

Annual Reports
of
Government Departments

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2006

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2006

Edited and Designed by the Operations and Programme Implementation Directorate
Office of the Prime Minister, MALTA

May 2007

[Annual Reports of Government Departments ~ 2006 also available on CD from the Department of Information]

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House of Representatives

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE

During 2006, the House met 141 times with Parliament sitting an average of three sessions a week but sittings were more frequent during discussions on the 2007 budget allocations to the various ministries. This year, as in the previous years, the Budget was presented in Parliament in November.

Adjournment was availed of on 115 occasions, divided equally between Government and Opposition Members on an alternating basis.

On 4 December the adjournment time was dedicated to the Council of Europe campaign to combat domestic violence against women, a serious assault on human dignity which prevents women from enjoying the fundamental rights secured by the European Convention on Human Rights. The adjournment time was shared equally by the Minister for the Family and Social Solidarity and Hon Helena Dalli.

During 2006, there were 24 calls for quorum, 10 of which were called in one sitting. The House was adjourned for the next sitting day with the same agenda on six occasions due to lack of quorum, while on the other occasions, the sitting was resumed after the interval of five minutes.

In May, the House debated an amendment to the Standing Orders of the House wherein the discussion on the monetary policy with the Governor of the Central Bank of Malta was included in the remit of the Public Accounts Committee.

In July, the House debated the partial revision of the Structure Plan in accordance with the Development Planning Act which was first debated in the Standing Committee on Development Planning but since the motion was not unanimously agreed, the law provided for the motion to be referred back to the House for further discussion. Also in July, the House approved the transfer of government property in Ta' Qali to the US Embassy in Malta.

In October, the House approved Malta's adhesion to the European Patent Convention and to the Patent Cooperation Treaty. Also in October, the House debated the working plan for the year 2005 – 2006 of the Parliamentary Secretariat for Small Businesses and the Self Employed relating to initiatives to develop entrepreneurship in Malta.

In December, the House approved the ratification of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

During the year under review, the Speaker of the House delivered eight rulings, six of which related to alleged cases of breach of privilege.

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS

During the year under review, 8,626 parliamentary questions were tabled, out of which 109 requested a written answer.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

During 2006, two ministerial statements were delivered to the House.

On 6 February, the Minister of Education, Youth and Employment delivered a statement on the setting up of the National Commission for Higher Education and laid on the Table of the House a copy of the interim terms of reference of the National Commission. The aim of setting up the National Commission for Higher Education was to ensure that excellence would be provided and that it would co-ordinate synergies between students, institutions, Government and the world of work to offer high-quality education that is equitable, responsive to today's needs, innovative and flexible, while still being cost-effective and sustainable.

On 6 March, the Minister of Foreign Affairs made a statement on the agreement signed between Malta and Tunisia for joint oil exploitation and exploration in zones of the Continental Shelf located between the two States. Minister Frendo said that a joint expert group would be set up to determine the exact coverage of these zones taking duly into account any possible rights of third states and following the relevant rules of international law.

PETITIONS

Five petitions were deposited in Parliament during 2006.

On 11 January, Hon Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando presented a petition signed by residents of Triq il-Grazzja in Żebbuġ regarding rain water flooding due to lack of storm water culverts.

On 5 April, Hon Roderick Galdes presented a petition signed by residents of Tank Street, Siġġiewi, regarding the lack of adequate access to their property.

On 8 May, Hon Justyne Caruana presented a signed petition regarding the structural damage in the columns in Rosa Magro Primary School in Xewkija.

On 27 June, Hon Leo Brincat presented a petition signed by residents in Swatar and Msida regarding MEPA's proposal to rationalise the land in Msida Valley, while Hon Michael Gonzi presented a petition signed by residents of Mellieħa regarding Government's proposal to alter the existing building boundaries and include the areas of Ta' Bragg and Qortin within the building schemes.

MOTIONS

During 2006, the Office of the Clerk of the House received 51 motions, out of which 24 were for First Reading of Bills and seven were Private Members' motions.

The Private Members' motions were:

- a motion regarding Government's decision to introduce the surcharge on water and electricity consumption, submitted by Hon Marie Louise Colerio and Hon Joe Mizzi, which motion was debated in April;
- two motions submitted by Hon Joe Mizzi to contest the rulings given by Mr Speaker on 20 and 29 March, and two other motions to contest the rulings delivered by Mr Speaker on 24 July;
- a motion submitted by Hon Evarist Bartolo and Hon Joseph Cuschieri on the situation of the tourism sector in Malta, which motion was debated in July; and
- a motion of no confidence in the Minister for the Investment, Industry and Information Technology, presented by Hon Charles Mangion and Hon Joe Mizzi, which motion was debated in July.

PAPERS LAID

During the year, 1,715 documents were laid on the Table of the House, 330 of which were legal notices.

There were also a number of documents laid on the Table of the House by Mr Speaker, amongst them, four constitutional court sentences, a number of reports submitted by the National Audit Office and replies to parliamentary questions submitted by the Members of Parliament to Mr Speaker.

Hon Clyde Puli, Chairman of the Social Affairs Committee, laid on the Table of the House proposed amendments to the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance emanating from the long debate held in the Social Affairs Committee on proposed amendments to the legislation relating to drug use in Malta.

DIVISIONS

Divisions called and taken during the year under review totalled 55.

STANDING COMMITTEES

The Standing Committees of the House that is, the House Business Committee, the Public Accounts Committee, the Social Affairs Committee, the Foreign and European Affairs Committee and the Consideration of Bills Committee, met regularly during the year.

- The *House Business Committee* held seven meetings during which business of the House was generally discussed and scheduled. The committee also discussed and approved the Ombudsplan for 2006, discussed Hon Marie Louise Coleiro's request for the Social Affairs Committee to debate the surcharge on electricity and water consumption, and also discussed the drawing up of guidelines to regulate the access of journalists in Parliament's precincts.
- The *Public Accounts Committee* met 17 times, wherein it discussed the annual report of the Auditor General for the year 2004; the National Audit Office report on risk management in government departments – an audit approach; and the Poultry Co-operative and co-operatives in general.

Following an amendment to the Standing Orders of the House, the Public Accounts Committee was now the parliamentary committee responsible to discuss Malta's monetary policy and to receive reports thereon from the Governor of the Central Bank of Malta. Three sittings were subsequently dedicated to this issue.

No less than seven sittings of the Public Accounts Committee were dedicated to debate the enquiry and report of the Auditor General on the operations of the Voice of the Mediterranean Radio Station. On the conclusion of the debate, a motion was presented by the Minister for Investment, Industry and Information Technology to appoint a person or persons to investigate the conduct of the office of the Auditor General in its investigation of the Voice of the Mediterranean.

- The *Social Affairs Committee* met 19 times during 2006. The Committee continued its debate on research, development and innovation within the context of the knowledge economy and also on the proposed amendments to the legislation regarding drug use in Malta. During 2006, it also debated mainstreaming disability issues in legislation and policy and in the decision-making process; the role of the National Statistics Office in socio-economic development; the challenges and opportunities for Malta as regards the innovation society; the annual report of the Commissioner for Children and the report of the National Commission for the Family.

The research analyst with the Social Affairs Committee made a presentation to the Committee on the Conference on the Family organised by the European Documentation and Research Centre of the University of Malta.

During 2006, the Social Affairs Committee continued exercising its role of scrutinising European Union *acquis* referred to it by the working group within the Foreign and European Affairs Committee responsible for filtering and referral of documents. Ten documents were scrutinised during the year under review. They included the European Quality Charter for Mobility; jobs and growth – a new start for the Lisbon Strategy; improving the mental health of the population; advanced therapy medicinal products; social protection and social inclusion policies in the European Union; roadmap for equality between women and men; prudent use of anti-microbial agents in human medicine; the establishment of a second programme for Community action in the field of health; and the improvement of the portability of supplementary pension rights.

- The *Foreign and European Affairs Committee* met 31 times during 2006 debating a wide spectrum of subjects.

During the year under review, the Committee examined the 2006 Work Programme of the European Commission with a view to arriving at a list of proposals which the Maltese Parliament wished to subject to the subsidiarity and proportionality check. This exercise was undertaken following the decision reached in the London COSAC meeting where an initiative to encourage national parliaments to conduct subsidiarity and proportionality checks on the proposals made by the European Commission, was launched. The shortlist of ten proposals arrived at by the committee was subsequently referred to the Presidency of COSAC.

Hon Michael Frendo, Minister of Foreign Affairs, made a presentation on the European Neighbourhood Policy, addressed to partners neighbouring the Union which are not involved in the accession or pre-accession processes. The objective of the neighbourhood policy is to share the benefits of enlargement with neighbouring countries in strengthening stability, security and well-being for all.

Minister Frendo also informed the committee on the agreement between Malta and Tunisia on joint oil exploration and exploitation activities on the continental shelf between the two countries; on irregular immigration in the light of the Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development held in Morocco in July; and on the European Foreign Ministers' meeting held in Brussels also in July. A meeting was also held wherein the Minister of Foreign Affairs gave an overview of the work and initiatives undertaken by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the previous months.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, together with Malta's Permanent Representative to the European Union, discussed with the Committee the Common Legislative and Work Programme for 2006; the annual Policy Strategy for 2006 and 2007; the Operational Programme for the Council for 2006 submitted by the Austrian and Finnish Presidencies and the 18 months Presidency Work Plan.

In January, the Committee invited HE Dr Elizabeth Kehrer, Ambassador of Austria accredited to Malta, who outlined the priorities of the Austrian Presidency in its work programme for the first six months of the year, amongst them the revival of the debate on the European Union Constitution, the approval of the European Union budget and the development of the Lisbon Agenda, that is, economic growth and the creation of jobs. In July, the Committee was then addressed by HE Mr Pauli Makela, Ambassador of Finland accredited to Malta, who spoke of the priorities of the Finnish Presidency for the last six months of the year, amongst them, the future of Europe, improvement of the legitimacy of the European Union, competitiveness, justice and home affairs - in particular international crime, terrorism and illegal immigration - and the European Union as a world player.

During 2006, the Committee invited a number of personalities to exchange views on subjects of their expertise, amongst them, Prof Marko Pavliha, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Slovenia, and head of the Slovenian delegation to the EMPA, who spoke of the role that Slovenia was playing in this forum towards the promotion of dialogue and co-operation between the northern and southern countries of the Mediterranean; Mr Suleiman Elshahumi, Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the General People's Congress of Libya; HE Dr Saad A E Elshalmani, Ambassador of the Great Socialist

People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to Malta; HE Mr Bechir Tekkari, Minister of Justice and Human Rights of Tunisia; HE Dr Alvis Memmo, Ambassador of Italy to Malta who was concluding his four-year term of office in Malta; and Dr Mustafa Barghouti, Member of the Palestinian Legislative Council and Secretary of the Palestinian National Initiative who acknowledged the active part played by the two political parties represented in the Maltese Parliament with regard to the Palestinian cause towards efforts to find a just solution to this long outstanding problem.

The Committee held meetings with the Maltese Members of the European Parliament; Dr Joe Borg, European Commissioner for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, who spoke at length on the Green Paper on the European Union Maritime Policy, Fisheries Partnership agreements and other related matters; Professor Josef Bonnici, member of the European Court of Auditors, who gave an overview of the functions of the European Court of Auditors; Dr Anthony Borg Barthet, Judge at the European Court of Justice, who spoke of the set-up, functions and jurisdiction of this Court; Dr Joanna Drake, Head of the European Commission Representation in Malta, who explained that the objectives of her office were to inform the Maltese people of the workings of the Commission; and Mr Danuta Hubner, Commissioner responsible for regional policy of the European Commission who was visiting EU member states to see the implementation of the 2004 – 2006 programmes relating to the cohesion policy mainly directed towards the sustained and equal development of the various regions of the European Union.

As in previous years, Members of Parliament were asked to report to the committee on their participation in various international parliamentary fora while Ministers also reported to the Committee on their participation in European Union Council meetings – post-Council scrutiny exercised by the members. Although the scrutiny process mainly involves the examination of Government's policies and actions on each Commission document prior to adoption in Council, post-Council meetings also act as a means to control the effectiveness of the Committee's work and to ensure that the Minister took heed of the Committee's opinion.

Hon Censu Galea, Minister for Competitiveness and Communications, informed the Committee of the World Trade Organisation Conference held in Hong Kong in December 2005 for which 149 countries had been represented, and also informed the Committee on the Green Paper on a future maritime policy for the European Union, while Hon Mario Galea informed the Committee of the elections held in Palestine which he followed as a European Union observer.

During 2006, the Committee also met with a delegation from the Grand Committee of the Parliament of Finland; the Project Development Team of the Euro-Mediterranean Institute of Technology and Innovation; Ms Nathalie Flynn, adviser to the Minister of Tourism and Culture, who referred to the importance of the tourism industry to the European Union in general and especially to Malta where it contributed between 25% and 30% of the Gross National Product.

As in previous years, the three scrutiny committees within the Standing Committee for Foreign and European Affairs examined a number of EU documents deposited at the House of Representatives. The scrutiny of the EU pipeline *acquis* through the Standing Committee for Foreign and European Affairs is an important parliamentary function as it enables the establishment of a stronger link between Maltese citizens and their democratically elected representatives on the one hand and the decision-making institutions of the EU on the other. This new parliamentary role, brought about after Malta's integration in the EU in 2004, serves to enhance the transparency, accountability and parliamentary awareness of how new EU legislation is negotiated and implemented.

During 2006, the scrutiny committee considered 370 new EU proposals. They assessed their legal and political relevance and established whether the documents should be cleared or required further debate. The documents deposited in Parliament ranged from Commission communications, reports, staff working papers, White Papers and Green Papers, to proposals for Council Decisions, Directives and Regulations and Draft Framework Decisions.

- In 2006, the *Standing Committee for the Consideration of Bills* met 28 times to discuss in Committee Stage bills which had been referred to it by a resolution of the House. No less than 16 bills were discussed, approved and referred back to the House for Third Reading.
- *The National Audit Office Accounts Committee* met twice during the year under review wherein it discussed the 2004 annual report of the National Audit Office and the estimates of the same office for the year 2006, and a resolution on the transfer of property in Ta' Qali to the American Embassy. Since the motion was not unanimously agreed, the motion was referred to the House for discussion.
- *The Development Planning Committee* met four times in 2006 to discuss the partial revision of the structure plan.

IN MEMORIAM

During the year under review, the House of Representatives mourned the loss of:

- Mrs Edith Debono Grech, Hon Joe Debono Grech's wife, who died on 30 January;
- Mrs Stella Pullicino, Hon George Pullicino's mother, who died on 12 April;
- Mr Paul Carachi, former Member of Parliament, who died on 30 August;
- Dr Emanuel Bonnici, former Minister, who died on 12 September; and
- Dr Herman Farrugia, former Member of Parliament, who died on 10 November.

The House also mourned the loss of three former Speakers: Mr Kalcidon Aguis who died on 24 May; Mr Joseph Baldacchino who died on 21 June and Dr Jimmy Farrugia who died on 25 November.

On 30 January, the House observed a minute's silence to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust following the United Nations resolution of 21 November 2005 designating the 27 January as annual international day of commemoration to honour Holocaust victims.

VISITS ABROAD BY MR SPEAKER

In May, Mr Speaker, Hon Anton Tabone, participated in the European Conference of Presidents of Parliaments held in Tallinn, Estonia. The Conference, organised by the Estonian Parliament in co-operation with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, brought together the Presidents and Speakers of the 46 member states represented in the Council of Europe together with representatives from the national parliaments of Canada, Israel and Mexico as observers. Following his participation at the Tallinn Conference, Mr Speaker, along with other participants, travelled to Helsinki to attend a one-day activity marking the 100th anniversary of the 1906 parliament reform in Finland.

In June, Mr Speaker participated in the Annual Conference of Speakers of European Union Parliaments held in Copenhagen. The focus of the Conference was to provide information and strengthen parliamentary scrutiny in all areas of competence of the European Union. It also promoted studies on joint actions by the Speakers on various topics relating to the role of parliaments and the organisation of parliamentary activities. The Conference officially launched the IPEX website, the tool for Inter Parliamentary EU Information Exchange. The website would be open to all national parliaments in Europe and the European Parliament.

In September, Mr Speaker led a parliamentary delegation comprising Hon Michael Gonzi and Hon George Vella to participate at the Inaugural Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) held in Amman, Jordan. Established under the aegis of the Inter Parliamentary Union, the PAM will give more stature to parliamentary diplomacy in the Mediterranean region and will provide the Mediterranean region with a unique parliamentary forum of its own, unattached to any ongoing process, where the members of the Assembly will be able to draw up and examine their own agenda. One of the main objectives of the inaugural session was the decision on the venue of the headquarters of its executive secretariat. Malta and Croatia had submitted their candidature to host the executive secretariat of the PAM

and at the inaugural session in Amman, the Assembly decided in Malta's favour to host the Executive Secretariat.

In November, Mr Speaker participated at the third meeting of Presidents of Parliament of the Western Mediterranean Dialogue, also known as the Five Plus Five Dialogue, which was held in Rabat, Morocco. The Western Mediterranean Dialogue brought together the national parliaments of France, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain from the northern shore of the Mediterranean, and Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia from the southern shore of the Mediterranean.

In October, Mr Speaker accompanied by Hon Franco Galea and Hon Joe Mizzi, paid an official visit to Cyprus.

In January, the Deputy Speaker, Hon Carmelo Abela, attended the 18th Conference of Commonwealth Speakers held in Kenya which brought together Speakers and Presiding Officers of Commonwealth Parliaments to exchange information and express views on matters of common concern; while in February, he attended the Small European States' Conference of Presidents of Parliaments held in Monaco. This forum brought together the Presidents of Parliaments of small European states to consolidate the existing relations and to study further the common problems of the participating countries.

OTHER VISITS ABROAD

During 2006, the Maltese parliamentary delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), comprising Hon Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando, Hon Robert Arrigo, Hon Joe Debono Grech, Hon Leo Brincat, Hon Helen D'Amato and Hon Joseph Falzon, attended the four-part sessions of the PACE held in Strasbourg and also attended meetings of the 10 committees of the Council of Europe that were hosted by the various member states of the Council of Europe.

In June, Hon Leo Brincat, on behalf of the Council of Europe, went on a fact-finding mission to Beirut, Lebanon, where he met with various Deputies of the country, while Hon Carmelo Abela and Hon Joseph Falzon attended the UEFA Conference *Play Fair with Sport* organised by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe that was held in Strasbourg in September.

During 2006, a number of Members of Parliament had the opportunity to participate, at the invitation of the European Parliament, at various parliamentary meetings held in Brussels:

January	Hon Frederick Azzopardi Hon Joe Mizzi	Joint Meeting on Energy Efficiency with Representatives of the European Parliament and European Union's National Parliaments
January	Hon David Agius Hon George Vella	Parliamentary meeting <i>Parliaments on the road to Lisbon</i>
February	Hon Chris Agius Hon Joseph Falzon	Inter-parliamentary debate on <i>How to raise growth in the euro area?</i>
May	Hon George Vella Hon Clyde Puli	Parliamentary meeting on the Future on Europe
October	Hon Joseph Falzon	Meeting on the role of budgetary control committees in national parliaments in particular with regard to the control of the Community budget
November	Hon Chris Agius	Public hearing on the future single market policy
December	Hon Michael Ascik Hon George Vella	Joint parliamentary meeting on the Future of Europe <i>From Reflection to action</i>

A number of parliamentary meetings, organised by the Austrian Presidency of the European Union, were held in Austria. Hon David Aguis and Hon Gavin Gulia attended the meeting of home affairs committees of the national parliaments of the EU member states held in April. Hon Robert Arrigo and Hon Charles Mangion attended the meeting of financial affairs committees of the national parliaments of the EU member states, held in May, while Hon Joseph Falzon and Hon Joe Mizzi attended the conference for environment committees in the national parliaments of the EU member states, held in June.

Other meetings attended by various Members of Parliament in the course of the year were:

May	Hon Clyde Puli Hon George Vella	XXXV COSAC meetings that brings together the committees of European Union national parliaments dealing with European Affairs as well as representatives of the European Parliament, and the Parliaments of acceding and candidate countries	Vienna, Austria
February	Hon Jason Azzopardi	COSAC Chairpersons' meeting	Vienna, Austria
November	Hon Jason Azzopardi Hon Clyde Puli Hon George Vella	XXXVI COSAC meeting	Helsinki, Finland

COSAC meetings, held biannually, are held in the capital of the country holding the European Union Presidency. COSAC was created in May 1989 where the Speakers of the Parliaments of European Union Mediterranean States agreed to strengthen the role of national parliaments in relation to the Community process by bringing together the committees dealing with European Union affairs.

During the year under review, a number of Members of Parliament also attended meetings organised by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

January	Hon Joseph Abela Hon Franco Galea	Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) UK Branch seminar on restoring faith in the political process	London
February	Hon Franco Galea	Committee on Improving Quality of Life, Exchanges between Civil Societies and Culture	Rome
February	Hon Michael Ascik	Working Group, in the context of EMPA, on Civil Protection and Prevention of Natural and Ecological Disasters in the Euro-Mediterranean Region	Brussels
March	Hon George Vella Hon Franco Galea Hon Joseph Falzon	Plenary session of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA)	Brussels
March	Hon George Vella	Committee on Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights	Brussels
May	Hon Franco Galea Hon Joseph Sammut	CPA 21 st Century Trust Conference "Where is globalisation heading"	Bangalore, India
May	Hon Frederick Azzopardi	18 th CPA Annual Seminar	Grand Turks, Turks and Caicos Islands
May	Hon Frederick Azzopardi	Committee on Economic and Financial Affairs, Social Affairs and Education	Brussels
May	Hon Mario Galea Hon Joe Mizzi	114 th Assembly of the Inter Parliamentary Union	Nairobi, Kenya
June	Hon George Vella	Committee on Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights	Brussels
June	Hon Franco Galea	Working group on the financing of the Assembly and revision on the EMPA's Rules of Procedure	Paris
September	Hon Frederick Azzopardi Hon Joe Mizzi	52 nd CPA Annual Conference and the 26 th CPA Conference for Small Countries	Abuja, Nigeria
October	Hon Helena Dalli	CPA 5 th Session of the Canadian Parliamentary Seminar	Ottawa, Canada
October	Hon Michael Gonzi Hon Joe Mizzi	115 th Assembly of the IPU	Geneva
November	Hon Justyne Caruana	CPA UK Branch seminar on <i>Gender equality – the foundation of democracy and development</i>	Westminster - London
November	Hon Michael Ascik	Committee on Economic and Financial Affairs, Social Affairs and Education	Tunisia

The Inter Parliamentary Union seminar on the role of parliamentary committees in mainstreaming gender and promoting the status of women, held in Geneva in November, was attended by Hon Clyde Puli, Chairman of the Social Affairs Committee. The objectives of the seminar were to identify ways in which the functioning of parliamentary committees dealing with gender equality and the status of women could be enhanced and policy and legislative outcomes bolstered to promote gender equality. It was to provide a forum for chairpersons and members of these committees to share national experiences and debate issues relating to the functioning of these parliamentary bodies, including their mandates, membership and working methods; best practices and recommendations on how parliaments and committees can effectively address gender issues at the national level; lessons learned regarding the development of policy and legislation to promote gender equality and support mainstreaming; and relations between committees and other partners to enhance their work.

The parliamentary delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE attended the various meetings organised during the year. In February, the delegation, comprising Hon Jason Azzopardi, Hon Anglu Farrugia and Hon Frederick Azzopardi, attended the winter meeting in Vienna which included meetings of the Standing Committee and the three General Committees of the Parliamentary Assembly; in April, Hon Frederick Azzopardi and Hon Anglu Farrugia attended the interparliamentary conference *OSCE: Security in Europe and risk management* held in Brussels, while in July, Hon Jason Azzopardi and Hon Gavin Gulia attended the 15th annual session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly held in Brussels.

Hon Joseph Falzon attended the First Part of the 52nd Session and the Second Part of the 53rd Session of the Western European Union Assembly held in Paris in June and December respectively.

In May, Hon Michael Ascjak attended the 12th Mediterranean Dialogue Seminar of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly held in Istanbul, Turkey.

In June, Hon Helena Dalli attended the Second Conference of Women Parliamentarians held in Bulgaria, while Hon Joe Mizzi attended the first Conference of Elected Representatives of the Mediterranean organised by UNESCO, in Rabat, Morocco. The aim of the conference was to forge a stronger partnership with parliamentarians and other elected representatives by finding ways and means of enhancing their co-operation with UNESCO at local, national and regional levels in order to promote the objectives of the organisation in their local and national agenda and legislation in the Mediterranean Region.

In November, Hon Frederick Azzopardi and Hon Anglu Farrugia attended the Fourth Session of the Interparliamentary Conference on Human Rights and Religious Freedom held in Rome, Italy.

In 2006 the Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs visited a number of foreign countries. In March, a delegation comprising Hon Mario de Marco and Hon Josè Herrera and led by the Committee's Chairman Hon Jason Azzopardi, visited the Czech Republic; in April, a delegation led by Hon Jason Azzopardi and comprising Hon Michael Ascjak and Hon Evarist Bartolo paid an official visit to Croatia; in June a delegation led by Hon Jason Azzopardi and comprising Hon Leo Brincat, Hon Josè Herrera and Hon Clyde Puli visited the four Baltic States, that is, Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, while in September, a delegation also led by Hon Jason Azzopardi and comprising Hon Leo Brincat, Hon Mario de Marco, Hon Clyde Puli and Hon George Vella, visited the Russian Federation.

These official visits helped further enhance bilateral co-operation with the national parliaments and the foreign and European affairs counterparts of these foreign countries. The Maltese committee members had the opportunity to observe parliamentary work in foreign countries and gain experience achieved by their counterparts.

HOSPITALITY OFFERED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

In February, the House of Representatives hosted the Regional Secretary of the British Isles and the Mediterranean Region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

In April, the House of Representatives hosted the 37th British Isles and Mediterranean Regional Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. The British Isles and Mediterranean Regional Conference was last held in Malta in 1995. These conferences, unlike plenary conferences of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, focus mainly on matters of regional interest but also touch upon other issues of common concern. The Malta conference tackled a variety of themes ranging from peace and security in Europe and the Mediterranean, ocean management and sustainable development, illegal immigration, the role of national parliaments in international relations and the Commonwealth–European Union relationship. The main theme of the opening plenary of the Conference was entitled *The Positive outcome from CHOGM in the trade area balanced against the disappointment from the Hong Kong talks*. The Conference had extensive input from expert speakers, both local and foreign, including the participation of local Members of Parliament. Through such activities, Malta continues to contribute towards wider visibility of the Commonwealth in international relations. The House of Representatives is determined to work towards the enhancement of parliamentary diplomacy which provides an essential tool towards the promotion and reinforcement of parliamentary democracy.

In July, the House of Representatives hosted a delegation from the Grand Committee of the Parliament of Finland. Besides a meeting with the Foreign and European Affairs Committee, the delegation met with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Justice and Home Affairs to get first-hand information on the various problems that Malta, as a small European Union state, was facing due to irregular immigration.

Also in July, the House of Representatives hosted a delegation from the Malta-France Parliamentary Friendship Group with the aim of enhancing existing parliamentary relations between the two countries.

In September, the European Health Academy held its third annual meeting in the Committee Room of the House of Representatives. The European Health Academy is an expanded platform that was originated in 2002 in the Czech Republic – a platform for open political and expert discussion about health services, their development and reform. The purposes of the EHA is to extend the Czech initiative to the European level, in particular, by inviting politicians from the 10 new member states of the European Union and the three candidate countries (Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia) to share their experiences with healthcare reforms in Europe. Some 30 participants coming from various European countries attended the Malta meeting.

In November, the House of Representatives hosted the autumn meetings of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly which consisted of a conference on *Immigration, Integration and Cross-Cultural Dialogue: The role of the OSCE*, the Mediterranean Forum and the Standing Committee of heads of delegations. Almost 300 delegates from 50 countries of the OSCE and four Mediterranean Partners, including Libya that was participating for the first time, attended the meetings. The meetings served as an opportunity for members of the Parliamentary Assembly to focus on issues of specific interest that affects OSCE states, and to interact with experts on these topical matters.

PUBLICATION

In July, the House of Representatives officially launched the book *Malta's Parliament – An Official History* by Professor Godfrey A Pirotta. The book is a comprehensive compilation of historical facts giving a broad overview of the legislative and constitutional developments that have evolved throughout the years and shaped the history of Malta's Parliament.

SPECIAL EVENTS

In June, as in previous years, Mr Speaker delivered a speech at the Sette Giugno ceremony in Valletta. Once again, Mr Speaker referred to the need for Parliament to work autonomously from the Public Service and that Members of Parliament need better facilities to carry out their duties more efficiently. He also stressed the importance that the public be knowledgeable about Parliament and its workings.

In May, the NSTF Mini European Assembly held its seventeenth final session in the Parliamentary Chamber. This year's theme was *Refugees – co-operation for resettlement and social integration?* The main objective of the NSTF Mini European Assembly is to complement the formal education process of post-secondary and tertiary level students through debate on relevant European institutional and current affairs and training in team-work, research, presentations, public speaking and mutual respect.

In June, some 190 students from 11 different schools participated at this year's session of the EkoSkola Parliament held in the Parliamentary Chamber on 1 June as part of the Environment Week activities. Ekoskola is an international environmental education programme launched in 1994 by the Foundation for Environmental Education and now includes over 12,000 schools distributed around the world. For this session, the children chose to present their concerns about the environmental issues outlined in the State of the Environment Report 2005. In the motion approved by the schoolchildren at this special session, they appealed to the Members of Parliament to safeguard the welfare of the environment in every decision taken in the House to ensure a good quality environment. A number of Ministers and Members of Parliament from both sides of the House took active part in the session.

In November, another special parliamentary session was held in the Parliamentary Chamber to mark Universal Children's Day. The theme chosen for this occasion was *towards a better welfare for children* and seven groups of children presented their thoughts to Parliament on how to ameliorate the welfare of children in specific areas including social inclusion, culture, education, play and leisure, IT, environment and family life. The Minister for the Family and Social Solidarity, together with a number of Members of Parliament from both sides of the House, participated at this session.

In May, the Library at the House of Representatives housed a pictorial and documentary exhibition commemorating the Centenary of the State Duma of the Russian Federation as a legislative body. The exhibition which outlined the historical development and activities of the State Duma in the period 1906-2006, was jointly opened by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Ambassador of the Russian Federation in Malta.

LEGISLATION

During 2006, Parliament enacted 20 acts, 10 of which were principal acts and 10 amendment acts.

A. Primary Legislation and Objectives Behind the Respective Bills

<p>Act II of 2006 – The Budget Measures Implementation Act To implement various budget measures and to implement other administrative measures.</p>
<p>Act III of 2006 – The Rome Convention on Contractual Obligation (Ratification) Act To implement the Ratification of the Accession Convention of 14 April 2005 to the 1980 Rome Convention on the law which applies to contractual obligations and to incorporate the Rome Convention which applies to contractual obligations and to incorporate the Rome Convention into the laws of Malta, and furthermore, in order to establish and facilitate through the European Union Act the legal mechanism which is necessary for the transposing into Maltese legislation of such Conventions as Malta is bound to implement as a Member State of the EU.</p>
<p>Act IV of 2006 – The Human Blood and Transplants Act To transpose Directives 2002/98EC, 2004/33EC and 2004/23EC and more explicitly to ensure that activities relating to the collection and testing of human blood and blood components, whatever their intended purpose, and to their preparation, storage and distribution when intended for transfusion, are undertaken only by blood establishments in Malta which have been designated, authorised, accredited or licensed by the Licensing Authority for that purpose. Furthermore, the Bill laid down the standards of quality and safety for human tissues and cells intended for human applications in order to ensure a high level of protection of human health.</p>
<p>Act V – The Securitisation Act To provide for securitisation and to introduce new rules on securitisation vehicles.</p>
<p>Act X of 2006 – The European Adoption Act The establishment of the legal framework and mechanics to provide for the adoption of the euro as the currency of Malta and for the replacement of the Maltese lira by the euro on such a date as may be established in agreement between the Government of Malta and the Council of the European Union.</p>

<p>Act XI of 2006 – The International Carriage of Goods by Road Act The ratification by Malta of the Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR) signed in Geneva on 19 May 1956 as amended by the CMR Protocol of Geneva signed on 5 July 1978 and its incorporation into the domestic law of Malta.</p>
<p>Act XII of 2006 – The Insurance Intermediaries Act To substitute the Insurance Brokers and Other Intermediaries Act, Cap. 404, to regulate insurance intermediaries activities and to fully implement the provisions of Directive 2002/92/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 December 2002 on insurance mediation. The bill also provided for consequential amendments to various other financial services laws.</p>
<p>Act XVII of 2006 – The Appropriation (2007) Act The application of a sum not exceeding Lm693,045,027 for the service of the financial year 2007 to meet expenditure under the different Votes in the Schedule to the bill.</p>
<p>Act XVIII of 2006 – The Second (2006) Appropriation Act The application of a sum not exceeding Lm50,439,980 for the service of the financial year 2006 to meet expenditure under the Votes specified in the First Schedule to the Bill in addition to Lm667,644,678 appropriated by Act No XV of 2005 and for the appropriation of a further sum of Lm20 for the service of the financial year 2006 to repay an equivalent amount withdrawn from the Contingencies Fund during the financial year 2006 under the Votes specified in the Second Schedule to the bill.</p>
<p>Act XX of 2006 – The Enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights (Regulation) Act The transposition into Maltese law of the provisions of Directive 2004/48/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the enforcement of intellectual property rights.</p>

B. Amendment Acts and Objectives Behind the Respective Bills

<p>Act I of 2006 – The Land Acquisition (Public Purposes) (Amendment) Act To provide for more certain and fairer criteria to determine whether land is a building site or otherwise for the purpose of compensation in the case of expropriation, and to regulate the value of land compulsorily taken possession of prior to 2003.</p>
<p>Act VI of 2006 – The Social Security (Amendment) Act To amend the provisions of the Social Security Act, Cap. 318, relating to the pension in respect of invalidity and to establish and grant the necessary powers to the Benefit Fraud and Investigation Directorate.</p>
<p>Act VII of 2006 – The Employment and Training Services (Amendment) Act To provide for a legal basis for, and the facilitation of, re-deployment exercises within the public sector which may become necessary in view of the need to restructure or reorganise bodies corporate or companies pertaining to the sector.</p>
<p>Act VIII of 2006 – The Excise Duty (Amendment) Act To provide for adjustments in the excise duty rates of certain energy products.</p>
<p>Act IX of 2006 – The European Convention (Amendment) Act To empower the Minister for Justice to implement as soon as possible, any judgment of the Constitutional Court of Malta or of the European Court of Human Rights which affects the validity of a law in Malta.</p>
<p>Act XIII of 2006 – The Education (Amendment) Act To provide for two complementary yet distinct Directorates instead of the Education Division and to better distinguish the regulatory and operative functions of the State in the education sector, so as to create the framework for the reorganisation of the State schools into Colleges, to establish the Council for the Teaching Profession, to establish a National Commission for Higher Education, to incorporate the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology in the Education Act, and to provide for other matters ancillary thereto or connected therewith.</p>
<p>Act XIV of 2006 – The Code of Organisation and Civil Procedure (Amendment) Act To reform the operative way of executive and precautionary warrants in Court and to introduce novel methods and measures in order to have the execution of judgments and the protection of the rights of the parties in the judicial process better protected and so as to introduce simpler instruments and means which are more efficient and efficacious.</p>
<p>Act XV of 2006 – The Consumer Protection Laws (Amendment) Act To provide for enforcement measures in various laws in order to implement Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 October 2004 on co-operation between national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws. The bill further provided for an alteration of the Minister responsible for the administration of two related Acts.</p>
<p>Act XVI of 2006 – The Criminal Code (Amendment) Act To implement measures to ensure a better and more expeditious administration of justice as outlined in the January 2005 Government White Paper, such as introducing restrictions to the immediate granting of bail to repeat offenders, the payment in criminal proceedings of judicial costs to the State and of damages to the crime victim, the removal of the mandatory requirement of corroboration of the evidence of an accomplice, the elimination of the punishment of imprisonment in criminal libel actions under the Press Act and the removal of mandatory imprisonment in cases of sharing in drug offences.</p>

Act XIX of 2006 – The Social Security (Amendment) (No. 2) Act

To amend the provisions of the Social Security Act, Cap. 318, relating to the pension in respect of retirement and to make consequential amendments.

RICHARD J CAUCHI
Clerk of the House

Electoral Office

RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS FOR THE ISSUE OF IDENTITY CARDS

The Commissioner of Police is the authorised officer designated to issue the Identity Card; however, the Electoral Office deals directly with it, administers the whole process and is responsible for its maintenance. The Electoral Office receives applications for the issue of ID cards, registers the changes resulting from transfer of residence or change of status or other particulars and prints the computerised ID cards. The whole process for each individual takes only a few minutes: the computer system prints the plastic ID card with the required security features conforming to international standards and this is given to the applicant on the spot. Personnel from the Electoral Office also go to hospitals, institutions for old-age people and in private residences where the sick and aged persons residing there applied for the issue or renewal of their ID card.

It should be pointed out that as from 1 May 2004, the Maltese ID card has been accepted as a travel document in all EU member states. In December 2004 the Council of the European Union issued regulations regarding additional security features including biometrics in travel documents. Naturally, the Maltese ID card had to conform to these regulations and from discussions held at local and international level it resulted that the ID card had necessarily to undergo significant changes in the near future. An ID card renewal exercise was scheduled to start at the beginning of 2006; however, a legal notice was published in January whereby expired ID cards were to remain valid up to 31 December 2006. This measure avoided waste of resources and duplication of work until the competent authorities took the appropriate decisions on the matter.

COMPILATION AND PUBLICATION OF THE ELECTORAL REGISTERS

The information collected in connection with the ID card also serves as the basis for the compilation of the Electoral Registers. Applications for registration as voters and for transfer of residence were received daily at the Electoral Office. These were verified against records held at this Office, the Public Registry, the Department for Citizenship and Expatriate Affairs and at any other appropriate department. The applications were processed and included in the Electoral Registers published in April and October, provided that the applicants had the requisite qualifications in terms of the provisions of the Constitution of Malta. Confirmation from the competent authorities was obtained prior to deleting from the Electoral Registers those persons reported to be deceased, of unsound mind, or sentenced to more than one year imprisonment. Investigations in conjunction with police officers were also carried out regarding emigrated persons prior to their deletion from the Electoral Registers. At the end of each month, a list showing the additions, changes and deletions to the Electoral Registers was given to the delegates of the political parties as laid down in Article 28 of the General Elections Act, 1991, and Regulation 7 (Third Schedule) of the Local Councils Act, 1993.

When Malta became a member of the European Union, nationals of other member states who resided in Malta and had the necessary qualifications became eligible to vote in elections for local councils and elections for members of the European Parliament. Consequently, a separate register was also compiled to include the names of persons eligible to vote in these elections according to the European Parliament Act approved by the House of Representatives.

UPDATING OF INFORMATION

The information held at the Electoral Office is kept regularly updated. This process comprises the inclusion of new voters, the transfer of voters from one locality to another and the deletion of deceased persons, emigrants and other voters who lose their qualifications according to law. The Electoral Office also updates regularly the Identity Card database that contains information on all persons aged from 14 years upwards who were issued with an ID card and this process includes any changes due to door re-numbering and new street names. The information is then copied at regular intervals to the Director of Civil Registration who maintains the Government Common Database that is accessed by all government departments on a daily basis. During the year inspections were carried out to verify the correct address of persons and to ensure that voters were included under the correct street names, localities and electoral divisions.

The computer system at the Electoral Office is built on a relational database and the particulars of voters and their digitised images both form an integral part of the system. All textual and image data is checked before being computerised as this is used for the compilation and updating of electoral registers, printing of identity cards, voting documents, lists of persons entitled to vote, and other documentation as well as for all electoral processes. Regular consolidation exercises are carried out to ensure that the data is correct.

HOLDING OF ELECTIONS

The main task of the Electoral Office during 2006 was the holding of elections in 23 local councils on 11 March. Preparations for these elections began in late 2005 and personnel from other departments were deployed at various stages to assist the staff of the Electoral Office. The Mediterranean Conference Centre was again used as a counting hall, which meant a radical change to the counting hall layout and substantial work and transport were needed during the week before elections to make the Centre fully functional as a counting complex. Afterwards, the whole set-up had to be dismantled and transported back to the stores at Ta' Qali and the whole operation was carried out at a substantial cost. 219 polling booths were set up in government schools and other buildings and instruction booklets, forms and other publications used during elections were reviewed and printed again where necessary. The Electoral Commission received nominations from 282 prospective candidates, as well as 1,927 applications for Assistant Commissioners to supervise the poll and 1,835 applications for Counting Staff to count the votes. After these elections were over, substantial ancillary work still had to be done including dismantling of polling booths, payment to personnel who were assigned tasks in the electoral process, payment to suppliers for services rendered during elections, compilation of statistical information, reports and other work.

During the year, 11 casual elections were held in various local councils to fill vacancies created after the resignation of Councillors. This Office also organised an election for members of the Local Councils Association and an election for a representative on the Board of the Chamber of Architects.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION

The Electoral Commission that conducted the elections for local councils was appointed on 29 August 2003 for a period of three years; the same Commissioners were re-appointed on 29 August 2006 for a further period of three years. A new Chairman was appointed in January and a new Commissioner was appointed in December instead of another Commissioner who resigned before being appointed Judge at the Law Courts. During the year under review the Commission met regularly each week and more frequently during election periods, discussed matters covering different topics, and held meetings with the delegates of political parties and representatives of organisations and public institutions. The Commission took decisions on the registration and deletion of voters, on matters related to the compilation of the Electoral Registers and on the conduct of the elections. Members of the Commission participated in seminars and conferences held abroad where the main themes of discussions were electoral processes and related issues.

OTHER MATTERS

The Electoral Office has a Section in Gozo where facilities are provided for the issue and renewal of ID cards and for any other information requested by persons residing there. This Section also serves as the focal point in Gozo whenever elections are held there.

During the middle part of the year, the counting complex at Ta' Qali was completely dismantled and knocked down to make the area available for other purposes. Consequently, all the stores, furniture and equipment there had to be transferred to an alternative site and the Electoral Office was given storage space at Wied il-Kbir, Qormi. The transfer operation, though voluminous, was ably organised and supervised by the staff of the Electoral Office and carried out within a strict time frame.

A previous study showed that many households in Malta and Gozo had either a house name only or a wrong house number and this situation created problems in identifying correctly the address of a person. The Electoral Office in conjunction with the Police and the Works Division of the Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure continued with an exercise whereby every door in Malta and Gozo would eventually be assigned an official door number. This long-term exercise which began in 1998 is expected to affect over 60,000 households. During 2006 about 100 streets in various localities were either re-named or given an official name and about 400 households were either assigned a door number or re-numbered. Persons residing in those households were then required to change their ID card to include corrections and changes resulting from this exercise.

During the year, female employees took an active participatory role in the day-to-day running of the Electoral Office and currently, they out-number their male colleagues in most sections within the Office. They were assigned various major exercises throughout the year, supervised and participated in electoral processes and attended board meetings and court sittings as necessary. Statistics and information on electoral processes continued to be compiled and published on a gender basis. The satisfactory outcome in all these cases confirms that this trend should be continued in the future.

Staff from the Electoral Office participated in seminars held locally and abroad, attended courses organised by the Staff Development Organisation of the Office of the Prime Minister and MITTS Ltd, and were often appointed on various boards. They were also asked to give advice and support to other departments, particularly by printing the Kartanzjan card on a regular basis for the Department for the Elderly and Community Care and by providing updated information to the Police and to the Department for Local Government.

The Electoral Office always took initiatives to provide a good service to the public and the Service Quality Charter that was launched in November 2004 provided a basis for an efficient customer service. The services provided by the Electoral Office were given with courtesy, within defined time frames, and in an efficient manner. Towards the end of 2006, discussions were held to introduce new opening hours at the Electoral Office. The outcome of the discussions was positive and the new opening hours shall provide an even better and more convenient service to the public. During the year the Electoral Office regularly updated its own website with relevant information and this proved very useful particularly during the Local Councils elections.

EDWARD R GATT

Chief Electoral Commissioner

Office of the Prime Minister

Management and Personnel Office

INTRODUCTION

During 2006 the Management and Personnel Office continued to build upon the changes undertaken in the previous year. Redeployment across the Public Service and wider Public Sector continued to ensure the optimum use of human resources. Furthermore, other initiatives related to the overall function of human resources were taken up.

The following report for 2006 provides a detailed picture of the progress registered by the Management and Personnel Office and at the same time outlines the functions and activities carried out by the four directorates constituting the MPO, which are:

- Department of Policy and Planning
- Department of Employee Relations
- Department of Resourcing, Public Service
- Department of Resourcing, Public Sector.

DEPARTMENT OF POLICY AND PLANNING

The functions of the Department of Policy and Planning for the year under review included the following:

- offering support to line departments using the Human Resource Information Management System (HRIMS) until a new HR system is in place;
- continuing with the implementation of the Performance Management Programme (PMP) to improve employee performance against approved output and pre-determined quality standards, and exploring new means of enhancing the Programme;
- preparatory work connected with the testing and implementation of the Public Service Recruitment Portal;
- improving the competence of Human Resource Management through regular fora for Directors Corporate Services/Directors Finance & Administration and HR Managers, and the organisation of other training activities in HR Management;
- providing continuous support to line departments on matters concerning organisational structure, staff complementing, and other HR functions;
- preparatory work for the implementation of a new HR and Pensions System to replace the current systems;
- monitoring of mechanisms for the recruitment of public officers with the EU Commission and other EU institutions.
- action to inform public officers and the general public about recruitment opportunities within the EU institutions and agencies.

CLASSIFICATION & RE-GRADING

An Addendum to the Agreement on the Classification, Regrading and Assimilation of the Customs Class was signed on 5 April 2006. This Addendum specifies the method of examination for the selection of Senior Customs Assistants to fill vacancies in the grade of Customs Officer on a once-only basis.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

In January the Department of Policy and Planning initiated its annual PMP compliance audits for the year 2006. Audits covered various units and departments in all ministries.

A PMP quality audit for General Service Grades within the Ministry for Investment, Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) was carried out in 2006. Despite the fact that in general the documents were well drawn up, there was excessive use of higher ratings. A report was prepared for the HR Manager to highlight this and other minor inaccuracies found during this audit.

PMP documents submitted by the Resourcing Department were also regularly reviewed for their quality content. Documents assessed during 2006 were in respect of 520 General Service employees in line for promotion and progression to higher grades and scales. Not less than 166 supervisors were informed of weaknesses found in the PMP documents they were responsible for, and improvements were solicited. This represented a total of 31.3% out of the total PMPs reviewed by the Department, which unfortunately means that there was an increase in erroneous PMPs over last year's 22.9%.

During the latter part of the year, this Office held discussions with HR Managers (through the Human Resource Managers' Forum) in order to improve the Performance Management Programme. The suggested improvements are being incorporated into a revised document which should be more user-friendly and curb certain abuses that have crept in over time. Concurrently a new PMP compliance audit system involving the HR Managers is being put in place.

FORA FOR DIRECTORS (CORPORATE SERVICES) / DIRECTORS (FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION) AND HR MANAGERS

The Department of Policy and Planning continued to manage monthly fora for Directors responsible for Corporate Services and Finance & Administration. Five fora were organised discussing topics of common interest. The topics discussed are listed hereunder:

- The new guidelines and procedures regarding cases of sexual harassment in the Public Service
- Performance Planning for 2006
- Amendments to the current Disciplinary Regulations
- UK-Malta Bilateral Exchange Scheme
- Remuneration payable to employees on contract.

Ten fora for HR Managers were organised during 2006. Topics covered were as follows:

- Topics related to the new Collective Agreement
- Treasury Pensions
- Amendments to the current Disciplinary Regulations
- UK-Malta Bilateral Exchange Scheme
- Injury on duty
- Functions of the new Recruitment Portal for the Public Service
- Improving the Performance Management Programme – Session 1
- Improving the Performance Management Programme – Session 2
- Changes in ETC Procedures
- Training on the new Recruitment Portal for the Public Service.

HUMAN RESOURCE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (HRIMS)

Following the signing of the Collective Agreement for Public Service employees for the years 2005 – 2010, vacation leave started to be calculated in hours instead of days. This necessitated major changes to the Vacation Leave module of HRIMS. After User Acceptance Testing (UAT) at MITTS, the module was rolled out to all HRIMS users in the various ministries. A report was also made available by this

Department to all sites using HRIMS, showing sick leave details and totals. This report enables line departments using the system to reply to any queries raised by MPO for better sick leave management.

A comprehensive exercise is being undertaken by this Department to key-in the grade history of all public service employees into HRIMS. This is being done so that in the near future all employee record cards resident at MPO will be replaced by computerised records in HRIMS.

The system was installed on the PCs of nine new users at the Personnel Section of the Law Courts at their own request. The system had been installed there earlier, but was little used. HRIMS will now help Law Courts consolidate their absence records and their reporting capabilities.

Several high-level meetings were held to establish the way forward for the new HR/Payroll system for the Public Service. The main topic in these meetings was whether to go for an open tender for the purchase of the new system or for a single negotiated approach. So far, no decision has been made.

THE MPO WEBSITE

Analyses of website statistics carried out for 2006 indicate that mpo.gov.mt was viewed 37,165 times, of which 15,316 were unique visitors, 8,783 persons were first-time visitors, while 13,066 were repeat visitors. 74% of users were local, 12% were surfers from Belgium; 13% were from the US and 1% from Hungary. The most popular pages appear to be (according to the largest number of pageloads) as follows:

www.mpo.gov.mt/

www.mpo.gov.mt/employeerelations.html

www.mpo.gov.mt/resourcing.html

www.mpo.gov.mt/policyandplanning.html

Visit length statistics show that 7.5% of visits lasted five minutes to an hour, while 14.8% of visits lasted more than one hour. The remaining percentage of surfers spent less than five minutes on the website.

80 MPO circulars were published on the site's Internal Calls page during this year, while 596 calls for vacancies in EU agencies were posted on the page for EU Calls for Applications.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Director, Policy and Planning participated in HR Working Group meetings which were held in Vienna on 6 and 7 February 2006 and Brussels on 21 April 2006. The final report with the Working Group's conclusions was presented to the Directors General during their meeting in May 2006.

EU MATTERS

During the year, 155 applications for recruitment with the EU Commission, EU institutions or EU agencies were issued as a Press Release and published in the Government Gazette. The Notices were also posted on the MPO website and on the Intranet. These calls referred to a total of 596 posts or positions. In the meantime, various queries from the general public on EU recruitment were handled during the same period.

The number of Technical Attachés in Brussels representing line ministries in various core institutions is currently 19. The Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs are in the process of selecting a Technical Attaché (Schengen and Asylum Affairs) while the Ministry of Finance have already selected a Technical Attaché (Customs) who is due to start in February 2007.

There are currently nine Seconded National Experts (SNEs) attached to EU institutions or agencies. Five of these SNEs are with DG Translation. The one with DG Agriculture who started his secondment as from 1 January 2004 has had his secondment extended for a further period up to end December 2007. Another

SNE serving with DG ECFIN from the Ministry of Finance as from 1 November 2005 is still in place. The SNE serving in Warsaw with FRONTEX with effect from 28 December 2005 is still in place. FRONTEX is an agency of the EU for the management of operational co-operation at the external borders of member states of the European Union.

OTHER MATTERS/ACTIVITIES

Director, Policy and Planning, was appointed on a committee set up by the Principal Permanent Secretary to assess the implications of applying the provisions emanating from the Employment and Industrial Relations Act to the Public Service.

This Department was actively involved in discussions on the new Recruitment Portal for the Public Service. This project is an initiative of the Department of Resourcing, in conjunction with the MIIT. The Portal is intended to handle electronically the complete recruitment process from the person's application for a post to the printing of the letter of appointment. The general public and public service employees will have the facility of applying online for any call for applications and MPO circulars, and viewing the status of their application from a PC with an internet connection.

The necessary text, both in Maltese and English, was passed on to the contractor and inserted into the various pages of the Portal. The system was then intensively tested both by MITTS personnel and by this Department. HR Managers were briefed and given training during their monthly fora to make them more aware of the system's functionalities. Intensive hands-on training will follow before the Portal goes live and is launched to the general public.

Mr Simon Sammut, Director, Policy and Planning, was appointed Director General (Veterinary Affairs and Fisheries) in the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment with effect from 8 June 2006.

EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

Appendices A to D show:

- A Recruitment in the Public Service 1996 – 2006;
Distribution of Public Service employees by Category and Gender as on 31 December 2006;
- B Average age by Grade and Gender in the General Service Class as on 31 December 2006;
Causes of termination of employment from the Public Service during 2006;
- C Public Service workforce as at end December 2005 and end December 2006;
- D PMP compliance by Ministry for General Service Grades during 2006.

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

The prime objective of the Employee Relations Department (ERD) is to advise and assist ministries and line departments in the development of effective management of the HR function, especially with regard to employee relations. In line with this objective, the Employee Relations Department proposed and implemented the following initiatives.

PUBLIC SERVICE MANAGEMENT CODE (PSMC)

The 6th edition of the Public Service Management Code was published both in paper and electronic format. This edition incorporated all the regulations and policies in the sphere of employee relations and resourcing. Consonant with Government's environmental priorities, the paper edition of the PSMC was published on recycled paper and in loose form to facilitate updating and to economise on paper.

GENDER EQUALITY AND INCLUSIVITY

In order to promote gender equality and inclusivity, a brochure was published on the family-friendly measures in the Public Service. This brochure also indicated that, according to the 2007 budget speech, these measures are applicable to employees in the public sector. The brochure, which was co-financed by the EU under the European Social Funds 2004-2006, was distributed to all employees in the public service and public sector.

A report was drawn up by the Employee Relations Department on the family-friendly measures availed of by public officers. This report was based on a service-wide survey which the Department had carried out to establish the number of public officers who, on 1 December 2005, were availing themselves of responsibility leave, parental leave, career break and reduced hours. From the findings of this survey, it emerged that officers are making more use of the family-friendly measures and that even male officers are making use of these measures, although to a much lower extent than females. The findings also showed that the aim of retaining experienced employees in employment is being facilitated by these measures.

Another report was drawn up for the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality between Men and Women about the progress made on certain initiatives by the Public Service to further promote gender mainstreaming and family-friendly measures. This report tackled various issues amongst which, (i) flexible hours; (ii) advancement opportunities for persons on reduced hours; (iii) replacement of staff on reduced hours; (iv) means to encourage use of parental leave by fathers; (v) elimination of discrimination between public service and non-public service employees; (vi) gender mainstreaming and equality committees; and (viii) monitoring of gender considerations in PMPs of senior public service employees.

An OPM Circular was issued drawing the attention of Heads of Department that, in line with Government's policy, all official government forms should be standardised for both men and women and that, when discriminatory wording is essential because of some legal requirement, an explanatory note should be added.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The Employee Relations Department published a document entitled *The Public Service: Guidelines on what constitutes sexual harassment and the procedures to be followed in such cases*. Through this document, the Public Service intends to convey the message that it strives to promote a dignified working environment and a harmonious relationship amongst all public officers, irrespective of their gender. This document also shows that the Public Service does not tolerate any form of sexual harassment and that these cases are regarded as serious disciplinary cases leading to dismissal over and above any criminal action which may be applicable.

The procedures outlined in this document are intended to serve as guidelines for both Heads of Department and public officers on how sexual harassment cases should be tackled in a fair, consistent and expeditious manner while ensuring standards of good practice, natural justice and utmost confidentiality.

DISCIPLINE

The 1999 Disciplinary Regulations were amended by means of a Legal Notice. A new concept which these amendments introduced is that an officer against whom an alleged serious offence is committed may lodge a formal complaint to his Head of Department within six months from the date when the alleged offence is committed. The Head of Department should then conduct a preliminary investigation within a given time frame before taking any disciplinary action. The Schedule of Offences and Penalties was also amended to include as serious offences, the offences 'sexual harassment', 'misuse of electronic equipment' and 'victimisation of witness or an officer/person lodging a report'. A number of rulings given by the PSC on the interpretation of certain provisions of the Disciplinary Regulations were also included in the legal notice.

An audit on the application of the Disciplinary Regulations by line departments during 2005 was carried out on the basis of the half-yearly returns on discipline submitted by line departments. The results were collated in a report entitled *Survey and report on disciplinary cases in the Public Service for the year 2005*. This report, apart from giving a statistical digest of disciplinary cases, identifies trends and also compares the 2005 figures with the 2004 figures.

The Employee Relations Department also continued to give support to line departments in the management of disciplinary cases. This was done in the following ways:

- issued directives and advice to line departments on the interpretation, management and processing of disciplinary cases; and
- organised a seminar for HR Managers and disciplinary officers during which presentations were made on (i) the findings of the report for 2005 on discipline; (ii) the data protection procedures and retention policy as regards discipline files and documents; (iii) the Employee Assistance Programme; (iv) the new measures to improve the supervision of the industrial workforce; and (v) the manual on the management of disciplinary cases.
- regularly monitored the application of the Disciplinary Regulations in line departments and the necessary corrective action was taken whenever necessary.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS (NGOs)

The policy on the release of public officers to work with NGOs was re-launched by means of a notice in the Government Gazette which invited interested NGOs to request the release of public officers, including the renewal of the release of public officers already working with them. To be eligible, NGOs must be established exclusively to fulfil a social or charitable purpose as defined by the Trusts and Trustees Act. The notice required that the applications submitted by NGOs should include a statement setting out the scope of the organisation, a copy of its statute and a proposal detailing a clear project to which the requested officer would be assigned. NGOs were also required to define the benefits originating from the project and the target deadlines for its completion.

Following the publication of the notice, a number of NGOs have requested the release of public officers to work with them. These applications were examined according to established criteria. Twelve public officers were released for one year on paid leave to 11 different NGOs while five other officers were released for one year on unpaid leave on grounds of public policy to three different NGOs.

PENSION RIGHTS

In conjunction with the Ministry of Finance, the relevant amendments to the Pensions Ordinance were issued in order to sanction by law the policies that the award of a Treasury pension is always subject to creditable performance and that an officer holding a Headship Position should, at least, serve for 12 months in such a position immediately before retirement to be considered as having performed creditably.

RECRUITMENT OPPORTUNITIES WITH EU INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES

New terms and conditions were issued upon which special unpaid leave may be granted to officers who are selected for employment with an EU institution. This type of leave may now be granted either on grounds of public policy or otherwise, however in both instances it is subject to the exigencies of the service.

Officers who had been previously granted special unpaid leave on grounds of public policy to work in the linguistic field with EU institutions have been exempted from the provisions of the new norms and conditions, on a personal basis. When the current term of unpaid leave of these officers expires, they will be eligible for a further period of unpaid leave not on grounds of public policy, not to exceed a total of three years unpaid leave in all.

BETTER REGULATION UNIT (BRU)

In order to extend support to the Better Regulation Unit, it was approved that a public officer be released for a period of two years on paid leave, to work with the General Retailers and Traders Union (GRTU). This officer will be the contact person between the GRTU and BRU.

SURVEYS

In order to plan new policies and also furnish information on different aspects of HR Management, the following two surveys were carried out:

- the number of days of sick leave availed of in the Public Service in 2005;
- the number of public officers who on 1 December 2005 were availing themselves of responsibility leave, parental leave, career break and reduced hours.

OTHER MEASURES

During the period under review the following measures were introduced:

- public officers who are due to retire or resign from the Public Service will have their vacation leave entitlement calculated on a *pro-rata* basis for the service given during that particular calendar year;
- when pre-retirement leave falls early in the year making it impossible to utilise vacation leave, such leave may be pre-dated by the number of days equivalent to the *pro-rata* vacation leave entitlement, calculated by a mathematical formula based on the date of retirement;
- new parameters for the calculation of the entitlement of the pre-retirement leave of non-pensionable public officers who, prior to 1 January 1999, were entitled to only 15 days sick leave on full pay every calendar year. For periods of service before 1 January 1999, the qualification requirement will now be computed as 50% of their total sick leave entitlement on full pay whereas for periods after 1 January 1999, the requirement of an average of 15 days of unutilised sick leave will continue to apply;
- when public officers who have permission to perform private work are transferred, promoted or progress to a higher grade they are required to make a fresh request for permission to perform private work;
- public officers who are assigned duties as Heads of government-appointed authorities and entities are substantively appointed as officers in Grade 4 after they serve for 6 years in the executive position. On the eventual termination of their appointment with the authority or entity, the officers who had a substantive appointment on Scale 5 or below, will on returning to the Public Service, be assigned a management position with the grade that they hold. Those officers who do not hold a general service grade, will be given the opportunity to remain in their departmental grade; and
- extended the policy for work on reduced hours with the option to work on a 25-hour time-table, besides the already operative 20 or 30-hour option.

STATISTICS

Cases handled by Employee Relations Dept	
Conditions of Service	1,525
Discipline & Staff Welfare	518
Treasury Pensions	127
Total	2,170

Disciplinary cases initiated under the 1999 Disciplinary Regulations by line departments	
Description of Punishments	No
Regulation 18 Admonishment	140
Regulation 19 Summary Warning	309
Regulation 20 Minor	130
Regulation 20 Serious	122
Total	701

Cases of conditions of service considered	
Type of Cases	No
Unpaid Leave	350
New/Review of Allowances	40
Cultural Leave	32
Medical Boards	252
Re-instatements/Re-employment	10
Union Activities	302
Deputising allowance	47
Qualification Allowance	49
Boards and Committees	17
Release of officers to NGOs	37
Gender Issues	76
Release of officers to work with EU institutions	58
Others	255
Total	1,525

DEPARTMENT OF RESOURCING (PUBLIC SERVICE)

INTRODUCTION

During 2006, various initiatives were undertaken by the Department of Resourcing (Public Service) in enhancing the competence of the Public Service to deal with specific issues of public administration as well as addressing proactively the challenges ahead: the rigorous Senior Principals selection exercise was held to strengthen the middle-management across-the-board complemented with an examination for promotion to the Officer-in-charge Minor Staff grade; and contractual positions of a definite nature were created and filled (i) to facilitate the management of EU Funds (PPCD, IAID, EUPU, Contracts Division, EU Affairs/ Programme Implementation/Policy Development Directorates within line ministries) and (ii) to constitute *loci* of responsibility for the performance of specific tasks within vital sectors (Health Division to cope with the opening of a state-of-the-art hospital and REFCOM to deal with increased applications from persons seeking asylum).

Other important projects undertaken in the period under review include the redeployment of Gozitan-domiciled officers to the Ministry for Gozo on back-office duties; introduction of arrangements for Domestic Staff at the President's Office by way of entitlement to an appropriate equivalent grade in the Public Service; and a solution was found to the lingering problem of the payment of arrear NI contributions on behalf of expatriate medical specialists still required at the Health Division.

The systems analysis for the creation of a Public Sector Recruitment Portal was intensified to facilitate front-end inception by February 2007. The Portal will provide the public with the service of online application for public service posts/positions and of viewing public sector vacancies from the comfort of one's home.

SECTORAL ANALYSIS – PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES

Rationalisation of Human Resources

The Department of Resourcing (Public Service), in conjunction with the Ministry of Finance, continued to promote and implement the rationalisation and cost-effective utilisation of human resources with regard to recruitment in ministries/departments in line with standing OPM/Finance directives.

Online Selection Process and Public Service Careers Portal

During the first half of the year, this Department spearheaded a number of meetings with other departments/units within MPO during which a systems analysis submitted by the company contracted to design the recruitment portal was evaluated. This report was the result of a series of intensive meetings with the contractor during which the recruitment processes were explained in detail in order to ensure that the various selection processes are faithfully represented in the upcoming portal. The first phase of the project, which will enable interested persons to apply for calls for applications in the Public Service, as well as view calls for the wider public sector online, is now nearing launch.

Recruitment relating to EU Fund Management and other National Issues

The Department of Resourcing (Public Service) facilitated the creation of various positions relating to EU Funds Management. Examples include the creation of the positions of EU Fund Managers in the Public Service, Senior Managers (Monitoring Authority) at the Planning and Priorities Co-ordination Division, Procurement Managers in the Contracts Division and Payment Co-ordination Officers at the Treasury. In the former case, the issue of the call and receipt of applications were centrally operated by the Department. It was also decided that centrally-operated public calls for applications be issued for the engagement of EU Fund Officers and EU Fund Support Officers.

This Department also facilitated the creation of positions and vacancies related to other matters of national importance such as irregular immigration, through the positions of Case Officer and Case Worker at Refcom and the engagement of Casual Detention Officers from amongst retired soldiers and police, and the migration of services between St Luke's and Mater Dei Hospitals.

Comparability of Qualifications

With a view to hastening selection processes, a new provision started to be included in relevant calls for applications, whereby it now became the responsibility of applicants in possession of qualifications awarded by foreign universities and tertiary education institutions to furnish the selection board with written proof from the Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre (MQRIC), or the designated authority in case of warrants, that their qualification is mutually recognised.

Revision of Contractual Terms and Conditions of Expatriate Medical Officers

Following extensive discussions involving this Office, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Health, Elderly and Community Care (MHEC) and the Ministry for Family and Social Solidarity (MFSS), issues relating to the regularisation of National Insurance contributions and pension entitlements vis-à-vis expatriate medical specialists employed with the Health Division pre-November 2004 have been settled. Furthermore, agreement between MPO and MHEC was also reached in order to align the relevant contracts as much as possible with the specimen agreements featuring in Appendix XXIV of Chapter 1 of the PSMC. Consultations continue amongst all three stakeholders with a view to reaching consensus with the expatriate specialists themselves.

The Effects of EU Directives on Employment in the Public Service and wider Public Sector

This Department participated in a committee chaired by Director (Industrial and Employment Relations) to examine the effects of various EU directives on employment in the Public Service and wider Public Sector.

In the meanwhile, this Department continued to participate in, and provide data for, discussions on the application of Directive 1999/70/EC for the Public Service.

Staff in Ministers/Parliamentary Secretaries' Private Secretariats

Arrangements were formalised entitling Private Secretariat personnel recruited from outside the core Public Service and wider Public Sector to 14 weeks maternity leave.

Monte di Pietà Grades

Following submissions by the Ministry of Finance, this Department recommended that paragraph 1.2.2 of the pertinent Classification Agreement on the Monte di Pietà grades be amended to enable the relevant Department to sponsor Trainee Consuls to follow local courses depending on availability and without lowering standards.

Deputy Director at the Civil Protection Department

Following approval by the Principal Permanent Secretary, this Department verified a request by MJHA for the issue of a public call for the filling of the vacancy in the newly-created grade of Deputy Director.

Clarifying Distinction between Contracts for Service and Contracts of Employment

OPM Circular No 20/2006 was issued to clarify the above-captioned distinction and to issue instructions that henceforth contracts for service are to be entered into by line ministries at the discretion of the Permanent Secretary concerned without reference to OPM but within standing financial directives, and contracts of employment are only entered into following OPM approval.

Employment of Officers within the Careworking Stream at MFSS with FSWS

This Department has participated actively with the stakeholders involved – MFSS, Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS) and the Union Haddiema Magħqudin – with a view to finding a practical way of deploying *en bloc* the said officers from the Adult Training Centres to the FSWS within approved parameters.

Questionnaire on the Bologna Process

A questionnaire originating from the EU on the Bologna process was compiled in consultation with Director, MQRIC.

Contract of Domestic Staff at the President's Office

The pro-forma specimen contract of Domestic Staff at the President's Office was amended, on the approval of the Public Service Commission (PSC), to include a proviso entitling staff to an appropriate equivalent grade on completion of four years satisfactory service.

Reporting Requirements – Attainment of Progressions by Incumbents in Position

MPO Circular No 140/06 was issued on 2 August 2006 instructing DCSs to use the reporting requirements, as stipulated in Section 1.3.11 of the PSMC, in the case of General Service Officers whenever officers occupying contractual positions become entitled to the attainment of progressions on the basis of creditable performance within the currency of the contract.

PSMC Update

Amendments and approved policies were prepared for insertion in a revised edition of the PSMC (e.g. policies regulating seniority lists of Gozitan employees working in Malta; pregnant Gozitan officers to be temporarily transferred to Gozo).

Technical Attachés at the PREU

A letter-circular to DCSs on the career advancement of Technical Attachés at the PREU was issued. The terms and conditions included in calls for application for these positions were also reviewed in conjunction with the Permanent Representation to the EU.

Officers Holding a Substantive Grade Selected for a Part-time Position within the Service

It has been held that public officers holding a substantive grade who are selected to fill positions on a part-time basis during normal office hours are allowed to retain their substantive appointment concurrently with their new part-time position. This norm is in tune with current policy concerning public officers holding a substantive grade who, at the same time, occupy a full-time contractual position.

Proposals in respect of Officers Selected to fill Assistant Director Positions

Following further in-depth consultations, change proposals for existing incumbents and future appointees were fine-tuned and a fresh policy redrafted for the consideration of the PSC. The advice of the Attorney General has been sought on whether the current substantive grade of Officer in grade 5 should be held in case of abandonment of present incumbents devoid of five years in the position of Assistant Director. Attorney General's advice is awaited.

Policy Regarding Top Management Positions Performing Duties in Government-appointed Authorities and Entities

A policy was originated whereby public officers, assigned to executive positions in the top management of government-appointed authorities and entities, be substantively appointed Officer in Grade 4 after having served for six years in the executive position. The implementation of this policy has already affected three public officers assigned duties in the public sector.

Selection Exercise for Senior Principals

The selection process started on 9 January 2006 with 202 candidates sitting for Part I (Discussion and Written Component) and 200 for Part II (Individual Interview), and ended on 24 March. The 93 successful candidates were appointed to the grade of Senior Principal in three batches. The first 50 were appointed on 21 June 2006, the next 25 on 23 August and the last batch of 18 were appointed on 21 December. Eighteen applicants appealed to the Prime Minister and their petitions were forwarded to the PSC who directed that, in all cases, there were no reasons for a change of results. The appointees were deployed according to their qualifications and expertise.

Competitive Examination for Officers-in-Charge Minor Staff

Following the PSC's approval for the issue of the call for applications, 26 Senior Messengers applied to sit for the examination held on 21 and 22 June 2006. In Part I of the examination, 20 applicants were successful to proceed to Part II. The Interviewing Board held two sessions on 18 and 19 September. The final result, published on 5 October 2006, shows that 11 applicants were successful. The PSC's recommendation for the appointment of all the 11 successful officers has been forwarded to the Prime Minister for his approval.

Appointment of Operational Support Workers

Following SDO certification of competence achieved in the course specifically tailor-made for successful candidates successful in the Interview, the Prime Minister, on the recommendation of the PSC, approved

that eight employees be appointed Operational Support Worker with effect from 21 December 2006. The appointees were deployed according to priority requests.

Back-office Work in Gozo

The first identified project in connection with the Gozo Back Office was DOI's 153 when, following a one-month training experience, four Gozitan Clerks serving in Malta were permanently transferred to Gozo. Thirty Gozitan Principals and Clerks have been identified for training on four projects namely, MHEC Salaries, Treasury (Pensions), Treasury (Salaries) and DSS (Energy Benefit Scheme). The officers will be transferred permanently to Gozo as soon as it is certified that they are competent in their new duties.

Glossary of Resourcing Terms

A glossary of widely-used terms in a Resourcing context was compiled, with related significance, for use by Directors of Corporate Services and HR Managers in line departments.

Deployment of Public Officers with Public Entities

During the year, 22 public officers were detailed with public entities whereas 80 officers had their detailing order revoked as a result of demand-driven requests or through officers' selection for posts in the Public Service. The following table shows the number of public officers who, on 31 December 2006, were deployed, attached or detailed with public entities.

Public Entities and Parastatal Organisations	Various	95
Water Services Corporation	Detailed	999
Malta Transport Authority	Detailed	70
Occupational Health and Safety Authority	Detailed	6
Malta Environment and Planning Authority	Detailed	101
Malta Maritime Authority	Detailed	22
Malta Resources Authority	Detailed	5
Malta Standards Authority	Detailed	4
Malta Statistics Authority	Detailed	71
Lotteries and Gaming Authority	Detailed	5
Superintendence Cultural Heritage	Detailed	10
Malta Communications Authority	Detailed	9
Heritage Malta	Detailed	183
Kunsill Malti għall-Ispirt	Detailed	38
Malta Council for Culture and the Arts	Detailed	31
National Commission Persons with Disability	Detailed	5
National Commission for the Promotion of Equality for Men & Women	Detailed	4
Medicines Authority	Detailed	14
National Archives for Malta	Detailed	1
Maltco Lotteries	Deployed	1
MATS Ltd (includes ex-AFM personnel)	Attached	160
Foundation for Medical Services	Deployed	10
MCAST	Deployed	90
WasteServ	Deployed	14
St John Co-Cathedral Foundation	Deployed	3
Barriera Tax Warehouses Ltd	Deployed	3
Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools	Deployed	1
Total		1,955

ONGOING ANCILLARY ACTIVITIES

Data on ongoing ancillary activities is shown on the following table:

Category 'A' Appointments	
Position	No
Principal Permanent Secretary	-
Permanent Secretary	6
Permanent Secretary - designate	2
Director General	12
Director	36
Others	2
In an acting capacity	16
Assistant Director	40

General Service Appointments	
Grade	No
Senior Principal	93
Principal	12
Assistant Principal	54
Executive Officer	5
Senior Clerk	200
Clerk	-

Calls for applications issued for Department, Technical & Industrial Grades	
Type of advert	No
Government Gazette	149
Service-wide MPO Circular	74
Department Circular	12

Recommendations to PSC in respect of Departmental/Technical/Industrial Grades	
Local personnel	306
Expatriate personnel	39

Movement of Staff within same Ministry approved by respective Permanent Secretary	
General Service Grades	50
Departmental Grades	2
Technical Grades	9
Industrial Grades	13

Pension Files processed by the Department	
Departmental, Tech & Industrial Grades	402
General Service Grades	104

General Service progressions from one salary scale to a higher one with the same grade subject to satisfactory performance	
Position	No
Senior Principal (Scale 7 to 6)	4
Principal (Scale 8 to 7)	15
(Scale 9 to 8)	25
(Scale 10 to 9)	118
Assistant Principal (Scale 11 to 10)	1
Executive Officer (Scale 14 to 13)	30
Clerk (Scale 16 to 15)	129

Engagement of Consultants/Advisers on contract	
New Contracts	24
Renewals	101
Terminations	32

Movement of Staff to & from Private Secretariats	
General Service Grades	16
Departmental Grades	4
Technical Grades	-
Industrial Grades	1

Departmental, Technical & Industrial Grades Appointments	
Position	No
Following public calls for application	507
Following selection from service-wide calls	251
Following selection from departmental calls	83
After a number of years service in the grade	78
On assimilation	1
Renewal of contracts	75
Other	52

Movement of Staff approved by MPO	
General Service Grades	71
Departmental Grades	14
Technical Grades	14
Industrial Grades	26

DEPARTMENT OF RESOURCING (PUBLIC SECTOR)

The main objective of this Directorate for 2006 was the consolidation of the various policies and procedures adopted since the establishment of the Directorate by virtue of MPO Circular No 14/2005.

These policies and procedures were viewed with more experience and hindsight as the past year can be considered to have served as a learning curve for all concerned. However these are still being discussed at RRAG level.

The amendment to the Employment and Training Services Act, Article 15, approved by the House of Representatives, strengthened OPM's power as far as redeployment is concerned.

The Director (Resourcing - Public Sector) and a staff member continued to take an active part in the proceedings of the Recruitment and Redeployment Advisory Group (RRAG) as Member and Secretary respectively. Five meetings of the RRAG were held between January and December, during which recruitment and redeployment procedures and policies were formulated.

The Director, together with other MPO Directors, actively participated in the drafting of a report on the effect of the Fixed Term Directive of the European Union, which was presented by the Director of Industrial and Employment Relations.

RECRUITMENT

The Directorate continued to cement its good working relationship with the Financial Management and Monitoring Unit of the Ministry of Finance. The excellent liaison between this Directorate and the Unit has helped in no small way to enable calls for redeployment to be issued in a speedy way as well as to prioritise other requests where necessary.

During the year in question, the Directorate received 255 requests from 49 different government-funded entities. Of these requests, 79 cases were translated into MPO circulars, whilst 222 were given the fast track for recruitment through the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC). Following the issue of MPO circulars, on 80 occasions the Directorate was informed that relative circulars had proved to be futile as either candidates interviewed were found to be not suitable for the position or else the call elicited no response. In such cases, approval was granted by the Directorate for the entities concerned to commence recruitment procedures with the ETC.

The Directorate continued also to be involved in the engagement of expatriates with entities. Arrangements had been made with the Director of Citizenship and Expatriates and the ETC on the best method to issue the approval for work permits for these foreigners. A fast track was established for requests such as those received from the Malta Shipyards Ltd for the engagement on temporary basis of foreign skilled labour so as to enable this entity to fulfil its contractual obligations.

The Directorate was called on countless times by the ETC to approve the extension of the statutory validity periods of work permits issued to entities that had expired. Approvals for requests for recruitment of personnel on short definite contracts or on a replacement basis, as in the case of casual substitutes, were also given on several occasions after careful consideration.

At the start of 2006 the Public Sector totalled just over 14,000 employees. By the end of August, according to the latest figures at hand at this Directorate, the figure was reduced to 12,541, partly due to the privatisation of Maltacom and its subsidiaries in May.

REDEPLOYMENT

This Directorate was also involved in the process of redeployment of employees from government entities, these having been declared surplus following restructuring.

The redeployment of surplus Water Services Corporation Gozo employees to Gozitan local councils was finalised. On the other hand the redeployment of surplus Malta-based WSC staff was in hand by year's end, this being effected only on a demand-driven basis. The public officials who voluntarily requested to revert back to public service duties were distributed in government departments to replace IPSL workers who were assigned there. The IPSL staff that was affected was in turn redeployed with other entities that had requested staff to man new positions, such as Environment Wardens with MEPA.

Various requests by entities and departments were received throughout the year for any surplus staff on the IPSL books, but such requests could not always be met as the demand was far higher than the supply.

During the year the Directorate concluded the smooth transfer of a number of ex- Foundation for Medical Services' staff to the Medicines Authority after the latter had attained legal status.

IPSL

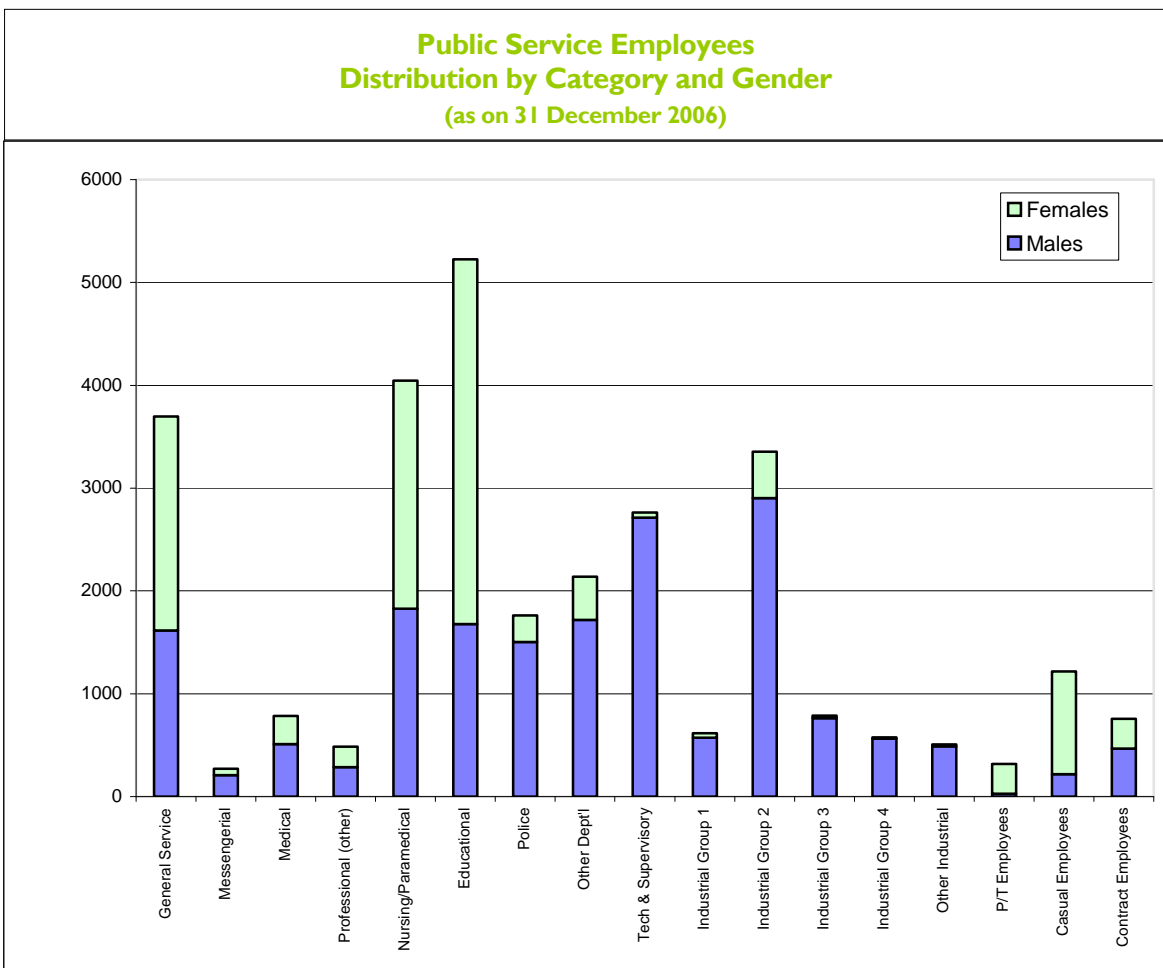
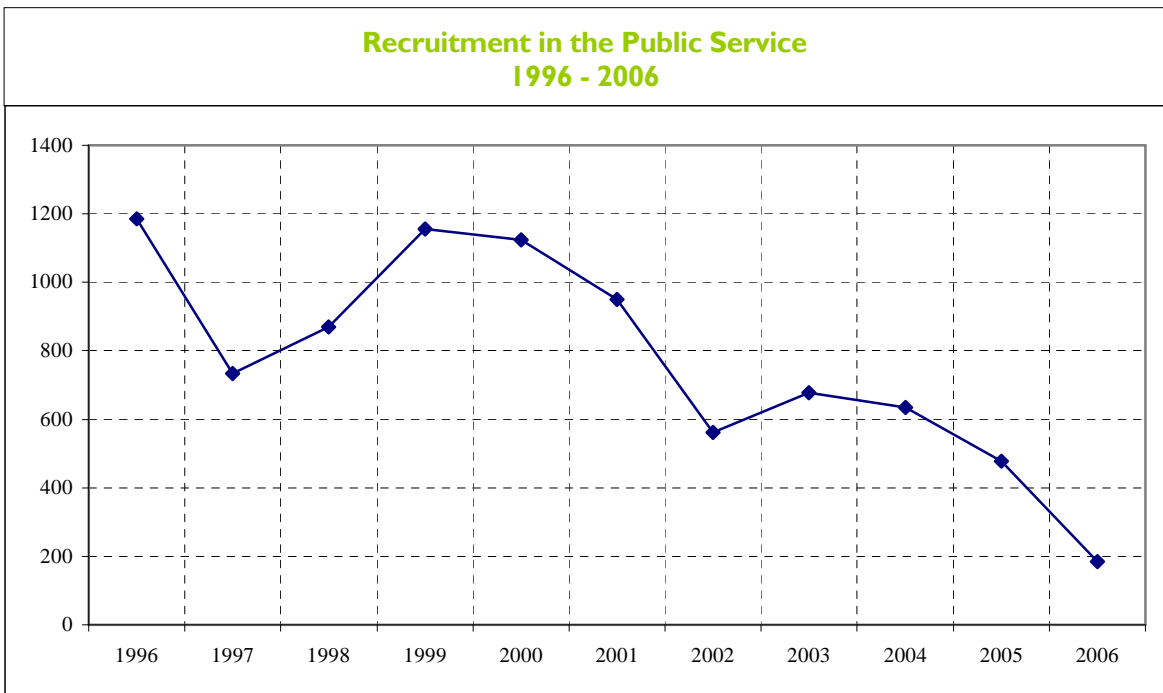
As from the start of the year, the IPSL vote which in 2005 was located under the Ministry for Investments, Industry and Information Technology came under the responsibility of the Office of the Prime Minister. The Directorate conducted the preparatory paperwork with the Malta Financial Services Authority for the necessary changes in the Articles of Association of the IPSL company to formalise changes to the Board of Directors, while in May a Chief Executive Officer was appointed. The new Board members are the Chief Executive Officer, who acts as Chairman, the Director Resourcing Public Sector, the Director Resourcing Public Service, and the Head of the Collective Bargaining Unit.

The IPSL workforce by the end of the year under review totalled 506 employees, made up of ex-employees of the following: Malta Drydocks (205), Malta Shipbuilding (249), MDC (30), Malta Win (6), Metco (3), Sea Malta (3), Limsuk (2), IPSE (2), WSC (2), Medigrain (1), MTA (1), MCST (1), MCC (1). All IPSL staff was redeployed within various departments and public entities as well as in local councils.

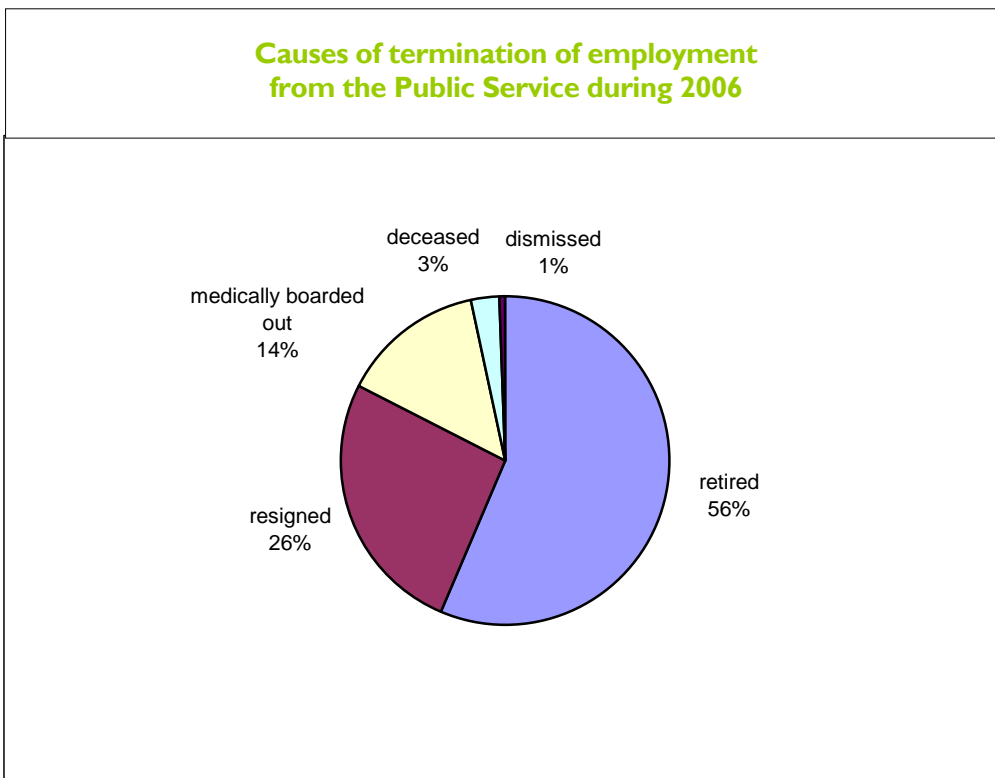
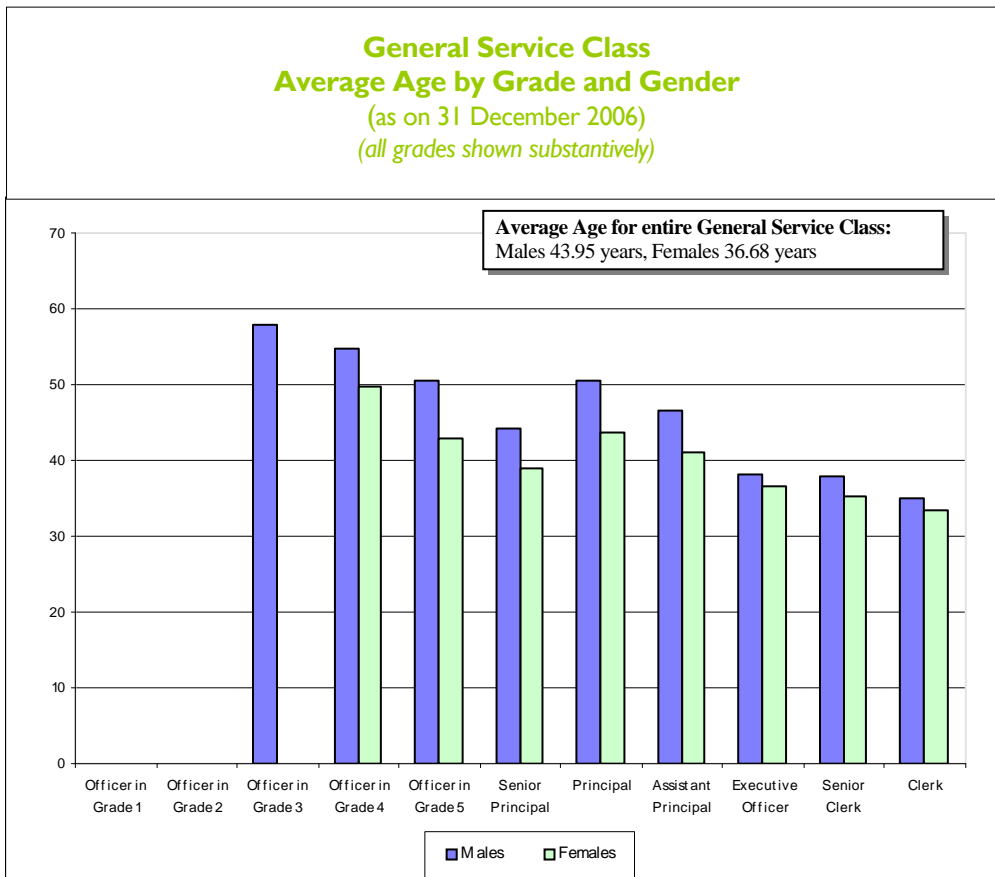
Before this Directorate handed over the day-to-day management affairs of the IPSL to the new CEO in May, a verification process was undertaken to confirm the placing of the IPSL workers and their assigned duties. The new Board also found it necessary to review the granting of extended sick leave to IPSL employees who reported genuine cases of hospitalisation or long recovery periods.

ANTHONY J VELLA
Acting Director General, MPO

APPENDIX A



APPENDIX B



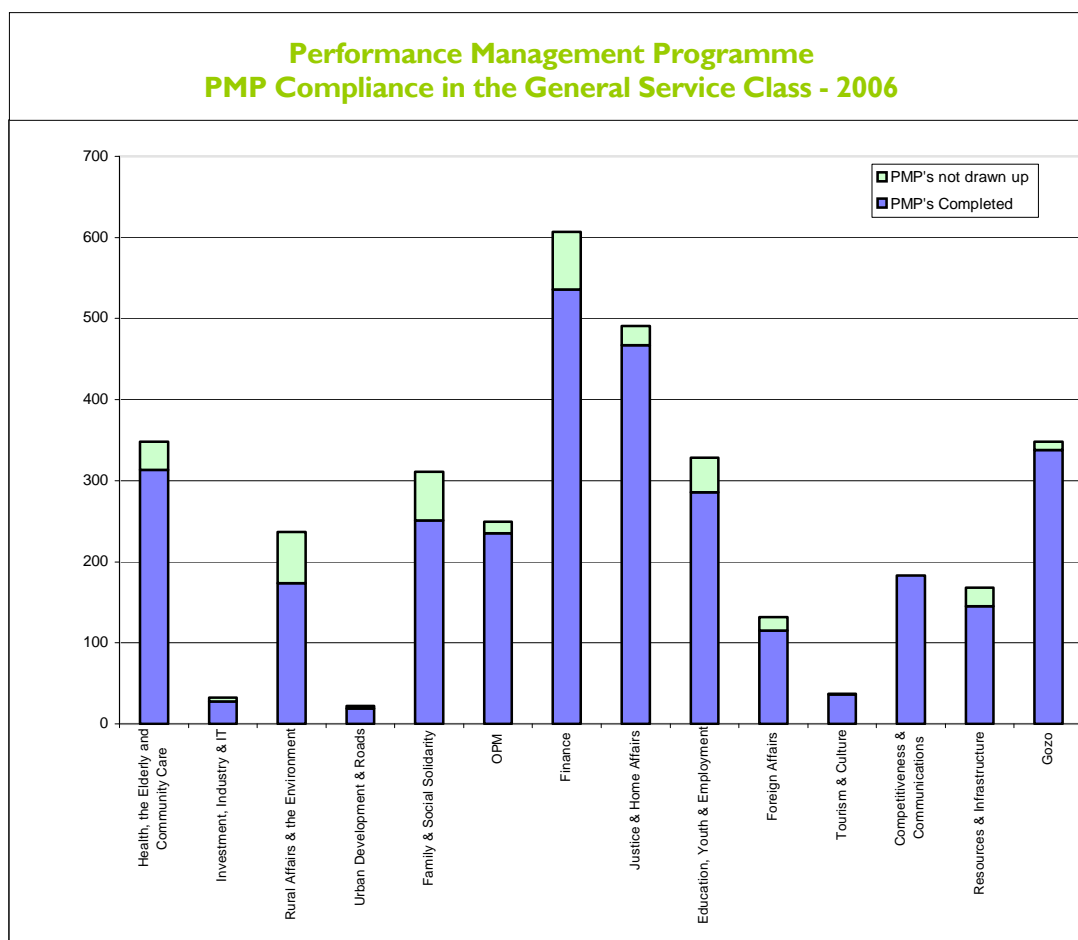
APPENDIX C

Government Workforce
December 2005/2006

Category	Dec 2005	Dec 2006	
Full-time Employees in Government Departments			
Administrative & Clerical	3,637	3,529	
Messengerial	293	261	
Police Force	1,799	1,759	
Technical	2,221	2,155	
Professional (Other than Medical)	428	446	
Nursing/Paramedical	3,924	4,045	
Medical	776	775	
Educational	5,291	5,222	
Other Departmental Grades	1,955	1,886	
Industrial	<u>5,434</u>	25,758	<u>5,145</u>
			25,223
Armed Forces (Uniformed)			
Regular	1,588	1,587	
Reserve	49	54	
Volunteer	<u>33</u>	1,670	<u>38</u>
			1,679
Temporary Employees			
Part-Time	329	317	
Casual	1,038	1,217	
On contract (Local and Foreign)	<u>733</u>	2,100	<u>757</u>
			2,291
Public Officers with Authorities/Parastatal Organisations		1,890	*1,778
GRAND TOTAL		<u>31,418</u>	<u>30,971</u>

* total as at November 2006

APPENDIX D



Planning and Priorities Co-ordination Division

INTRODUCTION

In 2006, the Planning and Priorities Co-ordination Division had the following responsibilities:

- to act as the National Aid Co-ordinator in respect of the EU Pre-accession Funds and Transition Facility and the accession-related bilateral technical assistance made available to Malta;
- to act as Managing Authority for the Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund 2004 - 2006;
- to act as Managing Authority for Community Initiative EQUAL and as national contact point for Community Initiative Interreg III;
- to manage the fifth Italo-Maltese Financial Protocol;
- to act as co-ordinating body of the EU Solidarity Fund grant;
- to act as the National Focal Point (NFP) for the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms;
- to work on the National Reference Strategic Framework (NSRF) and Operational Programmes for the next programming period (2007-2013);
- to draft Malta's position on the proposed regulatory framework for Structural Funds (2007 – 2013);
- the strengthening of the Division's administrative capacity in view of the 2007 - 2013 Cohesion Policy envelope.

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

EU Pre-Accession Funds

The allocation for the 2003 programme was €18,145,000 (€12,030,000 EU funds and €6,115,000 Malta funds). The disbursement deadline for this programme expired on 30 November 2006, by which date 96% of the EU funds and 94% of the Malta funds allocated (excluding the Urban Waste Water Treatment Plan in Gozo) had been disbursed.

Commission Decision (C/2006/4845) was adopted on 17 October 2006, granting an extension of the disbursement deadline as regards the Urban Waste Water Treatment Plant in Gozo. The disbursement period of this project was extended by ten months until 30 September 2007.

Transition Facility

Projects under the 2004 programme (total value €128 million [Malta €1 million, EU €11.8 million]) continued to be progressively implemented. The contracting deadline expired on 15 December 2006, by which date 95.11% of EU Funds and 94.94% of Malta Funds were contracted. In 2006 two Twinning contracts in the areas of producer responsibility and food and veterinary services received approval from the European Commission.

Meanwhile, contracting and implementation of the 2005 Programme started.

The Commission Decision on the 2006TF for Malta was adopted on 27 July 2006. Signature of an Exchange of Letters concerning project fiches of the 2006 programme took place on 31 August 2006. The EU contribution to the 2006 programme amounts to €3315,000.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Pre-accession and Transition Facility Programmes

The first round of Sectoral Monitoring Sub-Committees (SMSCs) for the year was held in March 2006. At the SMSCs the implementation progress of each project is reviewed and discussed. The seventh Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) was held on 31 May 2006 and representatives from the Commission met with delegates from the National Authorising Office, the National Aid Co-ordinator, the Department of Contracts and the Internal Audit and Investigations Directorate. The second round of SMSCs for the year took place in September 2006 and this was followed by the eighth JMC which was held on 27 November 2006. For each JMC a detailed Implementation Status Report is drawn up by PPCD. Independent evaluation of the projects being monitored was carried out and reports were presented to the authorities in April 2006 and November 2006.

Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund 2004 - 2006

Structural Funds

A second call for projects under the ESF was launched in January 2006. The call closed on 9 February, 2006, and 32 projects were received under measures 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 of Priority 2 of the Single Programming Document. Following a rigorous selection process, 12 new projects were chosen. The Monitoring Committees on Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund were convened on 16 February, 18 May and 18 October 2006. Annual reports were presented to the Monitoring Committee in May and submitted formally to the EC in June.

The Structural Fund Database (SFD) was included in the list of strategic core government applications due to its overall importance in managing EU projects. Various enhancements were made to SFD and access was granted to more users, amounting to around 250. Concurrently, a new version of the SFD is being developed to manage both current and new programmes and projects. The new version shall see the changeover from the current client-server application to a new web-based environment.

During 2006, the Managing Authority co-ordinated and submitted the ERDF and ESF audit replies. Six payment requests for reimbursement were made to the Commission: in March, June, August, October, November and December 2006. In 2006 Malta reached all its N+2 targets in real interim payments on all Funds.

During the reporting period, the Division emphasised the implementation of article 4 of EC Regulation 438/2001 on Management and Control systems to verify the delivery of the products and services co-financed under Structural funds. A number of on-the-spot checks were carried out.

