received Order of Australia Honours

Keynote speech by Lawrence Dimech OAM

Musical performances by Natasha Tatarinoff

Followed by light refreshments

 **Australia Day**  
Reflect. Respect. Celebrate.

Funding for this project has been provided by the NSW Government



THE MALTESE COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF NSW  
PRESENTS

**Maltese Heritage Day**

**SUNDAY 21 JANUARY 2024  
10:30AM - 4:00PM  
AT HAMRUN CLUB  
100 JACKSON RD, MARSDEN PARK**

MALTESE FOOD  
EXHIBITORS OF MALTESE TRADITIONAL ARTS,  
CRAFTS AND DISPLAYS  
COMMUNITY GROUP EXHIBITIONS  
CAR SHOW  
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MALTESE CONCERT BAND  
CHARLIE CAMILLERI & CHARLIE MUSCAT  
VICTOR IL-BUKKETT**

FOR MORE INFORMATION EMAIL  
[contact@mccnsw.org.au](mailto:contact@mccnsw.org.au)



## Aussie news

compiled by **Lawrence Dimech**

### The Iraq War, 20 years after

The decision to invade Iraq alongside the USA and UK has been heavily scrutinised and even after all these years, politicians are still calling for an inquiry.

Opposition to the war was prominent throughout 2003, with mass demonstrations in Australian cities not seen since the moratorium movement at the height of the Vietnam War.

At the time, the triumvirate of Bush, Howard and Blair justified the now-debunked claim that Saddam Hussein was in possession of weapons of mass destruction.

Cabinet papers revealed the Prime Minister was engaged in "extensive discussions" with then-US President George Bush and then-UK Prime Minister Tony Blair about the "possible use of force against Iraq".

Federal cabinet noted Iraq's behaviour had the potential to "damage gravely Australian security", with fears of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists representing "one of the greatest present threats" to the



A satirical tea towel, created to mark the end of John Howard's Prime Ministership.  
Photo: "John Howard – End Of An Era – tea towel" by angusf is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

nation.

The aftermath of the decision by Bush, Howard and Blair eventually dented heavily the reputation of the three leaders.

After serving 10 years as PM of Australia and with a 33 year career in Parliament, John Howard lost his seat in the 2007 election, only the second Prime Minister to do so in Australia, the first being Stanley Melbourne Bruce in 1929.

### First Australian-born Queen

Australia may not be a republic yet, however, the unexpected announcement from Denmark that Queen Margrethe is to abdicate makes the Australian-born Princess Mary, wife of Crown Prince Fredrick, the future Queen of Denmark.

The King-in-waiting met his wife Mary Donaldson, a Tasmanian-born lawyer, in a Sydney bar during the 2000 Olympic Games.

The 83-year-old Queen Margrethe II made the surprise announcement that she will formally step down from the Danish throne after 52 years during her annual New Year's Eve televised address.

She revealed her eldest son Crown Prince Frederik, married to Princess Mary, will succeed her when she abdicates on 14 January.

Now, married for 19 years and proud parents to four children, Mary has won her adopted country over with her dedication to royal duty.

Princess Mary was in Sydney in April 2023 to discuss Australia's "green transition" and visited a number of Danish-led projects related to sustainable construction and transportation.



"File:Mary, Crown Princess of Denmark and Frederik, Crown Prince of Denmark in 2015-2.jpg" by Frankie Fouganthin is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0.

## Many changes coming your way in 2024

Readers, especially those in Australia, will be interested on at least some of these changes coming in this year.

### Superannuation

Workers now can claim this as a right, as superannuation will be included into the National Employment Standards.

The idea is to help workers, not already covered by an award or enterprise agreement, to take up the matter legally with their employer if they fail to make superannuation payments.

### Welfare payments

There will be a 6 per cent indexation increase to almost a million Australians receiving youth, student, or carer support payments.

Those receiving Youth Allowance will receive an additional \$22.40 and \$45.60 a fortnight; those on Austudy between \$36.20 and \$45.60. People on the Disability Support Pension under 21 years will receive between \$31.10 to \$44.90 extra. The Carer Allowance will rise by \$8.70 every two weeks.

### COVID-19

Some Medicare Benefit Scheme (MBS) items related to COVID will be extended, including one whereby COVID-19 antivirals can be prescribed over the phone.

### Gas

Victoria is transitioning away from the fossil fuel. As part of this strategy, as from 1st January it will not longer be possible for new homes in the state requiring planning permits to be able to connect to the natural gas network.

### Electric vehicles

A stamp duty refund and rebate for eligible electric vehicle purchases will no longer be able to be claimed by NSW residents. Also a \$3,000 subsidy for eligible electric and hydrogen-powered vehicles will no longer be available in South Australia.



"THIS MONTH'S IMAGE MAKERS: Centrelink's rebranding has helped them capture a 100% market share." by David Jackmanson is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

### Medicare Safety Net



"Medicare" by 401(K) 2013 is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.

There will be an increase of 5.2% in the thresholds for the Original Medicare Safety Net (OMSN) and Extended Medicare Safety Net (EMSN). This is in line with the Consumer Price Index for the September quarter.

Medicare cardholders will have \$560.40 in gap expenses on a Medicare item before the OMSN is triggered with higher rebates. For the EMSN, concession cardholders and families eligible for Family Tax Benefit Part A will have a threshold of \$811.80. The threshold will be \$2,544.30 for everyone else.

### Vaping and

### smoking

Measures by the federal government against vaping crackdown will start this year, which is being termed a "major public health issue".

In the first stage, the importation of disposable single-use devices will be banned.

A new process will be introduced for doctors and nurses to prescribe vapes, known as the Special Access Scheme, to improve access to therapeutic vapes.

Furthermore, 18 temporary smoking cessation Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) items originally listed in 2021 will not be extended. Through these, patients could access smoking or nicotine cessation counselling through a GP they did not have an established relationship with. Such services will still be accessible under other MBS items with the patient's usual provider, according to the federal government.

### University students

Previously these needed to maintain a pass rate of at least 50 per cent to remain eligible for Commonwealth assistance, such as HECS-HELP. This requirement will no longer apply.

A student support policy will be necessary to be held by higher education providers, and made available to students.

### Vacant homes

The new year effectively marks an expansion of Victoria's Vacant Residential Land Tax (VRLT).

In Victoria, the Vacant Residential Land Tax (VRLT) will apply from 1 January 2025. In what is an expansion of this scheme, it will be based on occupancy from 1 January 2024.

Under the changes, a Victorian property will be deemed vacant if it is unoccupied for at least six months of the previous tax year. Each year the property is unoccupied, the VRLT will increase: 1% in the first year, 2% in the second, and 3% in the third. It is paid on the capital improved value.

There are some exemptions, including holiday homes if certain requirements are met.

### Kindergarten and pre-school

In Queensland, free kindergarten of 15 hours a week can be availed of by parents for their children if attending a government-approved kindergarten program.

In Canberra, free three-year-old preschool of up to 300 hours a year will be available to families.

*\*adapted from an article by David Aidone, SBS News*

## Looking back at the year 2023 in Federal politics

It is customary to look at the old year as we bid her farewell and what's better than to look at it through the reviews of the SBS News, a very trusted media outlet.

We had the Voice of Parliament referendum, the indefinite detention



Photo Source: SBS News

ruling and Robodebt, all reported in the Voice of the Maltese during year 2023.

It is past the halfway mark for the first term Labor Government. Opposition leader Peter Dutton is still trailing behind the support he needs to challenge Anthony Albanese.

There were things we will remember or we might have forgotten.

### Referendum – Voice to parliament

Australians voted in their first referendum in a generation, soundly rejecting an Indigenous Voice to Parliament.

It was a fractious debate, littered with misinformation and personal attacks. Polls initially showed support for the Voice above 60 per cent, but as the year dragged on, the Voice seemed doomed.

Public sentiment swung heavily against it and on referendum day, every state and territory in Australia barring the ACT voted No. The national Yes vote was just below 40 per cent.

PM Albanese attempted to salvage the reconciliation process by insisting the path towards equality for Indigenous people remained open. “From tomorrow, we will continue to write the next chapter in that great Australian Story, and we will write it together, and reconciliation must be a part of that chapter,” he said in a post-referendum speech.

But Dutton laid the blame squarely at Albanese’s feet. “People from all sides of this debate are rightly and understandably disappointed with the Prime Minister. He has held the pen of this definitive chapter in our nation’s history,” he said.

### Indefinite detention ruling

In November, the High Court ruled indefinite detention was unlawful and ordered the government to release any detainee with “no real prospect” of deportation. That meant more than 140 people who had seemingly been mired in detention for good, including a small number who had committed serious offences, were freed.

The government scrambled to introduce emergency laws allowing the cohort to be placed under curfew and be forced to wear ankle monitoring bracelets.

Another suite of bills was passed, giving the government extra powers to return the worst offenders behind bars, after the High Court released its legal reasoning in December. Five detainees have been arrested for various offences after their release.

### The Russian squatter

In gloomy Canberra winter, we saw the bizarre spectacle of a lone Russian diplomat holding out where Russia intended to build a new embassy, just a stone’s throw from Parliament House and Malta High Commission.

But after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, the government cancelled the agreement, arguing its proximity to the halls of power posed a national security risk. Russia was angered, and the man stayed put as Moscow launched its objections to the High Court.

The man – who became known as the Russian squatter – did leave soon after the High Court dismissed Moscow’s complaint.

### Royal Commission: Robodebt ‘crude and cruel’

A blistering Royal Commission into the illegal Robodebt scheme handed down its final verdict, labelling the system “crude and cruel” and finding it had led to suicides. The system, set up under the former Coalition government, used an automated assessment system to calculate an individual’s debt, incorrectly issuing more than 400,000 debt notices.

The report accused a series of Coalition ministers of abusing their powers and failing to inform cabinet over how Robodebt was operating, and continuing the scheme well after its “probable illegality

and cruelty” became obvious.

Key to its criticisms was former prime minister Scott Morrison, who, the commission said, had “failed to meet his ministerial responsibility” and “allowed cabinet to be misled” over the scheme when he was social services minister. Morrison rejected the commission’s findings against him, claiming he was the victim of a “political lynching” and urging Labor to “move on” from the scandal.

We are not suggesting any former ministers involved in the scheme have been referred for criminal or civil charges.

### Labor “worst international decision”

Paul Keating, ex-Labor PM launched a blistering attack at the National Press Club in March, just days after Albanese joined his US and UK counterparts to unveil the next step in the AUKUS pact.

The deal was Labor’s “worst international decision” since World War One and an attempt to return the party “to its former colonial master, Britain”, he said.

Singled out were Foreign Minister Penny Wong and Defence Minister Richard Marles, who he accused of allowing foreign policy to be run by the military. Keating lashed Australia’s “dopey” security agencies, before turning his attention to world leaders.

US President Joe Biden can “hardly put three coherent sentences together”, he said, while describing reliance on UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak for security as “deeply pathetic”.

But some of his most pointed criticism was for the journalists in the room, who he accused of whipping up hysteria about China. One was told to “drum [himself] out of journalism”, while another was told her question was “so dumb it’s hardly worth an answer”.

### Albanese makes historic trip to China

The prime minister became the first Australian leader to visit China since 2016, a major breakthrough in normalising relations.

Tensions between Canberra and Beijing escalated under the former Coalition government, seemingly prompted by its call for an independent investigation into the origins of COVID-19. China imposed a series of trade sanctions on Australian products during the pandemic, and refused to pick up the phone to Australian ministers.

But there have been breakthroughs since Labor took office, with Beijing lifting some sanctions and promising to review others (provided Australia pauses its complaints to the World Trade Organisation).

“Now the China-Australia relationship has embarked on the right path of improvement and development,” Xi told the Australian delegation. “I’m heartened to see that. A healthy and stable China relationship serves the common interests of our two countries and two peoples.”

### Labor and the Greens struck a deal over housing.

Labor took the Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF) to the last election, promising to use the proceeds from a \$10 billion investment fund to build 30,000 homes over five years. But the Greens said the plan was essentially a gamble on the stock market, didn’t build enough social and affordable houses, and did nothing for renters. A months-long stand-off got ugly at times.

But a deal was struck in September. The Greens didn’t get everything they called for – they wanted Labor to coordinate rent freezes – but they did extract an extra \$1 billion on social housing this year.

Labor had earlier announced a one-off \$3 billion in additional funding, but denied that was the result of Greens pressure.

### Battle in the skies

Labor’s relationship with Qantas came under the microscope. Qatar Airways applied to double the number of flights it dispatched to Australia, something it said would lower prices for the average Australian.

But Labor rejected the proposal in July, sparking claims it was too tightly connected to Qantas, one of Qatar Airways’ major competitors.