Cohesion Fund

The contracts for the three stretches of road under the Cohesion Fund transport project were signed in the first quarter of 2006. Works on Civil Aviation Avenue have been completed, while works on St Paul's Bay Bypass and Mġarr Road, Ġhajnsielem are progressing according to schedule. During 2006, Malta received € 2,591,637.02 in payments under the Cohesion Fund. The 20% advance payment from the Commission was received in May 2006 whilst the first interim request was received in July 2006.

As for the environment project, the publicity contract was awarded in February 2006, the supervision contract awarded in July 2006, and the works (construction) contract was awarded in December 2006.

Following the approval by the Commission of Malta's application for Cohesion Fund Technical Assistance, in December 2005, the Managing Authority started co-ordinating the implementation of two projects with a total allocation of €964,634. These funds are currently being used to finance the preparation of projects in the environmental sector that would then be financed by the Cohesion Fund for the period 2007-2013.

Community Initiatives

Interreg III

In 2006, Malta participated in four Programmes.

During the reporting period Malta held the Presidency of the cross border Italia-Malta Programme, the Medocc Programme and also the Archimed Programme. In this regard, PPCD organised a number of Monitoring and Steering Committee meetings for each Programme. During such meetings all the Partner countries participated as did the European Commission. In 2006 a total of 21 projects with Maltese partners were selected – 5 under the Medocc Programme and 16 under the Archimed Programme. PPCD organised a number of information sessions for the Maltese Partners of the different Programmes and also launched guidelines on control and publicity.

Over the year, PPCD also continued its work to verify expenditure from the Maltese Partners. Several regular advisory meetings were held with project partners, particularly with regard to claims for reimbursement.

Territorial Cooperation 2007 - 2013

In 2006, PPCD took an active part in the negotiations and drawing up of five new territorial co-operation programmes which will be launched in 2007, including the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument, Regions for Economic Change Initiative and ESPON II Programme.

EQUAL

All five EQUAL projects continued being implemented. The Monitoring Committee for EQUAL met twice - in May and October 2006. The Second Interim Evaluation Report of the ongoing evaluation of the Equal programme was submitted to the European Commission. The N+2 for EQUAL was reached in October 2006.

EU Solidarity Fund

The final Implementation Report in relation to the grant received for the 2003 storms, together with a Statement of Validity certifying expenditure made (by the Internal Audit and Investigations Directorate), was formally submitted to the European Commission in April 2006. During 2006, the Division continued to provide input with respect to the next Regulation on the Solidarity Fund.

Bilateral Assistance

UK-Malta Action Plan

The Division is responsible for co-ordinating the accession-related bilateral technical assistance made available to Malta. In 2006, UK Government allocated £59,000 to Malta for the financial year 2006/07. Following a call for proposals, five projects were selected for implementation, the main sectors of intervention being finance, agriculture and environment, education and SMEs.

European Economic Area (EEA) and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms

A total of seven project proposals and eight reserve projects were selected and sent to the donors [the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO)] for approval. An Annual Meeting was held between EFTA states representatives, FMO staff and the Maltese National Focal Point (NFP) in May while the Monitoring Committee convened in September 2006.

In December, three out of seven project proposals were approved by the FMO. Subsequently, three grant letters of offer were sent by the FMO to the NFP.

V Italian Protocol

PPCD held two Steering Committee meetings for the 5th Italo-Maltese Financial Protocols in February and July 2006. PPCD also submitted six Reimbursement Requests to the Italian authorities, amounting to a total of €13 million. The 5th Italo-Maltese Financial Protocol Annual Report 2005 and revised disbursement schedule for the year 2007 were submitted to the Italian authorities by PPCD during 2006.

EU Cohesion Policy 2007 - 2013

In 2006, the Planning and Priorities Co-ordination Division was responsible for drafting the 2007-2013 programming documents. The first draft of the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) was launched in March 2006 while the Operational Programmes I and II were launched in June and July, respectively. Draft documents were sent to the European Commission and informal discussions started in September 2006. The NSRF was formally sent to the Commission in November and it was approved by the Commission in December, making Malta the first EU Member State to have its NSRF adopted. During the same period, Malta started working on the preparation of its project pipeline with regard to major infrastructural projects of national interest.

During 2006, four entities benefited from the JASPERS initiative.

The Division co-ordinated Malta's position with respect to the reform of the EU's Regional Policy, including the new Council regulations for the period 2007-2013 and the implementing Commission Regulations 2007-2013, which were approved during the same year.

EU AFFAIRS DIRECTORATE

During 2006, the EU Affairs Directorate continued to perform its main role of managing and co-ordinating OPM's participation in EU structures and processes. To this effect, it regularly represented OPM in the meetings of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for EU Affairs. The Directorate also acted as Ministry contact (focal) point in the exercise to update the Malta position on the revised EU Sustainable Development Strategy, and also sat on the CIP (Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme) ad hoc expert group. The Directorate was also responsible for the transposition by OPM of Directive 2003/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the re-use of public sector information.

Administrative Capacity

During 2006, PPCD moved premises. Action was also taken to strengthen the administrative capacity of the Division. During 2006, six new Programme Managers joined the Division to replace Programme Managers that had resigned in 2006, largely to take up employment within the European institutions. Efforts were also undertaken to strengthen PPCD's and Government's capacity as a whole, particularly with a view to the 2007-2013 Programming Period.

MARLENE BONNICI

Director General (Planning & Priorities Co-ordination)

Staff Development Organisation

During 2006, a total of 3,936 government employees, consisting of 1,860 women and 2,076 men, participated in the training events organised by the Staff Development Organisation (SDO).

NON-CORE ACTIVITIES

Setting the Direction – Conference for Ministry Core Management Teams

SDO was entrusted with the organisation of a half-day Conference for ministry core management teams, which was held in February. The aim was to impart Government's Agenda to participants and introduce the idea of a core management team for ministries. The Principal Permanent Secretary chaired this Conference which was addressed by the Prime Minister and the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, among others. The keynote speaker was John Barker CB from the UK Cabinet Office. 93 senior officials, including top management, participated.

Retreat for Permanent Secretaries

In May, 2006 a retreat for Permanent Secretaries was organised by the SDO at the request of the Principal Permanent Secretary. Various activities together with a number of discussions and meetings were organised to help enhance the team dynamics of these senior officers.

Study Visit to Malta by a Group of Senior Government Officials from Armenia

Nine senior government officials from Armenia visited Malta on 17-25 July 2006 to familiarise themselves with the administrative and reform structures and programmes of the Maltese Public Service and to facilitate the exchange of views and ideas between Armenian and Maltese officials, with the assistance of the SDO. The group included a Deputy Minister, Heads of Staff and Specialists in specific fields. Participants said they were extremely satisfied with the seven-day programme.

Familiarisation Visit for Staff from the Commission

The SDO was asked to co-ordinate a familiarisation visit on 16 - 20 October 2006 for a group of 16 EU officials coming from various DGs within the Commission. Such information programmes are implemented by the Directorate-General for Personnel and Administration of the European Commission in the member states to enable Commission staff to familiarise themselves with the culture of host countries. The programme involved inputs from a number of serving government officials and major representatives of other entities, and covered areas that are of crucial interest. The sixteen participants were given an overview of the Maltese set-up with regard to the Economy, Public Service, Administration, Industry, Heritage and Political System using a hands-on and participative manner throughout all the sessions, also including a number of site visits.

Recruitment Competition by the European Union (*Concours*)

In order to assist Maltese nationals to effectively compete in these recruitment competitions (*concours*), the SDO in collaboration with the European Commission Representation in Malta and the Centre for European

Studies in Strasbourg organised a series of lectures for Maltese Nationals eligible to sit for these competitions for the posts of Administrators and Assistants. 74 participants, 50 of whom were from the public sector, benefited from this training programme. The EC Representation in Malta financed the foreign element of this training activity.

Public Procurement EC Directives 2004/17 & 2004/18

A training programme was organised by SIGMA/OECD on behalf of the European Union in collaboration with the Department of Contracts supported by the Staff Development Organisation. 45 senior government officials working on Public Procurement within the Malta public sector benefited from this training event.

Use of EU Tendering Templates

Following Malta's entry into the European Union, the Department of Contracts requested the SDO's assistance to organise a series of one-day training programmes targeted at officials working in public procurement across all government departments, authorities and agencies with 16 sessions being held in which 291 government employees participated.

Legislative Drafting – Translating Policy and Essentials of the Drafting Process

The SDO in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs and the Royal Institute of Public Administration (RIPA) International organised a five-day programme titled *Legislative Drafting – translating policy and essentials of the drafting process*. This training activity was part of a two-year project set up between the MJHA and the United Kingdom to strengthen the capacity of the Judiciary and Attorney General's Office. It was funded by the British High Commission.

UK/Malta Bilateral Exchange

The SDO was in charge of the first placement within the UK/Malta Bilateral Exchange Scheme, a new initiative encouraging job shadowing between civil servants of both countries. An official from the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel in the UK spent two weeks at the SDO, while visiting other departments to enhance her experience. Meanwhile, the Maltese counterpart circular was issued on 5 May 2006 and a total of 81 interested officers submitted their application. Three Maltese public officers were identified to participate in this scheme.

Traineeships at the General Secretariat of the EU Council

In August 2006, a circular was issued inviting eligible officers in the public sector to apply for a traineeship with the Council of the European Union. The SDO received a total of nine applications and the selection process was finalised at the end of August, when this office put forward the names of four officials to the Council Traineeships Office for consideration. SDO is still awaiting an official confirmation from the Council. These traineeships are envisaged to take place in 2007.

Traineeships at the EU Commission

SDO has put forward the name of an official to be considered for a traineeship with the EU Commission. An official confirmation of the said placement is still awaited.

Training Programmes for Operational Support Workers

During 2005 the SDO organised, on behalf of the Management and Personnel Office, a number of specific training courses for prospective Operational Support Workers who had been successful in a selection interview. Sessions included *Receptionist Skills*, *Customer Care*, *Interpersonal Skills*, and *Office*

Management and Registry Services. 12 officers participated in these courses. All sessions were assessed either via a short test as in the case of IT Skills, or through hands-on activities and observation carried out during the training.

Accrual Accounting

The Ministry of Finance in collaboration with the Staff Development Organisation is again organising *Accrual Accounting* courses for public officers who work in accounts sections within the public service. The objective is to have a skilled cadre of employees to help in the transfer of the existing cash based system to an accrual one. More than a hundred employees are attending this intensive training event which started in October, 2006.

Training for Telephone Operators at St Luke's Hospital

Training included a set of standard operating procedures as well as consultancy for top management. SDO also provided the hospital with a number of PCs to be used by telephone operators. These employees were given training on how to use a simple database/telephone directory and a course in *Receptionist Skills*. The training kicked off during November 2006. Two programmes were held and 18 participants benefited.

Training Programme for Euro Assistants

Director SDO was appointed member on the NECC Training Task Force. SDO supported NECC to organise training programmes for the newly appointed Euro Assistants. 83 public officers were trained in various skills in preparation for the introduction of the Euro in 2008. Their role is to help enterprises gear themselves up for the change.

Seminars Organised by the European Institute of Public Administration, Maastricht

During March SDO facilitated the participation of two public officials in a seminar organised by EIPA titled *State Aid & Policy Practice in the European Community: An Integrative & Interactive Approach*.

Training Programmes Funded by the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs

For the sixth year running the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs, through the Institute of Public Administration, Ireland offered the ten new EU member states various EU related training programmes. Four Maltese public officers participated in a one-week programme on *Financial Management* whilst another two officials benefited from another week-long programme titled *EU Skills*. Both training events were held in Dublin.

Scholarships Offered by the Commonwealth Secretariat

The Commonwealth Secretariat in collaboration with the Public Administration and Personnel Department of the Republic of Cyprus offered a five-day programme titled *E-Governance for Senior Public Professionals*. Seven Maltese public officials participated in this training event.

During May/June 2006 the Schulich Executive Education Centre, Schulich School of Business, York University, Toronto, Canada in collaboration with the Governance and Institutional Development Division (GIDD) of the Commonwealth Secretariat organised a two-week seminar titled *Commonwealth Executive Programme in Public Management*. The Assistant Director, Staff Development Organisation, participated in this intensive training programme.

The Commonwealth Secretariat in collaboration with the Civil Service College, Singapore offered a five-day programme targeted at Permanent Secretaries, titled *Managing Complexity in Networked Government*

held on 26 July - 2 August 2006. The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Finance attended this training event.

On 11 - 15 August a senior official from the Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure participated in a training programme organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat in collaboration with Loughborough University in the UK titled *Combating Corruption in the Delivery of Infrastructure Services*.

SDO Website

A new SDO Website compliant with the requirements and recommendations outlined in the Website Standard v 3.1 document published by CIMU in 2005 was launched in 2006.

CORE ACTIVITIES

Sponsorships for Masters Degree

Following a call for applications for interested and eligible public officers to be sponsored to read Masters degrees in various areas including HR, Business Management, European Affairs and Public Administration about 39 applications were received. From the eligible applicants, five officers were sponsored as follows: one Masters degree in Public Policy and an Executive MBA both with the University of Malta, two MScs in Human Resources and another one in Business Administration, the latter three with the University of Leicester. These officials commenced their studies in October 2006.

Diploma in Public Administration

The Diploma in Public Administration course was again offered for public officers by the University of Malta. This course opens every two years with the last course finishing in July 2006. 29 officers were selected and started attending University twice weekly.

Management Development Training

A number of programmes were held by the Management Development section including *Strategy Development, Management through People, Effective Presentations, Working through and with Others, Creative Thinking, Effective Writing, Work-Life Balance* and *Understanding and Working with Change*.

Continuous Development Training

Programmes such as *Communication Skills, Effective Communication Skills for Managers, Using Emotional Intelligence at Work, Smells like Team Spirit, Team Building, Working as a Team, Pre-Retirement programme, Secretarial Skills and Personal Assistant Skills, Data Protection, Performance Management Programme, Orientation and Empowerment Course for public Officers Resuming Duty from Long Leave and Registry Services* were run by this section.

Departmental and Finance Training

The Departmental and Finance Section organised various courses amongst which the following were held: *A hygiene course for Gozo schools cleaners, Improving Customer Relations, Government Finance and Procurement, Fundamentals of Cost and Management Accounting, Training for Minor Staff and Receptionist Skills*.

EU Training

The following EU-related training programmes were held during the year: *Sourcing EU Information in an Enlarged Europe*; *EU Treaties*; *Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU*; *EU Institutions (Advanced)*; *A Constitution for Europe (Advanced)*; *The Role of an EU Member State in Decision Making (Advanced)*; *Employment and Social Policy of the EU (Advanced)* and *How the European Union Operates*. SDO also organised a short orientation programme for a number of newly-appointed technical attachés who were going to join the Malta Permanent Representation in Brussels.

Language Training

A circular was issued inviting interested officers to apply for sponsorships in the above languages. The SDO received a total number of 38 interested participants wishing to be considered for sponsorship.

French Language Training for EU-related Meetings

French language training resumed this year at an intermediate level with the participation of 11 officers. During October 2006 this training event was again organised. The participants have now been divided into two classes with five officers at Intermediate Level and seven in the Advanced class.

IT Training

During the year, 160 IT programmes were organised and 1,358 government employees benefited from these training activities. Early in the year the handouts given to participants during the Microsoft Office application courses were updated from MS Office XP to MS Office 2003 by the SDO staff. As has been customary in the past years, the SDO, in collaboration with the Ministry for Gozo, organised ten IT courses in Gozo during the summer months. The SDO also organised a training course in *Lotus Notes* for the staff at the 153 Unit within the Department of Information as part of the Gozo back-office initiative.

Twelve new computers were procured for Training Room B which was refurbished together with Training Room C.

In view of the change from TeamWare, a new course in *MS Outlook 2003*, the new electronic mail programme used in government service, was developed by the IT Section.

Placement of University Students at SDO

Throughout the year three Social Administration students of the University of Malta were given the opportunity of gaining 200 hours experience working at SDO. One of the students was assigned a number of projects, mainly the implementation of a mentoring system for public officers and compilation of statistical information which, when completed, provided SDO with a detailed picture of the number of participants trained compared to the public service complement.

European Institute of Public Administration - NL

Director SDO represented the Maltese Government on the EIPA Board of Governors at the biannual meeting, following the signing of the membership agreement with EIPA.

Standing Conference of European Public Service Training Agencies (SCEPSTA)

During September 2006, Director SDO participated in the Annual SCEPSTA Conference 2006 which was held in Vienna. Director SDO was appointed Chairperson SCEPSTA and entrusted with the organisation of next SCEPSTA General Conference 2007 due to be held in Malta in September 2007.

Tenders 2007

As in previous years SDO issued two departmental tenders - one for training services in various skills including management, teamwork and leadership and the other for IT training services.

Improvement on Evaluation

Various sections have started to implement some form of assessment at the end of each course. This should help in evaluating how much each participant has managed to learn from the training programme.

Training DVD in Maltese

A locally produced DVD filled with short video clips and learning points was made by SDO. This involved a *vox pop* with the general public made into a short but effective training tool. This DVD was used in customer care courses particularly with minor staff.

Publication of SDO Training Review

The SDO published and distributed its *Training Review 2004/2005* entitled *Another Dimension*.

Launch of SDO Prospectus

On 15 December the SDO organised an event to launch its prospectus for 2007. All the public officers involved in HR training across ministries were invited. The objective for this activity was to introduce the new changes in Prospectus 2007, and expand and enhance the network of HR personnel in charge of the training function. An electronic version of the prospectus was distributed by e-mail and uploaded on the SDO website. The prospectus was designed in-house.

New Application Form

A new application form was designed to involve line managers more. Rather than just a plain endorsement, the line manager now needs to put down the objectives of the course as discussed with the applicant.

New Services Offered by SDO

The Resource Centre at SDO was refurbished to house two new computers and a video/DVD library as part of an initiative to extend our training resources and enhance the training function by providing different media and means of training. The list of books in the Resource Centre has been advertised online and a video library is being launched. SDO plans to install online journals, articles and other relevant literature search engine/database. As part of its eLearning pilot project SDO is now offering training through CD ROM based courses in the French, German and Spanish languages.

CHARTER SUPPORT UNIT (CSU)

The CSU continued to function under the remit of the Staff Development Organisation (SDO). During 2006, apart from the Quality Service Charter (QSC) initiative, the CSU introduced another initiative, that of Service Standards. The aim of the latter is to encourage more commitment across the Public Service in delivering better services to the general public and to internal clients.

The CSU also introduced a number of technical and business enhancements to the Customer Care System (CCS). The CCS was also introduced in a number of new departments and in Maltacom plc offices. Training was given not only to new CCS staff but also to all CCS users in collaboration with SDO.

Functions and responsibilities

Quality Service Charters

Following the issuance of OPM Circular 2/2006 and OPM Circular 7/2006, it was decided that Service Standards would be implemented across all the Public Service in order to raise the standard of services as well as to encourage the development of new Quality Service Charters with raised standards related to quality and time.

New Service Standards Road Shows

In order to publicise and impart more information on Service Standards, CSU organised a series of road shows within all ministries during the months of March-May. For these road shows, a video and a presentation were prepared and shown to all senior management.

The overall aim of the Service Standards road shows was to inform and discuss the implementation and maintenance of Service Standards with all senior management. The latter, in turn, would impart the same information to their respective staff, thus creating a knowledge-cascading effect.

Service Standards Follow-up

Following the Service Standards road shows, it was decided that follow-up in the form of a self-assessment exercise would be held. Thus, in order to ensure that the implementation and maintenance of Service Standards is proceeding according to plan, CSU produced a self-assessment template designed to evaluate the process and difficulties in the implementation phase.

This self-assessment template was subsequently sent to all Directors (Programme Implementation) who are responsible for the implementation and maintenance of both Service Standards and QSCs.

In turn, Directors (Programme Implementation) conducted the self-assessment exercise with all directorates, departments and sections within their respective ministry. The completed templates were duly received by CSU and used to compile a general report on the status of Service Standards implementation and maintenance across the Public Service.

Customer Care System

During 2006, CSU introduced a number of technical and business enhancements in collaboration with MITTS Ltd. These enhancements were aimed at making the CCS more efficient and CCS users more accountable with regard to logging, processing and resolving CCS requests. A number of new reports in the Enquiries and Reports module were also introduced in order to assist all CCS users in measuring and monitoring CCS requests.

During 2006, the CCS was introduced in a number of government departments, at the NECC and Maltacom plc. Due training was given to new CCS users within these offices. Refresher training was also given to Local Council CCS users upon request.

Moreover, a training programme for all CCS users was organised in collaboration with SDO. This training programme, divided over three days in May in Malta and one day in July in Gozo, involved all Customer Care Co-ordinators within ministries and Executive Secretaries and users within all local councils. The training programme focused on business and technical issues as well as communication and teambuilding within the CCS human network.

Statistics of CCS requests registered during 2006 are found in Appendix B.

Communication and training

- *Review 2004/2005:* The SDO and CSU Review for 2004/5 was published and distributed across the Public Service.
- *Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and Balance Score Card Seminar (BSC) EIPA Institute, Maastricht:* The CAF and BSC seminar was held at the EIPA institute in Maastricht on 22-23 May 2006 and involved participants from all EU member states. The principal aim of the seminar was to present and compare characteristics of both the CAF and the BSC as development tools that allow for analysis which is geared towards a future of continuous improvement.
- *CCS at CAPAM Awards:* The CCS was chosen as one of the eleven finalists for the CAPAM International Innovation Awards Programme that was held between 21 and 25 October 2006 in Sydney Australia.

During the conference, the CCS was presented to all participants within the context of the main theme of the 2006 Awards, which was that a capable public service is based on the principles of good governance; learns from past experience, manages risk and capitalizes on opportunities and delivers quality services across a range of sectors, even in situations of crises.

JOANNA GENOVESE

Director (Staff Development)

APPENDIX (i)

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS PER COURSE BY MONTH – 2006

	AREA / SUBJECT	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	M	F	Trainee Days	Total
I	Continuous Development Training																
	Team Building			15										7	8	22.5	15
	Pre-Retirement Course		19					18						22	15	74.0	37
	Resuming Duty from Long Leave								12						12	6.0	12
	Registry Services			8		20	20							28	20	24.0	48
	Using Emotional Intelligence at Work – Module 1				19	14								6	27	49.5	33
	Secretarial & Personal Assistant Skills			19	18					19	19			7	68	112.5	75
	Performance Management Programme (PMP)				47	19					13			32	47	39.5	79
	Data Protection		17	18	54	53	50					13		92	113	102.5	205
	Pensions and Benefits			11						13				13	11	12.0	24
	Using Emotional Intelligence at Work – Module 2									13	9			5	17	33.0	22
	Working in a Team						9				15			19	5	36.0	24
	Smells Like Team Spirit			17										2	15	17.0	17
	Communication Skills			19	17			14						12	38	75.0	50
	Effective Communication Skills for Managers				15					18		13		23	23	69.0	46
	Basic Course for Operational Support Workers			12										6	6	48.0	12
	Customer Care System – Module 1					43	14							36	21	28.5	57
	Customer Care System – Module 2					44	14							11	47	29.0	58
	Customer Care System – Module 3					39								7	32	19.5	39
	Training Programme for General Hands											61		19	42	61.0	61
	Training for Euro Assistants										83			43	40	249.0	83
	Sub Total	-	36	119	170	232	107	32	25	50	139	87	-	390	607	1,107.5	997
II	Departmental and Finance Training																
	Government Finance and Procurement				19		13				15			27	20	23.5	47
	Improving Customer Relations	18	14			17					33			22	60	114.0	82
	Training for Minor Staff				12	50	27			56	26	12		136	47	97.5	183
	Reception Skills								18		16	10	24	29	39	84.0	68
	Fundamentals of Cost and Management Accounting				36	19								40	15	137.5	55
	Improving Customer Relations – Ad Hoc Programme for MSD					25								23	2	50.0	25
	Sub Total	18	14	-	67	111	40	-	18	56	90	22	24	277	183	506.5	460
III	Information Technology Training																
	Microsoft Excel XP Introduction	7	10	9	18	20	21	19		7	19	13		68	75	357.5	143
	Microsoft Windows 98	11			5									4	12	32.0	16
	MS Windows XP	26	12	11	20	19		11	9		14			67	55	244.0	122
	Microsoft Word 97 Introduction		7		6									7	6	26.0	13
	Microsoft Excel 97 Introduction		7		4									5	6	27.5	11
	The Internet			7	9			9	11	11		8		17	38	31.0	55
	The Intranet						11							3	8	5.5	11
	Electronic Government Mail			11	8			7						7	19	18.5	26
	Concepts of Information Technology (IT)				9					10				13	6	19.0	19
	Manage and Maintain Your PC		5	13			16	10		8	9	11		35	37	122.0	72
	Microsoft Word XP Introduction		10	8	18	30	10	16		10	8	9		69	50	232.0	119
	Microsoft Word XP Advanced		8			17	10		7	12	12	12		34	44	117.0	78
	Microsoft Access XP Introduction	7		22	10	9	9	9	10	11	17	11		67	48	287.5	115
	Microsoft Access XP Advanced		9	4	6		5				3	4		20	11	57.5	31
	MS Publisher		9		13		10				8			12	28	80.0	40
	Microsoft Powerpoint XP Introduction	10	8	5	9	10	4	12	15	10	31		7	60	61	192.5	121
	MS Project			8		10		9				7		23	11	68.0	34
	MTML/Microsoft Frontpage XP			10								7		9	8	34.0	17
	Microsoft Excel XP Advanced		21		18	19			11	5	15	12		58	43	247.0	101
	Microsoft Powerpoint XP Advanced			8		6				7				10	11	31.5	21
	Email (MS Outlook)										57	41	8	48	58	98.0	106
	Lotus Notes							4						2	2	4.0	4
	NECC Power Point Presentations										31	52		43	40	41.5	83
	Sub Total	61	106	116	153	140	96	102	67	91	224	180	22	681	677	2,373.5	315

APPENDIX (ii)

	AREA / SUBJECT	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	M	F	Trainee Days	Total
IV	Language Training																
	French 1 st Year						21							16	5	252.0	21
	German						17							7	10	204.0	17
	Spanish 1 st Year						12							1	11	540.0	12
	Spanish 2 nd Year						5							2	3	225.0	5
	Spanish 3 rd Year						3							-	3	135.0	3
	Sub Total	-	-	-	-	-	58	-	-	-	-	-	-	26	32	1,356.0	58
V	European Union Training																
	How the European Union Operates				20	35								26	29	55.0	55
	Role of an EU Member State in Decision-Making (Adv)			13		14						33		35	25	60.0	60
	A Constitution for Europe							23						12	11	23.0	23
	EU Treaties										20			12	8	20.0	20
	Institutions of the European Union						19							6	13	19.0	19
	Employment and Social Policy of the EU					11						21		17	15	32.0	32
	Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU (Adv)										15			11	4	15.0	15
	Use of EU Tendering Templates		109	182										219	72	291.0	291
	Public Procurement EC Directives 2004/17 & 2004/18	45												32	13	90.0	45
	French for EU Related Meetings		12											7	5	228.0	12
	Sourcing EU Information in an Enlarged Europe					20	21	25						28	38	33.0	66
	EU Programme for Technical Attachés						9							7	2	18.0	9
	Legislative Drafting						20							11	9	100.0	20
	Training Programme for the <i>Concours</i>										73			45	28	657.0	73
	Setting the Direction		93											79	14	46.5	93
	Sub Total	45	214	195	20	80	69	48	-	-	108	54	-	547	286	1,687.5	833
VI	Management Development Training																
	Working through and with Others				9		6							13	2	15.0	15
	Understanding and Working with Change										45			40	5	67.5	45
	Strategy Development			10	5	20	8	5						38	10	72.0	48
	Work-Life Balance					6								6	-	3.0	6
	Work-Life Balance				5		5				6			14	2	8.0	16
	Effective Presentation for Senior Staff					13				10		8		13	18	46.5	31
	Creative Thinking						14	14						12	16	28.0	28
	Effective Writing				9	15	6				11			19	22	41.0	41
	Sub Total	-	-	10	28	54	39	19	-	10	62	8	-	155	75	281.0	230
	GRAND TOTAL	124	370	440	438	617	409	201	110	207	623	351	46	2,076	1,860	7,312.0	3,936

APPENDIX B

<i>CCS Statistics</i>			
<i>Ministries by Theme</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Local Council (cont.)</i>	<i>Count</i>
Agriculture & Fisheries	215	Kunsill Lokali Kalkara	99
Competitiveness & Communication	930	Kunsill Lokali Kerċem	51
Consumer Affairs	146	Kunsill Lokali Kirkop	119
Culture, Youth & Sports	9	Kunsill Lokali Lija	448
Department of Information	17	Kunsill Lokali Luqa	148
Education	50	Kunsill Lokali Marsa	272
Elderly & Special Needs	1	Kunsill Lokali Marsascala	665
Environment	5,616	Kunsill Lokali Marsaxlokk	207
Family and Social Solidarity	38	Kunsill Lokali Mdina	16
Finance	118	Kunsill Lokali Mellieħa	629
Foreign Affairs	13	Kunsill Lokali Mġarr	599
Government Information	142	Kunsill Lokali Mosta	414
Health, Elderly & Community Care	1,769	Kunsill Lokali Mqabba	699
Housing & Property	684	Kunsill Lokali Msida	359
Investment, Industry and IT	37	Kunsill Lokali Mtarfa	156
Law & Order	1,496	Kunsill Lokali Nadur	265
Power and Energy	7,738	Kunsill Lokali Naxxar	1,255
Requests for Gozo	230	Kunsill Lokali Paola	110
Rescue and Security	4	Kunsill Lokali Pembroke	175
Resources and Infrastructure	28	Kunsill Lokali Pieta`	146
Status and Registration	38	Kunsill Lokali Qala	189
Tourism	61	Kunsill Lokali Qormi	603
Trade and Industry	33	Kunsill Lokali Qrendi	442
Transport	7,700	Kunsill Lokali Rabat (Gozo)	209
Water & Sewerage	5,090	Kunsill Lokali Rabat (Malta)	463
Total	32,203	Kunsill Lokali San Pawl il-Bahar	4,227
		Kunsill Lokali Safi	75
<i>Local Council</i>	<i>Count</i>	Kunsill Lokali San Ġiljan	338
Kunsill Lokali Attard	516	Kunsill Lokali San Ġwann	458
Kunsill Lokali Balzan	727	Kunsill Lokali San Lawrenz	22
Kunsill Lokali Birgu	67	Kunsill Lokali Sannat	107
Kunsill Lokali Birkirkara	573	Kunsill Lokali Santa Lucija	172
Kunsill Lokali Birzebbuġia	267	Kunsill Lokali Santa Venera	950
Kunsill Lokali Bormla	221	Kunsill Lokali Siġġiewi	709
Kunsill Lokali Dingli	160	Kunsill Lokali Sliema	321
Kunsill Lokali Fgura	4,057	Kunsill Lokali Swieqi	168
Kunsill Lokali Floriana	242	Kunsill Lokali Ta' Xbiex	76
Kunsill Lokali Fontana	15	Kunsill Lokali Tarxien	288
Kunsill Lokali Ghajnsielem	65	Kunsill Lokali Valletta	544
Kunsill Lokali Għarb	29	Kunsill Lokali Xagħra	220
Kunsill Lokali Gharghur	188	Kunsill Lokali Xewkija	196
Kunsill Lokali Għasri	31	Kunsill Lokali Xgħajra	119
Kunsill Lokali Ghaxaq	70	Kunsill Lokali Żabbar	1,495
Kunsill Lokali Gudja	482	Kunsill Lokali Żebbuġ	157
Kunsill Lokali Gzira	78	Kunsill Lokali Żebbuġ (Gozo)	179
Kunsill Lokali Hamrun	294	Kunsill Lokali Żejtun	994
Kunsill Lokali Iklin	313	Kunsill Lokali Żurrieq	1,289
Kunsill Lokali Isla	106	Total	30,343

Management Efficiency Unit

Mission statement

To facilitate the improvement of government services.

THE ORGANISATION

The Management Efficiency Unit was set up in 1997 and is constituted as a separate organisational entity within the Office of the Prime Minister.

VISION

The Management Efficiency Unit endeavours to be the Public Service's entity of first choice for the sourcing of management consultancy services. In this respect, the MEU seeks to be recognised as a value-based, service-oriented entity that excels in the field of public sector management consultancy and that is able to respond effectively to the changing needs of the wider Public Sector.

VALUES

The MEU believes that the adoption of sound practical values is the cornerstone of effective business delivery. In seeking to achieve its mission the Unit has endeavoured to:

- maintain a professional and participative relationship with its clients;
- ensure that initiatives undertaken are reflective of Government's broader policy objectives;
- honour commitments and take responsibility for advice provided;
- operate within time and budgetary constraints;
- utilise its budget efficiently and effectively;
- deliver a top quality product;
- achieve and maintain a healthy and productive work environment that is based on respect and trust; and
- maintain an adequately resourced knowledge-based organisation through the adoption of a proactive retention, recruitment and development staffing strategy.

SERVICES

To deliver its operational thrust the Management Efficiency Unit has, through its multi-disciplined base of professionals, offered and provided the following services:

- **Formulation and Implementation of cross-Government Programmes** - where the Client's operative thrust is enhanced through strategic policy design and active managerial input in order to develop a speedier and more effective mechanism with which to deliver specific priority initiatives.
- **Policy Development** - where areas of activity are reviewed in order to create and critique alternative stratagems and provide policy makers with the necessary information to set parameters that guide future decisions and courses of action.
- **Strategic Planning and Reviews** - where a thorough analysis of projected deliverables in the medium to long-term is carried out within the context of the mission objective and the realities of operational environment. Proposals on how the strategic vision may be implemented are then developed and presented.

- **Mandate Reviews, Organisational Consolidation and Restructuring** - where a framework is designed to provide the mandate and legal context with which to guide the establishment and management of an entity, or are required to provide parameters for the regulation and control of particular operations.
- **Re-engineering of Business Processes** - where specific operations and the processes necessary for its delivery are examined and enhanced or added upon in order to improve productivity, efficiency and effectiveness.
- **Consultation and Communications Strategies** - where programmes for the effective consultation and communication of a message by a government entity are developed.

AGENDA

During 2006 the Unit sought to focus its programme of works in accordance with Government's strategic objectives. This was primarily achieved through the following key thrusts:

- the provision of advice and support to the Office of the Prime Minister in conceptualising and implementing a programme for the continuous updating and regeneration of the Public Service;
- the development and delivery of national and major projects in line with Government's priorities;
- the increased participation and involvement on strategic boards and committees;
- supporting the delivery of the Public Service Change Programme through the delivery of corporate initiatives that will lead to the strengthening of the Public Service's administrative capacity.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2006

The Unit's major achievements in 2006 include the delivery of national and major projects such as the:

- **Monitoring the implementation of the National Reform Programme (NRP):** The NRP is one of Government's key strategic documents through which the country's sustainable socio-economic development challenges will be addressed. It is primarily intended to address Malta's competitiveness in terms of the relaunched Lisbon Strategy. To that effect, MEU prepared the first Annual Progress Report on the Malta NRP. This was submitted to the Commission on 13 October 2006. The report takes into consideration the state of play of implementation, keeping in view the Commission's Assessment of the NRP and the Conclusions of the Spring European Council 2006.

A Commission delegation visited Malta on 20 June 2006 to discuss the progress being registered on the NRP. The outcome of the visit was a positive one. When the assessment of Malta's progress on the NRP was released, the Commission acknowledged the fact that "Malta is, overall, making good progress in the implementation of its NRP". Moreover, the Commission recognises that Malta is addressing "most of the commitments made by the 2006 Spring European Council." MEU has also participated in Economic Policy Committee meetings on Lisbon Strategy, the first Lisbon Growth and Jobs Seminar, NRP Co-ordinator's meetings. The Unit regularly and frequently inputs and validates Lisbon-related Malta positions in Council formations.

- **The setting up of the Better Regulation Unit within MEU and the preparation of the Simplification Action Plan:** The Plan approved by Cabinet and put forward as one of Government's key measures in removing obstacles to economic growth in Budget 2007 is being implemented. It contains more than a hundred measures under five strategic thrusts (simplification of processes; forms; revocation of obsolete legislation; consolidation of entities and setting up of one-stop-shops; e-Government/ICT).

The majority of "quick wins" have been delivered by January 2007. Work is in progress on the next wave of projects, that is, some 36 high-impact projects by May 2007 with 90% of the Simplification Action Plan expected to be delivered by end 2007. MEU also provides input and validates Better Regulation-related positions in EU Council formations. MEU also took active part in the EU-OECD Sigma Report on Malta's Better Regulation framework. The Unit has presented Malta's progress on Better Regulation in the Economic Policy Committee as part of Commission's Lisbon peer review. Last but not least, MEU has secured the Unit's first Twinning Light Project on Capacity Building (Better Regulation).

- **Leading the euro changeover process in the wider Public Sector including Local Councils:** Great progress has been achieved in this programme. The Public Sector Sectoral Committee (within the National Euro Changeover Committee) and headed by MEU has issued its second update Strategic Plan for the Public Sector. More than a hundred public service and government entities have euro changeover plans in place and are progressing with implementation. MEU has also agreed Dual Display Roll out plans and legal amendments process with NECC and stakeholders. In addition, the Unit organised a conference on Euro Changeover Planning. MEU actively participates in the NECC meetings and decisions.

Since the launch of the euro changeover programme in November 2005 and during the current year 2006, the public sector managed to attain a number of important goals which augur well for the successful implementation of euro changeover within the entire public service and public sector. The key achievements include:

- the mobilisation of structures and resources at all levels of the public sector (PSSC, EMCs, EPMs); the network of officials specifically nominated to deal with euro changeover comprises more than 200 officers;
 - the successful completion of a euro awareness and euro assessment phase - a detailed analysis on the impact of the euro changeover has been carried out by all departments/entities ;
 - development of euro changeover plans - more than 100 departments/entities and all the ministries have adopted a euro changeover plan which deals with all aspects of the euro changeover;
 - development and adoption of a strategic changeover plan for the entire public sector – two versions have been issued in March and September 2006;
 - publication of an electronic newsletter on euro changeover within the public sector which is being disseminated to all public officers;
 - the drawing up of an implementation plan for the rolling out of dual display within the public service and public sector so as to ensure a consolidated and co-ordinated launch;
 - adoption of an operational framework for amendments to legislation due to the introduction of the euro;
 - the carrying out of a training needs analysis within the wider public sector – some 2,500 officer have been identified for training through a train-the-trainer programme run by 100 identified trainers from within departments and other government entities;
 - active participation in the development of the national agenda and ongoing collaboration with the NECC and its sectoral committees and task forces.
- **Project managing the implementation of the Schengen project:** and addressing the requirements arising thereof in terms of ICT, training, implications on consular offices and embassies, border control, Police Force preparations, and logistics. This role includes representation at the major EU working groups covering Schengen.
 - **Co-ordinating Malta's consolidated position within the EU Sustainable Development Strategy:** The European Council has adopted an ambitious and comprehensive renewed EU Strategy for Sustainable Development. MEU was asked to co-ordinate the development of Malta's position within the Friends of the Presidency Group and in nine Council formations where the EU SDS was discussed. Input was also provided to the National Strategy for Sustainable Development.
 - **Co-ordinating the migration of back-office services to Gozo:** This includes the migration of the Department of Information 153 call centre to Gozo. Work is in progress to transfer other government back-office activities to Gozo.
 - **Delivering a number of projects under the environment priority of Government:** These include: an updated Waste Strategy; a Waste-to-Energy Strategy; Construction Site Management regulations; and MEPA operational review.

MEU has been given the mandate and to pursue the above key challenges across Government. Projects in this respect have already been initiated in 2005 or 2006 and good progress is being reported. All public sector-wide projects require from MEU the pursuit of a number of critical success factors such as:

- strong vision and values;
- a network of contact persons in all line ministries, departments and government entities;
- a methodological approach with templates for information gathering;
- small but frequent deliverables;
- careful planning;
- strong monitoring mechanisms; and,
- prompt escalation of issues/risks.

MEU has also carried out other projects including a number of public consultation exercises on client projects so as to involve all stakeholders in projects. Such consultations included amongst others the National Reform Programme; Construction Site Management regulation. In 2006, MEU organised a conference for the public sector on euro changeover planning. These projects have given the Unit the opportunity to address the MCESD on a number of occasions and to meet several social partners, civil society and local councils.

The Unit has continued its role in the public sector reform through the nomination of the Chief Executive Officer and members of MEU's Management Team on various strategic boards and committees.

Internally, MEU has completed a contract review of all members of staff including repositioning of some officers. During 2006, the Unit moved to modern premises in Blata l-Bajda. The Unit retained its support for family-friendly measures, environment responsibility and education. The PC network and software applications have been enhanced.

Taking into account the above outputs, the challenges and circumstances during 2006, the Management Efficiency Unit has managed to maintain the same high-level of internal performance attained in previous years and has also broken new ground in EU-related projects and Better Regulation. In particular, the increased alignment with government priorities, the increase in public-sector-wide projects and the European Union perspective which is a completely new area of work for MEU.

These achievements show that the leadership at MEU and the strategic initiatives being entrusted to the Unit have contributed to increase the pace of change in the public sector, are delivering results and providing better value for money to Government.

JOHN W AQUILINA
Chief Executive Officer, MEU

Armed Forces of Malta

INTRODUCTION

Throughout 2006, the Armed Forces of Malta (AFM) have been committed to the accomplishment of all tasks assigned to them. Primarily, there have been no significant changes to the roles of the AFM during the year under review. The AFM continued to provide for the surveillance of Maltese territory (land, air and sea) as its primary role and to provide military assistance to other entities as its secondary role. However, in 2006 the AFM has seen some major changes in its structure. In fact, the last two months of 2006 was characterised by the changes that took place due to the implementation of the AFM Organisation and Establishment of Personnel Review, which was geared at keeping the Force abreast with the new realities and operating scenarios, bearing in mind the ever-restricted budgetary allocations and the overall requirement to have a leaner yet more efficient armed force.

ROLES

The AFM is tasked to perform two defence roles:

- *Primary Defence Role:* The AFM is responsible for the external security and integrity of the Maltese Islands in peacetime and in crisis.
- *Secondary Defence Role:* The AFM provides military support in specified areas to the Police Force on a regular basis and to other government departments when required.

MISSIONS TASKS ARISING FROM DEFENCE ROLES

The demands, which these defence roles place on the AFM, can be broken down into individual mission tasks as follows:

Primary Defence Role

Maintain the external security and integrity of the Maltese Islands in peacetime and in crisis.

- Maintain territorial integrity (particularly at the Malta International Airport and other sensitive locations);
- Maintain integrity of Maltese waters (physical and electronic surveillance against smuggling, illegal trafficking of immigrants and law-breaking at sea);
- Provide for the limited surveillance of the Maltese airspace;
- Provide a search and rescue service in Malta and its Search and Rescue Region;
- Provide Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) and Improvised Explosive Device Disposal (IEDD) cover;
- Contribute towards international peace and stability by participating in the EU's Rapid Reaction Force.

Secondary Defence Role

Provide Military Supporting Tasks

- Provide military assistance to government departments and the civil community;
- Provide civil emergency protection support (explosives, marine pollution, floods and other disasters);
- Provide Military Aid to the Police and Security Services (internal security, anti-narcotic patrols and vehicles check-points);
- Provide state ceremonial and other public duties.

ORGANISATION STRUCTURE

2006 has seen some major changes in the AFM's organisational structure. As opposed to the three regiments that existed prior to the Review, the AFM now is composed of a Headquarters and five Units – 1st Regiment, 3rd Regiment, 4th Regiment, Maritime Squadron and Air Wing.

Headquarters AFM is responsible for the command, control and management of the Force. It lays down the policies and gives the necessary direction to run the AFM and to achieve the goals set by Government in an efficient and cost effective manner. As a result of the Review, major changes also took place within Headquarters AFM. The European Security and Defence Policy Section has been upgraded to a fully-fledged Branch. A new Branch for an Internal Audit and Investigation Function has been established. Within the Operations and Training Branch, the Plans and Intelligence Section was reactivated and a new Legal Section was formed. Additionally, a new Public Information Section has also been newly established with the Officer in Charge of this section reporting directly to Commander AFM and his Deputy. With these changes in the Headquarters set-up, a better and more efficient administration and control of the Force is expected to be achieved in the years ahead.

1st Regiment's primary mission is to deploy infantry soldiers on operations related to the maintenance of Malta's territorial integrity on land and to provide assistance to the Police when required. 1st Regiment is a motorised infantry battalion composed of a Headquarters, a Headquarters Company (providing service support), 'A' Company (tasked with airport security duties), 'B' Company (tasked with security of sensitive locations), 'C' (Special Duties) Company (tasked as a quick reaction company primarily focused on infantry operational tasks and also tasked to meet Malta's pledge towards the EU in Crisis Management Operations) and 'D' Company (tasked with providing heavy weapons support and providing security with Third Country Nationals accommodated in the Closed Detention Centre located in Lyster Barracks). In addition, the regiment also has a troop of soldiers based in Qortin, Gozo. Following the disbandment of 2nd Regiment (which consisted of Maritime Squadron, Air Squadron and the Air Defence Battery), what was the Air Defence Battery (ADB) has now become part of 1st Regiment with the new designation of Air Defence and Support Company (ADSC).

3rd Regiment is a service support unit composed of a Headquarters, a Headquarters Company, an Engineer Squadron, an Electrical and Mechanical Engineer Squadron, and an Ammunition and Explosives Company (including an EOD and Divers Troop). The AFM Band and Revenue Security Corps (RSC) which previously formed part of this regiment, now form part of the newly-formed 4th Regiment. The principal role of 3rd Regiment is to provide support services to the Force in field engineering, general electrical and mechanical maintenance, vehicle servicing and repair, ammunition and explosives storage, ordnance disposal and diving operations.

4th Regiment which has been newly formed following AFM's review has absorbed the functions and responsibilities of the previously Camp Commandant. As such it has absorbed within its formation the Medical Branch, the Records Section, and the Finance and Paymaster Section. Besides, both the Band and Revenue Security Corps have now become part of the Regiment. Additionally, two new companies were formed. The Command, Control, Communications and Information Company (C3I Coy) which is responsible for manning the AFM's Operations Centre and Rescue Co-ordination Centre as well as for the maintenance of all communication equipment and the installation and maintenance of all ICT systems within AFM and the Catering Company which has taken over all messes and canteens within the AFM now form part of the Regiment. This is expected to improve flexibility and standardisation of procedures.

Maritime Squadron (previously part of the disbanded 2nd Regiment) has been given the status of a major AFM unit. It is now under the command of a Commanding Officer and reports directly to Headquarters AFM. Its mission is that of maintaining the territorial integrity of the Maltese waters and provides for law enforcement at sea. This is achieved through the deployment of its assets to patrol Malta's territorial waters, fishing and contiguous zone as well as its continental shelf. The Squadron also provides search and rescue services at sea.

Air Wing (previously Air Squadron, 2nd Regiment) has also been raised to the status of a major AFM unit with its own Commanding Officer, and reports directly to Headquarters AFM. The Wing's major role is that of maintaining the integrity of Maltese airspace and the provision of Search and Rescue (SAR) services within a defined area of jurisdiction. Moreover, Air Wing is also committed to provide military assistance to other government agencies such as the Civil Protection Department and the Malta Police Force. It also provides for medical evacuation services between the two islands and from ships passing by when required. Air Wing assets provide also for filming and photographic services which from time to time are requested by government entities. To carry out such tasks, the Air Wing has thirteen aircraft in operational status out of which seven are rotorcraft (two belonging to the Italian Military Mission) and six are fixed wing aircraft.

OPERATIONS

Land

On land, the AFM's main operational tasks focus on key point security and providing military support to the Police. This was achieved through a combination of fixed-point guards, land patrols and vehicle check points. Statistics regarding land operations carried out during the year under review are:

Security Duties

'A' Company (Malta International Airport)		'B' Company	
Fixed points manned	13	Motor Vehicle Checkpoints	41
VVIP procedures undertaken	41	Locations	78
Valuable cargo escorts	924	Vehicles checked	418
		Minor contraventions (i.e. not having necessary documents)	59
Gozo Operations & Training Troop		Persons handed over to Police for investigation	10
VCP's	88	Drug Abuse Cases	4
Vehicles checked	517	Patrols (foot and vehicle)	26
Contraventions	3		

Apart from routine operations listed above, 'A' Company was involved in the provision of security during the Malta International Airshow and the 37th International Air Rally and the provision of special security arrangements with high-risk flights. 'A' Company also provided assistance on three occasions where Full Emergency (in accordance with the Aircraft Accident Emergency Instructions) was declared.

'B' Company is tasked with providing security at a number of sensitive locations around the Malta. These include government buildings, certain embassies and other strategic locations. During 2006, 'B' Company provided round-the-clock security with 13 of these locations. The company was also tasked with performing vehicle checkpoints and foot patrols aimed at curbing illegal substance abuse/trafficking, illegal immigration, illegal hunting and traffic contraventions.

'C' (Special Duties) Company was tasked to conduct a number of search operations within detention centres and in the northern part of the island, searching for escaped Third Country Nationals (TCNs). In June the company was again deployed to Safi Barracks in response to a mass disturbance that spilled out of Safi and onto the local roads. When the TCNs became overtly aggressive the company intervened to bring the situation again under control.

Apart from providing a Quick Reaction Force for the AFM in instances of unrest, 'C' (SD) Company also performs vehicle checkpoints with the aim of curbing illegal activities. During the year, 17 such checkpoints were mounted, resulting in 30 finds of illegal substances. Other tasks in 2006 included the escort of arms and ammunition and the escort of illegal immigrants on repatriation flights.

Gozo Operations and Training Troop

During 2006, the Gozo Operations & Training Troop was tasked with manning the Qortin Training Camp in Nadur; performing land coastal patrols and anti-narcotic vehicle checkpoints and patrols in Gozo; providing security duties at the Gozo heliport and assistance to the Gozo Police when required.

Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD)

The EOD Section conducts explosive/improvised explosive disposal operations, investigates bomb threats and items arousing suspicion at the request of the Malta Police Force, screens mail addressed to certain VIPs and other individuals and conducts searches for explosives at Parliament and in cargo and baggage at the Malta International Airport. The EOD diving section, in addition to normal diving tasks, assists the Police in the recovery of corpses and items connected with criminal activities at sea. Statistics for the period under review are as follows:

Bomb threats (all negative)	36	Explosions	1
Suspected improvised explosive devices (all negative)	17	Search for vehicles (under water)	2
Recovery of petards (various sizes)	84	Improvised explosive devices (actual)	1
Recovery of explosive ordnance	19		

Maritime

Maritime Squadron has continued to provide surveillance of the Maltese territorial waters and search and rescue services within Malta's area of responsibility. This is accomplished by deploying maritime assets on both inshore and offshore patrols. The following is a breakdown of operations conducted by Maritime Squadron during 2006:

Routine missions/patrols	744	Vessels sighted	148
Offshore patrols	79	Vessels – verbal challenge	255
Persons rescued (excluding TCNs)	11	Vessels – boarded and inspected	441
Assistance to craft, inc. distress (exc. TCN vessels)	26	Vessels – boarded and searched	8
Migrant interdiction operations	55	Sick persons conveyed from other vessels	2
Approx. no. of TCNs assisted/rescued	1,253		

These missions involved a total of 12,187 hrs underway, i.e. an average of 33.4hrs per day. Numerous force protection operations were also undertaken which saw foreign warships being escorted into and out of Grand Harbour while also being afforded various levels of protection at the quayside. In addition to the operational activities mentioned above, Maritime Squadron was also heavily involved in Operation Nautilus with OPV P61 and MPVs P51 and P52 deploying into patrol areas south and southwest of Malta.

The recent investment in maritime assets has proved to be crucial for the increased efficiency of this unit. 2006 has seen further investment by the arrival of a new interceptor boat P-01 and the continuation of works on the Squadron's base at Hay Wharf.

Air

Air Wing assets conducted a total of 1,184 flights during 2006 with a further 194 flights being undertaken by the MIATM AB212 helicopters. Of these 194 flights, only five were SAR-related with the bulk of the remainder being training flights and navigational exercises. A breakdown of these flights is given in the table below:

Mission	Fixed Wing	Helicopters	IMM	Total
Coastal Patrols	314	52		366
MLE Patrols	6			6
Offshore Patrols	6	1		7
Reconnaissance	17	28	1	46
Pollution Control				-
Fisheries Control				-
Illegal Migrants	9	4		13
Police Assistance Details				-
Rescue Call		8	1	9
Searches	30	16	1	47

Rescue		5	2	7
Recovery of Corpse				-
Medevac – Land Based		72		72
Medevac – Maritime Based Platforms		2	1	3
Medical & Health – Miscellaneous		6		6
Blood Conveyance Details		3		3
Military Conveyance Details		6	3	9
Military Purpose Details	5	9	2	16
VIP Conveyance Details		12		12
General Conveyances		20	3	23
Training	92	331	140	563
Navigation Exercises	16	2	37	55
Aircraft Tests	30	26	2	58
Photographic Missions		27	1	28
Video Info Link (VIL)		4		4
Check Flights	14	11		25
Totals	539	645	194	1,378

These missions involved a total amount of flight time of 1,015.35hrs.

In addition to the above-mentioned activities, Air Wing was also marginally involved in Operation Nautilus, the first joint operation in the central Mediterranean co-ordinated by Frontex. A single Air Wing officer was posted to the joint co-ordination centre in Lampedusa as part of the operation staff. A single Guardia di Finanza P166 aircraft participating in the operation was based at Air Wing facilities.

The Air Squadron has once more participated in the Malta International Airshow which was held at the Malta International Airport on the 23 and 24 September. The AFM participated in the static display with two helicopters and two fixed winged aircraft. Furthermore two Alouettes and two Bulldogs took part in the flying display.

Islander Aircraft AS9819 travelled to the Fly-BN facility in Benbridge, UK between 14 and 16 September for installation of the Forward-Looking Infra-Red (FLIR) turret being purchased as part of the Pre-accession 2003 Border Control Project.

TRAINING

- *Overseas:* The AFM was able to secure 28 training opportunities overseas in 2006. These were in: Italy (12); France (6); UK (3); Germany (2); USA, Belgium, Czech Rep, Denmark and Hungary (1 each). All administrative and planning processes in this respect are the responsibility of the Training section. Moreover, one platoon from C (Special Duties) Company was attached on a three-week pre-deployment training with the 7th Regimento Alpini in Belluno, Italy.
- *Local:* Numerous training events were organised, both internally as well as through mobile training teams. The latter were secured notably through EU projects (Twinning Light and VTS Projects) and the Italian Military Mission.
- *Travel Overseas:* The Operations Branch was also responsible for facilitating participation in overseas conferences, meetings and workshops by assuming all administrative duties in this respect. There were a total of 75 such visits in the categories as follows: 5 + 5 Initiative (9); Exercise Planning (3); ESDP-related (22); Frontex (19); OSCE (2); Miscellaneous (20).
- *Exercises:* During 2006, a number of exercises were conducted. These were either organised by the AFM independently or by the AFM in conjunction with other entities. The following table gives a breakdown of the exercises conducted:

<i>Exercise Name</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Description</i>
Ex Malta Hope	29 Apr-13 May	Joint exercise between AFM and British Army
Ex Evac 06	10 Jun	One day table top exercise on non-combatant evacuation (EU)
Ex Canale 2006	12-16 Jun	Annual live exercise between Malta and Italy (Maritime)
Ex Passex	17-19 Aug	Maritime rescue exercise between AFM and US Coast Guard
Ex Terraferma 2006	7-16 Sep (Malta)	
	18-28 Sep (Italy)	Annual live exercise between Malta and Italy (Land Forces)
Ex Aircraft Accident	3 Oct	Aircraft accident full emergency exercise in conjunction with MIA
Ex Little Buskett	15 Nov	Aircraft accident outside airfield boundaries in conjunction with CPD
Ex Terror Wings	17 Nov	Hijack exercise in conjunction with OMAS

- *Recruits*: Sixty recruits completed their basic training on 30 November 2006. The pass out parade was held at Luqa Barracks. The main guest of the event was the Hon Prime Minister who also inspected the parade.

Following a call for applications for enlistment in the AFM of Gunners and soldier Tradesmen/Bandsmen on 19 September, 306 applications were received. The total number of eligible candidates was 277 Gunners; 18 Tradesmen; 3 Bandsmen. The Army Physical Fitness Tests were held between 27 November and 1 December. For the first time it was decided to give applicants failing from one test the possibility of a resit in that particular test.

- *Officer Cadets – Intake 061*: Eight Officer Cadets finished the first part of their cadetship training during December 2006. Six of the Cadets will travel to Italy for the continuation of their training while the other two have been attached to sub-units while awaiting their turn to attend further training abroad.
- *Emergency Volunteer Reserve Force (EVRF)*: Throughout 2006, the EVRF continued to receive training by members of C (SD) Company. Apart from their monthly commitment, they also performed three mini camps of three days each over the year.
- *Education Classes*: The examinations of the Army Certificate of Education Classes I and II, which commenced on 1 December 2005, were held at the Lifelong Centre (Centre for Adult Education), Msida, on 29-31 May 2006. The Map Reading examinations for Class I and II were completed in mid-June 06. Class III Examinations, which were organised in-house (within the AFM), were held on 24-26 April. Trade Tests (and assimilations) were held in order to upgrade the trade qualification of soldiers in the AFM.
- *Other Training*: All units within the AFM have conducted training in accordance with their tasks. Physical Fitness tests and weapons classifications were conducted according to AFM Standing Orders. Moreover, other specialised training was also undertaken.

CEREMONIAL DUTIES

The following is a list of ceremonial commitments that the AFM attended to during 2006:

<i>Event</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>AFM Commitment</i>
Freedom Day	31 Mar	Guard of Honour – Vittoriosa
Victory Day	8 Sept	Guard of Honour – St John's Square
Independence Day	21 Sept	Guard of Honour – St John's Square Wreath Laying Ceremony – Floriana Guard of Honour – Victoria (Gozo)
State visit by HE President of Ireland	5-7 Oct	Arrival Ceremony – St George's Square Wreath Laying Ceremony – Floriana Departure Ceremony – MIA
Remembrance Day	12 Nov	Guard of Honour – St John's Square Wreath Laying Ceremony – Floriana
Visit by French Admiral	11 Dec	Quarter Guard – Luqa Barracks
Republic Day	13 Dec	Parade – St George's Square

Passing out Parade

On 30 November, 60 recruits took part in a 'Passing Out Parade' for which the Hon Prime Minister, the Hon Parliamentary Secretary, the Principal Permanent Secretary and Director Defence Matters were present.

AFM Band

Apart from state ceremonial duties, throughout 2006 the AFM Band was involved in a number of activities – both formal and informal. It has given concerts in schools, elderly homes and hospitals. In summer, the band participated in a number of public events and in the *Notte Bianca* held in Valletta. It also took part in the 2006 Valletta Military Tattoo where it gave an impressive display. All these activities were geared at enhancing the AFM's image.

LOGISTICS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Overseas Procurement

The last batch of 11 Land Rovers with military specifications were purchased and delivered from the UK in October. The AFM finalised the procurement of 800 foul weather suits from the Italian Army. Special anti-riot guns for C 'SD' Company were procured from H&K Germany.

Barracks and Projects

The newly established Barracks & Project section is responsible for a number of AFM projects:

- a temporary Motor Transport Shed at Luqa Barracks - completed in January;
- extension and refurbishment of the HQ AFM Block - to be completed in 2007;
- cesspit connection of Hal Far Barracks to the main sewage system - to be completed end June 2007;
- refurbishment/upgrading of safety requirements of the Safi Pistol Range - to be completed by end 2007;
- building of a reception centre at the ex-MT area at Safi Barracks- to be completed by end 2007;
- works on the Maritime Base at Hay Wharf - continued throughout 2006.

Feeding of TCNs

A total amount of Lm222,673 was defrayed in connection with the provision of 184,105 meals procured for Third Country Nationals housed in AFM Detention Centres.

Petrol, Oil & Lubricants (POL)

During 2006 a total of Lm 566,063 was purchased in POL to cater for the requirements for the operational capability of transportation of all AFM units.

Local Procurement by Tenders

A sum of Lm105,678 was disbursed on the procurement of military equipment and clothing purchased from local suppliers as part of a three year plan starting in 2006.

PERSONNEL MATTERS

Promotion Exercise

In October the Officers promotions were published - eight Majors were promoted to Lt Colonels; three Captains were promoted to one Sgt Major and two Majors respectively; seven Lieutenants were promoted to Captain. In December, four WOIs and four WOIIIs were promoted to the rank of Lieutenant whilst 582 were promoted in the ranks.

Awarding of the Long & Efficient Service Medal

The Long & Efficient Service Medal was presented to 222 individuals during a ceremony that took place on 4 October 2006. Another five members received the 1st Clasp whereas three members, including CAFM, received the 2nd Clasp on the same day.

Legal section

The recent reorganisation of the Force paved the way towards the formation of the Legal Section within the AFM Headquarters. There was the immediate cognition of all pending AFM Civil cases together with the necessary updating of files as required. The AFM legal representation during Court sittings is now formally entrusted to a 'military oriented' legal counsel, particularly when the cases being contested are linked to a purely military issue.

This section has formally provided direct legal advice to six different sections within the Force on subjects ranging from those of a purely administrative nature to others which have international legislation as their basis.

Air Show

A reception for Air Show 2006 participants, other members and distinguished guests was held at the Officers' Mess on 30 September 2006.

AFM Open Day

The AFM Open Day was held on Sunday 1 October 2006 between 1000 hours and 1800 hours. This year's open day has once again proved to be a complete success with thousands of people and a number of VVIPs (including the Prime Minister) visiting the event.

INTERNAL AUDIT

The Audit and Investigation Branch was set up as a result of the Review. Its mission is that of providing independent and objective auditing services in order to assist the AFM to make informed decisions, resolve issues, use its resources effectively and efficiently, and satisfy statutory and financial responsibilities.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

The Review that was undertaken during 2006 included the setting up of the Public Information Section within Headquarters AFM. This section should develop into a one-stop-shop for all persons or entities outside the AFM that require information. It is responsible for all aspects of relations with the media and the public in general and is tasked to advise the Commander on matters relating to public information. Although it is still in its setting-up phase, this section has already embarked on a number of projects apart from providing coverage on day-to-day events.

BILATERAL AFFAIRS

Malta-Italy

Military relations between Malta and Italy have continued to develop and flourish during 2006. Meetings between HQ AFM and the Italian Military Mission (IMM) were held regularly throughout the year. Moreover, the IMM provided for training of AFM personnel on more than one occasion either by bringing over Mobile Training Teams or by sending AFM personnel abroad.

For the fourth consecutive year the Italian Defence General Staff invited the AFM to participate in the traditional military parade, which is held in *Via Dei Fori Imperiali* in Rome. The AFM participated with a Flag Party which consisted of one officer and two non-commissioned officers.

Malta-EU

Following the review of the organisation and establishment of the AFM in October 2006, a separate branch focusing on European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) matters was established. This requirement stemmed out of Malta's full membership in the EU. It is headed by an officer in the rank of Lieutenant Colonel supported by three non-commissioned officers. This branch is responsible to Commander, AFM with reference to matters relating to European Security and Defence Policy. The branch also handles the EU Classified Information Registry within the same Headquarters. It is also responsible for United Nations and Organisation for Security and Co-operation matters that affect the AFM. Another area of responsibility is the Technical Agreement between Malta and Italy covering the attachment of an AFM platoon with an Italian Regiment for combined participation in EU-led Crisis Management Operations.

The ESDP Branch is in regular liaison with the Defence Matters Directorate in the Office of the Prime Minister and Malta's Military Representative at the Permanent Representation to the EU where the AFM has a Lieutenant Colonel appointed as Malta's Military Representative to the EU Military Committee (EUMC). Besides active and regular participation in the EUMC Meetings by the Maltese MilRep, members of AFM regularly participate in other ESDP meetings in Brussels.

In March, the EU asked all members states including Malta to review and update the National pledge made six years ago towards the EU's Military Headline Goal. Malta maintained the pledge made in 2000 towards EU-led Crisis Management Operations. This pledge consisted of an Infantry Platoon (one officer and 29 soldiers) and a National Headquarters Element (approximately five personnel) for participation in EU-led Humanitarian and Rescue Operations that have a UN/OSCE mandate and focused on the Euro-Mediterranean region. Malta also agreed to sustain this pledge for a year should this be required. This year Malta also pledged a Military Observer Team consisting of around 12 soldiers to perform military observation tasks in third countries and to sustain this pledge for a year.

During 2006, preparations were in full swing for the first posting of a Maltese officer with the EU Military Staff scheduled for early 2008. The AFM also took up military training opportunities that the EU offered. This included participation in an EU Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation table-top exercise as well as participation by AFM officers in training courses for military observers and press information officers.

This branch also co-ordinates the temporary attachment of Maltese officers overseas to support confidence-building missions of the OSCE in Europe, particularly those missions that are conducted in support of the Dayton Accords in the Balkans. During 2006, the AFM successfully participated in two such missions.

Malta-France

Relations between the AFM and the French Armed Forces were enhanced by the visit of Admiral Alain Oudot de Dainville, the Chief of Navy Staff. During his visit, current maritime affairs were discussed with Commander AFM and the Admiral visited the AFM's operations centre and Maritime Squadron.

Malta-UK

In April/May 2006 the AFM hosted a Company of British Troops from the 106th Regiment (Territorials). During their stay, a joint exercise was conducted with members of C (Special Duties) Company.

Malta-USA

Relations with the United States of America were further enhanced by the visit to the AFM of Rear Admiral Fred M Rosa, Deputy Assistant Commandant for Intelligence and Investigations in February. Ms Angela Cervetti, the US State Department Desk Officer for Malta and Rear Admiral W Baumgartner, the US Coast Guard Judge Advocate General visited the AFM in October.

Malta-Austria

Following an invitation by the Austrian Chief of Defence, the Commander AFM paid an official visit to Austria between 5 and 7 April. During the visit, he attended to a wreath laying ceremony, was invited to observe a Peace Support exercise denominated Peace Summit 06, visited the Austrian Army's training area in Hochfilzer and had various meetings with high-ranking Austrian officials.

Visits by Verification Teams

A Croatian Verification Team conducted a Vienna Document 1999 evaluation visit on 2nd Regiment on 1 March, visiting all of 2nd Regiment's sub-units. The team was very satisfied with the visit and the support provided by the AFM.

A Slovenian Verification Team conducted a Vienna Document 1999 Specified Area Compliance and Verification Visit to Malta between 14 and 16 March. The inspection team consisted of two Slovenians and a Bulgarian (guest). This verification team visited all the AFM units and also performed an aerial reconnaissance over specified areas that included the whole territory of the Maltese Islands. The team was also very satisfied with the visit and the support provided.

Visit by accredited Defence Attachés

In December, the Commander AFM invited all Defence Attachés accredited to Malta to visit HQ AFM for a briefing on the review being implemented. The Defence Attachés of France, Germany, Russia, USA, Poland, Greece, UK and Turkey and the senior officers at the Italian Military Mission attended the briefing.

CONCLUSION

As outlined above, 2006 was a very intense year for the AFM. The changes in its organisational structure have brought about new challenges but have put the AFM in a better position to take advantage of the opportunities offered. Once again, the AFM has proved to be an efficient force, making the best out of its limited resources, be it for training or operations. The AFM has managed to intensify its relations with other armed forces and to bring to conclusion a number of major infrastructural projects. In view of this, one can definitively say that 2006 was a fruitful year for the Armed Forces of Malta.

BRIGADIER CARMEL VASSALLO
Commander AFM

Department of Information

MEDIA RELATIONS

During the year under review, a total of 1,777 Press Releases together with accompanying press photographs were electronically issued to media organisations and other recipients in real time and posted on the Department's website on the same day of issue.

Full media facilities were provided to local and foreign media during official functions, and state and official visits to Malta, while assistance was given to foreign news agencies requesting interviews with the Prime Minister and other Ministers. The Department also carried out all the necessary logistical arrangements for media representatives accompanying the Prime Minister during his official visits abroad, including his participation at the European Council meetings held in Brussels in March, June, and December, at the EU-LAC Summit in Vienna (May), at the ASIA-EU Meeting in Helsinki (September), his working visits to Helsinki and Paris, his meeting with Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi in Rome (July), and his official visit to Croatia (August). A DOI photographer accompanied the Prime Minister on most of the visits. The Department closely liaised with OPM to map out a flexible value for money *modus operandi* being successively fine-tuned by added practical experience.

Press Cards issued to local media members amounted to 436, while accreditation cards issued to foreign media representatives totalled 14.

THE MALTA GOVERNMENT GAZETTE

The Department published 156 issues of the Government Gazette, totalling 11,302 pages, together with 6,824 pages containing 20 Acts, 26 Bills presented in Parliament and 336 Legal Notices. All editions of the Gazette were put online in real time, causing a 62% decrease spread over the last three years in the number of printed copies of the Gazette; in fact, whereas the number of subscriptions stood at 1,654 in 2003, this number went down to 628 in 2006, thus registering a decrease of 1,026 subscriptions. Moreover, the number of printed copies went down from 1,920 in 2003 to 740 in 2006, representing an overall decrease of 1,180. This has resulted in considerable savings on postage, paper and jobbing expenses. For the third year running, the Department published all the Acts of Parliament (22) and Legal Notices (418) on CD, which has proved useful to legal firms as well as with other interested parties.

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICE

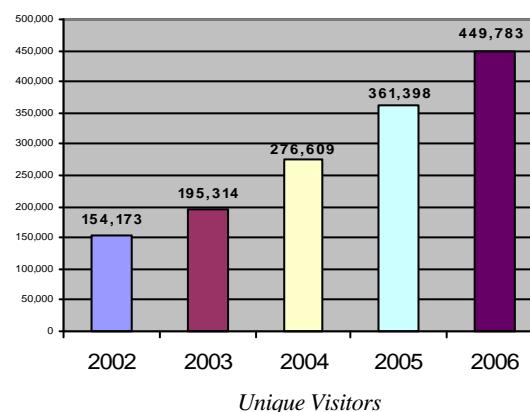
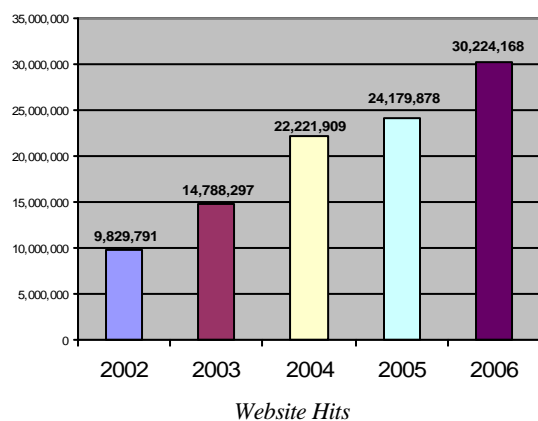
The Customer Care System together with the electronic service info.doi@gov.mt within the Government Information Service continued to provide direct information to the general public throughout the year. The public was also provided with various brochures and printed material on government activities. The number of subscribers to Direct Mailing Services reached 4,000, registering an increase of 730 new subscribers, over the previous year. The services, which are free of charge, include the electronic mailing of job opportunities, calls for tenders, scholarships and press releases. The Department also handled 1,680 electronic enquiries and 58,161 calls received on Freephone 153.

GREEN INITIATIVES

The Department participated in a number of meetings in the Green focal point forum, organised by the OPM Green Leader, in line with government policy, as a result of which a number of initiatives were implemented. In February the Department launched a save-energy campaign, whereby all staff members were encouraged to make diligent use of electricity and water. Additionally, all offices were equipped with suitable bins, marked accordingly for the separation of plastic, paper, metal, or glass. The bulk separated waste of each category is collected by WasteServ Ltd once a week. Other initiatives also focused on the reduction in the use of paper, re-use of envelopes, and the refilling of used printer ink cartridges. This Department carried out a survey to identify the number of lighting units in the offices and common areas with the aim of eventually replacing them with energy saving units. The exercise is being co-ordinated with the OPM Green Leader.

DOI WEBSITE

During 2006, the Department's website continued to increase its audience, reaching a record total number of 30,224,168 hits, as against 24,179,878 in the previous year, an increase of 6,044,290, while the total number of unique visitors increased to 449,783 as compared to 361,398 in 2005, an increase of 88,385. All website pages were kept updated, while special features were put online from time to time, especially the news page which featured audio recordings of various press conferences and speeches by the Prime Minister. For the first time ever, in 2006, the Department live-streamed the Prime Minister's Budget Speech in Parliament on its website. The Government Gazette, regularly posted at the same time of issue of the printed version, continued to attract the attention of users. Its rate of popularity is evidenced by consistent, numerous and frequent downloads. The pre-Budget Document was also in demand, reaching 19,836 downloads during the month of August. Other pages very frequently accessed included information about ministries and departments, job opportunities and calls for tenders.



THE OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT PORTAL AND GOVERNMENT INTRANET

The Department managed and continuously updated both sites throughout the year and introduced a number of innovations aimed at providing better and more wholesome information to the general public as well as to government users.

LOCAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS

In conjunction with the Electoral Office, a Press Room was set up at the Counting Hall providing local media with telecommunications and electronic facilities as well as other assistance. Election results were also put online on the website of the Department of Information as soon as each count was received from the Electoral Commission.

MALTA PAVILION

The National Pavilion at the 2006 edition of the International Fair of Malta was fully dedicated to the preparations which are underway for the introduction of the euro. The National Euro Changeover Committee (NECC) managed the Pavilion with the full support of DOI resources. Information meetings conducted by various experts were organised on each day of the Fair. An attraction in the Pavilion was an extensive and invaluable exhibition of coins used in Malta throughout the ages. A designated Children's Area included the presence of animators who organised various activities such as face painting, euro quizzes and other educational activities. Promotional material was also distributed to the public to encourage participation in the euro campaign.

FILM VAULT PROJECT

During the year under review, the Department embarked on a project entailing the setting-up of a proper Film Vault for its archived 16 mm films, which date back to the fifties. The vault was furnished with appropriate split-type air-conditioners, fire curtains, fire door and a sophisticated fire suppression unit. Subsequently, the Department proceeded with the laborious task of transferring all films from their previous stores to the new vault, where they are presently being individually catalogued, registered, placed in brand new plastic cans and permanently stored. The Department has endeavoured to set up the vault in a cost-effective manner while at the same time catering for the recommendations submitted by local and foreign experts, with the aim of creating a room with appropriate ambient conditions so as to prolong the preservation of what is considered to be part of our country's historical heritage.

MIGRATION OF FREEPHONE 153

In line with government policy, the Department actively participated in the migratory process of the Freephone 153 service to Gozo Back-office. An action team composed of the various stakeholders and technical personnel was set up to co-ordinate the migration. Five Gozitan employees working in Malta were selected by the Management and Personnel Office to operate the Freephone 153 from the Gozo back-office. They were trained accordingly by DOI personnel, both on the operation of the Lotus Notes, as well as on customer care. The outgoing DOI clerks passed on their valuable experience to the new team, during a period of parallel service provided before the actual migration took place. The close co-ordination offered by all involved rendered a smooth migration of the service. Some time before the migration deadline, the freephone services were provided from Gozo on an experimental basis. This proved to be vital, in order to identify teething troubles as well as to ascertain the successful operation of the telephone lines from Gozo. Freephone 153 services actually started operating from Gozo on Monday, 18 September 2006.

PAN-EUROPEAN PORTAL FOR EU CITIZENS

During the Editorial Board meeting which took place in Brussels late in 2005, the European Commission decided that the collation for the citizen section was to be taken care of by the editorial board members instead of the Internal Market Advisory Committee members. As from January 2006, a DOI officer sitting on the said editorial board has been in constant communication with the European Commission representatives to obtain as much information as possible with regard to this new task. At the end of February, almost 75% of the fact-sheets were collected and submitted to the European Commission for uploading. Subsequently, the designated officer continued to attend regularly the quarterly editorial board meetings held in Brussels, during which, a general feel of the information submitted was given, with special emphasis to Malta which succeeded in submitting nearly all the factsheets, following which, a second version of the portal was released. One of the crucial changes that are evident in this new section is the creation of new categories falling under the Business Section. All member states had to reassign the already provided content to match with the newly-created categories. All the promotional material which

has been received from the European Commission was forwarded to the *Forum Malta fl-Ewropa* for dissemination through local councils and the Malta International Trade Fair.

PAYMENT GATEWAY ON THE DOI WEBSITE

In line with government policy regarding the implementation of e-Government services, the Department submitted a number of proposals with the aim of improving present procedures. These include the creation of online payment for Government Gazette and Publications, the setting up of an online process for the issuance of press cards to journalists, and the creation of an online payment system for the purchase of photographs from DOI. Business Analysis Report for the first of the mentioned initiatives has been approved and the tender will be issued as soon as it is cleared by the Department of Contracts. The remaining two initiatives will be dealt with during the year 2007.

PUBLICATION OF BOOK ENTITLED MALTA'S PARLIAMENT - AN OFFICIAL HISTORY

The Department was asked by the Speaker of the House of Representatives to co-ordinate the publication of a prestigious book recording the history of Malta's Parliament. After a series of meetings with Mr Speaker and the author Prof Godfrey A Pirotta, the latter gradually forwarded to this Department the draft text, which was subsequently type-set and checked. Concurrently, work started on the taking of photos by the Department's photographers, which included photo sessions at the Tapestry Chamber, the Parliament Chamber, the Parliamentary Offices and Committee Rooms and various other Palace details. This was followed by several other tasks including the graphics, design, colour scheme, hard-bound cover, the dust-jacket (back and front), photographic material sought from various sources, etc. In the final stages, the whole text of the publication was proof-read for several times until it was ascertained that all misprints and other errors were corrected. Finally, a print-ready document was forwarded by DOI to Gutenberg Press for printing. The printing of the publication (2,000 copies) was completed in the beginning of June and the book was subsequently launched in July.

EMANUEL ABELA
Director (Information)

Government Printing Press

During 2006 the Government Printing Press continued to provide an efficient printing service to ministries, government departments and other agencies. All demands were met even though there were various instances where the Press was given very short lead times.

PRINTING OF GOVERNMENT GAZETTE

The following table shows the number of issues of Government Gazette and supplements printed in 2006:

	Issues	Pages		Issues	Pages
Government Gazette	154	11,302	Legal Notices	336	4,748
Bills	26	1,150	KLBL (Bye Laws)	2	10
Acts	20	920			

All supplements are published together with the Government Gazette which is the main publication. Apart from the twice weekly (Tuesdays and Fridays) publications, other extraordinary editions are printed according to exigencies.

Other major jobs undertaken during the year included:

- Electoral Register for General, Local Councils and European Parliament Elections (April & October);
- Ballot papers and other related material for March 2006 Local Council Elections;
- Annual Reports of various departments including Auditor General, Parliamentary Standing Committee, Ombudsman etc;
- Printing in connection with EURO Changeover process;
- Printing of mail shots (*Ġejjieni fis-Sod*) for Ministry of Finance;
- NSO Statistical publications;
- Printing of full colour 220 page book (Overview of the History of the Public Works);
- Education Department Books for Primary and Secondary Schools;
- Budget Publications and Financial Reports.

LOCAL COUNCILS ELECTIONS MARCH (2006)

Local Councils Elections were held during the month of March. The Government Press undertook all the printing requirements connected with these elections. The preparations start early with the printing of all the stationery followed by the printing, counting and sealing of the Ballot Papers. Voluminous extraordinary Government Gazettes were published in connection with the Voting Document accounts. The Election Results were published in another extraordinary edition of the Government Gazette.

BUDGET 2007

Together with the usual publications in connection with the presentation of the Budget, i.e. the Financial Estimates, Economic Survey, Budget Speech and *Diskors tal-Budget*, at the request of the Minister of Finance, the Press also published the Industry Strategy for Malta 2007 - 2010 (Maltese and English versions).

ADMINISTRATION

- Retiring officers are not being replaced, thus considerably reducing our staff complement. Existing personnel are being trained and redeployed when and where necessary.
- Long-standing Advance Warrant of Lm190,000 by the Treasury towards the Government Press Unallocated Stores account were finally reimbursed from savings 2005-2006.
- Arrears of Revenue were significantly reduced during 2006.

ADDITIONAL MACHINERY

Tenders for the installation of a Hotfoil machine (Letterpress Section) and a Glue Binder and Creasing machine (Finishing Section) were awarded and commissioned during 2006.

After extensive consultation with MITTS and the OPM Information Management Officer, the tender for the installation of a Management Information System was awarded.

ENVIRONMENT

- Waste is being separated and paper is being sent to *Sant'Antnin* Plant for recycling.
- Promoting the use of environmental friendly material to government departments. Stationery for various departments is being printed on recycled or ecological paper.
- Solar panels were installed on the roof of the Press to generate energy.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Tender was awarded for an electric stacker to avoid the lifting of heavy objects thus reducing the risk of back injury to personnel.
- A small clinic in the shop floor was fully equipped and two members of staff have undertaken first aid courses to deal with any emergency.

STATISTICS

Production Report by Category - 2006					
Category	Jobs Delivered	Total (Lm)	Category	Jobs Delivered	Total (Lm)
Letterheads A4	69	5,488.93	Cards approx. A5	3	587.07
Letterheads A5	22	4,729.41	Cards approx. A6	3	167.22
Letterheads A6	8	311.77	Multiple sets	61	16,486.08
Complimentary Slips	50	1,427.67	Magazines	8	2,247.68
Business Cards	210	5,528.75	Leaflets/Brochures	31	15,781.98
File Covers	110	10,681.01	Posters	10	773.36
Form A3 - Front only	54	4,781.88	Vouchers/Tickets	1	45.51
Form A4 - Front only	159	17,439.82	Booklets (-16pp)	71	13,683.00
Form A5 - Front only	41	3,922.63	Labels	3	374.54
Form A6 - Front only	25	2,376.28	Enumerated Forms	2	45.51
Form A3 - Two sided	52	12,210.31	Government Gazette	150	201,540.44
Form A4 - Two sided	124	23,380.89	Act	18	13,840.35
Form A5 - Two sided	43	7,193.50	Legal Notices	302	84,034.07
Form A6 - Two sided	15	1,138.91	Bill	27	23,429.99
Envelopes	25	1,158.98	Miscellaneous – 18%	218	28,063.95
Invitations	68	1,419.98	General Forms	80	4,695.46
Books (16pp +)	208	87,778.87	Miscellaneous – 5%	22	2,986.17
Cards approx. A4	3	937.28	Xmas Card/Calendar	10	1,317.45
			Total	2,306	602,006.70

Jobs listed above were ordered by 169 different departments, schools and other entities.

Tenders Awarded in 2006	
<i>Description</i>	<i>Supplier</i>
Colour Bristol Board	Kasco Trading Ltd
White Bristol Board	M Demajo Ltd
Provision of Cleaning Service	MCCS Co Ltd
Carbonless Paper in Reels	Arrowswift Co Ltd
Offset Cartridge Paper 70gsm	Kasco Trading Ltd
Matt Art Paper	Papyrus Trading Co Ltd
Yellow Bristol Board	Kasco Trading Ltd
Full Electric Stacker Machine	RCV Enterprise Ltd
Hot Foil Stamping Machine	MTA Co Ltd
Hot Glue Binder & Creasing Machine	MTA Co Ltd
GPP Management Information System	Philip Toledo Ltd

CARMEL R SAMMUT
Director (Printing Press)

Defence Matters Directorate

GENERAL

Defence Matters Directorate was set up in May 2003 to upgrade, consolidate and formalise the defence function of the OPM, a function which has been in existence almost continuously since 1964. The main responsibilities of the Directorate are:

- to provide objective technical and policy advice as well as timely analysis on all aspects of military matters affecting the Government's defence policy;
- to monitor and analyse the implementation of Cabinet decisions and government policies on defence matters and to report on the extent to which policy and performance targets are met;
- to develop new policy initiatives and concepts on all AFM matters with a view to improving the operational, logistic and administrative effectiveness of the AFM;
- in co-ordination with other stakeholders within OPM, and in liaison with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to manage bilateral as well as multilateral defence relations with other countries and international organisations.

AFM HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Finalisation of the AFM's Establishment Review

Several meetings were held with the Parliamentary Secretary OPM and the Head of the PM's Secretariat with the aim of finalising the AFM's Establishment Review. Government approval was granted to implement a new organisation and establishment for the AFM. Approval was also given to start the promotion process to fill all the vacancies created consequent to the new establishment. As a first step, the most senior Lieutenant Colonel was promoted to Colonel.

AFM Officer Promotions

The Prime Minister approved the promotion to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel of eight Majors, to the rank of Majors of three Captains, to the rank of Captains of seven Lieutenants and the Commission of Lieutenant to eight warrant officers.

Following the Officers' promotion exercise, the Prime Minister approved the promotion of 582 Other Ranks. Five Second Lieutenants were promoted to the rank of Lieutenant after successfully completing their eighteen month probationary period in the rank.

Recruitment of Gunners

Ministerial approval was obtained for the issue of two calls for applications for the recruitment of soldiers and trainee soldier tradesmen/bandsmen in the Armed Forces of Malta. This Office liaised with the Examinations Department with regard to the formulation of the calls for applications which were published in the Government Gazette of 19 September.

An innovation introduced in this year's call was the exemption given from sitting for the written exams to all those candidates in possession of Matsec certificates in the relevant subjects.

Retirement

A decision was taken to bring into effect the 1998 directive on compulsory retirement for all AFM personnel at the age of 55 years as from 1 January 2008. Henceforth, following that date, all AFM personnel will have their service terminated on their fifty-fifth birthday.

Recruitment of Members of the Emergency Volunteer Reserve Force

This Office gave the necessary approval to the Commander AFM to issue a call for applications for the recruitment of personnel for the Emergency Volunteer Reserve Force (EVRF). Out of the 29 applicants, only nine have been successful to join the EVRF.

AFM Salaries Review Exercise

The Director Defence Matters participated in two meetings led by the Parliamentary Secretary the Hon Dr Tony Abela to map out a way forward in reviewing AFM salaries – which were last reviewed in 1993.

AFM Standing Orders on Leave Entitlement: Compensation for Duties Performed on Public Holidays

Following a parliamentary question put to the Prime Minister on 28 November 2005, it was decided to review the AFM Standing Orders regarding leave entitlement to compensate personnel for duties falling on public holidays. It was approved that personnel who perform night shift on a public holiday which does not fall on a Saturday or Sunday, as well as those personnel who perform night shift or 24-hour duty on the eve of such public holidays (and who therefore finish their tour of duty at 0700 hrs on the holiday itself) would be compensated by six hours of time-off.

OTHER AFM MATTERS

Exercise Maltahope – Joint Military Training with the UK

This Directorate was deeply involved in the initial preparations of *exercise Maltahope* which was hosted by the AFM in Malta between 29 April and 12 May 2006. A joint Memorandum of Understanding concerning the conduct of the exercise was scrutinised by this Office and the Attorney General before signature by the AFM. An Implementation Agreement covering in detail the exercise was likewise studied to safeguard national interests.

A joint press conference took place before the exercise to communicate the aim and conduct of this exercise to the general public.

Use of Force Document

Following consultations with the Attorney General's Office, a new Operational Guidance Document on the Use of Force by AFM personnel in contact with civilians was approved and promulgated.

Exercise Canale 2006

Exercise Canale was this year hosted by the Armed Forces of Malta between 9 and 17 June. Besides Maltese and Italian Naval elements, France and Greece also took part in this annual bilateral exercise by

sending one naval vessel each. Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Mauritania, Portugal, Tunisia, and Turkey sent observers to view the conduct of the exercise in all phases and at all operational levels.

A VIP day was held on Friday 16 June. The Hon Dr Carmelo Mifsud Bonnici and Director Defence Matters represented the Government of Malta on the day. The Hon Lorenzo Forcieri, State Undersecretary for Defence, Dr Paolo Andrea Trabalza, Italian Ambassador to Malta and Lieutenant General Cosimo D'Arrigo, the Italian Deputy Chief of Defence, represented the Italian Government.

Re-Engagement of Volunteers to Participate in the EU-led Crisis Management Operations

Authorisation was given to the AFM to issue an internal call for applications to allow officers and soldiers to renew the commitment made in 2003 to participate in possible future EU-led operations.

Participation in Military Exercise Abroad

Between 18 and 28 September 2006 three AFM Officers and 50 soldiers were sent to Italy to participate in phase II of Exercise Terra Ferma 06. This exercise, dedicated to Peace Support Operations, is an annual land-based exercise organised on a bilateral basis by Malta and Italy.

Participation by the AFM Liaison Officer in the Swiss PfP Workshop

The AFM liaison officer in the Defence Matters Directorate participated in the 7th Swiss Partnership for Peace Workshop entitled *The OSCE Code of Conduct, Aspects of its implementation, the Law of Armed Conflict and Democratic Control of Armed Forces*, which was held in Switzerland on 17-22 September.

Thirty-eight participants from 26 different countries attended this workshop. A heavy representation was noticeable from former eastern block countries.

The workshop's main objectives were:

- to refresh the participants' knowledge regarding the main aspects of the code;
- to foster practical training methods related to the law of armed conflict including discussion of this corpus of law in the light of the challenge of terrorism;
- to promote application of the principles, norms and measures and democratic control of armed forces;
- to facilitate contacts and exchanges of views between the participants in charge of implementation, teaching and training in relation to the relevant aspects of the Code.

The AFM officer took active part in all syndicate workshops exchanging views and national experiences with other participants.

Visit by the Director to the AFM Maritime Squadron and the Detention Service

The Director Defence Matters visited two AFM units in the first quarter of her tenure. She first visited the Maritime Squadron on 7 November and the Detention Service at Luqa and Safi barrack on 23 November. As a follow-up to these visits, in particular the visit to the Detention Service, this Directorate sought to facilitate the implementation of some pending measures.

OSCE Communications Network

During the period under review this Office ensured the effective monitoring of the OSCE Communications Network and the timely return of documents which member states are obliged to compile and submit to OSCE from time to time.

Landing and Overflying of Foreign State Aircraft

Following the ministerial direction imparted in November 2005, this Directorate continued to make recommendations to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about requests from foreign countries who ask for permission to use Maltese airspace for their aircraft, either for landing or overflying. Approximately 80 requests of this nature per month have been processed during this quarter.

EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

Ongoing Monitoring of Developments in the ESDP

This Directorate continuously monitored developments in the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). The average of EU papers and reports that were processed during 2006 were 15 documents per working day (peaking at an average of 18 documents per working day in the fourth quarter).

A number of exchanges were held with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the Parliamentary Secretary for Defence in the OPM, and with Malta's Permanent Representation in Brussels in relation to the position to be adopted by Malta on various formal EU documents. Major exchanges concerned:

- the articulation of EU-NATO co-operation particularly: (i) a proposal by eight EU member states to enhance EU-NATO relations by formalising staff-to-staff contacts; (ii) a proposal for holding a meeting on the development of EU military medical capabilities in a format excluding Malta; (iii) the development of an EU policy concerning strategic airlift; (iv) the EU's access to NATO originating capabilities; (v) co-operation between the EDA and other stakeholders including NATO; and (vi) a possible solution to the current impasse in the relationship between EU and NATO.
- Malta's position on the European Defence Agency (EDA) policy papers: (i) the General Conditions to be applicable for Research and Technology Ad Hoc project groups in particular to ensure that only third states having a security agreement with the EU can participate in such programmes (to put pressure for the solution of the EU-NATO impasse); (ii) the proposal for an Intergovernmental Regime to Encourage Competition in the European Defence Equipment Market; (iii) proposal for a Joint Investment Programme for defence R&T investment where Malta has softened the wording of the agreed documentation and obtained the possibility that management decisions for such programmes be taken by consensus; (iv) the articulation of a European Capabilities Development Plan and its possible implications on national sovereignty where Malta ensured that national defence planning and investment decision-taking will of course remain subject to the sovereign processes of each participating member state; the Administrative Agreement between the EU Defence Agency and Norway (Malta achieved a diplomatic success when this agreement was split from the parallel arrangement with Turkey).

The Directorate ensured that Malta's interests as an EU member state were properly safeguarded, particularly by ensuring appropriate wording in texts defining the relationship between the EU and NATO in ESDP matters, given the exclusion of Malta and Cyprus from meetings, or parts thereof, when NATO classified material was being discussed.

Malta's Representation in EU Defence Meetings

During 2006, Malta participated in the two General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) in Ministers of Defence format both held in Brussels, as well as in the two informal meetings of Ministers of Defence held in Innsbruck (Austria) and Levi (Finland) respectively. In each case the delegation was headed by the Parliamentary Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister and, with the exception of the May 2006 GAERC, included Director Defence Matters. In that meeting, Permanent Secretary OPM (Strategy & Operations) accompanied the Parliamentary Secretary.

Other meetings at which Malta was represented included:

Meeting details	Attendee
EDA Steering Board – Capabilities Directors, Brussels, 24 January	Permanent Secretary OPM
EU Defence Policy Directors Meeting, Vienna, 20 January	Director Defence Matters
EDA Steering Board – National Armaments Directors, Brussels, 7 April	Director Defence Matters
EU Defence Policy Directors, Brussels, 25 April	Director Defence Matters
Joint EUMS-Council Information Working Group Seminar/Conference on ESDP, Brussels, 21-22 June	Principal – Defence Matters Directorate
EDA Special Preparatory Committee, Brussels, 7 July	Director Defence Matters
EU Defence Policy Directors, Helsinki, 18 July	Director Defence Matters
EDA Steering Board – National Armaments Directors, Brussels, 20 September	Director Defence Matters
Seminar of the Organisation Conjointe de Coopération en matière d'Armement, 21 September	Director Defence Matters Designate Director Defence Matters
EDA Preparatory Committee, Brussels, 25 September	Director Defence Matters Designate Director Defence Matters
EDA Meeting on Intelligence Understanding of the Mission Environment pilot course, Brussels, 24 October	Director Defence Matters Senior Principal in the Directorate
EDA Workshop for Defence Directors of the 10 new Member States, Brussels, 26 October	Director Defence Matters
Meeting of the EU Defence Policy Directors, Brussels, 26-27 October	Director Defence Matters
Prepcom for EDA Steering Board at the margins of the GAERC in Defence Ministers format, Brussels, 3 November	Director Defence Matters
EDA Preparatory Committee, Brussels, 6 December	Senior Principal in the Directorate

Secondment of AFM Officer for EU Military Staff

Following an internal call for applications for AFM officers, interviews were held in January to select an officer for specific training and eventual secondment to the EU Military Staff in Brussels in 2008.

Malta's Participation in the EU

Malta successfully lobbied so that its national on the “Athena” (mechanism for the financing of EU operations with military implications) College of Auditors participates in the team to audit the 2005 accounts of the European Defence Agency.

Malta was also one of the few EU member states to have answered the absolute majority of Presidency/European Defence Agency questionnaires within the stipulated deadlines, adopting insofar as possible a proactive approach which at the same time ensures that Malta's interest is safeguarded. Questionnaires were compiled with input from HQ AFM and other government stakeholders including the EU Secretariat. Amongst others, in response to an EDA questionnaire and in conjunction with HQ AFM and the Civil Protection Department, the Directorate assessed the number and type of planes that Malta would require if it were to participate in an EU military operation or to deliver humanitarian aid in case of a natural or man-made disaster.

On an initiative of the Defence Matters Directorate, a meeting was called by Director EU Affairs bringing together the Malta Council for Science and Technology, the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs, the Police, the AFM, the Civil Protection, the Malta Security Services, the Ministry for Investment and Information Technology and the Defence Matters Directorate to discuss the Maltese Government's position on Security Research and Technology. The meeting was called to discuss the Maltese reply to a questionnaire originally sent by the Austrian Presidency of the EU and enquiring about the current state of affairs of Malta's Security R&T, and scope for growth and international co-operation in this area.

Malta's Participation in the EU Defence Market

Government approval was obtained for Malta's participation in the European Defence Agency mechanism aimed at stimulating competition in the European Defence Equipment Market, and on 1 July 2006, together with 22 other member states, Malta became one of the 'founding' member states of this Intergovernmental regime. Without bringing any new burden upon Malta, this participation implies that henceforth, Maltese firms will be able to compete in this erstwhile out-of-bounds market. New export opportunities will most probably arise, particularly down the supply chain.

In order to alert Maltese industries about these new opportunities as well as about the possibility of taking part in defence-related (but with potential civilian applications) research and technology under the European Defence Agency umbrella, meetings were held with representatives of the Federation of Industry and Malta Enterprise. These meetings were followed by the styling of a brief article about these prospects to be distributed electronically to the contact lists of both entities. Also, in order to inform third parties of the 'defence' Maltese procurement procedures, an appropriate *vade-mecum* was prepared in conjunction with HQ AFM and the Department of Contracts and posted on the EDA website, together with those of other member states.

Maltese Offer to the EDA

After due consultation, Malta informed the EDA that it would be interested in hosting the language module of a pilot training course on the Middle East. This module will take the form of a 12 week course whereby students are trained in Speaking and Understanding skills in Arabic at the Department of Arabic & Near Eastern Studies at the University of Malta and will be offered in conjunction with Italy which will be offering the other modules. At a meeting held in Brussels on 24 October to discuss offers from different member states, it was agreed that the Maltese-Italy proposal offer should go forward.

ESDP Financial Contributions

During 2006, Malta paid its share of the common costs of a number of ESDP institutions and/or military operations: European Defence Agency €9,062, EU Satd lite Centre €4,658.66 and €21,955.32 towards the Athena mechanism which includes the common costs of the EU operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Represent Malta in the 5+5 Defence Initiative Steering Committee

Director Defence Matters and Deputy Commander AFM represented Malta at the first meeting of the 5+5 Defence Initiative Steering Committee for 2006, held in Paris between 30 and 31 March. The Senior Principal at the Directorate and Deputy Commander AFM represented Malta at the second meeting of the 5+5 Defence Initiative Steering Committee held in Nice between 14 and 15 November 2006.

In both meetings, Malta actively participated in the discussions and drafting of the different documents which were eventually endorsed by Ministers in December. These included the debate concerning the establishment of a '5+5' Defence School, a Spanish proposal to establish a permanent Secretariat in France, the creation of a Mine Clearing Centre, the report on the 2006 activities and the Initiative's Action Plan for 2007. The Maltese delegation was also responsible for ensuring that all documentation would be articulated in correct English. Director Defence Matters was part of a delegation headed by the Parliamentary Secretary OPM which represented Malta at the 5+5 Defence Initiative ministerial meeting on 11 December 2006.

BETTER REGULATION EXERCISE

One of the four proposals made by the Directorate on behalf of the AFM in March 2006 has been selected by Cabinet as a Better Regulation Exercise. The proposal involved the creation of a Microsoft-Word based digital form to be filled in by would-be film producers in order to request the AFM to make available assets for filming purposes. The Cabinet designated this proposal as a 'quick win', that is should be completed by the end of December 2006. This Directorate liaised closely with HQ AFM and the Malta Film Commission to draft the said form. The exercise was completed and the form forwarded to the Malta Film Commission on 26 December 2006.