The Coalition, which established a Senate inquiry into the saga, insinuated Labor’s decision was linked to Qantas backing the Voice to Parliament.

The government opted not to review its original decision.

Of interest to the Maltese diaspora is a later decision to greatly increase direct flights by Turkish Airlines to most Australian state capital cities, to 35 a week by 2025. This should greatly improve connectivity to Europe.

*\*Article edited by Lawrence Dimech from SBS News sources.*

**The Voice of the Maltese** is a bi-lingual (English and Maltese) online publication specifically targeting all Maltese living abroad. It is freely available online at the following address:  
<https://thevoiceofthemaltese.org>

A selection of articles is made available in a fortnightly Print Edition that readers can request to be sent by email as a PDF attachment (free), or as a paper copy by post (for a small fee).

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## In Memoriam

### Halliena Patri Alfred Sciberras OFM

By Charles Spiteri  
 January 12, 2024

Matul il-gimgha li għaddiet, il-Mulej għogbu jsejjaħ lura fid-dar tiegħu lil Patri Alfred Sciberras OFM, fil-ghomor ta' 87 sena.

Patri Sciberras kien minn Haż-Żebbuġ, Malta, imwieled fit-13 t'Ottubru 1957.

Fi-14 t'Ottubru 1958 għamel il-Professjoni Temporanja u fil-15 t'Ottubru 1961 għamel il-Professjoni Solenni. Gie ordnat Sacerdot fil-11 ta' Marzu 1967.

Peress illi Patri Alfred f'dan l-aħħar żmien kien rikoverat fid-Dar tal-Kleru 'Christus Sacerdos' Birkirkara, il-funeral tiegħu sar fil-Knisja Santa Marija ta' Gesù, tal-Patrijiet Frangiskani, fir-Rabat Malta, il-Gimgha 5 ta' Jannar, filghodu.

Fr Alfred kien jiffirma parti mill-Fraternità tal-Patrijiet Frangiskani fir-Rabat ta' Malta għal żmien twil, fejn kien ukoll għal xi snin Gwardjan. Kien għamel xi żmien ukoll Londra jaqdi lill-morda Maltin.

F'dan l-aħħar snin Patri Alfred kien jiffirma parti mill-Fraternità tal-Patrijiet Frangiskani f'Għajnsielem, Għawdex.



*Patri Alfred Sciberras ofm. Ritratt:  
 Fra Lorrie Zerafa ofm via  
 Facebook*

ukoll kelmtejn tal-okkażjoni.



*Jidhru mix-xellug għal-lemin Patri Gabriel Micallef, Patri Marcello Ghirlando u Patri Walter Vassallo, waqt iċ-ċelebrazzjoni tal-quddiesa.*

Il-kant kien taħt id-direzzjoni tal-istudenti Frangiskani. Ikkoncelebraw ukoll Patri Walter Vassallo ofm, Patri Gabriel Micallef ofm u Patri Gwann Azzopardi ofm.

Patri Alfred kien maħbub mill-Għawdxin. Kien imur iqarar f'diversi knejjes, fosthom fil-parroċċi tal-Qala u n-Nadur. Kien ċajtjer. U fil-festa ta' San Filep ta' Aġira, iffestiġġjata kull sena f'Haż-Żebbuġ, ma kienx jonqos illi meta jirritorna lura Għawdex, miċ-ċelebrazzjonijiet kien jieħu ftit kubbajt lil sħabu patrijiet.

*\*Ritratti: Charles Spiteri*

### Grima Emanuel 1943-2024 – Another loss to the Maltese community

By TVOTM Community Desk  
 January 7, 2024

It is with deep sadness that we announce the death of Emanuel Grima on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January 2024 who would have been aged 81 years in August of this year, in Malta.

Emanuel was the first graphic designer of The Voice of the Maltese (Lehen il-Malti) in 2013 and was active in the Maltese community in NSW during the period 1963-2017.

Emanuel Grima was born in Għajnsielem, Gozo in August 1943. Since early childhood, graphic arts have held a



Sadattant nhar it-Tlieta filgħaxija, 9 ta' Jannar 2024, fil-Knisja ta' Sant'Antnin f'Għajnsielem, il-Gwardjan tal-Fraternità Frangiskana f'Għawdex, Patri Marcello Ghirlando ofm, mexxa quddiesa konċelebrata għal ruħu bit-talba ukoll ta' l-Għasar tal-Mejtin u għamel

fascination for him. Carpentry and cabinet making was what he gravitated to at St Joseph in Santa Venera.

He migrated to Australia in 1963 and although he excelled in his trade his fascination with graphic arts took hold. In 1991 he took a TAFE course in desktop publishing and started editing and publishing with success the *fešta* annual booklet of Our Lady of Victory in Horsley Park and also San Nikola of Plumpton.

He lent a hand with the publication by the Maltese Welfare Inc. of the Maltese Community Directory on their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. He co-ordinated the graphic presentation of the book *Telqu Għal Għonq it-Triq*, Edition Two, written by Lawrence Dimech in July 2016.

He served on the early committees of the Melita Eagles FC, Maltese Welfare and Maltese Past Pupils of Don Bosco.

Emanuel was married to Doris and both returned to live in Żurrieq Malta in 2018.

May he rest in peace.

## Two veteran community stalwarts passed away

By TVOTM Community Desk

December 20, 2023

During the month of December 2023, the Maltese community in NSW, especially the football fraternity, lost two veteran stalwarts;

◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ (◆◆◆◆) ◆◆◆◆ – ◆◆◆◆-◆◆◆◆

Emmanuel entered the Lord's presence on December 8, 2023, at the age of 88 years.



A life member and dedicated servant to the Maltese and footballing community, Emmanuel joined Melita Eagles in 1962 and was immediately appointed Assistant Secretary. In 1965, he took over as Secretary of the Club, a position he held until 1969. In 1970, after a year's rest from soccer, he was elected as Secretary of the Phoenician Club (The former home of Melita Eagles) and was the licensee of the club

for 18 months. He also served as a Board Member of the Phoenician

Club for two more years. In 1971, Emmanuel returned to Melita as their Secretary and remained in this position until 1976, when he was elected unopposed as Chairman, serving in this position until 1984.

During Emmanuel's time in charge of the Eagles, the club went undefeated in the 1977 season to gain promotion to the NSW Division One competition after a seven-year absence at the top. He was also our Club's representative on the New South Wales Federation of Soccer Clubs and would later become a NSW Soccer Federation tribunal panel member from 1986 to 1991.

On May 27, 1981, as the soccer department of the organisation was getting bigger and demanded total involvement, the marriage with the Phoenician Club was dissolved after months of careful planning, meetings, discussions, and delicate bargaining, which saw both parties exchanging contracts that ended this long and at times, successful relationship. With this came the birth of Melita Stadium, which was officially opened on July 5, 1981.

### Vince Balzan – 1945-2023

We are deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Vince Balzan, who entered the Lord's presence on December 4, 2023, at the age of 78 years a well-known administrator and coach.

In November 1998, the initiative of then Consul-General of Malta in NSW and club co-founder, Lawrence Dimech, and Vince Balzan, to plan the first Cultural and Sporting Tour of Malta, a dream that had been on the board's plans for many years came to fruition.

More than \$50,000 was raised for this successful tour thanks to the hard work of an established sub-committee, which

included players selected that were under the age of 20 years, of Maltese descent and from the ranks of the youth and senior teams of Parramatta Eagles. The Maltese welcomed the tour and the squad was the toast of the town playing at main stadiums on the islands.

Vince was awarded Football NSW Life Membership as an acknowledgement and recognition of his distinguished service to Football NSW.

MAY THEY REST IN ETERNAL PEACE.

\*information & photos courtesy Melita Eagles SC Facebook page



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# Australia Happenings

## Feast of the Bambina in Cringila

By Louis Parnis  
January 12, 2024

To understand how significant is the Feast of Our Lady of Victories in the Illawarra area we need to go back to 1973.

It is recorded in the history of the St Francis of Assisi parish church that the Scerri family donated the statue which was hand carved by an Italian artist Vincenzo, welcomed by Fr. Bernard Micallef in 1973. The Maltese welcomed the statue and commenced refurbishing the church to house the statue.



Statue of Our Lady of Victories at Warrawong parish. Photo: supplied

At that time the Franciscan order looked after the church with the help of the Franciscan sisters. The sisters were very active in the church, at the time when the Warrawong Parish grew to 4,600. Why such a devotion to Our Lady of Victories by the Maltese? On May 18, 1565 the Ottomans invaded the island of Malta with some 30,000 strong army, however, the Knights of Saint John and the Maltese prevailed against all odds and after a terrible siege of the Grand Harbour defensive lines, the greatest super power of the day abandoned the siege, and accepted defeat on September 8, 1565.

During the Second World War with all the bombing, it seemed that only a miracle could save the Maltese enduring a life in shelters and

shortage of food. The Maltese felt and believed that it was no coincidence that Italy surrendered to the Allies on the Feast of Our Lady of Victory on September 8, 1943. And so, they began to address the church not as Our Lady of Victory but as Our Lady of Victories. Malta's two most terrible Sieges were lifted on the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lady!

The Cringila Centre responded to the call of Our Lady of Victories after the Warrawong church was handed 2 years ago, to the Wollongong Bishop as the Franciscan Order and the sisters vacated the church, witnessing the demise of the Feast.

The George Cross Falcons Community Centre Inc. President Louis Parnis meeting with the local Feast organisers and Centre committee decided to plan a return of the Feast, by seeking the Bishop to attend the mass, also booking a marching band for the procession, formed a choir and held an after party to over 200 attendees free of charge.

The President inspired by Our Lady wrote a song for the occasion and the song was welcomed after 50 years of holding the Feast. This year the Feast is going to fall on Sunday 8 September and again we welcome the Wollongong Bishop and local born Fr. Rick Micallef from the parish of Wagga Wagga.

We encourage everyone to attend and join this memorable afternoon. The church service will commence from 2pm and afterwards, there will be a party at the Cringila Centre.

*\*While thanking Mr Parnis for his article which is of interest, our publication of same should not be taken as an endorsement of the decision to hold the festa of Our Lady of Victories on 8th September, the same date that this important feast, which is also a National Day in Malta, will be celebrated by the NSW Maltese community in the principal Catholic Cathedral of NSW, St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney, as a mark of unity, as has been the case for the last 60 years.*

*The other parishes in NSW with a significant Maltese presence that celebrate this feast, Our Lady Queen of Peace (Greystanes) and Our Lady of Victories (Horsley Park), understand this and select a different day for their own celebration, in a spirit of unity. Obviously this is*



Scene from the Vitorja celebration at Warrawong in 2023. Photo: supplied

*a free country, there is no civil or canon law about the matter, but we don't understand why the festa organisers and community centre committee in Cringila decided not to do the same.*

*The Co-Editors*

*\*13/1/2024 updated date of statue donation, clarified location of statue and inserted photo from the Vitorja celebration*

## Iż-żamma tal-kultura Maltija fost l-emigranti

By Ivan Cauchi  
January 10, 2024

Bħalissa hawn f'Sydney, l-Awstralja, l-aħwa Keith u Fabian Demicoli. Keith huwa magħruf sew fost l-emigranti Maltin fl-Awstralja, bħala gurnalist tal-PBS ta' Malta, għas-sehem ewlieni tiegħu fil-programm tal-aħbarijiet apposta għall-emigranti li kien jiġi mxandar fuq l-SBS. Fabian huwa magħruf għas-sehem tiegħu fil-passat bħala *producer* fuq il-programm popolari Xarabank, kap tal-aħbarijiet ta' Net TV u riċentement jiffirma parti mill-organizzazzjoni tal-midja moderna Malta Daily.



Fabian Demicoli (xellug) u Keith Demicoli (centru) jinterviewaw wieħed mill-membri ta' La Valette Social Centre. Ritratt: Ivan Cauchi

L-aħwa jagħmlu hafna affarijiet flimkien, inkluż maratoni tal-ġiri, imma l-preżenza tagħhom fl-Awstralja hija marbuta mal-komunità Maltija.

Fil-fatt, it-tnejn qed jaħdmu fuq proġett, iffinanzjat mill-Unjoni Ewropeja, li jiddokumentaw iż-żamma tal-kultura Maltija mill-emigranti Maltin. Qed jipplanaw li jipproduċu serje ta' xi tmien programmi li

jixxandru fuq stazzjonijiet privati Maltin tat-televizjoni u fuq il-midja soċjali.