OFFICE MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES

Throughout the quarter, this Directorate continued putting emphasis on the need to implement environment-related (as well as cost-saving) initiatives:

- increasing the awareness of office staff about environmentally-friendly practices and policies. This included the circulation among staff of promotional material by WasteServ including posters/stickers, and information reports;
- waste (paper, plastic) is separated at origin and disposed of separately at the designated area in Castille for eventual collection by WasteServ;
- printer cartridges are being sent for refilling;
- envelopes are re-used for internal and selected external mail (selection is based on the need for security of the outgoing correspondence);
- use of degradable bags for disposal of waste;
- whenever possible, printing was done using a freeware software ensuring that two pages fit on each folio, printing was done on both sides of the page with an effective saving on paper consumption of between 66% and 75%;

Between 15 June and 31 July 2006, and during September, this Directorate implemented a flexible working-hours timetable ensuring that there would always be two members of staff in the office at any time between 7.30am and 5.30pm.

The Directorate has also formulated a Data Protection Policy.

VANESSA FRAZIER
Director (Defence Matters)

Department of Corporate Services

INTRODUCTION

The primary function of the Department of Corporate Services is to provide support services to the departments, secretariats and entities of the Office of the Prime Minister. The services are given in areas of human resources, finance and administration and office management. The Department is organised into three branches, namely:

- Human Resources
- Office Management
- Finance and Administration.

HUMAN RESOURCES

During 2006, the Human Resources Branch issued 25 letters of appointment, 20 letters of promotion and 21 letters of progression to staff during the year. Another six confirmations of appointment and 111 authorisation of increment were processed.

Another 18 new Contracts of Agreements for staff in the OPM were signed, 51 were renewed and a further eight were terminated. The number of resignations during the year was 13. Seven new Contracts and Agreements for staff in the Prime Minister's Private Secretariat were prepared and signed. Similar action was taken with the staff in the Parliamentary Secretariat (OPM) and the EU Secretariat.

The Pay Administration, which besides the annual salary covered overtime and other payments, catered for the 331 clerical and industrial staff in the Office of the Prime Minister.

During the year five service-wide calls for application for the filling of the positions of Assistant Director in the Office of the Prime Minister, processed through the Human Resources Branch, were issued for the following positions: (i) MPO – Resourcing – Public Sector; (ii) Planning and Priorities Co-ordination Directorate – EU Affairs; (iii) Department of Corporate Services – Office Management; (iv) Policy and Planning – People Management; (v) MPO Resourcing – Public Service.

The first three positions have since been filled, whilst this Office is still awaiting the approval from the Public Service Commission regarding the last two positions.

Six Casual Substitute Clerks and three Casual Substitute Executive Officers were engaged after a selection process through the Employment and Training Corporation.

The service of a private medical firm continued during the year. On instructions issued by the Branch, it carried out 57 visits.

Branch members also attended seminars on Gender Mainstreaming, Data Protection and Health and Safety.

The staff list of all personnel, both industrial and non-industrial, performing duty in OPM was updated correct as on 1 January 2007. During the year three adjustments were made in April, July and October.

Other work carried out by the Branch consisted of:

- administering the Performance Management Programmes;
- updating information of staff who work on reduced hours;
- taking steps to provide support personnel to departments.

OFFICE MANAGEMENT

During 2006 this Branch continued to manage the needs and requests of occupants not only of the Auberge de Castille but also of other buildings under the responsibility of this Office.

As far as Capital Projects were concerned, the installation of the glass doors and introduction of a limited access system and procedures was one of the main undertakings. Once implemented, a consolidated entry control was realised and maintained. Another project was the rehabilitation of premises at 13 St Paul's Street, Valletta. Works here varied from structural modifications to the complete refurbishment of the building including IT and telephone connectivity.

This year saw the installation of a much-needed service lift which was located in an internal yard near the service area of the building. Also, the refurbishment of the OPM Registry, including a second and larger mobile shelving system, was nearing completion. The installation of a lightning protection system was commenced and towards the end of the year had been 60% completed.

This Branch organised the migration of the Management Efficiency Unit, the Planning and Priorities Co-ordination Division and other offices both within the Auberge de Castille and to other premises outside these premises.

Other miscellaneous undertakings this Branch was entrusted with were the preparation of the Pandemic Influenza contingency plan, adjudication for the demolition of existing structures at the site allocated for the new US embassy, preparations for Notte Bianca and directional signage within the building. This Branch also took an active part in the restoration of Villa Francia and continued to prepare for joint press conferences at the Auberge de Castille between the Prime Minister and foreign dignitaries.

In addition to the above exercises, this Branch continued to maintain an efficient transport system for a fleet of over 40 vehicles. Performance statistics for each vehicle were collected and service visits scheduled. Where necessary, legal advice was sought from the Attorney General's office regarding traffic collisions. After an appraisal of office vehicles' value for money, five unserviceable vehicles were transferred to the Works Division whilst one new vehicle was purchased during the year.

This Branch continued to maintain inventory lists, temporarily store and dispose of obsolete, unserviceable and surplus items within the Ministry as provided by financial regulations. It also supervised the OPM's reception staff and maintained the OPM telephone system.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

During the year, the Finance and Administration Branch continued to provide support and financial administration service to the secretariats, directorates, divisions and public entities that form part of the Office of the Prime Minister.

The financial management aspect was given its utmost importance by the Branch's daily routine work. Monthly Revised Estimates were drawn up for the OPM Vote, whilst the returns of other departments which form part of this Ministry were also evaluated prior to onward submission to the Ministry of Finance. The Branch carried out this work in both the Recurrent and Capital Votes. Furthermore, the Branch had a very active role in the drafting of the 2007 Financial Estimates.

The issue of Advances for overseas travel was also an important task of the Branch. This included the closing of Travel Advances and where applicable the submission of reimbursement claims to the EU Paying Authority. During the year, 202 advances were issued to officers who travelled abroad on official business.

The targets set by the Branch, whereby commitments were raised within one day of receiving a requisition for the supply of stores or other services, and of settling invoices within one month of receipt, was generally achieved. The total number of transactions effected by the Branch during the year amounted to 8,129, a decrease of 3.6% over the previous year. This decrease was brought about by the reduction of two cost centres, the Tribunal for the Investigation of Injustices and the Central Information Management Unit, from the OPM Recurrent vote with effect from January 2006.

Other work carried out by the Branch during 2006 included the raising and submission of the following reports:

- raising of financial returns as requested by the Ministry of Finance, the Treasury and the National Statistics Office;
- raising, on a quarterly basis, financial information regarding Accrual Accounting;
- raising of quarterly returns of suppliers who do not provide the Department with a VAT fiscal receipt; and
- recording of Inventory items procured by this Office and making the necessary information available to the departments in order to update their respective Asset records.

ALEXANDER MAGRO
Director (Corporate Services)

Operations and Programme Implementation Directorate

INTRODUCTION

The primary functions of the Operations and Programme Implementation Directorate (OPI) are to:

- monitor and co-ordinate the activities of divisions and directorates within OPM on behalf of the Permanent Secretary;
- manage specific functions and projects;
- discharge the programme implementation and customer care functions within OPM;
- provide support to the Permanent Secretary OPM.

During 2006 the Directorate incorporated the Special Projects Unit and the Boards, Committees and Customer Care Unit and the OPM Registry. One of its main responsibilities is co-ordinating data protection compliance in government departments.

POLICY ISSUES

An integral part of the duties of the OPI Directorate is supporting the Permanent Secretary in the monitoring of policy implementation in departments reporting to him. This involves maintaining close liaison with these entities and providing operational support to them, as required. The Directorate also provides support in monitoring the implementation of certain policy decisions and initiatives across the Public Service. This includes regular co-ordination with other ministries and departments to provide clarification and interpretation of policies that affect their operations.

In the course of 2006, these functions covered the monitoring of the correct use of the National Coat of Arms, involvement in matters related to the national identity card, as well as the drafting and issuing of circulars and legal notices on service-wide and ministry issues, among which the provision of accessible services to all in line with the Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act and the updating of government websites.

This Office also formed part of an inter-ministerial working group set up to conduct a study and make recommendations on the development of a strategy for an integrated national identity management system with the aim of consolidating the country's identity management infrastructure and enhancing security and cost-efficiency.

The Director represented the Office of the Prime Minister on the National Commission for Sustainable Development and was responsible for co-ordinating OPM feedback on the draft National Sustainable Development Strategy.

Annual Reports of Government Departments

Another task of this Office in 2006 entailed the compilation, vetting, design and editing of reports submitted by government departments concerning their activities in 2005. In line with OPM's eco-friendly policy, a decision was taken that the Annual Reports of Government Departments would no longer be published in hard print but would instead be issued on CD. The 2005 departmental reports were also posted on the Public Service Intranet for greater diffusion among departments and public officers.

Boards and Committees

The OPI Directorate processes all appointments of constitutional commissions as well as appointments on boards and committees which require the approval of the President of Malta and/or the Prime Minister. It also keeps a detailed record of all government entities, boards and committees through liaison with the various other ministries. This office processed the correspondence related to the appointments on 18 boards and committees that required the approval of the President and on 29 boards and committees that required the approval of the Prime Minister. The database of official boards and committees was kept updated and press releases and the government gazette were monitored regularly.

Broadcasting

One of the responsibilities of the Office of the Prime Minister is the regulatory aspect of Broadcasting. During 2006 this Directorate liaised with the Broadcasting Authority on issues relating to legal and procedural matters which require reference to the Prime Minister in terms of the Constitution and the Broadcasting Act.

The 40th meeting of the Council of Europe Standing Committee on Trans-Frontier Television was held in Strasbourg, France on 11-12 April and was attended by the Assistant Director (Boards, Committees and Customer Care). This meeting dealt with various items including transmission rights of third countries and the correlation of Council of Europe agreements and EU directives regarding Trans-Frontier Television.

DATA PROTECTION

Data Protection compliance in the Public Service remains by far the most wide-reaching corporate project under the responsibility of the Directorate. In the course of 2006, the main focus of the data protection compliance strategy was the provision of continuous support and assistance to all government ministries and departments in the field of data protection. The OPM Data Protection Team (composed of OPI and MITTS personnel) provides advisory support to departments in case of queries received from the Data Protection Commissioner and acts as intermediary between the Office of the DP Commissioner and the relevant departments.

Data Protection Audits

During the year, the Data Protection Team concentrated on the carrying out of full audits. The Fair & Lawful Processing Audits concluded in the previous three years had the main objective of ensuring that the process of collecting and handling personal data by government departments was carried out in line with data protection requirements. The full audits, on the other hand, have a wider scope and consist of an investigation into all aspects of a department's activities and a review of the extent of compliance with the Data Protection Act. In 2006, 18 Data Protection full audits were conducted in four different ministries (ten at the Ministry of Education, Youth & Employment; three each at the Ministry for Justice & Home Affairs and the Ministry for the Family & Social Solidarity; two in the Ministry of Health, the Elderly & Community Care).

In addition, the Directorate continued to monitor the level of compliance with the recommendations made in the Fair & Lawful Processing Audits conducted across government ministries and departments in the first auditing phase.

Data Protection Training

The OPM team facilitated 12 half-day sessions on the Data Protection Act organised by the SDO and attended by a total of 203 public officers. Another presentation was delivered at a seminar organised by the Management and Personnel Office for HR managers and officers responsible for the processing of

disciplinary cases, focusing on HR data protection procedures and the retention policy in respect of disciplinary files and documents, while another training session was facilitated for Ministry of Foreign Affairs employees. Following the distribution of the schools data protection policy the OPM team was requested to facilitate three awareness sessions for Heads of state schools in Malta and Gozo. Three sessions of the Data Protection Officers Forum were held during 2006.

On 2-3 November the Director attended the 28th International Conference of Data Protection and Privacy Commissioners, held in London. The conference, with the theme A Surveillance Society?, looked at information gathering and sharing by both public and private sectors and considered issues of national security, law enforcement and customer service (public and commercial).

In November-December all the members of the OPM Data Protection team attended a two-day TAIEX seminar organised by the European Commission's DG Enlargement on Data Protection under the Third Pillar: EU Information Systems and the Protection of Individual Rights.

Provision of Data Protection Related Advice

The DP team continued to provide a consultancy service to government departments. Among the issues treated were data protection requirements related to access control systems, disclosure of personal data for the purpose of research, exchange of data within the scope of bilateral agreements with foreign countries, and advice on queries raised by a substantial number of departments.

Data Protection Twinning Light Project

The Data Protection Twinning Light Project started in 2005 in conjunction with German partners entered into its second phase in the first few months of 2006. The overall objective of this module was to build and enhance data protection skills in the Public Service. The main activities of the project were a review of the Public Service data protection strategy, transfer of knowledge on best practices and procedures adopted in specific sectors by the twinning partner public administrations and the development of policy guidelines and procedures in these areas.

From January to June, seven short-term experts (STEs) visited Malta as part of the twinning project. The scope of these visits was for the STEs to provide information on norms, best practices and procedures used in their public administrations and to make recommendations on how data protection implementation in the respective sectors in Malta could be enhanced. The sectors during this period concerned 'Education Issues', 'Data Architecture and Security Standards', 'Health Department Issues', 'e-Government/Statistics' and 'Schengen Issues'. Programmes were drawn up for each visit and arrangements were made for the holding of a series of meetings and presentations with the Heads and data protection officials of the respective ministries and departments.

A three-day visit for Maltese officials to study the implementation of data protection compliance in the Police sector in Germany took place in February. The programme included a visit to view Police systems, discussions on Police-related DP issues, Europol and Schengen and a visit to Frankfurt Airport. This was followed by a visit in March to study compliance in the Health sector in Germany, including a visit to a Cancer registry, discussions on data protection and data security in medical research networks, a visit to the University Hospital of Heidelberg and discussions on current issues regarding DP in the medical sector. A third visit was organised to study data protection compliance in the Education sector. This programme included a visit to the University of Berlin, discussions with the Ministry of Education of the state of Berlin, discussions with the Data Protection Authorities in the same state and a visit to a school. The delegations were composed of members of the OPM Data Protection Team and the Data Protection Officers and other officials from the three specific sectors.

The recommendations made by all the STEs were discussed with the Permanent Secretary and Heads of Department of the respective sectors reviewed with a view to assessing the findings and agreeing on any follow-up action required on the proposals.

One of the activities completed in the course of this twinning project was a review of the data protection strategy implemented in the Maltese Public Service. The STE evaluated the various phases and elements of the strategy adopted by the OPM Data Protection Team in its endeavours to achieve DP compliance across government departments. The strategy designed for the Public Service data protection compliance was highly commended by the German twinning partner. In his report, the STE identified various areas which could be addressed in order to achieve better compliance. Among these was an intensification of training opportunities for public officers in order to enhance data protection awareness in the Public Service. Work on the development of a proposal to obtain further EU funds in order to realize this proposal is now underway.

The total budget for the Public Service module of the Twinning Light programme came to €50,000 while, overall, around 620 Data Protection Officers (DPOs) and other public officers from the health, social work, taxation, education, police, e-government and HR fields attended information sessions delivered by 11 STEs in the course of the twinning period.

Issue of Data Protection Guidelines

A Manual on Data Protection was issued to all Data Protection Officers and copied to Heads of Department on 5 October 2006. The document contains basic information on how data protection is being implemented in the Public Service and is intended to serve as a guide to Heads of Department and DPOs on matters related to data protection, as well as to delineate the respective roles and responsibilities of Heads as legal Data Controllers and of DPOs as their representatives. The Manual was also placed on the section restricted for DPOs on the Public Service Intranet.

The Data Protection HR Corporate Procedures were revisited in the light of recommendations made by the twinning short-term expert on HR issues and, following consultation with MPO, a revised version was issued and posted on the DP Section of the Public Service Intranet.

European Data Protection Day

In 2006, the Council of Europe, with the support of the European Commission, announced that Data Protection Day would be celebrated on 28 January annually – to mark the day on which the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data was opened for signature. EU member states were encouraged to hold activities to commemorate this Day on 28 January 2007, to raise public awareness on data protection and to inform citizens of their rights.

As part of its activities to commemorate this day, the Maltese Public Service in October 2006 launched an initiative whereby each government department processing citizens' personal data would by 28 January 2007 have developed and issued a Data Protection Policy, thereby giving general information about their processing operations of personal data and about the rights of data subjects. The OPM Data Protection Team spearheaded the implementation of this plan by providing assistance and guidance to Data Protection Officers in the development and review of these departmental policies. Around 80 policies were submitted, most of which had been reviewed by the Data Protection Team by the end of the year.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

OPM Website

The Directorate also has responsibility for the management of the OPM website and for ensuring that website contents are kept accurate and updated. A number of changes needed to be effected following the appointment of two new OPM Permanent Secretaries and as a result of internal restructuring within the Ministry. Furthermore, this Office was also involved in intra-ministerial discussions in order to assess, in conjunction with various key stakeholders, the requirements of the OPM portal and other websites and to make proposals on an integrated infrastructure.

Implementation of Eco-friendly Initiatives

Throughout the year, this Directorate continued to monitor the implementation of environment practices across the Office of the Prime Minister and to extend assistance and support to the Green Focal Points (GFPs) in OPM departments and entities.

The projects launched in 2005 to promote eco-friendly practices in the workplace were sustained and further extended in 2006 through the application of added initiatives such as the:

- procurement, and distribution to all OPM Green Focal Points, of environmental awareness stickers to be affixed on switches, near water taps, on office cars and on waste bins;
- co-ordinating the carrying out of a neon tube audit in OPM entities, in preparation for a full energy audit scheduled to be conducted in 2007;
- gradual replacement of conventional lighting with energy-efficient light elements (already being installed in newly-refurbished offices and to replace spent neon tubes);
- compilation and maintenance of 'green' statistics.

The Green Leader participated in a Green Leaders Forum organised by the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment and subsequently supplied MRAE with data on paper and envelope consumption, cartridge recycling and batteries collected within OPM. The Directorate also participated in other meetings and activities pertaining to green initiatives such as *Greening the Economy* (a full-day Conference on green procurement), the green label as well as the MRAE Green Network website. Internal discussions were held with the Department of Corporate Services on increasing green procurement and improving waste separation methods in Castille. In October the OPM Green Leader and GFPs attended a training session on waste management organised by the medEcology Foundation/WasteServ Malta Ltd.

Subsequent to the award of framework contracts by MRAE, the Directorate undertook the necessary arrangements to co-ordinate the utilisation of the Lm10,000 allocated for the implementation of 'green' initiatives within OPM. The following initiatives were implemented:

- *Photovoltaic Units* – this Office identified two OPM sites to house PV units; liaised between the selected supplier and the selected entities, the Armed Forces and Government Printing Press, to make the necessary arrangements for site visits, filing of MEPA, MRA and other permits, and the testing of the units. The PV systems installed are a 2,100 Watts unit at the AFM and a 1,200 Watts unit at the GPP.
- *Waste separation banks* – 16 sets (x 4 bins) of office waste separation banks were procured and distributed to OPM Green Focal Points for use in OPM entities.
- OPM participated in the *34U Campaign* by contributing towards the planting of 100 trees. The OPM Green Leader represented OPM at a tree-planting ceremony at Kennedy Grove, organised by MRAE on 15 December.

In November this office issued a Manual for Green Focal Points with the aim of providing guidance to employees nominated as Green Focal Point to co-ordinate the implementation of green issues in their

respective entities, and to disseminate information across the OPM. The Manual was distributed to Heads of OPM departments/entities and to their respective Green Focal Points.

Euro Changeover

The OPI Directorate assisted Euro Project Managers (EPMs) in the preparation of the departmental/entity Euro Changeover Plan followed by regular collection and analysis of feedback submitted by these entities. Subsequently a Ministry Euro Changeover Plan, which highlighted the main euro changeover issues which needed to be tackled by the OPM, was drawn up and submitted to the Euro Changeover Public Sector Sectoral Committee (PSSC). This was followed with a bilateral meeting between an ad hoc PSSC review board and the EPMs of the five OPM entities involved, in order to assess the completeness and consistency of the developed departmental plans and to ensure that the latter reflect all measures necessary to ascertain a successful implemented euro changeover process within each entity/department. The second version of the Departmental and Ministry Changeover Plans was submitted to the MEU Euro Changeover Team in August and September respectively.

During the year the Directorate distributed guidelines and newsletters issued by NECC and provided the necessary support. The Directorate organised meetings and briefing sessions for EPMs with the primary aim of tracking implementation progress and also attended meetings and conferences organised throughout the year by the PSSC and the NECC.

Customer Care Function

In 2006, a total of 189 customer care requests, representing 87 from foreigners and 102 from locals were processed by the OPM Customer Care Co-ordinator. All the requests were settled within 10 days except for nine queries, which required feedback from other entities. Out of all these queries, 98 were received through the OPM website while the rest were received via e-mail. A further 21 requests were received through the computerised Customer Care System. Most of these queries were settled within a period ranging from one to four days while another two requests were closed within 14 and 20 days respectively.

REGISTRY

The OPM registry is now operating from refurbished offices while work continued on another site that would provide additional storage space for registry files.

Late in the year an exercise was commenced to input into the DocReg system around 22,000 inactive personal files, which had been archived at the OPM stores for a number of years and which had not yet been registered electronically. This lengthy exercise is being undertaken in addition to normal registry work and is expected to be concluded in the first months of 2007.

During 2006 the OPM Registry handled the following:

Letters received	5,352
New OPM Confidential files opened	30
New OPM files	1,142
New MPO files	599
New Personal files	6,557 (including part of the archived files)
New PQ files	349
Letter of Appointment/Assimilation/Progression	4,279
Performance Agreements/Review/Termination	
Circular distributed	206

MARIE-LOURDES GRECH

Director (Operations and Programme Implementation)

Ministry of Finance

Special Projects Division

BACKGROUND

The Special Projects Office has the function to undertake and implement a wide variety of initiatives some of which are of a corporate nature and others involving specific Ministry of Finance departments. The major corporate projects undertaken in the year under review were related to overseeing the development of: (a) Accrual Accounting; (b) eProcurement; and (c) eArchiving. Other assignments undertaken during the period under review range from the organisational reform of the revenue earning departments within the Ministry of Finance to the activities of the Co-ordinating Task Force for Own Resources.

ACCRUAL ACCOUNTING

Work is continuing on the introduction of accrual accounting at all ministries and their respective government departments. Accrual accounting will have a major impact on the way the internal financial business of Government will be conducted, particularly in areas of asset management and the management of debtors and creditors. This financial reform process will cross ministerial and departmental organisational boundaries and have a major influence on the departmental processes related to their day-to-day financial administration. Accrual accounting will provide more meaningful financial information that will enhance the quality of the Government's financial decision-making process. It will provide an in-depth understanding of the overall financial position of the Government, providing a sound basis for long term financial planning, in such areas as asset replacement planning, management of debtors and creditors and cash flow predictions.

The main achievements that have been registered during the relevant period include:

- commencement of an extensive accrual accounting training course in conjunction with SDO and Treasury Department, leading to the "A" level Matsec accounting examination for employees who are willing to continue their studies in the accounting field. At the commencement phase, the course had 150 participants, 16 of which have expressed interest to sit for the "O" Level examination in 2007;
- continuation of the process to increase the quality and timeliness of accruals information collected from all government departments through regular information monitoring by the Accounting Methodology and Compliance Unit within the Treasury Department;
- compilation of financial statements under partial accrual accounting rules for all ministries and their respective departments for period ending 31 December 2004 in conjunction with the Treasury Department and MITTS. These financial statements are prepared for internal evaluation and consumption. Furthermore, these financial statements have the objective of increasing the information quality level of the accounting database in preparation for the full implementation of accrual accounting in Government;
- reviewing where appropriate technical guidelines regarding: decentralisation of the budget process; inter-departmental transfers; depreciation of fixed tangible assets; valuation of fixed tangible assets;
- reviewing of the Malta Government Accounting Standards (MGAS) to ensure that they are in conformity with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS);
- continued support to departments for the compilation of financial statements under (partial) accrual accounting rules for year ending 31 December 2005, in conjunction with the Treasury Department and MITTS;

- continuation in conjunction with MITTS of the IT systems reviews of all government financial systems. These IT systems reviews have the objective of providing the basis for interfacing all Government's financial systems with the accounting package that will eventually replace DAS.

The next phase of the accrual accounting implementation process is dependent on the replacement of the current DAS. The business and technical requirements specifications for the replacement system have been documented and are currently under review.

ePROCUREMENT

The eProcurement project is relatively new with the project champion being the Department of Contracts. The Ministry of Finance had initially established a working group to examine the eProcurement system at the Scottish Executive resulting in a preliminary eProcurement report which contained a number of recommendations. Furthermore, in April 2006 the EU Commission issued a document entitled *i2010 eGovernment Action Plan: Accelerating eGovernment in Europe for the Benefit of All*. This document outlines a number of specific goals towards implementing eProcurement throughout all the Member States.

These developments have prompted the Ministry of Finance to establish a Task Force to drive the project to completion. This Task Force consists of the Ministry of Finance, Contracts Department, Budget Operations, Information Management Officer, PPP Unit, Internal Audit and Investigation Directorate, MITTS, and NAO (observer status). This Task Force currently has the following terms of reference:

- review the status of the eProcurement process in the light of the EU Commission eProcurement initiatives and the preliminary report prepared by the working group;
- prepare a strategic business case, including a benefits realisation plan that shows the indicative costs and benefits;
- prepare an eProcurement implementation project plan;
- oversee the implementation of the approved project plan.

The eProcurement project has important and long-term implications on the service-wide procurement process. Furthermore, the eProcurement Task Force has prepared an action plan that will be reviewed in the coming weeks to ascertain the resources that are required for its implementation.

eARCHIVING

The eArchiving project is also relatively new with the project champion being the EU Affairs Directorate within the Ministry of Finance. The spread of electronic systems in government has highlighted a need for improved record keeping practices. The adoption of word processing, email and multi-media applications has led to a situation whereby the essential evidence of government decisions and transactions is very often collected on the storage device of the computer utilised by individual public servants, and in e-mail inboxes and shared folders of individual public servants or work groups.

This form of record-keeping needs to be improved with the aim of ensuring that the government filing procedures meet the requirements for full, accurate, reliable, accessible and durable evidence of government activity. Furthermore, the revision and improvement of the record keeping process will mitigate the risks to the capture and management of essential information. It is envisaged that the eArchiving project has important and long-term implications on the service-wide filing process.

The Ministry of Finance has initiated a process to study the possibility of introducing an electronic records management system that will complement the existing manual registry filing process. It is envisaged that this system will eventually enable all the business systems that the Ministry relies upon to be capable of creating full and accurate records, and routinely performing these fundamental record-keeping processes on a continuous basis, either individually or through linked operations, thus ensuring the full range of the organisation's business activities to be properly documented.

To this end, the Ministry of Finance has established a project team to oversee this initiative in conjunction with MITTS and MEU with the aim of defining a common requirement that may also serve as a pilot which can in the future be rolled out across government. The following initial phases have been identified to enable this project to be successfully executed:

- preliminary investigation;
- analysis of business activity;
- identification of record-keeping requirements;
- assessment of existing systems;
- identification of strategies for record-keeping;
- design of a record-keeping system;
- implementation of a record-keeping system;
- post implementation review.

A detailed project plan will be defined once the common eArchiving requirements have been identified and documented.

OTHER ASSIGNMENTS

Other assignments that have been undertaken by the Special Projects Office include:

- Active participation in the organisational restructuring of the revenue-earning departments within the Ministry of Finance. This initiative has the objective of integrating the operations of the Inland Revenue, VAT, and Customs Departments and the Tax Compliance Unit.
- Initiation of a preliminary study and conceptual model regarding the cost management structure of the Treasury Department as a basis for the possible implementation of activity based accounting.
- Preparation and delivery of technical papers for the European Group of Public Administration and the First European Summit on Modernising Government, held at Bocconi University, Milan and Speyer University, Germany, respectively.
- Co-ordination of the Customs and VAT Departments, NSO, Economic Planning Division, Treasury and Budget Office regarding the work conducted in relation to the EU Advisory Committee on Own Resources.
- Co-ordination in monitoring the implementation of the data protection requirements within the Ministry of Finance and its respective departments.
- Participation in the Euro Changeover IT Taskforce related to ensuring that all government computer systems are euro compliant in time for the January 2008 changeover.
- Co-ordination of activities in relation to international institutions, such as, UNCTAD, IMF, World Bank, Council of Europe Development Bank, Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, International Finance Corporation, and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

CONCLUSION

The Special Projects Office will continually and proactively seek participation in projects that are aligned with the strategic directions of the Government in general and the Ministry of Finance in particular. The Special Projects Office is committed to utilising as much as possible the internal resources of Government, such as, MITTS, MEU, SDO, Treasury Department and other relevant departments to minimise the implementation expenditure of the various initiatives undertaken. Furthermore, the level of project participation will be commensurate with the available resources and the priorities established by the Ministry of Finance.

EMANUEL CAMILLERI
Director General (Special Projects)

Financial Policy and Management Directorate

MAIN FUNCTIONS

In the course of the year under review, the Directorate focused primarily on:

- the appraisal of the financial implications of new conditions of employment in the Public Service and on ensuring that existing conditions of service were being implemented in line with approved parameters;
- the review, on an ongoing basis, of existing financial management policies and procedures having service-wide applicability;
- the promotion and consolidation of the Public Private Partnerships Programme as a means whereby public services are delivered more efficiently and effectively and in a manner that secures added value for money;
- a number of ministry-specific initiatives, including several which had service-wide impact.

ASSIGNMENTS UNDERTAKEN

Throughout 2006, the Directorate was heavily involved in the following areas of activity:

- representing the Ministry of Finance in all negotiations of a sectoral nature held by the respective ministries with union representatives of specific classes of public service employees;
- evaluating the extent to which allowances/benefits awarded in terms of Sectoral Agreements were being paid in line with approved parameters;
- monitoring honoraria and/or remuneration levels currently enjoyed by, or proposed for award to, public officers and other appointees to government boards and commissions;
- updating policies and procedures, monitoring implementation and recommending corrective action where necessary in relation to expenditure-generating activities of a corporate nature such as travel on official business, transport, hospitality and utilities;
- contributing to the introduction of accrual accounting across the Public Service through active participation in the Accrual Accounting Task Force;
- leading the Public Private Partnerships Unit established in mid-2005, undertaking the first pilot project – a Home for the Elderly in Mellieħa – and seeking to identify a pipeline of prospective projects that lend themselves readily to the PPP model of procurement;
- co-ordinating the euro changeover process within the relative departments/entities falling under the Ministry of Finance, through the Director's chairing of the Public Finances Sectoral Committee and his participation as member of the National Euro Changeover Committee;
- driving the initiative to identify and simplify burdensome regulations, administrative procedures and fees within the departments/entities falling under the Ministry of Finance, as part of the overall programme of Better Regulation being spearheaded by the Office of the Prime Minister through the Management Efficiency Unit;
- overseeing the implementation of budgetary measures relative to the award of grants on expenses involved in the purchase/installation of solar energy heaters, photovoltaic systems, electric-powered vehicles, lifts for small and medium-sized enterprises and non-governmental organisations, roof insulation, musical instruments;

- implementing the amendments to the Pensions Ordinance that provide for special arrangements applicable to former public officers who were detailed or took up permanent appointment with public entities and taking action to secure the contribution due to Government from such entities in respect of their share of pension payable to officers serving thereat;
- evaluating and addressing sundry claims for compensation raised by third parties against Government in relation to damages allegedly sustained in the course of some government activity.

MARIO DEBATTISTA

Director General (Financial Policy & Management)

Treasury Division

GENERAL

On 1 November 2006, the Treasury Department which formed part of the Financial Administration Division within the Ministry of Finance was given the status of Directorate General following a restructuring plan that was drawn up earlier during the year. The restructuring of the department, which is still underway, aims at streamlining operations whilst building the necessary capacity and expertise that will enable the Division to perform its core Treasury functions as effectively and efficiently as possible. While supporting the administrative capacity of the Treasury to fulfil its legal obligations, this restructuring exercise also takes into account new functions that the Treasury will have to undertake in line with current policies.

For this purpose, in December 2006 two Directorates namely Government Accounts and Debt Management were established.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTS DIRECTORATE

Accounting Methodology and Compliance Unit

The Unit continued with its primary role of collecting accrual accounting returns on a quarterly basis and increased its efforts to improve the quality of data submitted by departments. The ultimate goal is that of improving the level of accrual-based data.

In this regard the officers deployed within this Unit have, through the guidance provided by MITTS, participated in data compilation exercises aimed at deriving accrual-based Financial Statements on three reporting levels: Department, Ministerial and Consolidated.

An enhanced version of the Stock Control Software developed by MITTS was implemented in various departments throughout the past year. The Unit provided assistance with the installation and also with the use of the software.

Other Initiatives

The Unit, as Treasury's representative, was involved in the process for the provision of an accounting training programme for public officers, with the Ministry of Finance and the Staff Development Organisation. The training programme runs over an 18-month period and consists of two modules. Module one which deals with Financial Management Accounting commenced in November 2006 and is scheduled to be finalised by June 2007. During this phase a number of participants opted to sit for the May 2007 session of the 'O' Level Matsec Accounting examination. Module two focuses on Cost and Management Accounting and is scheduled to start in September this year, to be finalised in 2008. The total number of participants amounts to 112 (99 Malta and 13 Gozo).

This training programme is meant to increase the level of competency in the accounting area in time for the full implementation of accrual accounting.

Cash Office

Cash Flow Projections

Departments have maintained their constant contribution in submitting Cash Flow Projections as per Treasury Circular 9/2005 and various other circulars. As has been pointed out in previous reports, Cash Flow Projections are a management tool to secure the maximum benefit of judicious cash management.

Bank Reconciliation Exercise

As from January 2002 electronic bank reconciliation was taken in hand. 75% of non cheque/cheque transactions are normally reconciled during the “first cut” reconciliation process. Automatic reconciliation has been up to date since February 2005 and is carried out every month following the Departmental Accounting System (DAS) month-end routine.

The manual reconciliation for outstanding transactions for 2002, 2003 and 2004 are 90% complete. At present manual reconciliation for these years is being carried out on unreconciled deposits for Malta and Gozo. Manual reconciliation of outstanding transactions for 2005 and 2006 (up to September 2006) are 95% complete.

The decision taken by Treasury in January 2005 to carry out manual reconciliation of outstanding transactions for each month following electronic reconciliation has ensured that liaison between BRS staff and government departments/ministries was better maintained. This has resulted in the timely detection/correction of errors and avoidance of same. Real time monitoring of government transactions is now possible and back logs are being avoided.

On a monthly basic, Treasury submits to NAO copies of the bank reconciliation statements. These statements reflect, apart from other information, decreasing amounts for unreconciled items in all areas.

Over the last year Treasury also adopted a more monitoring focused approach to ensure that departments observed the stipulated guidelines in respect of procedures for deposits at the Central Bank.

Bank Transactions Unit

The Bank Transactions Unit is responsible for effecting overseas and local payments. The following table illustrates the number of transactions by category that was effected by the Unit:

Transaction Type	Number	Value (Lm)
Debit Advice (Local) *	2,495	500,715,350.71
Telegraphic Transfers	1,618	31,683,784.97
Draft	1,078	1,207,622.71
Letter of Credit	9	1,262,009.38
Travel	3,618	2,757,564.50

* Debit advices issued by salaries and public debt are not included

Travel

As from 2005, the Unit took over all post-travel verifications as per Treasury Circular 6/2005. The task was formerly carried out by the National Audit Office.

During the year Treasury continued with the maintenance of the 2005/2006 travel databases and the verification of documents following overseas travel effected in 2006. Provisional figures show that over 3,600 visits abroad have been recorded for 2006. The following is the situation to date, with regard to investigated records:

	2005	2006
Total visits recorded	3,262	3,666
Still under investigation	28	16

Accounts Section

The Consolidated Accounts Section of the Treasury is considered to be the executive arm of the Accountant General. The main functions of this Section are to ensure that ministries and departments adopt and maintain uniformity in the accounting system. The Section is guided in this exercise by the Financial Regulations 1966 and the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1962 as well as by circulars issued from time to time to help in the interpretation of financial policy and legislation.

The vetting and processing of, and accounting for, all transactions effected by ministries and departments continued to be the main routine functions of the Section.

During the period under review, the Accounts Section processed local payments which were made up as follows:

Batches	11,080
Cheques	135,064
Value	Lm115,557,222

Reports

Apart from its day-to-day business, the Section also carried out additional assignments during the year including the issue of ad hoc reports requested by the Ministry of Finance, the National Statistics Office and the Central Bank of Malta. Other reporting as required by legislation is also carried out by this Section within the established time-frames. Amongst these reports, of particular relevance are the Section 65 Statements, the Annual Financial Report, the monthly Comparative Return of Expenditure and Revenue, and the publication on a quarterly basis of the Consolidated Fund Account.

The Section also carried out other duties relating to the Public Credit, Government Loans and Investments, Investments through MGI, Trust Funds and their related Investments, Warrants and Advances, compilation and collection of Arrears of Revenue, Write Off exercises and the monitoring of Other Deposit Accounts.

Euro Changeover Preparatory Work

In preparation for the Euro Changeover, the Treasury issued TR Circular 6/2006 dated 15 December 2006. This circular informed Departments, especially DAS users, about enhancements that were effected in the DAS application to ensure familiarisation with the dual display of monetary amounts during 2007. These enhancements included the dual display in the following documents: Local Purchase Order; Letter of Acceptance; Telegraphic Transfer; Payment Vouchers (Vendor, Multi Payment and Petty Cash); Receipts (Cash/Cheque and Direct Credit); Cheque - Remittance Advice.

This ensured the familiarisation with the new currency and would also lead the way towards the mandatory period of dual display of monetary amounts later on during 2007.

EU Funds Management Unit

The EU Funds Management Unit, formerly known as the EU Financing Unit has strengthened its human resources capacity in preparation of Structural Funds 2007-2013 period.

Throughout the year the Unit continued to process payments in respect of Transition Facility, Structural, Equal and Cohesion Funding. Apart from the preparation of necessary documentation for processing of

payments, attention was focused on providing stakeholders with reports that facilitated forecasts and control of project expenditure.

While securing control and compliance with the EU regulatory requirements, this Unit, with the assistance of the VAT Division, has ensured an adept treatment of VAT issues. The unit continuously liaised with the Managing Authority, the Paying Authority and other stakeholders in order to ensure prevention and detection of any possible irregularities.

Earlier during the year the Unit also organised an information session in preparation for the June 2006 Statement of Expenditure for Structural and Cohesion Funds and Equal Community Initiative. The main reasons for this session were to ensure the efficient management of Structural Funds and clarify other issues such as the treatment of VAT. Speakers included officers from Treasury, the Planning and Priorities Co-ordination Division and the VAT Department.

DEBT MANAGEMENT DIRECTORATE

The main functions of this Section are the monitoring, accounting and servicing of the Public Debt – Local and External. The Local element represents Malta Government Stocks and short-term borrowing – Treasury Bills, whilst the External element represents foreign loans.

Treasury Bills

Treasury Bills, which are offered by public auction on a weekly basis, have a dual role: primarily, to cover the temporary Cash liquidity of Government and secondarily, to maintain the Bill market. Treasury Bills are issued in denominations of Lm1,000.

The outstanding balance of Treasury Bills at any point in time is regulated by an enactment of the House of Representatives. While the current limit is Lm300 million, the outstanding balance as at 31 December 2006 was Lm160,472,000.

Interest rates ranged between a low of 3.1678% for 3 month Bills (20 January 2006) and a high of 4.1966% for 1 year Bills (15 December 2006).

The Treasury accepted the following number of offers, by tenor, and the respective amounts of the Bills:

Tenor	Applications	Amount (Lm)
28 days	3	31,000,000
91 days	360	270,227,000
182 days	49	47,890,000
273 days	39	26,309,000
364 days	45	48,585,000

The money market determines the rates for short-term borrowing and this, in turn, is influenced by the Repo Market rates.

Government Bonds

The Directorate is responsible for the issue of Malta Government Stocks in accordance with the Government programme. Stocks are normally issued to partly finance a budgetary deficit and partly to finance capital expenditure programme. Apart from new issues, existing issues may also be converted into new tranches as the case may be.

The Directorate has to service the half-yearly issue of Dividend warrants to existing stockholders.

During 2006 there was a redemption of Lm19.25m matured stocks and issue of new stocks amounting to Lm19.25 on which a net profit of Lm2.17m was made due to auction bids.

Foreign Loans

These loans are specifically issued to finance capital projects. A total of Lm10.39m was repaid according to the Re-Payment Schedule resulting in an end-of-year balance of Lm54.8m.

Salaries and Pensions Section

The primary objective of the Salaries and Pensions Section within the Treasury is to provide a timely service to the public sector by the prompt issue of Salaries and Treasury Pensions.

Salaries Section

In order to secure this objective, the Salaries Section has to ensure that the Database for Government Employees Payroll is properly maintained by effecting the changes in data captured at departmental level which in turn is transferred to the main system at Treasury.

- *Four-weekly salary payments system:* During the year under review the Salaries Unit continued with the operation of its four-weekly salary payments system which was introduced in 2004. Concurrent with that, it had also introduced the direct credit system, whereby all beneficiaries receive their salary payments electronically in the personal bank account of their choice.
- *Support Services:* As a result of the new provisions in the Collective Agreement for employees in the Public Service covering the period 2005 to 2010, Treasury in consultation with the MPO would ensure that the agreed provisions and measures affecting salaries are implemented in a timely manner.

Following approval by OPM for the introduction of the Donation Scheme to Charitable Institutions, during January 2006 Treasury finalised the necessary software enhancements to the current Treasury four-weekly Payroll Reporting System and by March 2006 the first Donation Scheme became operational in terms of the agreed parameters outlined in OPM Circular No 6/2006 dated 6 February 2006.

- *Public Service Reform:* The Unit also continued with the implementation of the Collective Agreement provisions and the Addenda to such agreements relating to the payment of progressions, appointments and other financial entitlements due to each class of employees.
- *Euro Migration Process:* In relation to the Euro Migration process, the Treasury, as one of the critical departments, is represented on the Public Finance Sectoral Committee (PFSC) to assist in identifying areas of concern requiring policy direction. In turn, officials from the Salaries Section hold continual meetings with MITTS Ltd to ensure that the surrounding preparations for the euro changeover are in compliance with the directives issued from time to time by the National Euro Changeover Committee (NECC). In this regard, the implementation of the dual-display of the Government Payroll and the Treasury Pensions shall be carried out as set out in the Roll-out Plan, that is, between 19 and 28 February 2007.

Treasury Pensions

General Data

By the end of 2006 the Pension Payroll stood at 14,147, being a net increase of 178 pensioners over 2005. The new pensioners for the year under review approved by the President reached 645 comprising the

following: Civil Servants - 465; Police Officers - 30; AFM Personnel - 48; Widows & Orphans - 96; Members of Parliament - 6.

Pensioners who passed away and ceased to be on the payroll during 2006 reached 467. The total payouts in pensions during 2006 rose to Lm24,790,096 representing an increase of 6.76% over the previous year.

By end of December 2006 the amount paid as Gratuities was Lm7,255,231 being a decrease of Lm900,517 compared to the previous year. Out of the total pensions paid to beneficiaries during the year, 68% of such payments were effected through the direct credit system operated with local banks.

Other tasks carried out by Treasury involved the re-computation and payment of pension arrears and difference in gratuity arising from the amendment to the Pensions Ordinance (Cap. 93) with respect to ex-government employees who retired from designated public entities as stipulated under the Ordinance.

NOEL CAMILLERI

Director General (Treasury)

Economic Policy Division

The Economic Policy Division provides Government with expert advice and assistance in the formulation of economic policy and the management of economic activity, with the aim of attaining Government's overall objectives of economic growth and development, high employment, low inflation and a sustainable external sector. Within this context, a sustainable public finance situation is necessary to ensure a stable macroeconomic framework. Furthermore, efforts are being taken to improve the incentive to work and to continue to attract foreign direct investment, to develop the tourism industry, to improve the competitiveness of the domestic economy, to support small and medium sized enterprises, to reduce excess bureaucracy and to support creativity and innovation. Within this context, the Economic Policy Division provides Government with the relevant technical input, so that the implementation of policy measures is done within the framework of Malta's economic developmental goals.

ECONOMIC STRATEGY DIRECTORATE

BUDGETARY PROCESS

The Economic Policy Division participates in the budgetary process, which is an essential tool in the implementation of Government's economic strategy. As in previous years, the Division provided information on the domestic and international economic situation as well as on the macroeconomic outlook. This information is important in order to ensure that the appropriate economic policy measures are formulated. The Division also provided an important input in the analysis of the fiscal situation and projections within the context of Malta's excessive deficit situation as well as the obligations of the Stability and Growth Pact. In addition, the Division was also engaged in the process of the proposal of budgetary measures and their respective economic impact.

Furthermore, during 2006, the Division provided input for the macroeconomic section of the 2007 Pre-Budget Document (Securing our Future).

The Division is represented in the Government Finance Committee and participates actively in the discussions. This Committee is responsible for the compilation of the Notification of Debt and Deficit Levels of General Government.

EU ECONOMIC POLICY CO-ORDINATION

The Division continued to participate actively in the EU economic policy co-ordination processes. In particular, the Economic Policy Division participates in the Economic and Financial Committee (alternates) and the Economic Policy Committee. The Division also participates in a number of working groups attached to the EPC. The Division is actively involved in the Working Group on Ageing Populations (AWG) which examines the economic and budgetary consequences of ageing. Moreover, the Division is also involved in other working groups of the EPC namely Output Gaps Working Group, Labour Market Working Group and Quality of Public Finances Working Group.

The Division is also engaged in the preparation of briefings for the ECOFIN meetings as well as for European Council meetings.

During 2006, the Division provided direct input in the preparation of the *Update of Convergence Programme 2006-2009*. The Convergence Programme is an important document within the framework of the EU's multilateral surveillance of budgetary positions and the surveillance and co-ordination of economic policies.

This document follows the submission of Malta's first Convergence Programme in May 2004, the first Update in December 2004 and the second Update in December 2005. The Update of Convergence Programme 2006-2009 includes macroeconomic forecasts, budgetary projections and an in-depth analysis of the fiscal situation and Government's fiscal policy, sensitivity analysis as well as an overview of the long-term fiscal sustainability. The analysis is conducted within the framework of the requirements set out by the Stability and Growth Pact as well as the Council Recommendation to abrogate Malta's excessive deficit procedure. The document was compiled in collaboration with the Budget Office as well as the Treasury, and with important inputs being received from various ministries and entities, including the Central Bank of Malta and the National Statistics Office.

Following the enactment of Act No XIX of 2006 entitled the Social Security (Amendment) (No 2) Act, 2006 in December 2006, the Division also prepared an *Addendum to the Update of Convergence Programme 2006-2009 (The Impact of the Pension Reform on Long-Term Pension Projections)*. This document provides a review of the salient elements of the pension reform and a preliminary analysis of the long-term budgetary impact of this reform.

The Economic Policy Division participated in the assessment of Malta's Update of Convergence Programme 2005-2008. In particular, the Division presented Malta's position in the Economic and Financial Committee (alternates) and contributed towards the preparation for the relevant Ecofin meeting.

In February 2006, the Division participated in the country examinations meeting held by the EPC on the National Reform Programmes submitted by Member States in 2005. During 2006, the Directorate provided input in the drafting of the Progress Report of the National Reform Programme 2005-2008 (NRP) which was submitted to the European Commission in October 2006. The Directorate participated in the Cabinet Committee on Competitiveness which is responsible to monitor the progress registered within the NRP and to ensure that the NRP is implemented in a timely manner. In November 2006, the Directorate participated in the country examinations meeting held by the EPC, which reviewed the Progress Reports on the NRPs of the Member States.

During 2006, the Division continued to provide information on the domestic economic situation and on the economic policies and measures that are being pursued by Government to the European Commission and other relevant parties. In particular, the Division continued to co-ordinate closely with Malta's desk officer in DG Ecfm. Bilateral meetings were held both in Malta as well as in Brussels with Commission officials from DG Ecfm.

EURO ADOPTION

The Division participated in the Euro Strategy Monitoring Group, which analyses the methodology used to calculate the relevant convergence criteria, monitors and forecasts developments in the nominal convergence criteria as well as developments in the real convergence criteria and reviews the situation vis-à-vis other conditions for euro adoption, namely enactment of legislative measures and statistical standards. The Division collaborated closely with the Central Bank as regards the price stability convergence criterion.

The Division is also represented in sub-committees of the National Euro Changeover Committee (NECC).

Furthermore, officers from the Division are assisting the NECC on the study of the potential inflationary impact of rounding and smoothing of specific products and services as a result of the euro changeover.

MALTA COUNCIL FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Division is represented in the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development and during 2006 it continued to participate actively in its proceedings. Furthermore, as in previous years, the Division computed and presented the relevant cost-of-living adjustment for 2007 as stipulated in the Incomes Policy Agreement of 1990.

NATIONAL ECONOMETRIC MODELLING

The Division has two econometric models of the domestic economy. One model is used to produce short-term forecasts for the main macroeconomic indicators. The purpose of the second model is to undertake economic policy simulation exercises and to provide a framework for medium-term forecasts. During 2006, the Division pursued work related to strengthening its econometric modelling capability. Work on the construction and maintenance of these models is undertaken in conjunction with foreign experts.

The short-term model was used to produce economic forecasts in spring and autumn, which were presented during the Economic Forecasts Meetings held between the Commission and the EU Member States. Discussions on these forecasts were held with Malta's desk officer in DG Ecfm. Furthermore, forecasts were also prepared in the light of preparations for the Budget and the Update of the Convergence Programme 2006-2009.

The second disaggregated model was used on a number of occasions for the preparation of scenario analysis, including sensitivity analysis assignments as well as policy simulation exercises. This model is being further fine-tuned in order to reflect better the realities of the Maltese economy and to modify the way in which a number of important relationships within the model are calibrated.

NATIONAL STRATEGIC REFERENCE FRAMEWORK (NSRF)

The Directorate provided direct input in the preparation of the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) in relation to the programming of structural funds for the period 2007-2013. The Directorate also participates in a Steering Committee chaired by the Parliamentary Secretary within the Ministry of Finance, which serves as a platform of co-ordination among the key players in the programming of structural funds.

PENSIONS REFORM

During 2006, the Division provided support in the preparation of a number of scenarios/simulations in the context of the preparations for the pension reform. These simulations were carried out using the World Bank's PROST (Pensions Reform Simulation Toolkit) model. A series of changes to the pension system were enacted by Parliament in December 2006.

FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVES 2007-2013

During 2006, the Division continued to provide support and input for the monitoring of developments as well as for the formulation of Malta's position during the negotiations on the Financial Perspectives 2007-2013.

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS DIRECTORATE

The International Economic Relations Directorate provides technical advice and assistance to Government on the economic/financial impact of international trade issues. Through its participation in the Commission Working Parties and Article 133 formations, the Directorate monitors and advises on the economic impact of issues and strategies concerning the EU's common commercial policy. Furthermore, the Directorate

provides an economic analysis and appraisal of Malta's international, regional, bilateral and multilateral obligations. This analysis is used in the determination of the most appropriate position for Malta.

During 2006, the Directorate enhanced its consultative role to ministries/organisations, in particular the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on issues involving international economic and trade relations.

THE COMMON COMMERCIAL POLICY - ARTICLE 133 COMMITTEE

The Article 133 Committee is a trade co-ordination and advisory committee to the European Union covering all aspects of trade policy. The Division, in liaison with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is constantly monitoring and analysing developments that take place during the Article 133 Committees in order to ensure that the views and interests of Malta are taken into account in the formulation of the EU's common commercial policy.

- *Article 133 Titulaire* : During 2006, the Article 133 (*Titulaire*) Committee was consulted on a number of trade policy areas, including developments in the WTO Doha Development Agenda, bilateral trade relations, the Communication on Global Europe, WTO accessions and WTO dispute settlement matters. Other thematic issues included the minimum platform for investment for EU free trade agreements and aluminium tariffs.
- *Article 133 Deputies*: The Article 133 (Deputies) Committee discussed issues relating to the WTO Doha Development Agenda, various issues relating to bilateral/regional relations with third countries, WTO accessions, and horizontal issues, such as the minimum platform for investment for EU free trade areas, the Communication on Global Europe and subsequent Council Conclusions, and trade related development issues.
- *Article 133 Services*: The Article 133 (Services) Committee focused on the EC's services offer for the DDA, as well as the GATS Article XXI compensation in view of the EC-25 consolidated services offer. Following the suspension of the Doha Round, the focus shifted on the bilateral level and the services elements in the current and planned EU free trade areas.
- *Article 133 Textiles*: The Textiles Committee continued to follow the China quota utilisation of textiles and clothing imports. The Commission extended the existing bilateral textiles agreement with Ukraine and amended the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement with Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan to ensure that the principles which apply to trade in other goods are also extended formally to trade in textile products.
- *Article 133 Steel*: Discussions during this Committee included the negotiation of a number of steel agreements, most notably the agreements on quantities of imports of certain steel products from Kazakhstan, Ukraine and the Russian Federation.
- *Working Party on Trade Questions*: The main focus of discussions was the Proposal for origin labelling of certain products imported from third countries, the *Reflection Process* on trade defence instruments and briefings on developments in the field of Anti-dumping and Anti-Subsidies.
- *General System of Preferences*: This Committee discussed in particular the Commission's Proposal to temporarily withdraw access to the Generalised Tariff Preferences from the Republic of Belarus, the grant of a special incentive arrangement for sustainable development and good governance to the Republic of El Salvador and the Regulation laying down rules for the opening and administration of tariff quotas for raw cane sugar for refining originating in least developed countries.

MULTILATERAL TRADE: THE WTO DOHA DEVELOPMENT AGENDA NEGOTIATIONS

The Division, in co-ordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Permanent Representations in Brussels and Geneva and other pertinent authorities, monitored developments and provided feedback on Malta's position with respect to various issues under the WTO Doha Development Agenda (DDA) negotiations. The main issues included agriculture, services, non-agricultural market access, trade facilitation and trade rules. However, during the course of 2006, negotiations on the DDA collapsed and

were temporarily suspended. Efforts are being undertaken to re-start the negotiations. The Division is monitoring the progress made in this respect.

BILATERAL AND REGIONAL TRADE RELATIONS

The Division consulted and co-ordinated with the competent authorities across Government in order to provide assistance to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in its policy formulation *vis-à-vis* a number of trade agreements with third countries that are currently under negotiation:

- *EU-China Closer Partnership, Closer Responsibilities*: The Division formulated its views, in co-ordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with respect to the proposed strategy for trade and investment with emphasis on a competition and partnership framework with China. Similarly, the Division monitored the documentation regarding the Market Economy Status of China for the EU-China Summit in Helsinki in September 2006.
- *EU-US Partnership*: The EU pursued further negotiations for a stronger EU-US partnership with a closer integration of the economies within a globalised scenario. With respect to the draft work programme of the EU-US Economic Integration and Growth Initiative, good progress has been achieved in many challenging areas. The Division monitored these ongoing developments and submitted views with respect to the Vienna Summit Declaration in June 2006.
- *EU-Canada Trade and Investment Enhancement Agreement*: The Division co-ordinated the views of various government entities, in liaison with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with respect to the economic aspect of the negotiations.
- *EU-Japan regulatory reform*: The Division monitored further developments arising from the ongoing dialogue with respect to the EU-Japan Regulatory reform proposals, in co-ordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other pertinent authorities.
- *EU-GCC Free Trade Area*: During 2006, the Commission focused discussions on the pending issues in the draft free trade area. These included services, investment and public procurement. The Division monitored these developments, including discussions on possible flexibilities to GCC countries.
- *EU-Mexico Free Trade Area*: The Division monitored further developments in the discussions on minor revisions, especially in the area of financial services.
- *EU-Mercosur Free Trade Area*: Negotiations will continue during 2007. The Division has monitored developments on this issue.
- *Economic Partnership Agreements*: The EU is pursuing a number of Economic Partnership Agreements with developing regions which need to be concluded by the end of 2007. The Division has liaised with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with respect to Malta's position *vis-à-vis* these Economic Partnership Agreements.
- *EU-Euromed Free Trade Area*: Negotiations with Euromed partners have continued in order to establish a dispute settlement system. Within the 133 Committee, discussions were held on the establishment of a protocol for liberalisation of trade in services, establishment and e-commerce within the Euromed area.
- *Negotiating mandates with Andean Communities, ASEAN countries, Central America, India and South Korea*: At the end of 2006, the Commission initiated consultations with respect to the issue of a mandate from the Council to open negotiations with these countries/regions in an effort to negotiate a new generation of WTO compatible free trade areas with ASEAN, India and South Korea and comprehensive Association Agreements with Latin America countries. These negotiations will be a key component of the EU's bilateral/regional relations in the coming years. The Division, in liaison with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had submitted feedback on the negotiating mandates.

TRADE DEFENCE INSTRUMENTS AND GREEN PAPER ON EUROPE'S TRADE DEFENCE INSTRUMENTS IN A GLOBAL ECONOMY

The Division monitored and analysed the ongoing developments on Anti-Dumping, Anti-Subsidy and Safeguard mechanisms. The Division provided advice to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the formulation of Malta's economic positions, bearing in mind the objectives, interests and priorities of the various stakeholders. The necessary consultations with local and Community stakeholders have been maintained.

On 6 December, the Commission initiated a Reflection Process on Trade Defence Instruments. Several experts were invited by the European Commission to comment on the possible reform of the Trade Defence Instruments. Subsequently a Green Paper for public consultation was launched in December. This process will continue in 2007.

THEMATIC ISSUES

Minimum Platform on Investment

The Commission launched discussions within the Article 133 Committee and provided a template on a minimum platform for investment for EU Free Trade Areas. The aim of this minimum platform is to provide a basic level of investment opportunities for EU and third countries when Free Trade Agreements are negotiated with third countries. In collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Division held consultations on this minimum platform and provided feedback to the Commission on Malta's position with respect to this issue.

Global Europe

The Commission issued a Communication on the External Aspects of Competitiveness (later known as Global Europe Communication) with the aim to review the contribution of trade policy to growth and jobs in Europe and to propose a set of concrete policy initiatives to strengthen this contribution. This Division, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, undertook the necessary consultations with the pertinent stakeholders and provided feedback to the Commission on Malta's views with respect to this Communication. Following this Communication, a series of draft Conclusions were issued on Global Europe. These were discussed in the Article 133 Committee where Malta's views on the Conclusions were forwarded.

Aid for Trade

The Division has co-ordinated with the Development Directorate within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to formulate a Malta position on Aid for Trade. Council Conclusions were agreed upon and issued on 16 October 2006. This initiative is aimed at increasing the trade capacities of least-developed and developing countries with the end objective of improving the economic and social conditions of their citizens.

Market Access Initiative

The European Commission launched a public consultation on a renewed market access strategy, in order to enhance the focus on effective market access for EU exporters in third countries, hence addressing obstacles to trade which either impede market access or make it harder, more expensive or more cumbersome. The Division liaised with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to provide the Commission with appropriate suggestions to deliver a comprehensive package to improve market access conditions for European companies. The Division participated in an information seminar organised by the *Forum Malta fl-Ewropa* regarding this initiative.

Investment Guarantee Agreements

The Division, in consultation and co-ordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other pertinent authorities, has continued negotiations on a number of bilateral Investment and Promotion Agreements, in particular with Vietnam, Ecuador, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

OECD Membership

The Division submitted technical data on the Maltese economy in response to a Commission's request for information in the light of Malta's OECD candidature. Preliminary views and assessment on Malta's candidature are also underway.

Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting in Singapore

The Division participated in the Commonwealth Finance Ministers meeting which was convened in Sri Lanka between 12 and 14 September 2006. Ministers participating in the meeting supported Malta's proposal to host a *Small States Network for Economic Development (SSNED)*.

Visit by Hon. Mauro Agostini

Hon Mauro Agostini, Italian Undersecretary of State for International Trade, visited Malta on 19-20 December 2006 for discussions on trade related issues with the Hon Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Division prepared the necessary briefings and was present for the meeting.

Advisory Support Services and Participation in Seminars

The Division extended its advisory services to various government entities, mainly through the compilation of briefings, the drafting of instruction notes, technical advice, research and economic analysis on specific requests.

Officers from the Division delivered presentations in a seminar on civil society in the recently acceded Member States, organised by DG Trade in Malta between 18 and 19 May 2006. The Division's officers also participated in various local and international conferences/seminars in the field of trade/economic relations.

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The Economic Policy Division provides information on the performance of the Maltese economy as well as on Government's economic strategy to representatives of international organisations.

As in previous years, the Division contributed in meetings with representatives from credit rating agencies such as Standard and Poor's, Moody's and Fitch. As the credit ratings assigned to Malta bear a direct influence on the interest rate charged on loans raised from international markets, the Division assigns significant importance to its interaction with these agencies. During these meetings, the performance of the domestic economy and the policies and measures pursued by Government to address the economic challenges faced by the Maltese economy were discussed.

The Division submitted Malta's position with respect to various issues in connection with the European Investment Bank and FEMIP. Positions included the EIB's external lending mandate and the EU's Guarantee Fund.

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

The professional staff at the Division carries out research work on various issues. During the year, the Division chaired a technical working group which prepared a report on competitiveness indicators for Malta. The Division also collaborated with the VAT Department on a specific assignment.

The Division also provided input for the formulation of Malta's National Action Plan for the Community emissions trading scheme.

In addition, research was undertaken by the Division's professional staff on various economic, fiscal and financial topics.

The Division published the *Economic Bulletin September 2006*. This document primarily analyses Malta's economic developments over the 2001-2005 period, with particular reference to 2005, whilst also providing a review of economic developments during 2006.

Moreover, the Division published the *Economic Survey October 2006*. This document which is presented to the House of Representatives at the beginning of discussions on Government's budgetary estimates provides a comprehensive analysis of Malta's recent economic performance and emerging economic trends, as well as an overview of international economic developments.

During 2006, the Economic Policy Division continued to hold active discussions with the Central Bank of Malta on the co-ordination of economic policies with a view to ascertain an optimal macro environment for further economic growth. It regularly collaborates with the Central Bank of Malta in areas of mutual interest, as well as to discuss local economic developments and prospects. The Division also continued to sustain contacts with similar organisations abroad.

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

The Division attaches importance to the enhancement of its human resource potential.

In order to meet its expanding demands, during 2006, the complement of Economics Officers in the Division was increased. In addition, the senior professional complement of the Division was strengthened by means of recruitment of Senior Economists and Economic Analysts.

Training of professional staff is also pursued. Staff members participate in training courses organised by the Staff Development Organisation and other training institutes, as well as in various conferences and seminars held both locally and abroad. Furthermore, one officer started a course leading to a post-graduate degree in Economics in a UK university.

INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND SUPPORT

The Division continued to work to ensure that it has the appropriate IT systems to support its professional staff in their work as well as its desktop publishing capacity.

The Economic Policy Division also continued to maintain its extensive information base on international economic affairs, in particular relating to the EU and the WTO.

JOSEPH RAPA
Director General (Economic Policy)

Contracts Division

RESTRUCTURING

The Department continued to strengthen its organisational structure by means of filling the vacancy of the post of Assistant Director (Pre-Contracts). Staff previously in separate units was amalgamated to form a coherent 'Letters of Acceptance and Contract Unit'.

The EU Unit was strengthened by the appointment of a number of Procurement Managers who will cater for the remaining Transition Facility Programmes and the new allocated EU budget obtained by Malta under the Structural Funds 2007-2013. It is also planned to seek approval for the engagement of a number of Procurement Managers to focus on new initiatives including e-procurement and Green procurement.

PUBLIC CONTRACTS REGULATIONS

Training on local legislation Legal Notices 177 and 178 of 2005 relating to Public Contracts Regulations, and Public Procurement of Entities operating in the Water, Energy, Transport and Postal Services Sectors Regulations, respectively, which transposed the two new Directives namely 2004/18/EC and 2004/17/EC of the European Parliament and Council was sustained throughout 2006.

In order to cope with the implementation of the new procurement practices being introduced, the Department successfully carried out a training programme, in collaboration with SIGMA/OECD on behalf of the European Union, with the aim of obtaining further expert training on the new procurement procedures stipulated under the new Directives. The two-day programme entitled The New Procurement Procedures and Instruments focused on the adoption of new procurement procedures, such as the Competitive Dialogue, Framework Agreements and e-Procurement, offering procurement officers from ministries and relative departments directly involved in the field of Public Procurement an overview of the implications of these new Directives.

The Department seeks ways to streamline its operations and direct best practices for the gradual adoption of these new procedures whilst converging the two elements of local and EU procurement.

Since local and EU funded projects had separate sets of administrative procedures and as a first measure to harmonise all tender procedures, not only within the Department of Contracts but also at ministries and public entities, the Department initiated an 'in-house' exercise to create a holistic approach and standardise all tendering procedures by means of creating new tender document templates. These are now available to ministries, departments and public entities through the Public Service Intranet. An intensive in-house training programme for around 300 government employees on the use of these templates was successfully carried out during the first quarter of 2006.

The Department was heavily involved in the new procurement procedure relating to the Competitive Dialogue. This innovative type of procedure is being utilised in the Private Public Partnership to be established for the Mellieha Residential Care Facility which has reached the Preferred Bidder Stage as well as that for the provision of Catering Services at the new Mater Dei Hospital which has been awarded. The procedure is also being utilised in another large project for the Malta Tourism Authority which has reached the competitive dialogue stage.

EUROPEAN UNION MATTERS

The EU Unit is responsible for the administration of all tenders which are fully or partially funded through EU funds. These operations, which include vetting of tender documentation and publication thereof, are related to the procurement of Supplies, Services or Works. Such tenders owe their origin to the Financing Memoranda signed for 2003, from the Financing Memorandum signed for the Transition Facility for 2004 and also from the Single Programming Document for the years 2004-2006.

A call for applications for the engagement of a number of Procurement Managers was successfully completed during 2006. Most of the successful candidates were recruited from within the Department proving that the training ideology adopted by senior management was thriving. Two other officers, one having a legal background, were also engaged on a contract basis, further bolstering the technical capabilities of the Department. It is expected that the recruitment process will be sustained so that the Department would be capable of coping with the expected influx of EU related tenders in consequence of Malta's new allocation of funds from the 2007-2013 EU budget.

The Department of Contracts is heavily involved in the Structural Sub-Committee on Pre-Accession and Transition Facility Assistance for Malta. In fact the Department is a member of this committee and attends both the Sectoral Monitoring Sub-Committee (SMSC) and the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) meetings.

The Transition Programme 2004 for Malta was concluded on 15 December 2006. Both the Transition Facility Programme 2005 and the Structural Funds Programmes for Malta of 2004-2006 are at an advanced stage of implementation.

The Department also contributes to the development of public procurement methodologies adopted in the EU. A senior official from the EU Unit actively participates in meetings organised by the Commission of the Advisory Committee on Public Contracts, the Working Group on e-Procurement, the Working Group on Public Procurement Statistics and informal meetings for new Member States. The Department of Contracts also took part in meetings organised by the EU Public Procurement Learning Laboratory and the EU Public Procurement Network.

The Department, with the assistance of the Planning and Priorities Co-ordination Division, delivered a presentation to the DG Enlargement on Tendering - Case Studies from Malta on the experience gained in administering tenders in respect of the European Social Fund.

Reports on Appeal Procedures and the Public Procurement System of Malta were drawn up for the EU institution SIGMA (Support for Improvement in Governance and Management).

EXTENDED DECENTRALISED IMPLEMENTATION SYSTEM

Following the granting by the EU Commission, in 2004, of the Extended De-Centralised Implementation System (EDIS) to Malta, the Department took on board several minor recommendations by the EU Auditors in order to enhance the monitoring, contracting and control systems in place. A revision of the Manual of Procedures, introduction of check-lists and other tools was recommended and effectively carried out while training to Senior Programming Officers and project leaders on the new amendments was carried out in January and September 2006.

An EU audit carried out by the Commission in 2005 had recommended that measures were to be taken to address weaknesses by the Directorate (Compliance) to effectively and efficiently carry out supervision of the SPO system as defined in the Manual of Procedures for Pre-Accession and Transition Facility Funding under EDIS. A private firm was contracted to carry out an Interim Evaluation Service for an Independent View to the Monitoring and Implementation Management of the Pre-Accession support to Malta and which had widespread exposure to the operations of the SPO system. The resulting report mapped out the SPO

system and the role of the Implementing Authorities, identified the inherent and control risks of the mapped out system, identified the system controls in place to mitigate the risks identified, drafted a check-list of the controls identified to be used during on-the-spot visits and formulated a sampling technique in order to perform the controls testing.

AUDIT VISITS

Five audit visits were affected on the EU Unit together with the horizontal stakeholders on Pre-Accession and Transition Facility Programmes. These visits were aimed at having a closer look at the systems in place, with a view to ensuring the sound management of EU funds.

TRAINING

A number of officials were afforded the opportunity of training abroad in public procurement. Five officers were sponsored to attend an Introductory and Practitioners Seminar on Public Procurement organised by the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA), while two officials attended another EIPA organised International Seminar on e-procurement. A senior manager attended an International Seminar on Public Procurement as an Economic and Social Policy Tool as well as a policy seminar on Public-Private Partnerships. The Department also participated in the Second International Conference on Public Procurement Practices in Italy. Training abroad was also organised on Tender Evaluation, Contract Drafting and Contract Monitoring.

Training on IT modules was constant throughout the Department while other specific training modules for Middle Managers were also encouraged and participation sustained. An intensive training course on accrual accounting was initiated whilst training on customer care was also provided. Training on social issues such as gender show the wide range of training made available to all employees.

GENERAL CONTRACTS COMMITTEE

The General Contracts Committee held 102 sittings during which 1085 cases were considered. The Committee evaluated reports and recommendations submitted by Contracting Authorities resulting in the issue of 331 Letters of Acceptance by the Department. The Committee deliberated on nine objections emanating from appeals lodged against recommendations of award of contracts pertaining to departmental tenders.

PUBLIC CONTRACTS APPEALS BOARD

The Public Contracts Appeals Board is appointed by the Prime Minister to decide on objections lodged against the recommendations of the General Contracts Committee on the award of public contracts.

During 2006, the Public Contracts Appeals Board held various sittings that dealt with 34 objection cases, seven of which were upheld.

WEBSITE

The Department's website contains information on the workings of the Contracts Department. Prospective bidders are provided with essential facts on public procurement. The site offers links to details on published tenders, General Contracts Committee recommendations and contracts awarded. A link is also available to the EU procurement SIMAP website. It is anticipated that the site will be upgraded to include enhanced functionalities once the proposed Procurement Management System is operational. The latter will be programmed to be user friendly with an efficient and effective platform for bidders that minimises the need to seek information elsewhere and for the procurers by providing a mechanism for dealing with the interaction with these same bidders. The system will also provide services to bidders in Malta and

abroad to stay informed about procurement requirements for items that are of interest to the particular bidder without the overwhelming volume of information relating to other items that are not of interest.

E-PROCUREMENT

The aim of introducing e-procurement across Government is that each and every economic operator across the European Union should be able to participate with simple and commonly used equipment and basic technical know-how in public procurement processes.

An e-Procurement Working Group was set up by the Director General (Contracts) in March 2005. The Group was entrusted with the drafting of a national plan entitled Action Plan 2006-2009 Implementation of e-Procurement across Government, setting the roadmap that leads to the introduction of electronic public procurement in Malta.

Following the presentation of the Action Plan to the Permanent Secretary MFIN, the latter formed an e-procurement Implementation Task Force under the chairmanship of the Director General Special Projects, MFIN whose brief is to review the status of the e-procurement project and prepare a strategic business case, including a benefits realisation plan that shows the indicative costs and benefits of the proposed system. Based on these findings, the Task Force is to prepare the appropriate implementation project plan for approval and to eventually oversee the implementation of the approved project plan.

In the meantime the Department is managing the adoption of a new IT System for Tenders and Contracts (STACS). Approval has been obtained from the EU for the relative funding of this project. A service agreement with MITTS Ltd has been signed and the relative tender is to be issued in the first quarter of 2007. The new Procurement Management System (PMS) for the Department will include a new user-friendly web portal offering clients the ability to view, download and effect payment for tender documents. The new system will enhance the existing web portal by having search engine capabilities for prospective suppliers who will be able to view information on tender publications, the phases of adjudication, recommendation for awards, appeal procedures and other tender processes on a 24x7 basis. The system will also have a management system capable of report generating facilities enabling the Department to fully adapt to EU statistical requirements. Another added benefit will be the direct link with the EU publications SIMAP office.

GREEN PROCUREMENT

The EU Directorate General for the Environment, having adopted the strategy to oversee the introduction of National Action Plans in each Member State by the end of year 2006, invited representatives from all Member States to a de-briefing seminar in April. At this seminar the Consortium engaged to report on best practices, the state of play and to provide recommendations on Green Procurement, presented its findings. The Draft Action Plan for Malta was the focus of attention of a working group in which the Department and MEPA played leading roles. Following the engagement of an expert under the EU technical assistance programme (TAIEX) to assist in drawing up the initial draft, the text was further enhanced with the use of environmental criteria obtained by MEPA through the city of Kolding, Denmark.

The Department increased this output through the findings of an International Seminar on Public Procurement at the Torgata University in Rome and another training seminar on Contract Monitoring attended in Brussels. In October, a seminar held for the purpose of introducing the Plan invited public comment and by the end of the year a final draft was prepared for launch. Pending the inclusion of the most recently available statistical data on procurement, the Plan is to be published in early 2007.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

A senior manager of the Department was appointed member of the Task Force to introduce transparent mechanisms to reward research and innovation through public procurement as part of the National Strategy for Research and Innovation 2007-2010.

BETTER REGULATION

The Department proposed and initiated three projects focusing on the harmonisation of tender documentation, bid bonds and facilitating the payment of fees, aimed at reducing burdens on the private sector.

STATISTICS

Projects Fully or Partially Funded through European Union Funds

The following is a list of the contracting activity carried out in relation to projects fully or partially funded through EU funds. These were related to the procurement of Supplies, Services and/or Works.

Contracts Awarded				
<i>Transition Facility Programme 2004 for Malta</i>				
	Published	Estimated Cost	Contracts Signed	Value of Contracts Signed
Commercial Tenders (Supplies, Services and Works) in Euros	10	2,782,887	11 ¹	2,585,125
Twinning Contracts in Euros	Nil	Nil	3 ²	1,802,000
Twinning Light Contracts in Euros	10	1,572,350	9	1,405,649
<i>Transition Facility Programme 2005 for Malta</i>				
	Published	Estimated Cost	Contracts Signed	Value of Contracts Signed
Commercial Tenders (Supplies, Services and Works) in Euros	1	98,500	Nil	Nil
Twinning Contracts in Euros	Nil	Nil	1 ³	675,000
Twinning Light Contracts in Euros	2	74,000	2 ⁴	209,924
<i>Structural and Cohesion Funds 2004-2006 for Malta</i>				
	Published	Estimated Cost	Contracts Signed	Value of Contracts Signed
Commercial Tenders (Supplies, Services and Works) in Malta Liri	29	4,685,524	40 ⁵	24,280,431

¹ Including 4 tenders published in 2005

² Comprising 2 tenders published in 2004 and 1 published in 2005

³ Published in 2005

⁴ Including 1 published in 2005

⁵ Including 23 published in 2005

Locally Funded Projects

The following is a list of the contracting activity carried out in relation to projects funded locally. These were related to the procurement of Supplies, Services and Works.

Commercial Tenders (Supplies, Services and Works) in Malta Liri

The Department published 460 calls for tenders, resulting in over 1,800 offers being submitted. The total value of contracts awarded by the Department in 2006 reached Lm24,653,800. The following is a breakdown of the contracts awarded:

<i>Categories</i>	<i>No. of Contracts Awarded</i>	<i>Totals (Lm)</i>
Supplies	232	12,169,500
Works	66	6,397,400
Services	31	2,516,900
Total	329	21,083,800

Item of expenditure	Total (Lm)
Purchase of Pharmaceuticals	8,346,300
Maintenance on Schools	2,210,500
Supply of Miscellaneous Items	1,581,700
Housing construction	1,462,900
Various services	1,452,000
Various works	1,115,400
Purchase of foodstuffs	937,400
Construction of roads	868,800
Various construction works	739,800
Period contracts	629,900
Hire of Vehicles	584,500
Cleaning services	370,300
Various school supplies	347,400
IT equipment and software	212,800
Purchase of various equipment	114,000
Consulting services	110,100
Total	Lm 21,083,800

In order to satisfy the Department's obligations in submitting the annual statistical report to the European Union, the Compliance Directorate enhanced the user-friendly template that was distributed electronically to all departments. A very realistic compilation of information was incorporated into a report submitted to the Commission by the October deadline.

FRANCIS ATTARD
Director General (Contracts)

Inland Revenue Division

Mission Statement

To collect taxes and social security contributions effectively and efficiently in order to ensure that all taxpayers and social security contributors pay their fair share, in accordance with the relevant legislation. In doing so the Department endeavours to provide the Ministry responsible for finance with guidance in enacting such legislation and to provide taxpayers and social security contributors with quality and timely service and to simplify procedures while minimising the cost of collection and the burden to taxpayers, in order to encourage compliance.

GENERAL

In 2006, the Inland Revenue Department achieved the revenue targets as set in the Financial Estimates. Enforcement on the collection of tax arrears and social security contributions for Class I and Class II achieved the desired results.

A major addition to legislation was Section 5A. This, together with other amendments, introduced the new regime of taxation on property transfers.

The Better Regulation initiatives were based on the enhancement of a wider spectrum of online services, which included the framework of online submission of documents and payments by notaries in respect of property transfers.

Simulation exercises were also carried out on tax balances with the scope of measuring the impact on the book balance with the euro adoption.

The Inland Revenue Department has also contributed to more green initiatives by laying the groundwork for the introduction of waste-separation throughout all sections including the Capital Transfer Duty Division and the Gozo Branch.

Security was also prioritised with an investment in CCTV equipment for the whole Department, special attention being given to sensitive areas.

INCOME TAX

Legislation

The Income Tax Act and the Income Tax Management Act were amended by the Budget Measures Implementation Act (Act II of 2006). The main but very considerable change concerned the new regime of taxation of property at the 12% rate on the consideration, as well as various conditions attached thereto and opt-outs from the new regime to the capital gains system.

A number of legal notices were also issued as listed hereunder:

LN 2/2006	Trusts (Income Tax) Regulations <i>prescribes all the forms pursuant to the taxation of trusts</i>
LN 3/2006	Part-Time Work (Amendment) Rules <i>prescribes a form for individuals to pay any shortfall of the tax</i>
LN 4/2006	Tax Credit (Women Returning to Employment) (Amendment) Rules <i>minor amendment to specify the extent of the deduction</i>
LN 50/2006	Venture Capital Fund (Tax Credit) Regs <i>provides tax credits for investment in venture capital</i>

LN 51/2006	Capital Gains (Amendment) Rules <i>deals with share transfers and prescribes the forms to be filled</i>
LN 52/2006	Agricultural Subsidies (Income Tax Exemption) Rules <i>specifies the subsidies that are exempt from tax</i>
LN 59/2006	Mergers, Divisions, Transfers of Assets and Exchange of Shares (Amendment) Regs. <i>amendment consequential to an amendment in the EU directive</i>
LN 76/2006	Fringe Benefits (Amendment) Rules <i>established a new benchmark for FBT on loans to bank employees</i>
LN 102/2006	Fringe Benefit (Amendment) (No. 2) Rules <i>lowers the new benchmark for FBT on loans to bank employees</i>
LN 112/2006	Tax on Property Transfers Rules <i>clarifications re the new tax on property</i>
LN 114/2006	Residents Scheme (Amendments) Regulations <i>provides for the procedures to be adopted in applying under the Scheme</i>
LN 139/2006	Deduction and Tax Credits (Gen. & Specific Qualifications) (Amendment) Rules <i>minor amendment to the definitions regarding qualifications</i>
LN 142/2006	Hosting of Students (Income Tax) Rules <i>establishes the manner of computing income for host families</i>
LN 159/2006	Deductions & Tax Credits (R&D) (Amendment) Rules <i>to allow large companies also to benefit from the R&D incentives</i>
LN 160/2006	Reduction of Additional Tax (Omissions) (Amendment) Rules <i>provides for CIR discretion to waive add. tax for omissions from Y/A99 onwards</i>
LN 234/2006	Double Tax Relief (Taxes on Income) (Spain) Order <i>double tax treaty with Spain</i>
LN 235/2006	Income Tax Exemption (Philanthropic Work) Notice <i>exempts Dar Mehba Bik and Fed. Ghawdxija persuni b'dizabilita`</i>
LN 261/2006	Double Tax Relief (Taxes on Income) (Iceland) Order <i>double tax treaty with Iceland</i>
LN 266/2006	Donations (National Heritage) Rules <i>provides for deduction re donation by companies to specified heritage organisations</i>
LN 270/2006	Double Tax Relief (Taxes on Income) (San Marino) Order <i>double tax treaty with San Marino</i>
LN 313/2006	Collective Investment Schemes (Investment Income) (Amendment) Regs <i>amendment re switches</i>

The more noteworthy concerned:

- regulations to further clarify the mechanics of the tax on property transfers;
- new regulations to regulate the taxation of student host families;
- double tax relief treaties with Spain, Iceland and San Marino;
- rules to provide for exemption where donations are made for the National Heritage;
- schedules to be filed when a share transfer takes place;
- regulations regarding Venture capital;
- exemption of specified agricultural subsidies.

FSS Tax

During 2006 employers submitted the following FSS annual reconciliation documents for:

2006:	22	Employees:	114
2005:	8,907	Employees:	205,549
2004:	122	Employees:	737
2003:	45	Employees:	417
2202:	38	Employees:	395
2001:	14	Employees:	57

The FSS section captured and reconciled data. Total documents processed were 9,126 FS7s and 207,155 FS3s. 8,193 Adjustment forms were processed during 2006. The section also issued 7,817 notices for collection of outstanding tax and social security contributions due by employers.

FSS enforcement efforts resulted in Lm1,370,981 in FSS tax and Lm2,105,044 in SSC as well as Lm8,953.62 in additional taxes being collected over and above the normal monthly tax revenue through employers' payroll.

Ledgers Section

The section issued 2,036 clearances to the Expatriate Department for the renewal of work permits.

Receipt Adjustments:	3,331
Journal Adjustments:	144
TX 44 (PAYE Adjustments):	868

Assessments

During the period under review, the Department continued with its drive to clear the backlog of assessments and to collect arrears of tax. A total of 46,326 assessments for past years prior to year of assessment 1999 were served on taxpayers.

Self-assessment Returns for Y/A 2006

A total of 81,130 self-assessment returns for year of assessment 2006 were processed up to 31 December 2006 apart from 140,733 tax declarations. These resulted in 222,063 statements for the year being issued to taxpayers up to the end of December 2006.

Outstanding Book Balance

The outstanding book balance is a fluctuating figure that is automatically inflated whenever assessments are raised and similarly reduced whenever tax is paid in settlement and assessments under objection revised following agreement. In view of the re-structuring of the Tax system with the introduction of Self-Assessment and the Year by Year Accounting system from Y/A 1999 onwards, the book balance is being presented in parts; the balance for the years of assessment from 1949 up to 1998 and the book balance for years of assessment 1999 to 2007.

Book Balance for Years of Assessment up to 1998

The Debit balance up to year of assessment 1998 as on 31 December 2006 was Lm118,041,553. This figure represents the total outstanding balance of all claims issued since 1949 less all payments of PAYE/FSS and Provisional Tax for the years of assessment for which assessments have been raised, less settlement tax. Against this book balance of Lm118.04 million one has yet to set off any overpayments of PAYE/FSS and Provisional Tax held in Suspense in respect of which assessments have not as yet been raised, claims for settlement of tax not legally due, and the difference resulting from the revision of "best of judgement" assessments following settlement of objections.

Book balance for Years of Assessment 1999 to 2007

On 31 December 2006 the book balance Y/A 1999 to 2007 stood as shown in the following table:

Y/A	Book Balance Y/A 1999 to Y/A 2007		Estimated Tax Y/A 1999 to Y/A 2006		Tax in Dispute Y/A 1999 to Y/A 2005	
	Taxpayers	Amount Due (Lm)	Taxpayers	Estimated Tax (Lm)	Taxpayers	Amount in Dispute (Lm)
1999	15,904	29,657,076	10,544	27,373,431	54	382,078
2000	14,980	9,728,496	10,465	7,335,123	63	833,526
2001	17,622	12,417,267	11,606	8,932,273	84	837,434
2002	19,889	13,190,672	12,922	10,443,367	77	753,566
2003	20,936	14,467,992	13,985	11,800,474	50	693,827
2004	23,392	16,318,094	16,210	13,985,870	33	271,251
2005	25,690	21,699,138	17,662	19,034,079	11	49,177
2006	35,609	34,193,181	25,345	30,592,794	0	0
2007	1	287	0	0	0	0

Included in the above table is an amount of Estimated Tax charged to taxpayers who did not submit any form of Tax document. This book balance will be reduced by the difference between the value of self-assessment returns submitted after end 2006 and the estimated tax charged.

A number of assessments were issued against which the taxpayer filed an objection (reflected in the Tax in Dispute column).

The book balance in Foreign Currency for Years of Assessment 1999 to 2006 as on end 2006 stood at Lm16,855,534, of which Lm311,514 represents Estimated Tax in Foreign Currency in respect of taxpayers who did not submit any form of Tax document.

Tax Audits

During the year, the Department continued to conduct tax audit enquiries - 606 new cases were opened while 756 cases were concluded, resulting in an increase in income brought to charge of Lm27,815,178. Cases in hand at the beginning of 2006 were 433, while at the end of the year the cases in hand were 283.

During the year a total of 246 new objections were received by the Department against assessments raised under the self-assessment system. A total of 140 objections were concluded, resulting in an increase in income brought to charge of Lm2,472,688. At the beginning of the year the objections in hand were 254, while at the end of the year the objections in hand were 360.

Computerisation

The Information Systems deliverables that were implemented during 2006 were:

- Euro Dual Display on most Inland Revenue and Capital Transfer Duty System.
- Budget 2006 and other Initiatives on the Self Assessment for Corporate and Individual Taxpayers for Year of Assessment 2006 for both back-office and online systems.
- On-Line Registration of Trusts.
- Supported the MFSA in their implementation of their online systems by providing a web service for the use of the Inland Revenue's Digital Certificates.
- Development of a Spreadsheet for the Calculation of Capital Gains Tax and Duty on Documents.
- EU Savings Directive: The processing of files received from the local payors and the exchange of information with the other Member States and participating countries.
- Payment of Final Settlement System FS5 On-Line using both e-PG and Internet Banking.
- Technical Upgrades of the Inland Revenue Website.

Take Up Statistics

Corporate Tax Return Filing:

Returns filed electronically	12,075
% of total return filed electronically	83.0

<i>PT Reduction Forms (Companies)</i>	443
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FSS Services for Employers 2005 (received in 2006):

Employers filing electronically	1,702
Employers filing through the internet	1,056
% Employers using internet	62.1
No. of FS3s received through the internet	69,401
No. of FS3s received on magnetic media	49,185

Payments:

e-PG Payment (Credit & Debit Cards)	3,764 (Lm723,450)
Internet banking	7,300 (Lm14,264,669)

<i>Personal Income Tax Returns Y/A 2006</i>	230
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Workflow Management System

The Workflow Management System was introduced to manage and control the work flow devolving on the various units of the Department. For the year 2006, 74,106 work items were received and forwarded for processing, while 71,445 cases have been closed.

Objections

Individuals

The number of pending objections of individual taxpayers against one or more assessments on 1 January 2006 stood at 14,845. There were 2,036 new objections registered during the year whilst objections settled by the Department for the year were 8,104, leaving 8,777 objections outstanding as on 31 December 2006.

Companies

At the start of 2006, there was an outstanding balance of 4,868 years of assessment under objection.

During the year, new objections were filed against 107 years of assessment. 933 years were cleared, leaving a balance of 4,042 years of assessment under objection, as at 31 December 2006.

Board of Special Commissioners

In terms of Section 35 (1) of the Income Tax Management Act, a taxpayer is entitled to file an appeal with the Secretary of the Board of Special Commissioners. The appeal should be filed within 30 days from the service of a Notice of Refusal by the Commissioner of Inland Revenue to an objection made by a taxpayer.

The number of cases concluded during 2006 was 50, still the highest in any year since 2000, with the number of still unconcluded cases at year end 2006 being 93.

Cases before the Court of Appeal

The number of cases involving the Court of Appeal during 2006 was as follows:

<i>Cases before the Court of Appeal</i>	
Cases pending as on 01.01.06	7
New cases	14
Concluded cases	9 *
Deserted cases	1
Total cases pending 31.12.06	11

<i>Cases before the Constitutional Court</i>	
Cases pending as on 01.01.06	2
New cases	0
Concluded cases	1
Total cases pending 31.12.06	1

* Included 2 retrials and 1 preliminary decision

<i>Cases before Civil Court</i>	
Cases pending as on 01.01.06	1
Concluded cases	0
Total cases pending 31.12.06	1

<i>Law Court Sittings</i>	
Court of Appeal	45
Constitutional Court	5
Total cases pending 31.12.06	11

Revenue

Revenue from Income Tax collected during Financial Year 2006 totalled Lm256.55 million. Furthermore the Department also collected Lm202.38 million in Social Security Contributions. As from January 2006, by Act III, which amended the Social Security Act, the Inland Revenue Department was handed the responsibility for the enforcement and collection of Social Security contributions for years also prior to 1998. The following table shows the revenue from Social Security Contributions:

Class I	120,419,819
Class II	13,625,701
Further Contribution	123,886
State Contribution	67,022,760
Total	201,192,166

The following table shows the revenue from Income Tax collected over the past seven years and the percentage variance from the previous year:

Year	Revenue	Variance from previous year	
	Lm million	Lm million	%
1999	128.4	17.8	+16.0
2000	149.5	21.1	+16.5
2001	166.3	16.8	+11.2
2002	190.1	23.8	+14.3
2003	205.2	15.1	+ 7.9
2004	211.2	5.9	+ 2.9
2005	221.8	10.6	+ 5.0
2006	256.5	34.7	+13.5

The table below gives a breakdown of the revenue collected in 2006:

I INCOME TAX					
	Settlement Tax Lm	PAYE/FSS Lm	Provisional Tax Lm	Self-Assessment Lm	Total Lm
Government/Parastatal Employees	1,021,129	21,255,878	1,625,817	1,829,978	25,732,802
Dockyard Employees	58,111	572,639	63,590	121,347	815,687
Private Employees	1,260,262	64,712,462	2,353,906	2,893,014	71,219,644
Shareholders	44,700	0	97,418	165,212	307,330
Expatriates	134,610	0	1,862,884	1,167,188	3,164,682
Business, Trade, Profession & Ecclesiastic Entities, Clubs	1,384,149	0	6,245,822	4,635,779	12,265,750
Rentiers	390,260	0	772,767	1,326,867	2,489,894
Companies (local)	1,817,670	0	71,145,405	18,771,710	91,734,785
Companies (foreign)	34,310	0	720,674	369,460	1,124,444
Other Categories	43,807	0	85,945	189,712	319,464
Capital Gains	0	0	30,097,755	0	30,097,755
Tax at Source	0	0	973,149	0	973,149
15% Withholding Tax	0	0	15,065,674	0	15,065,674
Others	1,234,535	0	923	47	1,235,505
Total	7,423,543	86,540,979	131,111,729	31,470,314	256,546,565
II SOCIAL SECURITY CONTRIBUTIONS					
Class I					121,209,903
Class II					13,625,399
Further Contribution					123,887
State Contribution					67,417,650
Total					202,376,839

Cash Office Receipts

The number of receipts issued by the Cash Office in respect of Income Tax and SS Contributions were:

Revenue	Receipts	Value
Income Tax	277,824	Lm 214,928,014.87
Social Security Contributions	154,582	Lm 98,263,742.29

Enforcement

The Collection Section commenced judicial action on a number of individuals and companies to secure revenue in the eventuality of tax falling statute-barred. Defaulting taxpayers were served with Demand Notices requesting them to regularise their position. Various cases were concluded while others were offered instalment plans.

Pre Y/A 1999 - Individuals		
Type of Enforcement	No	Value (Lm)
Demand Notices issued	3,423	4,165,595
Judicial letters created	2,420	3,763,901
Agreements	1,763	1,087,799

Pre Y/A 1999 - Companies		
Type of Enforcement	No	Value (Lm)
Demand Notices issued	479	2,503,122
Judicial Letters created	268	1,442,314
Agreements	29	232,351

PAYE/FSS 2005	
Type of Enforcement	No
Default Notices issued	13,555

PAYE/FSS Pre-2005		
Type of Enforcement	No	Value (Lm)
Demand Notices issued	1,282	23,646,747
Judicial Letters created	513	13,926,317
Agreements	121	6,049,554

Year by Year - Individuals	
Type of Enforcement	No
Default Notices issued	4,017

Year by Year - Companies	
Type of Enforcement	No
Default Notices issued	177

During 2006 the Section had 68 Court Cases and attended to 236 court sittings. Out of these 68 cases, 17 have been concluded and 10 new cases commenced during 2006. There were also five cases of *subbasta*.

Outdoor Inspections

The services of the Revenue Security Corps were regularly availed of to help the Department in its drive against tax evasion and for tax collection. Outdoor inspections were carried out mainly to identify cases of persons liable to tax who had failed to register as taxpayers, to ensure payment by employers of outstanding remittance of tax/SSC deducted from salaries/wages under the FSS system, and tracing taxpayers who fail to claim assessments sent by registered mail.

Inspections by RSC carried out in 2006 were:

Cash Escorts	554
Collection purposes	691
Investigation	87
Capital Transfer Duty Branch	743
PAYE	132
General enquiries	38

Taxpayer Service

The Department operates a one-stop-shop taxpayer service to address the needs of taxpayers, especially pensioners and individuals.

During 2006 the Department's Taxpayer Service Office (Help Desk):

- dealt with 30,087 personal encounters;
- registered 1,679 new taxpayers;
- reached 680 direct agreements for programmed tax payments by individuals;
- reached 474 agreements with employers on behalf of taxpayers for programmed payments of tax;
- amended 2,230 addresses
- issued 7,870 Income Tax Returns

Expenditure

The total recurrent expenditure, inclusive of all personal emoluments and other operating expenses, to administer income tax and the enforcement for the collection of social security contributions was Lm2.20 million. This figure does not include the amount of Lm2.78 million paid in tax refunds which should not be considered as an item of expenditure.

Thus, the cost per Lm1 of income tax collected during 2006 works out at 9 mils. When considering also the actual revenue collected from social security contributions, the cost per Lm1 of revenue collected from both sources works out at 5 mils.

Refunds

A total of 9,450 refunds of overpaid tax amounting to Lm1,764,463 was issued for years of assessment prior to 1999.

Up to 31 December 2006, the total of refunds issued for year of assessment 2006, which also in some cases included year of assessment 2005 and year of assessment 2004, was 45,401, amounting to Lm24,374,364.

Social Security Contributions

During 2006 the Social Security Division continued with the verification and enforcement of social security contributions. Class II payers continued to be informed of their Social Security Payment through the issue of the form PT1 every four months.

The major tasks carried out during 2006 were the following:

- 4,537 personal encounters;
- 301 determination of class one contributions for persons working abroad;
- 1,148 adjustments of receipts;
- 114 refunds issued, amounting to Lm68,183;
- 760 pensions scheme applications.

INTERNATIONAL TAX UNIT

Double Taxation Agreements

- The double taxation agreements with Iceland, San Marino and Spain entered into force and the related Legal Notices have been published.
- The double taxation agreement with Greece has been signed.
- The double taxation agreement with Switzerland was initialled.
- Negotiations were held with France wherein a protocol amending the existing double taxation agreement was initialled.
- Negotiations at the technical level were held with Ireland and Turkey but have not been concluded.
- Exploratory talks were conducted with the USA on the possibility of opening negotiations on a double taxation agreement.

Work Processed

During 2006 the International Tax Unit processed:

- 1,327 requests for certification of exemption from duty under the provisions of the Duty on Documents and Transfers Act;
- 566 claims for refunds;

- 530 applications for new Advance Revenue Rulings;
- 25 applications for renewals of Advance Revenue Rulings;
- 15 exchanges of information with foreign tax authorities.

Revenue

During the year, Lm10,400,000 were transferred to revenue from tax paid by companies dealt with at the International Tax Unit

EU and OECD Affairs

Members of the International Tax Unit attended 23 meetings in connection with EU/OECD related matters abroad.

Tax Law Amendments

Staff of the International Tax Unit took part in:

- discussions and drafting sessions relating to legislation concerning the agreement reached with the EU Commission and within the Code of Conduct (Business Taxation) Group in order to replace the ITC regime; and
- discussions relating to the fiscal regime concerning securitisation.

CAPITAL TRANSFER DUTY

Duty on Documents

During 2006 the Department examined 14,662 notarial deeds, out of which 6,067 cases were inspected by the Department's engineers. As a result, 5,120 original assessments were raised. During the same period 1,317 objections were filed, 600 revised claims were issued and 1,209 objections were settled.

During this period 120 refusals were issued in anticipation of appeals for the consideration of the Board of Special Commissioners for Duty on Documents and Transfers.

Besides duty on the transfer of immovable property, revenue under this source included also the duty collected in respect of share transfers, insurance policies, bank credit cards and other duties payable on various documents.

Total revenue collected from this source amounted to Lm38,960,533 (Duty on Documents) whilst outstanding balance of assessed duty, including disputed duty up to and including 31 December 2006 amounted to Lm12,029,634. This included revenue in respect of *causa mortis* transmissions. Besides arresting the further growth of arrears of revenue under the Duty on Documents and Transfers, the Department succeeded in reducing the arrears figure by circa Lm140,000 through intensified action of collection and conclusion of objections.

Since its inception, late in 1992, the *Causa Mortis* Section received 29,672 declarations of *causa mortis* transfers, mainly consisting of multiple transferees or beneficiaries in respect of Malta and Gozo.

During the year, 3,248 *causa mortis* returns were processed and 218 declarations filed by notaries were referred to the Department's technical experts to verify the valuation of immovable properties declared therein.

The Department receives and investigates a number of deficient returns. In fact, during the period, 2,366 claims were issued and 133 revised assessments were raised.

During the same period 40 objections were filed by transferees against the said *causa mortis* claims, while 95 objections have been concluded; appeals to eventual refusals will have to be finally considered by the above-mentioned Board.

The Department offers an efficient public relations service and maintains full liaison with notaries and the public in general.

Death and Donation Duty

The number of returns of chargeable transmissions filed during the period was 144 - all were processed and no outstanding returns remained unassessed.

Duty claimed was Lm16,883. Revenue collected, including prepayments on account and from arrears, totalled Lm41,285. Outstanding balances of assessed duty, including disputed duty up to 31 December 2006, amounted to Lm2,360,283.

Acquisition of Immovable Property by Non-Residents

In line with the agreement reached with the EU in pre-accession negotiations, the following new provisions were enacted under Chapter 246 of the Laws of Malta so that the legislation would comply with the *acquis communautaire* of the European Union as regards Chapter 4.

- Citizens of all European Union Member States, including therefore Maltese Citizens, who have resided in Malta continuously for a minimum period of five years at any time preceding the date of acquisition may freely acquire immovable property without the necessity of obtaining a permit under Chapter 246 of the Laws of Malta.
- Citizens of all European Union Member States, including therefore Maltese Citizens, who have not resided continuously in Malta for a minimum period of five years may only purchase their primary residence or any immovable property required for their business activities or supply of services without the necessity of obtaining a permit under Chapter 246 of the Laws of Malta.
- Citizens of all European Union Member States, including therefore Maltese Citizens, who have not resided continuously in Malta for a minimum period of five years, require a permit under Chapter 246 of the Laws of Malta to acquire immovable property for secondary residence purposes.
- Individuals who are not citizens of a European Member state may not acquire any immovable property unless they are granted a permit in terms of Chapter 246 of the Laws of Malta.
- There are defined zones in Malta, referred to as special designated areas, where there are absolutely no restrictions to acquisition. There is also no restriction on acquisition through inheritance and there are also several other special exemptions. Different rules apply to the acquisition by bodies of persons.

Revenue

The total revenue collected in Malta and Gozo during the year was:

	Lm
Death and Donation Duty	41,285
Duty on Documents and Transfers	38,960,533
Fines and Late Fees	6,235
Fees on AIP Permits	49,262
Total	39,057,315

Refurbishment of Offices

The extensive refurbishment of the offices housed at the Monte di Pieta' Buildings was continued and a satisfactory progress of work was maintained.

Computerisation

In collaboration with MITTS Ltd the implementation of the computerisation programme of all sections within the Department was further accelerated and almost all sections, except the Monte Office and the Consul's Office, were automated.

Preliminary Agreements

The registration of Promise of Sale Agreements at the Capital Transfer Duty Department was introduced. A Promise of Sale is to be registered within 21 days from its completion whereby the transferee is obliged to pay in advance 20% of the amount chargeable under the Duty on Documents and Transfers Act.

By the end of 2006, the Department registered a total of 10,457 Promise of Sale Agreements, of which 978 were registered in Gozo.

Il-Monti

Il-Monti advances money on pledges of precious metal. Below is a record of its activities during 2006:

Pledges accepted	3,100
Pledges redeemed	3,501
Money loaned	Lm142,085
Money received back	Lm158,574
Interest received	Lm13,139

The number of pledges remaining on hand at end 2006 was 8,563 against which Lm367,815 had been advanced. Besides advancing money on pledges, *Il-Monti* also holds regular Court deposits lodged for safe keeping. At end 2006 a total of 694 deposits were still held.

Expenditure in running *Il-Monti* during the period was Lm200, excluding Lm16,767 for Wages and Bonus. Moreover, a sum of Lm50,036 was spent for Contractual Services in connection with watch duties of the *Monti* and Consul's Offices.

Steps taken to improve the cost effectiveness of the Monte di Pieta' Institution have led to fruition with reduced capital outlay and undiminished service.

Assay and Valuations Office (Office of the Consul)

This Office regulates the marketing and distribution of precious metal articles and conducts also direct market surveillance via shop inspections.

The Goldsmiths and Silversmiths Act which came into force on 1 April 2004 requires that all marketed goods must be hallmarked either by an Assay Office Hallmark or by a manufacturer's or sponsor's hallmark as authorised in Malta or in an EU Member State. The implementation of the new Act was carried out smoothly in 2006 in spite of the radical changes involved, thus demonstrating the viability of the new legislation in both the local and single market environments.

The price of gold and silver, on which valuations made by this Office are based, was determined daily on the values quoted by the Central Bank of Malta.

The number of articles assayed, weighed and valued as well as the number of inspections during the period is shown below.

	Gold	Silver	Total
Articles received	1,733	25,878	27,611
Assays	384	360	744
Articles weighed and valued	291	0	291
Articles broken up on being found to be made of an inferior standard	0	59	59
Articles marked at a lower standard than the declared standard	0	0	0
No of Inspections			
		33	

Revenue from fees on assays, hallmarking, valuing and manufacturers/sponsors registrations was Lm5,564. Expenditure incurred in running the Consul's Office was Lm65,858 including salaries, overtime and bonuses and expenses.

ADRIAN CHETCUTI
Director General (Inland Revenue)

Customs Division

MANAGEMENT

During 2006, the Maltese Customs Administration had to operate mainly within the parameters of the following instruments:

- The WCO SAFE/Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade as adopted by the WCO Council in June 2005;
- Council Regulation (EEC) No 2913/92 of 12 October 1992 establishing the Community Customs Code, as amended;
- Commission Regulation (EEC) No 2454/93 of 2 July 1993 laying down provisions for the implementation of Council Regulation (EEC) No 2913/92 establishing the Community Customs Code, as amended;
- Excise Duty Act (CAP 382);
- The Import Duties Act (CAP 337);
- The Customs Ordinance (CAP 37);
- Intellectual Property Rights (Cross Border Measures) (CAP 414);
- International Conventions.

Economic interdependence and globalisation of trade are continuously growing together with the value and volume of trade, as well as the number of international consignments. At the same time the Department had to face new threats on the security and safety of the supply chain which are changing the traditional role of the customs administrations and are increasing its tasks and responsibilities.

The fight against organised cross border crime has become more important as criminal activities, including customs fraud, will continue to grow and will be increasingly organised on an international basis. On the other hand, international competition increasingly continued to be based on logistical efficiency. Predictability and sureness of delivery, both Just-In-Time and Just-In-Case, have increased in their importance in this highly demanding situation.

The need to maintain a balance between trade facilitation on the one hand and control and security on the other has required and will require customs to constantly develop state-of-the-art solutions and to rely on international standards. Computerisation of customs procedures, including transit, and the use of internationally compatible information and communication technology systems are critical factors for international trade facilitation.

Maltese Customs during 2006 continued to operate on EU customs legislation, procedures and documentation that required further customs reforms within our Administration in order to facilitate trade through the implementation of risk management systems, simplified procedures as well as the development of mechanisms for advance electronic transmission of customs data. Further developments in the near future will include the concept of Authorised Economic Operators (AEO). This concept will be instrumental in meeting this demanding challenge.

Mutual administrative assistance between the countries of the Mediterranean region and the other Member States has been a very effective tool during 2006 in the area of compliance and in the fight against fraud. The Department has worked hard to eliminate any obstacles in this area. Moreover, the Customs

Department has taken every opportunity to enhance co-operation amongst the different government departments/agencies, especially in controls on the border and inland.

IT and training strategies have continued to be developed in order for customs to enhance their effectiveness, *inter alia*, by using the most modern technologies whilst administrative capacity was further strengthened on the basis of the WCO standards.

All these challenges require important reforms relating both to legislation, procedures, administrative capacity, equipment and infrastructure. Maltese Customs, with the assistance of the EU Commission, is undergoing a continuous reform process in the management of effective compliance and in the fight against fraud. This allows the Department to continue (i) to simplify and reduce the contacts with compliant traders and (ii) to focus our risk-driven interventions against non-compliant traders. Maltese Customs has played and will continue to play an active part in this role as a member of the worldwide network of customs and excise administrations.

COMPLIANCE

During the year under review the Department continued to implement trade facilitation policy, reviewing its procedures so as to reduce administrative burdens on compliant traders without compromising the overall supply chain security. In line with this policy and in collaboration with the Consul of Gold and Silver and the Association of Used Vehicle Importers, the releasing processes of precious articles and used vehicles were reviewed. Procedures in various sections were revisited in the light of the experience gained during the initial period following accession into the EU.

Consultation meetings to discuss topical issues and procedures continued on a regular basis with economic operators, namely ship agents, *burdnara* and importers. Information on EU legislation and requirements was given to various operators who wanted to diversify and align their operations with the new EU trading environment.

Moreover, in view of the strategic position and experience that customs has at the border, various meetings were held with other government departments, authorities and agencies to share information and co-ordinate action on issues of mutual interest.

An extensive exercise was undertaken to clear goods which had been abandoned in Newport Bonded Stores for several years. These goods were either destroyed under customs supervision or sold by tender to the highest bidders. Also, in collaboration with MMA and VGT (the new Valletta Harbour operators), action has been initiated to remove several containers and goods which have been abandoned on quays.

EU PROGRAMMES

The EU Programmes Unit was set up at the beginning of this year. Its main function incorporates the co-ordination of all the activities abroad financed under the Customs 2007 Programme, including the travel and accommodation. This Unit manages the funds allotted by ensuring the participation of the competent customs officials in the various activities. A total of Lm57,000 funded by the Commission was spent on participation by 143 officials in an effort to enhance the expertise of these officials in their respective area so that they may keep abreast of the constant and rapid changes taking place in the Customs environment. The 2004/2005 budget allocation was favourably audited by the EU Commission in June 2006.

The Department's in-house trainer delivered the first e-learning car search module following the participation of customs officials in its final testing phase abroad. This was greatly appreciated by the Commission since the module was adapted to our national needs.

As a measure to enhance expertise and co-operation with customs administrations in other MS, nine customs officials participated in exchange visits to other EU customs administrations, one of which also sent an official to Malta.

PROCESSING SERVICES

The year under review consolidated the procedures which were brought in line on EU accession. On evaluating the results obtained through the new processes and responsibilities, it was possible to fine-tune for better compliance with EU and National legislation and facilitation of trade. The Common Agricultural Policy Unit was amalgamated with the Tariff Quota Section. It was considered that these two sections had overlapping and complementary duties of monitoring tariff quota authorisations and Agrim licences. Six Binding Tariff Information were issued by the Unit which bears the same name while a substantial level of Customs Laboratory analysis were related to drawback of customs duty on goods exported to third countries.

The Binding Origin Unit and the Verification Unit produced very positive results. The BOI Unit succeeded, through verification requests, to identify false and irregular preference documents and collect the related endangered taxes. The Verification Unit enhanced its co-operation with the Post Clearance Unit, thus producing much better results in the process. Better profiling of traders through the Risk Analysis module made it possible to focus on particular traders and specific goods, making better use of available human resources and extending higher facilitation to compliant traders.

EU CUSTOMS PROCEDURES UNIT

The Unit submits applications on behalf of traders for quota applications and forwards Surveillance information to the European Union's Central Services. The Unit processes warehouse applications and provides first line helpdesk services to users of the Manifest, Import and Warehousing systems.

The Unit was responsible for the control of the Inward Processing authorisation for sugar granted to a local company. The Unit also monitored the intra-community purchases of sugar on behalf of the Department of Commerce. The Unit also approved the importation of consignments under an agricultural quota system or AGRIM licence. The importation of goods moving under transit procedure (T5) was also controlled by this unit. The Unit conducted two half-day briefing sessions on CAP Procedures to a number of customs officers.

Every effort is being made so that members of the staff are trained in all the different aspects of the work involved and responsibilities entailed in the EU Custom Procedures Section.

CUSTOMS VALUATION OFFICE

During 2006, this Section has experienced growth in its performance and knowledge expertise owing to its participation at European level in the Customs Code Committee on Valuation matters. The principal aim is to promote the accuracy of the declared value which can be attained by different measures amongst which one can mention mutual confidence, communication and the exchange of information between Trade and Customs.

To this effect, the Valuation Section has worked throughout the year by giving advice to Management, Heads of Section in other customs areas, members of the business community and to private individuals. Also, a number of document/physical valuation checks have been performed.

BINDING TARIFF INFORMATION UNIT

The principal activity of the Binding Tariff Information Unit is the classification of goods. Decisions on various products decided in the Customs Code Committee in Brussels were circulated to all the staff. From

time to time BTIU receives documents from the European Commission concerning verification of their linguistic versions. This year the Unit was asked by the Commission to check and amend where necessary the Maltese version of the CN 2007 as regards the changes proposed. The Unit also received the EBTI-3 Thesaurus keyword data in English and this was referred for translation into the Maltese language.

Customs Analyst

Analytical and chemical work was executed during the period under review as follows:

Locally produced fruit juices & nectars for drawback	130
Alcohol for determination of denaturant	10
Kerosene, aviation turbine fuels for flash point and/or specific gravity determination	53
Diesel & other mineral oils for the determination of the fiscal marker	173

A total of 80 requests involving 150 samples were referred to the Laboratory by the Binding Tariff Classification Unit for the determination of the correct HS Code Number. The Compliance Verification Unit referred to the Laboratory a total of 430 documents relating to goods imported from non-EU countries for the checking of the correct Customs Classification and of other technical details. The Laboratory continued to assist the Common Agricultural Policy Unit in technical matters.

CUSTOMS ECONOMIC PROCEDURES UNIT

During the year, 19,834 documents were processed at the CEPU and 4,878 exports were carried out. CEPU is also responsible for issuing *burdnara* licences and *burdnara* ID cards. The number of authorisations for Procedures with Economic Impact amounted to 43. During the same time, several audit exercises were carried out in conjunction with the Post Clearance Audit. All claims for drawbacks, received during the period under review, were settled.

BINDING ORIGIN INFORMATION UNIT

Seventy-nine verification requests in respect of origin certificate were submitted. Forty-four replies confirmed correctness and authenticity of preference certificates. Eight replies confirmed that certificates, submitted for verification were declared to be either invalid or forged. In 2006 the Unit received two requests for verification of preference certificates issued in Malta.

DOCUMENT VERIFICATION UNIT

The Risk Analysis System selects particular consignments either for a Documentary Check, Physical Examination or VACIS Scan. These controls are based on specific risk profiles. Declarations earmarked without examination (Green) are checked within 15 days of acceptance in the Customs Electronic System. About 48,040 import declarations were approved in the system. The number of fiscal post entries issued tallied to 242 and the revenue collected was Lm107,129.

Verification of Intra Community documentation for shipments dispatched from the Free Port prior to the issue of the electronic gate pass is carried out. About 13,931 documents were submitted for verification focusing mainly on the Electronic Manifests, T2L certificates, Invoices and transportation documents.

CUSTOMER SERVICES

This office is responsible for processing of import documents in respect of personal effects and motor vehicles, transhipments and shipping bills, EU Taric Database queries, refunds and correspondence in connection with Preference Certificates.

The section entered import and excise duty declarations into the Customs Electronic System. This service is limited to traders who do not have online access to the CES. This section is also responsible to input statistical data of intra community trade as per the *intrastat* forms presented by traders, post clearance input of export declarations for statistical purposes, registration of new importers and administering user accounts of the CES.

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

The Section followed up cases of incorrect declarations while applications for misplaced Customs certificates were processed and approved. The status of pleasure sea crafts was monitored. The Section also dealt with 11 cases of Onward Supply Relief of luxury yachts. 144 Garnishee Orders were referred to Stations concerned with the resulting feedback referred to Civil Courts. Cases of outstanding revenue were also monitored in liaison with Legal Unit and Attorney General.

LANDING AND RELEASING

The branch comprises the following outstations: Deep Water Quay, Exam Shed, Courier Office, Airfreight Section, Malta Freeport, Hal Far Complex, Laboratory Wharf, Parcel Post Office, Malta Shipyards and Weighers Office.

Deep Water Quay

During 2006 a total of 242 vessels discharged and/or loaded the under-mentioned cargo at the Deep Water Quay:

<i>Discharged</i>	<i>Loaded</i>
6,059 full load containers/trailers	48 full containers/trailers
93,266 metric tons of conventional cargo	665.5 metric tons of conventional cargo
4,662 cars	80 cars

In July 2006 VGT (Valletta Gateway Terminal Co. Ltd.) took over the operations of the previous contractor, Cargo Handling Co Ltd. Much of the activity that used to take place at DWQ was shifted to Laboratory Wharf and this explains the sharp drop of about 60% in landings at this station. However, towards the end of the year there was an increase of other business mainly the unstuffing of containers containing second-hand vehicles. Talks are in an advanced stage to use one of the sheds for the storage and transhipment of ship's spares by a local company.

Freeport

During 2006 the following activities were performed at the Freeport.

- 1,772 *pratiques* were carried out, of which 1,093 were for vessels coming from non-EU countries and 679 from EU countries. 252 vessels were not boarded.
- 30,659 containers were discharged for local consumption, of which 5,554 were despatched under Customs seals. 16,606 seals were used and revenue amounted to Lm3,042.

This year, at the Freeport there was an increase of 6.4% in the number of containers destined for local consumption or to be put in free circulation. Despatches of containers from this Section to other Customs Stations are controlled by means of a Transit manifest. The officer in charge liaises with other Stations to ensure that all containers despatched have reached their destination.

Malta Shipyards

Revenue generated from this Section amounted to Lm5,220 duty, Lm8,907 VAT and Lm23,332 deposits raised on T1 docs.

Luqa Airfreight

During 2006, a total of 7,101 aircraft manifests were handled by this section. There were 19,770 declarations, of which 7,833 were selected for control. Revenue collected amounted to Lm3,003,892 of which Lm411,944 collected as duty and Lm14,131 as Excise duty. The amount of Lm34,762 were collected as additional revenue on 376 incorrect declarations.

This Section is considered as a one-stop shop mini Customs. Compared to last year there was an increase in duty collected. The efficiency of the staff at this section can be measured by the amount of additional revenue raised. Special attention has been given to Intellectual Property Rights infringements and IPR officers were called an average of twice a week. Goods in transit were thoroughly monitored together with Fraud Section officers and also Non-Proliferation officers were present when the need arose.

Globe Air Services is now in its second year of operation. This Company has its own freight shed within the airport precincts and so far most of the cargo handled was of Community status. A limited number of industrial concerns continued to benefit from a simplified procedure which facilitated the release of urgent cargo. Although Air Malta was given full responsibility to run the cargo shed, the Company is still obliged to keep Customs informed of all movements and refer to Customs personnel whenever 'T1' cargo was going to be released. Notwithstanding this, the Customs Department held its prerogative to carry out inspections/investigations as and when it deemed fit.

General Examination Shed

In all, this year 3,768 units were selected for control of which 1,185 units were examined at the Examination Shed, 1,559 units at importer's premises and 1,024 units containing second-hand vehicles at Laboratory Wharf.

- 102 discrepancies were detected of which 28 constituted incorrect declarations;
- Lm47,207 were collected as Post Entries involving Duty and VAT;
- Lm8,109 were collected as additional amount pending possible fines.

The amount of containers selected for control has been reduced by about 31% this year but still, officers in this Section managed to raise approximately the same amount of revenue in post-entries. This is mainly contributed to good targeting and effective risk management. Besides, two cases of fraud (double invoicing) were detected. Goods were withheld and advice has been sought on whether to start criminal proceedings.

The release of 23 consignments was withheld and goods were placed in safe custody pending clearance from other departments mainly; Department of Trade, Consumer and Competition and Port Health. Personnel from the Customs Anti Drugs Squad inspected two containers using the mobile X-ray Unit whilst 453 containers were scanned. Enforcement and IPR officers were present during the release of 29 containers.

Hal Far Groupage Complex

A total of 5,584 units entered the complex of which 1,536 were non-EU. Tallying was carried out on 934 non-EU units and 117 EU. There were also 1,591 spot checks carried out by SIAT at the gate. Additional revenue generated by this section on incorrect declarations amounted to Lm22,932 and Lm4,898 were

raised as fines. Lm8,660 was collected as rent charges (amount only covers rent paid at the Complex cash office).

The number of units which entered the Complex was similar to that registered last year with a slight increase.

Laboratory Wharf

There were 448 vessels which landed goods at this station and the following operations were recorded:

<i>Discharges</i>	<i>Loading</i>
9,354 units of which 726 non-EU; 4,875 new vehicles of which 2,231 non-EU; 189 live animals; 349,519 mt. tons bulk cargo cement, etc; 187,158 mt. tons wheat, barley, etc.	1,605 units of which 258 exports to non-EU; 11,847 mt. tons scrap material; 1,101 second-hand vehicles; 71 new vehicles.

1,015 containers containing 3,398 second-hand vehicles were transferred from Freeport and released by officers from Exam Shed.

This section experienced an increase of 22% in the amount of vessels discharging and loading cargo. This was mainly due to the decision taken by VGT to transfer some of its operations from DWQ to this Section. The number of Japanese second-hand vehicles imported remained approximately the same. Officers at this station monitor ships' manifests with regard to status and non-EU containers are sealed upon landing.

Parcel Post Office

The downward trend which was experienced last year in this Section has been reversed and there are indications that the postal service is again on the rise. In fact there was an overall increase of 12% in revenue. This is mainly attributed to an increase in buying over the Internet. The use of the Express Courier Service provided by Maltapost is becoming very popular. Random scanning of parcels for illicit and/or illegal goods continued to take place. This section generated the following activities during 2006:

- Lm 144,966 VAT and Lm25,485 duty were collected from PPO and Gozo branches.
- 15,144 parcels were presented to Customs, of which 1,676 were declared in CES, 3,962 as simplified SADs and 9,506 released free against PP notice.

Courier Office

During 2006 this section handled over 53,456 bags and 25,781 cartons, of which 14,678 bags and 2,139 cartons were non-EU. There is no doubt that the widespread use of e-commerce is reflected in this section as the volume of packages handled continues to grow at a fast pace. An increase of 38% was recorded in non-EU cartons. This increase is also reflected in the amount of revenue collected. Regular X-ray scanning is carried. A total of 9,769 cartons and 7,151 bags were scanned.

Revenue generated from this section amounted to Lm1,003,036, of which Lm84,386 was collected as duty. Additional revenue raised due to incorrect declarations amounted to Lm7,266.

EXCISE AND SYSTEM CONTROL

Customs Warehousing Unit

The section monitors both private and public customs warehouses operating under the open-bond system. Warehousing of new motor vehicles is normally the unit's major activity (3,078 vehicles in 2006); however the number of containers processed peaked at 52 in June. Other warehouses operating through this section

are those relating to the warehousing of lubricating oils, motor-cycles, marine outboard engines, generators, cosmetics and perfumery, canned foods, medicinals, packaging material, advertising material, clothing, electric cables, flight catering and frozen foods. Warehouse stocks are physically inspected at least twice a year and warehouse keeper must submit monthly stock and movement reports.

During the year the section collected a total of Lm1,294,811 Import Duty and Lm1,486,701 in import VAT

Newport Bonded Stores

A large proportion of the goods held at NBS cannot be disposed of until court cases are over. During 2006 the section collected Lm1,069 in rent, Lm1,502 in Import Duty, Lm8,168 in VAT and Lm1,931 in anti-dumping duties. Two auctions were held, generating a total income of Lm23,742.

Excise Section (Local Producers and Excise Registered Traders)

During 2006 this Section registered a further 50 Excise Traders, who now total 220. It administers excise goods varying from locally-produced alcoholic beverages and tobacco products to ethanol used in medicinals to controlling amounts of alcoholic drink brought in by travellers for private functions.

The largest cigarette manufacturer (Central Cigarettes Ltd) has ceased production in Malta and will henceforth import from Eastern Europe.

The section distributes cigarette excise stamps to warehouse keepers/producers and ensures that relative duties are paid; it is also responsible for the distribution of all alcohol stamps and was the section charged with ensuring that alcoholic beverages already released from warehouse and therefore already at wholesalers or retail outlets also carried the necessary stamp.

The section collected Lm24,136,637 in Excise Duty, Lm23,397 in Import Duty and Lm1,180,112 in VAT during the course of the year.

The Tax Warehousing Unit (Alcohol/Tobacco)

The unit supervises 18 Traders who are situated at Barriera Tax Warehouse (BTW) and 26 Traders who have a private Tax warehouse. During 2006, three new warehouse keepers started operations while another two moved out of BTW to new premises. Towards the end of the year one warehouse keeper who was repeatedly non-compliant had his authorisation suspended.

The primary purpose of the unit is to monitor that all merchandise warehoused in the trader's premises is duly recorded in trader's record books and that all releases from warehouses are paid for. Full documentary checks are made at the warehousing stage and warehouse keepers must submit stock reports on a monthly basis; a proportion of goods are physically checked, either at the warehousing stage or during stock control exercises.

In January 2006 Excise tax stamps were introduced to safeguard government revenue and to protect the interests of those traders who import merchandise legally. Tax stamps are now fixed on all alcoholic beverages above 25° alcohol and from 50cl upwards. As from October 2006 traders were required to formally warehouse all Excise goods imported under duty suspension even if arriving from the EU in order for customs to have a full standard electronic record of all transactions and stock.

The section recorded the importation of no less than 700 container loads of alcohol and tobacco products while 42 container loads were exported, this was apart from goods imported as groupage cargo.

Tax Warehousing Unit (Fuel)

The main objective of the Fuel Section is primarily to monitor and keep records of all fuel movements that are under duty suspension, and to ensure the full and proper collection of duties and taxes. Full stock and movement control is achieved through both physical and documentary checks. The section also collects fuel bunker charges and processes all claims for refunds of excise duty paid on fuel used in commercial navigation or during outward bound voyages by private craft.

Monthly data on importation, warehousing and exportation is submitted to the Malta Resources Authority as well as of all the internal transfers carried out between tax warehouses, which include bunkering tankers of which there are presently fifteen operating. Stock reports are submitted on monthly basis by all operators and these are backed up by physical end of month controls of all storage installations. During 2006 the section collected Lm28,383,250 in Excise Duty and Lm24,772 in Import Duty.

Computer Section

The section is responsible to plan for, and oversee, the introduction of all new EU related IT systems. Staff members work very closely with MITTS personnel. Staff regularly attends EU meetings to be fully conversant with the legal and business requirements and to ensure these systems will carry out the correct functions. The section also provides information material and training to staff and traders for every new development that takes place.

Another important matter that the section administers is the TARIC database and module. This is crucial to ensure EU compliance, and section expertise extends from the purely technical issues to the full business layer.

During 2006 new systems such as eDoCS, ICIS, Transit, MEX (the export module), have been introduced; others have been upgraded such as the Import System, TQS, MITTS User Administration module and SEED Spec 14 while others such as the Bonded Warehouse were implemented in production. Work on other systems, such as the ECS, OMER, and the Surveillance II is ongoing.

From July onwards continuous testing on the export system led to the launch of phase I on 6 November. The system is now in full production although the full business procedures have still to be introduced.

The section was, and still is, fully involved in analysing the needs and the preparations for the euro changeover and the dual display issues.

IT Centre

The section is responsible to install and administer all hardware and office type software in the Department, to troubleshoot all problems that arise and to liaise with MITTS and other suppliers. The old coax LAN infrastructure at the Customs Stores was replaced with new UTP cables; all network terminations and patching was carried out by the section's staff.

During the course of the year the Malta Customs website www.maltacustoms.gov.mt was kept updated. The IT Centre continued to assume responsibility for the upkeep and updating of the computer hardware inventory for the Department.

Transit/Freezones Section

Throughout 2006 the Transit/Free Zones Section followed up its dual role of overseeing the application of the Community/Common Transit procedure as well as monitoring the operation of Free Zones and Free Warehouses established in line with the Community Customs Code. The business statistics for transit operations undertaken during 2006 are as follows:

<i>Transit Movements</i>	<i>Opened</i>	<i>Closed</i>	
Country of departure - Malta	80	81	
Country of destination - Malta	1,706	1,987	
<i>Enquiry Procedure</i>	<i>Electronic</i>	<i>Manual</i>	<i>Concluded</i>
Started (Country of departure)	57	20	32
Received (Country of destination)	613	148	344

The Transit Section participated regularly in meetings of the Electronic Customs Group (ECG) held in Brussels. Other participation included meetings of Transit Co-ordinators and the Transit Contact Group.

During February two colleagues from Irish Customs visited the transit section on a Eurocustoms mission to review transit procedures in Malta. The Transit Section was represented in an Evaluation Seminar of NCTS organised by the European Commission in Lithuania and an NCTS/TIR Workshop held in Poland. A staff member attended for hands-on training on MCC Client in Athens. This training was eventually given to Customs staff serving in stations where MCC (Minimal Common Core) is used for the electronic processing of incoming and outgoing transit procedure.

The Section processed various requests for simplified procedures in the fields of regular shipping services and airfreight. A new operator was issued with an authorisation for a free warehouse at the Malta Freeport.

ADMINISTRATION

Finance

During the year under review, a major project undertaken was to house the offices of members of management into the top floor of the main Customs building.

General maintenance of various offices as well as ad hoc maintenance of certain security facilities as the Hal Far gate was also effected. Another major project worth mentioning was the procurement of the new motor launch to be used in enforcement operations.

Accounts Section

During the year 2006, the Accounts Section, in its endeavours to clear debts accruing to Customs, recovered a substantial amount of monies in arrears for services rendered by Customs officials.

The Accounts Section was also actively involved in discussions with MFIN and testing of a computerised system intended to monitor the issue of fuel to the Customs fleet of vehicles.

Customs Debt Unit

The total sum of import duties (TOR) for the period December 2005 to November 2006 was Lm6,413,318.00. Three-quarters of this sum, that is Lm4,809,985 was transferred to the EU. The remaining one quarter (Lm1,603,333) was retained by the Maltese Authority as administration fee.

The CDU continued to fulfil its important function in chasing outstanding dues to Customs established by the CES and to effect refunds. Two major functions carried out was the granting of deferred payment facility to certain importing companies and the management of bank guarantees.

Human Resources

The Human Resources Section provided support to the Senior Management, Section Heads and the employees in general. A Memorandum of Understanding and Agreement between the Government and the

Union Haddiema Maghqudin, covering staff of the Customs Class, was signed. The main objectives were efficiency, the better utilisation and allocation of resources and openings for career progress.

Training Unit

In-house training courses organised by the Training Unit during 2006

During 2006, a total number of 50 courses equivalent to 447 hours of in-house training (43 courses to Customs staff and 7 courses to the private sector) were delivered. This unit was in constant liaison and co-operation with seven external training entities and benefited from 14 tailor-made programmes, specifically designed and developed to the Department's needs.

Apart from the entire in-house training programme, another four courses held in other locations were organised by other training organisations in collaboration with the Training Unit. These were attended by 33 members of staff and a further 516 man-hours were measured on these external courses.

Health and Safety Unit

During 2006, the Health and Safety Unit continued with the projects launched during the previous year; the continuation of various risk assessments of the Customs Department work places and work practices, assistance to the Procurement Section in order to procure the Personal Health and Safety Equipment, meetings regarding the Pandemic Influenza and risk assessments at head office, participated in the Training Contact Persons meetings in collaboration with the Officer in charge Training Unit.

This unit has also assisted the Non-Proliferation Unit in the finalisation of the Vehicle and Container Inspection System (VACIS) evaluation report, carried out radiation test at the new warehouse location for VACIS at the Freeport and assisted the Non-Proliferation Unit in the radiological questionnaire on detection technologies.

During the year under review, this unit participated also in the Avian Conference in Brussels and carried out a risk assessment at the Ministry of Finance in Valletta.

ENFORCEMENT

The duties of the Directorate include: the clearance inwards and outwards of ships, yachts, aircrafts and passengers; censorship of video tapes and software; watching and escorting of uncustomed goods; patrols on land and sea in Customs areas; supervising the landing and loading of all cargo imported/exported by air; release of accompanied commercial goods; controls for illicit movement of narcotics, excise goods, cash and counterfeits; examination of containers in transit; carry out checks on merchandise which had been previously released from Customs without examination; collect and disseminate information and intelligence and the preparation of all documents in connection with criminal and civil proceedings in court.

Grand Harbour

During the year, 4,704 vessels, of which 2,379 were from non-EU countries, arrived in Malta while 4,705 were cleared outwards. These figures include arrivals/departures at Marsamxetto, Marsaxlokk and Mġarr harbours. Rummages on arriving vessels amounted to 23. Passenger arrivals totalled 100,216. Departing passengers amounted to 101,871 while 396,119 were transit passengers. A total of 7,409 accompanied vehicles arrived in Malta while 7,130 departed. This section processed 3,261 duty free deliveries and 3,790 fuel stores authorisations. The sums of Lm1,206 VAT, Lm37 Import Duty, Lm1,939 Excise and Lm199 as Fines were collected .

Airport

A total of 2,409 aircraft from non-EU countries landed in Malta. Import Duty, Excise Duty and VAT amounted to Lm14,254, Lm632 and Lm45,217 respectively. The sum of Lm676 was collected as fines on dutiable goods undeclared by passengers passing through the Green Channel. Freight landed amounted to 6,485,417 kilos whilst 5,748,708 kilos were exported. Arrivals from non-EU countries amounted to 160,019 passengers, 149,704 departed and 3,535 were in transit.

Yacht Marina

A total of 2,595 yachts, 210 of which from non-EU countries, arrived at the Msida and Gozo Marinas and Grand Harbour with departures amounting to 2,115. 57 rummages were carried out, of which 41 were on incoming yachts.

Prohibitions and Restrictions

Total duty collected amounted to Lm16,908 whilst VAT amounted to Lm91,966. A total of 75,812 DVDs were submitted for censorship, 1,389 of which were viewed. 90 were withheld, 56 of which were appealed and 15 were released by the Printed Matter Appeals Board.

Non-Proliferation Unit

The Non-Proliferation Unit carried out 67 documentary checks on containers in transshipment. Five shipments amounting to a total of 23 containers were withheld as the items within were found to be controlled. 35 documentary checks were carried out on air freighted cargo. One shipment was withheld due to incorrect declaration of contents. One documentary check was carried out on courier cargo while another physical inspection was carried out at Hal Far Groupage Complex. Twelve documentary checks were effected on local export, two of which were referred to the Trade Services for necessary licences. One export was inspected and denied export. This led to a subsequent investigation on previous exports by the same company.

Enforcement Unit

The Unit was very active in enforcing legislation connected with the introduction of affixing Excise stamps on alcohol bottles. 365 searches/inspections were carried out in commercial outlets for excise goods. 860 similar searches were carried out on vehicles/containers. Surveillance at open markets was also regularly carried out. Apart from seizing/withdrawing quantities of alcohol and cigarettes, about 4,000 pieces carbonated drinks in cans or plastic bottles were also withdrawn on behalf of MEPA.

The illegal importation of drugs is a priority on the Unit's agenda. Interceptions were effected at the Airport, Airfreight, Couriers and Seaport. A first for this year and which augurs well for the future was the carrying out of 2 (unrelated) controlled deliveries in collaboration with the Police.

Other detentions included undeclared monies withheld from departing passengers, over 12,000 steroids not covered by an import licence and various CITES items. Enforcement officers recouped over Lm21,000 due to the Department.

6,472 items (caps, lighters, wristwatches, VCRs etc.) meant for the domestic market were detained in terms of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) regulations. These were detained at the Airport, Airfreight, Groupage bonds and Post office. Similarly detained were twenty 40-foot and thirteen 20-foot containers in transit at the Freeport. The 43.8 million pieces detained varied and included talcum powder, cigarettes, outerwear, footballs and toothpaste.

Container Monitoring Unit

This Unit was again most active where seizure of goods (in containers) including counterfeit is concerned. Their interpretation of the scan image is habitually sought prior to taking any further action. During this year 3,891 containers for the domestic market and 5,031 containers in transit were scanned by the VACIS.

Legal Office

The number of Letters to Prosecute and Seizure Notes compiled and endorsed by the Comptroller amounted to 106. 42 Letters were sent to the Commissioner of Police for further action while 64 Notes were served to the offenders. Representations in Court totalled to 804 (310 Civil cases and 494 Criminal). 60 Criminal and four Civil cases were decided with the fines inflicted amounting to Lm46,383. 49 cases were settled administratively in virtue of the Customs Ordinance. Fines collected, including civil debt, amounted to Lm27,265 (VAT/ETI included)

Special Investigation Action Team (SIAT)

This Unit, based at Hal Far Groupage Complex, tallied the contents of 117 containers discharging there. Of the 69,991 passes issued, 63,867 concerned 'C' status goods. A total of 1,591 searches were carried out on outbound vehicles. Some positive results were obtained and several consignments were returned to bond for various reasons. These included lack of CE markings, IPR infringements, Excise goods as well as incorrect description of cargo.

Post Clearance Audit (PCA) and Economic Procedures Enforcement Unit (EPEU)

In their course of work, PCA/EPEU Unit officers carried out 573 site visits. Revenue collected by PCA officers included Lm1,578 duty, Lm6,905 VAT, Lm26,710 additional duty and Lm5,513 in fines. EPEU officers collected Lm1,070 duty, Lm243 VAT, Lm627 additional duty and Lm70 in fines.

Customs Intelligence Services (CIS)

CIS has the task of vetting domestic cargo and passenger manifests against set risk profiles. 3,923 containers were selected for scanning while 360 Cargo and Passenger alerts were issued and submitted to the Enforcement Unit and to the concerned entry/exit office. 28 positive results were obtained. 310 Risk Information sheets (RIFs) were received and disseminated to the relevant office/staff, while CIS created and transmitted to their counterparts in other EU Member States. 34 RIFs, 69 General alerts and 89 Intelligence alerts dealing with trends, infringements and modus operandi were also issued. Again this year CIS was involved in two Joint Customs Operations and served as the base from where information could be exchanged with the other participating countries.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Customs EU Specialist fulfilled three major functions during the year under review: liaison between EU Directorate MFIN and the competent officials within the Department, co-ordination (in conjunction with the EU Programmes Office) of all foreign travel by members of the Department on official business, and the provision of support to members of senior management regarding EU-related issues.

During 2006 Customs EU Specialist also served as Data Protection Officer and represented the Customs Department on the Sanctions Monitoring Board.

JOHN MIFSUD

Director General (Customs)

Value Added Tax Division

AIM

The principal aim of the Department is to ensure that the VAT revenue target set out in the annual Budget is attained, in line with Government's policy of ensuring sound public finance and with the minimum cost and burden to registered persons.

VAT LEGISLATION

During 2006, the following legal notices were published under the VAT Act 1998:

171 of 2006 – amendment to Items 6 and 7 of the Twelfth Schedule – Government Gazette 17953 of 11 August 2006
 181 of 2006 – regulations on Judicial Actions – terminology of Art. 65 (2)
 186 of 2006 – correction to LN 181 of 2006 – Government Gazette 17964 of 1 September 2006
 334 of 2006 – amendment to Item 3 (6) of Part 2 of the fifth schedule – Government Gazette 18014 of 29 December 2006.

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE

Compliance Rate

VAT returns continued to be issued regularly each month. The following table shows the returns issued and received during 2006. The overall compliance rate as on due date, expressed as the percentage of returns received over the number of returns issued, was 80.81%, increasing to 87.99% by end year.

	Returns Issued	Returns Received as on Due Date	Compliance Rate as on Due Date	Returns Received up to End of Year	Compliance Rate as at End of Year
Total	108,111	87,361	80.81 %	95,123	87.99 %

Revenue

During 2006, gross revenue collected under the VAT Act 1998, the CET Act 1997 and the VAT Act 1994 was Lm205,109,571 compared to Lm197,473,507 in the previous year. Refund of excess credit paid out of revenue amounted to Lm30,526,657 resulting in a net revenue of Lm1,745,829,914 compared to Lm168,195,933 in the previous year. The relevant information is shown in the following table:

	VAT Act 1998 (Lm)	CET Act 1997 (Lm)	VAT Act 1994 (Lm)	Total (Lm)
Total Gross	204,699,855	142,695	267,021	205,109,571
Less Refunds	30,129,951	102,528	294,178	30,526,657
Total Net	174,569,904	40,167	(27,157)	174,582,914

Outstanding Credits and Debits

As at end 2006, the Department had a net debit balance, after deducting outstanding taxpayers' credit, of Lm99,760,195. The amount of Lm93,950,392 was in the form of estimated assessments and interests

which would automatically be cancelled once the relative missing returns are submitted. Hence the realistic net balance was Lm5,809,803 in the form of taxpayers' credit, as shown below:

	VAT (1998) Lm	CET (1997) Lm	VAT (1994) Lm	Total Lm
Net Debit Balance	124,510,725	3,032,725	8,454,961	135,998,411
Outstanding credits	36,042,778	48,126	147,312	36,238,216
Net Balance	88,467,947	2,984,599	8,307,649	99,760,195
Less Estimated Assessments	60,752,579	379,001	1,272,044	62,403,624
Less Interests	21,013,703	2,292,678	8,240,387	31,546,768
Realistic Net Balance	6,701,665	312,920	-1,204,782	5,809,803
Accounts with a balance as at 31.12.06	17,237	2,897	3,680	23,814
Accounts with a balance as at 31.12.05	17,617	3,447	5,387	26,451

Cost-Effectiveness

Total recurrent expenditure during 2006, excluding the contribution to the Tax Compliance Unit and the expenditure in respect of the NPAA but including the lottery prizes and the lease of property, amounted to Lm2,573,059. Net revenue from VAT 1994, CET 1997 and VAT 1998 amounted to Lm174,582,914. The cost effectiveness rate for 2006 was therefore 1c5 per Lm1 of revenue compared to 1c5 in 2005.

ENFORCEMENT

Inspections

During the year, 19,624 field inspections were carried out, consisting of 19,563 spot-check inspections and 61 surveillance visits. As a result, 667 cases were referred for Court action (vide table below):

Number of Inspections					
	Spot-Checks	Surveillance Visits	Total	Court Action	Hit-Rate
Total	19,563	61	19,624	667	3.41 %

Throughout the same year, the majority of Inspectors were assigned work connected with administrative tax enforcement and review of tax assessments. Ten inspectors were regularly assigned duties to carry out inspection visits, supported by seven Revenue Security Corps members carrying out limited inspection duties.

Court Action

Legal action was taken against taxpayers wherever it resulted that the VAT and CET legislation was being abused. As a result, 297 cases involving failure to issue fiscal receipts were brought before the Court, of which 117 were decided. Of these, 90 cases were together fined a total of Lm18,800, whilst 27 cases were acquitted.

The Compromise Fine System was started in July 1999. Taxpayers have the option to pay a reduced penalty for failing to issue a fiscal receipt, instead of appearing before the Court. During 2006, 401 taxpayers availed themselves of this option, paying a total of Lm47,850 in fines.

Another 2,163 appointed cases involved failure to submit tax returns. As a result, 100 cases were together fined Lm119,571 whilst 841 cases were withdrawn once the returns were duly submitted prior to the Court's hearing. The relevant information is shown below:

	Involving Fiscal Receipts				Involving Tax Returns			
	Appointed	Fined		Acquitted	Appointed	Fined		Withdrawn
		No	Lm			No	Lm	
Total	297	90	18,800	27	2,163	100	119,571	841

Manual Fiscal Receipt Booklets

The number of fiscal receipt booklets distributed during 2006 was 78,678, an increase of 1.34% over 2005:

Printed Booklets	79,280
Distributed Booklets	78,678
Returned Booklets	54,657

Fiscal Receipts Lottery

The Fiscal Receipts Lottery continued to be run by the Public Lotteries Department. During 2006 an amount of Lm317,775 was paid as prize money.

INVESTIGATION AND REVIEW

Audit Investigations

The number of VAT cases assigned for investigation by professional auditors and the Tax Compliance Unit was 10. A total of 54 cases were concluded, resulting in Lm611,012 of under-declared tax. The number of cases pending investigation as at the end of 2006 was 85.

Validation of VAT Returns/Review of VAT Refund claims

The VAT returns are regularly validated for erroneous tax declarations. VAT credit claims are also regularly monitored. The number of claims reviewed during 2006 was 900, of which 298 claims were deduced, amounting to Lm1,449,614.

Type	Cases Assigned	Cases Concluded	Final Assessments	
			No	Lm
Validation	0	0	8	2,708
Correction	597	725	143	180,249
Credit Control	903	900	298	1,449,694
Investigations	142	196	149	1,410,244
Total	1,642	1,821	598	3,042,895

Objections

During 2006, a total of 1,090 objection letters were dealt with completely. The number of objection letters received by the Department during the same year was 1,670. As a result, the number of outstanding objections as at the end of the year was 262.

Appeals Boards

During 2006 the number of new appeals lodged with the VAT and CET Appeals Boards was 98. The Boards decided a total of 264 cases compared to 330 in the previous year.

COLLECTION OF TAX ARREARS

Civil Procedures

A total of 162 cases were settled through Civil Court action, resulting in the collection of Lm2,437,845 of tax in arrears, as shown in the following table:

	Demand Notices	Judicial Letters	Garnishee Orders/ Warrants of Seizure	Civil Cases Settled	Tax Collected
Total	9,780	280	170	162	Lm 2,437,845

TAXPAYERS' REGISTRY

Registration and De-registration

During the year, 4,200 taxpayers were registered with the Department, bringing the total number of registered persons to 81,988. The number of outstanding applications as at the end of the year was nil.

During the same year, 3,599 new applications were received for de-registration. A total of 2,638 applications were processed completely.

Maintenance of Taxpayers' Details

During the same year, a total of 24,378 interventions were made with a view to maintaining taxpayers' details. Special attention continued to be given to undelivered mail which was received back by the Department. Such mail was either redirected to the address obtained from the Common Database system or else referred for on-the-spot inspection.

GENERAL

Customer Service

Customer Service was also improved. The Department is also analysing comments made by customers in order to improve the service.

e-Government

In September 2006 the VAT Department adopted the electronic identification system for online services as part of e-Government project.

Updating of Internet Website

Throughout 2006, the VAT Department has continually updated the Department's website at www.vat.gov.mt. The website provides useful information on VAT for the general public, for traders and for tax professionals as well as online application for VAT registration and submission of VAT returns for Register B taxpayers. The Intranet site was also updated for the benefit of the VAT Department officials.

The VAT Department has also started to publish on its website, guidelines regarding the interpretation of issues relating to VAT. These guidelines would assist traders and tax practitioners in areas which require clarification in interpretation. The guidelines published so far relate to Trusts, Onward Supply Relief and Leasing of Pleasure Crafts.

Legal Committee

The Legal Committee set up during 2005 continued to discuss the various changes proposed by the European Commission and the EU Council to the VAT 6th Directive and which should be included in the Maltese VAT legislation. The committee also makes recommendations to the Inter-Ministerial Committee regarding these changes and also deals with certain cases of VAT interpretation. The legal committee is presided by the Commissioner of VAT.

Participation in EU Commission and Council Working Party Meetings

The VAT Department also participated actively in meetings held in Brussels of the Working Party No 1, VAT Committee, SCAC Committee, and the Recovery Committee.

The Commissioner of VAT also participated in the Council Working Party on Tax Questions which finalises draft VAT Directives for approval by COREPER and ECOFIN.

ECO Contribution

The VAT Department is the competent authority for the administration and collection of ECO Contribution. During 2006 the amount collected from this contribution was Lm5,094,969.

During the year various meetings were also held with businesses, in conjunction with the Office of the Parliamentary Secretary for the Small Businesses and Self-employed. During these meetings, VAT Department officials explained the application of ECO Contribution and replied to questions made by traders.

Meeting re Market Surveillance

During 2006, the VAT Department continued to participate in meetings held by the Office of the Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business and the Self Employed regarding Market Surveillance. The aim of such meetings was to increase the co-operation between different enforcement departments in the fight against unfair trading.

UK-Malta Twinning Project

This 15-month project which is now drawing to a close provided assistance by the UK Revenue and Customs to the Maltese VAT administration and the Tax Compliance Unit. The main aim is to strengthen the overall capacity of the VAT Department and TCU to adequately implement and control the European VAT system and to combat international evasion and fraud in the field of VAT. Besides training being given to all inspectors in recognising and detecting VAT fraud, experts from the UK's HM Revenue and Customs have offered assistance in the EU legal process, risk analysis, methods of detecting companies involved in carousel fraud, exchange of information with other EU Member States and computer audit techniques.

This project, which costs around €400,000, is financed through the EU Transition Facility Programme.

JOSEPH SAMMUT
Director General (VAT)

Tax Compliance Unit

GENERAL

During the year the Tax Compliance Unit (TCU) continued to consolidate its core competencies of:

- expanding its Data Warehouse to include new sources of information;
- increasing its efforts in combating tax evasion and avoidance through better and more cost-effective tax audits;
- implementing the Advance Tax Agreements Scheme;
- improving the expertise and technical knowledge of the TCU professional staff through continuous education programmes.

ADMINISTRATION

The total TCU budget allocation for 2006 was Lm500,000 under the item *Contributions to Government Entities* as part of the VAT vote. This was revised upwards by Lm8,000 by means of additional funds from the VAT department.

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

In 2006, the TCU maintained the same staff complement as at end 2005.

During the year, TCU professional staff attended the following training and development courses and seminars:

- an intensive three-day course for all operational staff on the use of advanced and specialised functions of Microsoft Excel, organised in conjunction with the Staff Development Organisation;
- a comprehensive five-day course on Information Security Management Principles organised by MITTS Ltd and QinetiQ;
- a two-week training programme, under the UK Twinning Agreement, delivered by UK trainers on information systems audit;
- familiarisation visits to the Large Business Service within HMRC in the UK with a follow-up of another two-week training session.

General Service support staff attended the following SDO courses:

- Communication Skills training;
- Secretarial Skills training;
- DAS related training;
- Occupational Health and Safety Training.

IT SYSTEMS & DATA WAREHOUSE

Data Warehouse

2006 was characterised by the migration to the latest version of Business Objects (BO). Subsequently all pending data was uploaded by MITTS. This migration entailed extensive report testing during which a number of data mismatches were identified.

Use of TCU information by other departments

Throughout 2006, a total of 524 reports were generated from the TCU data bank for other government departments, mainly the VAT, Inland Revenue and Social Services Departments as well as the ETC.

The table below lists the reports furnished by the TCU to the mentioned entities:

<i>TCU Reports for other Government Departments/Entities</i>					
	IRD	VAT	DSS	ETC	Total
January	25	4	0	1	30
February	20	4	11	84	119
March	28	0	4	1	33
April	19	1	0	0	20
May	22	2	7	66	97
June	40	0	7	0	47
July	11	1	3	33	48
August	14	0	5	11	30
September	13	1	2	0	16
October	14	8	4	0	26
November	13	13	4	1	31
December	0	5	3	19	27
Total	219	39	50	216	524

The above intelligence reports from the TCU Data bank relate to information on high risk companies and individuals involved in tax fraud/evasion and benefit fraud. The decrease in the number of reports, when compared to 2005, results from the fact that two separate exercises initiated in 2004 by VAT and ETC were concluded in 2005.

COMPLIANCE TESTING TEAM

The Compliance Team, set up in 2005, continued to compile tax compliance reports by sector and category on taxpayers based on information available within the data warehouse, other governmental entities and third parties. The objective of this initiative is to promote tax compliance by increasing public perception that data about economic activities is being collated. Such reports will be referred to the Inland Revenue and VAT Departments for action as necessary after a Data Protection Policy for the TCU is formulated.

OPERATIONS

Tax Investigations

During 2006, a total of 66 tax investigation cases were concluded – an increase of 8% over 2005. These audit cases resulted in:

Additional assessed income tax:	Lm 1,180,335
Additional assessed VAT:	Lm 902,528
Total additional assessed Tax:	Lm 2,082,863

The above amounts do not include interest, fines and/or penalties due for under-declaration and late filing or late payment.

Advance Tax Agreements Scheme

The Unit continued with the implementation of the Advance Tax Agreements Scheme announced in the Budget speech for 2002. During 2006, the following tax agreements were concluded:

Agreements reached under VAT Act		Agreements reached under Income Tax Act	
No. of agreements concluded	98	No. of agreements concluded	100
3-year VAT liability agreed	Lm722,083	3-year Income Tax liability agreed	Lm422,665
		3-year Social Security Contributions	Lm296,586

Total number of Agreements: 198
 Total tax liability and SSC over 3 years agreed to: Lm1,441,334

Tax Assessments Cost

The total cost per Lm1 of assessed tax during 2006 works out as follows:

Personal emoluments cost 2006:	Lm	408,933
Operations & Maintenance cost 2006:	Lm	96,886
Total cost:	Lm	507,819

Tax assessed resulting from 2006 tax audits:

VAT assessed:	Lm	902,528
Income Tax assessed:	Lm	1,180,335
3-year tax agreements (tax for 3 years):	Lm	1,441,334
Total tax :	Lm	3,524,197

Total cost of assessed/agreed tax liability: Lm0.14c4 per Lm1 of assessed/agreed tax.

CARMEL CONTI
 Director General (Tax Compliance Unit)

EU Paying Authority Directorate

Mission Statement

To perform duties and responsibilities relating to the financial management of EU-funded projects and EU Own Resources with the aim of maximising the benefits to Malta within the obligations and parameters as set out in National and EC Legislation.

MAIN AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

- To act as National Authorising Officer (NAO) in charge of the National Fund which has been set up as a Unit for the management of EU Pre-Accession and Transition Facility Funds.
- To be a permanent member of the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) which monitors EU Pre-Accession Programmes and Transition Facility.
- To act as the EU Paying Authority with regard to Structural and Cohesion Funds regarding the certification of expenditure and subsequent drawdown of funds from the EU Commission.
- To open and manage accounts in connection with receipts and payments of EU-related funds.
- To disburse funds relating to Own Resources as part of Malta's contribution to the EU Budget.

Core Functions

- to manage in an efficient manner the Paying Authority for Structural and Cohesion Funds;
- to perform the duties of the National Authorising Officer for Malta and be responsible for the management of the National Fund;
- to monitor progress of the projects which are being financed through foreign funds emanating from the EU and the European Economic Area, and draw budgets and forecasts for the said funds;
- to control and report on a regular basis the financial position of the funds and relative disbursements;
- to liaise with the DG Budget on the payment and financial management of EU Own Resources;
- to compile and maintain proper records of ex-ante, interim and ex-post inspections by third parties;
- to perform on-the-spot checks on the stakeholders involved in the implementation of EU-funded projects;
- to monitor the work of the Treasury and Contracts Department, which together are equivalent to the Central Financing and Contracting Unit (CFCU);
- to maintain an ongoing liaison with government institutions on EU-related matters in order to ensure that all commitments emanating from the various funding operations are being met;
- to manage the EU Travel Envelope regarding Malta's participation in EU Council and Commission meetings.

Work Report for 2006

Pre-Accession and Transition Facility Funding

The Director EU Paying Authority is also vested with the responsibility of National Authorising Officer (NAO) which is a function directly delegated to him by the Minister of Finance, currently also the Prime Minister. As stated in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the Financing Memoranda (FM) and EC Financing Decisions for the four Pre-Accession and the three Transition Facility Programmes, the National Authorising Officer is recognised as the top leader in the implementation process. These Programmes are regulated by EC Regulation 555/2000.

During 2006, the NAO ensured the continued adoption of the Extended Decentralised Implementation System (EDIS) in the management of EU Pre-Accession funds, including the Transition Facility. Further action was taken on the EDIS Audit Follow-up Report issued by the EU Commission following the Audit held in Malta in April 2005 and the NAO submitted to the DG ELARG the final formal replies to the EDIS findings and the Commission recommendations together with related documents of action taken. All replies were accepted by the Commission and the issue has now been closed provided that EDIS requirements follow-up is maintained as an ongoing exercise by the National Authorities.

To ensure sound financial management, proper accountability and transparency in the Pre-accession and Transition Facility funding, the Directorate, together with the cooperation of the horizontal, as well as vertical stakeholders involved in the project implementation process, updated the detailed Manual of Procedures and checklists. Account was taken of recommendations made by DG-Enlargement. The Manual provided the necessary tool to guide all users to the best practice possible across all government entities dealing with project implementation. Two seminars were organised by the NAO during the year to provide training to all vertical stakeholders involved in the project implementation.

The NAO was also involved in the following:

- chaired regular coordination meetings with the participation of all the Horizontal stakeholders, including the National Aid Coordinator (PPCD), the Contracts and the Treasury Departments in order to monitor the progress of all projects under the Pre-accession and Transition Facility Programmes and also to resolve any pending issues;
- participated in the biannually scheduled Sectoral Monitoring Sub Committees together with the National Aid Coordinator (NAC), Senior Programming Officers and the Project Leaders of projects under the Pre-accession and Transition Facility Programmes from various Ministries, Departments and other entities;
- participated as a permanent member, in the two Joint Monitoring Committee meetings held between the EU Commission and the Maltese Authorities, including the NAC, with regard to the monitoring of EU Pre-Accession Programmes and Transition Facility;
- participated in Steering Committees of Twinning Projects of various Departments and Ministries;
- issued various circulars related to the implementation of projects under the Pre-accession and Transition Facility Programmes. These circulars included early advice to stakeholders regarding contracting and disbursement deadlines of Programmes, another on Budget Estimates for each Project, and another on the End of the disbursement period for NP 2003;
- monitored the carrying out of a number of on-the-spot checks on Projects under the Pre-accession and Transition Facility Programmes at various Implementing Authorities and also the iPerseus System for the updating of financial data on the same Projects;
- communicated its position on various issues including Early Warning System in respect of contracts funded by EU Fund and an Evaluation report by independent evaluators on the implementation of Projects under the Pre-accession and Transition Facility Programmes.

The total amount of funds received from the Commission during 2006 to finance projects of the Programmes still open amounted to Lm4,496,154.26. Following authorisation of payments according to expenditure effected at project level, Lm1,613,997.30 were actually transferred to Government Revenue. Detailed information is included in the following table:

Pre-Accession and Transition Facility Funds 2006	
<i>Programme</i>	<i>Funds transferred to Government Revenue Lm</i>
NP 2003	1,005,536.61
TF 2004	478,759.78
TF 2005	129,700.91

Structural and Cohesion Funds

The Directorate also had the role of Paying Authority (PA) for Structural and Cohesion Funds and during 2006 honoured Malta's commitments and obligations and fulfilled its functions and tasks emanating from EC Regulations 1260/1999 and 438/2001.

During 2006, the Directorate experienced a heavy load of work since it had to cope with all the obligations and responsibilities emanating from the Structural and Cohesion Funds system whilst retaining all the responsibilities pertaining to Pre-Accession and Transition Facility Programmes. The Directorate performed four certifications of expenditure to the Commission during the year and was directly responsible for overseeing the whole certification process, and drawing up the necessary financial reports and disbursement claims. Two such certifications were held in June and October. Amounts certified were reimbursed in full by the Commission.

The EU Paying Authority continued to establish and maintain established efficient communications and contacts with the Financial Services at the EU Commission in Brussels and with the different Funds to ensure a smooth and reliable process and also strengthened the good working relationship and co-operation with the Managing Authority at the Office of the Prime Minister.

During the year the EU Paying Authority ensured that the funds concerning projects under the Structural and Cohesion Funds were provided and committed in the National Budget and the relative accounts opened. Furthermore, sound communication links with the Central Bank of Malta (CBM) were maintained at all times and instructions to the CBM were issued to provide statements of account of all transactions including interest earned on balances and other certifications requested by the EU Commission. Details about the relative accounts, including conditionalities, were communicated to the pertinent services in Brussels.

Throughout the year the Directorate communicated its position on various issues including comments on the Evaluation of the implementation of Projects under the Structural and Cohesion Funds for the period 2004 to 2006, comments on the new provisions for Structural and Cohesion Funds for the period 2007 to 2013, the treatment of advance payments under the various funds, VAT issues concerning EU funding and other issues.

During 2006, the Directorate carried out various Article 9 checks including on-the-spot checks.

The table below indicates the aggregated amounts of Structural and Cohesion Funds per fund received from the Commission together with the Certifications of Expenditure effected by the Directorate, amounts reimbursed by the Commission following certifications and the equivalent amount in Malta Liri transferred to Government Revenue. The total amount of certified funds received throughout the year – Lm6,113,218.21 - was transferred to Government Revenue.

Structural and Cohesion Funds during 2006			
<i>Fund</i>	<i>Funds Received from EU Commission during 2006⁽¹⁾</i>	<i>Expenditure Certified by the Directorate</i>	<i>Transferred to Govt. Revenue</i>
	€	€	Lm
ERDF	13,073,948.81	13,135,788.72	3,828,461.77
ESF	2,981,147.65	2,981,147.36	1,278,912.21
EAGGF	1,195,093.00	1,058,420.30	370,400.09
FIFG	708,559.62	708,559.62	303,964.41
Equal	124,788.99	323,616.29	Nil ⁽²⁾
Interreg	330,290.07	40,368.67	28,169.43
Cohesion	4,936,287.02	4,936,287.02	303,310.30

⁽¹⁾ Includes funds pertaining to certifications for 2006 and received in January 2007

⁽²⁾ Transfer to revenue to be effected in 2007

Lump-sum Budgetary Compensation

The EU Paying Authority Directorate was also responsible for managing the Lump-Sum compensation which the EU pays to Malta as a means of balancing the National Budget from the negative impact emanating from the financial obligations borne out of becoming an EU Member State.

The table below relates to the amounts received during 2006 with regard to this financial item:

Lump-sum Compensation during 2006		
	<i>Lump Sum</i>	<i>Transferred to Government Revenue</i>
	€	Lm
January	8,576,307	3,684,381.49
February	8,576,307	3,679,235.70
March	8,576,307	3,679,235.70
April	8,576,307	3,679,235.70
May	8,576,307	3,679,235.70
June	8,576,307	3,679,235.70
July	8,576,307	3,679,235.70
August	8,576,307	3,679,235.70
September	8,576,307	3,679,235.70
October	8,576,307	3,679,235.70
November	8,576,307	3,679,235.70
December	8,576,307	3,679,235.70
Total 2006	102,915,684	44,155,974.19

Own Resources

The EU Paying Authority Directorate also managed the Bank Account relating to EU Own Resources. During 2006, close relations were maintained with the relevant services in DG Budget of the EU Commission on the payment and financial management of Own Resources, reporting requirements, and the transactions to be made in the accounts and the exchange rate criteria. As a consequence, continuous contact, as an ongoing exercise, was maintained with the Customs Department regarding Traditional Own Resources (TOR), the VAT Department for the VAT-Based Own Resources calculation and the National Statistics Office (NSO) for the GNI-based workings. The Directorate ensured that payments to the EU Commission were effected on a regular basis and in the appropriate manner within the stipulated deadlines. The Directorate also took the initiative for the setting up of a Co-ordinating Committee for Own Resources within the Ministry of Finance involving all the relevant stakeholders.

The table below indicates the payments of Own Resources effected by the Directorate in favour of the Commission during 2006:

Own Resources during 2006	
<i>Resource</i>	<i>Lm</i>
Traditional Own Resources	4,227,246
VAT – Based	3,311,917
GNI – Based	12,717,817
UK correction	1,497,810
Reserve	22,576
Total	21,777,366

Travel Vote

The EU Paying Authority Directorate managed the Travel Envelope of EU Funds allocated to Malta in respect of the reimbursement of travel expenses for participation in EU Council Meetings as per EU Decision 190/2003 and also implemented the procedures for reimbursement for participation in EU Commission Meetings.

The Directorate conducted the following related work in this regard:

- co-ordinated and completed an exercise with all government ministries, departments and entities to collect all outstanding travel claims from their end;
- formulated Malta's Travel Declaration in respect of the reimbursement of all travel expenses incurred following the participation in EU Council Meetings;
- authorised the transfers of the EU Funds from the Central Bank of Malta to Government Revenue and the respective government ministries, departments and entities claiming reimbursement of travel expenses following their participation in the respective meetings.

The total of travel funds claimed to date and transferred to Maltese revenue for participation in EU Council and Commission Meetings during the year in question amounted to Lm428,913. This included Lm309,969 for Council Meetings and Lm118,944 for Commission Meetings.

During 2006, two audits on the travel procedures in place were carried out by the EU Commission and local NAO auditors. The procedures were commended by the Commission auditors and further refinements were carried out on recommendation by the local auditors.

Discussions were successfully concluded with the EU Council on the payment of the outstanding instalment to Malta from the Travel Envelope for 2004 Council Meetings.

Other Work

The EU Paying Authority was also involved in other specific areas of work as follows:

- The implementation provisions regarding the procedures to be adopted under the *EEA/Norway funding mechanisms*.
- PA fully prepared for *euro changeover*. PA Director participated in the Public Finance sub-committee of NECC as deputy chairman, in NECC Executive Committee meetings and other seminars, including the updating of the Master Plan for the euro changeover.
- Participated in meetings and other seminars organised by the *FORUM MALTA FL-EWROPA*, together with the submission of a contribution and comments by the Paying Authority which was included in an official report submitted to the EU Commission.
- As National Co-ordinator and Representative within the Ministry of Finance, the Directorate co-ordinated the participation in 17 seminars by Malta as part of the Action Plan under the *Fiscalis Programme 2007*, for the VAT, Customs and Inland Revenue Departments and also the participation in other activities such as Project Groups and Multilateral Controls. In all 52 officials from all departments participated in the various Fiscalis activities. Furthermore the organisation of incoming and outgoing Fiscalis Exchanges to and from Malta was also co-ordinated. The Directorate was involved in the hosting of a Fiscalis Seminar on Direct Taxation in Malta, which was organised in conjunction with the Inland Revenue Department. Moreover, the Directorate budgeted and requested funds from the EU to finance Malta's participation in the said programme, and managed the Fiscalis Account at the CBM in this regard. The Directorate also participated in the Inter-Ministerial meeting chaired by the Permanent Representative of Malta to the EU in Brussels, to put forward comments and recommendations on Malta's participation in the Fiscalis Programme 2013, together with participation in various fora on various fiscal matters.

CLAUDE G CUSCHIERI
 Director (EU Paying Authority)

EU Affairs Directorate

During 2006, the EU Affairs Directorate at the Ministry of Finance continued to co-ordinate meetings at the level of the Council of the EU and the EU Commission. The Directorate was involved in the dissemination of meeting agendas, co-ordination of attendance of officials at the meetings and the drawing up and clearance of Instruction Notes to be used by the technical officials and attachés participating in the meetings. The Directorate compiled Malta's position in consultation with the technical experts from both the public and the private sector.

The Directorate was also responsible for co-ordinating the consultation process on proposals published by the EU Commission. This included the presentation of memoranda on EU Commission proposals at the Inter-Ministerial Committee for EU Affairs. Once approved by the Committee and endorsed by the Cabinet of Ministers, the Directorate transmitted the approved memoranda to the House of Representatives for clearance by the Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs. A number of meetings were held with the Standing Committee in order to elaborate on the technical issues in hand. By the end of the year, a total of 112 memoranda were prepared for presentation at the Inter-Ministerial Committee.

During 2006, the Directorate continued co-ordinating the drawing up of the briefing notes and speaking notes for the Prime Minister, Parliamentary Secretary and Maltese delegations participating in the ECOFIN and the European Council meetings. This was done in close collaboration with line departments and ministries. In order to facilitate lobbying, the briefing notes included not only Malta's position, but also that of other Member States. The Directorate organised pre-ECOFIN briefing meetings, engaging all resident member state diplomats, in order to ensure that Malta's position on the agenda items was made known. The Directorate was also in contact with resident Maltese embassies established in the EU in order to obtain other member states' positions on the agenda items that were going to be discussed during the meetings.

The Directorate continued monitoring the transposition of the EU regulations and directives into Malta law. Its role included organising meetings with stakeholders in order to ensure a correct transposition of the *acquis*. As such, the Directorate was responsible for monitoring legislation from its inception (as a proposal) to its adoption as Maltese legislation.

Another function of the Directorate was the co-ordination, compilation and clearing of questionnaires prepared by the EU institutions. It was also responsible for addressing EU-related requests from both public and private organisations, both in Malta and abroad. Moreover, the Directorate continued offering support and advice to the Ministry of Finance on various issues pertaining to EU affairs.

DIANE SAMMUT
Director (EU Affairs)

Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs

Attorney General's Agency

As a result of the said reform, the legal staff complement at the Office of the Attorney General's Agency now reads as follows: the Attorney General, the Deputy Attorney General, one Head of Unit, eight Senior Lawyers, three Lawyers, three Junior Lawyers and three Legal Procurators.

At the end of 2006, the administrative and clerical staff complement of the Agency was made up of an Assistant Director and a number of officers in the various clerical grades who perform duties either as clerical support staff to the two legal departments or in the administrative sectors of the Agency.

Although during 2006 efforts towards securing suitable premises, where the present staff and the increased personnel could be properly housed, were intensified, no significant developments were registered. Unfortunately, due to various factors beyond the Agency's control, the project concerning the refurbishment works of the earmarked premises at No 30, Old Treasury Street, Valletta failed to materialise. In this situation, the problem concerning the new premises project has now become more acute than ever before since the new intake of legal personnel has to be housed within the already limited space available.

The total revenue accruing to the Office of the Attorney General during 2006 was registered as follows:

Affidavits	Lm	14
Legal Fees	Lm	5,777
Miscellaneous	Lm	892
Procès Verbaux	Lm	4,092
	Lm	10,775

The amount as given is the actual revenue accruing in the books of the Office of the Attorney General for the said year but account should be taken also in respect of the substantial amount of monies which the Office enables the Government to collect through legal action taken by the Office consisting of judicial actions and other judicial intimations. The Office does not charge government departments for the legal services extended to them in the course of the year.

As in previous years, the Civil Cases and Administrative Law Department and the Criminal Cases Department continued with their respective activities and, although in 2006 the legal staff complement was increased through the recruitment of new lawyers, the personnel of these two legal departments continued to cope, not without difficulty, with the ever-increasing demands arising as a consequence of the said shortfall of legal staff.

The Civil Cases and Administrative Law Department tenders legal advice on a very wide spectrum of subjects to government departments on an ongoing basis. Lawyers within this Department plead on behalf of Government in Small Claims, Inferior, Superior and Appeal Courts and before the Constitutional Court in court cases of a civil, administrative or constitutional nature. Lawyers, Legal Procurators and clerks in this Department also pursue the drafting, filing and follow-up of numerous judicial acts and legal letters required to collect monies due to Government and to enforce legal claims.

Relevant data regarding the activities of the Civil Cases and Administrative Law Department for 2006 is given in the following table:

CIVIL AND CONSTITUTIONAL ACTS – 2006

SUPERIOR COURTS

Judicial Letters	65
Writs of Summons	98
Appeals	76
Warrants of Seizure	3
Garnishee Orders	5
Miscellaneous Judicial Acts (including applications, statement of defence, notes of submissions):	
First Hall	1,090
Second Hall/Family	125
Statements of Defence	119

INFERIOR COURTS

Judicial Letters	183
Writs of Summons	17
Warrants of Seizure	21
Garnishee Orders	23
Miscellaneous Judicial Acts (including applications, statement of defence, notes of submissions)	615

GOZO COURTS

Judicial Letters	6
Writs of Summons/Statement of Defence	12
Warrants	1
Miscellaneous Judicial Acts	32

Between 1 January and 31 December 2006, the Attorney General's Office dealt with court cases on behalf of ministries and government departments; 231 cases have been decided.

The current cases are subdivided as follows:

Current Cases	718
New Cases	282
Sine Die	19
Waiting for hearing	21

New cases are classified as follows:

Constitutional cases	65
Appeals	58
Civil	149
Inferior	10

The Attorney General is also the Public Prosecutor before the Criminal Court and the Court of Criminal Appeal. Certain prosecutions initiated by the Police require the previous consent or direction of the Attorney General.

The Criminal Cases Department is responsible for the processing of criminal inquiries (*kumpilazzjonijiet*) and the filing of bills of indictment where this is warranted. Trials by jury are prosecuted by legal officers within the Department. The latter is also the depository of all *procès verbaux* drawn up by magistrates in Malta and Gozo following a judicial inquiry.

The *procès verbaux* are vetted by the legal staff for any further investigation that may be necessary. The Department also deals with consents to the Police for summary proceedings, orders by the Attorney General with respect to drug cases, appeals from judgements of the Criminal Court and of the Courts of Magistrates as a Court of Criminal judicature, applications for bail and on various issues connected with criminal proceedings and requests for visiting permits to prisoners awaiting trial.

Another area where the Criminal Cases Department is very active is that of extending assistance to foreign authorities in the investigation and prosecution of criminal offences within the jurisdiction of foreign judicial authorities. Such requests are often made by ways of letters rogatory which are examined and dealt with in the manner demanded by the nature of the request. Such requests concern mutual assistance in criminal matters, extradition and transfer of sentenced persons.

Relevant data regarding the activities of the Criminal Cases Department for 2006 is given in the following table:

	Jan/Mar	Apr/Jun	Jul/Sep	Oct/Dec	Total
Bills of Indictment	4	10	5	4	23
Cases remitted to Magistrates' Court for Judgement including Counter Orders	70	59	34	50	213
Consent for Summary Proceedings in terms of section 370(4) of the Criminal Code					789
New preliminary Investigations referred to the Attorney General by the enquiring Magistrate	98	96	88	93	375
New cases remitted to the Attorney General as per Article 392A(1) after a <i>Guilty Plea</i> is registered	19	28	29	37	113
Drug cases examined under Chapters 31 and 101 for the Attorney General's order to proceed					505
Miscellaneous applications	257	322	295	283	1,157
Appeal applications from Court of Magistrates including appeals under Article 392A(1)	23	23	14	32	92
<i>Procès-Verbaux</i>					
Malta					1,071
Gozo					133
Total					1,204

Since Malta's accession to the EU in May 2004, lawyers from the Office of the Attorney General have been participating in various committees, working groups and networks of the EU institutions.

Moreover, these lawyers also represent Government in meetings of the Council of Europe Committees and of various other bodies of international organisations.

Law officers are also involved in the pleading of cases in the European Court of Human Rights and, since EU membership, in the European Court of Justice. They also periodically present and defend Government's position before other international bodies that monitor human rights situations or issues of corruption and money laundering.

A number of law officers perform also lecturing duties at the University of Malta and at other institutions. It is considered that this activity plays an important role in enabling law officers to keep up to date with developments in the academic field and in applying the legal resources of the Office for the benefit of legal education in general.

It is also the function of the Attorney General to advise the Government on proposed legislation, to draft Bills in question, to attend sittings of the House of Representatives during the passage of such Bills in order to advise the Ministers concerned and to draft any amendments which might be deemed necessary. In view of the bilingual edition of all legal enactments, the Office of the Attorney General is also responsible for the translation of laws.

All subsidiary legislation is cleared from the legal aspect, translated and published under the supervision of this Office.

In conclusion, now that the Office of the Attorney General has started to gain good ground with its legal functions as a government agency within the framework of the Agreement signed between the Government and the Attorney General in May 2005, it is envisaged that with the successful completion of the exercise regarding the recruitment of new lawyers and assuming the successful conclusion of the 'new premises' project, the Agency would be in a far better position to honour its commitments and obligations within the framework of the Agreement concluded with Government.

DR SILVIO CAMILLERI
Attorney General

Police Department

ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

STRATEGY AND PLANNING OFFICE

Strategic Plan 2007 – 2009

During 2006, this office concentrated on the strategic document which is intended to be published and distributed during the first quarter of 2007. As a matter of fact, a number of meetings were held with senior staff and other key stakeholders in order to elicit objectives relative to this plan. Reports emanating from local councils meetings were also analysed in order to identify potential targets for the document.

New Training Programme

In the last months of 2006, preparations were taken in hand to draw up an all-year-round training programme at the Police Academy for all officers working the recently-introduced shift.

As a pilot model officers serving at the Control Room and the Mobile Squad were given four hours training in firearm handling and shooting, as well as another four hours training in First Aid techniques. The hours allocated for this type of training were taken from the overlapping one hour between the night watch and first watch shifts. This means that these officers will receive eight hours of training in a month which will be dedicated to different core and non-core Police subjects.

In view of the success of this pilot study, this new training programme will be extended to all serving officers working the new shift system. Such training will serve to supplement the already existing in-service courses.

Promotion

In October 2006, the Inspector responsible for the Office was appointed Officer in Charge Headquarters and a month later he was promoted to the rank of Superintendent, with an extended remit of the following offices: CMRU, Internal Affairs, Human Resources and Quartermaster Stores.

District of the Year Award

As from the year under review, the Malta Police Force introduced an internal competition between all the Police Districts, to determine the winning district which will manage to decrease the highest crime rate when compared with that of the previous year. The winning Police District was presented with the District of the Year Award as well as a certificate of merit for the effort, dedication and the result achieved during the Annual Reunion held at the Police Headquarters.

The competition in respect of 2006 was clearly won by Police District No 7, which district managed to reduce its crime rate, when compared with that of the previous year, by 22.58%, which amounts to 457 less crimes from the previous year.

The following table indicates the crime reported in the respective districts as well as at the Police Headquarters. It further indicates the respective results achieved, which when analysed, clearly show that Police District No 7 registered the largest decrease on comparing the past twelve months with the previous year. This decrease was registered in both the quantity of reports received and in percentage reduction in reported crimes.

District	Reported Crime by Districts			
	2005	2006	Comparison	% Change
1	1,293	1,089	- 204	- 15.78%
2	1,116	925	- 191	- 17.11%
3	1,163	1,154	- 9	- 0.77%
4	1,431	1,264	- 167	- 11.67%
5	1,312	1,331	+ 19	+ 1.45%
6	2,400	2,061	- 339	- 14.13%
6A	2,819	2,642	- 177	- 6.28%
7	2,024	1,567	- 457	- 22.58%
8	1,616	1,502	- 114	- 7.05%
9	2,394	2,064	- 330	- 13.78%
10	761	690	- 71	- 9.33%
GHQ	251	208	- 43	- 17.13%
Total	18,580	16,497	- 2,083	- 11.21%

The above table clearly illustrates that with the exception of one Police District (No 5) which ended the year with a minimal increase of 0.77% amounting to 19 more reported crimes when compared with the statistics of the previous year, all reported crime at the other ten Police Districts as well as at the Police Headquarters was reduced considerably.

The changes in the above table clearly demonstrate that this competition has managed to achieve its aims. The joint effort in the fight against criminality, by all sections of the Force, has managed to obtain a decrease of -11.21% of the reported crime when compared with the previous year, which means that during 2006 there were 2,083 less reported crime all over our islands.

This is a concerted effort by all members of the Malta Police Force which is clearly compatible with both the Force's Mission and Key Objective 3 of the Police Strategic Plan 2004-2006, namely "To promote and maintain Malta as a safe and secure State" and "Creating a safer environment" respectively.

Officer of the Year Award

This was another award which was introduced during the year under review. The aim of this award was to identify a member of the Force who throughout the year had manifested exceptional commitment in service, thereby upholding the highest traditions of the Malta Police Force.

This award was open to all members of the Force, regardless of rank and position, who have performed an act of exceptional commitment during the year under review.

A Selection Board appointed by the Commissioner of Police evaluated seventeen police officers who were awarded a certificate of merit for having performed an extraordinary act during 2006. In its evaluation, the Selection Board gave weight to those officers who had: performed the extraordinary act on their own and not in a group (two or more); performed the extraordinary act during his/her off duty or free time; additional commendations received during the year under review; and had not received any complaints against them by members of the public or their superior officers.

During the evaluation process, the Selection Board attributed extra points after considering the circumstances encountered by the respective officers during each act, and the end result of the extraordinary act. The Board considered the danger faced; the environment of the site where the act was performed; the time of the day; the number of persons that the officer had to tackle; whether the aggressors were armed; and whether this heroic act entailed the saving of someone's life.

After considering all the above criteria, the Selection Board decided that the act of Police Constable 972 Carmel Fiteni stationed at Police District No 4 was the most extraordinary, considering that this officer had, during the night and on his own, confronted three hooded and armed hard criminals, and managed to prevent the execution of a theft which was in progress at the premises of the Vittoriosa Local Council. He further managed to apprehend one of the criminals, by running after him over the dangerous bastions in pitch darkness.

The award was presented to Police Constable 972 Carmel Fiteni during the Annual Reunion held at the Police Headquarters.

THE POLICE EU OFFICE

The police EU Office is an integral part of the Malta Police Force. This office was set up in mid-May 2004 as a consequence of Malta joining the European Union on 1 May 2004. This office is still being structured according to EU specifications, in order to meet the standards of other EU member states.

The purpose of this office is to assist the Malta Police Force in carrying out its EU-related business. Amongst others, the EU Office carries out the following roles:

- Information gathering
- Raising the Malta's Police Force profile in the EU
- Developing regional links
- Exchange of information

The EU office which is manned by three officers, one police inspector and two constables who fall under the remit of the Assistant Commissioner in charge of Administration, is also responsible for the handling of classified information which is regulated by a number of laws which *inter alia* include the following: the Official Secrets Act (Cap 50); the Professional Secrets Act (Cap 377); the Security Service Act (Cap 391); the Code of Organisation and Civil Procedure (Cap 12); and the Data Protection Act (Cap 440).

One main function of the EU office is the processing of documents received from various ministries as well as from other foreign organisations such as Frontex, CEPOL, the European Commission, Europol, Interpol, etc. Information received differs from council decisions and regulations to training programmes for police officers. These training programmes and courses offer police personnel a chance to acquaint themselves with new methods of policing as well as information gathering and thus enhancing efficiency and competency in the Malta Police Force.

The invitations dealt with during 2006 reaches a total of 726. Average acceptance of participation to these invitations amounts to 44 %. During the year more than 350 Police personnel attended a total of 321 EU Council and Commission meetings and other non-EU meetings abroad.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS UNIT

During 2006 the Internal Affairs Unit received and investigated 145 complaints against members of the Force. Other investigations began on the initiative of this unit following surprise inspections carried out by members of this Unit, or following receipt of confidential information.

The nature of the complaints is shown in the following table; 69 of these complaints have been concluded whilst the remainder are still being investigated. The outcome of those concluded range from action before a PSC disciplinary board, internal disciplinary action, or no further action where allegations were not founded.

Nature of Complaint	No. of cases
Failure to enforce the law	5
Service not rendered	22
Breach of provisions of the Malta Police Act	21
Breach of provisions of the Laws of Malta	9
Others	88
Total	145

QUARTER MASTER STORES

During the current year various items were purchased besides the usual uniform items and accoutrements, including 200 Kenwood portable radios for issue to police districts 1 to 10, as well as the mobile squad, a personal issue cordura belt and LED flashlight/torch for all members of the Force, 50 Glock '17' pistols and 22 tactical shotguns for future use by the Mobile Squad, and 2,000 canisters of pepper spray plus their relative cordura pouches for issue to all members following a training course in handling same.

COMMUNITY & MEDIA RELATIONS UNIT

Community Relations

This Unit is responsible for the processing of requests for information by students, NGOs and the general public. Furthermore it handles the Customer Care System, Trenching System, and the OPRES (On-line Police Reporting System) as regards requests for information. It also liaises with the Police Academy and other police units for the Police Day programme. In view of this, liaison was also effected with the various NGOs who in turn requested the services of various Police Officers in educational talks, Traffic Safety Campaign, the services of the Police Band and Jazz Group and visits to the Police Academy and Museum and the Police Dog and Mounted Sections. This Unit is also responsible for the quarterly compiling, editing and publication of the Police Magazine – *Il-Pulizija*, and the publishing of the police calendar. During the year, this Unit processed the following requests:

	Received	Settled	Pending
Customer Care Complaints	995	544 *	451 **
On-line Reporting System (OPRES)	480	428	52

* Cases settled in 2006 include pending complaints from previous years

** This amount reflects only the pending complaints for 2006

Education

Personnel from this Unit gave lectures in various schools on several educational issues such as the Traffic Safety Campaign, traffic, child abuse, drugs, careers in the Police Force, bullying, etc. Crime prevention lectures were also organised in collaboration with various sectors. CMRU personnel co-ordinated visits by students and other NGOs, mainly to the Police Museum, Police Academy, Dog Section and Mounted Section. During the year the Unit processed 92 such visits; held 114 displays/participations; 87 talks at schools, local councils, NGO's, etc; 35 interviews to students, newspapers, etc; 117 participation/interviews on TV stations or radios; 110 requests for information received by e-mail, fax and post from journalists, students and others; and 45 other participations.

Educational spots were introduced and aired on local TV stations at various dates and times in relations to Theft of Vehicles, Theft from Vehicles, Hold-Ups, Pick-Pocketing and Snatch and Grab, being part of the preventive measures being taken by the Force in the fight against crime. This office received positive feedback regarding these spots, and in fact Channel 22 has dedicated a programme on such features.

This Unit also participated on a weekly basis on Radio Malta (Radio Magic) regarding Crime Prevention Tips and traffic restrictions. The Force participated eight times and the following topics were covered: securing your home; theft from vehicles; theft of vehicles; snatch and grab; pick-pocketing; suspicious

activities, persons and vehicles; giving information to the Police; anonymous person/s appearing at your door (use of ID cards etc.); information from the public as regards missing persons; importance of the safety belts; drink driving during the Christmas season; new legal notice (2007) as regards traffic regulations; and not to use mobile phones while driving.

Liaison was kept with producers from Net TV (Bongu NET and TEEN Trouble), Super 1 (One Breakfast and Kalamita), and Channel 22 (22AM and 22PM) in connection with various Police participations on day-to-day running of Police Sections. Such programmes are on a weekly basis and run throughout the winter and part of the summer schedule.

Media Relations

Personnel from the Media Unit daily monitor visual and radio transmissions, newspapers and internet, publications of press releases, co-ordinate press conferences, and record and monitor news bulletins and programmes where these concern the Police. The Unit is also responsible to make arrangements for interviews of police personnel and processing of information (transcripts) for the radio, TV and print media as the need arises.

Liaison was also extended to local producers with regard to filming for local programmes. This Unit also co-ordinates the editorial meetings, press conferences and the PR regarding Police Day activities.

During the year, this Unit was involved in the co-ordination of the following media activities: issue of 606 press releases, two editorial meetings, and 28 replies to articles published through the media – a total of 636 activities.

HUMAN RESOURCES BRANCH

The Human Resources Office of the Police Department was once again committed during 2006 due to the Local Councils Elections in various localities across Malta and Gozo.

This event entailed major preparation and organisation by the said office in selecting police personnel to distribute voting documents from various police stations. Police officers were briefed, detailed and deployed accordingly to supervise polling places, to escort ballot boxes and to sustain continuous supervision and order at the Mediterranean Conference Centre, Valletta.

The Malta Police Force was also heavily committed with the detention of illegal immigrants, for which this office details personnel performing duty with immigrants, rotating on a monthly basis, at Ta' Kandja and Hal Far Detention Centres.

The Branch also performed the following activities:

- *Retirements:* During 2006 the number of personnel who retired/resigned from the Police Force was 37 (1 Superintendent; 5 Police Sergeants; 1 Women Police Sergeant; 23 Police Constables; 7 Women Police Constables).
- *Other HR functions:* The HR Office also examined confidential reports regarding Police personnel for eventual promotion from one scale to another, advancements and confirmation in their respective appointment. Medical and injury boards were also appointed by this office, together with the maintaining of records concerning sick and vacation leave, unpaid, emigration and responsibility leave, allowances and financial information in order to keep documentation for pension purposes.

This office kept updated all amendments regarding MPO and OPM Circulars, the Public Service Management Code, the Police Act (Chapter 164 of the Laws of Malta), and other directives issued by the Commissioner of Police. Consequently, various GHQ Circulars were released from this office so as to inform all the members of the Police Force with these new amendments.

- *Recruitment and Reinstatements:* During the year, the HR Branch processed a call for applications to join the Police Force in the rank of constable. A total of 346 applications were submitted, consisting of 209 males and 137 females, which were assessed and interviewed accordingly. 135 new members (103 males; 32 females) were recruited and underwent a four-month training course at the Police Academy in October. One Police Sergeant was also reinstated.
- *Promotions:* During the year, 37 promotions were effected (seven Police Inspectors appointed to Police Superintendents; one Police Sergeant appointed to 1st Class Sergeant Major; 29 Police Sergeants appointed to 2nd Class Sergeant Major).
- *Disciplinary Sitings:* This Office also issued disciplinary charges for offences against the Police Act. Sixteen summary procedure sittings were held, during which 381 cases were heard and decided.
- *Meetings Office:* During the year, this Office received and processed a total of 29 applications for the holding of 4 meetings, 17 public discussions, 3 peace marches/rallies/walks, 3 demonstrations and 2 mass meetings.
- *Public Activities:* The following 29 public activities were held during 2006 – 3 demonstrations; 3 rallies; 2 mass meetings; 17 public discussions; 4 meetings.
- *Training Programmes:* Various two and three week refresher courses were held at the Police Academy for Sergeants and Constables. Small arms shooting courses were also held at the Police Academy. Seven members of the Force completed successfully their course of study at the University of Malta and graduated as Doctor of Laws (LLD) in December.
- *Biometric Fingerprint Reader:* During the year, the biometric fingerprint reader was introduced at the General Head Quarters and at the Mechanical Transport Garage. This system incorporates a total amount of 740 users. This office is in charge for the daily monitoring of the system. Each and every user is checked individually on a regular basis in order to be able to keep the utmost security around the whole buildings.
- *New Service ID Cards:* This office was also committed with the printing of the new service ID Cards for each and every member of the Police Department, amounting to 1,749 members of the Force and 73 civilians attached within the Department. The ID Card which has a much more professional look, complete with an ID Card holder has to be worn at all times while on plain clothes duty at the Police Headquarters.

Certificates of Merit

In 2006 the following 39 certificates of merit/commendation were awarded by the Commissioner: 19 Certificates of Merit for not availing of any sick leave for the past ten years; 1 Certificate to all members of the Mobile Squad to recognise the meritorious service rendered; 1 Certificate and Shield to all members of the No 7 Police District to acknowledge the distinguished service rendered in 2006; and 18 Certificates of Commendation for outstanding performance.

UPGRADING AND RENOVATION OF POLICE PREMISES

During the year under review, maintenance and upgrading works were initiated and completed in 16 Police premises. Maintenance was carried out to 250 air conditioning units in 11 Police premises.

Besides the day-to-day maintenance works such as whitewashing, plumbing, electricity and other needs in various police stations and branches, refurbishments were also initiated in a number of other locations (Msida and Żejtun Police Stations, International Relations Department; former Accounts Section at the GHQ) and are still in progress.

IT SERVICES - POLICE SYSTEMS

Schengen Preparations

A number of initiatives were undertaken as preparatory measures related to Schengen integration. An agreement was made with the Italian Ministry for Home Affairs that will allow the Malta Police Force to make use of their SIS II and SIRENE II systems. This was a major achievement since it will allow the Malta Police to benefit from an efficient system and gain expertise from our Italian counterparts.

During December 2006, the Malta government opted to join the SISOne4ALL project that required additional work in relation to ICT preparations and security. A grant was sought under the Norwegian Funds Mechanism for the provision of security measures in relation to the Schengen integration project. This grant was approved and works are expected to be completed by the end of December 2007.

False and Authentic Documents Online System

The 3rd stage of the FADO installation was completed during the latter part of 2006. This consisted of the installation of a secure connection, security devices and other secure measures at the Police ICT Data Centre and related sites. This measure was taken to ensure the secure transmission of sensitive data handled by the FADO system.

Border Control Systems

The existing border control infrastructure was strengthened with the introduction of two new servers at Police GHQ and 20 workstations at the departures/arrivals lounge at the Malta International Airport. A new class room to cater for border control training was also set up.

VISA System

A new system related to the processing of VISA requests was launched during March 2006. This project, implemented in conjunction with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, provides a workflow system facilitating communication between Maltese Embassies and Police back-end immigration business processes. The project is expected to be developed further over the next few months.

A number of small systems were also introduced including a Counterfeit Currency Database that manages information on counterfeit money, a Quarter Master Store management systems that assists in stock management, inventory stock controls, and a Visitor Access Management system that controls visitors pertaining to the Criminal Investigations Department.

ICT Infrastructure

In November 2006, a tender was published whereby six police stations, namely Valletta, Qormi, Paola, Hamrun, Birkirkara and Mosta police stations, would benefit from an upgraded local area network (LAN) that would facilitate the introduction of new police systems. This tender was awarded during December 2006 and works are scheduled to start during February 2007.

Works were also carried out at the Police MT Garage. This involved the implementation of a new network that links the new Traffic/ALE administrative building, Mobile Squad and Trades Section with Police GHQ.

Extensive works were also carried out at the new *Forni* Terminal (Seaport) that involved the implementation of a new network, installation of communication equipment and computers necessary to provide access to Border Control systems.

A project to embellish and increase the physical security parameter of the IT Services building was initiated late last year and is expected to be completed during the first half of 2007. This involves setting up adequate security perimeters in line with EU and national legislation, required prior to Schengen integration.

Office Automation

Between March and April 2006 a total of 67 computers and laser printers were distributed to all districts Superintendents, Inspectors and District Offices. An additional 22 workstations were also distributed during May 2006.

Telephony

As of March 2006, the Police telephone network was enhanced to cater for new services including a mobile gateway. The Police MT Garage and a number of police stations were also added to the telephone network.

CYBER CRIME UNIT

During the year, the Cyber Crime Unit (CCU) continued to flourish on both national and international scale. During June, the Cyber Crime Unit hosted an important COSPOL meeting at the Police Academy whereby crucial decisions related to the future of this operative group were taken. This included an agreement on a new strategy that will help the group to identify new threats related to online child abuse and on measures necessary to reduce these threats. In September 2006 the unit facilitated a meeting organised by Interpol in which over more than 100 delegates involved in the fight against online child abuse converged to discuss good practice and to exchange tools. Both meetings were beneficial for both the attendees and the Cyber Crime Unit.

The Cyber Crime Unit also chaired the eSecurity Working Group throughout the year under review. This included a number of formal meetings with various stakeholders resulting in a better understanding of the existing threats pertaining to ICT. The Cyber Crime Unit also worked with the Malta Communications Authority and the Ministry for Industry, Investment and Information Technology to prepare a draft eSecurity Strategic Plan. This plan will be adapted at a national level.

Members of the Cyber Crime Unit also attended a number of specialised courses that included Advanced Network Examinations organised by AGIS in Ireland. Members of the team also attended training related to Microsoft IT Essentials that were organised locally.

From an investigative point of view the Cyber Crime Unit was requested to assist in 173 cases that involved information technology. A number of these cases pertained to international co-operation requests. A total of 5,145 storage devices and peripheral equipment were examined. The outcome of these investigations was documented and submitted in Court as evidence. The following table represents the caseload handled by the Cyber Crime Unit during 2006:

Request for assistance – Type of Offence	
Adult Pornography	10
Child Pornography	11
Child Pornography Trafficking	1
Copyright Infringement	5
Defamation	15
Denial of Service	2
Defilement of Minor	15
Disclosure of Pass/Access Code	1
E-mail Tracing	2
Fraud	40

Hacking	5
Human Trafficking	3
Illegal Gambling	4
Incitement of Racial Hatred	2
Information Gathering	12
Output of Data/Software/Documentation	2
Prostitution	1
Threats	23
Uses unauthorised user name/e-mail	19
Total	173

Equipment Category	
Computer systems	130
Hard disk (internal/external)	170
Compact discs/DVDs	4,628
3.5 inch Floppy diskettes	98
Other media	45
Documents/logs/paper evidence/etc	74
Total Equipment Analysed	5,145

STATISTICS OFFICE

During the year 2006 the Statistics Office continued to publish a number of Crime Statistics reports on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. These reports are utilised by police senior staff for strategic and tactical purposes. The Statistics Office also dealt with a number of information requests deriving from various institutions such as Interpol, the United Nations, the European Union, Europol and the National Statistics Office (Malta). There was also a marked increase in the number of requests made by students and academic institutions. The Statistics Office also submitted statistical data in relation to parliamentary questions.

PROSECUTION UNIT

The Prosecutions Unit was set up in October 2000 and the parameters of its duties were set out in GHQ circular 83/2000. The main function of this Unit was intended to review cases, prepare their prosecution and finally to take over the prosecution of cases in Court. However due to ever present changing needs of the Force and the necessary academic training there has been some comprehensive change in its active role and personnel complement.

During 2006, this Unit was strengthened and it now comprises one Superintendent, two Inspectors and four Sergeants who have also finalised their course of studies reading law at the University of Malta and obtained their respective Doctorate of Laws.

For the past year, in continuance with its previous functions, the Prosecutions Unit has operated more as a legal section, providing legal and administrative support to all the other police branches. Such support includes recommendations on preferred charges, information about changes to statute and case law and prosecuting procedures. The role of this unit, since its increase in staff, has taken over the prosecution of Criminal cases, in particular the sittings dealing with the Juvenile Courts and the Criminal Family Courts, and added further to this Civil and Constitutional Court cases attendance and review. In a number of prominent instances we have also taken on the prosecution of Criminal cases.

This Unit is still concerned with a number of other initiatives and inter authority issues, such as the malicious call tracing system and the standardisation of procedures between different law enforcement agencies, such as the LES management committee, Customs, the Armed Forces and the Health Department amongst others.

In view of legislative changes currently occurring within the Criminal Law sphere, both substantive and procedural, this Unit has been increasingly burdened with legal review and discussions both in the local field and at EU level. This has, during the past year, been the greatest drain on its limited resources. The involvement of this section within the Schengen Convention has necessitated its deep involvement in the process of application of the Schengen Convention, and it is heavily committed to the evaluation process being directed towards Malta as a whole and the Police Force in particular. This Unit has in fact undergone two specific evaluations, dealing with Data Protection and Police Co-operation. Whereas the Data Protection evaluation has been finalised, the Police Co-operation evaluation is still underway, and this has involved the co-ordination of nearly all police specialised branches figuring mainly the IRU and Sirene set-up.

The commitment of the Unit to further the education of members of the Force has given rise to the continued provision of lectures aimed at Problems in Prosecution of Criminal Cases. Lectures have been delivered on a weekly basis to the prosecutors at Inspector upwards level, and specialised courses have been set up and executed to the reintroduced prosecutions by Sergeant Majors. The commitment to the Police Academy is still very strong and lectures were given in a number of fields, namely, Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure, Juvenile Law, and Data Protection during the *New Recruits course* held during 2006.

Data Protection Unit

The Data Protection Unit (DPU) was set up on 16 January 2006. It forms part of the Prosecutions Unit and the staff engaged full-time on data protection issues consist of an Inspector. A Sergeant from the Prosecution Unit assists according to exigencies.

The DPU was subject to an evaluation by the EU Commission in July 2006, where the obligations emanating from Directive 95/46/EC were assessed by 12 experts. The performance of DPU was found to be entirely successful.

The first year of the Data Protection Unit's function was largely spent forming the necessary DP infrastructure for the Police Force. Activities included the following:

- setting up of general procedure to be following by means of drafting a DP Manual;
- drawing up draft Memoranda of Understanding and meeting with several partners, including St Luke's Hospital and the Health Department;
- meeting with several departments and agencies and setting up the relevant DP procedure (e.g. facilitating the Adoption and Fostering processes where sensitive personal information is requested by applicants);
- drafting of new DP forms, e.g. Subject Access Requests;
- seeing to the needs of different Police sections in terms of DP obligations, e.g. the setting up of generic e-mail addresses in sections such as QMS, Weapons, Licensing Office, Accounts, Criminal Records Office, Secretariat and DPU (process is ongoing);
- processing of requests for information by the public according to articles 9 and 13 of Chapter 440 of the Laws of Malta, and LN 142 of 2004.

Other activities included:

- lecturing police personnel (new recruits);
- participating in the Data Protection Officers Forum of the Public Service;
- meeting with the DP task force, headed by the Office of the Prime Minister;
- participating in television programmes on DP issues;
- visiting Germany on a twinning light programme, in which the infrastructure of several police and civilian departments was observed in Bonn, Koblenz, Wiesbaden and Frankfurt Airport;
- meeting with the Data Protection Commissioner in order to prepare for the introduction of new EU obligations, emanating from Directive 2002/58/EC and Directive 2005/24/EC;
- co-ordinating investigations forwarded by the Data Protection Commissioner;
- assisting the Police Force in DP tribunal proceedings and Appeals Court proceedings involving DP issues;
- assisting Prosecutions Unit in legal issues and in EU evaluations in which it might be involved.

The Data Protection Unit is constantly monitoring developments in Data Protection and in Freedom of Information in the EU especially where new legislation needs to be introduced.