Għal dan l-għan, nhar is-Sibt 6 ta' Jannar 2024, attendew La Valette Social Centre, ċentru tal-komunità Maltija ġewwa l-punent ta' Sydney, biex jikkellmu mal-Maltin li kienu preżenti u jisingħu l-istorja tal-emigrazzjoni tagħhom, u jifhemu kif qed jippruvaw iżommu l-aspetti tal-kultura Maltija fil-ħajja tagħhom u kif qed jgħadduha lill-familja tagħhom.

L-aħwa Demicoli qagħdu f'diversi partijiet taċ-ċentru, ġeneralment b'Fabian jiehū ħsieb il-kameras u Keith jiehū ħsieb l-intervisti, li kienu informali u mexxejja ħafna, fejn il-partecipanti ħassewhom komdi li jikkellmu liberament anke jekk ma kinux imdorrijin li jkunu quddiem lenti u b'mikrofonu ħdejn il-qiegħ. Is-sugġetti li ġew diskussi kienu jinkludu l-proċess ta' emigrazzjoni, l-użu tal-lingwa Maltija fil-ħajja ta' kuljum, u naturalment l-ikel.

Sakemm idumu hawn, Keith u Fabian kellhom ukoll iżuru xi postijiet oħra fejn jiltaqqu l-Maltin. S'issa żaru ukoll Limestone Café fi Schofields u ċ-ċentru George Cross Falcons f'Cringila.

Apparti laqgħat pubbliċi bħal dawn, l-aħwa Demicoli qegħdin ukoll jiġu mistiedna u jattendu djar privati. Eżempju ta' dan kienet iż-żjara tagħhom ġewwa d-dar il-ġdida tal-kontributtriċi ta' *The Voice of the Maltese* Charmaine Tokić nee Cassar, li għandha l-kolonna popolari tagħha *The Foodie Mama*.

Hemmhekk, kienu preżenti wkoll omm Charmaine, Tereza, ir-raġel Dragan u t-tfal tagħha Leksi u Ella, u l-ħbieb tal-qalb tagħha Shannon Said u Ashleigh Cordina. Kienet okkażjoni fejn Charmaine setgħet issajjar l-istess ikel ma' ommha li tal-aħħar kienet sajret ħajjitha kollha – brodu, torta u *trifle* (għad-dettalji stennew l-artiklu li jmiss ta' Charmaine!) u taqşam din l-esperjenza mill-isbaħ mal-ħbieb u



(Xellug għal-lemin) Keith Demicoli, Charmaine Tokić, Teresa Cassar, Fabian Demicoli. Ritratt: Charmaine Tokić via Facebook

familjari tagħha, l-aħwa Demicoli u forsi l-ispettaturi futuri tas-serje awdjo-żiviva tagħhom.

Nawguraw l-ikbar suċċess lil Keith u Fabian Demicoli fl-inizjattiva tagħhom.

## Features

### Harsa madwarna

By Lawrence Dimech

January 10, 2024

Ħallejna warajna sena oħra. Kull sena tajba jew ħażina tħalli warajha xi avveniment speċjali. Almenu ħlisna mill-miżgħira pandemija tal-Covid 19 għalkemm hawn min għadu jbat l-konsegwenzi ta' din il-marda.

#### Il-posta tasal bil-qajla

Is-servizz postali għadna niddependu ħafna fuqu u anke li issa drajna bl-internet u x'naf jien, speċjalment dawk li huma mifrudin bil-kontinenti mill-familji u ħbieb. Fiż-żminijiet tal-Milied nistennew wkoll dawk il-kartolini tradizzjonali.

Ma nafx ma' min se nilmenta izda mhux sewwa li kartolina minn Malta mibgħuta bl-ajru bi ħlas ta' żewġ euros (\$A3.26) għandha tasal f'Sydney l-Awstralja xahar wara.

#### Fejn jidhlu ż-żgħażaġh, morna lura

Fejn jidhlu ż-żgħażaġh Maltin barra minn Malta (ma tanx inħobb nuża l-kelma dijaspora) f'it għamilna impatt f'dawn l-aħħar snin, mhux hekk anzi ħadna skoss lura.

Is-sena l-oħra saru żewġ attentati kbar fejn indaħlu b'ħafna entużjażmu l-Ministeru tal-Affarijiet Barranin ta' Malta biex jorganizzaw laqgħat virtwali, dik tas-17 ta' Settembru, bl-isem Lingwa Maltija u Identità u l-oħra tas-27 ta' Ottubru dwar l-Impatt tal-Bidla fil-Klima u ż-Żgħażaġh.

Dawn l-inizjattivi kellhom warajhom ukoll ir-risorsi tal-Aġenzija Żgħażaġh, il-Maltese National Youth Agency u anke l-Council of Maltese Living Abroad. Qatt ma smajna xejn dwar dawn l-inizjattivi. Nafu li l-aħħar waħda kellha tiġi mħassra u l-ewwel waħda f'it kellha attendenza. U dan meta qed nippruvaw nifhemu aħjar liż-żgħażaġh tagħna fl-Awstralja, sugġett tassew jaħraq. Min se jiċċaqilaq l-ewwel?

#### Żewġ gwerer

Ma nistgħux imwarrbu ż-żewġ gwerer krudili li tant kissru ħajjiet u gābu magħhom problemi għan-nies tad-dinja.

L-ewwel kellna l-gwerra bejn ir-Russja u l-Ukraina.

Fl-aħħar xhur tas-sena, faqqet gwerra iktar krudili fejn l-Gvern Isrealjan għal darba oħra baqa' għaddej b'attakki krudili biex jingassa lill-istrippa ta' Gaza mill-mappa tad-dinja u joħloq miljuni Palestenjan bħala refuġjati.

Kull pajjiż għadu d-dritt li jiddefendi ruħu izda ebda pajjiż ma għandu l-obbligu morali li jkisser u jfarrak lil dak li ma jistax jiddefendi ruħu.

#### Id-dar tax-xjuħ

Ma hemmx dubju, li l-iktar aħbar ħażina u disturbanti għall-komunità Maltija fl-Awstralja kienet meta f'Awwissu tas-sena l-oħra s-sorijiet Dumnikana Maltin ta' Blacktown f'NSW ħallew id-dar tax-xjuħ li kienu ilhom jiehdu ħsieb għal madwar 40 sena u telqu lejn Malta. Id-dar tax-xjuħ kienet ilha li nqas minn jannar 2023.



Signage to the St. Dominic's Home for the Elderly.

Photo: Lawrence Dimech

Deċizjoni hekk fatali mis-sorijiet Dumnikani Maltin ħalliet warajha vojta kbira fejn tidhol il-kura tal-anzjani Maltin. Saru ħafna protesti u nkteb ħafna dwar dan.

Kien hemm min akkuża li, fil-fatt il-binja qatt ma kienet tas-sorijiet Dumnikani ta' Malta izda tal-komunità Maltija għax kienet il-komunità Maltija li gabret il-flus biex tinbeda id-dar tax-

xjuħ fi Blacktown.

L-argumenti tant ħrasu li l-kwistjoni spicċat fil-qorti għax kien hemm allegazzjonijiet serji ta' korruzzjoni li jridu jiġu deċiżi fil-qorti. Sadanittant, il-binja giet mibjugħa u f'flokha jidher li se jinbnew flats u ċentru ta' kura għat-tfal.

#### Pensjonijiet minn Malta

Fl-aħħar tas-sena l-oħra ltaqajt ma każijiet fejn pensjonanti li jirċievu xi pensjonijiet minn Malta lmentaw għax id-Dipartiment tas-Sigurtà Soċjali f'Malta għandu ħabta li jwaqqaf dawn il-pensjonijiet mingħajr ma jagħti opportunitajiet lil dawk li jgħixu fl-Awstralja biex jippruvaw li għadhom ħajjin u għalhekk bid-dritt li jkomplu jirċievu l-pensjoni.

Tajjeb u neċessarju li d-Dipartiment f'Malta jzomm kuntatt mal-

pensjonanti iżda lanqas hu sewwa li f'hakka t'ghajn jaqtagħlhom il-pensjoni li tant ikollhom b'zonn biex jgħixu haġja normali. Fid-dinja tallum hemm ħafna modi moderni biex tkun tista' tiċċekkja jekk pensjonant għadux haġ.

Li tibgħat ittra bil-baħar minn Malta li ddum gejjha tlett xhur, jekk tasal, u mbagħad tagħti lill-pensjonant fit-jiem biex iwieġeb meta ż-żmien diga jkun għalaqlu, mhux metodu aċċettat.

Għandna wkoll f'kull stat rappreżentanti tal-Gvern Malti li għandhom javżaw b'telefonata meta xi pensjoni tkun se tiġi mwaqqfa. Forsi mhux għalhekk ukoll li għandna rappreżentanti u anke konslijiet onorarij madwar l-Awstralja kollha?

Hu att ingust u krudili li twaqqaf f'las ta' pensjoni għax huma ħafna dawk li jgħixu bil-pensjoni u għalihom dan il-hlas hu essenzjali.

Skond esperjenza li kelli riċenti sibt li meta kien hemm xi diffikultà mad-Dipartiment tas-Sigurta Soċjali mill-ewwel ħadu l-passi necessarji u għalhekk nittamaw li l-affarijiet jitjiebu.

#### Passaporti Maltin

Insemmi wkoll dwar il-passaporti u l-ismijiet Maltin għax jidher li reġgħet tfaċċat il-problema meta l-ismijiet purament Maltin jigu Ingilizati per eżempju minn Maria jsiru Mary u minn Gużepi jsiru Joseph.

Konna digà rbaħna argument mal-Gvern Malti li fejn hemm purament *translation*, l-ismijiet għandhom jigu aċċettati u ma hemmx b'zonn tmur il-Qorti f'Malta biex bi spiża kbira tibdel ismek legalment.

Iżda tiskanta li kull meta jinbidel il-Gvern jew xi ras kbira fid-dipartiment, dak li ġara qabel ma jibqax isehh.

Irridu għalhekk inkomplu ninsistu li meta Maria b'neċessità għax emigrant saret Mary u għandha passaport iehor bħala Mary din baqgħet l-istess persuna, ma hemm l-ebda identità doppja.

#### Gieħ ir-Repubblika

Kien ta' dispjaċir ukoll li fl-aħħar unuri ta' Gieħ ir-Repubblika mħabbra mill-Gvern ta' Malta f'Jum ir-Repubblika, ebda persuna mill-Awstralja ma giet onorata. Malajr jinsewna. Fil-fehma tiegħi, għandu jkun hemm persentaġġ allokat għall-Maltin ta' barra.

*\*10 ta' Jannar 2024: miżjudin is-suġġetti tal-posta u taż-żgħażaġħ*

## Biex Malta ma terġax issir kolonja

By TVOTM Contributor

December 21, 2023

F'Novembru li għadda l-Parlament Ewropew ivvota b'maġġoranza żgħira propożta biex issir konvenzjoni u jigu diskussi bidliet fit-trattati tal-Unjoni Ewropea.

Waħda mill-propożta hi li iktar deċiżjonijiet importanti jibdwu jittieħdu b'maġġoranza kkwalifikata u mhux b'mod unanimu fejn il-pajjiżi kollha jridu jaqblu biex jgħaddu ċerti liġijiet li jolqtu mill-qrib il-ħajja tal-poplu.

Flimkien mal-maġġoranza ta' pajjiżi oħra membri, naħseb li bħala Malta għandna nkunu kontra li l-gvernijiet tal-pajjiżi membri tonqsilhom iżjed is-saħħa li jinfluwenzaw deċiżjonijiet fl-Unjoni Ewropea li jorbtu lil kull stat membru u jolqtu l-għixien tal-poplu tagħna.

Dawk li jridu l-Istati Uniti tal-Ewropea, speċi ta' Repubblika Federal Ewropea jemmnu li għandu jonqos is-sehem tal-gvernijiet nazzjonali f'iżjed deċiżjonijiet Ewropej biex l-Unjoni Ewropea tkun tista' tieħu deċiżjonijiet iżjed malajr bla ma jkollha l-qbil tal-pajjiżi kollha.

Il-pajjiżi l-kbar ma jridux li l-pajjiżi ż-żgħar jibqgħu jkollhom saħħa daqshom fid-deċiżjonijiet li jittieħdu.

Għandna nkunu kontra li tiddgħajf is-sovranietà tagħna f'xi tibdil tat-trattati fl-Unjoni Ewropea.

Għandna nkunu kontra li nitilfu dak li ksibna bħala repubblika indipendenti u newtrali mingħajr bażijiet barranin militari.

Għandna nkunu kontra l-propożta li għaddiet f'Novembru mill-Parlament Ewropew li biha l-istati membri jitilfu iżjed influwenza fl-

Unjoni Ewropea u jiddeċiedu għalihom iżjed il-pajjiżi l-kbar fl-Unjoni Ewropea minn Brussel.