SENIOR STAFF OFFICE

During the period under review, this office carried out the following duties:

- *Parliamentary Questions*: dealt with 432 PQs;
- *Mutual Help Association*: the amount of Lm19,430 was processed by the Mutual Help Association on behalf of the Commissioner of Police and distributed to 37 families of deceased ex-members of the Force; the sum of Lm5,760 was collected from 960 members (ex-servicemen);
- *International Police Association*: served as the official International Police Association (IPA) Office within the Police Headquarters, serving the purpose of Information Office, Customer Care and Renewal of IPA memberships. 50 foreign IPA members and their families visited the Police GHQ while spending their holidays in Malta;
- *General Collection*: all contributions made quarterly by all members of the Force towards the Mutual Help Association and the Police Association are forwarded to this office where a reconciliation is made prior to being deposited at the Accounts Section. During 2006, the sum of about Lm40,000 was handled by this office.

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The function of the Department of Finance and Administration is to provide financial and administrative support services to the line operations of the Police Force. Administrative and financial advice was provided to the Commissioner of Police and other senior police officers, the Permanent Secretary and the Director Corporate Services at the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs.

The Ministry of Finance was provided with financial returns on a regular basis. Continuous monitoring and control was exercised on the expenditure of funds allocated in the budgetary estimates for the year under review. The Department's estimates for 2007 were compiled and the funds as approved in the Budget for 2006 were allocated under the five cost centres of the Police Department.

The office of the Assistant Director (Finance and Administration) was assigned two new major roles, that of the Euro Project Management for the Malta Police Force and the Project Management for Better Regulation. Both projects demanded a number of inter-ministerial and inter-departmental meetings with sections and personnel involved.

Accounts/Procurement Section

During 2006, the Accounts and Procurement Section continued with its day-to-day duties in connection with the procurement of items required for Police use and the subsequent payment of relative bills.

During the said year, this section issued seven departmental calls for tenders and another two tenders through the Department of Contracts. These calls for tenders included a number of uniform items, bullet proof vests, computer network installations, and for the supply of a Digital Photographic Laboratory for the Photographic Section of the Forensic Science Laboratory. The latter is intended to upgrade the Police Department's Photographic Unit into an up-to-date Digital Processing Laboratory so that it may be in line with the standards used by European Police authorities.

The Accounts section was also responsible for the preparation of requests and obtaining of Ministry of Finance approvals for the purchasing of a number of items, which sometimes are of a delicate nature, by means of a Direct Order.

Throughout the whole process, the Accounts Section ensured that the Government Financial Regulations were complied with. The following is a table showing expenditure during the years 2005 and 2006:

Recurrent Expenditure	2005 Lm	2006 Lm
Personal Emoluments	14,446,229	14,861,883
Operational and Maintenance Expenses	1,557,084	1,836,757
Special Expenditure	2,998	3,989
Total	16,006,311	16,702,629
Capital Expenditure	* 389,926	227,806

* Includes funds (Lm98,944) that were allocated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to cover expenses related with CHOGM.

Revenue

This Section reconciles commercial bank statements of revenue generated from licences, taxes, fines and other fees with cash returns forwarded by collecting offices namely the Police District Offices, the Criminal Records Office, the Identity Cards Section, the Police Licences Office, the Seaport, the Weapons Section, the Central Immigration Office and the Principal Citations Office. Detailed records of revenue are kept in a computerised system. The following table compares revenue collected with that of the previous year:

Item	2005 Lm	2006 Lm
Sporting Licences	380,205	381,518
Traffic Offence Tickets paid at the Traffic Fines Office	3,970	* 1,021
Miscellaneous Licences	20,815	19,676
Miscellaneous Fines	650	** 7,023
Permits/Certificates	114,102	125,386
Fees on Visas	415,000	427,297
Service to Third Parties	154,355	154,687
Road Accident Reports	12,433	14,689
Miscellaneous Reimbursements	265	8
Miscellaneous Receipts	5,967	2,491
Total	1,107,762	1,133,796

* Traffic fines awarded by Police Officers, except those at Marsa locality, are now being collected by the Local Councils Tribunals.

** The sharp increase is due to collection of fines currently being imposed in terms of provision in Article 15(5) of Chapter 217 of the Immigration Act on passenger carriers who carry improperly documented persons.

Salaries Section

This Section effects adjustments for the processing of salaries, allowances, overtime, bonus and income supplement of about 2,040 uniformed and civilian staff. Returns pertaining to extra duty performed by police personnel for third parties (e.g. banks, private functions, sports activities etc.) are also dealt with.

Human Resources (Civilian Staff)

In 2006 the Department's Civilian staff complement stood at 145 of whom 66 were assigned duties of Immigration Officers at Malta International Airport on a seven-day weekly shift roster. The Department is also sponsoring 11 apprentices under the Trainee Apprenticeship Scheme and 8 apprentices under the Extended Skills Training Scheme.

The section discharges the normal duties pertaining to HR Sections, comprising conditions of service of employees, processing of applications for leave and allowances, drawing up of various reports and returns, Performance Management Programmes, miscellaneous correspondence and other tasks such as processing of requests for reduced hours, responsibility leave, etc. This section also processes salary scale progressions including the submission of special reports and drawing up of letters of progression, manages the PSC Disciplinary Regulations and implements measures and benefits related to collective agreements.

Secretariat/Registry Services

This Section handles the distribution of all official circulars, the keeping of records and the distribution of all incoming and outgoing correspondence and files received from and sent to all police stations and other offices at General Police Headquarters.

In 2006 this Section dealt with about 14,000 letters received from government departments and authorities and the public. 6,850 new files were opened and the correspondence received was logged in the correspondence files. It is estimated that about 13,000 letters and reports were typed. About 4,100 government and 37,550 private letters were mailed from this Section.

Moreover, track of Death Certificates, Judicial Acts, Tickets of Admission in respect of unpaid court fines, monitoring and informing Director of Information of all suspensions of traffic of various feasts/occasions, and other outdoor public activities was carried out.

ACADEMY FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The aims and objectives of the Police Academy are to:

- train recruits, officer cadets and serving police officers to fulfil the role in the Malta Police Force with ability, knowledge and expertise, integrity and impartiality, effectively and efficiently;
- instil and strengthen concepts of professionalism in policing skills and core operations, and to train officers in modern managerial skills;
- initiate officers in their own further studies relevant to their role in the Force, such as psychology, behavioural sciences, scientific investigation, local and foreign case-law, comparative law and languages.

The following courses/seminars were held at the Police Academy during 2006:

No of Courses	Course/Seminar	Participants
7	In-Service Refresher Course Sergeants & Constables	215
1	Seminar – Legal Amendments – Police Inspectors	66
1	Seminar – Criminal Code Amendments and Procedure – Police Inspectors	66
28	Seminar – Legal Amendments/Judgements – Police Inspectors	1,406
1	Surveillance Techniques Training Programme – Organised by the Turkish National Police	13
1	Twining Light Course to MIA Police/Border Control Officers/Security	Police - 16 BCO - 109 Security - 4
1	Police Schengen Border Control Training Courses for MIA Police/Immigration Officers/Seaport Immigration/Security	103
1	27 th Recruits Basic Training Course	135
1	Lecture in 'Police Legal Proceedings as regards affidavit and notice of service' for Police Sergeants in charge offices and Pc's in charge outdoor papers	20
3	Lecture in 'Prosecution Procedures' for Sergeant Majors	73
1	Joint training Sessions between the Health Division and the Malta Police Force	101
1	Small Arms training (Smith & Wesson – Glock)	416
2	Small Arms training (Smith & Wesson – Glock and Shotgun)	269

Educational Visits

During 2006, the following educational/cultural visits were welcomed at the Police Academy: Maria Regina Girls Junior Lyceum; St Francis School, Cospicua; Margaret Mortimer Girls Junior Lyceum St Lucia; Kan P Pullicino Girls Rabat; Paola Ġuże D'Amato Boys Junior Lyceum; Ġużeppina Deguara, Marsaxlokk Primary School; St Monica School, Gzira; and St Theresa Girls Junior Lyceum, Mriehel.

Other tours were organised for the Ministry for Tourism and Culture; Equal Partners Foundation; and US Embassy Employees and Family Members.

THE POLICE ACADEMY BOARD

During the year, the Police Academy Board met four times to discuss the new procedure in respect of recruitment of Gazetted Officers (Inspectors); the Police recruitment for the year 2006 and relative curriculum; the Leonardo da Vinci Project; and the new system of in-service courses which were tied to increments and advancements.

INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES

Criminal Investigation Department

Detection of offenders remains the primary role of the Criminal Investigation Department. In continuation with the Department's role of introducing a proactive approach designed for the purpose of reducing crime, CID inspectors were assigned the role of liaison officers whereby each officer was tasked the responsibility of holding regular meetings with local councils to discuss and identify new crime trends as well as to implement strategies to prevent or detect crime. Another purpose is to increase and promote crime prevention awareness within communities. A total of 112 meetings with representatives from various local councils were held.

During 2006 a total of 1,312 CID case files were originated for investigation. Throughout the same year, 1,402 persons were arrested and interviewed, of whom 649 were detained for over six hours in connection with crimes being investigated. As a result of these investigations, 428 cases were solved. Of these, 358 cases were presented in court with a total of 275 arraignments which involved the prosecution of 374 persons. Of these, 35 persons were under the age of 18. Out of the 428 cases solved during the year, 70 cases resulting in 49 arraignments totalling to 158 offences and involving 67 persons are yet to be prosecuted in Court.

The following table gives a list of the offences instituted in court in 2006 in connection with these cases.

Solved Arraignments of Offences - 2006	Arraignments	Offences presented in Court	Persons Arraigned		Minors under 18yrs	
			Males	Females	Males	Females
Arraignments of Offences	229	975	261	8	30	3
Arraignments of Offences prior to 2006	46	209	65	5	2	0
Total	275	1,184	326	13	32	3

Solved Offences during 2006			
Category	Sub-Category	Nature	Total
Accomplice	Corruption		1
		Theft	1
	Escape from custody	From Residence	2
		From Retail Outlets	2
	From Bars/Hotels	1	
Anonymous	Misuse of phone	Phone calls	6
Arms Ordinance			71
Arson			2
Bodily Harm	Grievous	Attempted	4
		Wilful	6
	Slight	Involuntary	1
		Involuntary	14
		Involuntary	2
Bribery	Attempted		1
Breach of Passport Act			1
Breach of Probation			27
Breach of Suspended			19
Breach of Bail Condition			9
Calumnious Accusation			1
Conspiracy			3
Corruption			4
Defamation			2
Disobeying Police Orders			5
Destruction of Evidence			2
Disturbance Public Order			4
Drugs	Trafficking		1
	Possession		9
Embezzlement			5
Escape from Police Custody			2
Evasion of Duty			1
Fabrication of Offence			4
Failed to effect transfer of car			1
Failed to report road accident			1
False Declaration			12
False Particulars			1
False Report			11
Falsification			11
Fear of Violence Sec 251B C.C.			2
Forgery of Public Documents			1
Fraud			6
Harassment			1
Homicide	Attempted		8
	Wilful		2
	Involuntary		1
Human Trafficking			1
Illegal Arrest			26
Intimidation			2
Insurance Fraud			4
Made use of Forged Docs			9
Misappropriation			5
Motor Vehicle Regulations		Driving w/o licence	21
		Driving w/o insurance	27
		Car licence not renewed	1
		Dangerous driving	7
		Permitted others to drive a vehicle w/o insurance	1

		Driving under the influence of drink Others	1 8
Obscene Words			3
Perjury			3
Private Violence			4
Receiving Stolen Property			118
Relapsers			99
Reviled and threatened			7
Theft	Attempted	From Govt. Buildings	2
	Attempted	Hold Up	1
	Attempted	From residence	12
	Attempted	From bars/hotels	1
	Attempted	From Vehicle	4
	Attempted	From retail outlet	7
	Attempted	Theft of Vehicle	1
	Attempted	Snatch and Grab	1
	Attempted	From Garage	2
	Attempted	General	1
		From Government building	4
		Snatch and grab	24
		From business premises	2
		From beach	8
		From schools	3
		Hold-up	14
		From residence	52
		From vehicle	57
		Of vehicle	31
		From bars/hotels	8
		From retail outlets	59
		From places of religious nature	3
		From factories	4
		From garage	1
		Of Sea Craft	1
		Of Electricity	9
		General	
Threats			23
Unjustified Possession of Articles			1
Wilful Damage	Attempted	By fire (vehicle)	1
	Attempted	By fire (general)	1
		General	151
		To Cultural Property	6
		By fire (vehicle)	7
		By fire (general)	5
Violation of Property			2
Vilification of Religion			3
Total			1,133

Offences presented in court 2006 (including offences solved during 2005)

Accomplice - Escape from prison	1
Accomplice - Bribery	1
Accomplice - Unlawful exaction	1
Accomplice - Falsification	1
Accomplice in Theft from Retail Outlets	2
Accomplice in Theft from Residence	1
Accomplice in Theft from Bars/Hotels	2
Anonymous calls	6
Arson	2

False particulars	1
Falsification	16
Falsification of Documents	1
Fraud	8
Fraudulent alteration of acts by Public Officer	1
Grievous Bodily Harm/Injuries	6
Homicide	2
Illegal arrest	27
Illegal possession of cultural property	2

Association in crime	1
Attempted bribery	1
Attempted Hold up	1
Attempted Theft from garages	2
Attempted Theft from Govt. Buildings	2
Attempted theft from residence	12
Attempted theft from retail outlets	12
Attempted theft from Bars/Hotels	1
Attempted Snatch and Grab	1
Attempted theft from vehicles	8
Attempted theft of vehicle	1
Attempted grievous bodily harm	4
Attempted homicide	8
Attempted wilful damage by fire (vehicle)	1
Breach of arms ordinance	71
Breach of probation	31
Breach of Article 28A 1 (Suspended Sentence)	21
Breach of bail conditions	9
Bribery	2
Calumnious accusations	1
Conspiracy	3
Defamation	1
Disobeying Police Orders	5
Destruction of evidence	2
Disturbance of Public Order	4
Driven Vehicle in Dangerous Manner	8
Driven Vehicle Without Driving Licence	30
Driven vehicle without insurance	35
Driven under the influence of drink	1
Permitted others to drive	1
MVR (others)	8
Embezzlement	2
Escape from custody	2
Evasion of duty	1
Fabrication of Evidence	5
Fear of violence Sec. 251A Chapter 9	1
Failure to report discovery of Cultural Heritage	2
Failure to effect transfer of vehicle	1
Failure to report a road accident	1
False declaration	16
False report	13

Insurance fraud	3
Intimidation	1
Involuntary homicide	1
Involuntary grievous bodily harm	1
Involuntary slight bodily harm	2
Making use of forged documents	7
Misappropriation	3
Obscene words	2
Perjury	2
Possession of Drugs	5
Possession of Fire Arm	2
Private violence	4
Private interest in issuing orders	1
Receiving Stolen Items	116
Relapser	102
Reviled and Threatened Police Officer	7
Slight Injuries	17
Snatch and Grab	25
Theft from factories	1
Theft from retail outlets	59
Theft from Beaches	6
Theft from business premises	3
Theft from Garage	6
Theft from Government Building	5
Theft from Residence	52
Theft – Hold Ups	14
Theft from Vehicle	57
Theft from places of religious nature	3
Theft from bars/hotels	11
Theft of vehicle	39
Theft of electricity	1
Theft General	13
Threats	21
Unjustified possession of articles	1
Unlawful exaction	2
Vilification of religion	3
Violation of private property	1
Wilful damage	155
Wilful damage to cultural property	8
Wilful damage by fire (vehicle)	7
Wilful damage by fire (general)	2
Total	1,184

Homicide Squad

The Homicide Squad is proving to be a very important pillar within the Criminal Investigation Department in terms of serious crime investigations. The main responsibility of the Homicide Squad is to investigate the homicide cases and although no homicide cases have occurred during 2006, the Squad managed to solve two homicide cases which date back to 1988 and 1993 – respectively of Baron Francis Sant Cassia at Mgarr and that of Vittorio Cassone at San Gwann.

Apart from these homicide cases, the Squad also assisted in various other investigations when its services were required. It is continuously reviewing cold homicide cases and this with a view to identifying and bringing those responsible to justice.

Cultural Property Crime Squad (CPCU)

Crimes investigated

Theft and receiving stolen goods consisted of crimes related mostly to antique furniture, paintings, antique jewellery and other domestic objects, liturgical objects, coins and other types of antiques.

As for illicit trafficking, most crimes investigated during 2006 were trafficking of cultural goods mostly through the online e-Bay website.

Vandal acts and/or involuntary damage reported during 2006 concerned vandal acts on the country's most important archaeological and historic sites and monuments. Other related offences include anonymous threats in the form of letters or graffiti that were addressed to the authorities, threatening with the destruction or damage on internationally important cultural sites.

Plundering of archaeological sites and illegal excavations

Personnel from the CPCU conducted several surprise inspections on boats and several scuba divers in connection with looting of all kind of historical artefacts forming part of underwater archaeological sites. Local underwater heritage includes sites containing objects ranging from the Roman and Arab Era to wrecks and sites pertaining World War I and II.

Other services offered

- The Unit was also called to inspect museums and other sites for the purpose of giving advice to enhance security of these important localities.
- In order to provide a better understanding of the subject to other police officers, members of the CPCU deliver lectures to members of the force during in-service and recruitment courses at the Police Academy.
- The Unit completed the Cultural Property Crime Threat Assessment for the Maltese Islands as part of an initiative being undertaken by Europol. This 21-page research report was submitted to Europol.
- Also in 2006, CPCU was nominated by the Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs to act as Project Leader to clamp down illegal activities related to cultural property crime, being part of the National Tourism Plan. The objective of this plan is *to continue to focus our efforts on deepening our touristic offer through quality improvements in both our existing physical product and the service we provide.*
- The squad also attended several training seminars aimed at improving the investigative capabilities in this sector.

Stolen Vehicles Squad (SVS)

During the year the Stolen Vehicles Squad carried out the following vehicle inspections:

- 3,815 – second-hand imported vehicles;
- 1,156 – second-hand imported engines;
- 953 other vehicles were inspected at MT garage;
- 324 vehicles or engines were punched with new Police VIN or EN Stamp at SVS MT, while six were stamped at Customs;
- SVS/Technical Unit personnel were called seven times to assist Customs Department and 26 times to assist Police Officers in other investigations. The SVS Investigative Unit was requested to assist Customs Department on one occasion and assisted other police sections 11 times;
- one second-hand imported engine was found irregular (stolen) and was seized pending investigations;
- 13 vehicles were seized pending investigations (including 11 cars/trucks and 2 motorcycles) which were recovered by the SVS as these resulted to have been either reported stolen or having tempered identifications;
- 463 SVS query files were originated during the year;
- 437 vehicles and engines were photographed by SVS MT for investigation purposes whilst 17 other vehicles were photographed by the SVS CID pending investigations;
- 6 high value vehicles were recovered by SVS following importation after resulting to be reported stolen from abroad;
- The SVS Investigative team effected 11 surprise inspections at panel beaters, car dealers and scrap yards. These investigations led to the prosecution of 32 persons who were charged with vehicle crime related offences consisting of 22 arraignments.

Criminal Records Office (CRO)

During 2006, the CRO issued 27,767 Conduct Certificates for a total revenue of Lm27,767. 4,787 persons were convicted, of whom 3,258 were convicted for crime while 1,529 were convicted for contraventions. The following is a breakdown showing the gender of persons convicted:

Crimes	No.	Contraventions	No.
Males	2,705	Males	1,309
Females	190	Females	139
Male Foreigners	225	Male Foreigners	43
Female Foreigners	9	Female Foreigners	-
Males Underage	125	Males Underage	36
Females Underage	4	Females Underage	2
Total	3,258	Total	1,529

From the total number of persons convicted of crimes and contraventions, 277 were foreigners and 2167 persons were under the age of 18 years.

The punishments meted out by the Courts were as follows:

Imprisonment	167
Suspended Sentence in terms of Sec. 28A of the Criminal Code	274
Conditional Discharge in terms of Sec. 22 of Chapter 446 of the Laws of Malta	746
Conditional Discharged in terms of Sec. 7 of Chapter 446 of the Laws of Malta	141
Fine (<i>Multa</i>)	2,095
Fine (<i>Amenda</i>)	164
Reprimand and Admonition (R&A)	447
Interdiction	8
Destruction	13
Forfeiture	276
Suspension of Driving Licence	188
Suspension of Fire arms licence	8

During the same year, 3,360 criminal cases were decided, of which 2,261 were dealt with summarily, whilst the remaining 1,099 cases were dealt with through compilation of evidence.

Mobile Squad

The Mobile Squad is proving to be one of the primary workhorses of the Police Department. It has become well known for its rapid response on calls received both at the command centre as well as in various police districts. By being continuously in contact with the general public and owners of business establishments, the Squad is not only engaging in an effective community policing by assisting the general public in all sorts of needs but also and invariably making its members the frontliners in all kinds of situations.

During 2006, the Mobile Squad arrested 287 persons and a further 46 were caught *in flagrante delicto* committing a serious criminal act. Throughout the same year this section held more than 10,000 vehicular patrols in various localities. During Easter time and Christmas festivities, the Squad held intensive patrols, in co-ordination with the CID. Such patrols were mainly focused on commercial outlets, Lotto booths, exchange bureaux and commercial banks and other residential areas.

Response to thefts in progress amounted to 156 cases, whilst there were 23 drug seizures. Stolen items were recovered on 23 occasions while 308 body searches were held on suspicious persons and 209 other searches were carried out on motor vehicles. 174 residences and other premises were intensively searched for illegal property. Road checks carried out during 2006 amounted to 858 instances, and static observation was staged 75 times by multiple or solo unit. 57 stolen vehicles were located by the Mobile Squad during

patrols. Interventions, which merited the attendance of the Squad, numbered 241. 287 escaped illegal immigrants, and overstaying foreigners were also arrested.

The Squad also intervened in 144 serious traffic accidents, where 180 persons were found to be intoxicated, after being breathalyser-tested on the spot. In addition members of this section intervened in 18 attempted suicide cases. The Squad gave first aid on 50 different occasions and issued 54 traffic and other charges. As a result of their performance, the squad was awarded a certificate of merit.

Type of Duty	No
Alarms at residences and retail outlets	329
Alarms at commercial banks	210
Roadside breathalyser tests	180
Interventions in drug related offences	23
Road blocks	858
Searches	691
Arrests	287
Illegal immigrants	287

CID Lock-up

The CID lock-up located at the CID yard is divided into seven divisions; three are situated at the lower floor and four at the upper floor. The four divisions on the right of the buildings are used for male detainees and the three on the left are used for females. There are a total number of 48 cells, 11 of which are situated in the female section and the remaining 37 are used for males. These floors are interconnected by two elevators leading directly to the identification and interviewing rooms at the CID. They are also interconnected by four staircases.

The primary function of the lock-up is to serve as temporary housing for persons who have breached or are suspected of having infringed the laws of the state. The majority of persons detained at the lock-up are arrested by the specialised branches; however it is also regularly used by the district police. In 2006 a total of 2,648 persons were detained at the CID lock-up. 1,642 of these detainees were Maltese and the remainder of a foreign nationality. 396 detainees were released on police bail conditions.

The following list shows the number of detainees by nationality detained at the detention facility in 2006:

Nationality	No	Nationality	No
American	1	Lebanese	2
Algerian	22	Liberian	2
Australian	3	Libyan	372
Bangladesh	6	Mali	3
Bosnia Herzegovina	1	Macau	1
Bulgarian	13	Maltese	1,642
Cameroon	1	Mexican	2
Canadian	2	Moldavian	11
Chad	3	Moroccan	31
Czechoslovakia	2	Niger	3
China	14	Nigerian	21
Colombian	1	Norwegian	1
Congo	1	Pakistani	4
Cost D'Ivoire	7	Palestinian	27
Croatian	2	Panama	1
Czech Republic	4	Polish	3
Egyptian	53	Romanian	35
English	31	Russian	9
Eritrean	15	Scottish	1
Estonian	1	Serbian	24

Ethiopian	9
French	6
Georgian	17
German	6
Ghana	1
Guinea - Bissau	1
Holland	2
Hong Kong	1
Hungarian	6
Indian	6
Iraqi	9
Irish	1
Italian	23
Jordanian	2
Kenyan	1
Latvian	4

Senegalese	1
Slovakian	3
Slovenian	3
Somali	11
Sudanese	55
Swiss	1
Syrian	28
Taiwanese	1
Thailand	1
Tunisian	32
Turkish	5
Ukrainian	15
Uzbekistani	2
Yugoslav	14
Zimbabwe	3
<i>Total</i>	<i>2,648</i>

684 of these persons were detained in connection with illegal immigration issues while the remaining 1,964 were detained in connection with criminal investigations.

CRIME INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS UNIT

The roles of the Crime Intelligence Analysis Unit (CIAU) continued to gain workable status throughout 2006. The strategic and tactical analytical reports established during the previous years produced to inform investigators and senior management alike gained further stability.

The process of crime monitoring schedules with their intelligible-based practices formed the crime linkage and detection practices at various levels both nationally and internationally. In fact this type of intelligence-based policing practice contributed significantly to reduce the rate of specific types of criminal occurrences in 2006. This workability was successful at many levels particularly in the construction of Crime Predictive Reports. These reports were designed to set forth prevention strategies and recommendations to control or stop crime before they occurred. Furthermore, the Monthly Vehicle Crime Reports issued by this unit contributes significantly to the work of the CID sections particularly the Special Vehicle Squad and the Mobile Squad, the report acting as both a reference and intelligence guide.

The information-sharing infrastructure strengthened further in the process of the Early Warning System network for new synthetic drugs. As a result the CIAU has become the central element for the Police to disseminate and alert national and international bodies on new synthetic or psychoactive drugs detected in Malta. In fact, throughout the year three new alerts were submitted to the European Monitoring Centre for Drug and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) and Europol. As a result of this information networking the CIAU enjoys a base for which to contribute an active role in the anthology of the NFP Annual reports on the local drug situation.

Furthermore, the CIAU has continued to extend its services to various police branches which regularly refer to the unit for information, intelligence and security checks. The European National Unit and the Sirene Office have been in constant communication with this office to fulfil the requests made by their various international counterparts.

Through the principle of service advancement embraced by this unit, new projects and proposals have been set in motion throughout 2006 to improve on the units various databases.

The yearly bench marks that this unit sets for itself are generally reached, as a result, new requirements are regularly identified which propel to improve on our services to give better assistance to the ever increasing challenges of the police force and the community at large.

FORENSIC SCIENCE LABORATORY (FSL)

During the year, the services of the Forensic Laboratory were requested in 2,998 cases, varying from magisterial inquiries, specific court orders arising during the compilation of evidence, or other scientific work requested throughout Police investigations. The Image Enhancement Section within the Photography Unit was well patronised with over 200 enhancements from CCTV recordings and 150 video surveillance activities. The Fingerprint Chemical Enhancement Section continued to give excellent results considering that it is made up of two dedicated officers who are also required to perform routine fingerprint and AFIS duties. A member of the FSL has also actively participated in working groups and specifically in the Working Party on Frontiers (False Documents) mixed committee (EU/Iceland & Norway) and in the FADO user group, and has also participated in other seminars related to biometrics.

Ballistics/Firearms Investigations

This section services all the service firearms of the Police Corps, processes firearms licences, inspects premises of firearms dealers, stores firearms referred to the section by the Police or Customs for safekeeping, receives court appointments as ballistics experts, and also escorts firearms that may be used in the film-making industry from time to time.

The work performed by this section throughout the year was:

Servicing of firearms	361	Processing of firearms licence applications	935
Inspections of imported firearms	2,955	Participation in the Weapons Advisory Board	18
Inspections re exporting of firearms/weapons	15	Inspection at firearms dealers	34
Inspections of firearms with incorrect serial no.	746	Court Nominations	31
Inspections of other firearms re transfers	195	Imported/exported firearms safe keeping	4
Firearms referred by the Customs Department	16	Meetings re new Weapons Act/MITTS	6
Firearms referred by Police for safe keeping	108	Interviews re Collector Licence A	45
Firearms referred for destruction	32		

The ballistics unit has provided supporting evidence in a number of criminal investigations and has re-organised its scheduled servicing of police firearms to make it as effective as practicable, given the decimated size of the unit which is now composed of just two members.

Photography Section

This section processes films, prints photographs, carries out photographic and video surveillance during sporting activities, feasts and other public activities, and photographs latent fingerprints previously recovered from scenes of crime during magisterial inquiries and other police investigations. The evaluation of new digital systems was completed and a call for tenders for a digitised mini-lab system was issued but not yet evaluated. Digital camera systems have also been examined with a view of converting the analogue camera systems into digitised systems in line with modern trends.

During this period this section was called upon to perform the following work:

Printing of photographs	121,614
Photographic reproductions (black and white)	6,500
Video surveillance during sporting activities	79
Video/photographic surveillance during other activities	71
Police commitments	57
Enhancement of CCTV recordings	204
Other misc. work carried out at video section for other units eg SVS, MT Garage, Vice Squad, SB and others	52

Image and Video Enhancement

This is a sub-unit of the photographic unit. The FSL made full use of the investment in equipment and training in this section with over 200 investigations in this field carried out by just one officer and one senior technical officer. This is tantamount to practically one investigation per day during a working week. The increase in the work load carried by the Photographic section and the Image & Video Enhancement Section requires the investment in human resources and a call of applications from within the Police Force was issued and is being processed.

Fingerprint Unit

This Unit is responsible to take the fingerprints of suspects, tenants (for elimination purposes) and illegal immigrants and for their input into the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS). Fingerprint comparisons between latent marks found at the scene of the crime and those of suspects are effected and the unit develops/enhances fingerprints from various documents, examines anonymous letters and carries out other specific assignments requested by the Attorney General, Court of Magistrates, Interpol, Europol, Immigration, CID, Economic Crime, Drug Squad and District Police.

Due to the increasing demand for the chemical enhancement of fingerprints from surfaces and other materials which could not be examined through conventional methods, the Forensic Science Laboratory has set up the Fingerprint Chemical Enhancement Section. Two officers were sent for specialised training in this field of expertise and one of these officers is currently running the Unit with the assistance of the Head of the Fingerprints Unit. Two other laboratory officers who were sent for training on serial number restorations from firearms and engines also make use of this Chemical Enhancement Laboratory.

This section has been successful with 166 hits, resulting from searches performed on the AFIS, successfully resolving 76 separate crime incidents. (Hits are positively compared latent fingerprints which are recovered from the scene of a crime with suspects housed in the database). Numerous other hits resulted from elimination comparisons with tenants.

The Fingerprint Section has in all processed 42,839 transactions ranging from introducing new records, scanning, searching, updating and verifying results on the AFIS.

The Fingerprints Unit has successfully resolved 76 crimes, fingerprinted 1,780 illegal immigrants, scanned 1,534 ten-prints of suspects and tenants, updated the personal details of 1,503 ten-prints in the database, and a further 1,503 lifters were handed over by Scene of Crime Officers which were all scanned, inputted into the AFIS database and searched against the database. 30 cases of anonymous letters were submitted to this Unit by the Forensic Document Unit for fingerprint analysis. A further 67 cases of documents were submitted to the Unit by Scene of Crime Officers and CID officers while 63 cases were submitted to the Unit by the Courts of Law to examine as expert witnesses. 280 vehicles were examined and fingerprinted after being reported by their owners as having been broken into and objects inside stolen. This figure does not include other vehicles that were examined by Scene of Crime Officers after normal office hours or during the weekends (amounting to another 193 vehicles).

The documents that were examined at the Laboratory included:

Paper documents	1,078
Plastic including tape, bags, wrapper folders etc.	2,671
Metal items including firearms, foils etc.	70
Glass/material items	8
Vehicles involved in serious crimes for full examinations	6

These items were all examined using various chemical techniques that involved ninhydrin, superglue, basic yellow, gentian violet, rhodamine, sticky Side Powder, black/silver/white and magnetic powders, small

particle reagent, LMG blue star, Obti Tests and Quasar. Fingerprints developed through these techniques were photographed by the Unit using cold light sources and the Quasar2000.

An in-house exercise was done targeting the most active and recent subjects. This required the introduction of two specific strategies basically focussing on management by objective and total quality management. A motivational exercise was run in parallel aimed at enhancing the dull attitudes which normally result from working in such environments. As a result all the operators were given specific tasks and targets which they have successfully obtained with excellent results and also with an inflated job satisfaction attitude. The increase from last year's results is quite obvious; from 102 hits the unit has increased its results up to 166 which is an enhanced performance of 60%. This section has now embarked on another exercise aimed at stepping up total quality management and aspiring to consolidate the results achieved for the coming year.

Scene of Crime Unit

This section is called in to investigate practically all reported crimes. The duties include lifting and preserving all types of forensic evidence that may be relevant to the case under investigation. The amount of work performed by this section is considerable and consequently very difficult to quantify.

Members of this section have attended on 2,369 court-appointed cases during the period in question, apart from several hundred other police-appointed cases, which shared by other Units amount to a further 629 cases. These officers are responsible to assess the particular scenes of crime, evaluate the evidence being recovered, preserve the evidence according to established norms and standards, prepare the evidence for presentation in courts, prepare and submit detailed reports to the Courts of Law or to the Forensic Lab for each individual assignment. The members of the SOCO Unit area also called upon to assist the Photographic Unit in particular with surveillance operations. The range of cases included 993 cases of theft, 78 hold-ups, 162 arsons/fires, 33 traffic accidents, 17 cases of vandalism, 12 cases of smearing of paint, 79 cases of sudden death, 94 drug related cases, 61 recoveries of vehicles, 25 suicide cases, 8 overdose cases, 14 shooting incidents, 9 stabbings, 11 rape cases, and 193 fingerprint examinations of vehicles broken into, which, combined with those carried out by the Fingerprints Unit, make a total of 473 vehicles examined.

Court Attendance

All the members of the Forensic Science Laboratory are obliged to submit their findings and to give evidence in Court on all their scene of crime work. Throughout this period, members of the Forensic Science Laboratory were summoned to give evidence in 2,153 Court of Magistrate sittings and 40 attendances in Criminal trials.

Restoration of Obliterated Serial Numbers

Two scene of crime officers who have received specialised training in the restoration of obliterated serial numbers are currently also performing restoration examinations on firearms, vehicle engines and chassis numbers as well as one tool mark case. During this period these officers were involved in 10 investigations with outstanding results.

National Document Examination Unit

Apart from carrying out daily duties relating to police work, the NDEU is also recognised as the 3rd security level in security document examinations and is involved in liaisons with foreign private and government agencies engaged in border control measures, printing and distribution of classified alerts and bulletins, provides training for immigration personnel and provides training for other local entities (MIA, Central Bank and government agencies).

This year the Unit seized the following documents:

Counterfeit Visas Applications and approvals	10
Counterfeit Foreign Identity Cards	8
Counterfeit Driving licence	3
Counterfeit Schengen Visas	3
Counterfeit Passports	17
Counterfeit Residence Cards	1
Counterfeit Residence Permit	3
Forged Foreign Identity Cards	2
Forged Passports	32
Miscellaneous	2

Apart from counterfeit and forged documents, the NDEU has documented and added 242 genuine documents and specimens to its document library for comparisons. This Unit now has over 1,060 genuine documents in its Library. The Unit was also responsible for organising one day training sessions and in all 57 personnel were trained from different local entities.

The Unit has also processed, examined and reported on 33 cases of anonymous letters during the year in question. Furthermore the Unit has carried out 317 examinations on documents presented by Improper Immigrants. The Unit has printed and distributed 266 alerts and bulletins to all immigration personnel and furthermore assisted the Drug Squad Section in six controlled deliveries and responded to other calls made by other sections mostly related to Criminal Investigation cases.

This Unit actively participated in Frontiers False Documents working groups which were held in Brussels and also participated in seminars in The Hague and Rome on subjects related to security issues in travelling documents. As a result of these participations this unit has updated its library with the latest versions of travelling documents; as such documents are mutually exchanged during these meetings. Furthermore this unit is extending its operation by providing basic training to all the persons who are actively involved in the handling of travelling documents in order to widen their knowledge on the detection of forged or falsified documents. These include Immigration Officers, Air Malta staff, Customs, Police and Foreign Affairs personnel.

FADO System

FADO stands for False and Authentic Documents Online System. Throughout the year the FADO has been in continuous development. All three officers have been certified by the NSA up to security level and all the offices housing the FADO have been physically secured in compliance with the FADO physical security regulations. In December 2006 the FADO has switched to the final phase on to the secure network and from this date onwards we are in a position to upload and access information regarding both the authentic and false documents of the 27 member states and also security documents originating from third countries. All EU member states will have access to the system and an *ad hoc* FADO user working group has been established to operate under the Council of the European Union as part of the Frontiers/False Documents Working Party Mixed Committee. Members of this section are working on the system in order to upload the appropriate documentation.

Forensic Registry

The Forensic Registry is responsible for back-office operations of the FSL. The duties include the monitoring of file movements, opening and closing of files, Court diaries and appointments and other related office duties. The Forensic Registry officers perform standby duties in order to provide services related to the production of composite facial images through the use of computer aided software combined with specialised cognitive interviewing techniques (E-FIT) of female and child victims. Throughout this year they were engaged in the production of 48 E-FIT examinations, an average of one E-FIT per week.

They also provided photographic services to the Courts of Law for female victims, normally involved in sexual offences.

INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES (DRUG SQUAD)

During 2006 the Malta Police Drugs Squad continued with its efforts to identify, investigate and prosecute the principal contributors to the importation and trafficking of drugs in Malta. At the same time efforts were also intensified in attempts to deal with street level drug pushers. The Drugs Squad has invested considerable resources in order to contribute to the fight against drugs on an international level. The successes achieved during 2006 can be measured by several indicators, the most obvious one being the number of significant seizures affected during the year which can once again be considered as of substantial importance. The most significant in terms of seizures were the following:

January:	1 kilo of cocaine discovered at the Airport;
February:	1½ kilos of heroin at the Airport;
April:	3½ kilos of cannabis resin found at Bahar iċ-Ċagħaq;
May:	10 kilos of cannabis resin found at Marsaxlokk; 5,000 ecstasy tablets found at the Airport;
June:	½ kilo of cannabis resin found at Żebbuġ; several cannabis plants found in Ghajnsielem, Gozo;
July:	over 5,000 mCCP tablets found in a car driven to Malta from Spain; almost 12 kilos of Khat at the Airport;
August:	several cannabis plants at Munxar, Gozo;
September:	almost 10,000 ecstasy tablets seized at the Airport; 1½ kilos of cocaine seized at the Airport; 1½ kilos of cocaine seized at the Airport
October:	over 1,000 tablets of ecstasy found in Qormi.

Of particular importance is the fact that during 2006 three new substances were identified and seized in Malta for the first time. These substances were BZP of which 170 tablets were seized, MCPP of which a seizure of over 50,000 tablets was made and Khat of which almost 12 kilos were seized. Following these seizures the authorities moved quickly in order to include BZP and MCPP in the legislation since these substances had not been included in the list of illegal substances. Khat was already included in the list but this was the first time that it was identified in Malta. Of importance was also the fact that new methods of importation, such as the use of courier services, were discovered by the Police. New methods of concealment, such as drugs hidden in vehicle spare parts, were also discovered.

The Drugs Squad also played a very important part in international operations against drug trafficking, the most important being the operation against large scale trafficking of cannabis resin from Morocco to Italy. The contribution made by the Drug Squad during the months of March and April was a leading role and indispensable to the success of the operation which terminated in the seizure of over two tons of cannabis resin in Italy and the arrest of twelve Italian suspects. Later on during the year, the Drugs Squad played an important role in the seizure of about 3 kilos of cocaine which was made in Sicily.

The number of person charged in Court with drug related offences is another indicator of the efforts made by the Drugs Squad. In fact during 2006, 429 persons were charged with possession of drugs whilst 116 persons were charged with trafficking of drugs. These figures show an increase over those for 2005.

The Drugs Squad also continued to monitor closely parties and similar activities organised throughout the year. A limited number of drug seizures were made during these activities.

Arraignments of Offences liable to over 6 months imprisonment (in 2006)						
Subject	Arraignments					
	Cases	Persons Arraigned	Males	Females	Minors under 18	
					M	F
Possession	413	429	385	44	52	7
Trafficking	107	116	102	14	6	2
Other Crimes	13	13	12	1	-	-
Total	533	558	499	59	58	9

Solved Offences liable to over 6 months imprisonment (in 2006)	
Type of Offences	No. of Cases
Possession	361
Trafficking	96
Other Crime	4
Total	461

Arrests, Raids/Searches and Court sentences			
	Males	Females	Total
Arrested Persons	483	57	540
Sentences Delivered			426
Raids/Searches	255	23	278

Seizures

Type of Drug	Quantity
Cocaine	4 kg 269.078 grms
Heroin	1 kg 892.115 grms
Cannabis Resin	44 kg 987.31 grms
Cannabis Grass	2 kg 862.94 grms
Cannabis Plants	39 plants
Ecstasy	16,479 tablets
MCPD	50,533 tablets
BZP in tablets	170½ tabs
BZP in grms	9,894 grms
Khat	11 kg 812.3 grms
Amphetamine	0.5 grms
DHC's	84 tabs
Valium	2 tabs

INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES (ECONOMIC CRIMES AND VICE SQUADS)

Economic Crimes Squad

The Economic Crimes Unit is responsible to investigate all serious financial crimes and intellectual property rights' infringements and other serious crimes affecting the financial sector in any manner.

Various cases of a certain entity and importance either for value or for complexity were solved and brought before the law courts. The fight against the circulation of counterfeit currency was ongoing as was also the curbing of intellectual property rights' infringements and contraband of cigarettes and alcohol on the local market. There were also important cases which had an impact on a national level, such as the theft and dissemination of examination papers nationwide which was solved and stopped in a few hours. The fight against corruption continued and resulted in a good number of successes. Theft and skimming of debit cards, where a lot of dedication and investigative work was invested with a view to stop this relatively new phenomenon in Malta. The Economic Crimes Squad is responsible to investigate the following:

- Money Laundering
- Judicial requests for assistance from abroad regarding economic crimes
- Police requests from abroad through Interpol regarding economic crimes

- Foreign Exchange violations
- Breaches of the Financial Institutions Act
- Investigation of all Customs related offences
- Intellectual Property Rights violations
- General Fraud
- Misappropriation
- Bribery
- Extortion
- Corruption
- Forgery of Documents
- Embezzlement
- Plastic card fraud
- Currency counterfeiting
- Computer Crime

During 2006, the Economic Crimes Squad continued to curb the violations connected with Intellectual Property Rights infringements. This was complemented by a high amount of pirated material seized. Besides open markets and other retail outlets, these raids were this year extended to private residences since IPR infringements were being carried out over the internet. During 2006, over 40,000 pieces of copied material were seized by the Squad which is thousands more than last year. This material varied from audio and visual to clothing to cigarettes. The seizures made were as shown hereunder:

IPR Enforcement seizures

Number of raids	156
Number of cases arraigned in court	42
Persons arraigned in court	50

Items Seized	Quantity
DVD's	11,286
Playstation CDs	5,317
Video Films	66
Printed Material	21,422
Music CDs	1,462
Toys & Others	297
Others	160
Total	40,010

During 2006, the Economic Crimes Squad investigated the under-mentioned crimes:

Offences Investigated	No of Cases
Fraud	130
Misappropriation	47
Forgery	33
Embezzlement	4
Cheques Bounced	10
Cheques Stolen/Forged	9
Plastic Card Fraud	11
Local Counterfeited Currency	15
Foreign Counterfeited Currency	5
Usury	47
Intellectual Property Rights Infringements	7
VAT Investigations	2
Customs Investigations	31
Contraband Related	18
Computer Crime	7
Corruption	5
Money Laundering (FIAU)	31
Money Laundering (Police)	11
Foreign Requests for Assistance in Investigations	13
Comm Rogatories	10
Others (crimes not related to this Unit)	32
Total	478

The following table shows statistics relating to court arraignments:

Court Arraignments			
	Males	Females	Total
Persons Interrogated	487	119	606
Arrested	275	68	343
Persons Arraigned	301	55	356
Cases (Arraignments)	-	-	295

Money Laundering Unit

The Money Laundering Unit, which is within the Economic Crimes Squad, is responsible to investigate all cases of money laundering cases, rogatory letters received concerning money laundering issues from foreign sources and requests for assistance from foreign law enforcement agencies on the same issues. This Unit also investigates all cases referred to it from the Financial Intelligence and Analysis Unit and other independent sources.

Money Laundering Activities

Persons charged in court	21
STRs FIAU	31
STRs Police	11
Requests for Assistance	13
Rogatory Letters	10

Vice Squad

Curbing loitering and soliciting for prostitution remained high on the Vice Squad's agenda during 2006. Special attention was given to those areas which are notoriously known for loitering by prostitutes and possible new ones. These areas included Gżira, Msida, Marsa and Ta' Xbiex, and this year also Hal Far, since there were allegations of prostitution by foreign women.

The fight against the trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation continued and persons were charged in court following investigations in this regard.

The Vice Squad personnel are also directly involved in duties which cannot easily be quantified, mainly because they concern more the social aspect of life. This work concerns mostly domestic violence issues including child abuse, child neglect or family issues as well as the tracing of persons reported missing. This issue is given a high level of importance so as to minimise the harm that the absentee might encounter during his or her misadventure. All of these persons are interviewed with a view to establishing the reasons for leaving home. This obviously involves other organisations who would help the persons involved in the best possible manner.

The Squad also focused on the curbing of foreign prostitution where very good results were obtained. A considerable number of foreign women who were suspected to be indulging in prostitution locally were referred to the Immigration Branch for removal from Malta. This was particularly done by effecting frequent and continuing patrols and inspections at places of entertainment.

The Vice Squad also assists Social Workers in the execution of Court Orders, by accompanying the latter when these authorities seek assistance. The statistical data concerning the Vice Squad activities for 2006 is as follows:

Vice Squad Investigations	Total
Absentees	319
Domestic Violence	11
Rape	12
Violent Indecent Assault	3

Defilement of Minors	25
Suspected Foreign Prostitutes	4
Assistance to Social Workers	4
Child Pornography	5
Child Abuse	1
Bigamy	2
Raids for Prostitution	117
Raids for Illegal Lotto and Gambling	78
Others	2
Total	583

Arraignments in Court	Other Related Charges	Persons	Rape Cases
Rape	14	14	8
Defilement of minor	28	23	19
Violent Indecent Assault	16	5	3
Sexual harassment	3	1	-
Immoral acts in public	58	2	1
Child pornography	9	8	5
Pornography (Possession for circulation)	10	4	2
Loitering and soliciting for prostitution	259	259	258
Living off the earnings of prostitution	7	1	1
Compelled/induced persons of age to prostitution	2	-	-
Keeping a brothel	52	48	1
Trafficking in human beings for prostitution	4	4	2
Complicity in trafficking in human beings	1	1	-
Illegal Arrest	24	-	-
Child neglect	2	2	1
Bigamy	1	1	1
Breach of Gaming Act	22	23	12
Illegal gambling	6	6	6
Slight injuries	6	-	-
Breach of Care Order Act	1	-	-
Offences against Police Officers	2	2	2
False report/simulation of offence	1	1	-
Others	36	5	3
Total	564	410	325

PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Traffic Section

As in previous years the Traffic Branch focused its attention on reducing traffic accidents, improving the flow of traffic and assisting drivers, pedestrians and other road users alike. Personnel from this Branch devoted most of their time to proactive policing with a mixture of reactive policing.

Traffic motorcyclists made their presence seen, particularly during the rush hours. They were regularly deployed at Marsa, Regional Road, Mrieħel By Pass and other arterial roads with the aim of assisting and maintaining the free flow of traffic and in reducing inconvenience during the morning and afternoon/evening rush hours. Likewise, they contributed during national events in deviating traffic and easing traffic congestions.

Personnel from this Branch were also responsible for providing police escorts with international dignitaries visiting Malta on official functions. There were 22 occasions in which traffic police personnel contributed during the year under review which amounts to 222 persons. This, as distinct from other escort duties provided to His Excellency the President of Malta, together with other several occasions with the Maltese Prime Minister which amounts to 179.

Traffic personnel, in addition to ceremonial duties, also carried out spot checks with the aim of enforcing Traffic Regulations. A total of 26,662 drivers were stopped and charges were issued where necessary. 704

charges and 31,452 Traffic Offence Tickets were issued to various drivers and occupants for a variety of breeches of the Motor Vehicle Regulations.

Traffic motorcyclists were also deployed in policing several bicycle races and athletic meetings all over the island.

Personnel from the Traffic Branch were continuously involved in delivering public talks to local councils, government and private schools. In maintaining the Traffic Safety Education Campaign, the Traffic Branch had also participated in various television programmes on a regular basis.

Administrative Law Enforcement Unit (ALE)

The ALE Section continued with its efforts to prevent and detect environmental crime throughout 2006. The following charges were issued during 2006:

Nature of Charge	No.
Illegal Bird Trapping	44
Illegal Hunting on Land	148
Illegal Hunting at Sea	58
Importation of Protected Species	3
Possession of Protected Species	19
Illegal selling of birds	12
Litter Act	15
Dumping	22
Infringements of Malta Maritime Authority Regulations	158
Traffic Offences Tickets/Traffic Charges	137
Cruelty to animals	3
Arms ordinance	20
Development without MEPA permit	1
Smoking in public places	248
Others	57
Total	945
VAT New Cases	2,972
VAT Cases Decided	1,005
Protected species seized	132
Weapons seized	66

During the past year, the Administrative Law Enforcement Unit continued with its patrols on land and at sea. The number of charges issued during 2006 increased from 600 in 2005 to 945 in 2006. ALE's sea operations were moved from St Andrew's Compound to MT Garage while its offices were transferred from GHQ to MT Garage quarters. The new quarters housing the ALE and Traffic Sections were modernised by the ALE members themselves assisted by three officers from the SAG.

Officers from the ALE assisted various entities such as MEPA, the Veterinary Services and the Land Department in maintaining law and order. This involved assisting officials from these departments in implementing "enforcement notices and stop notices" as well as inspecting farms. Apart from enforcing regulations with respect to wildlife violations, ALE officers were also engaged in carrying out inspections with the aim of curtailing illegal smoking in public places. During such duties officers were deployed both in uniform and in plain clothes.

Members of the ALE, in conjunction with other branches of the Force, mounted several road checks during the night in connection with traffic and other infringements. Moreover, between July and September officers were deployed on beach patrol duties in several parts of the island.

Whereas the ALE officers carried out patrol duties at three beaches in 2005, their presence was extended to six beaches during 2006. Furthermore the equipment used during such patrols was increased from two to four boats.

The Inspector responsible for the ALE attended a CEPOL course in Spain where he also participated in delivering a lecture to our foreign counterparts. During the year under review the Inspector of the ALE was also responsible for delivering various lectures to new police recruits.

Control Room

Personnel stationed at the Control Room are responsible, amongst other things, to despatch field officers to sites of incidents. Their duties are co-ordinated with Districts and Specialised Units. They deploy personnel where they are needed most and at the appropriate moment. Officers at the Control Room are also responsible for answering incoming phone calls and channelling them to wherever it is required. Their duties require them to answer emergency calls and liaise with the Civil Protection Department and the Emergency Department at St Luke's Hospital. Additionally, they monitor CCTVs, burglar alarms and police vehicles on patrols.

The following figures indicate the number of incoming calls received at the Control Room on the 112 emergency number.

Emergency line 112	No. of calls
Calls transferred to various Specialised Units	2,784
Calls transferred to various Police Stations	821
Calls transferred to CPD	397
Calls transferred to SLH	1,473
Calls transferred to Gozo Police Dept	48
Calls transferred to Gozo Health Dept	34
Feedback to assistance rendered to members of the public and colleagues from other sections, wrong numbers and nuisance calls	40,123
Total	45,680

Principal Citations Office

The Principal Citations Office is responsible for processing prosecution cases before the Magistrates' Court and the Court of Appeal. In appointing these cases, personnel stationed in this office are inundated with the issue of summons and notices of service which in turn are distributed around Malta to various members of the public who are detailed to attend for court sittings. The following table gives an overview of cases processed by personnel stationed at this office:

Nature of Sitting	No of sittings appointed	Cases appointed	Cases put off	Cases decided
Traffic	84	6,094	4,004	2,090
Collisions	63	1,349	1,053	296
Health	24	1,898	1,659	239
DLE	32	627	415	212
Health & Safety	12	229	129	100
Appeals	104	1,306	926	380
Juvenile	8	152	80	72
ETC	2	50	35	15
Evasion of duty	7	141	123	18
Family Court	37	2,145	1,001	1,144
Total	373	13,991	9,425	4,566

Special Assignment Group (SAG)

During the year the Special Assignment Group effected a total of 3,611 performances on a number of different activities:

- fixed point duties with high risk embassies and other entities as well as armed escort duties with high profile dignitaries when visiting Malta (1,040 instances); 286 additional patrols carried out at the Malta International Airport;
- close security protection duties with VIPS and other dignitaries including delegations, venues where international conferences were held, high risk personalities visiting Malta, politicians, royalties, religious personalities, ambassadors, athletes, and other celebrities, both official and private visits. In certain instances close security protection was also carried out with HE the President of Malta (416 close security protection);
- normal patrols held in Paceville during weekends, public and national holidays and daily patrols round the clock to assist the Mobile Squad and patrols at Girdgħi on particular occasions (2,898 patrol duties in various localities);
- travelling abroad when escorting illegal immigrants to their country of origin, mainly where hostilities were suspected, and escort duties with criminals (33 escorts);
- escort duties with valuable objects, which consisted of diamonds, gold bullion, filigree, passports, cash etc (264 escorts);
- assistance to other sections or squads such as CID, Drug Squad, Economic Crime, ALE, and the Special Branch Immigration Section;
- providing personnel in anti-riot (13 occasions) or Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) (5 occasions).

Dogs Section

The Dogs Section is made up of various breeds. They regularly perform public displays when requested by philanthropic societies, schools, local councils and other institutions. At the moment, there are 36 dogs whose work consists of the following:

This Section is an integral part combining and executing various works with the Special Assignments Group such as fixed point duties, close security protection with VIPs in delegations and conferences, and SWAT related matters (total of 2,487 performances).

Members of this Section are deployed together with their dogs on security duty with illegal immigrants at the Police Detention Centres. Further security duties are carried out at the Malta International Airport, Sea Port and the Yacht Marina.

On various occasions, sniffer dogs and their handlers are called for assistance by the Drugs Squad for duties effected in parties, houses and vessels searches etc. Likewise, personnel and dogs from this section had assisted EOD officers from the AFM in effecting searches for explosives.

Mounted Section

This Section participated in ceremonial duties in connection with the presentation of credentials to HE the President of Malta at the Palace in Valletta on every newly appointed ambassador to Malta. A minimum of five riders on horseback are detailed to perform such escort duties.

Personnel from the Mounted Section were also deployed on patrols in certain strategic places. Furthermore, personnel were also detailed on foot patrol along most of the main beaches during the summer period.

Riders and horses were deployed at the Ta' Qali National Football Stadium during Premiership football matches and horse races at the Marsa Race Track.

During the year under review further refurbishment works were taken in hand by members of the Mounted Section to upgrade the premises.

The following is a list of activities carried out by the Mounted Section during 2006:

Type of Activity	No. of Performances
Fixed Point (Embassies and Warships)	51
Ceremonials	31
Football stadium	24
Marsa Race Track	54
Patrol on Horseback	149
Foot patrol	69
Total	378

MOTOR VEHICLE TRANSPORT SECTION (MT)

The Motor Vehicle Transport Section consists of two sections, the Drivers' Section and the MT Garage Workshop (Mechanics) Section.

The *Drivers Section* is responsible for the transport of all officers stationed at the GHQ and Traffic Branch. This section also caters for the transport of vehicles under investigations, derelict vehicles and damaged police vehicles. This section also runs a small fleet of buses for police reinforcements or transportation of clandestine immigrants. The distribution of barriers and the conveyance of corpses are also catered for by this section. In addition, members from this section also assisted the Trades (GHQ) Section, in various construction projects currently being undertaken at the GHQ.

The *MT Garage (Workshop/MT Stores) Section* is composed of the Workshop section, and the MT Stores section, which is responsible for the procurement and issue of vehicle spare parts.

This section is responsible for maintaining and servicing the police vehicle fleet, which at present is made up of 269 motor vehicles and 67 motorcycles, as well as seven second-hand vans and motor vehicles acquired from other departments. Services carried out at the MT Workshop section are automotive/motorcycle repairs, auto-electrical, vulcanizing, panel beating and spray painting.

During the year, the MT Section handled 3,366 job cards for repair works on police vehicles. These varied from routine maintenance, to major engine or body repairs. The amount of Lm101,696 was spent on the purchase of both proprietary and non-proprietary parts, and for other services.

During the same period, the fuel consumption for the Police Department amounted to Lm351,635, which includes 526,550 litres of unleaded petrol, 4,420 litres of LRP, and 76,850 litres of diesel fuel.

SPECIAL BRANCH

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS UNIT

Interpol

The Special Branch acts as the National Central Bureau of Interpol and is the contact point for international co-operation matters. This office ensures continued liaison with the General Secretariat of Interpol, NCBs in other countries and with the various branches and sections of the Force.

The main activities performed by this office during 2006 were:

- the judicial assistance in relation to extradition issues;
- the assistance in the execution of international *commission rogatoires*;

- international search for fugitives;
- assistance in police inquiries; and
- continued exchange of information with the Police services in member states.

Various messages by the dedicated electronic communication system of Interpol have been exchanged and personal liaison between the Head of the National Central Bureaus in Malta and those in other countries, in particular where assistance and information exchange is regular, has been ensured.

Other International Relations

The Head of the NCB in Malta also deals with other issues relating to international co-operation and on bilateral arrangements. These include liaison with the Guardia di Finanza, Italy; the Drug Enforcement Agency, USA; the Legal Attaché Office, USA; the Direzione Investigativa Antimafia, Italy; and the NCIS, UK and other international police services.

Various enquiries originating from the above law enforcement bodies were catered for in 2006, some of these cases resulting in successful criminal operations in the countries concerned, whilst others had greatly helped in the investigation of criminal activities or collation of information in such countries.

Pursuant to EU accession, this Department was also entrusted with the duties relating to co-operation with Europol. Malta is in fact a full Member of Europol and a European Liaison Officer (ELO) is posted at The Hague where the Headquarters of Europol are housed. Co-operation with other Europol member states have increased considerably during the year and during the same period various seminars and meetings were attended by the ELO and where practicable by other senior officers. Communication equipment dedicated to the exchange of information with Europol has been enhanced and action is being taken to enhance the administrative capacity of this unit. Judicial assistance and the assistance in the execution of *commission rogatoires* and procedures for the execution of EAWs is also catered for by the Officer in charge.

Schengen

A considerable number of Schengen related issues are catered for by the Special Branch. Action is being taken to build these offices in order to cater for future needs once we are connected with the Schengen Information System. This is an ongoing process and to reach this aim various working parties are attended by the officers identified to pursue this matter. The officer responsible for Schengen activities has also been involved in the evaluation process of other Member States and it is expected that such activities will be repeated in future. The Special Branch is constantly in contact with the Ministry in relation to activities related to Schengen and the various changes and introduction of procedures which are required for Malta to be accepted as part of the Schengen area. Proposals for Twinning Light programmes for such activities have also been prepared in order to ensure that training would be delivered in good time during the following year.

Sirene

Ad hoc officers have been deployed for duties at the Sirene (Supplementary Information Request at the National Entries) Office. During this period these officers have participated at several meetings and seminars related to duties connected with this office. Action has also been taken to ensure that the proper administrative staff is identified to be deployed at Sirene Office and to be trained by foreign experts through dedicated programmes which will take place soon. This is a very important process in our way forward to the European Union and the full compliance with Schengen related issues and massive activities are envisaged to take place.

Anti-Terrorism Unit

The Anti Terrorism Unit is housed within the International Relations Unit. A number of contacts have been established with other foreign services involved in such activities during the year. A number of seminars and other meetings were also attended by officers posted at this Unit during the same period. Malta is also part of the Police Working Group on Terrorism and the Unit is still undergoing constant development.

Immigration Branch

The main task of the Immigration Branch is to control the island's points of entry, which include checks to prevent illegal entry of foreigners and detection of forged documents. It has entry points at the Airport, Seaport and Yacht Marina as well as a seasonal port at Mġarr, Gozo. Police and civilian personnel man entry points at the airport.

During 2006, the number of persons who arrived in, or left Malta by air, was as follows:

Arrivals:	1,347,473
Departures:	1,348,561
Transit:	5,590

The statistics quoted above were brought from MIA sources since the filling of embarkation cards are now restricted to arriving passengers, who are not members of the EU.

The number of ferry passengers, excluding cruise liner passengers, who were processed at the seaport was as follows.

Arrivals:	96,511
Departures:	101,974

These figures were brought from the Sea Terminal company responsible for the management of the passenger terminal.

This branch also houses an office that deals with the processing of visas. Another office is entrusted with matters relating to foreigners' administrative issues, and includes the processing of requests for Acquisition of immovable property, extensions of stay, residence permits, nationality request, and work permits. 257 foreigners who did not satisfy the conditions for entry were refused entry into the island, an activity aimed at suppressing illegal immigration.

During the period under review, this office processed 56,599 applications for visas, of which 53,414 were approved and 3,185 were rejected. Several other transit and tranship visas for seamen were also received and processed.

The Immigration Branch is a Section where a lot of changes are taking place on an ongoing basis, especially in view of the requirements relating to the movement of persons by the EU. Activities to be in line with EU requirements are ongoing and have particularly been implemented at points of entry since May 2004. Other developments are in the pipeline especially with regard to duties connected with the aliens office, therefore the procedures of residence permits and extensions of stay. Residence permits cards for EU nationals are already being issued. Several meetings were also held with the Department of Citizenship and Expatriate Affairs which has taken over the responsibility of issuing Residence Permits to Third Country Nationals. An online IT network has been set up and several hundred applications have already been processed. Training in the field of residence permits issues have been delivered to a number of officers, even abroad.

Immigration Investigations

Insofar as field duties are concerned, 2,184 removal orders were issued by the Immigration Officers. These include removal orders issued in respect of foreigners arriving in Malta or intercepted on boats. Field duties also had to cater for the 57 incidents when boat people were traced and brought ashore or arrested after having landed illegally in Malta. These amounted to a total of 1,780 migrants. These all had to be medically checked, photographed, fingerprinted and accommodated. They were also interviewed in order to establish their identity and wherever possible effect repatriations. Co-ordination with the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity (MFSS) is required and kept constant due to the arrivals of family units and minors who are only kept in detention for the minimum period necessary to have them cleared medically. Dubious cases of minors are also referred for further age examination and the relative results are immediately communicated to the MFSS.

The nationality of the boat people was as follows:

Nationality	No.
Eritrean	368
Egyptians	312
Somali	311
Moroccan	158
Ethiopian	143
Others	488
Total	1,780

A number of the above opted to apply for refugee status locally and all relative documentation that was referred to the migrants from the Refugee Commission, relating to the approval or rejection of their claim, was delivered by Immigration personnel. The same applies to correspondence exchanged with the Refugee Appeals Board. During the year, 1,272 persons filed applications for refugee status and these consisted mainly of persons arriving by boat. All communications from REFCOM and the Appeals Board that are addressed to the immigrants are also distributed by this section. Records of these documents are also kept. As regards repatriation, a total of 780 foreigners were repatriated in line with immigration procedures. Also in this aspect, the Police were responsible to acquire the relative documentation and return tickets in order to secure smooth repatriations. In total, over 300 requests for documents were forwarded to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in an effort to be in a position to repatriate failed asylum seekers. In a number of cases action was also taken to organise repatriation procedures with accompanying escorts. During the year under review chartered flights were organised to escort illegal immigrants to Egypt and Morocco and the Branch again participated in a joint flight with Germany where a national of Burkina Faso was repatriated.

Fourth-one arraignments for offences liable to six months imprisonment or more were carried out in 2006. These included eight cases of “people trafficking”.

Eurodac Office

The Immigration Police are also responsible for the running of the Eurodac Office. As such they are responsible to store and disseminate fingerprints of all asylum seekers and illegal immigrants to the central data bank which is shared by all EU member states. The same office is also responsible for the responses to requests to check or take back of such immigrants who may be discovered in other EU member states or vice versa. 1,161 entries were affected and 134 requests for information and take-back requests were received. Out of these, a total of 56 immigrants were effectively returned.

Duties at Open and Closed Accommodation Centres

The Police are responsible for supervising the migrants housed at Hal Far and Ta' Kandja reception centres, while those at Safi and Lyster Barracks are under the supervision of the Armed Forces of Malta who assist

the Immigration Police in the fight against illegal immigration and housing of foreigners who had entered Malta by boat.

The arrangements for the security at the two accommodation closed centres, where illegal immigrants are housed, are also the responsibility of the Police Special Branch. Immigration Police presence is also secured at the Open Centre run by the Emigrants Commission at Balzan. This activity generated massive duties during the same year, especially insofar as escort duties and other related activities are concerned.

Mention has to be made of the fact that the Police canteen services are fully deployed and assisting the Immigration Section to provide meals not only for a number of immigrants in Police closed centres but also a number of immigrants who are in open centres. At the end of the year under study, police were no longer responsible to issue meals for the immigrants at the open centres as this role was given to a private company.

Protective Service Planning and Co-ordination

The Special Branch is also the designated body to co-ordinate protective measures of visiting VIPs or to organise security during certain conferences and other meetings. For this purpose close liaison is ensured with the District Police, the Traffic Branch and the SAG.

During 2006, various VIPs travelled to Malta and action was taken by this branch to ensure that through a combination of measures and capabilities, appropriate steps were taken to protect such visitors. There were around 22 such visits during this period. Protective duties are also carried out by officers within the Branch with certain VIPs as required.

Liaison Duties

The Special Branch performs liaison duties with foreign diplomatic representations in Malta. Continued assistance was given to embassies in several matters, including consular issues, both directly and very often through the involvement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Private Guards and Local Wardens

The Special Branch is also entrusted with issues relating to the processing of applications and licensing of applicants for the position of Private Guard or Local Wardens and for the registration and licensing of the agencies which employ such guards and wardens. During the year the following applications were processed:

Type	Applications				Licences
	Received	Refused	Withdrawn	Pending	Issued
Private Guards	471	7	-	22	442
Local Wardens	23	4	-	3	16
Private Guard Agencies	3	-	-	-	3
Local Warden Agencies	-	-	-	-	-

Weapons and Explosives

The Special Branch is also entrusted with issues relating to weapons and explosives, including the approval of importation of weapons and the temporary approvals for import/export of weapons for sporting purposes. Action was also taken to comply with EU requirements for the movement of firearms within the Union. The Special Branch is the designated contact point with other European Police Services dealing with the movement of weapons.

The European Firearms Pass has been created and can be issued as required.

During the period under review, the following weapons licences were processed from the different district offices throughout Malta which have access to a main weapons database. The system is enhanced continuously to meet the requirements of the Police Department.

Type of licence	New Applications	Renewed Permits
To keep knives	-	6
To carry knives	-	6
To carry harpoon guns	357	849
To carry firearms for sporting purposes on land	330	11,688
To carry firearms for hunting on board a sea-craft	61	444
To carry firearms for the hunting of wild rabbits	226	1,022
To take wild rabbits	2	31
To take birds	24	4,501
To carry airguns to and from licensed shooting ranges	77	62
To carry black powder	13	119
Clay pigeon shooting	71	215
Renewals to keep a firearm/s	-	20,714
Requests for purchase of firearms (new and second hand)	2,460	-
Bird ringing permits	-	16

From the 2,460 requests for purchases of firearms during 2006 indicated above, a total of 1,598 were applications for purchases of firearms from dealers. The Weapons Office also processed 159 dealer-to-dealer transfer applications as well as 30 applications for hunting trips.

This office is also responsible to ensure that correct amounts of explosive materials are used at hard stone quarries. To ensure that this activity is well carried out, regular consultation is kept with the Planning Authority. Officers from this department are present during all blasting operations carried out in local hard stone quarries or on construction projects which require the blasting of rocks. They are responsible to escort and control the issue and use of explosives when such operations take place.

The Explosives Committee which is composed of a member of the Armed Forces, a member of the Works Department and a member of the Police met on several occasions to deal with issues of fireworks and blasting operations. The Officer in charge of the Special Branch serves also on the Fireworks Committee, which is also responsible to check issues relating to the letting off of fireworks from certain sites.

Courses for the issue of Licences "A" to manufacture fireworks and Licences "B" to assist in the manufacture of fireworks were held during the same year.

Airport Police Station

The Special Branch is also responsible for the public areas at the Malta International Airport. It is also responsible for all investigations of incidents reported within the airport area. Such duties are directed by the Officer in charge of the airport Police Station.

Duties at the station concern normal public order duties, prevention of crime and investigation of offences. For this purpose several inspections and various road blocks were organised. The airport police are also responsible for the running of the custody centre at the MIA.

Various offences relating to traffic contraventions were dealt with and regular patrol is secured at the airport. A number of traffic offence tickets were issued by the airport police apart from towing incidents that were also executed by the same service.

The officers at the airport are also deployed on duties where special skills are needed to cover protective security measures during the use of the airport by distinctive visitors leaving or arriving in Malta. The following are the figures of activities carried out by the Malta International Airport Police Station.

MIA Police Station Activities - 2006		
		Total
Traffic offence tickets	250	250
False documents detected		
<i>Visas/stamps</i>	5	
<i>Passports</i>	47	
<i>Others</i>	19	71
Inspections	420	
Roadblocks	136	556
Damaged mail	7	7
Escorts of valuable cargo	609	609

Europol Liaison Officer

Strategic

The strategic portion of the work involves the representation of Malta in a number of boards and meetings, the preparation of position and briefing notes for other officers and for MJHA, together with other related work to ensure that Malta's interests are safeguarded in the different forums which convene at EPOL. The Head of the Security Branch is usually the sole Maltese representative on the EPOL Management Board, HENU meeting, ICT Programme Board, Financial Committee, Security Committee, Personnel Experts Committee, ICT Programme Board and various other expert meetings. In addition to the above, the Head of the Security Branch was also detailed to participate in EPOL's Strategic Committee, in the Friends of the Presidency on the Future of EPOL Meetings in Brussels, and in the EPOL Council Working Party in Brussels.

Operational

The operational aspect of the work involves information exchanges between Malta, EPOL specialised units, AWFs and other member states (MS). This is a multi-directional communication set-up which involves considerable work in servicing requests from other MS, EPOL specialised units and AWFs, whilst dealing with queries from responsible units in Malta. In this latter instance, any requests from Malta have to be converted into info-exs according to a standardised format using the IE system. The Head of Security is also the sole Maltese officer with access to EPOL's IS to date. Hence the ELO is also inputting and maintaining data belonging to Malta in this system.

Administrative

The administrative functions involve normal office administration, system back-up, filing, document preparation (for meetings etc) and also drive administration (ie MT's portions of the P and G Drives at EPOL that are used for electronic filing of all documents etc.).

This section was also responsible for consolidating Malta Liaison Bureau's position at EPOL. This entails establishing and maintaining contacts on an ongoing basis, since this may be deemed as an essential part of liaison work in the field of law enforcement co-operation. In 2006, the Head of Security Branch was also elected as one out of four ELO representatives for the rest of the ELO Community.

Europol Liaison Officers attended 105 various meetings during 2006.

During the year under review, 39 cases in Info-Ex were initiated on behalf of Malta, a total of 1,150 Info-Ex Transactions (replies sent to other MS) were sent on behalf of Malta, and 1,063 Info-Ex Transactions (requests received from other entities – EPOL Units, AWFs or other MS) were received, processed and forwarded to Malta for further action on behalf of Malta.

Each of these requests represents a case (just like a separate file except that all is handled electronically at Europol).

DISTRICT POLICING (REGIONS A & B)

Crime prevention and the preservation of law and order, which are the principal roles of the Police, were maintained. The following are the results achieved during 2006 by the District Police from both Regions:

Summary Cases brought before the Court

District	No of Cases	No of Persons	Crimes (Under 6 months)	Contraventions
1	474	501	189	914
2	354	383	305	450
3	636	650	140	722
4	525	596	93	668
5	552	715	157	805
6	532	573	400	676
6A	560	628	316	735
7	742	847	325	1,414
8	513	590	154	720
9	1,408	1,619	1,478	1,317
10	2,328	2,466	470	734
Total	8,624	9,568	4,027	9,155

The following table gives the number of traffic offence tickets issued and number of vehicles towed as well as respite warrants executed and lost and found property report in the respective districts during the year:

District	Traffic Offence Tickets	Vehicles Towed	Respite Warrants		Articles		
			No.	Amount (Lm)	Found	Lost	Restored
1	3,156	45	50	5,455	39	1,000	12
2	1,285	10	74	14,493	20	526	12
3	730	7	68	6,593	18	724	15
4	2,647	10	52	5,587	7	802	1
5	2,129	-	91	15,727	29	759	9
6	1,792	76	44	4,427	90	1,879	-
6A	6,773	-	45	9,475	35	1,150	-
7	7,914	9	95	9,658	81	1,251	-
8	1,425	12	105	14,935	53	1,314	-
9	925	23	57	10,167	145	2,027	-
10	2,087	8	39	3,365	55	753	6
	30,863	200	720	99,882	572	12,185	55

Officers from Districts and Specialised Units held a total of 106 meetings with local councils during 2006.

Crimes punishable with imprisonment over 6 months

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Crimes/Offences solved	
Abandonment/Neglect – of child/children	2
Abduction	4
Abuse of telecommunication	1
Abuse of Public Authority	1
Accomplice: Escape from Custody	1
Accomplice: In corruption	1
Arms Ordinance: Possession of Firearm w/o licence	87
Arms Ordinance: Possession of ammunitions w/o permit	1
Arms Ordinance: Possession of Pointed Instrument w/o permit	2
Arms Ordinance: Discharge/use of firearm	1
Anonymous – Phone Calls	6
Fraud: False declaration	32
Fraud: False particulars	1
Fraud: Copyright act	30
Fraud: Customs Ord. VAT	44
Gambling: Football pools	1
Gambling: Clandestine Lotto	6
Harassment	1
Hold up	14
Homicide: Attempted	22
Homicide: Wilful	2
Homicide: Involuntary	4

Arrest: Illegal	55
Arrest: Resist	6
Arson	7
Breach of Employment Regulations: To employ foreigners	37
Breach of Employment Regulations: Keeping commercial activity w/o licence	4
Breach of Animal Rights Act: Cruelty	3
Breach of Animal Rights Act: Keeping of animals w/o licence	1
Breach of Animal Rights Act: Importation of Protected Species	1
Breaches of: Financial Institution Act	3
Breaches of: Marriage Act	1
Breaches of: Care Order Act	1
Breaches of: Gaming Act	22
Breaches of: Bail Conditions	16
Breaches of: Suspended Sentence	19
Breaches of: Conditional Order	1
Breaches of: External Act	2
Breaches of: Guard and Local Wardens Act	1
Breaches of: Freezing Order	1
Breaches of: Probation Order w/o Officer	7
Breaches of: Probation Order with Officer	20
Breaches of: Passport Act	1
Breaches of: Money Laundering Regulations	5
Bodily Harm: Attempted unspecified	5
Bodily Harm: Attempted grievous	21
Bodily Harm: Grievous voluntary	126
Bodily Harm: Grievous involuntary	12
Bodily Harm: Grievous involuntary – MVA	9
Bodily Harm: Slight involuntary	6
Bodily Harm: Slight voluntary	49
Bigamy	1
Bribery	23
Bribery Attempted	1
Conspiracy	3
Complicity	6
Corruption	10
Crime Against Public Peace: Disobeying lawful orders	5
Crime Against Public Peace: Disturbance	8
Cultural Property Act: Damages	6
Damage: Attempted Wilful	2
Damage: Involuntary	3
Damage: Voluntary	338
Damage: Fire (Vehicle)	7
Defamation	2
Disclosing of professional secrecy	1
Drugs: Possession	471
Drugs: Trafficking	117
Escape from custody	2
Evasion of: Duty	10
Evidence: Fabrication	7
Evidence: Destruction of	5
External Transactions Act: Failed to declare over the limit currency	4
Extortion: Money	3
False Report	21

Homicide: Involuntary through road accident	3
Human Trafficking	1
Intellectual property rights	11
Intimidation	2
Malta Maritime Regulations: Breach of Regulations	3
Malversation of Public Officer: Embezzlement	7
Motor Vehicle Regulations - Driving Vehicle: w/o driving licence	25
Motor Vehicle Regulations - Driving Vehicle: w/o vehicle insurance	28
Motor Vehicle Regulations - Driving Vehicle: False number plates	8
Motor Vehicle Regulations - Driving Vehicle: Failed to effect transfer	1
Motor Vehicle Regulations - Driving Vehicle: Failed to report road accident	1
Motor Vehicle Regulations - Driving Vehicle: Driving while intoxicated	1
Motor Vehicle Regulations - Driving Vehicle: Dangerous driving	7
Misappropriation	46
Obstruction of public officers	14
Organised crime	1
Perjury: False swearing	4
Personification: Public officer	3
Pretended Rights	2
Private Violence	6
Prostitution: Soliciting and loitering	259
Prostitution: Prostitution, living off	7
Prostitution: Compelled for prostitution – of age	2
Prostitution: Keeping a brothel	52
Prostitution: Conspiracy in trafficking – white slavery	1
Prostitution: Trafficking – white slavery – under age	4
Receiving stolen property	17
Recidivist	101
Sexual Offences: Child pornography	9
Sexual Offences: Pornography - distribution	10
Sexual Offences: Indecency/Against morals	62
Sexual Offences: Sexual harassment	3
Sexual Offences: Defilement of minor	36
Sexual Offences: Rape	16
Sexual Offences: Attempted indecent assault	5
Sexual Offences: Violent indecent assault	19
Simulation of offence	119
Theft: Attempted	51
Theft: General	135
Theft: Of Services	1
Theft: Currency	5
Theft: From beaches	15
Theft: Government building	6
Theft: Commercial premises	17
Theft: From schools	3
Theft: From construction site	1
Theft: From garage	4
Theft: From residence	69
Theft: From rural rooms	4
Theft: From retail outlet	111
Theft: From religious sites	3
Theft: From vehicle	94
Theft: Of vehicle	42

False accusations: Calumnious accusations	3	Theft: Of electricity	11
Falsification/Forgery: General	26	Theft: From factories	8
Falsification/Forgery: Passport	6	Theft: Of mobile phone	8
Falsification/Forgery: Passport use of	9	Theft: Of fuel	2
Falsification/Forgery: Immigration Stamps	7	Theft: Of sea craft	1
Falsification/Forgery: Of vehicle licence	1	Theft: From sea craft	3
Falsification/Forgery: Of vehicle plates nos.	3	Theft: Pick pocketing	1
Falsification/Forgery: Of public documents	5	Theft: Snatch and grab	27
Falsification/Forgery: Counterfeit goods	10	Theft: From bar	9
Falsification/Forgery: Counterfeit money	21	Trading in influence	1
Falsification/Forgery: Falsification of document – use of	34	Trafficking: Illegal immigrants	7
Falsification/Forgery: Falsification of document	42	Threats: Unspecified	25
Fear of Harm/Violence: Bullying	2	Usury	6
Failed to notify authority: Of stolen property	1	Unlawful acts: Distribution of medicines	1
Failed to produce documents: Passport	4	Unlawful acts: Possession of article	1
Fraud: Unspecified	86	Unlawful acts: Restricted/protected area	8
Fraud: Fraudulent gains	13	Unauthorised sale of: DVD - pornographic	1
Fraud: Commercial	5	Violation: Of sacred places - church	3
Fraud: Insurance	4	Violation: Of property	2
Fraud: Computer Misuse	6	Violence: Against public officer – bodily harm	96
Fraud: Credit Card	7	Violence: Against public officer – vilification and threats	53
Total			3,788

Distribution of Solved Offences				
<i>District/Branch</i>	<i>No. of Offences</i>		<i>District/Branch</i>	<i>No. of Offences</i>
District 1	42		District 9	110
District 2	72		District 10	84
District 3	71		ALE	9
District 4	35		Special Branch	129
District 5	79		Vice Squad	564
District 6	130		Economic Crime Unit	408
District 6A	127		Money Laundering Unit	22
District 7	110		CID	1,133
District 8	106		Drug Squad	558
Total				3,789

Solved Cases and Offenders		
<i>District/Branch</i>	<i>No of Cases</i>	<i>No. of Persons</i>
District 1	27	39
District 2	48	46
District 3	42	64
District 4	20	22
District 5	34	36
District 6	106	108
District 6A	66	75
District 7	63	104
District 8	87	113
District 9	97	146
District 10	44	34
Administrative Law Enforcement Unit	6	9
Special Branch	53	129
Vice Squad	325	410
Economic Crime Unit	345	408
Money Laundering Unit	8	22
Criminal Investigation Department	428	606
Drug Squad	461	558
Total	2,260	2,929

Arrestment of offences		
<i>District/Branch</i>	<i>No of Cases</i>	<i>No. of Persons</i>
District 1	34	42
District 2	35	46
District 3	56	65
District 4	40	45
District 5	81	116
District 6	105	123
District 6A	61	71
District 7	48	66
District 8	74	113
District 9	129	140
District 10	34	58
Criminal Investigation Department	275	374
Economic Crime Unit	295	356
Money Laundering Unit	8	15
Vice Squad	325	410
Special Branch	49	77
Administrative Law Enforcement Unit	5	6
Drug Squad	533	558
Total	2,187	2,681

JOHN RIZZO
Commissioner of Police

Government Property Division

Directorate General

INTRODUCTION

The Government Property Division (GPD) falls within the remit of the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs and is responsible for the management of government's immovable estate.

The mission of the GPD is to promote and maintain the highest and best use of Government's immovable estate and to ensure an equitable process for the acquisition of property that may be required for a public purpose.

The GPD incorporates the Land Department, the Estate Management Department and the Joint Office. Whereas each of the three departments has particular objectives to achieve within a specific remit, the GPD acts as the co-ordinator of all operations whilst ensuring smooth management through the provision of the necessary financial and administrative backup.

The GPD is housed at the Auberge de Bavière. However, for lack of space, the Joint Office is located in Sa Maison. Plans are underway for the Joint Office to move to the GPD Annex in Marsamxetto Street, Valletta in the first quarter of 2007 in order to be closer to the Auberge de Bavière. This would enable better co-ordination and facilitate communication within the Division. In fact, there shall be only one Registry for all departments in the GPD portfolio and only one Revenue Collection Unit for the collection of rent payments and other revenue due on government property. Similarly, there shall be only one Customer Care Unit for the whole Division. The Enforcement Unit and the Legal Unit under the remit of the Land Department will continue to cater for the requirements of all GPD departments.

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION – 2006 DEVELOPMENTS

Tenth Anniversary Publication

This year, the Government Property Division celebrated the tenth anniversary of its setting up by the publication of a dossier as part of the ninth issue of the Ministry's information magazine. Articles highlighted the progress made in the management of government property backed by pertinent statistics with regard to publication of tenders and contracts, reconciliation of value of property originating under the 1991 State-Church Agreement, payment of acquired property and revenue of the GPD. This progress could only be registered through the enactment of new laws and amendments to existing ones as well as through the effective use of information technology that facilitated work processes. Finally, focus was put on the refurbishment works being carried out on the Auberge de Bavière, as part of the exercise to safeguard Malta's heritage for future generations. Distinctive guests led by the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs were invited to commemorate the occasion and to extend their appreciation and well-deserved thanks to GPD staff whose hard work made the GPD a success story.

Quality Service Charter

The GPD is continuously striving to strengthen its commitment to provide the best possible service to its clients within the ambit of the relevant laws and policies. In this respect, a Quality Service Charter has been launched internally within the Division with the direct participation of all the departments under its responsibility. The main objective of the Charter is to provide a brief overview of all legislation and

policies that regulate GPD operations and to highlight the quality of the services and standards offered within set timeframes in order to raise the standards of the services given to the general public. The QSC should act as an impetus for all staff members to further strengthen their commitment to carry out their responsibilities in a diligent and friendly manner. It is envisaged that the GPD Quality Service Charter will be officially launched after the relocation of the Joint Office in 2007.

EURO Changeover in the Public Sector

In line with Government's commitment to enter the Eurozone, the GPD continued to participate in the preparation and implementation of the Euro Changeover process. The GPD Plan was regularly updated as preparatory work got under way in line with the task list initially compiled to identify the undertakings that the GPD needs to conduct in order to ensure its euro compliance. MITTS has been contracted to undertake the euro compliance of the existing databases including dual display of currencies until € Day, whilst hard copies of documents have been amended to include dual display as from 19 February 2007. As a revenue-earning Division, it is being ensured that the changeover process is a smooth transition in compliance with official guidelines.

Better Regulations

In line with 2006 Budget Speech, the GPD carried out an evaluation exercise of all existing regulations, tariffs and fees within its portfolio. Seven proposals were initially submitted for the elimination, simplification and/or consolidation of burdensome regulations, administrative procedures or fees. These included amendments to legislation, policies and processes. Four of these were identified and endorsed by Cabinet as part of the Action Plan for Simplification. By this time, the Commissioner of Land Ordinance had been revised to empower the Commissioner of Land to delegate certain powers. Moreover, a policy was introduced, giving evictees one month's notice to vacate property prior to execution of eviction except in circumstances dealing with urgent action or security matters. The two pending proposals on the review of the Disposal of Government Land Act regulating the disposal of non-residential property and the revision of the process to promote and market tenders are in hand.

Monitoring of Projects

Following the re-introduction of a project monitoring system within the MJHA, the GPD submitted eight projects that are in various stages of implementation. These included initiatives under the Agricultural Land Scheme, the Transfer of Residential Property to Housing Authority, the Land & Estate Management Information System, the Mapscanning Project, the Major Rent Defaulters Scheme and the Registration of Properties/Collection of Rent Arrears and the Sale of ground rent/rents of properties administered by Joint Office. Progress on these initiatives is submitted regularly.

Attendance Verification System

As part of a ministerial initiative, the GPD has drafted a plan to introduce an Attendance Verification System at its offices at the Auberge de Bavière and at its annex housing the Joint Office. Following considerable research carried out online, a number of products were identified to answer to the GPD's special concerns, namely the provision of a thumb reader that can be integrated into existing time/attendance, HR and accounting systems, that is flexible enough to cater for employees performing duties outside the office and that is least invasive in order to protect the historical importance of the buildings in question.

Data Protection Audit

A Data Protection Audit was carried out by MITTS during November and December in the different departments of the GPD. An initial draft report has been submitted and a number of issues have been and

are being addressed as a result. It is envisaged that the final audit will be presented in early 2007 incorporating all sections of the Division including the Joint Office.

Rehabilitation Works at the Auberge De Bavière and the Ex Tal-Pilar School

Plans and permits for the continuation of refurbishment works at the Auberge have been finalised and preparation for the issue of tenders for flooring and some structural work are in hand. Meanwhile, works such as the cleaning and pointing of the first floor corridor and six rooms together with the restoration of windows and doors are being carried out in-house.

Works on the Annex to the Auberge were started this year and GPD personnel were involved in the removal of all electricity, water and telephone installations, plastering and pointing of all walls and ceilings, refurbishment of all doors and windows which are in the region of 62 items. Electricity and water installation tenders have been awarded and works are being carried out by contractors under GPD supervision. Data and telephony installations have yet to be started.

Permits for the construction of an electricity substation in West Street have been issued, but due to sub-floor composition, changes in plans and subsequent request for MEPA reconsideration have been submitted. GPD is still awaiting the outcome in order to issue tender for the necessary civil works.

Information Technology

During 2006, GPD's efforts for modernisation included a number of IT initiatives.

In accordance with the guidelines and targets set by the National Euro Changeover Committee (NECC), work got under way to enhance GPD information systems to render them euro compliant. The Land Management System was initially targeted since much of the data maintained therein together with the computation aspects of the software will bring about high impact by the adoption of euro.

The Land Management System (LMS) Upgrading Project was undertaken as a safeguard against the lack of Government/MITTS expertise in Novell operating systems. This was seen as a potentially high risk issue in the event of sudden hardware failure and the concomitant inability to restore the system. The chosen solution was to migrate the application from a Novell based operating system to a Windows based operating system that, apart from providing higher security levels, also allows improved configuration of menu-systems and user access. Project was completed in March 2006.

The Land Cheque Printing System upgrade was undertaken to transfer the system to a Windows XP Operating System to improve both the security of data in the system and the printing of cheques. This has also enabled the extension of the system to have the facility to produce cheques paying out the interest owed on the compensation due. The system is currently also being enhanced to cater for euro dual display and it is envisaged that implementation will commence in January 2007.

The MapScanning Project continued during 2006 by scanning images of various GPD maps which will eventually be integrated in the GIS Systems.

All GPD PCs including the applications, directories, permissions and groups found on the GPD servers (OALANDS and OAJOINTOFF) were checked by MITTS for the initialisation of the EMA Project which consists of the transfer and centralisation of all GPD applications on MITTS' servers.

During the year, new equipment was purchased to replace obsolete tools including PCs, printers and scanners. A number of PCs, including their operating system software, were also upgraded to current versions.

The IT Inventory consisting of all IT equipment being used by GPD staff was finalised.

Human Resources

The staff complement at the GPD is decreasing from year to year. In fact, the total of 156 officers (December 2004) went down to 146 (December 2006). Eight of these are ex-Malta Post Office employees whilst nine are IPSL employees deployed with the Division and two from the Local Government Department.

In the meantime, in order to strengthen the somewhat depleted GPD human resources and following calls for application, three Junior Legal Officers were recruited, whilst the fourth will be recruited in early 2007. A call for a notary is being processed. However, the call for the appointment of Assistant Director (Services) was not successful. Two casual substitute clerks were recruited to replace two officers on unpaid study leave. Calls of interest were published to engage the services of lawyers and architects in order to accelerate the processing of work at the GPD.

Gozo Branch

For the convenience of Gozo residents, the GPD continued to provide personalised service to clients through its branch in Gozo where rents, ground rents, and *qbiela* may be paid. The Gozo office also provides customer care services.

Financial Matters

Funds, allocated to the GPD under the Budget Estimates, are managed with care and due diligence. All reporting is done on a regular basis including accrual accounting reports. Besides the day-to-day running expenses, the Accounts Section settled all bills related to court registry fees, research, land registration, contracts, electricity and water supply (value of Lm90,000), burthens (221 in no.) and refunds of overpaid ground rent.

Health and Safety

Health and safety issues are an ongoing process and annual updating of the risk assessment is being carried out in order to continue building on past initiatives. GPD staff members are regularly notified of any course that is available. All staff members are encouraged to attend.

Preparedness for Pandemic Influenza

The GPD Contingency Plan was drafted and a 'Pandemic Focal Point' appointed as part of the Ministry's initiative to combat the pandemic flu when and if it hits Malta some time in the future. The scope of this exercise is to take all necessary measures to prevent the dispersal of the virus and to contain it once it spreads, whilst ensuring continuity of the Division's essential operations. From time to time, information leaflets on the subject are distributed to all members of staff.

Green Initiative

The GPD continues to support and promote the Green Initiative within the MJHA. The Green Travel Plan, based on first-hand data gathered through the carrying out of a survey among GPD employees, was finalised. Waste is being separated and disposed of according to guidelines in collaboration with WasteServ. Environment stickers to save water and electricity can be seen in prominent places and auto-spouts purchased.

JOHN SCIBERRAS

Director General (Government Property)

Government Property Division

Estate Management Department

DEPARTMENTAL OVERVIEW

The EMD's mission is to help the Government Property Division shape and deliver Government's immovable property agenda by providing quality property-related advice and services. EMD helps the Government achieve its policy objectives by contributing to three key outcomes:

- Improved and more efficient property operations
- Sustaining Government finances
- Sustaining Government projects and initiatives.

PROPERTY OPERATIONS

Property Records

The update and maintenance of government property records is a fundamental task carried out by the EMD. This comprises of several property datasets including a textual database of Government-owned property (excluding ex-Church property records which are maintained by Joint Office), deed packets as well as a number of map-sets. These records are an important information source for such government projects as SmartCity, beach management, privatisation, housing, roads etc.

Property Information Requests

As part of its role in maintaining the property terrier, the EMD provides property related information to a varied list of clients that ranges from private individuals and companies to government ministries, departments, agencies and authorities. Information is typically required in connection with the possible disposal of such property and in relation to government projects and initiatives. During 2006, the EMD handled over 3,600 such requests/reports. In addition, the EMD carried out 620 property inspections, apart from giving assistance to the Land Department in 61 court cases. 250 property status reports were also drawn up.

Property Plans

The preparation of property plans and drawings is an essential element in the management of government immovable property and the maintenance of a property terrier. The EMD utilises a custom-developed GIS-based Property Drawing System for the preparation of all property drawings. This system also interfaces with specific off-the-shelf computer aided design software to facilitate layout drawings. During 2006, the EMD put up a total of 1,150 property drawings in connection with leases, sales and permits over government-owned property. In addition, 16,000 copies of plans were provided by the GPD in relation to such matters as Parliamentary Resolutions, land registrations, tenders etc.

Map-scanning Project

This project involves the electronic scanning of a number of map-sets that hold information regarding Government's real estate interests. Each map-set involves thousands of property parcels each of which has to be captured, checked, split up as necessary and transferred onto an electronic geographic information

system (GIS) that is to be developed. Due to funding and resource restrictions this project is planned to be implemented over a period of years. The Map scanning project is aimed at providing the protection of unique property records and the removal of process bottlenecks through the provision of simultaneous electronic access to map records. During 2006 progress on this project was slowed due to insufficiency of funds.

Protection of Government's Title to Property

Under the provisions of the Land Registration Act, the first registration claimant to a property obtains a pre-emptive advantage over other pretenders. To safeguard Government's rights, the EMD checks every single application for property registration made with the Land Registry. During 2006, about 960 such applications were checked and, where applicable, the necessary cautions raised. The Department also investigated and resolved 71 cases of cautions raised against it by private parties. To further secure Government's title to its real estate, the EMD also undertakes the laborious process of registering Government's title via *ad hoc* applications to the Land Registry. During 2006, some 1,600 land registration plans were prepared of which the EMD registered a total land area of 2,557,000 square metres.

Operational Streamlining

The EMD's efforts to ensure an effective public service delivery are ongoing. During 2006 the Department has streamlined a number of operational processes including the transfer of government-owned residential property to the Housing Authority and the issue of permits for temporary activities. It is calculated that efficiency in these cases has improved by a minimum of 100%.

SUSTAINING GOVERNMENT FINANCES

Sale of Property

As part of its business development process the EMD continually strives for the identification of property that may be issued for sale at competitive prices. During 2006 a number of properties were referred to the Land Department for sale through tenders or redemption. The EMD also played a substantial role in the successful sale by Government of the Holiday Inn complex at Tigné. Total land sales from Government property during 2006 amounted to Lm20 million (excluding sale of ex-church property).

Property Leasing

EMD also sustains government finances by processing and approving the disposal of government-owned land and buildings via emphyteutical grants, leases and temporary permits – with the final legal document being issued by the Land Department. This involves such properties as land, shops, garages, stores, mobile kiosks, filming, tables and chairs permits etc. During 2006 the EMD processed 96 cases for temporary activities on government land, 500 permits for repairs/works and 78 tables and chairs permits. In addition the EMD also approved another 140 properties for leasing and emphyteutical grants. During 2006 new leases were effected for a total yearly rent in excess of Lm150,000.

SUSTAINING GOVERNMENT PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

Devolution of Property to Local Councils

The EMD's task is to assess the devolution proposal, draw up necessary plans and *ad hoc* conditions and then refer the matter to the Land Department for finalisation of the contract of transfer. During 2006 the Government Property Division concluded the devolution/leasing agreements for six properties as approved by EMD. These include two properties at Cospicua and one each at Dingli, Gharb, Sannat and Xewkija.

Property Expropriation Assistance for Infrastructural Projects

The EMD also handles requests made by government departments for the expropriation of private property for public purposes, mainly in connection with infrastructural projects. The EMD collects all relevant technical data, takes corrective measures as appropriate, liaisons with the sponsoring department and prepares the necessary plans for the expropriation. The EMD also provides technical assistance to the Land Department in acquisition cases taken in front of the Land Arbitration Board. During 2006 EMD's efforts enabled the Land Department to issue 62 new cases of expropriation.

In 2006 the EMD approved the release back to the original owners of 14,000 square metres of land that had been expropriated but was never made use of by Government.

Special Projects

During 2006 the EMD continued to play an active role in special projects sponsored by Central Government including the Bugibba Perched Beach Project, Fort Cambridge Development Project, Mgarr Harbour Project, Site for US Embassy, Enemalta Land and SmartCity Project. EMD's involvement relates to the identification of land boundaries, status and burdens, participation in the preparation of disposal conditions, preparation of plans and in some cases provision of final documentation.

Land Transfer to Government-Owned Entities

Other major projects that involved the EMD during 2006 were those related to the transfer of government-owned properties to government-owned entities. These included the transfer of several parcels of land to Enemalta for substation purposes, as well as the donation to the same corporation of the installations at Xewkija, Qajjenza and Korradino.

Facilitation of Home Ownership Schemes

As in previous years the EMD continued to sustain Government's efforts to promote home ownership by authorising the transfer to the Housing Authority of 450 properties for eventual sale to tenants. The EMD also issued 11 objections to sale requests by the Housing Authority – normally in view of heritage value of subject property or other estate management considerations militating against sale.

Agricultural Land Scheme

This scheme was a corporate initiative that enabled cultivators of government-owned agricultural land to register for the possibility of acquiring a new title to the land even where occupation was irregular. During 2006 the EMD processed and approved for leasing 650 applications.

Green Initiatives

The EMD has also contributed to Government's green initiatives by reducing the use of paper and fuel particularly by resorting to the use of technological innovations such as the use of orthophotos to reduce the need for site inspections and hence fuel consumption.

Support Services

The EMD also provides support services by providing property related information to such government bodies as the Planning Authority, Works Division, Department of Social Housing, Land Registry, MIMCOL, MIP, Malta Transport Authority, Malta Maritime Authority and Housing Authority.

JOSEPH CARUANA
Director (Estate Management)

Government Property Division Land Department

INTRODUCTION

The Land Department's role is the legal aspect of government property management. This means that after the Estate Management Department or Joint Office has decided on the best possible use for a particular property, the issue is taken over by the Land Department for the actual disposal of the property under the procedures permitted by the Disposal of Government Land Act.

In general terms, the formal disposal of government property requires either the issue of a call for tenders or else an *ad hoc* Parliamentary Resolution. It is the Land Department's task to prepare tender documents, publish them and award the disposal. Likewise *ad hoc* Parliamentary Resolutions are prepared by the Department. Subsequent to the disposal of a property through lease agreements/contracts, the Land Department is then responsible for the follow-up and enforcement of any conditions imposed on the transferee. These include the payment of rent and the proper maintenance of the property, but may also contain other special conditions such as the development of structural improvements within specified time limits. The finalisation of contracts also includes those related to the acquisition of private property for a public purpose under the auspices of the Land Acquisition (Public Purpose) Ordinance. Indeed the expropriation of private property is a primary task of the Land Department, one which enables Government to carry out major infrastructure works and other projects of benefit to Maltese society.