Il-propożti jneħħu l-unanimità li hemm b'zonn s'issa f'oqsma importanti biex minflok deċiżjonijiet jittieħdu b'maġġoranza kkwalifikata fejn il-pajjiżi l-kbar ikollhom iżjed piż milli digà għandhom.

Pajjiżi bħal tagħna għandhom x'jitilfu bit-tneħħija tal-unanimità għax ma tibqax Unjoni Ewropea ta' stati uguali.

Inmorru lura 500 sena?

Il-maġġoranza kbira tal-pajjiżi kollha fl-Unjoni Ewropea għandhom x'jitilfu. Dan jurih il-vot li ttieħed f'Novembru meta l-propożta għaddiet bi ftit. Fil-Parlament Ewropew 291 vvutaw favur, 274 ivvutaw kontra u 44 astjenew.

Kien hemm membri li vvutaw differenti mill-grupp politiku tagħhom u vvutaw skont l-interessi nazzjonali ta' pajjiżhom u mhux skont kif xtaq il-grupp politiku li huma fih.

Biżżejjed niehdu l-Partit Popolari Ewropew (PPE). Il-Pollakki fih vvutaw kontra l-propożta waqt li l-PPE kien favur il-propożta. Qabel ittieħed il-vot, anki xi hadd bħal Donald Tusk, il-Prim Ministru tal-Polonja u li serva bħala President tal-Kunsill Ewropew u żgur ma tistax takkuzah li huwa kontra l-Unjoni Ewropea.

Huwa qal li l-membri tiegħu fil-Parlament Ewropew ivvutaw kontra l-propożti biex l-istati tonqsilhom is-saħħa fid-deċiżjonijiet li jittieħdu. Tusk qal: "L-Unjoni Ewropea għandha b'zonn issewwi ħafna nuqqasijiet li għandha."

Wissa li jkun metodu stupidu ħafna li dawn il-ħsarat jissewwew b'xi Ewroentuzjażmu li kien wiehed mir-raġunijiet li wassal għal Brexit, biex ir-Renju Unit joħroġ mill-Unjoni Ewropea,

Minn 27 stat membru hemm 15 li għandhom popolazzjoni b'inqas minn 10 miljun. Dawn jitqiesu żgħar u medji. Kollha għandhom x'jitilfu jekk jiddgħajf is-sehem tagħhom fid-deċiżjonijiet għax ma tibqax il-ħtieġa tal-unanimità. Żgur mhux se nkunu waħedna li nirreżistu bidla bħal din.

Pajjiżna jintlaqat ħażin jekk tidhol propożta bħal din. Nintlaqtu f'dak li għandu x'jaqsam mal-għixien tagħna u għalhekk għandna ngarsu l-gid u l-interessi tal-poplu tagħna biex xħin jiffasslu l-liġijiet tal-Unjoni Ewropea jieħdu ħsieb ukoll l-interessi tagħna, inkella jsiru mhux biss mingħajrma iżda kontra tagħna.

Meta dhalna fl-Unjoni Ewropea, il-vot kien favur, għalkemm mhux b'ħafna, bil-wegħda li l-Unjoni Ewropea tkun għaqda tal-gvernijiet tal-pajjiżi membri u mhux tkun għaqda federali fejn jgħibu l-istati membri u kolloxx isir għaqda waħda.

Għandna naħdmu ma' pajjiżi oħra li ma jridux tonqsilhom is-saħħa li għandhom.

Dawn il-bidliet li jiddgħajfu l-istati membri jgħaddu biss bil-vot tal-pajjiżi kollha. Liema stati se jivvotaw biex jiddgħajfu u jagħmlu suwiċidju?

F'Unjoni Ewropea fejn nitilfu l-vot biex niddeċiedu dwar affarijiet essenzjali għall-poplu tagħna, nerġgħu nsiru kolonja fit-tarf tal-Ewropa taħt Sqallija bħal kif konna qabel ma l-Imperatur Karlu V għaddiena lill-Ordni tal-Kavallieri fl-1530.

Irridu nmorru lura 500 sena?



*\*artiklu miktub mis-Sur Evarist Bartolo, illum irtirat, li kien Ministru tal-Edukazzjoni u anke Ministru tal-Affarijiet Barranin.*

# Letter to the Editor

## Disappointed with The Voice of the Maltese

Thank you for sending me The Voice of the Maltese magazine. But I just cannot believe that this is the same magazine that I used to take so much pleasure reading for close to 10 years. Me and readers I know living away from our beloved Malta, used to regard it as the real Voice for us Maltese living abroad. Politics never entered into it and the good feel factor always prevailed. We expected the online version to follow the same pattern. Not anymore however, it seems.

I am passing Christmas and the new Year in Malta with my son and his Maltese wife. They have made Malta their home, therefore I have a lot of free time to enjoy my say on the island and continue to discover what I missed last summer. I have also a lot of time to go over the recent copy of The Voice of the Maltese magazine that I received a couple of days ago.

It is sad that nowadays, the magazine and the online rarely publish the really important decisions taken in Malta by the administration, which is a pity. Else they are given a sharp twist that belittle the impact. But the greatest insult was the difference in the reports about the two National feasts of Independence and Republic Day.

Incidentally I was in Malta, as a young lad of 15 in 1964 when we celebrated Independence, and a young man of 25 when Malta celebrated Republic Day. That was during my first visit to Malta after six years in Australia. I was proud of both occasions. Now at age 74 I am still very proud of both achievements. We used to have very interesting articles on The Voice about these two National Days.

All has changed however. For the new look magazine and the news portal, Republic Day is much inferior to Independence Day.

Independence Day on 22 September was reported with great pomp (<https://thevoiceofthemaltese.org/?p=4484>), with a lengthy report with five large photos of the celebrations, including a photo of the celebration by the PN supporters.

The commemoration on the magazine (Issue No. 307) was even more widely reported, with a Front Page photo, three pages of reports and seven more photos. Which is all well and good.

The Republic Day commemoration on the portal was reported with just six paragraphs and three pictures (two of the same, with the PM laying a wreath in front of the Republic Day monument (without a caption) and a photo of President George Vella delivering a speech. Nothing was said about the national celebration itself, and not even a sentence of the President's very important historic speech or the national awards.

Only a half page was reserved for Republic Day in The Voice issue No. 312. Not a word about the commemoration in Valletta on December 13, and not a word about President George Vella's final speech before his retirement.

By the way we are also very disappointed that in the Christmas Special edition of The Voice we did not have the usual messages, especially those from the President, the Prime Minister of Malta and Malta's HC in Australia.

We the loyal readers expect much more in 2024.

**Paul Zammit**

## Paul Sant

*Another service offered by The Voice of the Maltese providing legal information to our readers*

## Whether percentage apportionment of net proceeds of sale of matrimonial property is "just and equitable"

By Paul Sant

January 11, 2024

In the recent case of *Mullis & Quimby* [2023] FedCFamC1A 16, McClelland DCJ allowed the appeal sitting in the Appellant Division.

The background of the case is follows:

[2] The parties commenced cohabitation in 1991 or 1992, although they were never married. There are two children of the relationship, one who is now an adult and the other who is 17 years of age. The parties separated when the husband vacated the parties' home in September 2012. The husband commenced the substantive proceedings by way of an Initiating Application filed 29 August 2013 seeking parenting orders. This was subsequently amended to seek property orders and, ultimately, leave was granted to the husband to proceed on that application.

[3] Relevantly for the purposes of this appeal, the hearing before the trial judge occurred over four days, being 1–2 October 2020 and 6–7 April 2021. Reasons for judgment and orders were delivered on 12 August 2022.

[4] In his judgement, the primary judge made a finding that the parties' pool of available property, as determined by the trial judge,

be divided 70 per cent to the wife and 30 per cent to the husband. The primary judge also made default orders in the event of the wife failing to pay a lump sum to the husband in order for a property at Street A1, Suburb B ("the property") to be transferred to the wife. This was in circumstances where the wife lives in the neighbouring property at Street A2, Suburb B, which is currently in her name. The default provisions provided for the sale of the property, with the wife being ordered to arrange for and meet the costs of rectifications to enable the sale to proceed. Those rectifications involved removing a shed that overlaps both properties and also effecting separation of the septic tank system that is joined to both properties.

On appeal, the husband successfully argued that:

[5] The primary judge erred in making a default property sale Order, including a provision that the Appellant receive a lump sum of money from the net proceeds of sale of the relevant property, rather than a percentage of the net proceeds of sale, thereby failing to give any or sufficient consideration to a change of value of the property located at [Street A2, Suburb B] in the state of new South Wales from the date of the final date of hearing on 7 April 2021 and the date of the Judgment on 12 August 2022 [some 16 months later].

The primary judge erred in making the Order pursuant to section 90SM of the *Family Law Act (Cth)* (1975) ("the Act"), in that such an Order may have the effect of not representing the just and equitable division determined by the Court.

The primary judge erred in failing to give reasons why the Appellant would receive a lump sum of money from the net proceeds of sale of the relevant property, rather than a percentage of the net proceeds of sale.

[6] Essentially, those grounds contend that, consistent with relevant authorities, in circumstances where it could reasonably be anticipated that there would be a delay between the concluding date of evidence and the delivery of judgment, a trial judge would have directed that the net proceeds of sale of the property would be divided in accordance with the apportionment of the parties' property as determined by the primary judge to be appropriate. That is, it was contended that such a percentage based apportionment should have been applied, rather than the requirement to pay a lump sum, which the primary judge had ordered.

On appeal, the respondent wife conceded that:

[8] The preferred course to be adopted to achieve a just and equitable division of the parties' property was orders for a percentage division from the net proceeds of sale of the subject property, rather than the lump sum payment as determined by the primary judge. This was particularly in circumstances where it could reasonably be

anticipated that there would likely be a substantial delay between the conclusion of evidence, including as to valuation, and delivery of judgment. Relevant authorities referred to by the husband in that respect included *Noetel and Quealey* [2005] FamCAFC 677; (2005) FLC 93-230 at [143]; *Tiley and Tiley* [1980] FamCA 73; (1980) FLC 90-898 at 75,660 [1980] FamCA 73; and *Waters and Waters* [1981] FamCA 19; (1981) FLC 91-019.

McClelland DCJ having found error on the part of the primary judge, as conceded by the parties, re-exercised jurisdiction pursuant to s 36 (1) of the *Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia Act 2021* and was satisfied that the orders proposed by the parties upon the appeal being upheld are appropriate and represent a just and equitable adjustment of the parties' property pursuant to s 90 SM of the *Family Law Act 1975*.

Please feel free to contact Longton legal who have expertise in dealing with matters on appeal.

## Dr Hugh McDermott MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney General  
State Member for Prospect

**For help on NSW Government issues concerning:**

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- Crime
- Health
- Environment
- Housing
- Local Government
- Public transport
- Community Services



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Maltese Spoken

**The Malta Journalism Awards 2023** was awarded to The Voice of the Maltese for their long journalistic contribution to the Maltese living outside Malta

Registered readers will receive notifications of new content from the email addresses [editor@thevoiceofthemaltese.org](mailto:editor@thevoiceofthemaltese.org) and [tvotm.archive@gmail.com](mailto:tvotm.archive@gmail.com). Make sure to allow incoming emails from both these addresses. To communicate with the editor, send an email to [editor@thevoiceofthemaltese.org](mailto:editor@thevoiceofthemaltese.org).

Are you part of the Maltese diaspora? Are you a first or subsequent generation Maltese emigrant in the first wave (north Africa), second wave (English speaking nations) or contemporary (Europe/elsewhere), and have stories that would interest the Maltese wherever they are? We would like to hear from you!

## Culture

### Grand Master's Palace reopens after extensive renovation

By Brian Decelis

January 14, 2024

The Grand Master's Palace in Valletta reopened its doors to visitors after an extensive restoration with an investment of more than €40 million, financed partly (€18 million) by the European Union as part of the European Regional Development Fund.

After years of unprecedented logistical and restoration works, the Grand Master's Palace – a gem in the heart of Valletta that can be considered the cradle of our nation – is once again welcoming visitors after the restoration phase of the interior of this historical and architectural site was completed.

The Armoury has taken back its original place of 1605, in the former Parliament Chamber; the Piano Nobile corridors were restored; as was the Uccelliera, where there was the office of the Speaker; and a

visitor centre was completed in the area known as Palazzo del Monte and the Orangery (which was the office of the Attorney General) and the place where in the past there was a small orange garden. Moreover, the courtyards of the palace, as well as the State Halls, were also restored.

In a speech during the inauguration ceremony, the President of Malta George Vella recalled that at the beginning of his Presidency he had to relocate his office, including all the staff, to Sant'Anton Palace. "Looking back, I do not regret the sacrifice that my staff and I had to make because over time I recognised the urgency for the restoration of this jewel that had significant damages," stated President Vella.