The Land Department is organisationally divided up into two branches, namely the Enforcement Branch and the Contracts Branch; between them, these cater for the wide ranging roles entrusted to the Department. The former is responsible for all enforcement measures required to better manage government property, whilst the latter is in charge of the formal requirements of leasing or selling/purchasing property and the finalisation of related contracts.

ENFORCEMENT

The enforcement of contractual conditions is essential if property management is to be given any significance. Within this aspect, the very small number of Enforcement Officers carries out site checks to ensure that conditions of lease are being honoured. Non-compliance is met by counter measures to ensure that defaulters are brought back on track. These measures include formal warnings, the issue of prohibitory injunctions and also eviction proceedings. In this regard, Chapter 228 of the Laws of Malta - Land (Compulsory Eviction) Act – gives the Land Department extensive powers to evict persons who occupy government property without title. This power is used with caution but the Land Department is committed to ensure that government property is not abused of.

The Enforcement Section incorporates within it the collection of rent due on leased property. The non-payment of rent is monitored through periodical invoices and also through individual demand letters. Persistent non-payment leads to judicial action that may include executive warrants, the termination of leases and, in the more serious cases, eventual eviction.

During 2006, over 44,000 payments, which represent 55% of the total payments of rent, were effected at local councils, while 704 payments, which represent 15.8% of the total payments, were made through the GPD's website (www.gpd.gov.mt). Clients have three options for the payment of rent:- at the Department

by cheque or bank draft, at the local councils by cash, cheque or bank draft and from their homes by credit card through the GPD's website.

CONTRACTS BRANCH

The role of this Branch is the formalisation of any disposal or acquisition of property. The Disposal of Government Land Act stipulates that government property can generally be disposed of either through tenders or through a special Resolution of the House of Representatives.

The publication of tenders necessitates continual liaison with the Estate Management Department and the Joint Office to ensure that the appropriate conditions are set out in the tender. To ensure maximum publicity to tenders, relative adverts are made on a number of local newspapers apart from the Government Gazette. Transparency is ensured by opening all tender documents in public.

Government has for decades made use of the provisions of the Land Acquisition (Public Purpose) Ordinance (LAO) to enable it to take over private property without having finalised acquisition proceedings. The lack of property ownership information in Malta makes the whole acquisition process cumbersome and time consuming. It is one thing declaring a property to be required for a public purpose under the aegis of the LAO, but a completely different matter to actually enter into a deed of transfer. The whole process formerly involved the identification of owners (perhaps the most difficult part of the whole process), their root of title, the issue of a 'notice to treat' to offer a specific price for the property, litigation in front of the Land Arbitration Board, agreement on the compensation due and the final settlement through the publication of an acquisition contract. Upon publication of the contract, Government must pay damages based at 5% per annum on the price from date of taking over of the property up to the date of publication of contract. The damages are calculated on the price specified in the notice to treat, which price is estimated on the market value at the time the notice to treat is issued. Due to delay in establishing the root of title, the price of property, inclusive of damages, has through the years resulted in outstanding exorbitant acquisition debts.

Since 1994, the Department has limited the growth of the acquisition debt by requiring government departments that originate the need for the acquisition, to provide up front the full estimated value of the effected property. This ensures the payment on demand for any acquired property.

In its efforts to speed up the acquisitions process, the Land Department had, between 1996 and 2002, farmed out to lawyers in private practice the task of carrying out legal researches to prove the root of title. This has had positive results by reducing related time wastage but still the establishing of the root of title depended on third parties claiming to be the owners in making available the required documents in order to prove their title. The 5% damages was guaranteed and third parties took advantage by prolonging submission of the required information in order to benefit from the ever increasing property market prices on which the 5% damages per annum are payable. Lack of funds and lack of human resources have also contributed to this situation in that the department was constrained to limit the issue of notice to treats since once a notice to treat is served, payment must then be made. However in an attempt to extinguish the accumulation of the acquisition debts, during the last five years, additional funds have been provided and between 1999 and 2006 over Lm29.4 million have been paid for expropriated property.

In terms of the Land Acquisition (Public Purpose) Ordinance, as amended in 2002, the value is part of the President's Declaration and Government becomes the owner immediately the President's Declaration is published in the Government Gazette. Within a period of 15 days the Department deposits the value in an interest bearing account at a bank. It would then be up to the owners to prove title to the property. When the owners prove their title, the Department concludes the contract and pays the money deposited plus accrued interest. At the same time, the owners may still proceed to the Land Arbitration Board to contest the price.

In accordance with the provisions of these amendments, the Department can also (a) process past outstanding acquisitions in the manner set out above thereby stopping the accumulative 5% damages, (b) purchase property acquired under the title of *possession and use* by capitalising the yearly rent at 1 % and (c) purchase property acquired under title of *public tenure* by capitalising the yearly ground rent at 1.4%.

These amendments which came into force in March 2003 will not only minimise the expropriation debt but will enable government to draw up the long outstanding HOS plots contracts and dispose of residences within Housing Estates constructed on land still under acquisition. Under these amendments a total of 122 bank accounts have been opened in 2006. The total sum deposited amounts to Lm904,767.

2006 HIGHLIGHTS

Revenue Collection

During 2006, no less than 67,000 rent invoices, 250 judicial letters, and 65 lease termination warnings were issued to ensure timely recovery of rent dues, also necessitating telephone contacts and on site collections by the Department's enforcement officers. About 75 repayment agreements were also negotiated with defaulters. This has resulted in a total revenue in 2006 of Lm8,712,885 excluding sales.

Evictions

These constitute a strong deterrent against abuse of government property. During 2006, a total of 95 evictions were carried out with the full co-operation and assistance of the Commissioner of Police, the Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure and the Malta Environment and Planning Authority when demolition of property was involved. These included about 50 evictions carried out in connection with the Smartcity Project.

Tenders, Leases and Sales

During 2006, the Land Department advertised a total of 246 tenders for the lease of government property resulting in 104 lease agreements and 103 contracts. 270 encroachment permits were issued. These included permits for mobile kiosks, luna parks, circus and the holding of activities in various localities. 598 lease agreements for the lease of agricultural land made in terms of the Agricultural Scheme were concluded. The Land Department also completed the sale of government land/property resulting in a revenue for 2006 of Lm24,706,869. Government-owned land valued at Lm129,000 has been exchanged with private-owned property expropriated in terms of the Land Acquisition (Public Purposes) Ordinance.

Acquisition

In 2006, the Department finalised a number of acquisition deeds paying a total of Lm2,746,773 to owners of expropriated property. 62 new President's Declarations for the expropriation of land mainly for road formation being financed by the Italian Protocol have been issued. 62 President's Declarations of past outstanding acquisitions in order to compensate the owners in accordance with the amendments made to the Land Acquisition (Public Purpose) Ordinance (Chapter 88) have also been issued. 24 President Declarations for the termination of agricultural leases comprising of a total area of 88,756 square metres of government-owned land required for projects, have been made.

Releases

In 2006, a total of 14,434 square metres of land in various localities formerly acquired in virtue of the Land Acquisition (Public Purpose) Ordinance (Chapter 88) was released to the private owners.

Special Projects

The Land Department in conjunction with the Estate Management Department has had an important role in the drawing up of conditions and the preparation of plans of a number of major projects. In 2006, the Department has been actively participating in the Smartcity project. Other projects which the Land Department was involved in were the Tigné Holiday Inn Site and the Bugibba Perched Beach projects.

Free of Charge Services

During 2006, the Land Department continued to provide, free of charge, agency services to the Housing Authority, the Sports Council and the St John's Co-Cathedral Foundation. As part of these services, the total sum collected on behalf of the Housing Authority was Lm108,553. The sum of Lm81,044 was collected as rent for sports facilities on behalf of the Sports Council and the sum of Lm8,420 was collected as rent on behalf of the St John Co-Cathedral Foundation.

CONCLUSION

The Land Department's role in ensuring that the use of government property is appropriately controlled is considered to be of utmost importance. This will help to promote a rationalisation culture that appreciates the true potential value of government property and its possible uses. The other major task, which the Department is tackling seriously, is the acquisition debt problem and in 2007 the Department shall continue to explore further avenues in order to extinguish payments due for land expropriated in the past.

ALBERT V MAMO
Director (Land)

Government Property Division Joint Office

INTRODUCTION

The roles of the Joint Office are:

- managing and administering the immovable estate transferred to Government by the ecclesiastical authorities in terms of the Ecclesiastical Entities (Properties) Act, Chap. 358;
- validating and verifying the data being transferred to it by the ecclesiastical entities to determine the exact value of all the properties transferred so that the necessary adjustments will be made to the original amount of Lm28,067,000 which the Government issued in Bonds in terms of the 1991 Agreement with the Ecclesiastical Authorities;
- to register at the Land Registry all the properties which it administers, as well as those retained by the ecclesiastical entities.

Property Administration and Alienations

In 2006, the following properties were alienated:

As per 1996 Scheme	17
As per 2002 Initiative	403
As per original deed	22
Through Tenders/Exchange/Direct Disposal	65
Total	507

In terms of Article 2 of the agreement between the Government and the Holy See, 13 portions of land in Birkirkara, Fgura, Kirkop, Luqa, Msida, Siġġiewi, Żabbar and Żebbuġ (Malta), having a total area of 25,262m² were transferred to the Housing Authority by Legal Notice Nos. 242 and 284 of 2006 to be allocated for social housing projects. The Joint Office also transferred 11 vacant or substandard premises to be rehabilitated under the Urban Regeneration Scheme by the Housing Authority utilizing funds provided by the European Union for this purpose. These were transferred by Legal Notices Nos. 85/2006 and 108/2006. All the properties were transferred to the Housing Authority at a nominal price.

Plots of land were transferred to Enemalta Corporation for the construction of substations. The Department also received and processed requests for the recognition of emphyteutae and tenants in their respective properties.

2002 Initiative

By the end of the year, the Joint Office had received 4,765 applications for the redemption of ground rent and for the purchase of leased premises. This resulted from the announcement, made by Government in the Budget Speech for the year 2002, that the Government was putting on the market all the properties being administered by the Joint Office and which are either resident-occupied or used as a summer residence.

Of the 3,472 applications processed so far, 670 applications were invalid and a further 2,505 applicants were informed of the amount of redemption or of the selling price, as determined by established criteria and 297 applicants were given an interim reply. With a view to hastening the process, the Joint Office farms out to architects in private practice the valuation of certain properties.

Agriculture Leases Scheme

The Joint Office is also processing applications received by February 2001 in terms of a scheme whereby persons occupying government-owned land for agricultural purposes without title were given the opportunity to regularise their position.

Reconciliation, Verification and Registration

Transfer of Information on Properties

During 2006, the transfer of information from the Church Administrative Offices to the Joint Office regarding properties transferred to the Government by the Church continued at a steady pace. Up to the end of the year, 24,431 forms concerning properties listed in Annex 8 of the Church/State Agreement were forwarded to the Joint Office by the ecclesiastical entities.

A large number of correction forms had to be raised or confirmed regarding this information, which corrections, have to be approved by the Control Committee in terms of Section 4(2) of the Agreement. These corrections entail additions of properties inadvertently left out of the Annexes to the Agreement, deletion of others that were erroneously included, and correction to the capitalised amounts of properties.

In 2006, the Control Committee approved 1,507 of these corrections. The Committee also signed 395 property forms, thus confirming the final amount due to the ecclesiastical entities in respect of the properties concerned.

During 2006, the Joint Office continued to reconcile the values of properties previously owned by the 99 different ecclesiastical entities. During the year the Joint Office verified and determined the exact value of the properties transferred to the Government of another nine such entities, bringing the total of reconciled entities at 47.

Registration of Properties

The Department continued with the registration of property with the Land Registry in terms of Cap 358. During the year, 877 properties were registered. The related work entailed the drawing up of relative plans. This brought the total number of properties registered as on 31 December 2006 to 10,552. The following figures show the number of properties registered during the past three years:

	2004	2005	2006
Registered Properties	889	731	877

Administration

Revenue Collection

Besides the collection of rent of leased properties, the Department identified properties available for disposal in terms of the Disposal of Government Land Act. The following figures show the comparative figure of revenue collected during the past three years:

	2004	2005	2006
	<i>Lm</i>	<i>Lm</i>	<i>Lm</i>
Rent	502,675	511,702	513,211
Sales	1,668,328	1,836,297	4,653,995
Total	2,171,003	2,347,999	5,167,206

50% of the amount of rent collected during 2006 consisted of arrears. This was the result of an enforcement exercise undertaken by the Department in conjunction with the Land Department.

The Control Committee

The Control Committee is a body set up in terms of Article 17 of the 1991 Agreement between the Holy See and the Government of Malta. Two members of the Committee are nominated by the Holy See and two members are nominated by the Government of Malta. Chairmanship of meetings is by rotation. The present members representing the Government of Malta were nominated in January 2002.

The functions of the Control Committee are promoting and monitoring the correct and timely application of the provisions of the above-mentioned Agreement with particular reference to the approval of corrections to the Annexes; the alienation of property and in particular the issue of bonds in favour of the Foundation for Church Schools.

Co-ordination with the Estate Management Department and the Land Department

With the amalgamation of the Joint Office within the Government Property Division, at the beginning of 2002, the Joint Office worked hand in hand with the Land Department, which is responsible for the legal aspects of government property management, and also with the Estate Management Department, which is entrusted with the role of promoting the effective management of Government immovable property. This co-ordination and related co-operation with these two other departments falling under the Division, has been essential for uniformity in adopting the common policies of the Division.

JOSEPH SCIRIHA
Director (Joint Office)

Land and Public Registry Division

Land Registry

OBJECTIVES

The Land Registry, which is governed by the Land Registration Act, Cap. 296, is a depository of titles to property. It is principally responsible for the registration of title to property within designated registration areas, except for government property as well as property administered by the Joint Office, which is registered throughout. Further duties also emanate from the Condominium Act, Cap. 398.

In view of the planned Central Registry Act, whose main aim is the establishment of one Central Registry through an amalgamation of the Land and Public Registries, it has become essential to ensure that the Land Registry has the necessary administrative capacity to provide a nation-wide ownership database both in terms of trained human resources as well as technological capacity. Initial steps have already been taken to continue the restructuring. This is due mainly to the fact that the Central Registry Act envisages the extension of the present compulsory registration area to include the whole territory of the Maltese Islands. Assistance on the draft Act was provided to the Standing Committee for Consideration of Bills during 2006. The Act is expected to be put into force during 2007.

RESTRUCTURING EXERCISE

An assessment of human resources exercise of the entities falling under the Land and Public Registry Division with the scope of determining the feasibility of the amalgamation emanating from the establishment of a Central Registry was commenced during 2006. The restructuring process will eventually be completed through the re-issuing and eventual filling of vacant posts, as approved by the Management and Personnel Office, in view of the expected increased work-load resulting from the Central Registry Act. In the meantime, during 2006 staff attended training in various areas relating to departmental policy and administration. Courses attended include courses on Middle Management, Word Advanced, Internet and Excel Introduction. Besides, a three-day Team Building Course, tailor-made for the Land Registry, was held in conjunction with the Foundation for Human Resource Development in October 2006. The Staff Development Organisation Prospectus was periodically examined with a view to encouraging further training of staff.

In August 2006 MITTS Ltd was requested to conduct an ICT impact analysis of the Central Registry Act on the Land and Public Registry Division, obviously including the Land Registry Certification System (LRCS). Exploratory discussions, workshop meetings and face-to-face interviews were held with the MITTS project team. The impact analysis exercise is still in hand.

LAND REGISTRY CERTIFICATION SYSTEM

The system's shortcomings, including slowness and occasional downtime were identified and categorically dealt with following consultation with MITTS. A planned future enhancement is, in line with the corporate e-government project, to eventually make the LRCS accessible online, obviously subject to certain security and data protection safeguards, thus ensuring an enhanced service delivery to all Land Registry clients. Discussions with the relevant stakeholders were held throughout 2006 with the main aim of providing this service as soon as possible.

The following figures indicate the number of applications lodged at the Land Registry:

Year	Applications
2000	4,500
2001	4,624
2002	5,422
2003	6,056
2004	6,047
2005	5,911
2006	6,409

LAND REGISTRY QUALITY SERVICE

A reprint of the Quality Service Charter of the Land Registry, incidentally one of the first to be introduced by Government way back in 1999, was made in October 2004. Commitments featuring in the Quality Service Charter offer a service that aims at responding to customers' requests within a few minutes (clients coming to the Registry for a Land Registry Plan are guaranteed service within ten minutes of their request). A generic e-mail account for the Land Registry – land.registry@gov.mt - which enables clients to make comments or complaints electronically has been created and queries are dealt with on a daily basis. Random checking on all types of applications lodged at the Registry revealed that targets and deadlines set out in the Charter are rigorously being observed. Adequate signage and seating were provided for the Department's clients. A suggestion box was also affixed for the collection of Feedback Forms.

DATA PROTECTION

A Data Protection Policy has been drawn up. It has been vetted by the OPM Data Protection Team and published well before Data Protection Day 2006. Besides, the Land Registry collaborated extensively for the finalisation of an analysis report of data collection forms and a full Data Protection Audit. Recommendations are regularly scrutinised and implemented whenever possible.

SEARCH UNIT

The Presentata/Search Units, which were transferred from the Public Registry to the Land Registry during 2002, in order to enhance the one-stop-shop concept in so far as property registration is concerned, now form an integral part of the Land Registry.

Discussions with the Notarial Council with the scope of fine-tuning the Registry's administrative requirements with its clients' exigencies continued throughout 2006. The Department is also liaising with the Notarial Council and the actual service provider on the finalisation of a Standard Form for the electronic submission of notes, thus eliminating the need for the Notary to have to physically present such notes at the Department. The Form is currently being tested by the service provider.

Besides, as part of the Better Regulation Exercise, Cabinet approved the Department's proposal to repeal Government Gazette Notice Number 527 of 1 October 1978 which establishes the present opening hours of the *Prezentata* Section and publish a new Notice extending the Section's office hours in summer. This will undoubtedly provide a better service to the Department's clients.

In April 2006 a proposal for an e-government service enabling the Registry's clients to request Searches on Wills online or from their local councils was made to MIIIT through Information Management Officer (IMO), Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs. Meetings with an MIIIT consultant who was requested to draw up a Business Analysis Report were held throughout the following weeks. The first draft of the report was forwarded to the Land Registry for vetting in July 2006. MIIIT subsequently issued a call for the provision of the service and during the last quarter of 2006, the members of the Adjudication Board were nominated. The adjudication process is expected to be concluded in early 2007.

CONDOMINIUM ACT (CAP. 398)

This law aims at regulating, through general parameters, the relations between owners and in specific cases tenants, thereby reducing conflicts concerning the common parts within a *condominium*. It gives direction and provides guidance as to how matters between the *condomini* are to be conducted.

The Land Registrar is bound by this Act to register the administrators of *condominia* and the rules regulating such *condominia*. When rules are registered, the Land Registrar is bound to issue a notice in the Government Gazette. The Act also requires the Land Registrar to keep a register of the administrators.

An electronic *Condominium Register System* was finalised and installed during 2004. The system serves as a quick index for all *Condominia* registered with the Land Registry. Further enhancements to the System were installed and tested during 2006 are now an integral part of the Register. It is planned that the program will eventually be made available for public access.

VOLUNTARY REGISTRATION SCHEME

In conjunction with the Rehabilitation Project Office and the local councils, a voluntary scheme of registration was launched in November 2001 for property situated within Valletta, Floriana, Senglea, Cospicua and Vittoriosa. By virtue of this scheme, owners of immovable property within these areas are entitled to benefit from certain subsidies which include the preparation of the registration plan by government employees at the expense of Lm10 and subsequently the actual registration of property at the cost of Lm10 rather than Lm20.

The year 2006 saw a co-ordinated phased implementation of the scheme. Further funds were also made available in the 2006 Estimates and the Scheme for the Voluntary Registration of Property in the areas mentioned is in fact currently ongoing. In fact, out of 2,060 applications received, 482 have been finalised and work on 769 applications is ongoing. The applications received were divided as follows:

Council	Applications
Valletta	368
Birgu	343
Bormla	655
L-Isla	376
Furjana	318
Total	2,060

CONCLUSION

The main challenge faced by the Department is the strengthening of administrative capacity in view of the Central Registry Act organisational requirements.

The Land Registry remains committed to keeping attuned to evolving EU-related developments in the area of land registration, particularly the ongoing attempts of harmonisation of cadastral policies and practices within EU countries. This necessitates, as far as possible, ongoing active participation in activities and projects organised by the EU Permanent Committee on Cadastre.

DR STEPHANIE PAPPALARDO
Director (Land Registry)

Land and Public Registry Division

Public Registry

INTRODUCTION

The main functions and responsibilities of the Public Registry originate from the Public Registry Act, Cap 56, the Marriage Act, Cap 255, Chapter 16 of the Civil Code, Sections 1 to 306 and the Housing (Decontrol) Ordinance, 1959, Cap 158.

MAIN AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

CIVIL STATUS

This Section deals with the registration and issuance of copies of Acts of Birth, Marriage and Death as well as all annotations to these Acts. Besides registering all births, marriages and deaths occurring in Malta, the Department registers, on request, certificates of births, marriages and deaths of Maltese citizens where the event occurred abroad. During 2006, a total of 528 such registrations were made which included 509 Births, and 19 Deaths. There were also 230 annotations of nullity of marriage and divorces. Statistical data is also regularly forwarded to government departments, particularly the National Statistics Authority.

Registrations and Issuance of Civil Status Certificates

The following table shows the Acts of Civil Status registered during 2006 and Civil Status Certificates issued, as compared with 2005:

	Registrations		Extracts Issued	
	2005	2006	2005	2006
<i>Births</i>	4,152	4,103	48,200	47,916
<i>Marriages</i>	2,304	2,376	14,090	12,730
<i>Deaths</i>	2,968	3,042	15,134	15,920
Total	9,424	9,521	77,424	76,566

During 2006 a total of 6,000 Full Copies of Acts of Civil Status were issued against 5,311 copies issued in 2005. 11.38% of the total of Civil Status certificates issued were ordered online.

The Department issues certificates which attest that no entry of marriage registered at the Department exists in the Civil Status Records in respect of a particular individual. The number of certificates issued in 2006 was 153 against 150 in 2005.

Annotations

Any person, who may have an interest, can take action before a competent court in Malta for: the correction or cancellation of any registered Civil Status Act; the legitimation *per subsequens matrimonium* of a person born out of wedlock; and the acknowledgement of the paternity of a person born out of wedlock. Legitimation *per subsequens matrimonium* may also be effected by applying to the Director, Public Registry. The amendments to the Civil Code referred to above, and which came into force on 1 March 2005, have radically changed the legal procedures whereby the father of a child born out of wedlock may claim the paternity of that child. Previously a person could claim the paternity of a child by a Public Deed.

The new amendments require the person claiming paternity to inform and ask, through a judicial letter, for the consent of the mother and if the child is of age, he has to be informed and asked also for his consent.

Moreover divorces and nullities of marriage obtained in a competent court abroad may be registered at the Public Registry after ascertaining that they conform to the relative requisites of Maltese Law. Nullities of marriage obtained in Malta are also registered at the Department. All changes emanating from the above instances are recorded in the Annotations column of the relative Civil Status Act.

Comparative figures for annotations entered in the Civil Status registers during 2006 compared with those of 2005 are listed in the following table:

Types of Annotations	2005	2006
Corrections	47	70
Legitimations or Acknowledgements	180	147
Nullity of marriage and divorces	198	230
Total	425	447

Adoptions

The number of adoptions entered in the Adopted Persons Register in terms of the Civil Code (Amendment) Ordinance 1962 during 2006 was 77 against 62 in the previous year.

MARRIAGE REGISTRY

The number of marriages in respect of which formalities were completed by the Marriage Registry during 2006, as compared to the preceding year, was as follows:

Marriages in Malta	2005	2006
Religious	1,480	1,524
Civil	708	761
Total	2,188	2,285

The number of marriages (religious and civil) between foreign couples who in 2006 opted to contract their marriage in Malta amounted to 583. These couples hailed from a wide diversity of countries. During the year 122 Maltese men and 102 Maltese women were married to foreigners. The number of Religious marriages between Maltese couples amounted to 1,395 while 83 opted for Civil marriage. Civil Marriages may be celebrated at the Department and also outside the Public Registry premises.

LAND VALUATION SECTION

The computerisation of the Land Valuation Office initiated in 2005 as a Teleworking Project continued during the year in question. It is expected that this project will be finalised in the coming months.

The Department also processes applications for the decontrol of privately-owned dwelling houses in terms of the Housing (Decontrol) Ordinance 1959 and issues certificates thereof, besides certificates of rental value. The number of tenements decontrolled and the number of certificates issued in 2006 compared to 2005 are shown in the following table:

	2005	2006
Tenements decontrolled and registered in terms of Ordinance XIX of 1959	11	2
Issue of copies of Certificates of Decontrol	18	11
Total	29	13

SEARCHES AND LEGAL SECTIONS

In anticipation of the introduction of the provisions found in the Central Registry Bill (Bill No 16 of 2003), the day-to-day administration of these two Sections has been assumed by the Director, Land Registry. The Director, Public Registry is still responsible for the running of the Department in terms of the Public Registry Act, Cap 56. The following are statistics showing the services rendered in the said two Sections.

Registration of Hypothecs		
	2005	2006
a) Registration of Notes of Hypothecation	21,734	23,194
b) Registration of Legal Hypothecation	133	138
c) Registration of Notes of References	10,129	10,627
d) Registration of Renewals of Hypothecation	23	6
	32,019	33,965

Notes of Enrolment (<i>Insinwa</i>) registered				
	2005		2006	
	Number	Value Lm	Number	Value Lm
Sales	10,610	441,722,708	10,252	361,203,250
Exchange	83	1,976,000	56	1,742,500
Donations	268	4,923,729	172	4,845,060
Partitions	109	6,066,200	114	3,390,500
Perpetual Emphyteusis	97	15,631	109	18,180
Temporary Emphyteusis	58	22,420	63	4,753
Causa Mortis	4,676	-	4,144	-
Marriage Settlements	12	-	3	-
Personal Separation	701	-	334	-
Wills	8,369	-	5,645	-
Other Acts	3,811	-	2,381	-

The total amount of debts secured by a hypothecary or privileged guarantee registered during 2006 was Lm404,586,500 against Lm465,982,150 in 2005.

The Searches Section issues certificates referred to as Special Certificates which are a true reproduction of a Note of Hypothec, Legal Hypothec or Enrolment (*Insinwa*). In 2006 the number of Special Certificates issued amounted to 282.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Data Inputting and Verification Project

During 2006, the capture in computerised format of all Civil Status records, dating back to 1863, continued to make progress and the general public is already bearing the fruits of this ambitious project. In fact applications for Full Civil Status Certificates in respect of persons born between 1952 to 1993 are being processed on the date of application and, in most cases, the time-frame for sending these certificates to applicants is now two days instead of the usual four.

Since the project was launched in 2004, the total number of Acts of Birth inputted was 272,137 covering the years 1952 to 1993. The total number inputted in 2005 was 98,961 covering the years 1964 to 1982. In 2006, the total number of acts of birth imputed was 93,101 covering the years 1952 – 1963.

The Public Registry and the Common Database

Following the Identity Card Renewal Exercise, thorough checks started being carried out to identify discrepancies between the information submitted by applicants and the Public Registry databases and the Common Database so that, where necessary, corrections are made. Due to increased output and the

expertise gained by personnel deployed on this exercise, 2006 continued to have a substantial rise in the discrepancies detected. Action, when required, was duly taken to make the necessary corrections.

Administrative

After a Health and Safety exercise it was found that asbestos tanks were still being used on the roof for collection of mains water. These were replaced with plastic ones and a new system for the filling of such tanks was installed. Safer electrical fittings were also fitted for the marriage registration rooms.

In conformity with environmental recommendations, new bins were bought and are being used to separate waste. A system for recycling of paper and collection of batteries was adopted.

The Department submitted proposals for the Better Regulation initiative and is in process of implementing decisions. Moreover, the Department is in full swing with the adoption of the euro changeover requirements both for dual pricing and integration.

The Acting Director participated in different meetings at the Ministry and was present in Parliament when the Central Registry Act was discussed at the committee stage.

Meetings with the Gozo Notarial Representatives were held and issues that were pending for a long time were resolved. This activity was held also with the Malta Notarial Council.

Staff Training

Various officers were detailed to attend courses organised by the Staff Development Organisation. Senior staff at the Accounts Section attended courses on Financial Accounting while other staff in various sections attended advanced courses in MS Word and MS Excel.

In the last quarter of the year Mr Carmel Mifsud retired from Acting Director Public Registry, while Mr Charles A Micallef, Director General, Land and Public Registry Division, acted *ad interim*.

ANTHONY GERALDI
A/Director (Public Registry)

Land and Public Registry Division

Department of Civil Registration

INTRODUCTION

The main functions of the Department of Civil Registration are issuing of Maltese Passports, notifying the Public Registry of births and deaths that occur in Malta and maintaining, enhancing and developing Government's corporate database known as the Common Database (CdB).

ACTIVITIES

e-Government – Passports Online

The online service for the application for a passport continued to function as an e-government service. Maltese applicants, who are 18 years old, hold a valid Maltese Identity Card and are e-Id registered, may now apply online for a new passport. During 2006, 33 applicants made use of this facility.

Biometric Passports

Although various meetings were held and presentations delivered on biometric passports and progress was registered, in 2006 departmental initiatives were postponed as Government decided to embark on a national identity management system. This new system will integrate all identity management in a one stop shop system. Biometric data will feature as a priority since Malta is committed to issue biometric passports according to EU directives. It is expected that biometric passports will be available to the Maltese general public in course of 2007. A new procurement of the present passports had to be processed to meet the demand until biometric ones are available.

In the first quarter of the year under review a new server to house the Passport Issuance System had to be installed since the old one was giving problems. The new server has a modern and more secure backup facility while enhancing the system with faster facilities.

Transfer of Forms to National Archives

During 2006, a number of old passport forms were transferred to the National Archives at Rabat.

PASSPORT OFFICE, MALTA

As well as fulfilling its core function of issuing passports, the Passport Office, Malta provides also full support to Maltese embassies, high commissions and consulates abroad. It also gives full support to the Gozo Passport Office.

During 2006, the Passport Office issued a total of 31,242 passports (31,165 ordinary passports; 77 diplomatic passports to Maltese diplomatic personnel).

Multiple Passports

When considered necessary, the Passport Office accepts applications for the issue of a second passport. During the year, 139 such passports were authorised and issued.

Refugee Travel Documents

Convention Travel Documents are also issued by the Passport Office. A total of 1,031 Travel Documents were issued during 2006.

Oaths and Digitised Photos

To further enhance the one-stop-shop concept, Passport Office officials are also appointed as Commissioners for Oaths to administer an oath when necessary. The Department offers also the facility of taking digitised photos on the premises. A total of 436 oaths and 810 digitised photos were taken during the year.

Service Outside Office Hours

The Department offers an all-inclusive round-the-clock emergency service to clients needing an urgent passport during silent hours - 31 such cases were processed in 2006. As in previous years, the Department again managed to honour its commitment, as laid down in the Quality Service Charter, even during the peak summer period, thanks to the commitment of the staff.

Urgent Passports

Requests to issue urgent passports within 24 hours of application are received against an additional payment. During 2006, a total of 1,400 such passports were issued under this system.

Arabic Translations

The Passport Office also offers the services of an Arabic translation on passports upon request. A total of 208 translations were carried out during 2006.

PASSPORT OFFICE, GOZO

The core function of the Gozo Passport Office is the issuing of passports. During the year, a total of 2,174 new passports were issued compared to the previous year's total of 2,609.

The following services were also provided to the Gozitan public: issuing of collective passports and Arabic Translations; application for visas by foreign citizens; and furnishing information regarding documents required by persons enquiring about dual citizenship.

Total Number of Passports issued in 2005-2006				
	<i>Passports Issued</i>		<i>Revenue (Lm)</i>	
	2005	2006	2005	2006
Malta	34,635	28,516	371,181	294,261
Gozo	2,609	2,174	27,161	21,803
Missions	3,261	2,649	41,744	43,062
Diplomatic	76	77	456	462
Total	40,581	33,416	440,542	359,588

The decrease in the number of passport issued may be attributable to the fact that some Maltese are travelling with identity cards and thus they are postponing applying or renewing a passport when they are not travelling outside the European Union. Some may be also waiting for the introduction of the biometric passport and again leaving it to a later date to apply or renew a passport.

BIRTH/DEATH NOTIFICATION SECTION

This Section may be considered as the front office for the registration of all births and deaths occurring in Malta. Following notification, the relative Acts are then drawn up and checked before being delivered to the Public Registry for registration. This is an important process to ensure that the details submitted by the notifier are correct.

Total Number of Notifications received in 2005-2006				
	Births		Deaths	
	2005	2006	2005	2006
Malta	3,593	3,639	2,895	3,069
Gozo	297	280	279	251
Total	3,890	3,919	3,174	3,320

THE COMMON DATABASE SECTION (CdB)

The Common Database is one of the major pillars to achieve the information sharing policy of Government. It is a corporate initiative aimed at providing commonly used information that falls under the public domain, to achieve information consistency across government departments and to facilitate the one-stop-shop concept in government departments. Thus the Common Database System integrates public domain information that is commonly used amongst government departments and which is available in computerised systems. Established security and control procedures are in place to ensure proper use of the available data, particularly in conformity with the Data Protection legislation.

Concept

The information contained in the Common Database concerns persons and their addresses and also an Organisations Area of Information is gathered from the Public Registry, the Electoral Office and the VAT Department. This is validated against predefined rules so as to ensure data integrity and quality. Those transactions that pass the validation rules update the respective records inside the CdB. The source department verifies transactions that fail the validation process. Government departments run the Query Module to conduct searches as required. Therefore they can view information that is current, consistent and correct on a daily basis. A mechanism is also provided so that feedback on the integrity and quality of the data is obtained from different users. Action is taken accordingly to rectify the information after investigations are carried out.

CdB Owners' Group

This group consists of representatives from the departments that provide data on a particular area of information in the CdB. The aim of this group, which is chaired by Director Civil Registration, is to discuss data and policy issues concerning this information sharing initiative. Regular meetings were held throughout the year, during which related issues and progress were reviewed.

During the last quarter of the year Mr Carmel Mifsud, Director (Passport and Civil Registration) retired and Mr Charles A Micallef, Director General, Land and Public Registry Division, acted *ad interim*.

ANTHONY GERALDI

Director (Passport and Civil Registration)

Courts of Justice Division

DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL COURTS AND CIVIL TRIBUNALS

GENERAL

The Department's objectives are:

- to provide support and advice to the Director General on general management issues;
- to provide timely and adequate support and facilities to the Civil Courts and Civil Tribunals, including the Family Court section, so that the members of the Judiciary within the Civil Jurisdiction may operate efficiently;
- to submit policy proposals to the Director General on matters relating to the operation of this Directorate.

The Civil Courts Department is headed by the Director, Civil Courts and Tribunals who is also the Registrar of the same Courts. The Registrar of the Civil Courts and Tribunals is responsible for:

- the registries and the officers attached to them;
- the filing and service of judicial acts;
- execution of executive titles such as judgements and warrants through Court-appointed Marshals;
- the judicial sales by auction section;
- the Archives section; and
- the Bookbinding section.

Apart from the Constitutional Court and Court of Appeal in its Civil Jurisdiction, there are three sections in the Civil Courts to which are assigned the category of cases. These are the Family Section, the Voluntary Jurisdiction Section and the First Hall of the Civil Court.

There is also a Magistrates' Courts whereby the Magistrate presides over cases having claims exceeding Lm1,500 but not exceeding Lm5,000, in which case these are presided over by a Judge in the Superior Courts.

The Small Claims Tribunal is presided by an Adjudicator who decides on principles of equity according to law. Claims in this Tribunal do not exceed the sum of Lm1,500.

2006 witnessed positive developments in the field of Information Technology and e-Government, modernisation of the Archives, centralisation and streamlining of services offered by the Civil Court Registries, a drive to recoup arrears of revenue and the computerisation of schedules of withdrawals

IT INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

This Department served as a catalyst for the whole Division when it introduced a new concept in the issuing of receipts in the various cash points. The receipt is now in-built within the Legal Case Management (Lecam) IT system and such receipts are now easily reproduced from within the system itself, thereby eliminating the use of continuous computer paper.

In conjunction with the Agency of the Attorney General and MITTS Ltd, lawyers and legal procurators were provided with EU sites on the PCs available for their use at the Civil registries. Thus these regular

court clients could access sites such as those of the Council of Europe, Eurojust as well as the European Justice Network in both the civil and criminal fields.

This Department computerised the schedules of deposits deposited in the Courts of Magistrates. This enabled the section responsible for such schedules to be able to electronically withdraw monies deposited therein and thus eliminating manual intervention. Schedules inputted onto the IT system go back from the current year to 1995 and it is the Department's intention to input further schedules beyond 1995.

In anticipation to the Government's intention to set up a court specialising in property cases, this Department identified well over 1,000 property-related cases pending in the Superior Courts and included also a field within the Civil Case Management IT program as a separate court category.

The Civil Courts Department approved significant enhancements to the Lecam system of benefit to the Agency of the Attorney General (AG) since this Agency did not have a customised IT system that supported civil case management on a day-to-day basis. The enhancement ensured that the AG would have a system whereby the Agency would be in a position to monitor those cases where the AG is representing one of the parties. AG users are now able to insert lawyers linked to a case and eliminate maintaining the cumbersome manual diary.

MITTS were commissioned to draw up a report in the Acts Management Program enabling this Directorate to provide statistics on how many official letters in terms of Article 166A of the Code of Organisation and Civil Procedure (COCP) are rendered executive titles (*reži ežekuttivi*), to encapture those letters against whom a reply was forthcoming (*noti risponsivi*) and also which official letters containing bills of exchange (*kambjali*) were followed by a court suit. Such initiatives were in line with OPM directives governing Better Regulation. Further to this report, a further program was implemented whereby all notes contesting such official letters were now linked with the same letters.

e-GOVERNMENT

Monthly statistical reports of the Civil and Criminal Courts related to judiciaries and courts continued to be published on the Internet by this Department. This important source of information found on the site www.mjha.gov.mt has proved to be an important analytical tool particularly for researchers, members of the Judiciary and the Courts' administration.

Two age analysis reports were also published on the web correct as at end April and September 2006. This information assisted in the identification of backlogs in the various courts, tribunals and boards.

To comply with the general public's suggestions on the MJHA website, an enhancement was carried out within the Civil Case Management program whereby the name of the judiciary is now correctly reflected throughout the case history whenever a court case is transferred from one member of the judiciary to another.

ARCHIVES

This Department continued with its exercise of upgrading the Archives of the Courts of Magistrates. New shelving was procured and installed and identification of all volumes carried out. Truck-loads of unused paper were disposed of in accordance with environmental policies operable within the Public Service. It is envisaged that this overhaul of the Archives will be maintained during 2007 and that proper indexing and cataloguing of all volumes will be made in the same manner as was carried out in the Superior Archives and of the volumes stored at the Camerata.

TRAINING

Training sessions were delivered by the Department's legal adviser on the amendments regarding the execution of warrants.

An information seminar was organised by this Department in conjunction with the Agency of the Attorney General to Deputy Registrars regarding EU Regulations which came into force on issues such as the recognition and enforcements of judgments in civil and commercial matters, the service in the member states of judicial and extrajudicial documents in civil and commercial matters and on co-operation between the courts of the member states in the taking of evidence in civil and commercial matters.

A Risk Assessment Policy was drawn up by this Department in conjunction with the other departments in the Courts Division.

FINANCE

This Directorate embarked on an exercise to recoup monies which were deposited in a below-the-line account rather than in the Government's revenue vote. Such registry fees were deposited as a guarantee (*kawtela*) to secure a party's request to Appeal from a First Instance judgment. This exercise resulted in over Lm60,000 being collected.

COURT CASES

Amendments to Chapter 12 of the Laws of Malta (the Code of Organisation and Civil Procedure) state that the competence of the Courts of Magistrates in its Civil Jurisdiction is to be increased from Lm5,000 to Lm10,000 whilst that of the Small Claims Tribunal is to be increased from its present capping of Lm1,500 to Lm5,000. This significant change in competence should further reduce the backlog of cases in the First Hall of the Civil Courts whilst also increasing the caseload onto the Small Claims Tribunal. Such a shift is corroborated by favourable statistical results which show a sharp decline in the number of pending cases in front of the Small Claims Tribunal from 2005 to 2006. This is not only due to efficiency on the part of the Adjudicators presiding over this Tribunal but also due to the introduction of the official letter in terms of article 166A of the COCP whereby one can obtain an executive title by virtue of this letter without having to initiate proceedings in front of the Small Claims Tribunal. In fact during 2006, 3,479 such letters were presented at the Inferior Court Registry and these could have potentially reduced new cases in front of the Small Claims Tribunal by this amount.

There was generally a reduction of the number of pending cases in front of all Courts, Tribunals and Boards during 2006 as clearly depicted in the table below.

Courts	Pending cases – December 2005	Pending cases – December 2006	Reduction (in figures)	% Reduction
Constitutional	39	31	8	20
Court of Appeal (in its Superior Jurisdiction)	843	830	13	1.5
First Hall of the Civil Courts	4,959	4,712	247	5
First Hall of the Civil Courts (Family Section)	993	965	28	3
Courts of Magistrates	1,224	1,076	148	12
Small Claims Tribunal	1,783	1,160	623	35
Land Arbitration Board	256	233	23	9
Rural Leases Control Board	127	121	6	4

PREMISES

Work on the construction of the administrative floor was initiated during 2006 and this necessitated the transfer of various offices to alternative premises. It is envisaged that works will be concluded in the first quarter of 2007.

New chambers were afforded to the two newly appointed female judges.

CUSTOMER CARE INITIATIVES

Hall bookings for the Small Claims Tribunal sittings started being made one week in advance so that the Halls could be assigned beforehand and the general public would know in advance where the sitting would be held.

To eliminate clients having to go to two different points within the Courts when effecting schedules of deposits, payments of such deposits, be it registry fees or the actual deposit, are now being made only at one cash point in the Superior Registry rather than at two different points. This one-stop shop procedure was positively met by the Chamber of Legal Procurators. In line with this initiative, instructions were given to the cashiers that no cash deposits above Lm1,000 were to be accepted.

This Department also introduced a streamlined procedure for the payment of a guarantee (*kawtela*) when presenting an application for an appeal. Whereas previously clients had to wait for the file to be forwarded to the Registry from the Court of Appeal, now payments can be made instantly at the Judicial Sales by Auction section.

MEETINGS

Meetings were held with the Malta Financial Services Centre and the Chairman of the Appeals Board. The latter was set up in virtue of the Controlled Companies (Procedure for Liquidation) Act, Chapter 383 of the Laws of Malta whereby the Court Registrar is responsible for all acts presented before the Board. The meeting established the procedure to be adopted when presenting such appeals. This Directorate also assisted the Board by nominating a Deputy Registrar to act as Secretary to the Board.

MISCELLANEOUS

A delegation from Gibraltar visited the Courts of Justice and this Directorate organised a meeting for the delegation with the Chief Justice and the Director General. The scope of the visit of this delegation from Gibraltar was to examine our IT system, particularly the Lecam system with the possible intention of adopting this system in their Courts. For this purpose a high profile meeting with MITTS Ltd was organised and a general overview of both MITTS' operations as well as of the Lecam system was given to the delegation.

This Directorate was involved in discussions with a delegation from the EU regarding the setting up of an EU library complete with the relevant IT equipment and web site, all funded by the EU.

Following discussions with representatives from the National Statistics Office (NSO) with this Directorate and officers from the Family Court Registry, regular statistical information on the number of separations in Malta were forwarded to this Office.

New procedures were implemented by this Directorate together with the Criminal Courts Department to all transcribers. Every transcriber was no longer required to submit a hard copy of each transcript for verification purposes but had to submit same on a floppy disc or CD. Apart from being an eco-friendly measure, this system drastically reduced the use of photocopy paper as well as recurrent expenditure.

Following the award of an EU tender, this Directorate was involved in discussions with German experts from the EU in connection with the Twinning Light Project which aimed at identifying and organising various training programmes for different categories of staff.

This Department was actively involved in the annual organisation of the European Day of Civil Justice in co-operation with the Judiciary, the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs and the Attorney General's Agency. The activities included a seminar on European legislation and its impact on the local Courts of Justice as well as orientation tours of the Courts to secondary school students.

During 2006, this Department issued 53 internal memos to all staff within the Civil Courts. In the same period, 27 disciplinary charges were issued in terms of Regulation 20, 17 in terms of Regulation 19 and four in terms of Regulation 18 of the Public Service Commission (Disciplinary Procedure) Regulations, 1999.

DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL COURTS AND TRIBUNALS

During the year under review the Courts of Criminal Jurisdiction Department continued last year's programme in increasing its efficiency in the workings of the Courts by providing support and motivated trained staff for the better administration of justice.

GENERAL

This Department has this year been strengthened in its managerial resources by the appointment of a new Director, and the appointment of an Assistant Registrar. These appointments, together with that of a second Assistant Registrar, were immediately felt and yielded positive results.

The Director, Criminal Courts & Tribunals and his assistants continued to hold regular staff meetings with all employees of the Department. When it was considered necessary and more expedient, employees were also addressed individually. These meetings, apart from ensuring constant communication between the management and their subordinates serve also as an in-service training exercise. Preparations are underway so that the Training Academy would be strengthened so that it organises in-service courses for the various employee grades.

Deputy Registrars, Court Assistants and other clerks, were given instructions, lectures and directives regarding the functions of the Courts of Magistrates in its function as a Court of Criminal Judicature and that of a Court of Criminal Inquiry. Instructions were given regarding the correct procedure how court files should be kept. This uniform procedure brought about less referrals of acts from the Office of the Attorney General and reduced also the possibility of having acts being declared null and void.

Employees were given various lectures by the legal adviser attached with it regarding amendments introduced in the Criminal Code. These lectures were of the utmost importance so that all employees could act, each one according to his category and grade, in accordance with the amended provisions of the law. These amendments varied from the way a person was being granted bail to the reimbursement of court expert fees.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Regular meetings were held with MITTS Limited so that all electronic programmes continued to be updated as required from time to time. A number of meetings were held in connection with preparations required for Malta's introduction of the Euro on 1 January 2008, as it affects the Courts of Criminal Jurisdiction Department. These meetings systematically prepared all those involved by information and training so that problems would not occur when the changeover takes place.

A number of meetings were held related to LECAM enhancements, including those regarding preparations for the standardisation of the “Verbali” LECAM application. Through this application all Deputy Registrars would record the “prime note” on this program which, besides offering standardisation, allows that data security is readily available if and when required. The system offers data backing systems and audit trail facilities.

COLLECTION OF FINES IMPOSED BY THE COURTS

The long and sometimes complex legal process to collect fines, court expert fees and personal guarantees imposed by the Courts of Criminal Jurisdiction or the conversion of these into terms of imprisonment or detention, continued throughout the year.

It was ascertained that all fines, court expert fees and personal guarantees were duly entered in the Fines Management System with the LECAM. This was a very important exercise and thousands of defaulters received notices so that they could regularise their position according to law. Legal action, as necessary, was taken against those defaulters who did not regularise their position by either referring the matter to the court effect payment.

During the year under review, through various actions taken by this Department, the sum of Lm530,933 was collected from outstanding fines. A record of 1,151 conviction tickets were issued and it was necessary to file over 500 applications in Court so that fines, court fees and personal guarantees were either collected or converted into terms of imprisonment. Constant liaison was made with the Commissioner of Police and the Director of Prisons regarding the issue and necessary action required to execute conviction tickets.

ARCHIVES AND COURTS EXHIBITS

The process of disposing of old court exhibits continued during the year under review. This exercise was undertaken after the required verifications and legal provisions were looked into according to law. This created available space so that a reclassification exercise of court could be made. Modern shelving was procured and available space assisted a speedier classification process of court acts. Access to the archives is more user-friendly and this helps court staff to serve lawyers and the public when they require access to court acts and documents.

All drugs, drug related material and valuable court exhibits were duly categorised and photographed. This new established procedure is an on going process. Each court exhibit is carefully examined. It has to be ascertained that the case to which the exhibit appertains is definitely decided, photographed and where applicable the destruction of drugs and drug related material is effected. Then a ‘*proces verbal*’ has to be prepared according to law and inserted in the records of the case. This exercise is done in consultation with the members of the Judiciary who preside over drug related cases.

REGISTRY FOR THE COURTS OF CRIMINAL JURISDICTION

In collaboration with the Court Administration particularly the Directorate for Support Services, this Department inaugurated a new Registry for the Courts of Criminal Jurisdiction according to law. All services offered to the Department of Criminal Jurisdiction and which previously were scattered in various parts of the Law Courts have now been amalgamated and are being offered at the new Registry.

The new registry houses also the Cash Office with almost all its back-up office work.

The new registry operates as a one-stop shop, a concept which has reduced the number of people entering the Courts. Hence the new registry, besides being there to receive all the acts which have to be presented according to law, serves as a cash office and a point where the public can take an affidavit. Any person who requires a permit to visit a prison inmate is now also being served there. At the new registry one may make

verifications after an application or other court document had been filed, such as an application for a person to be exempted from jury service, or the granting of bail proceedings.

GOZO COURTS AND TRIBUNALS

Mission Statement

To balance the needs of the legal process of the Gozo Courts and Tribunals with the underlying administrative requirements that have to support that process.

ORGANISATION OF THE GOZO COURTS AND TRIBUNALS

As regards the judiciary organisation structure, there is one resident Magistrate, alternating with another Magistrate from Malta on a roster of two weeks and one week each respectively, thus dealing with two thirds and one third respectively of the cases introduced during any particular year. These Magistrates take cognizance of all acts filed during the proceedings of the cases assigned to them, prohibitory injunctions and applications before the Court of Voluntary Jurisdiction. They are also the duty magistrates for Gozo and Comino, and as such they hold magisterial inquiries and carry out preliminary investigations. As a rule, court sittings are held from Tuesday to Friday, with an average of 40 cases per sitting.

REGISTRY

Unlike the Courts of Justice in Malta, there is only one Registry at the Gozo Courts catering for both civil and criminal cases.

The number of applications, including replies in lawsuits during 2006 totalled 2,111. Judicial letters amounted to 799, of which 179 relate to those falling under the recent amendments to the Code of Organisation and Civil Procedure (Section 166A) and five regarding bills of exchange. There were 90 legal protests/counter-protests and 420 schedules of deposit.

COURT OF MAGISTRATES

During this period, 151 cases were introduced in the Superior Jurisdiction (money claims over Lm5,000 or concerning a point of law); 118 cases were decided and 42 were ceded, leaving 992 pending cases.

In the Court of Magistrates in its Inferior (Civil) Jurisdiction (money claims ranging from Lm1,500 to Lm5,000) there were 17 newly introduced cases, while 53 were disposed of.

There were 101 new applications before the Court of Magistrates in its Voluntary Jurisdiction, while 109 decrees were issued. The same Court still has 60 pending cases.

The Court of Magistrates as a Court of Criminal Judicature (*Kawzi Sommarji*) takes cognizance of all criminal offences and contraventions punishable with a maximum of six months imprisonment. During the year under review, 942 cases were introduced while 824 cases were decided, ending with the year with 511 pending cases, 26 being put off *sine die*, 2 cases re-appointed from *sine die* and 163 cases withdrawn.

As a Court of Criminal Inquiry, 37 new preliminary inquiries (*kumpilazzjonijiet*) were introduced, 49 were decided while 83 remain pending.

The Magistrate presiding as Revising Officer, in terms of Section 13 (3) of Chapter 354 (General Elections Act, 1991), did not decide any of the applications pending. During the same period, 27 new applications were introduced; 30 applications are still pending.

FAMILY COURT

In the mediation stage, there were 91 new introductions of notes, letters and applications (*rikorsi*); 59 decrees issued; and one withdrawal. There were 18 writs of summons introduced in the Family Court during the year under review, with 10 being decided. One case was ceded while another was deserted, leaving a balance of 39 pending cases at year-end.

SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL

The Small Claims Tribunal, catering for cases whose value does not exceed Lm1,500, had 57 newly-introduced cases, one of which were referred from the Tribunal in Malta. It decided 53 cases and referred 5 cases to the Tribunal in Malta, while 6 cases were ceded and 23 cases deserted. Ten other cases remain pending *sine die*, awaiting the outcome of related lawsuits.

The adjudicator sitting on the Small Claims Tribunal is substituted by another one from the Courts of Justice in Malta in cases of abstention or challenge. The same adjudicator also sits on the Local Councils Tribunal as Commissioner for Justice, dealing with minor offences such as traffic contraventions.

JUVENILE COURT

The sittings of this Court, which were previously held at the Conference Room of the Ministry for Gozo, started being held at the NGO Centre in Xewkija from 1 February 2006.

COURT OF APPEAL

The Court of Appeal (Civil Inferior) holds sittings in Gozo to hear appeals from decisions of the Rent Regulation Board, the Rural Leases Control Board and the Small Claims Tribunal in addition to those of the Court of first instance, inferior jurisdiction, as well as appeals from other administrative boards which hold sittings in Gozo. This Court had 28 newly-introduced cases, besides one other addition, decided 21, has 23 pending cases, and there was 4 ceded case.

The Court of Criminal Appeal (Inferior Jurisdiction) also holds sittings in Gozo and decided 31 cases. There are 7 pending cases left.

The Registry of this Court is also designated as the Registry of the Court of Criminal Appeal regarding appeals filed from judgements of the Court of Magistrates as a Court of Criminal Judicature in Gozo. Appeals from judgements of the Court of Magistrates (Gozo) in its Civil Superior Jurisdiction only are heard by the Court of Appeal in Malta.

BOARDS

The Rent Regulation Board and the Rural Leases Control Board, dealing with applications regarding matters between lessors and lessees of premises or land respectively each had three new applications introduced. The Boards decided 5 and 7 respectively, the former having 16 pending cases and the latter having 19.

During the period under review, two Gozitan lawyers served as Official Curators and Advocates for Legal Aid.

One Judicial Assistant continued to hold sittings in Gozo as delegated by the Magistrates sitting in the Court of Magistrates in its Civil Jurisdiction.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND E-GOVERNMENT

Throughout 2006, the Gozo Courts continued with its efforts to improve the level of service to the legal profession and the public in general. Advancements in the IT field, both as regards the installation of additional hardware and with enhancements in software, helped in the improvement of the service offered.

STAFF TRAINING

Since staff training is an integral part of human resource development employees from all sectors of this Department were encouraged to undergo training in various fields especially in those areas most akin to their line of duty. It is mandatory that staff is well-trained to meet the requirements of the complex environment of the courts. Various employees also attended IT courses organised by the Staff Development Organisation in office automation programs such as Word, Access and, also on Internet use, as well as in Communication Skills and EU Affairs.

COLLECTION OF REVENUE

As regards the collection of Revenue: Lm37,499 were collected as fines (including arrears), an increase of Lm8,136 from the previous year, and Lm110,124 as filing and registry fees, an increase of Lm11,064 from the previous year, together bringing the total revenue to Lm147,623, an overall increase of Lm19,200 over 2005.

REFURBISHMENT OF PREMISES

At the end of 2006 this Department completely dismantled the floor of Hall 2 because of the required substitution of ten steel beams in the underlying Registry. This work had to take priority over formerly envisaged projects. This work was carried out during the 2006 Christmas recess by a private contractor whose quotation to carry out the required works was the most advantageous.

During this refurbishment the Registry was temporarily relocated to what was previously the Advocates' Chamber which, in turn was permanently relocated to another room.

DEPARTMENT OF SUPPORT SERVICES

HUMAN RESOURCES

During 2006, the Courts of Justice Division maintained its drive to exercise greater control on the working time of its employees. All departments within the Division took the required measures to ensure that strict adherence with the Public Service Management Code. The engagement of a medical agency to carry out sick leave verification for employees who report 'sick' was also a good initiative which proved fruitful as the number of sick leave days/absenteeism decreased.

During the current year 11 appointments were issued and four pension papers were processed. These appointments have helped to improve the administrative work of the Law Courts, resulting in an increase in revenue of approximately Lm230,000 over the previous year.

An exercise to identify existing and future vacancies was carried out and a number of requests to fill existing vacancies were submitted to the Public Service Commission and the Management and Personnel Office. During the year, five drivers with the Judiciary, five Deputy Registrars, three Court Messengers, three Senior Marshals, three Senior Clerks and 13 Casual Substitute Clerks/EOs were engaged.

FINANCE SECTION

The Finance section is responsible for the collection of fines, fees and other revenue, refunds as directed by the Directors for civil and criminal jurisdiction, and the payment for procurement of stores and services in connection with the operations of the Courts of Justice. This section is also responsible for the payment of salaries to employees of the Courts of Justice and to persons who provide other services like Court Experts, Commissioners of Justice and other tribunals.

Every effort has been made during 2006 to maintain the Personal Emoluments bill as low as possible through savings in overtime. As a result of this effort the total amount spent on Personal Emoluments for 2006 was Lm33,000 less than that for 2005 with the same staff complement. With regards to Operational and Maintenance Expenditure, the Courts of Justice Division has managed to reduce expenditure by Lm35,000 when compared to 2005. This despite the fact that during 2006 the Department made a one-time expense of Lm10,000 for the procurement of two Directors' cars.

Reference has also to be made to many works related to maintenance of premises, the installation of a security system and the procurement of equipment and furniture. The contract for the provision of security personnel by a private company which started in June has cost the Division Lm6,620.

With regard to the Programmes and Initiatives category, here again a reduction in expenditure of Lm74,000 was made when compared to 2005. The bulk of the expenditure in this category was in respect of the Court Experts Fees. However, one must state that expenditure under this Item depends on the number of accidents and criminal cases reported annually. This applies also to other Items under this category such as sittings in the Small Claims Tribunals, Family Court and Local Tribunals where expenditure depends on the number of reported incidents. Out of the Court Experts Item, this year arrears amounting to Lm28,000 to the Malta National Laboratory were settled.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

One of the main functions of the Support Services Directorate is that of capital projects. This year the one-stop-shop of the Registry of the Criminal Courts Jurisdiction project was finalised at a total cost of Lm20,000. The refurbishment of the two main lifts at the Courts of Justice has also been completed at a total cost of Lm13,500. A Letter of Acceptance was also issued in respect of the structural and electrical works at the 4th Floor. This project aims at total restructuring of the 4th floor to house the Administration of the Courts of Justice including the Director General's office, the Director Support Services Office, offices for the Assistant Directors, the Human Resources and Accounts Section and the Registry. Structural and electrical works are already in hand; this project is expected to cost Lm184,500. Call for tenders for the reinforcement of the basement pillars is expected to be issued during 2007 at an estimated cost of Lm142,000.

REVENUE

Once again the Division has succeeded to increase the collection of revenue over the preceding year. During 2006, revenue was increased by approximately Lm230,000. This increase was due to the hard work of court officials who managed to identify areas where revenue could be collected, thereby reducing revenue arrears.

OPERATIONAL AND MAINTENANCE WORKS

Maintenance

An intensive schedule of maintenance works was carried out during the year. This included an overhaul of the main lifts that are situated at the entrance of the lobby. Extensive work has been carried out on the drainage system and painting of various parts of the Law Courts.

A number of air-conditioners have been installed within the private chambers of members of the Judiciary as well as Court Halls. Air-conditioners were installed to minimise the intense heat within the Court Halls during the summer jury sessions. The expenditure for this work amounted to approximately Lm3,500.

In order to remove any potential risk to visitors, the chandeliers of the portico which were extensively damaged were dismantled and will be undergoing the necessary repairs.

Security

The level of security at the Courts of Justice Division was increased by engaging a number of private security guards through a call for tenders. Security cameras were also installed around the building covering the main door, the Judiciary entrance, the Civil Court Registry entrance and the garage. A control room has been established at the Security Officer's office incorporating the security cameras at the Family Court. The system has a 24-hour recording facility.

Entry access to Courts of Justice Division has been brought under control with the introduction of a swipe card code entry system through the Civil Courts Registry. A computerised system records the details of the persons accessing the building. A similar computerised system has also been introduced at the Criminal Registry, for staff working within this section.

Health and Security

In order to address the health and safety risks at the Courts of Justice Division, three members of staff continued receiving training by attending courses at the Occupational Health and Safety premises. A detailed report covering Health and Safety risks at the Law Courts was forwarded to the Occupational Health and Safety Authority.

Fire extinguishers are periodically serviced and placed in strategic positions. In the meantime the Civil Protection has been contacted to make recommendations on consolidating fire-fighting measures.

New lightweight scaffolding has been purchased to replace the old metal scaffolding. Elevators are serviced regularly and they are being certified in conformity with Health Regulations.

TRAINING ACADEMY (TWINNING LIGHT ACTIVITIES)

The Twinning Light Agreement between the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs and the German Foundation for International Legal Co-operation for the initiation of the Project entitled *Capacity Building in the Justice Sector* was signed on 14 September 2005. An initial meeting to agree on a schedule of project activities took place at the Courts of Justice Division on 10 October 2005.

During the period November 2005-June 2006, activity visits in the following fields identified in the project were carried out on schedule: the acquisition of Video Conferencing and related Equipment, the setting up of a Research Unit and EU Library, the assessment of the Organisational and Technical Structures, the creation of two Websites (one for the Training Academy (TA) and the other for the Judicial Studies Committee (JSC)), the Training needs assessment for the TA and the JSC, and the development of Contacts with Training Institutions abroad. In addition to this, as per conditions laid out in the agreement, study visits by four participants of the host country to legal institutions in the EU were also made. The Twinning Light activities were duly completed on schedule on 15 June 2006. On termination of the activities, two reports, one on the performance and the other on the activities, were then drawn up by the German Foundation; the former was presented to the EU Commission and the latter to the Courts of Justice.

In accordance with the terms set out in the agreement two tenders were issued by the Courts of Justice Division. The first tender was for the development of two websites, one for the TA and the other for the JSC; this tender was awarded and the contract agreement was endorsed in November 2006. The second

tender comprised of two lots - the first lot dealt with the procurement of Video-Conferencing and related equipment, whilst the second lot dealt with the procurement of books for the setting up of an EU Library. Lot 1 was awarded and the contract agreement was endorsed in December 2006; the equipment identified in the tender was scheduled to be delivered in March 2007. Due to non-compliance with the conditions laid out in the tender, lot no 2 (books for the EU Library) was not awarded.

During this period the Training Academy was also involved in the co-ordination and running of an orientation session for prospective Deputy Registrars and an orientation session related to Council Regulation No 44/2001.

JOHN B GALEA

Director General (Law Courts)

Office of the Notary to Government

ARCHIVES SECTION

In the Notarial Archives are deposited deeds *inter vivos* and *causa mortis* published by Notaries Public who have practised or are practising in Malta. The latter are wills drawn up in the public form; the former are all other deeds relating to property transfers (sales, emphyteusis, partitions and others), loans, powers of attorney and so on. Moreover in the Archives one finds also all deeds received by the Notaries to Government. All these deeds are deposited for custody and safekeeping. The original deeds are housed at Head Office, whilst the Registers (copies) are housed off-site, in different premises.

All deeds are also accessible to the public for inspection, provided that the person enquiring about a particular deed can indicate the notary who published same and the date thereof. Legal or informal photocopies thereof are issued on request. Fees are charged for such inspections and for any copies requested.

NOTARIAL SECTION

The Notarial Section publishes deeds to which the Government, any corporate body established by law or any partnership or other body in which the Government of Malta or any such body has a controlling interest or over which they have effective control, is a party.

The Notarial Section liaises directly with various government departments to give effect to certain government policies and activities. The Department also receives requests for the publication of deeds relating to courses of study which the Health Division advertises from time to time for the training of medical and para-medical staff. These requests are also received when scholarships are granted by the Education Division, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Works Division and others.

A number of contracts were published by the Notaries at the Department. Amongst these, of note were the setting up of a foundation called the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies (MEDAC), a deed of acquisition by which Government purchased property to use as medical stores and a contract of works in connection with civil engineering and construction works at Bugibba perched beach.

Upgrading of Archives at St Christopher Street

During the period under review the Office continued working on the project of organising the Archives at St Christopher Street, Valletta. These Archives started opening to the public regularly twice a week instead of once a week as in previous years.

The Notarial Archives Resources Council found sponsors who donated a photocopier, a computer, metal shelving as well as a sponsorship to repair a number of volumes which are bound in illuminated manuscripts.

Deeds of Notary whose Warrant was Suspended

A number of deeds of a Notary whose warrant was suspended were bound into volumes, and those which were visited by the Special Commissioner for Notarial Acts were placed in the Archives to be made available to the public. The rest have been stored in a secure room awaiting inspection by the Court of

Revision of Notarial Acts. Work is still ongoing on the binding of loose deeds into volumes and in preparing registers of the said deeds. The Chief Notary to Government who has been appointed keeper of the acts of this notary signed a number of Public Registry notes for enrolment of same.

Notarial Warrant Examination

In May 2006 a Notarial warrant examination was held and 14 Notaries were presented with their warrants in July.

Staff

During this period the Department managed to acquire more IPSL employees whose contribution proved indispensable to the smooth running of the Department. Savings were made as they were instrumental in carrying out work which would otherwise have had to be farmed out.

Lists of Notaries

The Department also prepared the lists, of deceased Notaries and their keepers, both in Malta and Gozo, as well as lists of practising Notaries, both in Malta and Gozo, for publication in the Government Gazette according to law.

Lotteries

The Notaries from this Department were appointed by the Lotteries and Gaming Authority to be present to supervise the weekly Super Five and Lotto draws held throughout the year. These are being held in a private studio in Birkirkara and transmitted live on television. A Notary from the Department also supervised the Government VAT receipts lotteries held monthly at Saint James Ditch, Floriana.

Separation of Waste

The Department has continued separating paper, plastic and used batteries. These are regularly collected for recycling by WasteServ Ltd.

STATISTICS

<i>Notarial Archives</i>	
Volumes of deeds received in the Archives in terms of the Notarial Profession and Notarial Archives Act (Chap. 55)	110
Volumes of deeds received from the Special Commissioner for Notarial Acts in terms of Act X of 1999	27
Copies of deeds issued	10,218
Volumes repaired	77
Volumes bound	67
<i>Notary to Government Office</i>	
Deeds were published in connection with:	
Works (tenders) contracts	3
Courses of study and scholarships	10
Sale of gravesites	135
Other transactions to which Government was a party	36
Notes of enrolment, hypothecs and references entered in the Public Registry	196

Revenue and Expenditure

The revenue collected by the office during 2005 amounted to Lm57,256.23 and the expenditure during the same period totalled Lm123,604.98.

DR CORA VELLA

Chief Notary to Government

Department of Citizenship & Expatriate Affairs

RESIDENCE PERMITS FOR THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS

After a lot of preparatory work, various meetings, testing of an IT System developed specifically for such a purpose, the transposition of EU legislation and the establishing of related policies, the issue of Uniform Residence Permits in respect of Third Country Nationals through an automated program was inaugurated on 1 December 2006. Uniform residence permits which are issued in terms of the Immigration Regulations, 2004, are in the form of vignettes (stickers) affixed on passports.

This new role has been taken over from the Police Immigration authorities and has replaced two functions previously performed by this Department: the issue of work permits, now the responsibility of the Employment and Training Corporation and the issue of permanent residence permits under a Residence Scheme which is now being undertaken by the Commissioner of Inland Revenue.

On 17 November 2006 Legal Notice No 278 of 2006 was published in the Government Gazette. This legal notice concerns the status of third country nationals who are long-term residents (that is, they have been living in Malta - an EU member state - for five years or more). Persons who qualify for such status shall be issued with a uniform residence permit valid for 5 years.

The Director, Citizenship and Expatriate Affairs was delegated the powers to issue such permits by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Justice and Home Affairs (Government Notice No 943 of 3 November 2006, published in the Government Gazette on 10 November 2006).

Although it cannot be denied that the automated program did not have its teething problems, nevertheless, with the assiduity of the staff undertaking this new task and the ever-present backing of MITTS, the first few permits (14) were issued late in December 2006. By that time, no less than 308 applications were received by the Department.

PRESENT/FUTURE ACTIVITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT

Apart from dealing with Citizenship matters which form a good chunk of the Department's workload and which constitute a perennial activity, the Department has to undertake also new roles which have been devolved upon it, one of which is the issue of residence permits to third country nationals as mentioned above. The Department has, however, also been working, together with the Director EU Affairs of the Ministry, on draft legislation which concerns residence requirements for EU citizens and members of their families. The work is in an advanced stage and it is envisaged that the said legislation will be published early in 2007.

EU RELATED MATTERS

The Department's activities in EU related matters are not limited to those which have already been mentioned above. Indeed the Department is involved also in the transposition of EU directives which concern students and researchers. The Department's role in these cases is to give expertise input concerning residence requirements for such persons.

In view of the new tasks assigned to the Department which involve EU citizens and members of their families as well as Third Country Nationals, especially where residence requirements are concerned, the Department, through the attendance of the Assistant Director, participated in various meetings related to these matters, which were held in Brussels:

- *Meeting of experts on Directive 2004/38/EC on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Union, held by the Commission on 30 January 2006:* This meeting was convened by the Commission in order that experts nominated by member states, who were to act also as contact points for questions relating to the transposition and implementation of the said directive, could discuss difficulties and matters relating to the Directive's implementation.
- *Meetings of the Technical and Advisory Committees on the free movement of workers held on 22 and 23 February 2006 and the 26 and 27 October 2006:* The objectives of these committees are to assist the Commission to prepare, promote and follow up technical work and measures for giving effect to Regulation 1612/68 which deals with matters concerning freedom of movement for workers within the Union and to examine any questions arising from the Treaty and measures taken in pursuance thereof, in matters concerning the said workers and their employment.
- *Contact Committee Meeting on Migration Directives (focused on the Students' Directive 2004/114/EC) held on 6 October 2006:* The meeting discussed questions relating to the transposition and implementation of the said directive. Questions concerning the implementation of the Family Reunification Directive and the Long-term Residence Directive were also discussed during this meeting.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Nationality

The Department continued to deal with enquiries regarding the national status of both Maltese and non-Maltese citizens and with applications for the acquisition of the citizenship of Malta under the provisions of the Maltese Citizenship Act (Cap 188). During the year, 406 persons were registered as citizens of Malta whilst 68 others were naturalised as citizens of Malta, as shown in the tables at Appendices A and B.

Applications for naturalisation made under the Maltese Citizenship Act (Cap 188) are considered in the light of the established Citizenship Guidelines for the grant (or refusal) of citizenship; 27 applications for citizenship were refused in 2006.

The number of persons who acquired Maltese citizenship during the past five years is as follows:

Year	Registration	Naturalisation	Total
2002	684	99	783
2003	496	93	589
2004	514	70	584
2005	490	72	562
2006	406	68	474

Dual Nationality

During the year the Department continued to deal with quite a number of enquiries concerning dual citizenship. Former Maltese citizens, who have resided abroad for more than six years, may hold dual nationality, provided the relative conditions laid down in the Maltese Citizenship Act are satisfied. A breakdown of the number of confirmations issued up to end 2006 is given at Appendix C.

EXPATRIATES

Persons who enjoy 'Freedom of Movement'

This Department is responsible also for confirming that persons to whom Section 44 of the Constitution refers enjoy freedom of movement, that is, the right to remain in Malta and to work here (without the necessity of a work permit). Confirmations issued by this Department during the year cover 69 persons. Details of confirmations issued during the past five years are shown at Appendix B.

'Exempt Person' Status to the Foreign Husband of a Citizen of Malta

As from 1 August 1989 the foreign husband of a female citizen of Malta enjoys *exempt person* status. This means that if the said husband wishes to work in Malta he does not require a work permit whereas if he merely wishes to reside here he is not required to have his permit to reside in Malta renewed periodically. The number of persons to whom such status was confirmed during 2006 was 97.

'Exempt Person' Status to the Foreign Wife of a Citizen of Malta

As from 24 April 2001 the foreign wife of a citizen of Malta enjoys freedom of movement only after five years from the date of marriage. Until then she enjoys *exempt person* status which nevertheless gives her the right to remain and to work in Malta. During the year 158 wives of citizens of Malta were informed that they enjoy *exempt person* status.

WORK PERMITS

Although work permits became the responsibility of the Employment and Training Corporation as from 1 August 2005, the Department was committed to issue those permits for which it was still responsible. During 2006, 60 new permits were issued; 34 permits were renewed and 3 requests were refused.

REVENUE

During 2006 the Department derived Lm19,111 from fees charged for various services.

JOSEPH TREEBY WARD

Director (Citizenship & Expatriate Affairs)

APPENDIX A

FOREIGNERS REGISTERED AS CITIZENS OF MALTA UNDER THE MALTESE CITIZENSHIP ACT, CAP 188 - 2006

Nationality	Husbands of Citizens of Malta	Wives of Citizens of Malta	Former Citizens of Malta	Children of a Maltese Mother	Total
Algerian	4	-	-	-	4
Australian	23	17	13	105	158
Austrian	-	1	-	-	1
Brazilian	-	1	-	-	1
British	18	26	8	25	77
Bulgarian	-	2	-	3	5
Canadian	3	7	7	13	30
Chinese	1	1	-	-	2
Dutch	-	1	-	1	2
Egyptian	-	1	-	-	1
Filipino	-	3	-	1	4
German	1	1	-	2	4
Ghanaian	1	-	-	-	1
Guatemalan	1	-	-	-	1
Indian	2	-	-	-	2
Italian	7	-	-	15	22
Jordanian	1	1	-	-	2
Lebanese	-	2	-	-	2
Libyan	8	1	-	3	12
Macedonian	-	1	-	-	1
Moldovian	-	1	-	-	1
Moroccan	-	4	-	-	4
Nigerian	5	-	-	-	5
Polish	-	1	-	-	1
Romanian	-	2	-	-	2
Russian	2	10	-	-	12
Serbian	6	-	-	-	6
South African	1	-	-	-	1
Swiss	-	1	-	2	3
Syrian	3	2	-	-	5
Thai	-	1	-	-	1
Trinidad & Tobago	1	-	-	-	1
Tunisian	5	1	-	4	10
Turkmenistan	-	1	-	-	1
Turkish	1	-	-	-	1
Ukrainian	-	3	-	-	3
United States of America	5	5	1	5	16
Zimbabwean	-	-	-	1	1
Total	99	98	29	180	406

APPENDIX B**FOREIGNERS NATURALISED AS CITIZENS OF MALTA UNDER THE MALTESE CITIZENSHIP ACT, CAP 188 - 2006**

Nationality	Males	Females	Total
Albanian	-	1	1
Algerian	2	-	2
Australian	1	-	1
British	4	3	7
Bulgarian	1	-	1
Chinese	-	1	1
Egyptian	2	-	2
Ethiopian	-	2	2
French	2	-	2
German	1	1	2
Indian	4	-	4
Iraqi	1	1	2
Irish	-	1	1
Italian	3	1	4
Japanese	1	-	1
Kenyan	1	-	1
Libyan	1	-	1
Moroccan	1	1	2
Russian	1	-	1
Serbian	1	-	1
Spanish	-	1	1
Swiss	-	2	2
Thai	1	1	2
Tunisian	2	4	6
Stateless	15	3	18
Total	45	23	68

PERSONS INFORMED THAT THEY ENJOY 'FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT'

Category of Persons / Year	Persons born in Malta who ceased to be Maltese citizens whilst being emigrated (Sections 3(1) and 5(1) of the Maltese Citizenship Act)	Children of Maltese Emigrants (Column 1) or of Citizens of Malta, who are under 21 years of age and who hold another citizenship	Non-Maltese Wives of Maltese Citizens or of Persons appearing in Column 1	Non-Maltese Husbands of Maltese Citizens or of Persons appearing in Column 1*	Total
2001	4	167	125	5	301
2002	10	138	40	23	211
2003	8	202	29	23	262
2004	3	114	7	23	147
2005	2	54	8	11	75
2006	9	46	5	9	69

* As from 24/04/2001 (and provided they have been married for at least 5 years)

APPENDIX C

CITIZENS OF MALTA ALSO HOLDING CITIZENSHIP OF THE COUNTRY INDICATED - 2006

Country	Confirmations Issued during				Total
	1989-1999*	2000- 2004**	2005	2006	
Algeria	-	1	-	-	1
Australia	1,594	1,559	208	150	3,511
Austria	1	1	-	-	2
Belgium	4	1	-	-	5
Brazil	14	12	-	-	26
Canada	1,894	1,031	157	142	3,224
Denmark	1	-	-	-	1
Egypt	-	5	-	-	5
Finland	1	-	-	-	1
France	13	18	1	4	36
Germany	4	18	1	-	23
Greece	6	5	-	-	11
Holland	13	6	2	1	22
India	-	1	-	-	1
Ireland	3	9	1	2	15
Israel	1	1	-	-	2
Italy	271	180	10	7	468
Jamaica	1	-	-	-	1
Jordan	-	-	-	1	1
Libya	-	20	8	1	29
Mexico	-	3	-	-	3
New Zealand	21	9	1	-	31
Nigeria	-	2	-	-	2
Norway	2	-	-	-	2
Pakistan	-	3	1	-	4
Poland	-	1	-	-	1
Sierra Leone	-	-	-	1	1
Singapore	-	1	-	-	1
South Africa	7	17	-	5	29
Spain	1	1	-	-	2
St Christopher	1	-	-	-	1
Sweden	-	4	1	1	6
Switzerland	21	8	2	-	31
Syria	-	1	-	-	1
Tunisia	2	1	-	-	3
United Kingdom	906	1,420	137	74	2,537
United States	918	714	74	108	1,814
Zimbabwe	-	1	-	-	1
Total	5,700	5,054	604	497	11,855

* For year by year details, see Report for 2000

** For year by year details see Report for 2005

Department of Correctional Services

Prison is an unfortunate reality for all those citizens referred to the Facility by the Courts. The main objective of the staff at the Correctional Facility is to ensure that inmates sent for custody are looked after with fairness and humanity while maintaining the highest standard of security possible for the general public.

Security remains the first responsibility, but concurrently efforts are being made to produce real evidence that imprisonment can be a constructive experience, which helps the prisoners to reintegrate into society.

Efforts are also being made to drive down levels of drug misuse in prison and help prisoners stay 'clean' of drugs. This, coupled with incessant efforts to introduce educational classes work on literacy and numeracy and providing skills for the work environment outside the prison precincts, will help offenders change their lives for the better.

The Corradino Correctional Facility serves the public by keeping in custody those committed by the Law Courts. Our duty is to look after prisoners with humanity and help them lead law-abiding and useful lives whilst in custody and after release.

SECURITY

Following the escape of an inmate early in 2006, the security system was freshly re-assessed. A general survey was made and the needed works were carried out.

The fight against drug smuggling into the Facility was one of the main concerns of the administration. The dedication of all officers involved proved very positive. Prohibited substances were found on visitors and inmates on 40 occasions during the year.

Searches in cells, common areas, grounds and on visitors are being made without the least respite. It is envisaged that further equipment will be procured in the near future to continue to curtail this abuse.

PROBATION SERVICES UNIT

The main objective of the Probation Services is to help ensure stability by contributing to minimise the frequency of crime and by ensuring the reintegration of offenders to functional societal frameworks. It is aimed that the myriad of services offered will address the needs of the criminal justice system with regard to non-custodial sanctions.

Statistical Report:

During 2006, the Probation services received a total of 324 new cases from the Courts of Justice in Malta and Gozo, a slight increase over the previous year. The cases issued mark a shift towards the utilisation of the probation services at the pre-sentencing stage, with a marked increase noticed in the issuing of provisional orders of supervision and pre-sentence reports. In December 2006, the Unit was handling a total of 495 active cases distributed among two Senior Probation Officers, carrying a reduced case-load due to other duties, and eight Probation Officers.

The Probation Services database reveals that offenders come in contact with the Probation services for various offences. The predominant offence proved to be theft, as was the case in previous years. The figures show that there was a considerable increase in the number of drug trafficking cases, whereas there was a marked decrease in drug possession cases. This still resulted in the fact that a high percentage of offenders referred to the Probation Services have got a drug-related problem. In 2006, there was yet again a marked increase in sex offences concerning minors.

During the year under review, of those cases referred to the Probation Services, 30 instances concerned female offenders, whereas 294 cases concerned male offenders.

A high proportion of offenders who benefited from Probation Services fell under the 20 to 24 years of age bracket. There was also a noticeable increase in the 10 to 14 years age bracket. In general, the shift noted in recent years to more difficult and demanding offenders has become even more pronounced. Cospicua was the locality which yielded the highest percentage of cases with Qormi and Żejtun trailing close behind.

Breakdown of Cases	No
Supervision	48
Pre-sentence report	103
Probation Orders	134
Suspended Sentences	36
Community Service Orders	3

Type of Offence	No
Drug related	67
Sex related	25
Theft, arson, fraud	178
Others	54

Age Distribution (years)	No
10 to 14	15
15 to 19	70
20 to 24	91
25 to 29	51
30 to 34	39
35 to 39	27
40 to 44	13
45 to 49	10
50+	8

Gender Distribution	No
Females	30
Males	294

EDUCATION UNIT

The Education Unit of the Facility is now in its ninth year offering its service to the inmates. During 2006, the staff complement consisted of one co-ordinator and ten part-time teachers. The educational programme is organised on a voluntary basis. In 2006 the number of residents taking educational courses amounted to an average of 65 inmates.

The courses offered ranged from the first year of primary school to sixth form level. Furthermore, one resident and a former resident also attended a diploma and a degree course respectively at the University of Malta. The subjects taught at the Unit are Chess, Computer (basic & ECDL), Electrical (Licence A & B), English (basic & SEC), Italian (basic), Maltese (basic), Maths (basic & A level), Philosophy (basic), Pottery, Spanish (basic).

The Education Unit opens for six hours daily, five days a week, from Monday to Friday. During 2006 one resident completed the ECDL course and passed all the ETC tests (7 modules); one resident completed his diploma in Functional Arabic at the University of Malta and has now proceeded to BA (Hons) level; another has started reading for the Diploma in Functional Arabic at the University; yet another passed the MATSEC Board A Level examination in Pure Maths; 20 foreign inmates have acquired basic literacy skills in the English Language; eight Maltese residents have acquired basic literacy skills in the Maltese language; five other Maltese acquired basic numeracy skills.

YOUNG OFFENDERS' UNIT OF REHABILITATION SERVICES

This Unit houses residents aged up to 24 years, with a concession being made in respect of older offenders whose particular circumstances call for special attention. During 2006, YOURS registered 107 admissions, 13 of whom were foreigners. On the other hand, 93 residents were released or transferred from the Unit,

six of who were sent to attend a residential drug rehabilitation programme. The highest number of residents in the Unit was registered in April with 34 residents whilst the least number of residents was in the beginning of January when YOURS housed 17 residents.

There were no drastic alterations to the schedule of the daily activities within the Unit except for the introduction of two main projects. The first of these was the provision of outside work in return for payment. This provided the residents with the opportunity to utilise their time in a more efficient way whilst earning some extra cash. The second project had to do with the setting up of a small breeding station. The planning of the project, construction of the cages as well as the running of the whole project is entrusted to a group of residents who are responsible for the cleaning, breeding and caring of the rabbits. Both these endeavours have proved very successful with the residents, hinting at the need for more such projects which capture the interest of the residents and at the same time provide them with responsibilities.

During 2006, there was also an increased collaboration between the Employment and Training Corporation and the YOURS unit. The result of this co-operation was the provision of the Food Handling Licence (B) for 16 residents. The provision of this course within YOURS premises equipped these residents with official certification that enables them to work in the food and catering industry. Apart from this course, one resident was certified for the first two modules of the ECDL certification whilst another got a Diploma in IT Studies from a local accredited institution, and another resident started studying for two "O" levels.

INMATE ASSESSMENT UNIT

For the first half of the year, the Forensic Psychologist was not available and consequently assessments, care plans and resulting audits could not be carried out during this period. The EuropASI was carried out, albeit not on a regular or consistent basis. Statistics for this part of the year include only interventions carried out with inmates by the Correctional Supervisor. Work in connection with social work namely through the part-time Social Worker, and supervision of same continued.

As from July 2006, a Forensic Psychologist joined the Unit and during the second part of the year the Unit was functioning regularly, making available all services to the inmates, including liaison between inmates and various external agencies. These generally include agencies offering services of a social/welfare nature, such as Appogg, ETC, Social Housing and drug rehabilitation agencies.

The Unit handled 741 assessments, 238 EuropASI, and 210 GHQ. A total of 210 correctional care plans were classified as follows: 109 low, 84 medium, 16 high and one very high. Individual interventions carried out during the year reached a total of 1,194, involving 586 inmates. An average of 48 inmates was reviewed each month.

Statistical Report

During the year, 522 persons were newly admitted to the Facility. The Law Courts referred 825 tickets of admission which included newly-admitted and inmates already at the Facility. Those newly-admitted were 369 Maltese and 153 Foreigners. There were 27 males and 495 females.

Newly Admitted	
2002	399
2003	375
2004	480
2005	389
2006	522

Referral Tickets from Courts			
	<i>Sentenced</i>	<i>Awaiting Trial</i>	<i>Total</i>
Male	404	359	763
Juvenile - male	-	10	10
Female	40	12	52
Juvenile - female	-	-	-
Total			825

	<i>Sentenced</i>	<i>Awaiting Trial</i>	<i>Total</i>
Maltese M	122	223	345
Maltese F	15	9	24
Foreign M	24	126	150
Foreign F	-	3	3
Total	161	361	522

Note: - An individual may appear in the statistical tables in any one of the categories, i.e. awaiting trial or sentenced.
 - When a prisoner is required to serve a sentence for two or more sentences, it is the heaviest sentence that is shown.
 - Two or more sentences passed at the same time and ordered to run consecutively are treated as one in equal to the length of the two.

Expenditure

The average cost of maintaining one prisoner during 2006 was Lm23.51. The total recurrent expenditure was Lm2,943,611. Expenditure of a capital nature reached the sum of Lm110,000.

The average daily population during 2006 was 343 persons. The highest number of prisoners on one day was 387 (on 10 December 2006).

Daily Average Population	
<i>Year</i>	<i>No</i>
2002	277
2003	281
2004	277
2005	294
2006	343

Inmates (as on 10/12/06)			
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Sentenced	254	12	266
On Arrest	-	-	-
Awaiting Trial	116	5	121
Total	370	17	387

SANDRO GATT
 Director (Correctional Services)

APPENDIX A (i)**Sentenced Prisoners (By Age Group & Sex)**

Age (years)	2005		2006	
	M	F	M	F
14	-	-	1	-
15 to 17	4	-	6	-
18 to 20	10	2	32	-
21 to 24	50	-	55	9
25 to 29	83	6	91	2
30 to 34	68	4	95	6
35 to 39	36	6	57	4
40 to 49	47	-	49	3
50 to 59	30	5	29	-
60 +	6	2	3	2
Total	334	25	418	26

Sentenced Prisoners (Length of Sentence)

Length	2005		2006	
	M	F	M	F
One day to one month	102	7	113	11
Over 1 month to 3 months	60	10	51	5
Over 3 months to 6 months	41	2	48	3
Over 6 months to 12 months	47	1	43	1
Over 1 yr to 2 yrs	46	1	75	2
Over 2 yrs to 4 yrs	22	2	35	2
Over 4 yrs to 6 yrs	7	1	26	-
Over 6 yrs to 10 yrs	1	1	19	-
Over 10 yrs to 15 yrs	2	-	6	2
Over 15 yrs to 20 yrs	2	-	1	-
Over 20 yrs	3	-	1	-
Life	1	-	-	-
Total	334	25	418	26

Note: These figures include only incarcerating sentences. Other sentences are: Acquittals – 6; Suspended Sentences – 22; Probation – 9; Fine/multa – 2; Declared insane – 2; Extradited – 1.

Sentenced Prisoners (By Offence)

	2005		2006	
	M	F	M	F
Homicide and attempted homicide	9	-	8	1
Violence against the person	-	-	1	-
Breach of Bail	4	1	17	1
Theft	67	2	89	4
Sexual offences – rape, etc	5	-	17	-
Drug Related	43	2	52	2
Immigration	1	-	11	-
Prostitution	-	-	4	-
Escape from place of custody	4	-	5	-
Grievous bodily harm	1	-	7	-
Slight bodily harm	2	-	-	-
Fraud	-	-	4	-
Conversion of <i>Multa</i> /court exp	168	17	143	17
Falsification	2	-	7	-
Possession of Prohibited Articles	2	-	3	-
Illegal Arrest	1	-	2	-
Wilful damage	-	-	16	-
Other offences	25	3	32	1
Total	334	25	418	26

Release of Prisoners

	2005	2006
On Bail	148	198
By Court Order	2	6
On Payment of Fine	27	7
On Termination of Sentence	138	150
On Probation	10	10
Amnesty/Pardon	12	4
Immigration Act	4	-
Acquitted	8	5
<i>Multa</i>	-	28
Suspended Sentence	24	23
Transfer to mother country	8	1
As per Mental Act	-	1

APPENDIX A (ii)

Prisoners by Nationality		
<i>Nationality</i>	<i>Sentenced</i>	<i>Awaiting Trial</i>
Algerian	1	1
American	-	1
Australian	-	2
Belgian	-	1
British	2	7
Canadian	-	1
Chadian	1	1
Chinese	-	3
Dutch	-	1
Egyptian	3	5
Eritrean	1	5
Ethiopian	-	5
Georgian	-	1
Indian	1	1
Italian	1	5
Ivory Coast	-	2
Latvian	-	1
Libyan	11	44
Maltese	137	232
Mexican	-	2
Niger	-	3
Nigerian	2	10
Pakistani	-	1
Palestinian	-	2
Panamanian	-	1
Romanian	-	2
Serbian	-	1
Somali	-	5
Sudanese	1	8
Syrian	-	3
Tunisian	-	2
Turkish	-	1
Ukrainian	-	1

Prisoners by Place of Residence – Newly Admitted			
<i>District</i>	<i>Place of Residence</i>	<i>Arrested</i>	<i>Sentenced</i>
1	Valletta, Floriana	18	11
2	Qormi, Żebbuġ, Siġġiewi, Lapsi	19	11
3	Paola, Fgura, Tarxien, Luqa, St Lucia	24	17
4	Cospicua, Kalkara, Żabbar, Xagħra, M'Scala, Vittoriosa, Senglea	45	24
5	Għaxaq, B'Bugia, M'Xlokk, Żurrieq, Qrendi, Mqabba, Kirkop, Safi, Żejtun	20	16
6	Sliema, Gzira, Msida, St Julians, San Ġwann	35	13
7	Hamrun, Marsa, St Venera, Rabat, Dingli, Mdina, Pieta, G'Mangia	27	12
8	B'Kara, Balzan, Attard, Lija, Ta' Qali, Naxxar, Gharghur	20	14
9	Mosta, Mġarr, St Paul's Bay, Qawra, Mellieħa, Ċirkewwa, Għadira	17	11
10	Gozo	7	5
	Foreigners	129	24
	No fixed address	-	3
	Total	361	161

Department of Civil Protection

INTERVENTIONS

During 2006, the Civil Protection Department (CPD) responded to a total of 6,487 emergency calls, including 1,316 helicopter movements at the Gozo Heliport. In addition, there were 19 Marine related incidents which were dealt with by the Marine/Hazmat Unit. There were 332 which resulted as hoax calls, representing a 54% increase over the previous year.

Department	
<i>Incident</i>	<i>Total</i>
Vehicles	198
Rubbish/Skips	446
Grass/Trees	1,357
Gas	34
Houses	173
Shops	22
Hotels	22
Factories	29
Restaurants	37
Stores	86
Oil Spills	1,059
RTA's	170
Farms	35
Garages	39
Sea craft	18
Floods	59
Collapsed Buildings	8
Rescue of Persons	126
Fireworks Factories	5
Historical Buildings	1
Others	915
False Alarms/Hoax	332
Helicopter movements	1,316
Total	6,487

Marine Unit	
<i>Incident</i>	<i>Total</i>
Ship/boat on fire	3
Assistance	9
Boat adrift	3
Rescue of persons	1
Search for missing persons/divers	1
Hazardous material	2
Total	19

MAJOR ACTIVITIES

During the year under review, the Humanitarian Aid Unit responded to requests made by the EU, in conformity with the Agreement for the Civil Protection Mechanism, in providing assistance following the war in Lebanon.

Contingency Plan

A Contingency Plan for aircraft disaster outside the airport perimeter was drawn up. A mock exercise was carried out together with other entities who may be involved during such incident. The exercise was a complete success especially through the co-operation by all entities including NGOs.

Euromed

The Civil Protection Department, in collaboration with Euromed, hosted a week-long seminar on the theme *Pollution of the marine areas in the Mediterranean*. The seminar was attended by members of the Civil Protection from Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Israel and Jordan. The conclusions obtained were very satisfactory and further similar seminars are scheduled to be held in Malta during the coming years.

Education

The Department has continued with its aims of providing educational activities mainly aimed at students and schoolchildren. During 2006, there were a total of 27 visits to schools in Malta and Gozo (both government and private) as well as other educational establishments. Various aspects of Civil Protection were treated during these visits.

In addition, the Department has embarked on a series of television programmes on TVM aimed at depicting various incidents which happened in Malta and Gozo during the last years, together with expert advice intended to educate the public in ways to prevent such occurrences. These programmes have attracted public acclaim and will be followed by other programmes during 2007.

The Department has also made arrangements to deliver information to the general public during a morning breakfast show which has also attracted public appreciation. These weekly programmes will also continue during 2007.

Marine Unit and Humanitarian Aid Unit

During the year under review, both the Marine and the Humanitarian Aid Unit were shifted from their location to a new site at Shipyards Wharf, Paola. In view of the fact that this site was previously used as a derelict scrap yard, action had to be taken to clear the area and transform it for Civil Protection use. The site was inaugurated by the Hon Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Justice and Home Affairs Dr Tonio Borg in August 2006. Further works are being undertaken during 2007.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The Civil Protection Department continued to provide lifeguard services in five popular beaches throughout the summer period. The Department was assisted by a number of volunteers to run part of this duty. As in preceding years, the Department has also run these operations with the joint co-operation of three non-government organisations - the Malta Red Cross Society, the St John Ambulance Brigade and the St John's Rescue Corps.

Training

The CPD was involved in various training activities both locally and abroad. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has continued to provide Radiation Protection training courses and a member of the CPD followed a two-week course of training in Greece. Likewise the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has offered a week's course of training in Switzerland and Serbia for three members of the Force. The United States of America has also provided training as well as equipment costing thousands of Maltese Liri after a request was made by the Department.

AID FROM INTERNATIONAL BODIES AND FOREIGN INSTITUTIONS

The CPD continued to work towards the establishment of a Nuclear, Radiological, Biological and Chemical (NRBC) response unit. The project, funded by the IAEA, which commenced in 2003, continued

throughout 2006. More radiological monitoring equipment was provided by the agency to the CPD for training purposes.

EU MECHANISM FOR CIVIL PROTECTION

During the year, the Department participated in different meetings organised by the EU Commission to establish greater co-operation between EU member states and members of the European Economic Area, in the field of civil protection.

The Director has also participated in various meetings organised by the Euromed and other meetings organised by the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement. Both organisations provide the prevention and action to be taken in case of a major disaster.

EU Matters

Participation at meetings and conferences has reached an almost weekly occurrence and, for the purpose, an EU Office was established within the Department. A civilian senior officer has been appointed to deal with EU matters and to represent the Department in meetings abroad.

IN-HOUSE TRAINING PROGRAMMES

The aim of the CPD is to deliver best quality service to the community in cases of incidents. The best possible way to reach this objective is to maintain a continuous employee development programme as well as volunteers within the same Department.

Notwithstanding the problems that the Department must face to overcome problems related to human and financial resources, there is still the need to perform the tasks efficiently and effectively to save human lives.

The Department has also adopted other operational strategies to integrate the work of other agencies in other incident scenarios, such as flash floods and earthquakes.

PETER CORDINA

Director (Civil Protection)

Department for Local Government

Mission Statement

To ensure that all local councils have the legislative authority to respond to local needs in accordance with the functions and responsibilities delegated to them in terms of the Local Councils Act. The Department also acts as a stimulant to the devolution and decentralisation processes.

OBJECTIVES

In order to carry out its objective, the Department has three main roles:

- a co-ordinative role: the co-ordination of all initiatives by other ministries and departments that directly or indirectly affect the functions and operations of local councils;
- a guidance role: by issuing circulars to all councils to guide them in their operations and to ensure that there is uniformity of application and implementation of legislation and procedures;
- a monitoring role: through a supervision of councils' minutes, in particular on areas affecting expenditure, in order to ensure compliance with legislation.

SOURCES OF LEGISLATION

In the exercise of its operations, the Department is guided by the following sources of legislation: Local Councils Act (Cap. 363); Subsidiary legislation issued in terms of the Local Councils Act; Local Councils Procedures enacted in terms of the Local Councils Act; other legislation which directly or indirectly refers to Local Councils; the European Charter of Local Self-Government of the Council of Europe which Malta ratified on 6 September 1993; policies regulating local government, adopted at national level; and policies adopted by the ministry responsible for local government.

ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS

During this year, the Department filled the position of EU desk officer. It has also created the Petition Board and fledged it with five employees who register and file the petitions received by the public, refer them to the respective Authorised Officers for their comments and submit them to the Commissioners for adjudication. In 2006, 44 ex-WSC employees were deployed with the Gozo local councils. The majority of these employees perform manual work.

FINANCIAL ALLOCATION TO LOCAL COUNCILS

For the financial year 2006/2007 (ending on 31 March 2007), local councils were allocated the sum of Lm10.25 million. The distribution of these funds to the 68 local councils is made by the Department in accordance with the funding formula established in the Tenth Schedule to the Local Councils Act.

In order to determine the part pertaining to the respective local council, an updated inventory of assets (directly related to the statutory functions of local councils) is maintained by the Department. This inventory is carried out by the Field Services Unit of the Department.

The Department also allocates a financial contribution to the Local Councils Association and the AKSLM for their operational activities.

DIRECTIVES AND GUIDANCE TO LOCAL COUNCILS

As part of its role of guiding local councils in their operations, the Department for Local Government issued, from time to time, various circulars to all local councils. During the year, the Department issued a number of circulars ranging from guidance on payments, local enforcement system new processes, general deficiencies outlined in the Auditor General's report, information on newly published local government legislation, health and safety issues, and uniformity of application of statutory requirements. Certain circulars also concerned the collection of information from local councils in respect of the drawing up of draft replies to parliamentary questions.

The Department also assisted and vetted requests by local councils to obtain a bank loan for the purpose of acquiring new administrative offices. During 2006, five such applications were processed and the respective Letter of Authorisation issued. The Councils involved were Sannat, Qormi, Nadur, Kerċem and Ghajnsielem.

The procedures adopted by local councils in appointing new Executive Secretaries or renewing the contracts of existing Executive Secretaries were also vetted by the Department prior to these being forwarded to the Minister for consultation.