He hoped that this restoration leads to a path of renewing knowledge and sustainability of the Maltese cultural heritage, of which this Palace is such an important part.

For his part, Prime Minister Robert Abela, in a speech during the inauguration ceremony, expressed the Government's desire for this Palace to be more beautiful so that we can ensure that future generations, like our ancestors and ourselves, can enjoy it as well.

He recalled his visit in 2020, when the world was facing a pandemic, and that on that day his message to the Heritage Malta management was one of courage, but also a message about the need for more work and investment so that once we overcome that difficult period, the world will find us ready to not only continue with our lives, but to be at the forefront in various fields.

“For us, culture and the protection of national heritage was not an exception. Instead of reducing investment, we increased it. Instead of slowing down, we increased speed. Today we are here in this transformed gem, a beautiful project that we also delivered. A gem among the many in this capital city that we are so proud of. We are dedicating national funds to such projects as the result of wise economic management. Because the economic results we achieve give us the power so that as a country we have the necessary resources to invest in all areas.”



Photo: Heritage Malta



Photo: DOI

Prime Minister Robert Abela concluded that the Government is investing to prepare for the future while never neglecting the protection of what makes us who we are. “Because we are proud to be Maltese. Because we are grateful for what our ancestors did, and we must protect it. Because we want to give a strong present and we want future generations to be proud of what they find. Above all, because we want to design a beautiful future.”

The Palace is open for visitors every day between 09:00 and 17:00. For more information visit: <https://heritagemalta.mt/explore/grand-masters-palace/>.

## Il-Bambaluna – The Lamington

By Charmaine Tokic

January 15, 2024

With Australia Day coming up soon, I thought it would be fitting to write about one of Australia's iconic cakes – the lamington! It's so iconic, it made its way to Malta where you'll find it in a pink or red coating rather than the traditional chocolate coating. It is known by a few names in Malta; *pasti mill-homor*, *pasti mir-roża* and *bambaluni*. They became popular in Malta in the 60s and 70s and can still find them in kiosks and pastry shops on the Islands. These were my nanna's favourite sweet and would bring home to her 10 kids on the rare occasion when she went to Rabat city in Gozo.

There is some controversy about the lamington's origins. Some say that the sponge landed in chocolate icing by accident, being the fault of a clumsy maid. Another attributes the invention to Lady Lamington, a cooking instructor at Brisbane's Central College. But it's

likely origin is that it was named after Baron Lamington, the Governor of Queensland from 1895 to 1901 where his French chef, Armand Galland created it on a whim as a way to use up stale sponge.

As for how the lamington made its way to Malta, one could say that they were brought over to Malta by returned migrants from Australia. Whatever the story, I love that the Maltese adopted the lamington and made it their own. You could say *il-pasta mir-roża* is a Maltese-Australian cake, as Maltese-Australian and sweet like me! Paying tribute to my birth country and to my country by blood, I share with you the way my mum makes these fluffy little cakes.

### Pink Lamingtons – *Pasti mir-Roża*

You will need a 20cm cake pan. This recipe will make 20-25 small cakes, depending how big you cut them.

Ingredients:

- 1 packet strawberry jelly
- 250g butter
- 200g castor sugar
- 4 eggs
- 200 ml milk
- 350g self-raising flour
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp salt
- desiccated coconut

Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 180C. Prepare the jelly according to the packet instructions. Place in the fridge for about 1 and a half hours, or until slightly thickened (consistency should be like an unbeaten egg white).
2. Line your cake pan with baking paper and set aside.
3. With an electric beater or mixer, add the butter and sugar until creamy, then add the eggs and combine.
4. Slowly add the flour to the mix until well combined.
5. Lastly, add the vanilla, pour in the milk and mix in carefully – do not over mix.
6. Pour the cake mixture into your tin and place into the oven for 15-20 minutes.
7. Let stand in the tin for a few minutes, then remove from the cake pan onto a cooling rack. Allow to cool completely before applying the coating.
8. Cut the cake into smaller cake size pieces.
9. Spread the desiccated coconut out on a plate and dip each cake in the jelly mixture, letting it soak in slightly then roll in the coconut to coat.
10. Refrigerate for at least an hour to allow to set before eating.

Tips:

1. Don't overmix the cake batter after adding the flour. This can toughen the texture and remove the air from the cake, making it too dense and not light and fluffy how you would usually find a lamington.
2. I find freezing the cake a little to firm it up makes it easier to handle when applying the jelly mixture and coating with coconut.
3. Trimming the edges of the cake will allow all the sides to absorb the jelly mixture evenly and also allows for the pink colour to really stand out.
4. Don't soak in the jelly mixture too much and ensure you coat all sides of the cake.
5. You could be a little fancy and add fillings like whipped cream and/or jam.



*Pasti mir-Roża*

Photo by Charmaine Tokic

6. Made too many to finish? Use the leftover cakes to make an epic trifle!

If you would like to read about a particular foodie topic feel free to drop me a line via [editor@thevoiceofthemaltese.org](mailto:editor@thevoiceofthemaltese.org) or direct message me on my Instagram @\_thefoodiemama

## Esibizzjoni tas-Socjetà Filatelika

By Charles Spiteri

January 14, 2024

Fil-librerija tal-iskola tas-Seminarju saret il-prezentazzjoni ta' certifikati u tifikriet lill-istudenti li pparteċipaw f'livell impressjonanti fl-Esibizzjoni tas-Socjetà Filatelika t'Għawdex f'Novembru 2023 fiċ-ċentru kulturali Il-Ħaġar. F'istess ħin kien hemm għażla ta' esibiti ukoll.

Is-segretarju tal-Gozo Philatelic Society (GPS) Antoine Vassallo heġġiġhom ikompli f'dan id-delizzju pożittiv, ħsieb konfermat mill-kap tal-iskola Dun Charles Sultana. Il-Viċi President tal-GPS Anthony Grech, li pprepara varjetà ta' rigali bl-għajna tal-MaltaPost, kien preżenti ukoll. Il-librar tal-iskola Paul Galea organizza l-attività u stqarr it-tama li tkompli tissaħħaħ din ir-relazzjoni.

Fil-fatt membri tal-kumitat iżuru din l-iskola u oħrajn biex juru kemm hi sabiha l-kollezzjoni tal-bolli – u jqassmu b'xejn. U dawn l-isforzi żdiedu peress li fl-2024 jgħid il-Gubiew tal-Fidda tal-għaqda.



Ritratt mix-xellug għal-lemin jidhru l-istudenti rebbieħa:

Noah James Camilleri, Craig Borg, Isaac Bugeja, Jake Refalo, Nathan Sultana, Laurent Jacques Bishop, Lucas Joe Portelli u Kirill Xerri. Fuq in-naħa ta' wara jidhru wkoll (mix-xellug għal-lemin) Dun Charles Sultana, Antoine Vassallo u Anthony Grech. Ritratt: Charles Spiteri

Il-parteċipanti l-oħrajn se jingħataw il-premijiet u certifikati tagħhom waqt il-Laqqgħa Generali Annwali fil-Ħaġar nhar il-Ħadd 28 ta' dan ix-xahar ta' Jannar 2024.

## Kunċert mużikali mill-istudenti ta' Mro Franco Cefai

By Kav. Joe M. Attard

January 7, 2024

Fl-Awla Monsinjur Giuseppe Farrugia fi ħdan il-kumpless tal-Bażilika ta' San Gorg Victoria, nhar il-Ħamis filgħaxija, 4 ta' Jannar 2024, għadd sabiħ ta' t'fal li jitgħallmu l-mużika taħt id-direzzjoni ta' Mro Franco Cefai pprezentaw programm varjat ta' siltiet mużikali, wħud minnhom dwar il-Milied.

Il-kunċert ta' madwar siegħa kien jismu Sounds of the Season – Winter Concert u matulu xi t'fal daqqew ukoll il-flawt, il-klarinet, il-pjanu u t-trumbetta.

Is-serata fethet biċ-ċekjkna Amea Jo Refalo li daqqet fuq il-pjanu Old German Dance ta' M Praetorius u Boogie ta' Daxbok kif ukoll kantat il-Libsa bil-barnuż akkumpanjata fuq il-pjanu mill-għalliem tagħha. Kien imiss imbagħad li nisimghu Rain on the Roof ta' J. Thompson u Air – from Surprise Symphony ta' Hayden minn Kurt Saliba u dritt wara, Hedwig's theme ta' Harry Potter fuq il-pjanu minn Estelle Spiteri.

Luca Jan Mercieca daqq għalina mbagħad Joy to the World ta' L. Mason u The Song of Twilight kompożizzjoni tal-Gappuniż Y. Nakada. Fuq it-trumbetta, Noah Xerri daqqilna Hark the Herald Angels Sing ta' Mendleson waqt li fuq il-pjanu tana Baby Elephant Walk, mużika ta' Henry Mancini magħruf għal mużika li kiteb għal films, waqt li Annamaria Amatulli daqqet fuq il-pjanu Waltz No 2 ta' Shostakovich.

Fuq il-flawt Keira Mae Adak Demicoli daqqet bi hlewwa The Dolly Suite Op 56. No 1 ta' Faure u Suite Antique tal-kompożitur Ingliż J. Rutter.

Tal-Kav Joe M Attard, li ppreżenta wkoll dan il-kunċert tat-tfal li għalih attendew bi ħgarhom il-ġenituri, inqat il-poeżija tal-Milied, Puer Natus est Nobis li giet ippubblikata fuq *The Voice of the Maltese*, u wara, fuq il-pjanu, Chris Attard daqqilna Lights Are On ta' Rosenthal u Bohemian Rhapsody tal-grupp leggendardju Queen.

David Hariton Grima daqq Interstellar – Main Theme ta' Zimmer kif ukoll And now let's Handel ta' M. Proksh. Fuq il-pjanu Anthony Spiteri interpreta Grande Valse Brillante Op 18 ta' Chopin u l-kunċert gie fi tmiemu b'Colette Attard fuq il-klarinet u akkumpanjata minn Mro Cefai tatna Meditation for Solo Clarinet u Allegro Moderato – 1st Movement from Sonata No1 tal-kompożitur Franċiż J. Lefevre.



Wieħed mill-istudenti fuq il-pjanu, bl-udjenza attenti jisimghu. Ritratt: ipprovdut



Ritratt: ipprovdut

## Innu lill-Madonna tal-Vitorja

By Louis Parnis

January 12, 2024

Waslet il-festa tagħna  
Nifirhu lkoll flimkien  
Il-festa tal-Madonna  
Fil-knisja tal-Maltin

In-nies ta' Illawarra  
Kemm huma ferħanin  
U kemm hi sabiha l-għaqda  
Li nahdmu lkoll flimkien

O Marija ħelwa Bambina  
Dan l-innu nkantaw

Illum niffestegġjaw  
Jum twelidek nożżuh  
Tal-Vitorja nżommuh

Il-Maltin u l-Għawdxin

Int Padruna tal-Maltin  
Uliedek imsejnin  
Taħt ismek mgħammdin



Fi żmien ta' twemmin kbir

O Marija ħelwa Bambina  
Dan l-innu nkantaw

## Għanjiet għall-Etjopja

By Charles Spiteri

January 7, 2024

Fil-Ġonna ta' Villa Rundle, f'Victoria, l-allievi tal-Banda Ċittadina La Stella tellgħu programm mużikali, fejn daqqew għadd ta' għanjiet tal-Milied, bi skop li jingabru fondi għall-Etjopja.

Grupp ta' tmien persuni, seba' Għawdxin u persuna minn Malta, fuq inizjattiva tal-Moviment Ġesù fil-Proxxmu, ser imorru l-Etjopja fuq ħidma missjunarja mill-1 sat-22 ta' Frar. Dawn ser jaħdmu fuq xi proġetti, fosthom *borehole* ġewwa l-villaġġ ta' Bitawoshi u proġett ieħor ta' rinovar ta' skola ġewwa l-villaġġ ta' Pugnido.

Il-grupp ser iżur lil dawk rikoverati fi sptar ġewwa Bonga kif ukoll l-isptar tas-Sorijiet ta' Mother Theresa, ġewwa Jimma u Gambella. Dan peress illi fost il-membri tal-grupp ser ikun hemm xi tobba.



Ippeżenta l-programm Francesco Pio Attard. Preżenti kien hemm ukoll is-Surmast Direttur tal-Banda Ċittadina La Stella, Mro. John Galea.

*\*Ritratt: Charles Spiteri*

## Puer natus est nobis

By Kav. Joe M. Attard

December 30, 2023

Il-Milied hu festa kbira  
li jfakkarna fil-Bambin  
illi twieled ġewwa grotta  
għall-ġnus kollha midinbin.