The Department also gave support in the following areas:

- *Finance and Tendering:* The Department answered councils' queries regarding finance and tendering, and monitored the submission of financial statutory documents. The Monitoring Unit of the Department assessed the budgetary documentation of local councils and offered advice to the Executive Secretaries on how to improve these submissions.
- *Human Resources:* During 2006, the HR Section was responsible for:
 - co-ordinating the training in the Maltese language for departmental staff and for Executive Secretaries;
 - progressions and promotions of several departmental staff;
 - liaising with the Water Services Corporation concerning the 44 ex-WSC employees assigned with local councils in Gozo;
 - processing of pensions of three departmental staff;
 - submitting a monthly return to the Office of the Prime Minister on staff;
 - liaising with IPSL on a regular basis regarding information and updates on IPSL employees assigned with the Department and with local councils;
 - updating the lists of IPSL and ex-WSC officers and the respective local councils where such employees are assigned.
- *Audit:* Following lengthy discussions with the National Audit Office, the Department published the new version of the Audit Procedures which substituted the existing procedures. The salient features of the new procedures include provisions for a mid-term audit; the drawing up of special reports; the holding of *ad hoc* audits; the new procedure for submission, as well as the new format, of the Financial Statements; and the provisions allowing for specific audits.

CONSULTATION MEETINGS

The Department held consultation meetings on a regular basis with the Local Councils Association and the Assoċjazzjoni Segretarji Kunsilli Lokali Maltin (ASKLM).

In January 2006 a seminar was held between the Parliamentary Secretary (Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs) and department senior officials wherein the annual work plan was discussed. Subsequently, fortnightly meetings were held to discuss pending issues and to keep the Parliamentary Secretary updated on matters of a serious nature.

The Department also had consultation meetings with other public entities on issues relating directly or indirectly to local government, or where action or initiatives would affect the operation of local

government. These included the Malta Tourism Authority, the Malta Transport Authority, Local Warden Agencies, etc.

DELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS TO LOCAL COUNCILS

Local Enforcement (LES)

During 2006, as a consequence of Government's commitment to improve the local enforcement system, in particular with a view to render the system more accountable, a new Local Enforcement System Committee was set up by virtue of Legal Notice 237 of 2006. The new Committee was empowered with (executive) functions to draw up and implement a general policy regarding regulations delegated for enforcement to the local councils, including the discipline function of Local Wardens. This Committee started functioning towards the end of the year.

Efforts were increased to instil more discipline and enforce environment regulations. During the year under review, Local Wardens and Green Wardens issued 2,500 contraventions between them. This measure has aided considerably in efforts to suppress littering.

In order to curb over-speeding the local councils have made eight applications for the installation of speed cameras. Complaints from the public on the local enforcement system diminished considerably in 2006 following the setting up of the Petitions Board.

Devolution of Government Property

During 2006, after processing by the Department in terms of eligibility and financial feasibility, central Government devolved immovable property to the following local councils: (i) a playing field in John Borg Street to Birkirkara Local Council; (ii) an area to be developed into a recreational area by Għarb Local Council; (iii) two rooms to be developed into tourist centre by Dingli Local Council; (iv) a garden and recreational area to Xewkija Local Council; and (v) Verdala Playing field to Bormla Local Council.

Petitions Board

In January 2006 a Petitions Board was set up by Legal Notice 414 of 2005 with the competence to decide on petitions relating to an evident mistake in the identity of the offender or in the identification of a vehicle, an evident mistake which resulted in the offender being wrongfully found guilty, humanitarian reasons attenuating the circumstances relating to the commission of the contravention, when the issue of the charge or notice of contravention is manifestly unjust or oppressive, or when the statutory procedures for issuing a contravention have not been followed.

During the year under consideration, the Board received over 7,000 petitions. 58% of processed cases were decided in favour of the petitioner.

MONITORING OF LOCAL COUNCILS' FUNCTIONS AND OPERATIONS

During 2006, the Monitoring Unit which falls under the Policy and Planning Section of the Department continued with its efforts to achieve full compliance by all local councils in their submission of their statutory documents such as Budgets, Business Plans and Quarterly Financial Reports.

The Unit's efforts were also reflected in that, for the local councils' financial year ended 31 March 2006, only four local councils registered a deficit in their working capital. This is an all-time low since 1997, when local councils started keeping their accounts on an accrued basis.

During 2006, this Unit communicated with various councils with respect to non-compliance in the timely submission of statutory documents (such as Council Minutes, Schedules of Payments, Budgets, Business Plans and Quarterly Financial Statements).

This Unit was in constant contact with the Office of the Auditor General with a view to reviewing existing regulations and procedures, including necessary amendments to statutory documentation. The two Monitoring Officers engaged with this Unit at the end of 2005 were instrumental to finalise the Audit Procedures which have now been published.

This Section was also responsible to investigate reports of alleged abuses or irregularities by local council members and staff, and punitive action was taken when allegations were proved.

FIELD SERVICES UNIT

During 2006, the Field Services Unit (FSU) of the Department carried out the following activities:

- *Data Update:* During 2006, the FSU continued to update the inventory of assets data of local councils, which serve as the basis for the allocation of funds to local councils. In addition, data compiled from surveys carried out in gardens, verges in urban roads and traffic flows in a number of localities were digitised into GIS map form.
- *Efficiency Reports:* In the period December 2005 to November 2006, the FSU carried out 68 inspections in Malta and Gozo with respect to the local councils' statutory functions of upkeep and maintenance of all roads, street sweeping, road signs and markings, public conveniences, urban footways and non-urban roads, and gardens.
- *Other Services:* The FSU also gave additional services to the Department, the Ministry and other ministries, government departments and other government entities. These included the provision of all locality maps to the Police Department in connection with a national restructuring process.

NEW LEGISLATION

Subsidiary Legislation and Bye-Laws

During 2006, a substantive amount of subsidiary legislation was enacted during the period under review. These were Legal Notice 22 of 2006 (Local Councils Financial Amendment Regulations); Legal Notice 111 of 2006 (Local Councils, Amendment of Tenth Schedule, Regulations); Legal Notice 140 of 2006 (Petitions (Local Tribunal) Amendment Regulations); Government Notice 696 of 2006 (amending the address of the Gozo Local Tribunal); Legal Notice 193 of 2006 (LCA Amendment Regulations); Legal Notice 225 of 2006 (amending the LCA Regulations); and Legal Notice 328 of 2006 (substituting the Audit Procedures).

Legal Notice 22 of 2006 is considered a landmark legislation as it introduced a new concept rendering local council members or officials personally liable in those cases where, without proper explanation to the Director, Local Government, it results that any payment has been made or that there has been any fraud or misappropriation of funds or of council property, or where any Executive Secretary or other person has wilfully or negligently omitted to collect or receive any monies or that any monies received have not been duly credited to council accounts.

Legal Notice 328 of 2006 is another important piece of legislation that has replaced the existing Audit Procedures to make provision for new procedures regarding *inter alia* submission of financial statements and management letters and compliance with the latest International Financial Standards.

During 2006, two Bye-Laws were published by local councils after approval by the Minister. These were LCBL 47/1/2006 by Pieta Local Council prohibiting loitering in and around St Luke Square, and LCBL

52/2/2006 by San Ġiljan Local Council regulating Advertisement on Street Furniture being Council property.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS

UDITE Congress in Malta

The Department sponsored the first UDITE (Union of European Local Council Executives) in Malta. The Director also participated in this Congress as chair of one of the work groups.

Participation in International Seminars/Conferences/Meetings

The Department for Local Government is also actively involved in international fora relating to local government. The Department is a member of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF), the Steering Committee for Local and Regional Democracy (CDLR) of the Council of Europe, and the URBACT (EU Programme) Monitoring Committee. Senior officials also participate in other seminars, conferences and meetings relating to local government organised by other entities, such as activities organised by national authorities of other EU and other states.

NEW INITIATIVES

In accordance with the proposals for the introduction of several measures as provided for by the 2005-10 Public Service collective agreement the following initiatives were taken up:

- *Flexibility in work schedules:* A questionnaire was devised and sent to all local councils (as main departmental clients) to evaluate and give suggestion on the service provided by this Department. Besides Quality Service, this questionnaire was also aimed to compare the office working hours of the local councils with that of the Department for Local Government.
- *Flexibility arrangements (flexitime, job sharing and teleworking etc):* During 2006 arrangements were put in place to accommodate two members of staff to work reduced hours/flexitime.
- *Electronic Attendance Verification:* This Department is in the process of evaluating several electronic attendance verification systems and quotations before deciding which system is most beneficial to the Department.
- *European Union matters:* During the year under review, the Department for Local Government undertook several initiatives in connection with European Union training for Councillors, Executive Secretaries and other members of staff:
 - March - met with Mr Michael Ashley, Executive Director, Local Government International Bureau (UK) to discuss areas of activities.
 - May - Mr Michael Ashley took part in a half-day seminar organised by the Department and the following day he held one-to-one meetings with several Executive Secretaries.
 - December – a one-day seminar for Councillors and Executive Secretaries was held regarding local councils' experiences in European programmes.
 - During 2006 the Department collaborated and worked closely with several local and international organisations/entities regarding EU matters, including the British High Commission in Malta, the European Commission Representation in Malta, the European Union Programmes Unit, Europe Direct Malta, Youth Programme, and the Local Government International Bureau (UK)
- *Green Travel Plan:* The Department for Local Government's Green Travel Plan has been carried out by the Administration Unit and based on the instructions laid out by the Principal Permanent Secretary. These included the study of the guidelines, carry out the necessary discussions and consultation within the Department and draw up draft GTP for consideration and eventual implementation.
- *Training Courses/Seminars.* During 2006 the following courses/seminars were held/organised by this Department:

- *March/April* - training in the Maltese language orthography for Local Councils' Executive Secretaries; three sessions were held for the Executive Secretaries in Malta and one in Gozo;
- *May* - Senior Management Development Programme - two courses of four sessions each for the Executive Secretaries and other local council staff;
- *May* - half day information seminar for Executive Secretaries;
- *December* - one day Seminar *Esperjenzi ta' Prattiċi Tajbin minn Kunsilli Lokali fi Proġetti ta' l-Unjoni Ewropea*.

FOKAL (FORUM OF LOCAL ACTORS)

During 2006 the Department chaired two FOKAL (Forum of Local Actors) meetings. The FOKAL is a consultative body composed of representatives from the National Youth Council (KNZ), National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE), National Commission Persons with Disability (NCPD), the ASKLM and the LCA (as observers). The Forum is chaired by the Director, Local Government.

Two major issues discussed during the forum led to concrete action for assistance by the Department in the promotion and support for the Youth Council initiative co-ordinated by the KNZ for the second time, as well as include accessibility to all persons as a matter of policy both at departmental and local government levels.

EURO CHANGEOVER

The Department was assigned the responsibility of project leadership for the Euro Changeover plan with respect to the area of local government. A Project Team was set up under the leadership of the Director, Local Government, whereby a business plan was drawn up. In addition, the relevant local government legislation that needed amendment as a result of the euro changeover was identified. Two seminars were organised with the support of NECC and collaboration of the Local Councils Association, whereby the implications for and input by local government were discussed.

MALTA – UK CO-OPERATION

Through collaboration with the LCA and the support of the UK High Commission in Malta, close co-operation links were forged with the Local Government International Bureau of the UK Local Government Association. Through this co-operation, senior UK government and local government officials visited Malta twice whereby assistance was given to those local councils wishing to establish close links with UK municipalities with a view to participate jointly in EU projects. This co-operation was rendered possible through the personal involvement and support of the outgoing UK High Commissioner for Malta, HE Mr Vincent Fean.

SUPPORT FOR YOUTH COUNCILS INITIATIVE BY NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL

The Department fully supported the new Youth Council project organised by the National Youth Council (KNZ). The Director participated both in the preparatory work done by the KNZ as well as the seminars organised for local councils.

NATALINO ATTARD

Director (Local Government)

Airport Security

THE OFFICE OF THE MANAGER AIRPORT SECURITY (OMAS)

The Office of the Manager Airport Security is the appropriate authority responsible for the overall management and control of aviation security at Malta International Airport. It is responsible to develop, regulate and manage a secure aviation system and provide adequate security services for the protection of all property and stakeholders in the aviation industry in Malta.

During the year under review, the Office of the Manager Airport Security acted in line with the global and local aviation industry, its main objective being a balance between facilitation and security leading to a *safe sky* for the local aviation industry.

AVIATION SECURITY COMMITTEE

During 2006, the Aviation Security Committee met three times. It is to be noted, however, that most of the groundwork was effected during sub-committees which met on an ongoing basis.

This Office also held meetings with stakeholders on a one-to-one basis. Besides being instrumental to maintain a sound correlation between different entities, companies and departments, these meetings provided a more steady and upfront flow of the agenda during the Aviation Security Committee.

CIVIL AVIATION SECURITY PROGRAMME (CASP)

The main objective of the Civil Aviation Security Programme (CASP) is that of protecting the civil aviation industry in Malta. This is achieved through the setting of appropriate regulations, standards and guidelines. The CASP further guides and makes obligatory, procedures to be undertaken by stakeholders connected in any way with the aviation industry; be they situated on the airport precincts or inland.

During 2006 the CASP was thoroughly appraised and reviewed. The 2006 adaptation was set in line with the current aviation industry environment. In March 2006, the new version of the CASP was forwarded to the Minister for Justice & Home Affairs and the European Commission for their necessary approvals.

In April 2006 the newly approved version of the CASP was handed to the aviation stakeholders in replacement of the older version. Government departments, and other companies connected to aviation security, were provided with an abridged version of the CASP. Only relevant information was disseminated to the relevant parties since CASP information was provided on a need-to-know basis only.

AVIATION SECURITY ISSUES

European Commission Inspection at OMAS

Between 4 and 6 April 2006 the European Commission inspected the Office of the Manager Airport Security. This was the second EU inspection - this time aimed at the appropriate Authority for aviation security in Malta.

The Commission inspectors mainly emphasised compliance with the community regulatory requirements, in particular the development and state of implementation of the civil aviation security quality control programme together with the compliance monitoring activities undertaken.

The final report by the EU Commission, dated 21 September 2006, confirmed that OMAS was fully compliant with EU Regulation 2320/2002.

European Commission Security Inspections

The Manager Airport Security, who is a certified EU Aviation Security Inspector and an ECAC AVSEC Auditor, carried out a security inspection on behalf of the European Commission in Fiumicino Airport, Rome. The inspection was effected between 15 and 19 May 2006.

European Commission & ECAC Workshops

In September, the Manager Airport Security was one of the main lecturers in a EC/ECAC Workshop organised in Lisbon, Portugal, where he delivered an informative presentation on the security training, tests and monitoring activities carried out by OMAS. A Commission feedback-form presented to all participants confirmed that Malta's presentation was rated amongst the best from the programme of study.

European Commission AVSEC Meetings

During 2006, the OMAS attended regularly for AVSEC European Commission meetings in Brussels. These obligatory meetings were instrumental to voice Malta's concerns and endorsements of important decisions in the development of AVSEC implementing legislations. Decisions were taken in the context of the local aviation industry strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

European Commission Concerted Action

In November, OMAS participated in a concerted action aimed at triggering the improvement of the air carrier performance in the field of aircraft security. The European Commission suggested a list of airlines to be monitored by participating countries.

The type of air carriers was representative of European airlines with regular airlines, low-cost and charters; 43 airports took part in this monitoring process. During the period under review, OMAS inspected more than 24 foreign aircraft. The national air carrier Air Malta was monitored both locally and abroad.

Security Audits, Tests, Exercises and Inspections

During the year under review, the Office of the Manager Airport Security carried out a number of tests and inspections. The Department also performed two security audits. The following is a breakdown of the monitoring activities effected:

Number	Chapter	Number	Chapter
<i>Tests</i>		<i>Inspections</i>	
10	Airport Security	14	Airport Security
3	Passenger & Cabin Baggage	30	Aircraft Security
<i>Audit</i>		1	Passenger & Cabin Baggage
1	Gozo Heliport	8	Cargo Couriers & Express Parcels
1	Malta International Airport	3	Air Catering Stores & Supplies

The aim of the above mentioned tactics are to validate the implemented security measures at a certain point in time. They are also aimed at monitoring the level of compliance with the CASP, EU Regulations, or/and any *ad hoc* policies which may at the time mirror the local threat level. A follow-up inspection ensured the approved rectification of any deficiencies that may have been traced.

Access Control

Following the replacement of all visual airport security passes with proximity/visual security airport passes, the OMAS introduced the use of access control systems for employees accessing various parts of the terminal.

Through this innovative access control system the times, gates, and pass bearer accessing certain areas are recorded electronically. This data provides a more convenient and accurate record of access and egress into and out of controlled and restricted sites.

Meanwhile, during 2006 the OMAS processed 3,500 temporary pass requests to enter into security, controlled or restricted areas. Permission was granted or denied after a balance of risk/threat assessment, facilitation and necessity. Persons granted temporary entry permits were to be escorted by a permanent pass holder at all times.

Hijack Exercise

Operation WARDA, the simulation of a hijacked aircraft landing in Malta was organised in November – 600 persons from different departments and companies were involved in the exercise. An innovative attempt for this year's exercise was the 'break down' of the whole exercise into sets of scenarios. The development of events was set in such a way to meet objectives set by the participant departments themselves. Observers from each department or company were nominated to monitor their own participation. This methodology gave all participants an insight of their strengths, and/or weakness where one considered needed improvement.

Staff

One of the Assistant Managers successfully concluded an ICAO-ECAC Aviation Security Management Course held in Brussels in April while in October the other Assistant Manager successfully concluded an Aviation Security National Auditor Training Course, also in Brussels. The latter is now a fully certified EU Aviation Security Inspector.

Security Training Courses

Security training courses are organised to ensure that the aviation security measures projected in the CASP are clearly understood by all employees.

During the year a total of 806 participants from airport and off airport employees attended courses organised by OMAS, as shown in the following list:

Course	Participants
Aviation Security Awareness	397
Secure Clean	137
Air Cargo Security Course	59
Armed Forces of Malta Refresher Course	136
Malta International Airport Screeners Refresher Course	77

Monitoring of Security Aspects in Airport Design

During the year under review the OMAS continuously monitored the Malta International Airport physical development of the Schengen Project.

Initially this Office approved the plans for design of the project. Periodical inspections by OMAS Staff ensured that the actual layout concurred with the proposed and approved plans.

OMAS also approved the plans for the design of a Cargo Shed for DHL. The physical building started in September 2006 and is still under construction.

In November 2006, meetings with Lufthansa Technik for a multi-million EUR investment for a new Airbus Widebody maintenance & overhaul project, was given a positive response for a 'plan approval' by OMAS.

Finally in December 2006, OMAS also approved the plans for the design of the new Air Carrier Catering Company situated in Fgura with an assembling facility at the Luqa Airport Old Terminal. The physical construction at the Airport Old Terminal started in December 2006, while the development of the catering premises in Fgura is to be initiated early in 2007.

Further onsite inspections are scheduled for all the above construction and development projects.

MARIO BUGEJA
Manager (Airport Security)

Detention Service

Mission Statement

To keep in custody in as humane way as possible those persons declared as irregular immigrants on arrival until such time that they are granted freedom of movement, i.e. Refugee or Humanitarian Status, or freed without their case being resolved, or repatriated.

GENERAL

The year under review was characterised by an increase in the number of boats carrying irregular immigrants which managed to reach Malta particularly during the summer months. In fact, in June alone, no less than 642 irregular immigrants landed in Malta and were subsequently accommodated in closed accommodation centres.

Inevitably, the estate available to the Detention Service could not cope with the subsequent overcrowding. This created a lot of tension within the closed centres and as a result an unprecedented number of serious incidents involving irregular immigrants occurred within and outside closed centres.

THE DETENTION SERVICE

The Detention Service was established on 18 August 2005. It is made up of personnel seconded from the Police Force and from the Armed Forces of Malta under one Command. It is a new department that falls under the responsibility of the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs.

To achieve its mission, the Detention Service was tasked with the security of the Closed Centres while providing:

- adequate accommodation, including the necessary toilet and shower facilities;
- basic needs, such as food, clothing, hygiene and safe environment;
- access to medical care;
- access to the asylum system, that is, Commissioner for Refugees;
- access to non-governmental organisations;
- means of contacting home or their country representative in Malta.

The Detention Service is made up of: a Commander – currently from AFM; 1 Police Inspector and 48 Policemen; 4 AFM Officers and 114 soldiers; and 57 Casual Detention Service Officers (ex-Police, ex-AFM or other similarly disciplined corps). These are deployed between Headquarters and 4 Closed Accommodation Centres.

A HISTORY OF CLOSED ACCOMMODATION CENTRES

Closed Accommodation Centres were first set up in 2002 following the first major influx of asylum seekers. Eventually, four centres were established at two Police centres and two AFM barracks, and presently these are located at Hal Far, Ta' Kandja, Safi Barracks and Lyster Barracks. Since these centres were first established, 7,178 irregular immigrants have passed through them.

At the end of the year the number of irregular immigrants accommodated in closed centres was as follows:

- Safi Barracks Closed Centre - 493 irregular immigrants in three compounds.
- Lyster Barracks Closed Centre - 482 irregular immigrants in two compounds.
- Ħal Far Closed Centre - 69 irregular immigrants.
- Ta' Kandja Closed Centre - 67 irregular immigrants.

ARRIVALS OF IRREGULAR IMMIGRANTS IN 2006

A slight decline in arrivals was observed in 2006 with 1,780 immigrants landing in Malta by late October, compared with 1,822 arrivals during 2005. This was mainly due to inclement weather that dominated the Mediterranean and which hampered crossings during the latter part of the year.

However, this did not relieve any pressure from the closed centres which had to find ways and means of accommodating an ever increasing arrival of immigrants, culminating in the arrival of a staggering 642 irregular immigrants in June alone.

As the pressure increased in the centres due to overcrowding, so did the number of disturbances and riots. Large groups of irregular immigrants attempted a number of mass breakouts intended as protests outside the closed centres. Such protests happened in February in the vicinity of MIA, in March outside Valletta and in June on the outskirts of Luqa. These protests were successfully contained by the security forces who always managed to return immigrants involved back to the closed centres.

MILITANT IMMIGRANTS

As opposed to preceding years, immigrants who arrived in 2006 were observed to be more militant, aggressive and more akin to causing trouble. In fact, the number of attempted escapes and serious disturbances recorded was three times as many as those which occurred in 2005.

As a result of the overcrowding and unruly behaviour by refractory and aggressive irregular immigrants, much of the estate under Detention Service control sustained serious damage costing thousands of Liri.

ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW ACCOMMODATION AT SAFI

Government realised that it would be more acceptable to have better accommodation facilities for irregular immigrants and as a result, a new compound was inaugurated within Safi Closed Centre in March. Known as C Block, the new compound was designed to accommodate 224 immigrants in three separate divisions. It was not long before it was put to good use with the arrival of two large boats full of North African immigrants who were immediately accommodated in the new block. Damages caused to these premises during the disturbances are still being repaired.

Other premises, formerly known as Ħal Far Reception Centre (HFRC), were converted from an open centre to a closed centre. Irregular immigrants accommodated at Police GHQ Closed Centre were moved to HFRC during late 2006.

MEDIA GRANTED ACCESS TO CLOSED CENTRES AT SAFI AND ĦAL FAR

Media access to view the closed centres at Safi and Ħal Far was granted on 23 March 2006. The media was also introduced to the new purpose-built accommodation centre (C Block) which had been built at Safi to replace former tented accommodation.

During presentations made by the Commissioner of Police, adviser to the Government on Immigration matters, and the Commander of the Detention Service, the Government's policy of detention and future plans for dealing with immigration were explained.

VISIT TO CLOSED CENTRES BY MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Members of the European Parliament Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs who visited the closed centres at Safi and Hal Far on 24 March were given the opportunity to meet the immigrants in detention and inspect every part of the estate belonging to the Detention Service. Although MEPs were very critical about the conditions at the centres, many expressed their solidarity with the Maltese authorities for the onerous task undertaken.

DETENTION CENTRE RULES 2006

An important milestone reached in 2006 was the publication of the *Detention Centre Rules and Standing Instructions* which constitute the Standing Instructions for the Detention Service. They make provision for the regulation and management of detention centres. They provide for matters such as the welfare and entitlements of detained persons, their religious observance, correspondence, health care and any complaints they wish to make, as well as the use of security measures such as powers of search and removal from association in certain circumstances. The Rules also provide for the duties of detention centre officers.

ENTITLEMENTS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND OBLIGATIONS WHILE IN DETENTION

Another equally important publication drawn up in 2006 was the pamphlet *Your entitlements, responsibilities and obligations while in detention*. This publication is an information booklet which outlines the entitlements, responsibilities and obligations of immigrants in detention. All immigrants in detention have each been given a copy of this pamphlet which is published in three languages, namely English, French and Arabic.

ENLISTMENT OF CASUAL DETENTION SERVICE OFFICERS

In view of the dearth in personnel which was adversely affecting daily operations, another group of 42 Casual Detention Service Officers was enlisted in late July. Following an intensive two-week induction course, these were deployed at Safi and Lyster closed centres. All such personnel had previously served in the Police Corps, the Armed Forces of Malta, other military corps and similar disciplined organisations. Another recruitment process for a further 50 Casual Detention Service Officers was undertaken in late 2006.

EU FUNDING - ARGO PROGRAMME

Following the European Union's decision to provide emergency financial aid to countries affected by irregular migration, the Detention Service embarked on a project to obtain funds made available by the EU. The aim of the project was to ensure that the minimum standard of reception as outlined in the EU directive Minimum Standards of Reception 2003/9/EC was maintained throughout summer, notwithstanding the large influx of asylum seekers that landed in Malta during the 4-month period (covering July to November) in question and afterwards.

The Detention Service (together with the AFM and Malta Police Force) and the Ministry for Health, the Elderly and Community Care submitted the expenses incurred in terms of meals and drinking water provision with respect to the closed reception centres, where the situation was at times considered precarious.

Medical services at the four closed reception centres were provided by two doctors and two nurses who dedicated 20 hours each over the four centres per week. These medical services were provided over and above the normal primary health care system in Malta available to the general public.

The project was accepted by the European Commission which co-financed 57.5% of the total costs, which in real terms amounted to approximately €550,000.

CONCLUSION

2006 proved to be another challenging year for the Detention Service. The number of serious incidents involving irregular immigrants exacerbated the already precarious situation within closed centres brought about by overcrowding. Given the Detention Service's stark resources, were it not for the resolve of its personnel and the support made available by the Police and the Armed Forces of Malta, the problem of accommodating so many irregular immigrants could have become unsustainable. However, in the face of all this adversity, the Detention Service prevailed and managed to overcome most of the serious issues that came about in 2006.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL BRIAN GATT
Head, Detention Services

Office of Commissioner for Refugees

GENERAL

The Office of the Refugee Commissioner started the year 2006 with the cases of 149 applicants still being examined, as well as 692 applicants awaiting the start of procedures on their case – a total of 841 persons. From January to December 2006, this Office concluded the cases of 1,210 persons of 39 different nationalities. At the end of the year, this Office was still working on the cases of 211 persons, while 720 persons were awaiting the start of procedures on their case. All of these form part of the total of 1,751 boat people who arrived in Malta during the summer of 2006.

At the end of December 2006, the ‘oldest’ cases waiting to be interviewed by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner were of asylum seekers who arrived in Malta by sea towards the end of June 2006.

During 2006, the Office of the Refugee Commissioner lost the services of some of its staff. At the end of the year, this Office consisted of the Commissioner, one Assistant Commissioner, four case workers, one Principal Officer, one senior clerk and a messenger (ex-Drydocks worker). Interviews for the engagement of new case workers were held in October/November 2006.

PROCESSED CASES

The total number of applicants examined by the Office during 2006 was 1,210, as follows:

Category	Number
Persons recognised as refugees	28
Persons granted humanitarian protection	522
Persons whose application was rejected *	637
Persons who withdrew their application	23
Persons whose case is still under consideration **	211

* The number of rejected applications does not include those who have been granted humanitarian protection.

** These include 54 undocumented applicants claiming to be unaccompanied minors. Their cases were referred to the competent authorities to establish whether or not they are really under age. Their application for recognition of refugee status can only be processed after such procedures are concluded.

The total number of persons recognised as refugees or granted temporary humanitarian protection by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner from January 2002 to December 2006 was as follows: Refugees – 186; Humanitarian Protection – 1,005.

CHARLES BUTTIGIEG
Refugee Commissioner

Department of Corporate Services

MINISTRY'S OVERALL MISSION

The Ministry's main objective with regard to law enforcement is to preserve peace, law, order and security in our society while at the same time striving to maintain an acceptable balance between the rights of the individual and the needs of the community. The Ministry is also responsible for land management, justice matters and local government.

DEPARTMENT OF CORPORATE SERVICES

The aim of the Department of Corporate Services is to offer support and advice to the Ministry's Permanent Secretary and the departments falling under the Ministry's area of responsibility on issues related to human resource management, finance and administration and information technology.

The Department's main responsibility is to ensure the most effective and efficient utilisation of the resources, both human as well financial, at the Ministry's disposal. It includes the collation and preparation of the Ministry's business plans, financial estimates, annual reports and monthly financial forecasts. The Department also plays an effective co-ordinating role on these matters between the Ministry departments and the central authorities, mainly the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Finance. Currently the Department handles all finance and administration requirements of the Office of the Commissioner for Refugees, the Department of Citizenship and Expatriate Affairs, the Law-drafting and Translation Unit, the Office of the Manager Airport Security and the newly set-up Detention Service. Most of the planning of the work of the Department is deadline-driven and depends on the target dates set by the central authorities.

Human Resources

The Department of Corporate Services continued to liaise with the various departments to ensure the effective implementation of corporate human resource policies, systems and procedures prescribed by the central agencies. It continued to provide support and assistance to the Ministry's departments/entities in the recruitment and deployment of human resources.

In its continued efforts to keep the staff complement of the various departments falling under the Ministry duly filled, calls for applications were prepared and/or issued to fill various posts. Two positions of Assistant Director at the Courts and one Project Officer at the Third Country Nationals Directorate, as well as 42 posts of Casual Detention Service Officers with the Detention Service were filled during the year.

Calls for applications were also issued to fill the vacant positions of Assistant Directors whose five year performance contract expired during the year under review. Five positions were renewed and the relative performance agreements were drawn up with the Directors in their respective departments.

Various progressions of officers from a certain salary scale to the next higher scale in terms of the Addendum to the 1993 Agreement on the Classification, Assimilation and Grading of the General Service Grades were drawn up and handed to the respective officers.

Personnel in the Human Resources sections within the departments falling under the Ministry continued to receive the necessary training on the compilation of Performance Management Programmes.

The HR Branch co-ordinated the selection process and engagement of a number of Casual Substitute Clerks through the Employment and Training Corporation to be deployed in various departments falling under the Ministry to replace other officers who had benefited from family-friendly measures introduced by Government.

Training and Staff Development

Personnel within the Accounts Section of the Ministry and other departments continued to attend specialised training courses organised by the Ministry of Finance and the Staff Development Organisation on the Accruals Accounting concept. Other staff followed courses in word processing and database management systems, and Occupational Health and Safety matters.

Staff posted at the departments falling under the Ministry was also nominated to attend training courses in IT and other seminars on the EU, organised by the Staff Development Organisation. Messengerial staff was nominated to attend a short course on receptionist/front office duties.

As in previous years, the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs funded another certificate course in Criminology at the University of Malta, thus giving a chance to police officers to obtain a University qualification in subjects related to their work

Finance and Administration

The financial management aspect was given utmost importance by the Branch in its daily routine work. Monthly Revised Estimates were drawn up for the Ministry's vote and its five Cost Centres, whilst the returns of the other departments which form part of this Ministry were also evaluated prior to onward transmission to the Ministry of Finance. Another important aspect was the drafting of the 2006 Financial Estimates and the consolidating of the Financial Estimates of other units forming part of this Ministry.

The Finance and Administration Section at the DCS performed the following tasks during the year:

- drawing up of the relative payrolls of personnel deployed at the various Cost Centres and units falling under the Ministry, after taking into account adjustments, increases, allowances and overtime;
- raising of financial returns as requested by the Ministry of Finance, the Treasury and the National Statistics Office;
- raising, on a quarterly basis, financial information regarding accrual accounting;
- raising of quarterly returns of suppliers who do not provide the Department with a fiscal receipt;
- recording of inventory items procured by this Office and making the necessary information available to the departments in order to update their respective asset records;
- processing requests for payment for the procurement of works and services;
- compiling information related to replies to parliamentary questions;
- approving advance payments made by the various departments falling under the Ministry;
- preparing the necessary documentation and closing of advances related to delegations proceeding abroad on official duties. During the year the Finance and Administration section processed 125 advances made to officers proceeding abroad on official duties and other ministerial missions, mainly on EU related matters. Statements of expenditure drawn up related to travel abroad were examined and certified correct before submission to the Auditor General and Accountant General. The advances certified were: 76 Attorney General's Office; 125 Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs; 280 Police; 26 Civil Protection Department; 36 Malta Security Services.

Green Initiative

A number of 'green' initiatives were embarked upon, spread over a good number of departments and entities. These included separation at source of paper, collection and safe disposal of used batteries and ink cartridges/toners, participation in the Energy-Saving (Neon-Tube) Project and Waste Collection Sites exercises.

The Unit co-ordinated and extended support to the Ministry's Green Leader towards the introduction/extension of 'green' initiatives identified within this Ministry. Plastic bins were procured for waste separation and measures were also taken to collect paper in garbage bags to be later collected by WasteServ for recycling purposes. Action was also taken so that whenever possible envelopes would be re-used for circulation of correspondence within departments under our Ministry. Funds allocated for such purpose were disbursed to purchase energy saving equipment. Solar panels were installed at the Police General Headquarters for energy saving purposes.

Boards and Committees

This Directorate is also responsible for all the boards and committees that fall under the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs. A database in respect of such boards and committees is kept regularly updated. Frequent correspondence is exchanged with the Office of the Prime Minister for the re-appointment and publication of the relative notices in the Government Gazette regarding the renewal/composition of such boards.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Department of Corporate Services, through the assistance of the Information Management Officer, administered funds allocated for the procurement of hardware and other IT projects and software applications. The Ministry's IT allocation for the year was of Lm558,000. Further funds were allocated for ICT Core Services Agreements under the Capital Vote of the Ministry for Investment, Industry and Information Technology.

Information Management Unit

The Information Management Officer continued with the daily meetings with the different departments, catering for their particular IT needs. This time-consuming exercise involved making contacts with MITTS especially on system software and other consultancy works. Procurement of hardware for all line departments was made through the extensive use of e-procurement system. Electronic Requests for Services were processed before extending the required IT services within departments. Constant contact was kept with MITTS Call Centre to assist end-users solve problems that arose during their normal routine work.

The Unit continued to focus on the implementation of the Schengen *acquis* with respect to Schengen Information System II (SIS II).

The preparation for a Refugee database took more than expected due to the number of entities involved in this project. A business analysis was finalised and a draft Request for Tender document was drawn up.

Other e-initiatives were taken in hand during the year under review as shown hereunder:

- *Public Registry - Notifications of Deaths*: business analysis drawn up, tender issued adjudicated and awarded;
- *Public Registry - Wills Searches-on-line*: business analysis drawn up, tender and adjudication in progress;
- *Manager Airport Security website*: business analysis drawn up, Request for Tender (RFT) document being analysed;
- *Judiciary website*: business analysis drawn up, tender document and adjudication in progress.

All the above initiatives were funded by the Ministry for Investment and Information Technology while the following were implemented and financed out of EU funds:

- *Judicial Studies Committee website*: business analysis drawn up, tender issued adjudicated and awarded;
- *Video Conferencing project at Courts of Justice*: business analysis carried out, tender issued, adjudicated and awarded.

Following an evaluation exercise carried out to assess the impact that would be brought about by the introduction of the euro, all IT systems within the Ministry and websites requiring euro changeover adjustments were identified and the relative contracts with MITTS and third party suppliers were signed to carry out the necessary modifications.

GEORGE ZERAFA
Director (Corporate Services)

EU Affairs Directorate

During the year under review, the EU Affairs Directorate co-ordinated attendance at Council and Commission working group meetings and kept records of those meetings in which Malta participated, both through its technical attachés as well as through the technical experts from the line departments. Monthly calendars and agendas were sent to the line departments concerned as soon as they were received. As a result, the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs was represented at working groups most regularly also due to the fact that some of the meetings were attended by the staff of the Directorate itself, in particular the Article 36 Committee. Furthermore, staff from the Directorate accompanied the Deputy Prime Minister to the Justice and Home Affairs Council meetings. The Directorate worked in constant liaison with the technical attachés in Brussels and ensured a constant flow of information and co-ordination between both sides.

Proposed new legislation in the area of justice and home affairs continued to increase and, as expected, the Directorate received a constant flow of EU documentation. This was distributed to the line departments promptly and according to the subject matter. The Directorate was instrumental in the drawing up of a large number of explanatory memoranda (which are submitted to the Inter-Ministerial Committee, Cabinet and the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives) and instruction notes for local use and for use at the working groups in Brussels. The Directorate also prepared instruction notes every week for each justice and home affairs item that was discussed at the Committee of Permanent Representatives, and briefing notes for the Deputy Prime Minister in preparation for the Justice and Home Affairs Council meetings. Furthermore, the Directorate prepared various other briefing notes and talking points for the Prime Minister when attending the European Council or when having bilateral meetings, as well as for the Permanent Representative when necessary. During the year under review, the Directorate continued with the initiative whereby member states, through their representations in Malta, were briefed about the positions that Malta would be taking in Council, during a meeting held for them one or two days prior to the Justice and Home Affairs Council meetings.

Throughout the year, the Directorate was instrumental in the drafting of legislation with a view to transposing the Justice and Home Affairs *acquis*. This was possible following consultations with the line departments concerned. As a result of this ongoing initiative, the Directorate managed to ensure the timely implementation of several EU legislative requirements.

The EU Affairs Directorate was also involved in the preparations for the Schengen evaluations relating to Police Co-operation, Data Protection and Consular Affairs. In this regard, the EU Affairs Directorate drafted the programmes for the Police Co-operation and Data Protection evaluations, and participated in preparatory meetings as necessary. With regard to Consular Affairs, the Directorate was involved in co-ordination, mainly between officials from the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Above all, the Directorate co-ordinated and formalised answers to questionnaires and follow-up reports in connection with these evaluations.

Besides the official evaluations relating to Schengen, two French Senators visited Malta in September 2006, with a view to assess preparations for entry into the Schengen area. Officials from the EU Affairs Directorate assisted in the co-ordination of these visits, and attended meetings and events as necessary.

During the year under review, the EU Affairs Directorate within the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs continued to consolidate its structures, primarily through the deployment of a Fund Manager. This

followed the recruitment process initiated by the Ministry in 2005 and was undertaken in anticipation of the commitments arising out of the Financial Perspectives for 2007-2013 and the current EU Funding Mechanisms, in particular the European Refugee Fund. The Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs is responsible for the Management of the Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows Framework Programme under which four financing mechanisms are included. To this end, the new structures placed the Directorate in a better position to monitor the implementation of EU funded projects under the different financial mechanisms.

Throughout 2006, the EU Affairs Directorate provided assistance, monitored and ensured the proper implementation of various projects, and ensured the timely and efficient implementation of the Transition Facility 2004, 2005 and 2006 projects.

Following the signing of the European Refugee Fund II 2005 grant agreements, the EU Affairs Directorate monitored the proper implementation of the five European Refugee Fund II 2005 projects. The Directorate also set up a proper reporting, payment, verification and monitoring procedure in line with EU regulations. The calls for project applications under the European Refugee Fund II 2006 were issued following which projects were selected. In addition, the Annual Programme (required under ERF regulations) for 2006 was also submitted to the Commission. The call for projects under the European Refugee Fund II 2007 was issued in October. Throughout the different stages the beneficiaries of the European Refugee Fund were guided as to proper implementation of their projects.

Under the ARGO 2006 Programme, specific actions projects were drawn up and sent to the European Commission. Both projects submitted by Malta under this fund were selected. Following the issuance for project proposals under ARGO 2006 and the Return Preparatory Actions Programme, two project proposals were submitted for consideration by the Commission.

The EU Affairs Directorate also co-ordinated two TAIEX Seminars, on issues of data protection under the third pillar and access to justice.

DR JOSETTE ZERAFÀ
Director (EU Affairs)

Policy Development Directorate

The Policy Development Director, within the Office of the Permanent Secretariat, is responsible for providing coherent direction and guidance in policy formulation to all of the Ministry's line departments.

During 2006 the Directorate continued providing assistance in the consolidation of the newly set up Detention Service. Roles and duties for the organisation were formally established, as well as the Unit's obligation and responsibility towards those entrusted under its care. The gradual recruitment exercise of new Casual Detention Offices was continued throughout the year. This process will eventually replace service personnel which can then be returned to their core duties in line with the Ministry's policy in this area.

Another area of activity in which the Directorate played a significant role was in the evaluation of the proposed new regulations for the use and possession of arms. Following the publication of the Arms Act in 2005, the Directorate was responsible for co-ordinating work between the Ministry, the Advisory Board and Police Department and subsequently advising the Ministry on a set of new regulations that would translate the provisions of the Arms Act into executable functions. The introduction of a number of new activities in the Arms Act requires a serious and holistic approach. Thus the Act provides for the setting up of a Weapons Board which amongst other duties is responsible for giving advice to the Minister and the Commissioner of Police on related matters. As a result of a consultation exercise and the collective effort of the various stakeholders, the Directorate was in a position in August 2006 to bring into force the Arms Act, Arms Licensing Regulations (LN 177 of 2006) as well as setting up the Weapons Board composed of representation from Government and organisations representing this sector.

During the year the Director was also mandated with co-ordinating two cross-Government initiatives, namely the Euro Changeover process and the Better Regulation Exercise.

Under the Euro Changeover initiative, the Directorate acted as the Ministry's Euro Co-ordinator, thus facilitating the work of the Public Sector Sectoral Committee (PSSC) within the National Euro Changeover Committee (NECC). A number of information sessions were held with line departments both on a one-to-one basis and at corporate level to disseminate the changeover plan that was to be rolled out by the PSSC. Through various reviews, an evaluation exercise was undertaken on the impact that the introduction of the euro would have on the IT infrastructure, business process, legislation and staff training of all the line departments and entities falling within the Ministry. During the year, two updated versions of the Ministry's Changeover Plan were produced. The Directorate also assisted the horizontal task forces working on IT, legislation and training requirements.

The Better Regulation reform exercise was another initiative undertaken during the year. Following initial information seminars organised between the Directorate and the Better Regulation Unit, line departments were requested to submit proposals which would enable them to improve service delivery to their clients, being both the general public and the business community. As a result of the support and motivation raised during this review, the Ministry identified 24 initiatives (the highest across Government) for consideration by the Better Regulation Unit and final approval by Cabinet. As approval on these initiatives was received in late November 2006, most initiatives will be realised during the course of 2007.

IRREGULAR IMMIGRATION

The issue of illegal immigration was not only high on the national agenda but has been brought to the forefront of the EU Justice and Security Council agenda. Throughout the year the Directorate has provided briefs and reports to the Office of the Prime Minister and Ministry for Foreign Affairs as part of Government's commitment to bring international awareness to the crises that Malta was facing in this area.

A major role of the Directorate was that of bringing the issue of irregular immigration to the attention of European Border Agency – Frontex. At the request of the Ministry, Frontex was engaged in providing a number of immigration officers from various member states to assist local immigration authorities in the identification of irregular immigrants. Another initiative, which also involved diplomatic and technical meetings with Italian and Libyan officials, was the planning of the first joint patrol operation under the auspice of the EU in the southern Mediterranean. This joint patrol mission code named Nautilus was possible after various technical meeting between officials from Malta, Italy, Greece, France and Germany. These countries agreed to pool in their sea and air assets to make this mission possible. The Joint Patrolling exercise was carried out between 5 and 10 October and, besides being a deterrent to criminal networks, also provided a learning experience for future missions of this type.

Throughout the year the Directorate acted as a focal point in the area of migration with foreign governments, at EU level and with international organisations such as UNHCR and IOM. It also undertook to participate in a number of fora and international conference, at the same time enhancing networking opportunities.

THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS SECTION

The Third Country Nationals Unit which is responsible for working on issues related to irregular immigration and asylum continued to consolidate its work, following internal restructuring which took place in 2005. Its administrative capacity was enhanced by the recruitment of a project officer in mid-2006. The Unit was responsible for various co-ordinating tasks in the area of asylum and irregular immigration. Through EU funded programmes, various experts were brought over to provide training in legal and administrative matters, as well as in the practical approach to the management of reception centres. Through the ARGO Funds, the Assistant Director Third Country Nationals lead a six men Maltese delegation made up of government officials and NGOs representatives, to the Netherlands. The visit provided an opportunity for the Maltese delegation to experience at first hand the methodology used by the Dutch authorities working in the area of asylum and irregular immigration.

During the year an important service offered by the Unit was that of providing legal aid to over 500 asylum seekers of which over 400 cases were concluded by end of year. During the year the pool of legal aid was increased to match the demand and the structure will be reviewed again next year.

In view of the various stakeholders involved in processing irregular immigrants and asylum seekers, it was found necessary to incorporate the various inputs into one comprehensive process that would give management a tool that provides exact and on-time reports of the situation. For this purpose MITTS were commissioned with drawing up a requirements document for an IT Registration and Tracking System. It is planned to have the system running by end 2007.

Resettlement opportunities was another area that has been given high priority by the Ministry. Although much depends on the goodwill of other countries, a slow but steady understanding of Malta's situation is emerging. During the year Third Country Nationals Unit was responsible for identifying and co-ordinating the resettlement of twenty persons enjoying protection in Malta, to start a new life in Germany. Preparatory work was undertaken with the Governments of Ireland, Lithuania and USA, and resettlements exercise are to be carried out in 2007 with each of these countries taking 10, 6 and 30 persons respectively.

The Directorate's principal work of activity for the year was concluded with an international conference organised in conjunction with IOM on Assisted Voluntary Return for failed asylum seekers. This is a new initiative being introduced to consolidate Malta's holistic approach in dealing with its immigration problem by providing permanent structures for those not eligible for protection to return home in a dignified manner. This initial pilot project will be followed by a feasibility study next year so as to improve on the service delivery of the specific target groups.

MARIO CARUANA

Director (Policy Development)

Programme Implementation Directorate

Following a 60% staff turnover in the past year (including a change of Director), the Programme Implementation Directorate was restructured in order to take up duties which better reflect the priorities of the Ministry. In view of this reorganisation, during 2006 the Programme Implementation Directorate focused its activities on project monitoring, handling of media-related items, customer care matters and international affairs.

PROJECT MONITORING

At the start of the year the Directorate was tasked with re-introducing a project monitoring system. Accordingly line departments were asked to nominate a liaison officer in order to report back on the progress of particular projects. Following introductory meetings which were held with line departments, 42 projects were identified and monitored during 2006. Apart from these ministry-specific projects, the Directorate also monitored, directly or indirectly, the implementation of other public service-wide initiatives such as Better Regulation, NCSD and Euro Changeover.

This Directorate became also involved in the compiling of the Pandemic Preparedness Action Plan and was entrusted with the nomination of contact points in all the Ministry departments/divisions who were subsequently asked to send in the necessary plans and precautions related to this issue.

Apart from these projects, the Directorate was tasked by the Permanent Secretary to participate and report back on various ministry issues such as prison matters, the implementation of the Schengen Acquis (a vast project involving the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs, the Ministry for Investment and Information Technology and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the development of National Identity Management Systems.

With regard to prison matters, the Directorate was tasked with compiling and monitoring, in consultation with the Director (Correctional Facilities) and the Prison Board of Visitors, a number of tasks to be carried out at the Corradino Correctional Facilities and other premises falling within the same remit.

During 2006, a strategic decision was taken by the Office of the Prime Minister, in which Directors of Programme Implementation were to take up the responsibilities of Senior Programming Officers for the Structural Fund Programme 2007-2013. In this regard, senior management discussions were held between the Directorates of Programme Implementation and EU Affairs in order to chart out the migration of the related staff and processes.

GREEN INITIATIVES

During 2006, Government allocated Lm10,000 for each Ministry to spend on Green Initiatives. Within the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs, such funds were administered by the Green Leader under direct supervision of the Director (Programme Implementation). When considering what expenditures would be effected, the Directorate focused on three of the 'green areas' that have been identified by Government, namely energy, waste, and water. Furthermore, in order to provide a fair distribution of expenditure, each line division/department within the Ministry was asked to submit proposals on how they could benefit from such funds.

The following expenditures were carried out during the year:

- purchase and installation of a PV Panel;
- purchase and installation of water-saving automatic spouts;
- purchase of bring-in sites;
- purchase of environment-themed stickers.

Apart from the above purchases, the Green Leader carried out an environment-awareness campaign (through the distribution of green-related tips and stickers), and also assisted the Director in drawing up the Ministry's environment and sustainability policy, the green office criteria list and, following consultations with officials within the Ministry, the Green Travel plan. Furthermore the Green Leader acted as liaison person with the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment on participation in the 34U campaign.

CUSTOMER CARE

The Customer Care service was enhanced during 2006 as, apart from queries generated through the Customer Care System, the Unit started managing also requests received through the Ministry's website. A total of 418 incoming requests (from both local and foreign sources), varying from complaints, requests for information and suggestions were handled during 2006 (an increase of 246 from the previous year). A system was also devised whereby all details (including statistics) of incoming requests/complaints were recorded to be retained for future reference.

As per instructions issued by the Charter Support Unit, each Department has to ensure that it conforms with a number of minimum customer-oriented service standards. In this regard, the Customer Care Unit of the Directorate organised a road show in which such standards were presented to senior officials within the line departments. Subsequently, a survey sheet was circulated in order to ascertain whether divisions and departments were compliant or otherwise.

The Customer Care Co-ordinator participated also in related Customer Care forums.

Media Items

During 2006, the main newspapers were monitored on a daily basis in order to identify articles concerning the Ministry's policies and any customer-care related issues. These articles were copied and distributed amongst relevant officials and records were also kept in a related database. Apart from newspapers, the Directorate also monitored and recorded press releases, acts and legal notices.

Ministry's Website

During the year, the Directorate was entrusted with liaising with line departments in order to review and update contents of web-pages within the Ministry's website. Initial amendments were carried out in a number of web-pages, and particularly in those pertaining to the Permanent Secretariat, the Police Force, the Department of Local Government, the Passport Office and the Marriage Registry

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

2006 was a busy year with regard to international affairs, with the signing of a number of bilateral agreements and visits by international delegations and dignitaries, including the holding of two international seminars.

In all, four bilateral agreements were signed during 2006. In May Malta secured bilateral agreements on Extradition and Mutual Legal Assistance with the United States of America. In July Malta signed a Bilateral Agreement on Co-operation against Organised Crime with Bulgaria. During the same month, bilateral discussions were held at the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs between Maltese and Tunisian

delegations in order to reach an agreement on Extradition. The Programme Implementation Directorate took care of the logistics of the meetings and participated in the discussions. At the end of the discussions, Malta and Tunisia reached consensus on the text. The Agreement was eventually signed in December, during a visit in Malta by the Tunisian Minister of Justice and Human Rights.

A Chinese Senior Officials delegation, led by the Deputy Director General of the Department of Judicial Assistance and Foreign Affairs of the Chinese Ministry of Justice, visited Malta in October 2006. The aim of the visit was to discuss prison management related issues and to tour prison facilities and services in Malta. During its stay in Malta, the delegation visited the Corradino Correctional Facilities, the Forensic Ward at Mount Carmel Hospital and the Substance Abuse Therapeutic Unit (SATU) at Imtahleb. Talks were also held with a Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs delegation, led by the Permanent Secretary, on the possibility of enhancing bilateral co-operation between Malta and China in this particular area. The role of the Programme Implementation Directorate in such visit was primarily to co-ordinate the programme, in co-ordination with the Chinese Embassy in Malta and with the Director (Corradino Correctional Facilities). The Directorate was also tasked with organising site visits and accompanying the Chinese delegation throughout the stay.

The Directorate was assigned with taking care of logistical arrangements related to other important visits by international senior dignitaries, most notably the visit by the Italian Minister for Justice, Hon Clemente Mastella (in November), the Tunisian Minister of Justice and Human Rights, Mr Bechir Tekkari and the visit by senior delegations from Libya, Italy and the European Union in September 2006 who attended an EU-Libya preparatory meeting on illegal immigration.

The Directorate organised two major conferences, jointly with international organisations, during 2006.

In March, the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs, in collaboration with the Hague Conference on Private International Law, hosted the second Judicial Conference on Cross-Frontier Family Law Issues. The Conference continued the process of dialogue, which began with the first Malta Conference (organised in 2004) and focused on the protection of cross-frontier rights of contact/access of parents and their children and the problems posed by parental abductions between the countries concerned.

In November, a seminar on the implications of dual nationality was jointly organised between the Ministry and Euromed Justice Programme.

In both occasions the Programme Implementation Directorate was tasked with organising the logistical aspects of the seminar.

JESMOND CAMILLERI

Director (Programme Implementation)

Ministry of Education,
Youth and Employment

Education Division

THE DIVISION

The Education Division is committed to ensure that all students of compulsory school age attending Maltese schools receive a quality education which will help them grow up into fully-fledged citizens. This objective can be achieved by the creation and provision of opportunities throughout their educational experience which facilitate their holistic development. The Division is thus the guardian of each child's right to develop her/his cognitive potential. Compulsory education must also ensure that all children are endowed with the skills, knowledge and attitudes to make education a lifelong experience.

The core values which drive the Education Division are equity and quality in the provision of learning experiences. In its role, the Division endeavours to meet the current and future needs of each individual student within Maltese society and the larger European context. This mission is accomplished through the effective and efficient use of the resources at its disposal.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Education Division which falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment (MEYE), is subdivided into six departments:

- Planning and Development
- Curriculum Management
- Operations
- Student Services and International Relations
- Technology in Education
- Further Studies and Adult Education.

The Department of Finance and Administration, which up to 2005 was part of the Education Division, has been restructured and merged with the Department of Corporate Services, answerable to the Permanent Secretary, MEYE. The departments within the Division have strong links between them and with other departments, agencies and foundations within the Ministry. This network facilitates the provision of a holistic service to all its clients from kindergarten to adult education.

TOP MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES OF THE EDUCATION DIVISION

The political Head of the Education Division is the Minister of Education, Youth and Employment, who is assisted by the Permanent Secretary. Being one of the largest departments in the Public Service accounting for about one third of public service employees, the Education Division is under the directorship of a Director General who carries the overall responsibility for the Division's six departments. Each of the departments within the Division is managed by a Director. Each department is subdivided into branches, each headed by an Assistant Director. Each branch offers specific services covering determined areas.

Other administrators and specialists within the various Education departments include education officers, counsellors, social workers, educational psychologists and a medical officer. The Division also operates a peripatetic teacher service to schools in the following areas: Art, Complementary Education, Drama,

Health and Safety, Information Technology, Music, Personal and Social Education and Physical Education.

RESTRUCTURING OF THE EDUCATION DIVISION

Currently, the Education Division is responsible both for the provision of education services as well as for monitoring the quality of the services it provides. In line with the Ministry's objective of increasing school autonomy through the creation of College Networks to provide quality education, the need and demand for quality assurance and monitoring assumes a greater role. This is reflected in the policy document *For All Children to Succeed*. For this to come about, the Education Division will be re-engineered into two distinct entities – two directorates. The Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education will be responsible for monitoring and quality assurance. The Directorate for Educational Services will be responsible for providing those services which, due to economies of scale, cannot be decentralised to the College Networks. The necessary legislative instruments regulating this new set-up have been included in the amended Education Act in 2006. During 2006, ongoing discussions were held with the stakeholders to draw up an implementation plan.

COLLEGE NETWORK

Following the successful piloting of three College Networks during school year 2005/06, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment was encouraged to continue with the implementation of the policy document *For all Children to Succeed*. Plans were laid for setting up and launching four more colleges. College co-ordinators were appointed and the Colleges started functioning as from October 2006. It is planned that three more colleges will be set up in October 2007. During 2006, the existing colleges consolidated their position and the services they provide. Colleges were given the status of legal entities by means of Act XIII of 2006 which was enacted in August 2006, amending the Education Act 1988.

SCHOOL BUILDING PROGRAMME

The National Minimum Curriculum (NMC) highlights the importance of having a learning environment which stimulates the learning process and contributes to the development of students' attitudes and behaviour. The NMC specifically states that "school environments must be improved or changed". The Ministry has initiated an ambitious school building programme in tandem with an ongoing refurbishment of existing schools. During 2006, work was initiated on the building of two new secondary schools; one at Handaq and another at Verdala. The programme, which is managed by the Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools, is aimed at having a stock of modern and user-friendly school buildings equipped with all the facilities required for the holistic education of our students.

BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL PLAN 2007 - 2009

The Education Division annually prepares its three-year Business and Financial Plan. This plan incorporates the Division's ongoing and future projects, reflecting the Ministry's policy agenda and priorities. The Business Plan was drawn up through a process of consultation and negotiation among the departments within the Division and co-ordinated by the Department of Corporate Services. The Business Plan has become an indispensable management tool for each department as it provides a forward-looking approach in the provision of services.

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Mission Statement

To enhance the Maltese educational system through qualitative and quantitative planning resulting from structured research as required by progressive educational trends and to ensure that education in Malta attains the required levels and standards including the provision of schools conforming to these standards.

Professional Staff

In order to achieve this aim, the following professional and management staff is at the service of the department: 1 Director; 1 Head Infrastructure; 2 Assistant Directors; 2 Education Officers.

Main Responsibilities

The main responsibilities of the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) include:

- co-ordination of policies of the Education Division;
- development of new initiatives, aimed at planning for the improved quality of education and ensuring their proper and timely implementation;
- monitoring the implementation of strategic and operational plans to ensure quality, quantity, timeliness and results in relation to planned objectives and expected outcomes;
- initiating research proposals within the Department of Planning and Development in collaboration with other departments, the University of Malta and other institutions so as to design programmes for qualitative planning and international benchmarking of the Maltese system;
- overseeing the development of a comprehensive research and statistics function, ensuring that records and data are kept current and disseminated in a timely fashion;
- overseeing the compilation of a hierarchical management information system that assists senior managers in their decision-making activities;
- preparing and monitoring forecasts of school population growth and school population mobility, and setting up and organising appropriate research work for this purpose, so as to satisfy any policy requirements of the Education Division;
- liaising with the Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools so as to draw up a plan detailing the required capital works and maintenance works to respond to such school population shifts and demands. Such planning decision will also be reflected in the business plan submissions that will be prepared on a yearly basis and which shall be updated regularly;
- monitoring progress in all capital projects and maintenance works;
- continually promoting health and safety in all state schools;
- establishing and fostering good working relationships with external stakeholders including local councils and MEPA;
- devolution to schools of funds for maintenance, materials and supplies from the Recurrent Vote, and the procurement of furniture and equipment from the Capital Vote according to the decentralisation policy of the Division.

PLANNING AND RESEARCH BRANCH

Statistics Unit

The compilation and analysis of statistical data is a central activity of the branch. Data is collated from both state and non-state schools as well as from post-compulsory institutions. Data, mainly focusing on pupils/students and teaching staff, is collated on a quarterly basis. The analysis of data provides objective indicators utilised for planning of educational initiatives and policy formulation by all departments within the Division. Data is made available, on request to researchers, the media, as well as to local and international agencies. During 2006, the Branch carried out a number of sufficiency assessments of schools. These were carried out in connection with the integration of primary schools A and B into

primary C schools, the migration of G Despott Boys Junior Lyceum from its site in Verdala to A Cini Secondary School in Hamrun, and the expansion of Dun G Zammit Boys' Junior Lyceum Annexe in Sliema to accommodate a larger student intake.

The Planning and Research Branch drafted working documents regarding the upgrading and extension works in government schools, to meet the demand created by shifts in the population. Changes in the curriculum and the evolving educational experience being given to pupils in state schools also increases demands for new facilities in schools.

The Planning and Research Branch, together with the Department of Operations and MITTS Ltd, continued to develop the Schools Data Management System which will generate electronic transfer of data regarding pupils and students from schools to head office. This system will improve data quality and reliability. During 2006, the piloting of the system was concluded in twelve schools.

Research Unit

The Planning and Research Branch incorporates the Research Unit whose function is to encourage and monitor research in local education. Such research, including that by university students is conducted in state schools or through the Education Division documents. During 2006, the unit assessed and approved 263 requests, an increase of about 2% over 2005. The requests originated from a number of faculties, the largest number or 56% from the Faculty of Education. The Unit also provided support to foreign research institutes and universities carrying out trans-European research studies on national education systems. The university courses that benefited from the unit's support are indicated in the following table:

Course	No of Requests
Bachelor of Education	147
PGCE (Post Graduate Course in Education)	24
BA/BSc	11
Diploma Courses	13
Medicine	6
BA Psychology	19
B Communication	2
Architecture	2
MA/M Ed/M Sc/M Admin/MBA	20
PhD	2
Others	17
Total	263

On completion of their research programme, researchers are encouraged to submit a copy of their dissertation to the Documentation Centre of the Education Division. Thus research carried out in state schools and/or Education Division documents can be put in context and the results made available to the areas concerned. In order to promote future studies, these documents are available for reference and perusal at the Documentation Centre for senior staff. The list of these dissertations, accompanied by a short abstract, is also available on the departmental website for easy reference. During the year, 136 theses were deposited in the Documentation Centre.

Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)

There is a growing consensus among educational stakeholders, both nationally and internationally, that a greater emphasis needs to be placed on measuring educational outcomes. Further to this, both the National Minimum Curriculum and our new social and political realities as members of the European Union stimulate further the need to participate in international benchmarking exercises.

In the context of these developments, Malta is participating for the first time in TIMSS 2007, consisting of an achievement test in mathematics and science for students as well as a student's background

questionnaire. Questionnaires are also administered to the mathematics and science teachers of the students tested and also to the Head of the sampled school. During 2006, Malta participated in the field test which was carried out to test the reliability and validity of the instruments to be used in the main study. Fifteen secondary schools, representing both the state and non-state sectors, participated. A sample of about 1,500 students and about 250 teachers participated in the field test. Participation in TIMSS has an added value component since, through close collaboration with IEA, staff at the research unit was trained in the use of two international databases developed by IEA and developed international research management competencies. All data was sent to IEA following data checks made by the Unit. The Research Unit professionalism was given due credit by IEA for the quality of data sent in its report on quality assurance.

Teaching and Learning International Study (TALIS)

The first strategic objective of the Lisbon process focuses on the need to raise the quality and standard of the learning process. One of the areas covered by this objective is the improvement of the education and training of teachers and trainers. In order to have objective data, the Commission has commissioned the OECD to carry out an international study on the teaching and learning process taking place in European schools. The study entitled *Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS)* was launched in 2006 and the field test is scheduled for March 2007. The Research Unit has actively participated in the drafting of the international questionnaire. It has carried out a sampling exercise in collaboration with Statistics Canada to identify those schools which will be participating in the field study scheduled for March 2007.

Eurydice National Unit

The Maltese Eurydice Unit has been participating in all the work carried out by the Eurydice Network throughout 2006. The objective of the Unit is to monitor, draft and disseminate reliable and comparable information on the Maltese education system within the wider landscape of European education. The work of the Eurydice Network includes descriptive studies, comparative analysis, as well as the collation of indicators and statistical data.

During 2006, the unit accomplished the following projects:

- drafting the Maltese contribution to the electronic publication *Organisation of School Year 2006-2007*, a comparative analysis on how the school year is organised across the EU member states, EFTA countries and acceding countries. The information collated covers both primary and secondary education and includes national data on the length of the school year, the timetable for the start of each school year and the distribution and length of school holidays;
- co-ordinated the updating of the publication *Focus on Higher Education in Europe*. The publication deals mainly with two aspects: the structure of local degree courses and the reforms in tertiary education in line with the Bologna Process. It also tackles the National Qualification Frameworks as regards tertiary education. The publication will also include the academic calendar of European universities. The preliminary draft version was submitted to the European Commission in September 2006;
- drafting the descriptors regarding decision-making, advisory, operational and regulatory formal bodies in higher education institutions in Malta. These will be included in Volume V in the series *European Glossary on Education*. The Glossary is a reference resource on terminology which is intended to facilitate understanding of concepts used in European education systems. The publication will be printed during the first quarter of 2007;
- participating in a study entitled *Specific educational measures to promote all forms of giftedness at school in Europe*. This Eurydice study records and examines education policies concerned with promoting giftedness, as well as the main measures introduced in European school systems to educate gifted and talented young people and to promote all forms of giftedness in primary and general secondary education (ISCED 1 to 3). It has been undertaken for the informal meeting of ministers on this subject, which was held on 16-17 March 2006 under the Austrian presidency of the EU Council;

- co-ordinating a survey regarding tertiary education in Malta in preparation for the publication Key Data on Higher Education in Europe which will be published in 2007. This study will cover various indicators regarding higher education in Europe including participation, human and financial resources, financial support for students and international mobility;
- updating, in collaboration with the Department of Adult Education and Further Studies, a report on Non-vocational Adult Education (NVAE) in Malta. NVAE takes place in a wide range of settings within the framework of lifelong learning. The study covers institutionalised and organised learning and teaching processes for adults without a direct link to the labour market. This report was published on the Eurydice website in November 2006;
- finalising the work on a European survey on the evaluation for institutions for teacher education. This study includes a quick survey on the evaluation of teacher education institutions in Europe on the basis of official policy documents. More particularly, the Eurydice network analysed the extent to which quality assurance and internal and external evaluation practices exist for institutions/programmes providing initial and in-service teacher education in European countries. The study was published in February 2006;
- concluding the European study on the training of science teachers and procedures for assessing pupils in this field of education. The data collection provided the national overview of the different professional components of initial education for science teachers (especially, in terms of teaching methodology), of the way in which they are expected to teach science subjects, as well as, of the way in which pupils are assessed in order to see whether this is consistent with expected teaching methods. The study was published in March 2006;
- updating the summary fiche on Maltese education to reflect developments which have taken place during 2006;
- providing an information service by regularly answering to the many requests for information regarding various aspects of our education system. These requests originate both from local as well as trans-border sources;
- collating, in collaboration with the National Statistics Office, of data for EUROSTAT, questionnaires regarding expenditure in education, student enrolment and educational staff;
- promoting Eurydice work through the dissemination of its publications and other material among Maltese stakeholders.

Eduforum

Eduforum continued to be published regularly on a quarterly basis, reaching as wide a number as possible of stakeholders in education.

This publication serves as a means of information, as well as a record of initiatives, achievements, plans and policies generated within the Education Division during 2006. This newsletter aims at bringing together and disseminating good practice among stakeholders and partners in education, while serving as a medium for quality public relations with local and foreign entities.

The users' survey was analysed and a short report published in the November issue.

DEVELOPMENT BRANCH

Health and Safety in Schools

Greater awareness regarding health and safety has been achieved in all state, church and private schools due to the sustained efforts of Health and Safety teachers in secondary schools and Peripatetic Health and Safety teachers in primary schools. Various topics related to health and safety were promoted and discussed with the school management teams and staff.

Events in which the Health and Safety Unit contributed during 2006

- Provided support to Skolasajf 2006 to ensure a healthy and safe environment;
- Organised four INSET Courses;
- Trained academic/minor school staff and TSB staff in fire awareness and suppression as well as in basic first aid;
- Headed the Health and Safety team for the Education Division's premises;
- Organised Health and Safety Expositions in Malta and Gozo;
- Participated in staff development sessions in various schools on Health and Safety issues;
- Trained, observed and advised schools on evacuation protocols and drills;
- Prepared school contingency plans;
- Prepared detailed evacuation plans for schools, including the installation of marked plans and exit signage at strategic places on school premises;
- Carried out annual risk assessments in all primary and secondary schools;
- Delivered talks to parents on local/EU legislation related to Health and Safety issues;
- Organised courses for school leavers in basic Health and Safety and first-aid;
- Inspected first-aid cabinets to ensure that they were well stocked and their contents complied with Red Cross European Standards recommendations;
- Ensured that fire extinguishers were appropriate, well-maintained and serviced;
- Advised on the procurement, deployment and fixing of emergency lighting, as and where necessary;
- Liaised with external agencies such as the OHSA; CPD; Malta Red Cross; FTS; ADT; Sedqa; Appogg; Police Department; Health Division; RoSPA; Child Accident Prevention Trust; European Child Safety Alliance; EU programmes;
- Provided a consultancy service to all schools, including non-state schools, and other Education Division services;
- Organised and/or participated in EU-funded projects related to Health and Safety;
- Compiled and edited the quarterly journal Safe and Healthy;
- Distributed a monthly Health and Safety e-pamphlet to all schools;
- Participated actively in various inter-departmental and ministerial committees;
- Promoted Child Safety Education on the Mass Media.

School Requisites

- Revised and updated guidelines in the form of a manual to help Heads of School draw up their capital expenditure business plan. This manual was distributed to all state secondary and primary schools. The revision and updating of this booklet arose in response to a number of concerns raised by Heads of School in their interpretation of the guidelines in the previous edition;
- Enhanced the digital database which was initiated in 2005 to monitor the equipment procured by schools under the Equipment Expenditure Imprest;
- Processed financial records of the three funds sent by schools in both hard and soft formats. Data received is then converted into DBA format for subsequent analysis.

Technical Services Branch

The Technical Services Branch (TSB) provides a maintenance service to all state schools through the services of its ten specialised sections.

Works carried out by the TSB during 2006			
Section	Manning Levels	Job Tasks Accomplished	Major Works
Masonry	22	95	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of school façade at Sir A Dingli Girls' Junior Lyceum; Long term project at G Despott Boys Junior Lyceum, Verdala; TSB new offices at St Venera; Assisting FTS at new extension at G Curmi Higher Secondary School, Naxxar and MA Vassalli Boys Junior Lyceum, Handaq; Refurbishment at Industrial Relations office, Valletta.
Carpentry	17	170	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food labs at L Gafa` Boys' Secondary School, Fortini, St Benedict College, Sir A Dingli Girls' Junior Lyceum; New furniture at the offices of the Permanent Secretary; Doors at the Education Division; Furniture at the TSB offices.
Plastering/Painting	26	92	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Twelve food labs; Block C at M Assumpta Girls' Secondary School, Hamrun; Facade at St Elmo Primary School, Valletta; Whole floor at Old University Buildings, Valletta; TSB stores/offices; Pool at San Miguel Special School.
Electrical	18	224	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New electrical installations at twelve food labs; Block C at M Assumpta Girls' Secondary School, Hamrun; Halls at Mqabba Primary and M Goretti Girls' Secondary School, Tarxien; TSB new offices/stores.
Plumbing	16	260	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New installations at twelve food labs; New toilets at Patri Ġ Delia Primary School, Siggiewi, A Cini Hamrun, Naxxar Boys' Secondary and TSB new offices/stores.
Drainage	7	225	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TSB new offices/stores; New installation systems at B' Kara Primary, Dun F Camilleri Primary School, Hamrun and St Benedict's Primary School, Kirkop.
Aluminium	3	95	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dismantling all apertures at Ġ Despott Boys' Junior Lyceum, Verdala; New apertures at TSB, Education Division.
Welders	14	52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New workshop at TSB new offices; Steel benches for several technical workshops.
Membrane Laying	4	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TSB new stores.
Support Unit	9	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several schools.

Liaising with Local Councils

The excellent co-operation that has always existed between the Education Division and local councils continued, and in fact was further enhanced during 2006. This healthy co-operation is proving most beneficial in gradually turning our schools into Community Learning Centres, through which the concept of Life Long Learning is being promoted. Considerable progress in this area is being achieved through the Foundation for Educational Services.

DEPARTMENT FOR CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT

Mission Statement

To ensure that learners get their entitlement to Quality Education.

STRUCTURES

The Department has four branches: Curriculum Development; Student Assessment; Training and Staff Development and Curriculum Implementation. In order to achieve this aim, the following professional and management staff is at the service of the department: 1 Director; 3 Assistant Directors; 19 Education Officers.

Main Responsibilities

The Department works from the Education Division, Floriana as well as from the Curriculum Centre, Floriana, and from a number of other centres and units, which include the:

- National Curriculum Centre, Hamrun
- Educational Assessment Unit
- four Resource Centres for the teaching of languages, namely: English, French, German and Arabic
- Science Centre
- Home Economics Seminar Centre
- Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia) Unit
- Drama Unit
- Literacy Unit.

During 2006, the Department was heavily involved with professional staff development sessions. In-service training at the school level continued to be supported. The Department embarked on a project focused on the extended training of Basic Skills teachers.

The Student Assessment Branch carried out various tasks in the field of assessment. The holding of annual examinations and the Junior Lyceum Entrance Examination, being the more visible evidence of the work of this branch.

Insofar as Curriculum Development is concerned, the Department provided learning resources to pupils and students. The branch also developed syllabi for the secondary sector. The Department invested time and effort on laying the groundwork for pilot projects, namely one on Entrepreneurship Education at the primary level and a pilot project involving foreign language teaching in the primary sector. The Department was also involved as a partner in the *Facilitating Equality Through Education* project. The Department also carried out work in connection with the Audit projects being carried out under the leadership of the Director General.

Various initiatives were carried out by the National Curriculum Council during the year in question. It provided support to a number of projects including the Best Language Practice Award together with funding for 27 curricular projects in schools across Malta and Gozo. In the latter case, funding was also approved for the purchase of Physical Education and Science equipment for all schools in Gozo. It also invested heavily in the purchase of Literacy materials for use by schools in Malta and Gozo.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT BRANCH

- The efforts of this branch were mainly directed towards the purchase of textbooks with new textbooks being purchased both for the primary and secondary sectors.
- New syllabi for the secondary sector were also developed during the year and put on the website of the Curriculum Department.
- A pilot project on the teaching of German, Italian and French to Year 5 pupils was initiated during school year 2006-2007.
- Various Education Officers, together with the Director, were also involved in the project on Facilitating Equality through Education. The Department was a co-partner in this project together with the Faculty of Education of the University of Malta and the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality.
- Preparatory work was also carried out in connection with the euro changeover with the Director, Curriculum Management participating in the committee set up within the Education Division for this purpose.
- The Director, together with Assistant Directors, participated actively in the committee set up by the Director General concerning the Audit of schools.

- The Education Officer responsible for the Teachers' Documentation Centre mainly focused on textbook issues.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND THE EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT UNIT

During 2006, the Educational Assessment Unit (EAU) carried out various duties, which included:

- co-ordinating the construction of annual examination papers, their printing and distribution - 319 different examinations were held, involving 442,431 examination booklets;
- organising the Junior Lyceum Entrance Examinations into Form I in May 2006; 3,968 students (418 were provided with special arrangements) sat for these examinations; 2,390 (60.23%) were successful. Results were sent via SMS to candidates who opted for this service. There were 259 requests for revision of papers;
- organising the Entrance Examinations into Forms II, III, IV and V - 539 students in secondary state and non-state schools seeking admission into the Junior Lyceum sat for these examinations in June 2006; 85 (15.77%) of these students passed the examinations;
- publishing the Junior Lyceum Entrance Examinations' Annual Report which includes detailed statistical information, a review of the examination procedure, copies of the examination papers, marking schemes, specification grids, an analysis of the examination items, the Chief Examiner's report on each paper and other general information;
- providing Education Officers, as well as schools, with statistical information such as schools'/national mean score, and schools'/national standard deviation for each subject;
- holding various meetings with Heads of School and meetings/training sessions with peripatetic teachers, in preparation for the Year 6 Annual and the Junior Lyceum Examinations;
- conducting staff development sessions on formative assessment and the setting of examination papers;
- maintaining the EAU website which includes past examination papers, articles related to assessment and other useful information. As from this year a section entitled *Children's Works* has been included. The website is intended to be of use to education officials, school administrators, teachers, parents and the general public;
- selecting and archiving sample scripts (together with the corresponding Markers' Sheets) of the Junior Lyceum Examination 2006. The collections are based on specified criteria with a view to monitor standards over the years;
- holding seminars for new Heads of state schools and/or Assistant Heads of School of state and non-state schools on *Enhancing Learning through Formative Assessment*.

TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT BRANCH

Rationale

The Training and Staff Development Branch aims to provide in-service training, both locally and abroad, for all teacher grades in state and non-state schools and in the Education Division, in order to support all initiatives for the improvement of teaching and management services aimed at providing a quality education for all. The branch sustains training initiatives submitted by colleges, schools, by all departments of the Education Division, the University of Malta, the Foundation for Educational Services (FES) and non-government organisations (NGO's).

In-Service Courses (INSET)

In-service courses for teachers and other teaching personnel were held in July and September - 97 courses (56 compulsory and 41 voluntary) were offered in both sessions. Some of these courses were organised

solely by the Education Division while others were organised in conjunction with other bodies as shown below:

Organising Body	No of Courses in July	No of Courses in September	Total No of Courses
Education Division	40	29	69
Secretariat for Catholic Education & Culture	8	-	8
Foundation for Educational Services	3	2	5
Colleges/State Schools	11	4	15
Total	62	35	97

	No of Participants in In-service Courses - July & September		Total
	Males	Females	
Compulsory Courses	824	2,075	2,899
Voluntary Courses	104	810	914
Total	928	2,885	3,813

Year	No of Participants in In-service Courses – 2004 to 2006
2004	3,748
2005	3,415
2006	3,813

In the course of 2006, the Training and Staff Development Branch organised and/or sponsored various in-service courses/seminars in support of improved teaching and learning. These included College-based or School-based In-service Training, for which two colleges, one school-network and eight state schools (two primary and six secondary schools) organised their own school-based in-service course.

Council of Europe Workshop

In April 2006, the Training and Staff Development Branch, in conjunction with the Council of Europe, held a three-day international workshop entitled: *How to promote Children's Thinking in Europe through Investigative Learning at School*. Ten foreign and thirty Maltese primary and secondary school teachers, administrators and other education personnel participated. The proceedings of the seminar are to be published.

Council of Europe Bursaries

During 2006, calls for application were issued regularly for teaching grades interested in attending seminars of the Council of Europe offered as part of the Teachers' Bursary Scheme. Thirteen teachers and other education officials attended these courses.

European Centre for Modern Languages

The Branch processed applications from teaching grades for participation in the workshops run by the European Centre for Modern Languages of Graz, Austria. Five education professionals attended these courses.

Professional Development Sessions

Schools can hold up to three two-hour professional development sessions after school hours, one in each term. The theme of these sessions is chosen by the school. In all, 239 sessions were held during scholastic year 2005-2006. The Branch provided the necessary support towards the successful organisation of these sessions.

CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION BRANCH

GENERAL

The Assistant Director (Curriculum Implementation) supports the Director Curriculum Management who, with a team of Education Officers (Curriculum), assisted by subject co-ordinators and a number of peripatetic teachers, have the responsibility to ensure that the policies and the provisions laid down in the Education Act are adhered to in both state and non-state schools. This team also contributes towards the implementation of the National Minimum Curriculum by advising and supporting teachers, evaluating and reporting on their work and about the progress of teaching in schools.

AIMS

In liaison with other sections and units within the Education Division, the Curriculum Implementation Section aims to:

- implement the broad aims of the National Minimum Curriculum within the Curriculum content;
- liaise with Principal Education Officers and Education Officers to ensure monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning;
- provide support to teaching and learning of all curricular areas at all levels;
- strengthen and refine the skills developed by students at primary level;
- liaise with the Students' Services Department to ensure that all students receive their entitlement in an inclusive educational setting;
- strengthen the personal and social education of each student;
- implement a policy for language teaching;
- consolidate the teaching of the Catholic faith and provide assistance for a formation in universal moral values;
- strengthen emotional development;
- strengthen parental participation.

Peripatetic Service

The peripatetic service encompasses the following areas: Personal and Social Development for the Primary, Thinking Skills Sexuality and Relationship Education in secondary and primary Schools, Alcohol and Drugs Prevention, Specific Learning Difficulties services, Complementary Education, the *Let Me Learn* Programme and the Literacy Unit Programme. Art, Physical Education, Music, Drama, and Science are also provided by the service.

Area/Programme/Subject	No of Teachers in the Peripatetic Service - 2006		Total
	Males	Females	
PSD Peripatetic Primary – Malta	12	28	40
PSD Peripatetic Primary – Gozo	2	4	6
PSD Thinking Skills	1	8	9
PSD Sexuality and Relationship in Education	1	3	4
PSD Alcohol and Drugs	2	3	5
PSD INT Seminar Centre	2	6	8
Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)	2	6	8
Complementary Education - Malta	3	53	56
Complementary Education – Gozo	2	8	10
Let Me Learn	1	3	4
Literacy Tutor	-	5	5
Hands-On Farming	1	-	1
Art – Malta	7	3	10
Art – Gozo	1	-	1
Physical Education – Malta	15	3	18
Physical Education - Gozo	5	-	5
Drama	13	5	18

Music – Malta	3	5	8
Music - Gozo	1	3	4
Science – Malta	2	6	8
Science – Gozo	1	1	2
Home Economics	-	5	5
Total	77	158	235

Specific Learning Difficulties Unit

The main role of the Specific Learning Difficulties Service (SpLD Service) is to support children encountering literacy difficulties which are of a specific nature. Consequently, the SpLD Service has been involved in a number of activities to offer schools, children individually and parents appropriate support. These included school visits, meetings and courses for parents, assessments and one-to-one intervention. Additionally, the SpLD Service has also maintained or extended its contact with other organisations or schools in the field of dyslexia through a number of EU-sponsored initiatives.

Parents' meetings

A course for parents of recently identified children was also held between February and May 2006. This was attended by approximately 50 parents on a weekly basis.

School visits

The SpLD Service visited a number of state, church and independent schools, both for the purposes of a brief informative meeting and also for the purposes of more frequent one-to-one sessions focusing on multi-sensory intervention. During the year, a total of 60 school visits were undertaken - 15 in primary schools; 45 in secondary schools.

Assessments

The main focus of the assessments carried out at SpLD Service was on the investigation of the need for Special Examination Arrangements for the purposes of the Junior Lyceum examination and for the MATSEC examination. Assessments were carried out in both state and non-state schools.

No. of Assessments carried out by the SpLD Unit in 2006	
	No of Students
Assessments in Malta	235
Assessments in Malta regarding special arrangements for the Junior Lyceum exam	107
Malta Total	342
Assessments in Gozo	30
Assessments in Gozo regarding special arrangements for the Junior Lyceum exam	18
Gozo Total	48
Total	390

EU Projects

Staff from the Unit participated in the EU educational programmes, namely: *Leonardo da Vinci Project Mobility Project* entitled *Learning Partnerships*, the DYPATEC, Socrates Grundtvig and the Grundtvig 3 *Project Reading and Writing Difficulties in Adults*.

Complementary Education

Complementary Education is an intervention programme for primary school learners who have not mastered the basic skills or who have fallen behind in the class literacy and numeracy programme. The

programme embraces the philosophy that every child, whatever his/her ability, has the potential to learn and achieve. The mission statement is to develop and enhance the strengths and abilities of the individual learners. The teachers are a dynamic source that generates and sustains collaborative teaching and learning in the school for the benefit of the individual learners.

	Teachers Providing the Literacy Programme		Total
	Males	Females	
January 2006	5	61	66
December 2006	5	68	73

Children & schools receiving the service		
January 2006		
Schools	Year	Children
26*	1	205
61	2	651
61	3	577
57	4	527
37	5	42
22	6	74
Total		2,076

Children & schools receiving the service		
October 2006		
Schools	Year	Children
	1	
61	2	589
61	3	627
57	4	515
51	5	415
35	6	208
Total		2,354

*Complementary Education starts in January for learners in Year 1

The service is provided for children in Year 1 in about 26 schools and the children start attending Complementary Education in January. The purpose is to lessen the gap between success and failure for these children who have started to fall behind in the class programme.

Two in-service courses were held in July and September for all teachers in Complementary Education in Malta. Assessment packs were compiled and shared among the teachers to be used as tools for continuous assessment.

Let Me Learn Programme

The Let Me Learn (LML) team continued with its training programme to include new teaching professionals. The training included both theoretical aspects as well as hands-on sessions. During the year, LML team members continued to provide support to teachers who have completed their training. In September, a three-day in-service course, offered within the premises of St Benedict College, Kirkop, opened the LML team's calendar of events for school year 2006/2007. Over 300 persons participated. In November, a Diversity Awareness Day was organised by the LML team in conjunction with KOPIN and the staff of St Albert's College. The activities were held with students from Year 5 to Form V.

Members of the LML team attended meetings of the EULLearn – A network of Higher Learning Institutions for Life-long learning and EQUIPE plus, which promotes best practice in quality assurance arrangements in adult learning in universities. The LML process is networked to other European countries through a number of projects, including a Grundtvig project in the Social Promotion of Intercultural Communication Expertise and Skills and the Masters programme in Regional Development and Lifelong learning co-ordinated by the University of Sterling. The unit also co-ordinates the updating of its website, the maintenance of the LML library and the organisation of the certification ceremony.

Literacy Unit Programme

The Literacy Unit has continued to expand its service. During this year, the Literacy tutors provided support to a good number of primary schools in Malta and in Gozo. Furthermore, the unit's service is also covering secondary schools. The tutors were involved in a variety of tasks, such as helping to update school libraries; setting up resource rooms and supporting Heads of School and teachers with relevant materials; providing technical advice on literacy; providing in-class support through paired/shared reading, storytelling and listening to stories; animating staff development meetings; launching phonics reading to

provide students with tools to get started and setting up reading schemes. In Gozo, the Literacy Unit is also supporting the Literacy Centre.

Hands-On Farming Initiative

In collaboration with the Information Section of the Department of Agriculture, the Curriculum Department has been organising class visits to the Ghammieri Government Farm. Biology option group students from all junior lyceums and secondary schools are participating. A full-time teacher from the Education Division animates these educational visits and learning material is explained and distributed to all participants.

Art Peripatetic Service

The following are the tasks and initiatives undertaken by the Art peripatetic teachers during 2006:

- organised in-service courses for all art teachers for secondary state and non-state schools. The courses were offered both in July and September;
- organised meetings for primary peripatetic art teachers where various art workshops were planned as extra curricular activities to complement the art syllabus;
- visited both primary and secondary schools;
- set the national annual examination papers in collaboration with the Education Officer and the subject co-ordinators;
- collaborated with the Malta Council for Culture and The Arts by conducting workshops for children visiting the exhibition *Children's views of the World*, organised by Geneva World which took place at Caraffa Stores;
- collaborated with the Science department by conducting workshops for two hundred (200) children at Robert Samut Hall during the Climate Change Seminar. The focus of the workshop was creativity through recycling;
- acquired a selection of books for the Art Unit;
- produced a set of ceramic murals for the conference room at the Curriculum Centre Floriana;
- produced a lesson pack for the primary sector;
- collaborated with the Russian Centre for Science and Culture to organise a unique exhibition of precious icons which was visited by students and staff of Maltese schools;
- sent a selection of children's art works to Russia to commemorate the anniversary of the first Sputnik launched in space.

Physical Education Peripatetic Service

The PE peripatetic staff visits and supports all schools in Malta and Gozo. Teachers for PE support the Sports Section of the Education Division; various sports activities such as netball and football festivals, cross country national champions and tag-rugby tournament were held for state and non-state schools.

Music Peripatetic Service

The Synergy Project

The initial aims of the Synergy Project were teaching through the expressive arts – Art, Music and Drama; promoting English oracy and helping class teachers to improve the teaching and learning in the classroom. This was achieved through the use of a wide variety of teaching techniques intended to appeal to pupils with various abilities and personalities. Working as a team – pooling ideas and resources, and joint problem solving – contributed greatly towards the implementation of these aims.

The focus has always been on teaching and learning through enjoyment, adopting a child-centred approach thus enhancing self esteem. With the introduction of the NMC the Synergy Project focused mainly on the integration of subjects through the Thematic Approach.

Parents at Dun A Camilleri Primary School A, Żejtun were given the opportunity to attend a Synergy session to understand better how their children learn more effectively through active participation and enjoyment.

Drama and the Drama Unit

During 2006, the Drama Unit presented two *Theatre in Education* projects at the Drama Centre, Blata l-Bajda. These were: *Internet Chatrooms* for Forms III and IV, with an audience of about 2,400 students, presented in May, and *Scenes from Shakespeare's Macbeth* for Form IV, with an audience of 2,300 students, presented in October/November.

Apart from these presentations, the Drama Unit organised another TIE, *Sigar u Bnedmin*, at the theatre of St Vincent De Paule Residence. This TIE was presented between the end of November and mid-December to an audience of nearly 5,000 children. The aim was to make children aware of ecological issues. This was performed for Year 2, 3 and 4 pupils.

Apart from these centralised TIE projects, other projects were held in schools. In these projects, teachers from the Drama Unit visited schools carrying out interactive lessons, using drama exercises and acted pieces:

- A project about Obesity, entitled *Jimmy and Timmy*, was presented in the primary schools for Years 1 to 6. Three different formats of this project were prepared to suit the various age groups. About 11,500 students participated in this project.
- *Mozart* was a project about the life and music of the great composer, as well as an encouragement for creative writing. This project was aimed at Year 5 and 6 pupils, and was spread throughout the year. About 5,000 pupils participated in this project.
- *Mickey* was a project about relationships between parents and children and focused mainly on problems that adopted children face, especially those who have never known their real parents. It was aimed at Year 1 and 2 pupils, with great participation from the children, and was spread throughout the year. About 5,500 pupils participated in this project.
- *Leqqina*, another team teaching project for Years 1 and 2, dealt with the issue of true friendship and respect. The project was presented by three teams of two teachers each time, and about 4,500 pupils participated in this project.

The Drama Unit collaborated with Maria Bambina Primary School, Mellieħa, in a Comenius Project, which had Slovenia, Poland, Italy and Spain as partners. Two Drama Unit teachers prepared a legend from Slovenia, and a group of five pupils from this school presented this legend in the form of an original play in Trieste, in May, under the direction of the Drama Unit teachers. As part of this project, a Maltese legend was also presented to the community of Mellieħa, in the form of an original play in the school hall, under the direction of the Drama Unit.

The project about *Bullying* was once more held both in primary and secondary schools.

In July, Drama Unit teachers gave workshops in an in-service training course organised by P Xuereb Primary School A, Rabat for its staff. The teachers attended workshops on how to make puppets and how to use them in class during lessons.

In July and September respectively, the Unit organised two in-service courses: *The Role of Women in literature: Dealing with Gender Issues* and *How to Write Scripts with Gender Issues in Mind*. For the July

course, Ms U Kraus from Poland was invited to give lectures about the role of women in Polish Literature. For the September course, a member of the ETC Gender Equality Unit was invited to lead some workshops.

In November, the Unit helped to organise part of the Health and Safety Week. The Drama Unit teachers performed a puppet show at the Phoenicia Hotel, Floriana, as part of this week. The aim of the show was to promote safety awareness at home, at school and in the street. This was presented between 8 and 10 November to an audience of 600.

The Drama Unit teachers visited schools throughout the year, where they gave drama lessons, helped teachers use Drama in their teaching, and helped in the staging of the prize day play, as well as other activities related to drama and theatre. In all, there were about 3,500 visits to schools, and over 10,000 lessons were given.

SCIENCE AND THE SCIENCE CENTRE

The Science Centre worked hard throughout the year to further enhance teachers' confidence to teach science and improve the quality of the science activities carried out in schools. It aimed to promote challenging and interesting learning activities which supported the development of scientific skills and positive attitudes towards science from an early age.

At School Level

The Science Centre provided support service to all primary schools in Malta and Gozo for science and technology. It continued to assist in the teaching and learning of science in the classroom. It aimed to develop more science resource boxes to support teachers in class. The support material developed was open-ended to enable the teachers themselves to think constructively, adapt and adopt for differentiated learning and enhance and develop according to their classroom needs.

During 2006, the Unit piloted the assessment of primary science in preparation for introducing it in all schools in 2007.

This year the Science Centre established more design and technology projects for primary schools. Years 1 to 4 now have three design and technology projects to carry out throughout the year – one per term. The primary science and technology peripatetic teachers supported the teachers in these projects. Parents were also invited to visit the schools and experience the projects themselves in the classroom.

Professional Development

A number of professional development sessions were held in schools to enable teachers to come up with solutions to the problems they face when teaching science.

In-service courses were also carried out in July and September. In July, a compulsory in-service course was held for Year 5 teachers to discuss the progression made so far in primary science. In September, a voluntary in-service course *Catch a Star* was held for all science teachers.

European Projects

The Science Centre, together with A Preca Primary School, Lija, P Xuereb Primary School A, Rabat and Żebbuġ Primary Schools, involved itself in three Comenius 1.1 projects, with the following themes: *Let's Fly Together*; *The Environment Around Us* and *Tell us Where you Live*. Partners from Romania, Spain, Finland, Italy and Turkey visited the Centre and themes were developed for students and teachers to work on.

The *Science on Stage*, a project to encourage teachers to develop material and share it amongst other teachers in Europe, was launched last October to strengthen European links. This project, together with *Hands-On Science* a Comenius 3 project which encourages teachers to teach science in an investigative way, made it possible to organise a science week (Home-Sci-Home) in Gozo. The outcomes were presented for the CASTME award last November.

In June, the Science Centre also embarked on the project Scientific Thinking Process in Pre-primary Settings (STIPPS). Science and its thinking process pose inherent advantages to the cognitive development of young children. Science educators from England, Belgium, Germany, Poland and Malta are working together to come up with a European teaching science model for pre-primary schools.

Publications

During the year under review, the Science Centre published two publications namely *Storytime Science* and *Einstein u Peppina Favlina*. The former is a teachers' book with accompanying full colour poster. It enhances scientific literacy and ensures that scientific concepts are mastered at an early age. The latter links literacy to primary science and was aimed to introduce Einstein to primary school children. The book was distributed to all Year 5 and Year 6 teachers, and science activities related to Einstein's discoveries were carried out at school.

The Non-Formal Curriculum

Staff at the Science Centre believes that the largest gains made in the development of positive attitudes towards science and technology is through non-formal science hands-on learning opportunities. With this in mind, it organised a number of activities to expose students to a holistic curriculum for quality educational development. These activities included:

- Home-Sci-Home – a week of activities in Gozo for all primary schools;
- Kitchen Science – an activity for children and parents at Santu Rokku Primary School, Vittoriosa;
- Alive in Action – a science and IT activity at E B Vella Primary School B, Mosta;
- Science fest – a science festival at C Sammut Primary School A, Mosta;
- Kite festival – a kite making and flying day at A Preca Primary School, Lija;
- Planet walk – a joint activity with Astro Club which made children aware of the solar system;
- Dr Scitek – a joint activity with Education 22 which produced 39 programmes on primary science;
- Science Goes Safari – a series of hands-on activities were held at the University during EXPO Science.

HOME ECONOMICS AND THE HOME ECONOMICS SEMINAR CENTRE

During 2006, the Centre was responsible for the following activities:

- Primary School Programmes in state, church and independent schools which included: *A Healthy Breakfast for a Good Start*, for Year 3 pupils, piloting of a bi-lingual primary programme *Taste the Rainbow*, for Year 5 Pupils and *Taf Tiekol Tajjeb?*, for Year 6 pupils.
- Secondary school programmes in state, church and independent schools which included: *Halli Nieklu bis-Sens!*, for Form II students and *Qassam Flusek bil-Ghaqal and Indokra d-Dinja minn Darek*, for Form III students.

Members of the Unit were invited to give talks to parents and to community circles and groups.

Other projects undertaken were:

- drafting of *General Food Guidelines for Healthy Food Consumption*;
- analysis of food products when requested by schools, educational entities and food importers for the distribution and importation of food and drink items in schools;

- conducting a workshop and set up an exhibition during the Citizenship Festival;
- participation in the radio programme *Familja Wahda*;
- planning and participation in a weekly slot dedicated to *Nutrition Throughout the Lifecycle* over a period of eight weeks on *22am*, a TV programme aired on Channel 22;
- preparing *Duq il-Qawsalla*, a new computer animated presentation using the “Illuminatus” software. In addition, 6,000 activity booklets and certificates were printed. These were funded by the National Curriculum Council. The programme was piloted in a church school with Year 5 students;
- refurbishing the Nutrition Display room at the Home Economics Centre;
- meeting tuck shop operators – a provisional list of possible food and drink items that comply with the guidelines *The Provision of Food and Beverages in Schools* was provided;
- devising and piloting a version of Food and Beverage Selection Guidelines for tuck shops in secondary schools, which included a pack of tried and tested recipes;
- organising two annual in-service courses - one in July for teachers of Textiles studies and another in September for teachers of Home Economics. During the latter session, the Home Economics syllabus for Form III, IV and V students taking the subject as an option was launched. *Using the Internet as a Medium for Fashion Design in Textiles Studies* was a learning hands-on experience given to Textiles Studies teaching staff during in-service training; and
- contributing to the TASNE group drafting of a comprehensive document for eventual legislation purposes on food policy matters in schools. The document was presented in July.

SUBJECT SPECIFIC REPORTS

Primary

- Allocated Level Descriptors 1 to 4 to syllabus learning outcomes.
- Judged and awarded Best Language Practice in state and non-state schools.
- Formulated detailed syllabus guidelines for Years 6 and 7 teachers.
- Organised in-service courses for teachers of Years 1 and 2. These focused on creative thinking and ways of developing thinking skills.
- Organised and supervised in-service courses in connection with the introduction of a new language course book in primary classes Years 3 and 4.
- Gave an induction talk for newly qualified teachers teaching in the primary sector.
- Mapped the Primary Entrepreneurship Programmes to the primary syllabus.
- Provided text books for the Primary (liaising with Education Officer, Resources).
- Evaluated personnel for complementary education in the primary sector.
- Established criteria for the recruitment of Primary Curriculum Co-ordinators.
- Delivered several in-school staff development and professional development sessions (approximately twice a month), covering various topics regarding the teaching of English.
- Met parents of children attending different schools and delivered talks regarding *Helping Children in the Learning of English*.

MATHEMATICS

Primary Section

During 2006, the Primary Section:

- organised a three-day in-service course entitled *The Use and Application of the New Mathematics Syllabus in Year 6*. All state and non-state Year 6 teachers in Malta and Gozo attended for the course. A representative for Harcourt Education led the July sessions;
- organised a three-day course for Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 teachers during teaching practice;
- organised a two-day in-service course for church school teachers in Gozo, covering *Calculation Strategies in Mathematics* and *The Preparation and Setting of a Good Mathematics Examination Paper*;
- organised a four-session course for primary schools subject co-ordinators entitled *Computer Generated Diagrams for Mathematics*;
- delivered talks to parents of pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 in various primary state and non-state schools;
- participated in staff professional development sessions in primary schools;
- formed part of the Board responsible for the Basic Screening Assessment for Year 6 pupils in the three colleges;
- set and monitored the national annual examination papers in Mathematics for Year 4 to Year 6;
- produced and circulated an informative four-page full-colour brochure *It-Tagħlim tal-Matematika fid-Dar u fl-Iskola* to all parents of primary school pupils in Years 1 to 6 (30,000 copies);
- converted all Year 6 mathematics textbooks to reflect the Maltese currency;
- put on the web electronic assessment sheets for mathematics in Years 1 to 3 and created similar sheets for Years 4 to 6;
- started work on the drafting of six workbooks (one for each year group) for the introduction of the euro in Malta.