O Ġesù, ċkejken tarbija,  
la teħux għall-ħtjiet tagħna;  
kun af illi aħna dejjem  
irriduk li tibqa' magħna.

Kienet lejla minn tax-xitwa  
meta l-anġli lkoll kantaw  
li l-Feddej kien wasal fostna  
għaliex riedna nsalvaw.

L-anġli nstemgħu jgħannu hienja  
qtajja' qtajja' ferħanin;  
"Glorja 'l Alla 'l fuq fis-Sema,  
sliem u paċi lill-bnedmin!"

Fuq il-belt zġhira ta' Betlem  
dehret kewkba ta' ġmiel kbir  
illi dawlet l-art bid-dija,  
qalb kulhadd riedet ittir.

Dlonk ir-ragħajja flimkien marru  
lejn il-grotta ma' xulxin –  
kollox warrbu għal dil-bxara,  
għotjiet hađu lill-Bambin.

Għalkemm snin tgerbu bil-bosta,  
din il-ġrajja ma tafx tmien  
għaliex tat lid-dinja shiħa  
ferħ u hena tul iż-żmien!

Ejja mela, Milied hieni,  
imla d-djar tagħna lkoll,  
seddaq fina tamiet godda  
u l-qlub iebsa fis int ħoll.

Awguri lill-Għawdxin kollha  
u mhux inqas lill-Maltin –  
nixteqilkom minn qiegħ qalbi  
ferħ Miliedi tul is-snin.

Kav. Joe M. Attard

*Il-Belt Victoria, Għawdex  
Diċembru 2014*

## Kunċert multilingwistiku

By Charles Spiteri

January 1, 2024

In Dulci Jubilo, kunċert multilingwistiku mis-sezzjoni femminili tal-kor Laudate Pueri, wassal għal konklużjoni sublimi tas-sensiela tas-Sibt filgħodu fil-mużew Il-Ħaġar.



*Il-Prof. Maria Frendo tidher l-ewwel waħda minn fuq ix-xellug.  
Quddiemha jidher huha l-Kanonku George Frendo*

Immexxija mill-Prof Maria Frendo u l-Kanonku George Frendo, dawn l-innijiet natalizji inkludew The First Nowell, Gloria in Excelsis Deo, In Dulci Jubilo, Stille Nacht, God Rest ye Merry Gentlemen, Once in Royal David's City, A Great & Mighty Wonder, O Come Emmanuel, u While Shepherds Watched – il-biċċa l-kbira fl-arrangament ta' Joseph Vella u David Willcocks.

Qabel tazza nbid bl-ispejzi (ix-xarba tradizzjonali Ngliza *mulled wine*), l-udjenza li tant apprezzat b'entużjażmu din in-nofs siegħa, tfakkret li l-kor shiħ ikanta fil-liturġija tal-bażilika ta' San Ġorġ fil-lejl tal-Milied u fil-Pontifikat tat-Tnejn.

L-istudenti tal-Iskola tal-Mużika kienu taw bidu għal dawn it-tliet appuntamenti ta' Diċembru. Il-flawti, mghallma minn Sarah Cassar, daqqew xogħolijiet ta' Corelli u Holst u l-klarineti taħt Noel Curmi, siltiet ta' Sheeran u Tchaikovsky. Imbagħad il-kordi (li jgħallimhom Pierre Louis Attard) semmgħu Brahms u Cerulli.

It-tieni kunċert kien twassal mill-Brasstubes, taħt Mark Gauci. Il-programm ta' appuntamenti għal dan iċ-ċentru kulturali inkluda anki wirjiet u żewġ konferenzi – dejjem fl-iskema tal-Ministeru għal Għawdex "Milied f'Għawdex".

Il-Pranzz tal-Ħbieb isir il-Ħadd 7 ta' Jannar 2024.

*\*Ritratt: Charles Spiteri*

## Ninu Ninu u l-Qagħqiet

By Charles Spiteri

December 29, 2023

Din kienet attività organizzata fil-Mithna tax-Xewkija, is-Sibt, 16 ta' Diċembru 2023.

Membri minn Tal-Fuklar Folk Group daqqew strumenti folkloristiċi Maltin u kantaw Għanjiet tal-Milied. Michel Refalo daqq il-kitarra u kanta, George Refalo bit-tamburell u Amea-Jo, tifla ta' 8 snin, kienet



tkanta wkoll.

L-Għanjiet tal-Milied li tkantaw kienu Ninni La Tibkix Iżjed, Ninu Ninu tal-Milied, Libsa bil-Barnuż u O Lejl ta' Skiet.

Magħhom kien hemm ukoll Salvina Portelli, min-Nadur, li kienet qed taħdem u tipprepara l-Qagħaq tal-Għasel fuq riċetta tradizzjonali Maltija, billi tagħmel l-għagina, tiftaħha, tipprepara t-taħlita ta' go fiha u tagħlaqha. Imbagħad iddaħhal il-qagħaq fil-forn. Dawk li għogobhom iżuru l-Mithna tax-Xewkija f'dan il-jum, kellhom l-oportunità li jingħataw qagħaq tal-għasel żgħira kif ukoll tazza Kafè taċ-Ċikwejra, kolloxx b'xejn u skont kif kien jinħadem dari.

Dawk preżenti, kemm adulti kif ukoll tfal u żgħar, ħadu pjaċir ikantaw mal-mużiċisti wrew is-sodisfazzjon tagħhom b'ċapċip kontinwu.

*\*Ritratti: Charles Spiteri*



*Membri minn Tal-Fuklar Folk Group. Mix-xellug għal-lemin jidhru George Refalo, iż-żgħira Amea-Jo u Michel Refalo*



*Uħud minn dawk preżenti jiskopru s-sigriet tar-riċetta tal-qagħaq tal-għasel li kienet qed taħdem Salvina Portelli*

## Notice Board

### Maltese Seniors Social Welfare Day Groups

**Llandilo Maltese Seniors:** meets on the first Wednesday of each month at the Llandilo Community Hall, 257 Seventh Avenue, Llandilo 11am to 1.00 pm. Group holds regular Information Sessions/ Workshops & Bus Trips. Group Leader: Helen Azzopardi.

**Fairfield Active Maltese Seniors:** meets on the last Tuesday of the month. Group meets in the Parish Hall of Our Lady of the Rosary Church, 18 Vine Street, Fairfield from 10 am to 12 noon. Group Leader Dorothy Gatt mobile 0422757829

**Maltese of Bankstown Group:** meets third Wednesday of the month from 10am at the Lewis Bowling Club, 14A Waterloo Rd, Greenacre. Every other Wednesday, an outing is organised. For enquiries, call Sam Galea on 0410269519. This Group is sponsored by the Bankstown Resource Centre.

**Daceyville Maltese Seniors:** meets the last Wednesday of the month in Meeting Room One, No. 3 General Bridges Crescent, Daceyville. Note: the group also arranges regular bus trips. Join us and make new friends. Group Leader: Connie c/- 0434093446. Sponsored by Sydney Multicultural Services.

**The Sutherland & St George Maltese Group:** meets every first Wednesday of the month, from 10:00am to 12noon at the Miranda Community Centre, 93 Karimbla Rd cnr. Kiaora Dd, Miranda. The meetings are interesting and informative. We have guest speakers. Sometimes we also show films. Monthly outings as well, travelling in modern, safe & comfortable minibuses. Membership is Free. Everyone is welcome. For more info please contact Charles N. Mifsud, coordinator, on 0421662298.

**Merrylands Social Maltese Seniors:** has now combined with the Greystanes Group. Group Leader: Salvina Falzon c/- Marisa on 0414863123

**Greystanes Maltese Seniors:** meets on the second Monday of each month at the George Preca Parish Centre Our Lady Queen of Peace (OLQP) Church, 198 Old Prospect Road, Greystanes from 10.30 am to 12.30 noon. Group holds regular Information Sessions/

Workshops & Bus Trips. Group Leader: Frances Montesin.

**Men's Group:** meets every last Tuesday of the month at the MCC Centre at 59b Franklin Str, Parramatta WEst (next to the Primary School) from 10 to 12 noon. Discussion, information and renew friendship. Pastizzi, Kinnie etc. available. Contact Fred on 98632550

*\*All groups are supported by the Maltese Community Council of NSW, with a sponsorship from Multicultural NSW. Contact the MCC Welfare Officer: Marisa Privitera JP on 0414863123. The MCC offices are at 59b Franklin St cnr. Young St, Parramatta West, NSW*

### Hamrun Club Association – Marsden Park

Address: 100 Jackwon St, Marsden Park, NSW.

**Upcoming activities by or at the club**

26 January – Australia Day Festival at The Entrance, leaving from La Valette SC at 8am

For further information & bookings: call Joe Borg 0414429391.



### La Valette Social Centre

**Thursdays:** Open around lunchtime for food, drinks, boċci and Holy Mass..

**Saturdays:** Enjoy a great Maltese menu, drinks and entertainment on Saturday nights. Ghana every last Saturday of the month. Play bingo and boċci with your friends in a family environment. Holy Mass at St Francis Chapel at 5.30pm.

**Sundays:** Rock&Roll from 6pm onwards.

Drinks & pastizzi.

<https://lavalette.com.au>. 175 Walters Road, Blacktown. Tel. 96225847.



## Maltese Community Council of NSW



20 January 2024 – Australia Day from 2pm @ Holroyd Centre, 11-17 Miller St, Merrylands  
21 January 2024 – Maltese Heritage Day @ Marsden Park.

Seeking expressions of interest from exhibitors of Maltese traditional arts, crafts and displays. Contact Marisa on 0414863123 for more information.

## Maltese Community Council of Victoria



477 Royal Parade Parkville Victoria 3052.  
Phone 03 9387 8922, Admin@mccv.org.au

Position of part time Maltese teacher vacant. Apply if interested.

## Religious services in central Sydney

Every Sunday in the chapel of St Paul in De Piro House, Stanley Street Sydney, there is a Mass in Maltese by Fr Tarcisio, which starts at 10.00 am and afterwards, there will be a cup of coffee. Come and meet together in a Maltese atmosphere.

Phone Fr. Tarcisio Micallef on 02 9380 8398



St. Mary's Cathedral, Sydney

## Tune in to radio and television

### NATIONAL

**SBS RADIO:** 97.7 FM Tuesdays 12:00pm; Friday 12:00pm. Listen on Digital Radio or Live Streaming on [www.sbs.com.au/radio/](http://www.sbs.com.au/radio/) or on TV Channel 38. On Demand and podcasts on [www.sbs.com.au/maltese](http://www.sbs.com.au/maltese).

**SBS TV:** SBS TV news from Malta every day at 4.30 pm on Channel 35 also on demand.

### VICTORIA

**3ZZZ 92.3FM:** Mondays 5-6pm, Fridays 5-6pm and Saturdays 10-11am. Presenters: Paul Vella, Mario Sammut, Liz Phillips. Listen live on [www.3zzz.com.au](http://www.3zzz.com.au).

**98.9 North West FM:** Mondays 7-8pm and Fridays 6-7pm. Maltese Program. Presenter: Emmanuel Brincat. Listen live on [www.northwestfm.org/ethnic-radio/](http://www.northwestfm.org/ethnic-radio/).



**97.9 FM Melton:** Tuesday 6.00pm to 8.00pm Maltese Program. Presenter: Miriam Vella. Live streaming on [www.979fm.com.au](http://www.979fm.com.au).

### NSW

**VOX FM 106.9:** Mondays 5pm to 6pm. Voice of Valletta – Illawarra Maltese programme presented by Louis Parnis. Live streaming on [www.voxfm.org.au](http://www.voxfm.org.au).

**WOW-FM 100.7:** Tuesdays 6pm to 9pm. Maltese program with Joe Borg, Emanuel Camilleri and Michael Mallia. Listen live on [www.wowfm1007.com.au](http://www.wowfm1007.com.au).

**2GLF FM 89.3 Maltese Community Council programme:** Every Sunday is now two whole hours, from 10 to 12 noon. The first hour is Maltese Voices, dedicated to the best of Maltese talent. This is followed by News from Malta, the latest information, culture, interviews, community notices and topics of interest. Listen live on [www.893fm.com.au/on-demand](http://www.893fm.com.au/on-demand).



### QUEENSLAND

**4EB FM 98.1:** Tuesdays 6:00am to 8:00am; Presenter: Lucy Stewart. Music, news from Malta, topics of interest, song requests, community announcements. Live streaming on [www.4eb.org.au](http://www.4eb.org.au) or On Demand on [www.4eb.org.au/shows/program-bill-malti-global-maltese/](http://www.4eb.org.au/shows/program-bill-malti-global-maltese/).

### SOUTH AUSTRALIA

**5EBI FM 103.1:** Maltese Community Radio Program from Adelaide. Sunday: 7.00am; Monday: 8.00am; Monday: 6.00pm. Presenters: Bernadette Buhagiar and Ron Borg. Listen live or On Demand on [www.5ebi.com.au](http://www.5ebi.com.au).

## Maltese Language School of NSW

Learn about the Maltese language, the culture, lifestyle, cuisine, traditions and the amazing history of the magnificent Mediterranean islands of Malta and Gozo. Classes available for beginners and those who already have a confident grasp of the Maltese language. Adult and Children's classes available. All classes are online. Positions available for people who can assist with teaching the Maltese Language.

Call Lisa for an information package on 0419 418 547 or email [mls@mccnsw.org.au](mailto:mls@mccnsw.org.au).



A division of the Maltese Community Council of NSW Inc. Established in 1999

## St Nicholas Festa Committee

130-136 Hyatts Rd, Plumpton, NSW. PRO: Stella Vella 0414188226



### Upcoming activities:

- Sunday 17 March 2024 – March Fete
- Saturday 27 April 2024 – Variety Night
- Sunday 7 July 2024 – Imnarja
- Sunday 13 October 2024 – October Fete

# Sports

## Waterpolo: Malta outclassed by a dominant Serbia in Croatia

By TVOTM SportsDesk

January 12, 2024

As anticipated, Malta was outplayed by a truly dominant Serbia in the final Group C match at the Len Waterpolo Championships in Croatia and suffered a 4-21 defeat.

Firm tournament favourites Serbia dominated throughout and were fully valued for their victory, which made them group winners. The Maltese stood no chance against such an opposition, and the absence of four first-team players made their task even more difficult.



*Logo of the Waterpolo European Championships in Croatia*

After his red card for violent play against Israel, Mark Castillo was serving his first of a two-match ban; Sam Gialanze and Nicholas Bugelli were ruled out with fever, and a back injury kept Liam Galea out of the team.

Serbia got off to a flying start and, with Malta offering little if any opposition, by the end of the first session, had already built a 5-0 lead.

In the second session, Malta improved, but not enough to cause any problems to the opposition. At least they did open the scoring with a goal by Jayden Cutajar, but the Serbians again ran away with the opposition by netting six more times, and at the halfway stage of the game, they were already leading by 11-1.

Serbia did not let up in the third session, and although Maltese goalkeeper Benji Busuttill distinguished himself with some fine saves, they scored five more times to Malta's one by Jacke Muscat.



*Malta (white caps) concedes one of the 21 goals against. Photo: LEN*

Nikolai Zammit and Jak Cachia scored two goals for Malta in the final session, but the Serbians' supremacy was complete as they wrapped it all up with five more goals for an overall score of 21-4.

Malta will play again on Wednesday today in a playoff match against Slovenia. Victory gives them the chance to play for 13th and 14th place on Saturday.

## A Leagues Unite Round – Multicultural Celebratory Lap of Honour

By TVOTM Contributor  
January 14, 2024

Sydney hosted its first ever A Leagues Unite Round over the weekend, bringing all 24 men's and women's teams across the Isuzu Ute A-League and Liberty A-League together to play a complete round of 12 matches across three Sydney stadiums.

The Unite Round is a brand new experience which brings all A-Leagues clubs, fans and grassroots players together for the very first time in Sydney in an unprecedented celebration of football.

As part of Unite Round, the A-Leagues held a multicultural celebration in between the two matches played on Friday, 12 January 2024 at CommBank Stadium, Parramatta, to recognise the immense contribution of a large number of diverse cultural communities to our leagues and football across Australia over many years.

Melita Eagles Sports Club were extremely proud to have

represented the Maltese Footballing Community in this Multicultural Celebratory Lap of Honour, and hopefully this will be the start of things to come for the revival of this famous football club.



*Anthony Theuma, Secretary (left) and Mark Tanti, President (3rd from left) with other members and supporters of Melita Eagles Sports Club*

*\*by Anthony Theuma, Secretary of the Melita Eagles Sports Club*

## Manchester United women's team duo illuminate Rainbow Ward with heartwarming visit

By Joseph Cutajar  
January 14, 2024

In a heart-warming gesture of kindness, two members of the Manchester United women's team players, Evie Rabjohn and Irene Guerrero, brought joy to Mater Dei Hospital when they visited the Rainbow Ward at the Sir Anthony Mamo Oncology Centre at Mater Dei.



*Evie Rabjohn and Irene Guerrero in front of the oncology centre. Photo: VisitMalta*

The Rainbow Ward is known for its commitment to providing comprehensive care for young patients undergoing oncology and haematology treatment, offering inpatient and outpatient services.

The hospital staff greeted the two players and then took them to the Rainbow Ward, where they met the nurse in charge of the specialised ward, who gave them a tour of the ward and explained to them that there are currently three patients in the ward.

Understanding the challenges these children face in their fight against cancer, the players presented them with a signed Manchester United kit and engaged in light-hearted conversations. This gesture

undoubtedly put a smile on the faces of these young patients and their families going through a difficult time.

The visit created a positive atmosphere and left a lasting impression on the players and the hospital community, fostering a sense of unity and hope in the face of health challenges.

The visit at Rainbow Ward formed part of the Manchester United Women's team's recent commitments in Malta as part of their winter training camp in which they also played and beat PSV Eindhoven of The Netherlands.

## Waterpolo: Malta snatch incredible first-ever win over Israel in European Championship group stages

By TVOTM SportsDesk

January 9, 2024



Logo of the Waterpolo European Championships in Croatia

The Malta national waterpolo team made it to the history books at the European Championships in Croatia by producing a miraculous comeback in an emotion-filled match to register its first-ever victory in the group stages of the event by beating Israel 13-11.

Malta's success was acquired most dramatically as it had to come back from three goals down in the last session to win the match.

From the outset, the two sides produced an incredible fight, a real battle with many physical contacts and even more emotions and unbelievable twists before Malta emerged as an unlikely winner.

The Maltese disappointedly started the game with a poor performance in the first session. Israel took control early on and built a massive 2-5 lead in the first eight minutes with a flawless attacking performance, which saw all their first seven shots on target. They seemed to get into an even more promising position when a VAR review ended in Mark Castillo's ejection for four minutes..

Israel increased their lead to 6-2 early in the second session, but Malta ended it 3-3 and 5-8 down. The improvement boosted the morale of the Maltese players, and although Israel still held the psychological edge, they pushed on for a comeback.

Malta got through the third session with a 3-2 score, but they were still behind in the final session. However, Malta staged a 4-0 run in the last 5:31 minutes, and with 35 seconds to go, Jake Muscat converted a penalty. Jayden Cutajar also found the net for a 5-1 score in the dying seconds, while Israel only replied with one. Then, Malta's comeback was complete.

This victory ensures that Malta will avoid the bottom spot in its group for the first time and have a more favourable draw in the positional play-offs. Hopefully, it at least matches the 14th place attained two years ago. Malta meets Serbia in their final group match on Tuesday.



The victorious Malta team against israel in Croatia. Photo: LEN



Maltese players and coach at the end of the game. Photo: LEN

## TipSport Malta Cup 2024: A thrilling display of international football in the heart of the Mediterranean

By TVOTM SportsDesk

January 12, 2024

The much-anticipated competition for the TipSport Malta Cup 2024, marking the 6th edition of this prestigious football tournament held in Malta and supported by VisitMalta, is underway.

The TipSport Malta Cup is an annual football tournament that brings together top teams from Central Europe for a spirited competition. Organised in the picturesque setting of Malta, the competition aims to foster international sportsmanship and showcase the best of football talent.

The participating teams in this year's tournament, showcasing the top talent from four outstanding teams, include two formidable contenders from the Czech Republic, Hradec Kralove and Sigma Olomouc, Austria's renowned Austria Wien, and Slovakia's Spartak Trnava. The event is expected to create an exciting spectacle for football enthusiasts.

The tournament kicked off with two matches on Matchday 1 at the Ta' Qali National Stadium, with Hradec Králové and Austria Wien figuring in a scoreless draw and Sigma Olomouc beating Spartak Trnava 2-0. The diverse lineups promise intense and competitive matches, highlighting the rich football culture across Central Europe.

Matchday 2 is due at the same venue this Saturday with the matches between Spartak Trnava and Austria Wien, and Sigma Olomouc against Hradec Králové.

The tournament concludes at the Tony Bezzina Stadium in Paola on Monday, 15th January, when Hradec Králové play Spartak Trnava, and Sigma Olomouc meet Austria Wien.



Participants in the TipSport Malta Cup. Photo: TipSport

## Hamrun inflict season's first defeat on Floriana to rejoin them at the top

By TVOTM SportsDesk

January 9, 2024

The New Year did not start well for Floriana as they lost their unbeaten run in the Premier League with a 0-1 loss to Hamrun Spartans and, with it, their sole command of the League ladder, which they again share with their victors.

**Hamrun Spartans ..... 1 Floriana ..... 0**

A last-gasp goal for Hamrun Spartans, scored by Roko Prsa deep into stoppage time, halted Floriana's 11-game unbeaten run in the Premier League and also helped the Spartans to regain the share of the top spot in the league table, which they had lost just over a month ago, with their defeat against Birkirkara.

The result was a blow that Floriana did not deserve, as they were the better team throughout the match. However, they failed to take their chances, particularly when they failed to score from a penalty early on. Goalkeeper Henry Bonello saved Ulises Arias' spot-kick that was awarded in the 13th minute for a foul by Steve Bog on Kemar Reid.

Bonello was again called into action to keep the Greens at bay on other occasions, especially on the half-hour when he saved an Owen Spiteri header. At other times, Floriana missed the target with a Kemar Reid shot and a Uros Djuranovic effort.

Hamrun's most threatening reaction arrived in the 68th minute when Joseph Mbong's fine effort in the 68th minute was blocked on the goal line by Georgi Kitanov in the Floriana goal.

Floriana created another scoring opportunity at the other end through Kemar Reid, but Bonello was again alert enough to deflect to corner. However, at this juncture, it wasn't all Floriana. Hamrun came close to opening the scoring in the 82nd minute, only for Luke Montebello's shot to smash against the crossbar.

But with the game heading to a sharing of the spoils, the Spartans broke the deadlock. They got all three points three minutes into added time when goalkeeper Georgi Kitanov could only parry Joseph Mbong's cross-shot to Luke Montebello, who headed towards Roko Prsa, for him to tap in the victory tally.

**Sliema Wanderers ..... 2 Gudja Utd .... 0**

Sliema Wanderers kept up their impressive form without exerting too much energy in beating lowly Gudja United, now under new coach Renzo Kerr Cumbo, by 2-0 to stay closest and separated by only five points to the two leading teams, Floriana and Hamrun.

The Wanderers dominated throughout. However, it took them 40 minutes to draw ahead with a goal by Joachim Adukor following a corner kick action, and they consolidated their victory with a second goal by Geoffrey Acheampong in the 80th minute when he headed home a cross from Lydon Micallef.

**Hibernians ..... 1 Marsaxlokk ..... 1**



Hamrun (dark strip) against Floriana. Photo: Walter Sargent

Marsaxlokk shared the points in a 1-1 result with Hibernians at the end of a balanced match. But they lost ground in the race for the leading positions and are now five points behind third-placed Sliema Wanderers and just two points ahead of Hibernians.

Marsaxlokk took the lead three minutes into first-half stoppage time with a goal by Yuri Messias but failed to hold on to their lead and conceded the leveller on the hour, which was scored by Rodney Antwi. They also failed to take advantage of their numerical superiority in the last 15 minutes following the sending off of Ferdinando Apap for two yellow cards.

**Birkirkara ..... 2 Sirens ..... 1**

Birkirkara managed a narrow 2-1 victory over bottom team Sirens to join Marsaxlokk in fourth place. After nine minutes, they paved the way to victory with a goal by Maxuelli Maia.

Birkirkara stayed on top without exerting too much pressure and doubled the score in the 62nd minute when Maxuelli Maia obtained his brace by beating Sirens' goalkeeper Andreu Ciolacu with an acrobatic feat.

Hafiz Mohammed Akadom pulled a goal back for Sirens a minute later.

**Naxxar Lions ..... 2 Valletta ..... 1**

Naxxar Lions returned to winning ways after two games in which they dropped five points by defeating a disappointing Valletta side by 2-1 to leave the Citizens in a precarious position close to the relegation strugglers.

Takuma Yamaguchi gave Naxxar a perfect start by putting them ahead after just five minutes off a cross by Maicon and then doubled the score in the 31st minute through Edson Cerqueira Farias.

Valletta reduced the arrears in the 48th minute with a headed goal by Federico Falcone, but they never looked capable of salvaging any points.

**Balzan ..... 2 Mosta ..... 0**

A brace by Aleksa Andrejic handed Balzan a deserved 2-0 victory over Mosta, giving them a comfortable mid-table position and leaving Mosta struggling in the lower half of the league standings.

Balzan were the better team throughout and deserved their victory. However, they failed to turn their superiority into goals before the first minute of the second half when Aleksa Andrejic scored with an overhead kick. In the 85th minute, they sealed the issue with Andrejic's second goal.

**Santa Lucia ..... 2 Gżira United .... 1**

Gżira United's disappointing run in the Premier continued with their unexpected 2-1 loss against Sta Lucia. Their fourth defeat on the trot and their seventh from 12 outings puts them in troubled waters in the lower reaches of the league standings. For the Saints, their second victory of the campaign is significant as it could help them in the struggle to avoid relegation.

Early on, Santa Lucia's day looked as if it could end in tears when Jurgen Pisani frittered away the chance to put them ahead when his penalty, awarded them for a foul by Thiaguinho on Adam Bradshaw after just two minutes, was saved by goalkeeper Darijan Zarkov.

However, they kept their cool, and after 15 minutes, Daniel Letherby put them ahead by scoring on his debut when he beat Zarkov from the rebound after the Gżira keeper blocked his close-range shot.

The Maroons of Gżira made a semblance of a reaction in the second half and, after 13 minutes, drew level through Gabriel Bohrer Mentz, who headed in the equaliser from a Thiaguinho corner. They even kept up the pressure and came close to forging ahead for the first time, only for substitute Andrew Borg's effort in the 75th minute to be cleared off the goal line with the Saints' goalkeeper beaten.

Then, at the other end, a minute into stoppage time, Santa Lucia created their final scoring opportunity that led to their winning goal, scored by Jurgen Pisani, who headed in at the end of a free-kick action.

### Premier League results on Match Day 12 at a glance

Hamrun ..... 1 Floriana ..... 0  
 Marsaxlokk ..... 1 Hibernians ..... 1  
 Sliema W ..... 2 Gudja Utd ..... 0  
 Birkirkara ..... 2 Sirens ..... 1  
 Naxxar Lions ..... 2 Valletta ..... 1  
 Balzan ..... 2 Mosta ..... 0  
 Santa Lucia ..... 2 Gżira United .... 1

### PREMIER LEAGUE standings after Match Day 12

Floriana and Hamrun Spartans 29 points; Sliema Wanderers 25; Marsaxlokk and Birkirkara 20; Naxxar Lions 19; Hibernians 18; Balzan 17; Gżira United, Valletta and Mosta 11; Santa Lucia 9; Gudja United and Sirens 6,

## Manchester United women beat PSV in Malta with a stoppage time goal

By Joseph Cutajar  
January 7, 2024

The Manchester United women's team beat the Netherlands' PSV by 2-1 in their friendly practice match in Malta. But it needed a last-gasp goal from Nikita Parris to wrap up a close but entertaining game at the Tony Bezzina Stadium.

The game, the highlight of the two teams' training camp in Malta, must have served them well given their forthcoming league fixtures in the respective countries.

As expected, on their second visit to Malta following last year's successful tour, and as the home of United's official destination partner, VisitMalta, Manchester United have been provided an excellent reception. However, this same hospitality has also been shown to the Dutch team on their visit to Malta.

The coaching staff of both these women's squads have expressed their satisfaction with the facilities provided and their delight for the warm welcome and the reception they got by playing in front of the Maltese football supporters.

The game itself was well-balanced. After a shaky start, PSV settled down and dominated the exchanges in the first half. United goalkeeper Mary Earps, recently awarded the MBE, was called upon to save twice. But she was lucky when Joelle Smit beat her in the 16th minute, only to see the ball hit the upright.

Six minutes later, PSV got a just reward. Joelle Smit received a pass from Hendriks and beat Earps with a low drive, to give PSV the advantage.

The goal brought a strong reaction from the United girls, and in the 32nd minute, they drew level at the end of a move started on the right by Lisa Naalsund. The substitute's low cross found Gemma Evans, whose shot was saved by goalkeeper Pondez, but Jayade was on hand to score from the rebound.

Manchester United made several substitutions on the change-of-ends, and they began to move much better. They regained the upper hand and came very close to taking the lead several times. They eventually scored the winning tally two minutes into stoppage time when Nikita Parris headed home from a cross from the left.

## Floriana end the year as league leaders following a dramatic 3-2 win

By TVOTM SportsDesk  
December 20, 2023

Marsaxlokk and newly promoted Sliema Wanderers are proving to be a reality in this season's Premier League. They occupy highly placed positions in the League Ladder on their own merits, something they continued to show with their outstanding performances on Match Day 11. Marsaxlokk came close to snatching a point off leaders Floriana, while Sliema dominated Naxxar. Meanwhile, Floriana end



Manchester United's starting XI against PSV in Malta. Photo: MUFC

League leaders Floriana (Green strip) in their match against

the year holding to the top position.

**Floriana ..... 3 Marsaxlokk ..... 2**

Leaders Floriana were given a good run for their money when they faced Marsaxlokk. They had to come from behind to obtain their narrow 3-2 win at the end of an entertaining match that helped them maintain their three-point lead over Hamrun Spartans at the top.

Marsaxlokk's consistency this campaign finds them fourth in the league, three points behind Sliema Wanderers. Their position could have improved by a further point were it not for a goal conceded five minutes into stoppage time.

They were first on the score sheet with a goal in the 15th minute scored by Anthony Abah Obonogwu, who netted the rebound from close range after goalkeeper Georgi Kitanov blocked Nikolai Muscat's shot. They held the lead throughout the first half.

But five minutes into the second session, Floriana equalised through Carlo Zammit Lonardelli and then went ahead eight minutes later with the second goal scored by Ulises Arias.

The ding-dong battle continued with Marsaxlokk obtaining the leveller in the 65th minute from a header by Yago Ramon Sousa Gomes after a perfect freekick from Leandro Aguirre.

The game looked like it was heading for a draw when, five minutes into added time, in a final effort, Floriana scored the winning goal through Kemar Reid, for Floriana's ninth victory from eleven matches to end as "winter champions."

**Hamrun Spartans ..... 3 Santa Lucia ..... 1**

Hamrun Spartans obtained an easy 3-1 victory over relegation-threatened Santa Lucia to keep abreast of leaders Floriana, with just three points separating the two sides.

Hamrun took matters in hand early on and, by the end of the first half, were already comfortably placed to win the match by scoring three times, the first goal after only four minutes through a Yulian Nenov header from a Luke Montebello cross.

In their reaction, Santa Lucia came close to netting the equaliser in the 29th minute when Emerson Marcelina cleared a Tatsuro Nagamatshu shot off the fatal line. Subsequently, Hamrun doubled the score on the half-hour through Luke Montebello when he finished off from an Emerson Marcelina freekick.

The Spartans stayed on top throughout the match and ascertained their superiority with a third goal four minutes into stoppage time at the end of the first half, scored by Uros Djuranovic.

Santa Lucia improved in the second half, and they were rewarded for their efforts with a consolation tally in the 50th minute, scored by Tatsuro Nagamatsu, who beat goalkeeper Henry Bonello with a low drive.

However, until the end, Hamrun managed to control the match and were never in danger of losing their grip.

**Sliema W. .... 4 Naxxar Lions ..... 1**

Sliema Wanderers continued to impress, making it seven wins and a third in succession by defeating Naxxar Lions 4-1. Their three points consolidated their third position in the league table, four points behind Hamrun Spartans. For Naxxar, it was their first defeat in the last eight outings.

The Wanderers indicated their thoughts from the start but had to wait until the 15th minute to get their reward with a goal by Edmond Agius. They stayed on top, but their chances improved even further in the 37th minute when they found themselves having a numerical advantage after the sending off of Naxxar's Marcilio Wiliam Moreira da Silva.

Sliema took advantage, and three minutes into stoppage time at the end of the first half, they doubled the score through Vito Plut, who rounded a defender before hitting low past goalkeeper Debono.

Naxxar somehow reduced the arrears nine minutes into the second half with a goal by Nikolai Micallef. However, it took the Wanderers only five minutes to retain their two-goal advantage when they got the third goal courtesy of Geoffrey Acheampong.

Sliema wrapped it all up with the fourth goal in the 69th minute when Geoffrey Acheampong obtained his brace, beating the Naxxar goalkeeper with a long-distance shot.

**Hibernians ..... 9 Mosta ..... 0**

At the end of a drab encounter, Hibernians and Mosta shared the spoils in a scoreless draw, which left their respective supporters with a sour taste as on this showing, the season does not promise much satisfaction despite the two clubs' efforts to strengthen their teams for this season.

Although Hibernians are not expected to challenge for the top honours on this showing, at least their position in fifth place leaves them well-placed to accomplish something worthwhile as the season progresses. Mosta stay in a precarious position in the lower reaches, with only three teams below them.

As expected, the Hibernians were the better team, but they created very few scoring opportunities. Their best chance fell to Jurgen Degabriele early in the second half when Akpan, the Mosta goalkeeper, turned his freekick to corner. The Mosta goalkeeper again saved his side late on when he saved another effort by Rodney Antwi.

#### **Birkirkara ..... 3 Gżira United ..... 2**

Although they managed to get back into the game and level the score after being two goals down against Birkirkara, in the end, Gżira did not have the push needed to keep their hopes alive and share the spoils as five minutes into stoppage time, they conceded a third goal and lost the match.

The end of what turned out to be a dramatic game helped Birkirkara return to winning ways after some disappointing results to earn a more respectable position in the standings. In turn, Gżira's sixth loss keeps them in the lower half of the League ladder.

Birkirkara took an 11th-minute lead with a goal scored by Maxuella Maia but then had to wait until the 67th minute to strengthen their hold with a second goal by Andrei Ciolacu.

However, this second tally awakened the United players from their slumber. They finally reacted by reducing the arrears two minutes later with a goal by Lucas Ribeiro and even levelled matters four minutes from time when Jovan Pajovic deflected Lucas Ribeiro's shot past the Birkirkara goalkeeper.

But five minutes into added time, Birkirkara broke away and caught their opponents unaware to score the winning goal through Ali Diakite.

#### **Balzan ..... 0 Valletta ..... 0**

Balzan and Valletta, desperate for points in a season that their respective supporters had wished for much more, failed to get more than a point after sharing the spoils at the end of a scoreless draw.

For Valletta, in particular, the season is turning out to be nothing short of disastrous by their own standards, as they have now gone

six matches without a win. Balzan have done slightly better. The point they got in this tie was their fifth from the last six games, and they sit in mid-table, three points ahead of Valletta.

The match was evenly balanced, with neither of the two teams offering much. Valletta had the better of the exchanges in the first half as Jhonnattann Benites and Shaun Dimech had two goal attempts saved by Danilo Golovic between the Balzan sticks.

Balzan improved in the second half, but their scoring opportunities were much too feeble to cause worries to the Valletta rearguard. The best scoring opportunity again fell to Valletta, with Brandon Diego Paiber shooting wide from an ideal position in the dying methods.

#### **Sirens ..... 2 Gudja United ..... 1**

By beating Gudja United 2-1 in their eleventh match of the campaign, Sirens have finally managed to register their first win of the season, which gives them hope for the coming year. Although they are still at the bottom of the league table, they have improved their points tally and now share the position with two other teams, the losers Gudja and Santa Lucia.

It did not seem likely to happen in the initial stages, especially when Gudja was awarded a penalty in the 18th minute for a foul on Avou Toure. But the same player failed to beat goalkeeper Andrea Cassar from the spot.

The same player somewhat paid amends for his lapse nine minutes later when he put Gudja ahead with a headed goal from a Gabriel Mensah cross.

Gudja's advantage was erased eight minutes into the second half, with substitute Daniel Agius levelling the score for Sirens following a good run by Kemmu Degran Jackson.

The Seasideers even scored the winning goal in the 68th minute when Kwasi Donsu converted a penalty awarded for a foul on Sacha Borg in the area.

#### **League standings in the Premier League after Match Day 11**

Floriana 29 points; Hamrun Spartans 26; Sliema Wanderers 22; Marsaxlokk 19; Hibernians and Birkirkara 17; Naxxar Lions 16; Balzan 14; Gżira United, Valletta and Mosta 11; Gudja United, Sirens and Santa Lucia 8.

Authorised by Chris Bowen MP, ALP, Fairfield West

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*Aphorism 12 by Manuel Dimech, from Aphorisms – Wisdom of a Philosopher in Exile, SKS 2012, edited by Mark Montebello & Francis Galea*



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