Secondary Section

During 2006, this section carried out the following initiatives:

- published the report about the Mathematics National Conference 2004 – *The Teaching and Learning of Mathematics in Malta – Today and Tomorrow*;
- introduced a new syllabus at Form I junior lyceums and secondary schools. This syllabus is now subdivided into four schemes that cater for all levels of students' ability;
- introduced a new examination paper for students following a Basic Mathematics (Numeracy) Programme in Forms I, II and III;
- introduced new textbooks at Form I and Form IV at both junior lyceums and secondary schools;
- marked the scripts of TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) field study;
- set the test paper and formed part of the team in charge of the Basic Skills Assessment at the three Colleges;
- formed part of the Working Group set up by the Minister of Education, Youth and Employment, to study and provide recommendations for a National Adult Basic Skills Strategy;
- carried out a Basic Skills Training course for those teaching mathematics to students following a Basic Mathematics (Numeracy) Programme;
- started preparing a set of five workbooks targeting students at each form of the secondary sector in order to familiarise students with the euro currency;
- organised a 'hands-on' activity for gifted and talented Form IV students from state and non-state secondary schools.

ENGLISH AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE RESOURCE CENTRE

New Initiatives Undertaken by the Unit

- Evaluated Form IV Junior Lyceum course book.
- Organised a one-day training session, run by an Edexcel trainer from the UK, for Forms IV and V teachers in church schools.
- Represented Malta on the European Union Advisory Board planning the design and implementation of the European Indicator of Language Competence, a project launched by the EU Commission.
- Participated in School Audits.
- Collaborated with the teachers of English in an area secondary school in the production of learning outcomes for the four language skills for Literacy in Forms I and II in a secondary school.
- Collaborated with the teachers of English in a secondary school in devising a draft Action Plan for a Literacy programme for scholastic year 2006-2007. The plan covers all the phases for the coming year. The Action Plan is to be monitored and reviewed throughout the year.

Ongoing Projects

- Identified, celebrated and disseminated good language practice through membership of a Selection Committee entrusted with the task of rewarding good practice in 20 primary and secondary schools in the state and non-state sectors participating in the Best Language Practice of the Year Award 2005.
- Managed the support given by subject co-ordinators to schools. One of their main tasks for 2006 was the evaluation of a Form IV course book and the updating of the English syllabus.
- Updated the English Language syllabus with the aim of strengthening its outcome-based approach.
- Provided an English Literature syllabus for Forms IV and V secondary school students.
- Collected exemplars in relation to the Level Descriptors.
- Piloted and monitored the provision of learning outcomes for literacy classes (Initiative E) and draft Action Plan (Initiative F).

GERMAN AND THE GERMAN LANGUAGE RESOURCE CENTRE

New Initiatives

- Extended pronunciation, intonation and *Landeskunde* classes to non-state schools.
- Started project work for Form IV classes.
- Started cluster groups involving all schools.
- Initiated plans to provide internet information service for teachers.

Ongoing Projects

- Assisted the German national Lingua Assistant from Frankfurt through Comenius project.
- Set half-yearly exam papers in cluster groups with direction from subject co-ordinators.
- Organised an INSET course regarding DVD application for German lessons.
- Interviewed applicants for the posts of regular and supply teachers.
- Visited Schools.
- Finalised level descriptors.
- Reviewed syllabus.
- Started procedure for introducing a new textbook.

Statistics

- training sessions for 52 state and non-state school teachers;
- 633 lessons for pupils;
- three sets of interviews – two for supply teachers and another for regular teachers.

A project started in 2002 for beginners in schools (state and non-state) was continued during this scholastic year. Pupils in Form I attended pronunciation and intonation classes, whereby they experienced hands-on practice in pronunciation and intonation of words and phrases in the German language. After a short break they dedicated the rest of the morning in discussing and finding out information about Germany in general, the various *Länder* and especially their main cities. All Form I pupils attended the second session during the Easter term.

Forms III and IV students continued with their previous years' project. Form III students had as their main theme, *Feste und Bräuche* (feasts and customs), whereas Form IV students had the presentation of an internationally known character of German/Austrian/Swiss origin.

Frau Sybille Trapp from the Goethe Institute in Milan led the INSET course in September at the German Language Resource Centre. The theme covered was *The Use of Internet for Classroom Activity and Teaching of German*.

Level descriptors were finalised and discussed with the teachers in an INSET course. The teachers of German have also been using the level descriptors of the Common European Framework of Reference, and these are further explained by the “Can do” statements attached to each level. The knowledge of German in our schools (up to Form V) reaches level A2.

Research was carried out by the subject co-ordinators regarding the choice of a new textbook for use in schools. Similar research work was also carried out regarding the adoption of readers in various levels of competency for pupils. Help was sought from the Goethe Institute regarding supply of all the latest textbooks on the market for the Library.

ITALIAN

The highlights of the curricular projects of the Unit of Italian for 2006 included the following activities:

- phasing in the new Italian syllabus for state secondary schools, covering Forms I, II and III (1st year of junior lyceums). The new syllabus is structured within a framework of innovative learning outcomes which are based mainly on the level descriptors for Italian published by the Department for Curriculum Management;
- introduced the new textbook for the teaching of Italian *Rete!* Junior A and Junior B in Forms I, II and III (option) in state secondary schools and junior lyceum classes;
- published two new numbers of *Lo Stivale*;
- finalised the Culture project in which all teachers of Italian in state schools participated. A set of handouts with standardised cultural material about Italy and its life was produced and distributed to teachers;
- initiated the Italian Language Awareness pilot project in a number of primary schools. Through this project – which follows the recommendation of the European Commission to introduce a third language at Primary level – pupils are offered the opportunity to become aware of the culture of a foreign country. This year, the project was piloted at E B Vella Primary School B, Mosta with Year 5 pupils. Preparations are in hand for extending the pilot project to other primary schools in 2007;
- reviewed, in collaboration with the teachers of Italian at G Curmi Higher Secondary School the introduction of a new textbook for the students attending this institution;
- broadened contacts with the Italian Cultural Institute and the Italian Embassy, including assisting the process to send teachers of Italian on short-term bursaries at the Università per Stranieri, Perugia;

- co-ordinated the participation of subject co-ordinators and teachers of Italian in workshops and projects organised by the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) in Graz, Austria;
- organised two in-service training sessions, conducted by the author of *Rete! Junior Series*. Teachers had the opportunity to discuss the methodology utilised in the new textbook;
- chaired the Best Language Practice of the Year Award organised by the National Curriculum Council in conjunction with the Department for Curriculum Management. This year, the awarding ceremony was held on 20 October, the European Day of Languages in Malta. Italian featured in one of the winning entries for this year's award;
- co-ordinated the *Story Telling in Italian* sessions conducted by a renowned Italian actress. The sessions were held in a girls' secondary school and at the Italian Cultural Institute in Valletta.

HISTORY

The highlights of the work carried out were:

- revised the History syllabi for both junior lyceums and secondary schools;
- evaluated the History (Option) syllabus for Forms III to V and the History (Option) syllabus for Form III;
- organised an INSET course *The New History Syllabus – An Overview* during the September session;
- evaluated and upgraded the History webpage *History – Primary and Secondary Schools* which can be viewed on <http://schoolnet.gov.mt/history/>;
- co-ordinated the subject of European Studies as an option subject;
- sat on MATSEC Syllabi Boards for History, Environmental Studies and European Studies;
- assisted in the hosting of the Euroclio Conference in Malta in March during which a presentation was delivered;
- participated in various courses and seminars both locally and abroad.

DEPARTMENT OF OPERATIONS

Mission Statement

To ensure quality and standards in state schools, thus enabling them to address better the needs of their students in order to help them become meaningful citizens of the global society.

The Department of Operations is responsible for:

- supervising state primary and secondary schools in Malta and Gozo with the exception of Special Education schools;
- ensuring the delivery of policies;
- ensuring the development of the administrative staff in these schools;
- ensuring quality in education in these schools;
- establishing and working with school councils;
- recommending policy and/or administrative/programmes for state schools;
- facilitating better communication between schools and the Division.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

During the year under review, four more colleges have been added to the three that were introduced last year. The composition of each college is shown in the following tables.

College 4 School Network	
<i>Primary Schools</i>	<i>Secondary Schools</i>
A Galea Primary School, Floriana	Dun Ġ Zammit (Brighella) Boys' Junior Lyceum, Hamrun
Dun F Camilleri Primary School, Hamrun	F X Attard, Boys' Secondary School, Marsa
Dun Ġ Preca Primary School, Hamrun	L Manche' Boys' School, Floriana
L Balbi Primary School, Marsa	M Assumpta Girls' Secondary School, Hamrun
Spizjar Ġ Agius Primary School A, Paola	
Spizjar Ġ Agius Primary School B, Paola	
H Frere Primary School, Pieta'	
St Elmo Primary School, Valletta	
College 5 School Network	
<i>Primary Schools</i>	<i>Secondary Schools</i>
G Schinas Primary School, Luqa	Dun K Psaila Boys' Secondary School, Żebbuġ
San Ġorġ Primary School, Qormi	Ġ Galea Boys' Secondary School, Qormi
San Bastjan Primary School, Qormi	Maria Regina Junior Lyceum, Blata il-Bajda
Patri Ġ Delia Primary School, Siġġiewi	MA Vassalli Boys' Junior Lyceum, Handaq
Dun M Xerri Primary School, Żebbuġ	
A Sciortino Primary School, Żebbuġ	
College 6 School Network	
<i>Primary Schools</i>	<i>Secondary Schools</i>
Dun A Manche' Primary School, Ġzira	A Bosio Boys' Secondary School, Ġzira
B Mizzi Primary School, Pembroke	Sir A Dingli Girls' Junior Lyceum, St Patricks
Madonna tal-Mensija Primary School A, San Ġwann	Sir L Preziosi Girls' Secondary School, St Andrews
St Bernardette Primary School B, San Ġwann	
Dun Ġ Xerri Primary School, St Julians	
Ġ Bonnici Primary School, Sliema	
College 7 School Network	
<i>Primary Schools</i>	<i>Secondary Schools</i>
K Sant Primary School, Gharghur	Lily of the Valley Girls' Secondary School, Mosta
Marija Bambina Primary School, Mellieħa	Naxxar Boys' Secondary School
C Sammut Primary School A, Mosta	
E B Vella Primary School B, Mosta	
Dun K Xerri Primary School, Naxxar	
Patri F Sammut Primary School, St Paul's Bay	

M Mortimer Girls' Junior Lyceum, Sta Lucia and Maria Goretti Girls' Secondary School, Tarxien, were incorporated into St Benedict's College. Ave Marija Primary School, Xghajra, Sta Klara Primary School A and Dr F Chetcuti Primary School B, Żabbar, Fra D Bonanno Girls' School, Marsa and G Despott Boys' Junior Lyceum, Verdala were included with the Cottonera College.

All the remaining schools were grouped into three areas. Each area was headed by an Education Officer in the absence of Assistant Directors.

During the year under review, B'Kara Primary School A and Primary School B, as well as Qormi (St. Sebastian) Primary A and Primary B, were amalgamated into Primary Schools C.

Staff

Professional Staff attached to the Department of Operations is: 1 Director; 3 Assistant Directors carrying out duties as College Co-ordinators; 2 Principal Education Officers (appointed to lead External School Audit teams attached to Department of Operations in September 2005); and 4 Education Officers.

Deployment/Shortage of Teaching Staff

When schools reopened in September 2006 the complement of Heads of School was thirteen short of the required manning levels.

Schools without a Head of School – September 2006	
Primary Schools	
Patri Tumas Xerri Primary School, Bahrija	K Grima Primary School, Gharb
Mqabba Primary School	Dun S Portelli Primary School, San Lawrenz
Spizjar Ġ Agius Primary School A, Paola	Patri M Sultana Primary School, Xaghra
A Buhagjar Primary School B, Rabat	Mons Ġ A Vella, Żebbuġ (Gozo)
Dun K Sant Primary School, Tarxien	
Secondary Schools	
L Gafa Boys' Secondary School, Fortini	M A Vassalli Boys' Junior Lyceum, Handaq
Dun K Psaila Boys' Secondary School, Żebbuġ	

There was no shortage of teaching staff in primary schools while a teacher of Biology, Personal and Social Development, Spanish, Marketing and three teachers of English and four of Home Economics were required in secondary schools.

Number of Schools

No of Schools by level/sector – October 2006	
Kindergarten Centres	62 ⁽¹⁾
Primary Schools	72
Junior Lyceums	11 ⁽²⁾
Secondary Schools	19
Boys'/Girls' Schools	2
Post-Secondary Schools	2
St Benedict's College	1
Total	169

(1) these centres are situated on the same premises as the primary schools, with the exception of Mosta and an additional centre at Paola

(2) Form I intake of Dun Ġ Zammit Brighella Boys' Junior Lyceum and M A Vassalli Boys' Junior Lyceum, Handaq attended Dun Ġ Zammit Brighella Boys' Junior Lyceum Annexe at Sliema.

Staff in State Schools

	Pre-Primary		Primary		Secondary		Inclusive Education		Post-Secondary		Total		
	M	F	M	F	M	M	M	F	M	F	M	F	T
Heads of School ⁽¹⁾			33	30	16	11			2		51	41	92
Assistant Heads of School ⁽²⁾			35	71	58	34			4	3	97	108	205
Subject Co-ordinators ⁽³⁾			1	3	43	30			13		57	33	90
Teachers ⁽⁴⁾			135	549	550	932			95	80	780	1,561	2,341
Activity Teachers ⁽⁵⁾			10	8							10	8	18
Resource Teachers				6	26	14			2		28	20	48
Instructors ⁽⁶⁾			16	156	166	143			4		186	299	485
Part-time Instructors ⁽⁷⁾				7	3	3					3	10	13
Temporary Teachers				1	3	1			1		4	2	6
Retired Teachers				1					2		2	1	3
Supply Teachers			2	16	9	20			1	2	12	38	50
Facilitators ⁽⁸⁾							10	259			10	259	269
Kindergarten Asst. (KGA) ⁽⁹⁾		410							31			441	441
KGAs (Spec. Educ.) ⁽¹⁰⁾									98			98	98
P/T KGAs									1			1	1
P/T KGAs (Spec. Educ.)									3			3	3
Supply KGAs (Spec. Educ.) ⁽¹¹⁾							44	601			44	601	645
Total	-	410	232	848	874	1,188	54	993	124	85	1,284	3,524	4,808

(1) Not including 1 Head of School on unpaid/responsibility leave and 2 Heads of School (Secondary Schools) awaiting appointments as Heads of School.

(2) Not including 10 Assistant Heads on Acting Head duties, 4 Assistant Heads (Primary) on loan to Ministries/unpaid leave, 3 Acting Heads (Secondary) and 2 Assistant Heads (Secondary) on long leave.

(3) Not including 1 Subject Co-ordinator on non-teaching duties and 3 on long leave.

(4) Not including 41 teachers (primary level) on maternity/parental leave, sick leave, unpaid leave, 4 teachers (secondary level) on non-teaching duties, 125 teachers (secondary level) and 7 teachers (post secondary level) on long leave.

(5) Not including 1 Activity Teacher on parental leave.

(6) Not including 14 Instructors (primary level) on maternity/parental leave, 6 Instructors (secondary level) on non-teaching duties, 10 Instructors (secondary level) on long leave and 1 Instructor (post secondary level) on non-teaching duties.

(7) Not including 1 part-time Instructor (primary level) on parental leave and 1 (secondary level) on non-teaching duties.

(8) Not including 21 on unpaid leave.

(9) Not including 3 Kindergarten Assistants (KAs) on clerical duties, 2 KAs on long sick leave, 7 KAs on maternity leave and 3 KAs (Inclusive Education) on unpaid leave.

(10) Not including 2 on unpaid leave.

(11) Not including 16 on unpaid leave.

Number of Classes and Student Population in State Schools

School Population <i>(at the beginning of scholastic year 2005/2006)</i>				
Sector	Population			No. of Classes
	Male	Female	Total	
Kindergarten	2,244	2,126	4,370	272
Primary Schools	9,057	7,718	16,775	861
Junior Lyceums	4,053	5,369	9,422	402
Secondary Schools	3,612	3,103	6,715	334
Boys'/Girls' Schools	1,010	1,256	2,266	n/a
Post-Secondary Schools	533	-	533	27
St Benedict's College	306	139	445	32
Total	20,815	19,711	40,526	1,928

Departmental Meetings with Heads of School

The Department of Operations organised several meetings for Heads of Primary and Secondary Schools. The main objectives of these meetings were the ongoing enhancement of the services provided by the schools and the Department to clients, and the streamlining of communication between schools and Head Office.

Data Protection Seminar for Heads of School

Following the audit that the OPM Data Protection Team carried out in several primary and secondary schools in Malta and Gozo, a seminar was organised for Heads of Primary and Secondary Schools in Malta and Gozo regarding the Data Protection Policy that was drawn up for all state schools.

In-service Management Course for Assistant Heads of School

The Operations Department organised an in-service course for newly appointed Assistant Heads of School (Primary and Secondary). The course entitled *Improving Quality Management in Schools* was spread over four days and tackled the following topics: The Role of Assistant Head of School, School Development Planning, Performance Management Programme (PMP), School Accounts and Student Services. The course was attended by 20 Assistant Heads of School.

SCHOOL TRANSPORT

The Department of Operations was responsible for organising and providing school transport for students in primary and secondary schools. During 2006, transport was provided by the Mini Bus Co-operative, the Unscheduled Bus Service and the Public Transport Association.

To ensure the smooth running of the service, the officer in charge of transport carried out various on-site inspections and held meetings with Heads of School and with local councils. Students with special needs, supervised by facilitators, were also provided with alternative means of transport.

School Transport Report as on October 2006			
Schools	Students	Daily Trips	Daily Expenditure (Lm)
Primary	3,230	157	1,470.96
Boys' and Girls' Schools	545	48	691.06
Secondary	5,207	208	2,324.94
Junior Lyceums	7,845	289	3,904.52
Total	16,827	702	8,391.48

Development of New Database for Professional Staff Working in Schools

The new database for teaching staff, tailor-made to suit the needs of the Division and developed in collaboration with MITTS, is now in place. All information about teaching staff working in schools has been entered. Clerical staff of the Operations Department was responsible for the data input. Data is continuously being updated to include newly recruited staff.

Development of New Database for Students Attending School

In collaboration with MITTS and with the help of teachers in the Student Information Systems Unit (SIS), a new student database to be used by schools has been developed. This new system had to be developed as the system currently used in schools cannot be upgraded to be compatible with the current computer operating systems. During the year under review, 12 primary and secondary schools were used to test the database. Clerical staff from these schools received training from SIS personnel in the use of the database. During the summer months, six university students assisted with the data entry.

After School Activities

Following the success of last year's pilot project, the *After School Activities* programme was extended and offered to nine secondary schools, namely Sir L Preziosi Girls' Secondary School, C Diacono Girls' Junior Lyceum, St Benedict's College, St Theresa Girls' Junior Lyceum, Can P Pullicino Girls' Secondary School, E Serracino Inglott Girls' Secondary School, G D'Amato Boys' Secondary School, Lily of the Valley Girls' Secondary School and V Borg Brared Boys' Secondary School. All Activity Teachers are involved in the project which includes gymnastics, football, volleyball, netball, basketball, art, ceramics and music.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

During the year, the total number of personnel employed to support students with special needs rose from 923 to 1,052.

Interviews for Supply Learning Support Assistants to support students with special needs in the mainstream were held during May and June.

The transition exercise for students with special needs proceeding from primary to secondary education, which included 181 sessions, was held between April and June.

485 Supply Kindergarten Assistants applied to attend the course on Supporting Students and Students with Individual Educational Needs. Those who did not apply or resigned are following the Diploma in Inclusive Education being organised by the University of Malta.

Posting of Students for Teaching Practice/Observation/School Experience

The Education Division is represented by the Department of Operations on the Teaching Practice Committee of the Faculty of Education. This committee seeks to enable close collaboration with the Teaching Practice Co-ordinator of the University and the Department of Operations.

Students following the Bachelor of Education degree and the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) courses are posted in state, private and church schools for a six-week teaching experience, for weekly class observation or for school experience sessions. The following table provides a calendar when each activity took place.

Calendar of Activities of Student Teachers			
	<i>Teaching Practice</i>	<i>Class Observation</i>	<i>School Experience</i>
1 st Yr Students			November-December
2 nd Yr Students	November-December March-April	November-December	
3 rd Yr Students	February-March		
4 th Yr Students	November-December		
PGCE	November-December February-March		

The schools taking B Ed and PGCE students determine their own needs and student teachers are posted accordingly, as much as possible. Schools take full responsibility of the students placed in their schools. In this way, both parties involved benefit to the maximum from their placement in school. During the whole process, Heads of School, Assistant Heads of School, Subject Co-ordinators and teachers are encouraged to participate in the tutoring, mentoring and supervision of student teachers.

At the request of, and in conjunction with, the Teaching Practice Co-ordinator of the Faculty of Education, a total of 674 placements in state schools were given to B Ed/PGCE students for their teaching practice or school experience and observation during 2006.

No. of Student Teachers Training in State Schools – 2005/2006			
<i>Primary</i>			
1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year
<i>Observation</i>	<i>Teaching Practice</i>	<i>Teaching Practice</i>	<i>Teaching Practice</i>
14	-	53	58
<i>Secondary</i>			
1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year
<i>Observation</i>	<i>School Experience</i>	<i>Teaching Practice</i>	<i>Teaching Practice</i>
99	107	82	86
<i>PGCE</i>			
<i>Teaching Practice</i>			
175			

Networked Learning Communities

The EXCEL Network Project continued for another scholastic year. The Network took up action research which focused on the topic *Enhancing Pupil Self-Esteem*.

Teacher-researchers from the United Kingdom visited Malta between 12 and 18 March 2006 so as to initiate the projects with their Maltese counterparts through the formation of action-research partnerships. Each partnership consisted of a Maltese and a UK school, namely, C Diacono Girls' Junior Lyceum and Hanham High School; Dun Ġ Zammit Boys' Junior Lyceum and Sir Bernard Lovell School; Dun K Scerri Naxxar Primary School and Mead Community Primary School; F Castagna Ghaxaq Primary School and Longwell Green Primary School; F Zammit Qrendi Primary School and Marshfield Primary School; Ġ Delia Siggiewi Primary School and Frogwell Primary School.

These partnerships worked together towards various targets. Teacher-researchers visited various schools in order to familiarise themselves better with the local educational provision and to facilitate their work with the partner school. The whole network developed six case studies, one by each of the school partnership.

Teacher-researchers agreed to investigate the baseline self-esteem of their pupils through questionnaires and interviews. Pupils were then involved in a project where they were expected to manage their own learning. A re-investigation of the same pupils' self-esteem was carried out to compare the findings with the initial baseline information.

The EXCEL (Malta) Project led to important key points for teaching and learning. The teacher-researchers found out that students who were given the opportunity for more active participation in making choices about their learning, increased their self-esteem and sense of achievement. Even less outgoing pupils benefitted from this by collaborating with their more outgoing peers.

School Councils

During the year under review, there were 111 school councils (72 in primary schools, 35 in secondary schools and four in special schools). The School Councils' Section dealt with enquiries and information regarding school councils. The section also took part in presentations on the media and organised talks to parents about school councils.

STUDENT SERVICES AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

The Department of Student Services and International Relations (DSSIR) is responsible for three main areas: Student Services; Special Needs in Special Schools; and International Relations. The Department has been under the responsibility of the Director General (Education) in the absence of the Director Student Services and International Relations, who retired in the latter part of 2006.

STUDENT SERVICES BRANCH

Safe Schools Programme

The Safe Schools Programme comprises three units: the Child Safety Services, the Anti-Bullying Unit, and the Anti-Substance Abuse Unit. Each unit seeks to give service through consultation, intervention, prevention and training.

Child Safety Services

Child Safety Services is a specialised unit manned by four guidance teachers, working mainly in the area of child abuse. During 2006, it received 234 referrals regarding cases of alleged child abuse. However, the Unit is also involved in the tracing of students and in the Special Education Needs Team (SENT), which is a multidisciplinary team that identifies and helps children with learning difficulties.

Members of the Unit were invited to give lectures to school staff during school development sessions, to newly appointed Assistant Heads of School and to Education Officers. The Unit also organised an in-service course on Child Abuse for primary school teachers and a two-day intensive course for Sedqa's Babes programme facilitators.

During 2006, the Unit carried out an evaluation of the current national policy for child protection and the services provided by the Unit. This included a questionnaire to Heads of School, school counsellors and guidance teachers. The results were included in a report entitled *Evaluation of the Present Procedures and Services*, presented to the Director Policy Development. The Unit also compiled a Child Safety Officer Manual. In partnership with the Department of Technology in Education, the Unit produced two story books with themes on abuse, a website for young children and interactive computer games. The Unit is collaborating with *Inhope* - a new helpline on internet abuse.

Services Provided by Child Safety Services Unit	
Service	Frequency
Consultation by phone	60
Consultation on school premises	9
Consultation and Co-ordination	11
Direct Referral	147
Co-ordination	6

No of Alleged Child Abuse Referrals by Categories	
Type of Abuse	Referrals
Emotional	19
Neglect	56
Physical	35
Sexual	66
Emotional and Neglect	1

Staff Training	10
Primary Safety Programme	1
Secondary Safety Programme	4
Parents' Awareness Programme	3
Counselling	5
Meetings with other agencies on shared projects	8
SENT meetings	24
Tracing	317
Total	605

Emotional, Neglect and Physical	6
Emotional and Physical	22
Emotional, Physical and Sexual	2
Emotional and Sexual	4
Neglect and Physical	14
Neglect, Physical and Sexual	1
Neglect and Sexual	1
Physical, Sexual, Emotional and Neglect	3
Unknown	4
Total	234

Substance Abuse Policy Team (SAPT)

The SAPT, made up of three guidance teachers, strives to keep schools safe from substance abuse in all its forms and from all stakeholders. This stance warrants the planning and implementation of preventive strategies and interventions for students, school staff and parents.

During 2006, SAPT offered assistance to schools whenever cases of alleged substance abuse occurred. It provided professional advice on matters of policy and procedures regarding school referrals. This is an integral part of the service because it strives to strike a balance between the needs of the alleged user and safeguarding of the school. It also provided assistance to students who are allegedly using drugs or at risk of substance abuse.

The process of intervention involves an array of indirect and/or direct strategies. Indirect intervention may include classroom sessions, fora, seminars, staff development meetings in-service training and other preventive work. Direct strategies involve sessions with abusers, parents and staff concerned in the case. During the year, 106 cases were reported to SAPT.

Reports Submitted to SAPT in 2006								
Month	State Secondary Schools		State Primary Schools		Church Schools		Independent Schools	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Total	58	20	7	1	7	12	1	0

Throughout 2006, the SAPT strengthened its collaboration with agencies and government departments working in the field. The team developed other links with non-governmental agencies including Caritas and OASI in Gozo. Particularly useful is the collaboration with the Guidance and Counselling Services Unit and with services provided within the Safe Schools Programme. All cases are monitored regularly through frequent contact with the students and professionals concerned.

Prevention is a crucial aspect of the services provided by the SAPT. It aims to focus on those students who are mostly at risk and to proactively promote a healthy society. SAPT, together with *Sedqa* and the PSD/Guidance team, participated in prevention programmes aimed at students, parents, staff and the community at large. One such initiative, the Family Strategies Programme (FSP), assists and supports parents in their ever-changing and challenging role, as first educators of their children. SAPT also organised two in-service courses for teachers during July. Together with *Sedqa*, Caritas and OASI and lead by the National Commission on the Abuse of Drugs, Alcohol and other Dependencies, it participated in an evaluation of drug prevention programmes provided by the various agencies

Anti-bullying Unit (ABU)

The Anti-Bullying Unit strives to initiate, support and co-ordinate the schools' anti-bullying programmes, thus ensuring a safe and caring environment conducive to learning and well-being.

The Unit, which is manned by three guidance teachers, provides advice and support in developing whole-school responses to bullying and the promotion of pro-social behaviour. This includes awareness raising

and formulating and implementing anti-bullying strategies. It gives support to staff, students and parents to increase their confidence and competence in dealing with incidences of bullying behaviour. The Unit acts also as a resource centre.

The Unit acts also as a link between schools and other student services or professional agencies within or outside the Education Division.

Cases of bullying are mainly referred from the Educational Welfare Services, School Psychologists and the Guidance and Counselling Unit, social workers from Appoġġ, Helpline 179 and directly by parents and students. The number of new individual referrals amounted to 166 new cases. A constant telephone support service is also available for schools and parents.

Schools visited during 2006 for the purpose of interventions <i>(prevention programme, staff development, parents meetings, individual cases and class contact)</i>					
Primary schools	Boys Sec & JL	Girls Sec & JL	Church (primary and secondary level)	Independent (primary and secondary level)	Gozo (primary and secondary level)
31	13	11	12	3	5

Art Therapy Unit

Art Therapy offers curative services to students who experience difficulty in talking about their problem. The Art Therapy Service is given by a peripatetic teacher who is a qualified Art Therapist. During 2006, the section dealt with 62 cases.

School Psychological Service

The service strives to promote the optimal psycho-educational environment that facilitates the learning and development of children and young people. This is undertaken through partnership with parents and collaboration with school staff and other child professionals and services.

During 2006, the Unit undertook the following activities:

- Individual casework – urgent referrals and those on the waiting list. The majority of referrals requested support relating to severe emotional and/or behavioural difficulties (including aggression, depression, suicidal behaviour, disruption and destructiveness), and diagnosis of learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia, mental disability, ADD/ADHD, autism etc.). Around 47% of new referrals requested an assessment *vis-a-vis* special examination arrangements for Junior Lyceum or MATSEC examinations.
- Multidisciplinary teamwork as part of the SENT project.
- Telephone consultation with parents, school staff and professionals in other agencies/services.
- Attend case conferences in schools and in child support agencies/services.
- Work in conjunction with the Education Medical Service on the formulation of categories of special educational needs received by the Statementing and Moderating Panel, for statistical purposes.
- Collaborative work with the Child Guidance Clinic, St Luke's Hospital, in relation with individual case referrals.
- Talks given to guidance teachers, counsellors and social workers.
- Supervising of trainee psychologists and psychology students.
- Attending conferences and seminars.

During the year, 601 new referrals were received by the Service. The total number of closed cases referred before or during 2006, was 511.

Case Workload - 2006	
	No. of Cases
Individual case referrals (urgent and waiting list)	238
MATSEC special examination arrangements	54
Junior Lyceum special examination arrangements	227
SENT	132
Child guidance clinic	14

School Social Work Service

The School Social Work Service is engaged in ensuring that all school age children receive the best possible education, in the best possible conditions and to the best of their abilities. This is done through the use of effective social work intervention and, when necessary, by taking uncooperative parents to Court. At the start of the school year 2006/07, in line with the implementation of the College networks, each College network was assigned a social worker. During 2006, steps were taken to initiate a refurbishment programme of the premises to make them more client-friendly.

During the summer, the Unit tackled the issue of absenteeism through counselling sessions with 60 students and their parents.

Other tasks included:

Home Visits	680	Talks delivered by Social Workers	38
School Visits	464	Meetings with other professionals	244
Case conferences	67	SENT meetings	23
Juvenile court sittings	7	Assessment of absenteeism reports	9,575
Juvenile court cases	174	of which taken to court	4,026
Social work intervention at Unit	195	Police sitting	8
Social work counselling	218	Police case	241
Exemptions assessment	985	Datatrak sitting	148
Referrals-out	80	Datatrak case	4,026

School Library Service (SLS)

The SLS aims to support school libraries and librarians. One of the main projects for 2006 was the continuation of computerisation of school libraries. All schools in the project were linked to Head Office. Following the installation of "Oliver", the newly acquired library management software, in schools, which included barcode scanners and borrowers' cards, a two-day training session was given to teacher librarians.

During 2006, about 242,000 books were catalogued. Concurrently, books were either recycled or added to the Special Collections Scheme which by the end of 2006 amounted to 4,237 fiction titles and 11,424 information books. In 2006, 3,783 books were recycled.

In October, the SLS organised the 6th International School Library Day seminar. The seminar was held at Robert Samut Hall, Floriana and attended by over 100 teacher-librarians.

On the occasion of World Book Day (23 April), the section organised the annual quiz competition for secondary schools. Two schools tied for first place, Sacred Heart Convent School and St Monica School, Gżira. A writing competition for primary schools was also well received. First prize went to a student from San Andrea Middle School. As in previous years, the library week activities were held just before World Book Day.

The Best Library Award for 2006 was given to St Francis of Assisi Boys' Secondary School, Sta Venera, while the Best Librarian Award went to Mr M J Zammit at St Benedict College, Kirkop. Awards were handed out by the Minister of Education, Youth and Employment during the October seminar.

The monthly booklist was reintroduced in January and nine issues for primary and secondary schools were published. Some concern about the provision of fiction titles in schools caused the Department of Operations to issue a circular at the end of the year regarding the purchase and sale of fiction titles by schools.

During the month of October, all secondary schools in Malta and Gozo were visited by SLS staff and a status report was drawn up and presented to the Director General (Education).

Statistics from 36 secondary schools show that the total number of books in these schools amounts to over one 194,425. With a student population of 20,109, the ratio of books per student works out at approximately 10:1. A total of 10,694 books were added throughout the year. The number of periodicals purchased dropped again this year to 59. Loans during the twelve-month period amounted to 72,464 books. The average book loan ratio per student works out at 3.6 books per student. The school with the highest ratio (10:1) was registered by C Diacono Girls' Junior Lyceum, Żejtun, followed by Sta Theresa Girls' Junior Lyceum, Mriehel with a ratio of 7:1.

The collection of school admission registers in the Archives Section increased to 98. Throughout the year over 220 school attendance certificates were issued to ex-students.

Birżebbuġa Primary Schools received a donation from Oil Tanking Malta Ltd to set up their libraries. All the books were delivered to the SLS at L-Iklin and, with the assistance of parents from the schools, it was possible to process the books in seven days. The 3,000+ books were also added to the central database (Oliver) and thus Birżebbuġa became the first primary school to be computerised. It was officially opened by the Minister of Education, Youth and Employment.

Other primary schools which brought their whole stock of books to the SLS were Sta Klara Primary School A, Żabbar, Dr G Ganado Primary School, Mtarfa and St George Primary School, Qormi.

The SLS was also involved in the reallocation of school libraries to new premises. The books and library furniture of G Despott Boys' Junior Lyceum, Verdala were moved to SLS at Iklin. The books and other publications were processed and added to the central database during summer with the help of two university students. These were then reallocated in the new premises of the school at Hamrun. The SLS assisted in the reallocation of school libraries at Sir A Dingli Girls' Junior Lyceum and M Mortimer Girls' Junior Lyceum.

Education Medical Service (EMS)

A new medical officer was appointed to run the Education Medical Service in August 2006. This report therefore covers the last five months of the year. The EMS endeavoured to give an advisory and practical service to the centre-based administrative staff as well as to all the schools. The Educational Medical Officer (EMO) was involved in the staff development of nurses working in special schools. Talks regarding health issues were given to parents at W Baker Primary School, Gudja, Dun K Sant Primary School, Tarxien, St Benedict Primary School, Kirkop and Dun A Manche' Primary School, Gżira and at the Guardian Angel Special School, Hamrun. As part of a health promoting programme, the EMO visited 14 schools and discussed health promotional aspects such as first aid facilities, the school's environment and nutrition policies, with the school management team. The EMO examined 20 pupils who requested special arrangements for their Junior Lyceum entrance examination. The EMO compiled a list/glossary of the medical conditions of stated pupils/students to simplify and streamline the classification of special needs into broad categories. The objective is to make the specialised terminology more accessible to lay persons and simplify data collation.

During 2006, the Unit continued the Hepatitis B Immunisation Programme and the Head Lice Screening Programme. This section co-ordinated and funded the vaccination of new staff at special schools. The Community Nursing service visited homes of children coming from disadvantaged home environments.

This section has an arrangement with the Employee Relations Section for the screening of employees' medical certificates regarding the relevance of these certificates to the policy of accumulation of sick-leave.

In collaboration with the Occupation Health and Safety Unit, the EMS reviewed a number of health related policies including the first aid facilities in schools and the febrile illnesses policy. The EMO participated in the management of a number of Meningitis or suspected Meningitis cases. This included advising staff and parents and liaising with the public health surveillance personnel.

Guidance and Counselling Unit

The Unit seeks to provide a continuous advisory service to all students, leading to their holistic development. The service is given to schools and to the general public during office hours.

The Guidance and Counselling Unit covers:

- Personal, curricular and career guidance with students and parents.
- Developmental Guidance which identifies and meets the personal and social needs of pupils and on helping them to deal successfully with their concerns.
- Staff professional development.
- Collaboration with other agencies.
- Parenting Skills programmes consisting of six sessions with parents.
- Individual and group counselling with students and parents, both as preventive action and crises intervention.

The counselling service is given in all schools. Services range from crisis interventions to personal, vocational or educational counselling. A great number of referrals are also made to other support agencies.

Curricular Guidance has various facets ranging from individual guidance and counselling, seminars and orientation visits. The service is also provided to parents. Curricular guidance covers three key stages:

- Transition from primary education to secondary education.
- Choice of subject options in Form II and Form III.
- Transition from secondary to post-secondary education.

Career Guidance, similar to curricular guidance, includes a range of services and initiatives but the focus is on career paths and the job market. Major input coincides with the last two years of secondary education. Students are taken on orientation visits to places of work in a range of economic activities. Career seminars were held throughout the year for 35 state secondary schools and 17 non-state schools. The Unit initiated the drafting of four workbooks under the title *Kif Tagħmel Ghazla Tajba* to be used by students during the Career Seminars. These will be published in 2007.

Guidance teachers meet once a week as part of their ongoing professional development. An induction course is also held for new guidance teachers between October and November. Staff of the unit attends INSET courses during July and September.

In the absence of Education Officer Guidance, the counsellors took over the co-ordination of the services and the development of the unit.

The Unit offers a number of programmes including the *Parenting Skills Programme* held throughout the year for groups of up to twenty parents per session. A new manual has been prepared for use in this programme.

Counsellors organised a number of one-day seminars in schools aimed at the students' personal growth. The themes discussed included leadership, relationships, communication, and other related topics.

Members of the Unit were invited to deliver talks in primary and secondary schools during school development sessions and to parish groups. Counsellors liaise with other agencies such as Sedqa and with other services provided under the Safe Schools Programmes.

Unit Għożża

This unit seeks to provide a support service and an educational programme to unmarried pregnant minors, leading them to adopt a positive attitude towards motherhood while empowering them to pursue their career paths.

During 2006, the Unit provided service to 176 unmarried mothers - 84 attended the programme while 92 requested counselling. About 40 teenage mothers and their babies/toddlers attended the Mother and Baby Support Group. Ongoing counselling was also offered to these girls, their parents and partners.

The unit offers a number of programmes including:

- *The Pregnant Girls Programme* offering sessions in self-development, as well as informative sessions on educational, legal and social topics in relation to pregnancy and motherhood. In 2006, the programme included input from the Midwifery Team at St Luke's, Consumer Rights Association, Social Assistance, the Public Registry, the Health Promotion Unit, the Immunisation Unit, the Speech Therapy Unit, a Beauty Therapist, the Breast-Feeding Counsellor from the Cana Movement, Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) and Guidance Teachers.
- *The Mother and Baby Programme* consisting of a weekly one-hour session for young mothers, during which their children are provided with early learning activities. During 2006, a monthly outing has been included in the programme.
- A *Parenting Skills for the Early Years* course organised between April and June. A certificate of attendance was awarded to the girls who attended the six sessions.
- *Nifhmu 'l Uliedna fil-Bidliet*, a programme for parents of pupils in Years 5, 6 and 7 was delivered in 27 state primary schools in Malta. The Unit organised a seminar for parents of Form I students. This seminar focused on Parenting Skills and on starting Parenting Skills Programmes in Gozo.
- *The Parents of Pregnant Girls Programme* consists of a number of meetings with a content that ranges from information-giving to moral support.
- Counselling Service is offered at all times on request by appointment to girls, their partners, and their families.

The Unit's major initiative during 2006 was the organisation of the seminar *Children Having Children*, held on 15 February at Robert Samut Hall. The seminar was chaired by Ms J Baldacchino, Assistant Director Student Services and talks were given by Ms M R Mifsud, Dr A Abela, Dr M Chircop and Ms P Darmanin. It was attended by counsellors, guidance teachers, social workers, midwives and personnel from the Health Promotion Unit. Ms S Camilleri, the Commissioner for Children, concluded the seminar. One outcome of this seminar was the formation of an Action Committee tasked with the standardisation of some form of sex education in schools. The Committee is chaired by the Assistant Director Student Services.

Other initiatives included:

- participation in SCOOPS;
- *Jum il-Mara* Celebration.
- establishment of Health and Safety Standards;
- participation in the competition *Healthy Snacking* organised by Home Economists in Action. Our students presented posters on the topic *Healthy Snacking in Pregnancy* and were credited with certificates;
- participation in television programmes and contributing articles to the media.

Throughout the year, the premises of Unit Għożża have continued to be refurbished and made more user-friendly.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS BRANCH

The Branch includes three Sections: International Links; Democracy and Values Education; and the Youth Service Organisation and Sports.

International Links

During 2006, the International Links Section co-ordinated the following initiatives:

- *Europe at School Competition 2006*: This competition, under the patronage of the Council of Europe, the Council for Co-operation and the European Commission, included essay writing, artwork and an Internet Award Scheme. The Internet Award Scheme aims at establishing a network of school partnerships to work on themes of common European interest by making use of the internet. The theme for 2006 was *The Spirit of Co-operation in a Plural Europe*. A total of 17 schools, with 406 entries, took part in 2006.
- *European Day of Languages 2006*: 30 schools (22 primary, 8 secondary) sent written reports on activities held on or around this day. Activities included drama, power point presentations, presentations during school assemblies, native speakers of different languages invited to school, songs, poems, video conferencing, national anthems, greetings, exhibitions and traditional dances.
- *European Development Days Competition 2006*: This competition, organised by the European SchoolNet in Brussels, was open to students aged 16 to 18 years. Fourteen students participated. The entries were published on the European website where students from all over Europe could vote. The national winners, two students from De La Salle College and the Junior College who placed first and second respectively, travelled to Brussels where they met Commissioner Louis Michel. One of the Maltese students was selected by the European judges to join a group of students who will join Commissioner Michel on a visit to Africa. The aim of the competition was to raise awareness about how development co-operation between Europe and Africa works.
- *European Day of Parents and Schools 2006*: In collaboration with the Association of School Councils organised a series of activities to mark the occasion. Besides school based activities which took place in 59 schools, there were two activities, one in Malta and another in Gozo, in which all parents were invited to meet the Permanent Secretary, MEYE, the Director General Education, and the Presidents of the Association of School Councils and the Association of Parents of Children in Church Schools. About 500 parents attended these activities. The overall aim was to promote the active involvement of parents in the education of their children.
- *Spring Day in Europe 2006*: This is an initiative by the European Commission to encourage students to learn more about the EU and to voice their views and concerns regarding its future. It also aims to raise awareness on how young European citizens can join forces with European institutions for better dialogue and understanding of European democratic developments. The Unit worked closely with the Austrian Ambassador, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Commission Representation and the European Parliament Information Office on this project. Members of the European Parliament, the Austrian Ambassador, the Head of the European Commission Representation and other important people related to the EU visited schools in Malta and Gozo and participated in discussions about the EU. Students also visited the European Commission Representation and the European Parliament Information Office where they also discussed EU issues.
- *Spring Day in Europe Competition 2006*: 17 schools took part in the competition which included drawings, paintings, bookmarks, posters, proposals for a better EU and power point presentations. The prize for 22 students in the 14+ category was a Euroscola trip to the European Parliament in Strasbourg.
- *Europe Day 2006*: 400 students from 27 schools in Malta and Gozo took part in the Europe Day celebrations in 2006. During an activity at the Mediterranean Conference Centre, schools' representatives presented proposals regarding the future of the EU to a high profile panel chaired by the Minister of

Foreign Affairs. The proposals were drawn up as part of the schools' Spring Day project. The proposals were also sent to the European Commission. The same students participated in a march past in Valletta, carrying the flags of all EU countries. This was followed by a flag raising ceremony in St George's Square.

- *The People to People International*: This organisation strives to enhance understanding and friendship between people of different countries and cultures. Maltese schools joined children from around 94 countries in different projects. A Maltese school, Can P Pullicino Girls' Secondary School, Rabat, won first prize in the Global Youth Murals Competition.
- *Commonwealth Day Secondary Schools Competition 2006*: In 2006, the Malta Commonwealth Competition Committee, made up of representatives from the Education Division, the Foreign Affairs Ministry, and the British and Australian High Commissions, chose the theme of the historic event when Malta hosted the CHOGM meeting in November 2005. 34 students from church and state schools participated with entries that took the form of essays, drawings, portfolios and power point presentations.
- *The 191 Children's Views of the World*: In collaboration with the Art Section of the Curriculum Department and the Malta Council for Culture and the Arts, organised an exhibition at Caraffa Stores, Vittoriosa. The 191 drawings from children in the 191 United Nations member states, including Malta, showed different artistic expressions which were testimony to global challenges and the importance of promoting unity in diversity through intercultural dialogue. The International Relations Section co-ordinated art and writing workshops and school visits for the duration of the exhibition.
- *Staff Development Sessions*: Staff development sessions were facilitated at Can P Pullicino Girls' Secondary School, Rabat and Dun Frans Camilleri Primary School, Hamrun. The topic was *Integrating the International Relations Dimension into the Curriculum*.
- *Co-operation with the Balearic Islands*: Co-ordinated the visit to Malta of a group of high profile officials from the Ministry of Education of the Balearic Islands. Talks were held with officials at the Ministry of Education including the Permanent Secretary, the Director General and the Director Curriculum Management. During their stay, the officials also visited schools to observe the teaching of English in primary and secondary schools and met members of the schools' management team.
- *Projects funded by the EU*: Proactively encouraged schools to participate in FP6 Research projects, tackling subjects such as science, French and Spanish.
- *Scholarships*: Liaised with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to communicate to schools information regarding international scholarships.

Youth Service Organisation

The main objectives of the Youth Service Organisation are student exchanges, school competitions and exhibitions of works by students and other initiatives with NGOs.

Student Exchanges

The following exchanges took place in 2006:

Incoming Country	Students		Teachers		Participating School/s
	M	F	M	F	
Bourges, France	5	13	-	2	C Diacono GJL, Żejtun/French Resource Centre
Koblenz, Germany	7	10	-	2	F X Attard BSS Marsa/E Serracino Inglott GSS Cospicua
Piedimulera, Italy	16	13	-	3	A Valletta Primary 'B' B' Kara
Sta Sophia, Italy	1	7	-	2	L Gafà BSS Fortini
Tunisia	3	2	1	1	Sir T Zammit BSS Mtarfa
Morocco	6	12	1	1	V Bugeja BSS, Sta. Venera
Kiev, Ukraine	8	16	2	1	Sta Theresa GJL Mriehel
Goppingen, Germany	-	11	-	1	M Mortimer GJL Sta Luċija
Total	46	84	4	13	

Outgoing Country	Students		Teachers		Participating School/s
	M	F	M	F	
Morocco	11	1	2	-	V Bugeja BSS, Sta Venera
Koblenz, Germany	7	10	1	2	F X Attard BSS Marsa/E Serracino Inglott GSS Cospicua
Train of Friendship, Bari	10	-	1	1	F Selvatico BSS, Naxxar
Piedimulera, Italy	13	12	2	1	A Valletta Primary 'B' Birkirkara
Kiev, Ukraine	3	21	2	1	Sta Theresa GJL Mriehel
Goppingen, Germany	-	11	-	2	M Mortimer GJL Sta Lucija
Landshut, Germany	-	18	-	3	M' Regina GJL Blata l-Bajda/M' Assumpta GSS Hamrun
Tunisia	8	3	2	-	Sir T Zammit BSS Mtarfa
Total	52	76	10	10	

Marsaxlokk Youth Hostel

Further provision works were carried out to attain the standards demanded by Malta Tourism Authority. Thus, the hostel was able to accommodate local and foreign students. The hostel also hosted Gozitan students during Skolasajf.

Competitions

- *Carnival Painting and Craft Competition 2006*: This competition is organised to promote Maltese cultural activities. Students from all schools were invited to take part in mask making, painting or collage as well as miniature floats. These entries were exhibited at the Education Foyer. Due to the popularity of the competition, only the best 20 entries out of each school were accepted. More than 900 works were submitted.
- *Christmas Crib Competition 2006*: This activity is organised in collaboration with the National Commission for Folklore. Short-listed cribs from 15 participating schools were exhibited and later sold. Proceeds were donated to the Community Chest Fund.
- *Commonwealth Day Essay Writing Competition 2006*: The aim of this competition was to highlight among Maltese students the principles underlying the Commonwealth and its relevance.
- *British Culture Essay Competition 2006/2007*: The YSO in collaboration with the British Culture Association organised an essay competition for secondary and 6th Form students on various themes. Eleven schools took part in this competition.
- *5th World Exhibition of Children's Art*: Schools participated in this art competition with the theme *Still Life*. An exhibition project was set up in Berlin to promote different cultures. 33 entries from three primary schools were received.
- *Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES)*: A competition by Media Consultant on behalf of the European Commission was organised for students from secondary and post-secondary schools.

Other Initiatives

- Organisation of Christmas Mass.
- The children's mass formed part of the *Milied Flimkien* Campaign for the Community Chest Fund. This event was presided by HE The President of Malta and Mrs Fenech Adami.
- A *Sports Code of Ethics* was drafted and submitted to the Ministry for their views and comments.
- *Puttinu Cares* Football Marathon.
- Basketball Promotion Unit.
- Health Behaviour of School-Aged Children in collaboration with the Health Promotion Unit.
- Meetings with Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna to promote Malta's heritage.
- World Harmony Runners – An international team of runners visited four primary schools.
- EXPO Science Med-Exhibition.
- Teatru Qroqq presented a play for schools.
- The Local Council of Cospicua presented an exhibition about Ġuze' Chetcuti.
- Collaboration with Nature Trust; President's Award Scheme, Youth Travel Circle and Skolasajf.

Democracy and Values Education Programme

This programme aims at supporting student civic participation, pupil/student councils and Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) and Human Rights Education (HRE) throughout local schools. In 2006, support was given to nine schools in the framework of this programme.

- *School Development Planning (SDP) Sessions:* The Unit facilitated school development sessions in ten schools. Topics covered included: Our School – A Centre of Citizen Education, The Setting up of a Pupil/Student Council and Values Education.
- *Professional Development for Pupil/Student Council Link Teachers and Potential Link Teachers:* Professional development sessions for link teachers are held weekly between February and May. These sessions were embraced as an opportunity to reflect on existing practices, exchange experiences and create new networks for future collaboration.

The number of Link Teachers by Sector/Level was: 41 state primary; 21 state secondary; 19 non-state.

The Unit organised an in-service course entitled *Education for Democratic Citizenship – Learning to Live Together* in July. The course aimed to examine modes and methods of democratic non-formal education to promote values, attitudes and behaviours that lead to the respect of human dignity and human rights.

- *World Children's Prize:* Six schools participated in the largest annual educational programme for children based on the rights of the child, democracy and global friendship: The World Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child, often called the *Children's Nobel Prize*, based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. All schools are now registered as Global Friends of the World Children's Prize.
- *Democracy work with Skolasajf:* All Skolasajf co-ordinators were presented with material for the setting up of pupil councils in their centres. The children attending these centres elected pupils to represent them on the council. These were involved in the organisation of activities in their centre.
- *World Children's Day – Children's Corner:* To mark World Children's Day, a family celebration was organised at Ta' Qali on 19 November 2006. The Unit set up a children's corner styled on 'Speakers' Corner' in Hyde Park. Children and young people were invited to present a short speech on *The Rights of the Child*. Thirty-one schools participated in this event.
- *Stop Violence Against Women Exhibition:* The Commission on Domestic Violence organised an exhibition at the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity for the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Students from Can P Pullicino Girls' Secondary School, Rabat participated in the exhibition designing posters which depicted the call for action to eliminate violence against women.
- *Animal Awareness Education Programme (AAEP):* As from September 2006, the AAEP was reorganised to reflect the College set-up. Schools were divided into groups according to which College network they belong. The programme consists of a set of lesson plans which cover animal welfare and the environment. Besides, following a cross-curricular approach AAE was integrated in all subjects. The programme is co-ordinated at school level by a link teacher. In 2006, two training sessions were held for link teachers. Ten schools participated in the television programme 22am on the Education Channel where they dwelt on topics dealing with animal welfare.

Animal Awareness Day was celebrated on 4th October in all schools. A Preca Primary School, Lija, the national hosting school for 2006, organised activities around the theme *Animal Awareness and Their Habitat*. Animal Awareness Day was also celebrated during SkolaSajf in August. The main activity was held at Skolasajf Centre, Żabbar.

The newsletter *Animal Magic* was published.

SKOLASAJF 2006

The eleventh edition of the *Skolasajf* programme was officially launched by the Minister of Education, Youth and Employment in May 2006 at John A Cilia Primary School, Mgarr. In relation to the European Year of Desert and Desertification, the main theme chosen for 2006 was *Together for the Environment:*

Awareness – Appreciation – Initiatives. *Skolasajf* catered for senior primary school children – from Year 4 to Year 6. A promotional brochure was distributed to all primary schools catering for the mentioned age group. Some 4,000 pupils participated in the *Skolasajf* Programme in 50 centres in Malta and 12 in Gozo. All children attending Special Schools were offered the opportunity to attend and participate in the programme – Special Centres were opened at Wardija, Guardian Angel, San Miguel, Helen Keller in Malta and at Sannat in Gozo.

The five-day celebration Fieramaratona was held at the Maria Regina Girls' Junior Lyceum from 6 September to 10 September. Exhibits and stage performances held at the premises were of a very high standard. The final of the Weetabix Fun Games Festivals was held on Friday 8 September.

Klabbsajf, a programme which catered for Year 2/3 pupils who during scholastic year 2005/6 were receiving complementary education, kept its share of popularity. Thirteen centres in Malta and five in Gozo were opened to cater for this programme and some 270 pupils participated.

Skolasajf programme included the following activities:

- Environmental Protection sessions by Nature Trust.
- Tree Planting Activities by 34U Campaigners.
- Drug and Substance Prevention by Sedqa and Caritas.
- Animal Rights Awareness by SPCA
- Visits to University Radio – Campus FM
- Healthy Breakfast Days
- *Skolasajf* Pupils' Councils in all *Skolasajf* Centres.
- Drama Project – *Vjagg Boom Bang*.
- Three Live-in Programmes: One at Dar San Ġuzepp Gozo and the other two at the Marsaxlokk Youth Hostel.
- The Hyundai World Cup Quiz.
- Cultural Heritage by Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna.
- Awareness re: Waste Separation – a joint venture with WasteServ Malta Ltd.
- Painting, Prose and Poetry competition held in conjunction with Peace Lab.

Regular evaluation sessions were held with the *Skolasajf* Co-ordinating Mentors. Evaluation meetings were also held with Centre Co-ordinators.

The sum of Lm1,700 was raised in aid of the Community Chest Fund. The sum of money collected was presented to HE the President of Malta, Dr Edward Fenech Adami, at a ceremony held at the Palace on 13 November 2006.

DEPARTMENT OF TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION (DTIE)

PRIMARY SECTOR SECTION

Primary Sector Websites

In addition to the Section's five existing websites, a new website was launched to promote the new ICT Primary Syllabus and related level descriptors, at <http://schoolnet.gov.mt/ictprimary/syllabus/>.

ICT Support Initiatives for Primary Schools

The Support Initiatives for primary schools and teachers launched in 2005 were continued as follows:

ICT in Practice:	10 schools
Webmaster Support:	30 schools

Teacher Support (one 2 one Training Programme)														
Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5		Year 6		Total		
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	T
-	1	-	5	-	8	1	9	3	5	3	8	7	36	43

An interim report published in March presented initial feedback collected from ICT peripatetic teachers, class teachers and members of the senior management teams of schools who participated in both programmes. In June, an internal review seminar was organised to discuss the outcomes of the Support Initiatives. The interim report and other statistics presented during the review seminar can be found on the Support Initiatives website at <http://schoolnet.gov.mt/ictprimary/supportinitiatives/>.

School Professional Development Meetings

Following requests from various schools, members of the Department's Primary Sector Unit were involved in a number of professional development sessions organised by the schools. This year the Section's staff participated in four whole-day events and nine after-school staff development sessions.

In order to facilitate schools in the organisation of their professional development meetings, the Section publishes an annual catalogue of topics that can be addressed through these sessions. The topics include nine two-hour hands-on workshops and three one-hour presentations and discussions. This catalogue is regularly updated with new topics suggested by the school staffs themselves. Further details can be obtained from the ICT Admin website at <http://schoolnet.gov.mt/ictadmin/>.

INSET Courses

The Section continued delivering INSET courses for regular teachers. The course *Using the Internet in the Primary Classroom* was offered to Year 5 teachers - 53 participants attended the course. In previous years this course was offered to Year 4 and Year 6 teachers.

In collaboration with St Benedict's College, the Section organised an INSET course for all Year 4 and Year 5 teachers in the College's primary schools. The topic was *Creating Lesson Packs Across the Curriculum* and was intended to help teachers create customised resources based on existing software packages and targeting various curriculum objectives.

INSET Courses July & September 2006 Sessions								
Courses	Year 4		Year 5		Total			
	M	F	M	F	M	F	T	
Using the Internet in the Primary Classroom	-	-	13	40	13	40	53	
Creating Lesson Packs Across the Curriculum	15	13	2	16	17	29	46	
Total	15	13	15	56	30	69	99	

Publications

The Section continued the regular publication of the newsletter *ComputerWise*, promoting the use of ICT across the curriculum and disseminating good practice among schools. This year we have adopted a bilingual approach by including articles both in Maltese and in English. Apart from regular contributions from our own staff, we have also included contributions from teachers and Heads of School.

Laptop Status Survey

In April, the Section launched a Laptop Status Survey in eight primary schools (7 in Malta, 1 in Gozo). The survey was intended to provide an estimate of the number of laptops present in the schools at any one time; the usage of the laptops; and of laptops that are beyond economical repair or currently under repair.

A full report of the findings and recommendations is available from the Centre.

Other Projects

In 2006, the Unit together with the Literacy Unit initiated the project *Using ICT in the Kindergarten* at the Floriana Primary School (Kindergarten section). The project includes training in the use of Internet, Basic Skills, PowerPoint and Print Shop.

Regular meetings with Appogg, the Child Safety Services and Health and Safety Teachers were held to coordinate efforts towards the effective promotion of child safety in schools and among parents.

During 2006, the Unit organised staff development sessions for the staff at Helen Keller's School.

SECONDARY SECTOR UNIT

The aim of this Unit is to explore and exploit the potential of ICT so as to enhance the quality of teaching and learning experiences and practices for students and teachers, and to prepare students for a future in which new technology is ever changing. The Unit aims to provide ICT teachers and schools with the necessary tools, resources, expertise, information, advice and support to make the delivery of ICT in Education more effective.

ICT Syllabus

The first group of Form V students in junior lyceum and area secondary schools sat for the ECDL tests after having followed the full course as designed in the new ICT Syllabus launched five years ago. Those Form V students who were unable to follow the full course were given the opportunity to cover the whole syllabus by attending a Conversion Course held after school hours between May and July 2006.

Automated Testing System (SSr)

The automated testing system (SSr) was improved by further development of the SSr Test Engine including a facility for students with special needs. Over 60 interactive test questions using VBA and Flash were developed by the Secondary in-house SSr support team. SSr tests were managed and deployed in all junior lyceums and secondary schools as shown in the following table:

Automated Testing				
Form	School Type	Module Tested	Weight ⁽¹⁾	Data Tested
Form V	Junior Lyceum	Module 2	50%	Nov 2005
Form V	Junior Lyceum	Module 1	50%	Jan 2006
Form III	Junior Lyceum	Module 1	20%	May 2006
Form V	Secondary School	Module 1	50%	Nov 2005
Form V	Secondary School	Module 1	50%	Jan 2005
Form IV	Secondary School	Module 1	20%	May 2006

⁽¹⁾ The weight of the automated test as a percentage of the annual examination mark

The Automated Testing System (SSr) was awarded the National ICT Achievement Awards (NICTAA) in the Education Sector organised by the Computer Society of Malta.

ICT Support in Teaching and Learning

ICT teachers in schools were given constant support by the support staff. The ICT Secondary Collaborative Website was further developed by including full interactive notes for Module 1 up to Form III. The Annual ICT Past Papers section was updated and the 9 ICTaC projects developed by secondary schools during the ICTaC Partners in Learning course were edited, compiled and uploaded to the website.

ICT Across the Curriculum (ICTaC)

The ICTaC initiative for the secondary sector launched last year was further consolidated by participation in staff development meetings and the organisation of school in-service courses held in July and September. The Secondary Schools Support Staff provided questionnaires, teaching material, tutors and schedules. A three-day ICT in-service course with the specific objectives of improving the ICT capabilities of teachers and to train them in the use of ICT in their respective subjects was held in the following schools: Sir A Dingli Girls' Junior Lyceum, St Patricks; Gozo College Secondary Complex, Victoria; C Diacono Girls' Junior Lyceum, Żejtun; Ġ Galea Boys' Secondary School, Qormi; Dun K Psaila Boys' Secondary School Żebbuġ; St Michael's School, Sta Venera.

Other Initiatives

- Piloted wireless connectivity at Maria Regina Girls' Junior Lyceum and San Franġisk D'Assisi Boys' Secondary School;
- Extended the network infrastructure in secondary schools to improve communications required for the Automated Testing System (SSr), Internet connectivity and future implementation of ECDL Automated Testing;
- Installed 34 interactive whiteboards to support the use of ICT Across the Curriculum;
- Reallocated school computer labs at Ġ Despott (Verdala) to temporary location at ex-A Cini (Hamrun);
- Installed two new computer labs at St Benedict's College;
- Participated in the negotiations and drawing up Microsoft Agreement 3 and its management.
- Participated in the 3rd Microsoft Innovative Teachers' award in Estonia;
- Reviewed the syllabus of the ECDL Conversion course for Form V students;
- Compiled ICT competences in the Secondary Sector according to the EU framework;
- Participated in the drafting of Business Requirements for the secondary school sector as requested by MIT.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

The Design and Technology syllabus has been presented to, and accepted by, the Curriculum Department and is now available online.

As from the beginning of school year 2006-2007 mock SEC extended projects were piloted in a secondary school prior to the Secondary Education Certificate (SEC) in 2008.

Staff Development

A group of technicians who were redeployed to work in the Design and Technology Laboratories attended an in-house training course on health and safety.

Three support teachers and a technician together with the Education Officer from the Design and Technology Learning Centre at Naxxar secured an EU grant for training on the newly-procured Computer Aided Machines (CNCs). The participants will subsequently transfer skills and knowledge to other teachers and technicians.

About 30 D&T teachers have started attending a ProDesktop course at the D&T LC run by qualified teacher trainers. Successful participants will be granted a school site licence for this software.

Implementation of Design and Technology in Schools

As from September 2006, five more schools, namely: M Mortimer Girls' Junior Lyceum, M Regina Girls' Junior Lyceum, G F Aguis De Soldanis Complex, G Despott Boys' Junior Lyceum and Naxxar Boys'

Secondary School, introduced Design and Technology in their schools. The total number of secondary schools now offering the subject has gone up to nineteen.

The D&T LC co-ordinated works with the Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools (FTS) to refurbish and supply furniture and equipment to four food laboratories at Sir A Dingli Girls' Junior Lyceum, one at L Gafa Boys' Secondary School and another at St Benedict's College. Work on laboratories for Textiles was also carried out in five schools.

School Text Books

The Unit prepared the groundwork for the introduction of Design and Technology textbooks. A number of books was submitted and evaluated, short listed and chosen by a board with members from the D&T LC and the University of Malta. The call for tender will be published early in January 2007.

Initiatives

- The Education Officer, D&T invited lecturers from the Faculty of Education for an orientation visit to D&T LC and discussed issues of significance to both stakeholders.
- Students from Mater Dei School participated in a D&T project based on ICT at the Centre. The project is meant to help motivate the students to further their education.
- Two classes from the primary sector visited the Centre where they spent a day working on Food, Textiles and Resistant Materials projects.
- Discussions are under way to formulate a programme of studies specifically for students with special needs.
- The Education Officer chaired the SEC Syllabus Panel and revised the SEC syllabus for Graphical Communication. The EO sits on the board working on a European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) project for upgrading and equipping the science and technology laboratories.

ETWINNING

The Department of Technology in Education is the official National Support Service (NSS) for eTwinning in Malta. The task of the NSS is to promote the action and to facilitate the greatest possible participation. This was done through marketing, technical and pedagogical support and training. eTwinning has clear benefits to students and teachers as it gives them the opportunity to work with technology and practise their ICT and language skills in an authentic and engaging setting.

A good number of schools in Malta are participating in this action and 202 teachers from all levels of education have registered to date. Malta has a very high participation ratio and 75% of registered schools have registered projects. This compares very favourably to the European average of 30%.

The NSS organised specialised training courses for teachers which were held after school hours. It was also invited to participate in a number of afternoon professional development sessions.

eTwinning Participation Data (non-cumulative)			
<i>Year</i>	<i>Schools Registered</i>	<i>Teachers Registered</i>	<i>Projects Registered</i>
2004 – 2005	56	116	24
2005 - 2006	39	73	44

TEACHER TRAINING UNIT

The Teacher Training Unit within the Department of Technology in Education organised three groups of courses during 2006 and continued the ECDL courses started in November 2005. During this year, the Unit launched three new courses: Photoshop (PSH), Creating Resources for Special Educational Needs (SEN) and ProDesktop (PROD). All three were very well attended. The first session was in March.

During the summer of 2006, there were 24 classes following various courses. Two new courses were also launched. One course, covering the role of ICT in special needs education, was attended by 90 applicants. The second course covered Photoshop.

There were 160 applicants for courses starting in November. The Unit launched a new course ProDesktop intended for teachers of Design and Technology and Technical Drawing. Thirty-two teachers applied.

Course	Number of Applicants for Evening Courses						
	No. of Applicants			No. of Applicants by Educational Sector			
	March 2006	Summer 2006	November 2006	Primary	Secondary	Post-secondary	Special
CAD	3	3			6		
CRP1	3	11		14			
CRP2	2			2			
CRP3	1	3		4			
CSW	8	9	7	9	14		1
ECDL		63	45	48	49	5	6
EXC	1	7		3	4	1	
FLH	12	28	6	13	26	4	3
MDB	2	3	1	1	3		2
MMM		7	3	1	9		
PPT	8	21	10	20	14	5	
PSH		30	11	14	22	3	2
SEN		90		54	26		10
TWN	2	14	4	8	9	2	1
WIN	10	17	7	17	14	1	2
WRD	6	19	10	17	15		3
LMT		11			8	3	
INT3		11	1	3	6	3	
INT2	1			1			
INT1	8	22	10	19	18	2	1
GRP1	3		2	1	3	1	
PROD			32		30	2	
TCH	10		10	10	9		1
Total	80	369	159	259	285	32	32

EUROPEAN COMPUTER DRIVING LICENCE (ECDL) UNIT

During 2006, the Department of Technology in Education initiated an evaluation of the unit's objective to increase the participation in ECDL courses. This was carried out through two questionnaires aimed at evaluating students' acquaintance with the European Driving Licence Certification and their general interest in this certification. One of the questionnaires was administered to a sample of 815 ex-Form V students while a second questionnaire was administered in six junior lyceums. The results of the two questionnaires are being analysed by a team of educators from the Department of Technology in Education and from the Department of Curriculum Management.

25-Hour Conversion Course

This was the last year the Department of Technology offered the 25-hour conversion course for Form V students as all students in the secondary sector would have started their ECDL course from Form I. 1,919 students from state and non-state schools participated in this course and sat for the examination. This course was sponsored by the National Curriculum Council.

ECDL Exams for Form 5 Students

Up to 2005, Form V students sat for their ECDL examinations in November/December. This year, the ECDL unit proposed to the Department of Examinations to have these examinations immediately after the

end of the students' Conversion Course. This proved to be a success and 1,592 students applied for these exams.

ECDL Exams for Junior Lyceum and Secondary School Students

Form III and Form IV students in Junior Lyceum and Form IV students in Secondary Schools sat for a number of ECDL modules in November/December 2006. 2,325 students applied for the ECDL Examinations. Students who did not have a skills card were given one for free by the Ministry of Investment, Industry and Information.

New Initiative in ECDL for Special Students at Helen Keller School, Qrendi

Four students from Helen Keller School, Qrendi were given the opportunity to follow the ECDL course. A support teacher from the primary section of the Department of Technology, together with the school's communicator, took up the challenging task of creating a structured programme around the seven modules. New signs had to be created to represent abstract symbols pertaining to the various technical skills required to master information technology terms. Lessons were held on a weekly basis. The students sat and were successful in four modules.

Accreditation of New Testing Centres and Training of Invigilators/Markers

During 2006, another seven schools were accredited as new testing centres. This was done to cater for the increase in the number of students taking ECDL. The new schools which were accredited are Vincenzo Borg Brared Boys' Secondary School, B'Kara; Vincenzo Bugeja Boys' Secondary School, St Venera; San Franġisk D'Assisi Boys' Secondary School, St Venera; Ġużè Galea Boys' Secondary School, Qormi; Antonio Bosio Boys' Secondary School, Gżira; Margaret Mortimer Girls' Junior Lyceum, Sta Lucia and Helen Keller School, Qrendi. This brings the total number of schools accredited under the Ministry of Education to sixteen.

Four teachers were also trained as invigilators and markers during 2006 in order to facilitate the issuing of results to students. These new markers received a half-day training session organised by the Computer Society Centre at the Computer Services Centre, University of Malta. This brings the total number of registered invigilators/markers for the Ministry of Education as an accredited testing centre to 84.

ECDL Training for Clerks at the Education Division

During 2006, the ECDL unit organised the third training course for clerks working at the Education Division and in schools. Eighteen clerks participated and were successful in all modules. This training was sponsored by the Directorate of Corporate Services.

ECDL Automated Testing

The Department of Technology issued a tender for the procurement of a server for the automated testing software. MITTS Ltd is currently in the process of evaluating the hardware of this server in order to go live with a pilot testing.

ICT SPECIAL NEEDS UNIT (ICT_SEN UNIT)

Training

The ICT_SEN Unit launched a six-week course for staff in primary and church schools on Creating Multimedia Resources for use with computer access devices for special needs. This course was attended by 90 participants (88 females, 2 males). Participants were introduced to specialised software such as

BoardMaker 5, as well as other software tools such as Word and PowerPoint. Further training was provided to trainee INCO's, assistant heads and facilitators (primary and special schools) and speech therapists. There were 199 participants (13 males, 186 females).

The Unit also provided training in ECDL to students at Helen Keller Special School. The ICT_SEN Unit, in collaboration with the Department's Secondary Sector Unit, provided help and support in a number of secondary schools, with the aim of enriching literacy through ICT.

Collaborative Projects

The Unit also collaborated in the co-ordination of an eTwinning project with Guardian Angel Special School and a British school. Another project, this time in collaboration with the Design and Technology Learning Centre, was conducted at Mater Dei Special School.

Procurements and Tenders

The Unit provided support for the procurement of specialised hardware and software for a number of special schools. It also applied for ESF and ERDF projects towards this end.

Websites

The ICT_SEN Unit assisted in the development and the maintenance of websites for Helen Keller, Mater Dei and Dun Manwel Attard Special Schools as well as the Inclusion Network.

Skola Portal

The National Portal for schools found at <http://skola.gov.mt> is continuously being updated. Schools can easily promote the activities they hold in their schools by submitting articles through an online form found on this site. Students and teachers can also submit links to educational sites to be shared with other teachers and learners.

E-mail Accounts for Students

All new students whose parents accepted and signed the AUP were given an e-mail account. This is an ongoing process that is repeated from year to year to cover the new intake of students at reception level. All e-mail accounts are continuously scanned for viruses and monitored for spam.

Change of Teachers' E-mail System

The e-mail system used by teachers in state schools was upgraded from Teamware to Microsoft Exchange. This upgrade has provided new facilities and a larger mailbox. Teachers are now able to access their e-mail both via Microsoft Outlook 2003 and via the much improved web-based interface through the Skola portal.

Internet for Schools and Video Conferencing

All schools have broadband Internet (1024x512Kb) through ADSL or cable connectivity and the infrastructure to hold video conferencing sessions with local or foreign schools.

Forum

A bulletin board is now being used by students and teachers. The Forum is accessible only to its members. All teachers and those students whose parents signed the AUP form can register as Forum members. All

posts submitted in this Forum are moderated. The Forum has currently 506 members (teachers, parents and students), 271 of who contribute regularly. Over 1,600 topics were discussed.

Newsletter

The Skolazine, a monthly electronic newsletter, was launched in January 2006. This e-zine is sent to students and teachers through their e-mail. It can also be accessed by the public through the Skola portal.

European Structural Funding

The DTiE has requested for an extension of the European Structural Funds (ESF) project (ESF/3) - Information and Communications Technology Training Programme in view of the savings made throughout the whole project. The request was accepted by the Managing Authority (OPM). Part of the extension was requested to cover the Training and Testing of Advanced ECDL which is currently in progress, Photoshop training and Inclusive Educational software training. The Photoshop training was delivered in July whereas Inclusive Educational Training was delivered during October. Forty-four computers, two colour laser printers, two interactive whiteboards and two multimedia projectors were delivered and installed.

GRAPHICS SECTION

The Graphics Section of the Department regularly provides service to other departments in the Ministry as well as to all schools. Throughout the year, the Section designed and produced publications, calendars, posters, logos and display boards for exhibitions and other events. Its services were actively sought in connection with the organisation of seminars, conferences and presentations. It promoted various graphics and ICT-related local and international competitions in schools.

The Section contributed to the revision or creation of web graphics and layouts for the various sections' website. Regular voluntary courses related to graphics design or targeting particular graphics software were also offered throughout the year as part of the evening/summer courses programme.

SCHOOL INFORMATION SERVICES (SIS)

The role of the SIS is to train and support schools' administration personnel in the various SIS software modules.

During 2006, the SIS Centre conducted training courses in the various SIS software programmes, intended for newly appointed Heads of School and Assistant Heads of School and school secretaries and clerks. At the beginning of the scholastic year, in collaboration with Megabyte, the Unit held workshops for Heads of School. These sessions addressed the Facility Timetable software. All training programmes were held at the SIS Training Centre located at Maria Regina Girls' Junior Lyceum, Blata I-Bajda. During this period, training was given to 117 trainees with a total of 243 man-days of training.

The SIS team supported schools' clerks during the summer recess to perform the Year-End update for their students' database. The support services given to schools were further enhanced with the uploading of all SIS manuals on the DTiE website.

In October 2006, the SIS team conducted the Good Shepherd Project for the eighth consecutive year. This project identifies five year-olds whose parents have not registered them in any school according to the provisions of the Education Act 1988.

As in previous years, in-service European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) courses for teachers and Adult Evening Classes were held at the SIS Training Centre both during and after school hours.

During 2006, the SIS office collaborated with MITTS in the rewriting of the Administration, Attendance and Staff Manager Software. It is planned that these modules will be completely online by the end of 2007. The Government Central Database (CdB) has been installed in all schools to facilitate data entry once these modules are online. The first group of school secretaries/clerks from 12 schools have been trained in the use of the CdB. Preparations are now under way for the retraining of all schools' administration personnel in the new software and CdB.

DEPARTMENT OF FURTHER STUDIES AND ADULT EDUCATION

Mission Statement

To provide and promote opportunities for the enhancement of the education level of all citizens so as to equip them with the tools for developing and renewing their skills and knowledge throughout their entire lifetime; support and regulate church and independent education institutions; provide information and advice on the comparability of international and Maltese qualifications and promote transparency of qualifications; and to co-ordinate designated authorities ensuring uniform application of the law in the field of professional recognition.

Main Responsibilities

The main responsibilities of the Department of Further Studies and Adult Education (DFSAE) are to:

- co-ordinate nationally Mutual Recognition of Qualifications;
- administer the Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre (Malta QRIC);
- convene the Mutual Recognition of Qualifications Council;
- convene the Designated Authorities Conference;
- process the recruitment and promotion of education grades;
- organise staff development programmes specifically designed for teaching personnel in adult education;
- manage the schools of Art, Drama and Music in Malta and Gozo;
- manage and organise the Lifelong Learning Centre;
- organise the running of adult and evening courses in various centres;
- organise adult basic skills programmes;
- organise, manage and develop the Media Education and Broadcasting Centre comprising Education TV 'Channel 22';
- support, regulate and develop policies for non-state schools;
- ensure the adherence of non-state schools to the National Minimum Curriculum;
- approve the employment of suitably qualified education grades by non-state schools.

Mutual Recognition Co-ordinator's Office

The legal responsibility of the Mutual Recognition Co-ordination has been entrusted to the Director, Further Studies and Adult Education. This position entails the co-ordination of the Designated Authorities and the promotion of uniform application of relative national legislation as well as the relevant EU directives. The necessary database of the designated authorities has been compiled and constantly updated and the various queries and requests both from clients and the designated authorities have been addressed. Meetings regarding recognition were held with the Management and Personnel Office (MPO), designated authorities and professional bodies. The Director also acted as the EU General Systems National Co-ordinator, attending relevant meetings, and monitoring the development of Directive 2005/36/EC. The Director has been constantly consulted on EU matters relating to qualifications, mobility and services, lifelong learning, key competencies, vocational and adult education drafting feedback and helping in the compilation of data and questionnaires. The first mandatory Annual Designated Authorities Conference was organised in May 2006.

Ratification of the Lisbon Convention

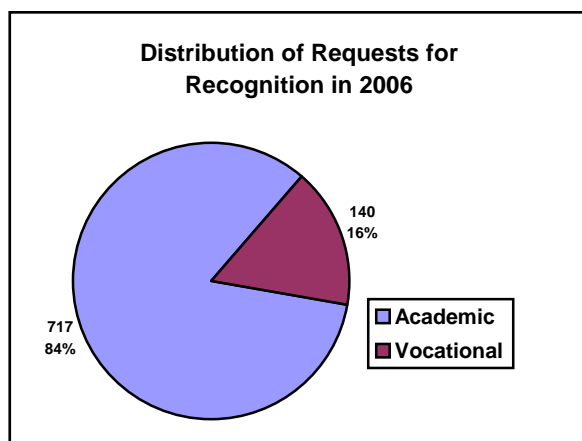
DFSAE made the necessary preparatory work for the ratification of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Convention). Malta ratified the Convention on 16 November 2005 which came into force on 1 January 2006. The text of Legal Notice transposing the Convention into Maltese law has been drafted, translated and proofread by the Department. Legal Notice 280/06 was published in the Government Gazette on 21 November 2006.

Transparency and Validation of Non Formal and Informal Learning

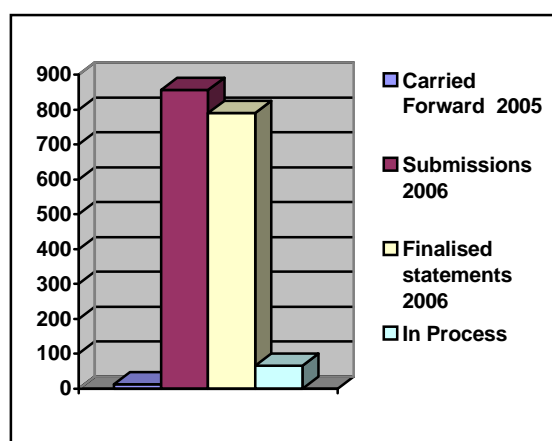
The Department of Further Studies and Adult Education has been actively involved in technical working groups organised on transparency of qualifications and validation of Informal and Non Formal Learning. The Department contributed actively to the national debate participating seminars and conferences while two officers from the Department followed the EU Peer Cluster Groups meetings on Adult Learning and Learning Outcomes. The Department is participating in the OECD initiative on the Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning which entails research and the compilation of a Country Report.

Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre

The Malta Qualification Recognition Information Centre is the designated national centre for recognition of qualifications. The Centre acts also as NARIC MALTA, which provides active advice and information concerning the evaluation of academic and vocational diplomas, the collection and dissemination of information, the promotion of Maltese qualifications and the facilitation of mobility. The Centre is also part of the ENIC and MERIC networks. The desk officers of the Malta QRIC are continuously involved in providing information, feedback and assistance regarding recognition of qualifications to students and persons seeking employment, designated authorities and employers, as well as various institutions including the Department of EU Affairs and other departments within the Public Service.

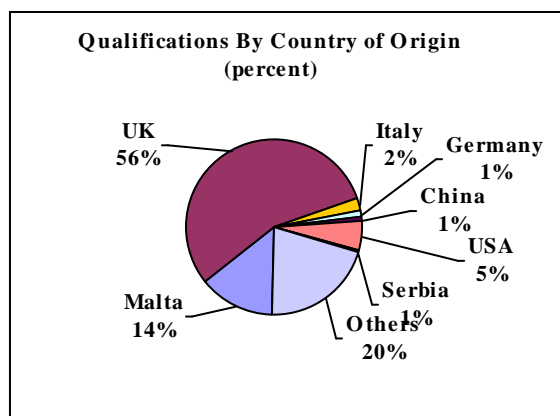


Requests for Recognition by Type of Qualification

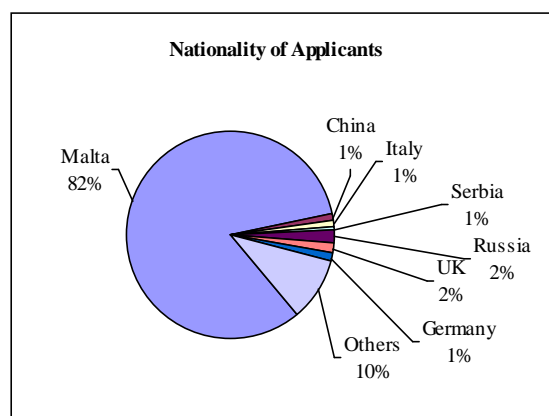


Number of Requests Submitted

This year the Malta Qualification Recognition Information Centre received 857 requests for recognition. 717 of these requests asked for academic recognition while 140 requests asked for vocational recognition. 56% of these requests concerned qualifications from the UK while 14% of these requests concerned Maltese qualifications.



Origin of Qualifications (Percent)



Nationality of Applicants (Percent)

Meetings were held with the MPO, the Public Service Commission (PSC), Solvit Agency, the Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business and the Self Employed as well as several private learning institutions. The database which includes all the relevant designated authorities responsible for the various regulated professions has been continuously updated. Information about qualifications acquired through the ENIC/NARIC networks is being compiled in a digital database for easy reference.

During the year, the Malta Qualification Recognition Information Centre continued with its efforts to disseminate information about its operations and recognition issues. It set up an informative stand at the Europe Near to You Fair organised by the EU Representation in Malta, the MCAST Vocational Fair and the ETC Employment Fair. A National Conference on Recognition was organised by MaltaQRIC in February 2006 while the Director presented a paper on Professional Recognition in the Seminar on the European Qualifications Framework organised by the Forum Malta fl-Ewropa.

The Malta Qualification Recognition Information Centre forms part of the various networks, namely the National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC), the National Reference Points and the European Network of National Information ENIC Centres. This network in comparison with the Naric Network has a much wider geographical average because it includes Eastern Europe, USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. The staff of the MQRIC participates daily in a discussion forum with its NARIC/ENIC counterparts on the NARIC/ENIC networks. This forum allows NARIC/ENIC Centres to exchange information and good practice, and to consult rapidly on contentious recognition issues. MaltaQRIC officials participate actively in the work programme of the ENIC/NARIC Networks, attending the 13th Joint Meeting of the ENIC/NARIC networks in Estonia and the NARIC Thematic Group Visit held in Hungary where recognition issues were discussed with Hungarian, Turkish, Spanish and English and Polish colleagues responsible for qualifications awarded by Maltese Education Institutions. Malta has obtained a Socrates grant to organise a thematic visit early in 2007. Malta was also chosen as venue for the 15th Meeting of NARIC/ENIC in 2008. The MaltaQRIC has close contacts with the two international organisations active in the field of academic recognition, the Council of Europe and UNESCO – CEPES. This work is related to the implementation of the Joint Council of Europe and UNESCO Convention in the recognition of qualifications concerning high education in the European Region.

Mutual Recognition of Qualification Council

The Mutual recognition of Qualification Council continued with its work programme of establishing criteria and policies on which to base recognition. The Council convened 11 times. Items on the agenda included the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and European Qualification Framework (EQF), Trans-national and Joint Degrees, the Mediterranean Convention., the Lisbon Convention and the European Credit Transfer System.

Links with European Training Foundation (ETF)

The Director is substitute member of the ETF Governing Board and member of the ETF Advisory Board for the Mediterranean Area. The Department maintained links with the ETF and was represented at the ETF Meeting for the Mediterranean Region in Turin in July 2006.

Statistics

The Department collects, compiles and processes statistical data from post-secondary institutions regarding students and curriculum options so as to produce a complete picture of the Maltese post-secondary and tertiary education. These statistics are obtained from the Junior College, Institute of Tourism Studies, church and independent schools and MCAST and are collected by subject and by course while analysis is by gender, age and provenance.

RECRUITMENT AND PROGRESSION SECTION

This section is responsible for the issuing of all calls for applications pertaining to the Education Grades and IT Technicians in the Education Division, a task shouldered by the Non-State Schools Sector.

Thirty-two selection boards were set up in the teachers' recruitment process while 667 applications were processed. Meetings were held with the chairpersons of the various selection boards. A meeting with the chairpersons for Regular Teachers 2007 was held on 13 October 2006. During this meeting, information regarding recommendations from the Director General, Permanent Secretary MEYE and the Public Service Commission on the selection process was distributed.

During 2006, the following five calls were published: Regular Teachers; Subject Co-ordinator (Secondary); Head of School (Malta); Assistant Director (ADE Inclusive Education and ADE Non-State Schools); Head of School (Gozo). Numerous recommendations for appointments in various grades were made to the PSC. A number of draft calls were also prepared for onward transmission to the PSC and the MPO. The call for applications for Regular Teachers 2007 has been internally discussed and drafted for eventual formal request to MPO and Ministry of Finance (MFIN) prior to its being sent to the PSC for approval and publication.

NON-STATE SCHOOLS SECTION

The Non-State Schools Section is responsible for learning institutions which are not part of the state education system. These include (a) church schools (b) independent schools and (c) commercial schools and tuition centres. The main responsibility of this section is ensuring that schools adhere to the provisions of the Education Act and in particular the National Minimum Conditions. The Section also ensures that schools providing compulsory education follow the National Minimum Curriculum. The main tasks carried out by the Non-State Schools Sector during 2006 were:

- The approval of teachers recruited by non-state schools and, in the case of church schools, the relevant salary scale was also determined.
- Monitoring the quality of teaching.
- School visits, held on a regular basis in church schools, together with visits to independent schools. Prize Days, School Concerts, Open Days, Comenius Projects, presentations and other activities organised by schools were also attended.
- Maintained links with the Church Secretariat for Catholic Education.
- Meetings with the Malta Environment and Planning Authority to discuss plans submitted to the Sector for the building of new schools or extensions of already licensed schools. Sites were also visited.
- Collection of statistical data, which includes school population, staff and fees and school absenteeism. As from 2003, the collection of statistical data has been made on the same lines as the data collected from state schools. Statistics on Complementary Teachers in Church Schools were updated during 2006.
- Ongoing support to schools in the School Development Planning process.

- Meetings with Heads of Schools. A meeting with all Heads of School was held at St Dorothy's Junior School, Żebbuġ on 30 June 2006.
- Representation on the Council of the Malta QRIC.

Church and Independent Schools

Children attending non-state schools numbered 24,026 (16,721 students attended church schools while 7,305 attended independent schools). The following church and independent schools were in operation at the end of 2006:

	Pre-Primary	Primary	Secondary	Post-Secondary
Church Schools	33	25	22	2
Independent Schools	28	14	9	1
Total	61	39	31	3

Teaching Staff in Church and Independent Schools

Church Schools			
<i>Religious Teaching Staff 2006/07</i>			
	Male	Female	Total
Heads of School	10	24	34
Assistant Heads	7	19	26
Teachers	33	28	61
Supply Teachers	1	3	4
Kindergarten Assistants	-	31	31
<i>Sub-total</i>	51	105	156
<i>Lay Teaching Staff 2006/07</i>			
Heads of School	2	6	8
Assistant Heads	13	26	39
Teachers	228	734	962
Supply Teachers/Instructors	21	45	66
Kindergarten Assistants	-	49	49
Facilitators/Supply kindergarten asst. on facilitating duties	31	343	374
<i>Sub-total</i>	295	1,203	1,498
Total	346	1,308	1,654
Independent Schools			
<i>Educational Staff 2006/07</i>			
	Male	Female	Total
Heads of School	6	15	21
Assistant Heads	5	12	17
Teachers	84	318	402
Supply Teachers/Instructors	12	70	82
Kindergarten Assistants	-	96	96
Facilitators/Supply kindergarten asst. on facilitating duties	-	7	7
Total	107	518	625

Approvals of Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff in Church Schools – 2006	
	Total
Heads of School	7
Assistant Heads	10
Subject Co-ordinator	10
Social Worker	1
Teachers	118
Supply Graduate Teachers	44
Supply Teachers	26
Kindergarten Assistants	7
Learning Support Asst. & Supply KG	104
Computer & Science Lab Technician	6
Secretary	3
Clerk	4
Cleaner or domestic	25
General hand	1

Commercial Schools and Tuition Centres

In 2006, there were 65 licensed Commercial Schools and 42 Tuition Centres (17 offering academic programmes, 13 vocational and 12 others), while seven applications for new tuition centres were submitted. These applications are awaiting the relevant permits from the Malta Environment and Planning Authority. When dealing with an application for the setting up of a new school, the sector requests detailed information about the school's proposed philosophy, policies, curriculum, teaching programmes and teachers' qualifications.

ADULT EDUCATION BRANCH

The Adult Learning Branch is responsible for Evening Classes, Adult Literacy Courses, the Lifelong Learning Centre, the Media Education and Broadcasting Centre, the Schools of Art, the Schools of Music and the Schools of Drama in Malta and Gozo.

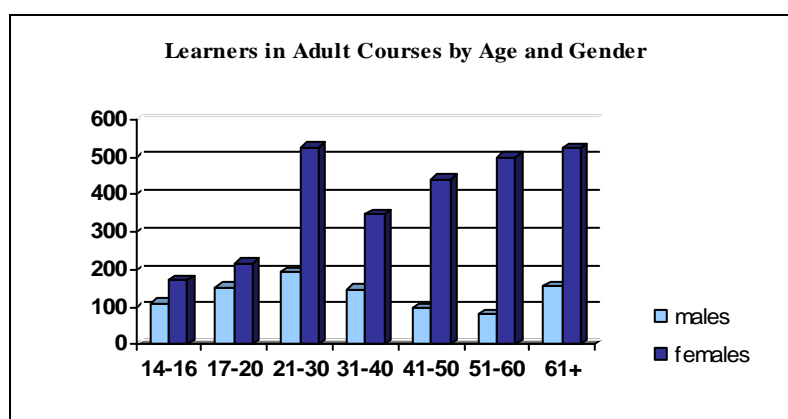
This Branch aims to:

- provide learning opportunities to all those who would like to acquire and/or improve their skill and knowledge in the subject/s of their choice;
- support transition into a knowledge-based society and economy through Information Technology courses;
- monitor learning opportunities offered to ensure relevance and quality;
- create a culture of lifelong learning.

The DFSAE is a net contributor to this success and is one of the leading providers of Adult Education in Malta and Gozo. It offered 185 courses in Malta and 64 courses in Gozo for the last quarter of 2006. These courses vary in type and depth and the comprehensive number of learners attending evening and adult classes is over 8,000. The Department provides adult learning opportunities as follows:

Adult courses (mainly evening classes) at various Centres, in Malta and Gozo

These are the traditional evening class format of one-and a-half hour lessons twice weekly. In 2006, the number of subscribed adult learners was 3,674.



Age Group	14-16	17-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61+	Total
Malta	251	352	695	489	529	539	602	3,457
Gozo	32	19	24	8	9	44	78	217
Total	283	371	719	497	538	583	680	3,674

No. of learners in Adult Classes by gender - 2006			
	Males	Females	Total
Malta	883	2,574	3,457
Gozo	28	189	217
Total	911	2,763	3,674

Basic literacy initiatives - ESF Project

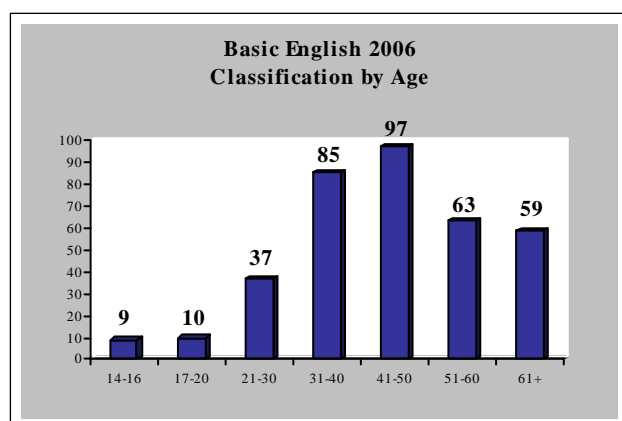
The project entitled *Training of Trainers Programme in Basic Literacy* which was commenced in mid-2005, was implemented successfully during 2006. This project is co-financed by the Malta Government and the European Union through ESF.

Two short courses for adult educators, one in Malta and one in Gozo, were held in March and September respectively. There are currently in place 14 centres doing Basic Maltese Literacy in the evenings. The total number of learners attending is around 110.

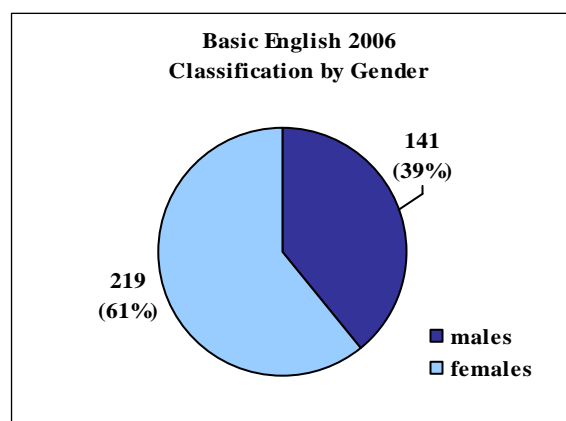
A set of three manuals for the teaching and learning of basic Maltese, compiled by Prof C Mifsud *et al*, by the name of *Sisien*, was launched in December. The pack consists of a Student's book, a workbook and a Teacher's book. The learning pack also includes an audio CD, a set of working cards and a set of educational charts.

Basic literacy initiatives - Basic English

This year, 360 adults (141 males and 219 females) attended courses in Basic English literacy. These were held in collaboration with 19 local councils, and the National Council for Women.



No of Learners by Age Group



Percentage of Learners by Gender in Basic English Course

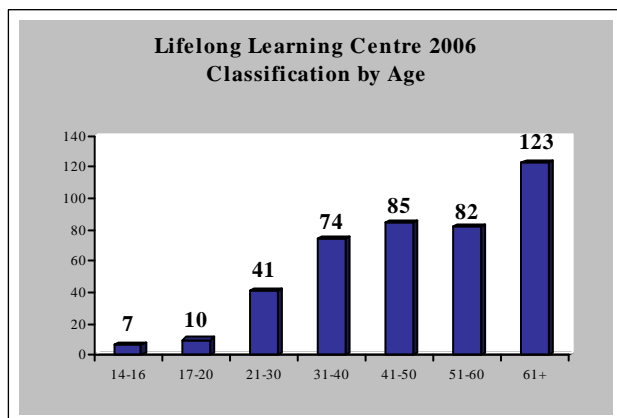
The Department also provided courses in Basic English for foreigners, including refugees, and courses in Basic English, Maltese and Mathematics for persons undergoing rehabilitation programmes, in collaboration with entities including Caritas and the ETC.

No. of learners by age group and gender in Basic Learning Programmes - 2006										
Age Group	14-16	17-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61+	M	F	T
Basic Maths	-	-	3	-	-	2	-	2	3	5
Basic Maltese	1	2	14	7	10	18	2	22	32	54
Basic Maltese for foreigners	4	1	28	23	16	13	8	31	62	93
Basic English for foreigners	1	2	9	17	16	35	5	28	57	85
Total	6	5	54	47	42	68	15	83	154	237

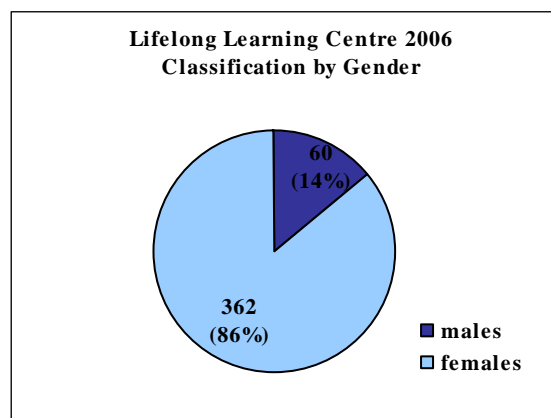
No. of Learners in Rehabilitation Centres attending Basic Learning Programmes - 2006		
Centre	Subject	No. of learners
St Mary Community, Luqa	Gardening	17
St Anna, Caritas Bahar ic-Caghaq	Basic English, Maltese	7
Dar Frate Francesco B'Kara, Dar is-Sliem, B'Bajda Girls' JL	Basic English	30
Total		54

The Lifelong Learning Centre

The number of adult learners attending day classes at the Lifelong Learning Centre, Msida is 30 per cent higher than in 2004, as 422 adults are currently attending courses that include basic literacy courses in Maltese and English Language, as well as for other academic subjects, at different levels. Courses in IT mainly ECDL and Computer Awareness and courses in entrepreneurship are also taken up at the Centre. The Empowerment course was introduced successfully in the current school year. As of December 2005, the Centre is organising courses for the Armed Forces of Malta, leading to ACE 1 and ACE 2 levels of academic attainment.



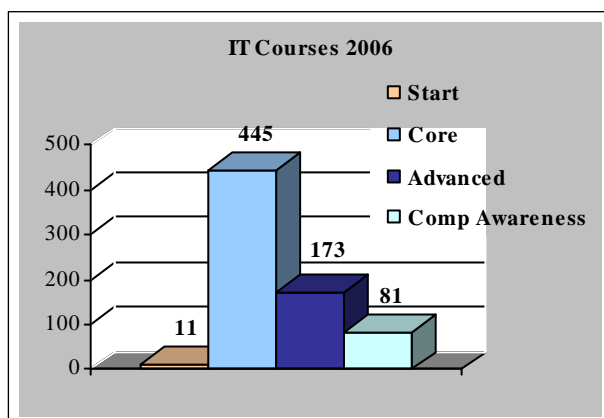
Number of learners attending LLL Centre by gender



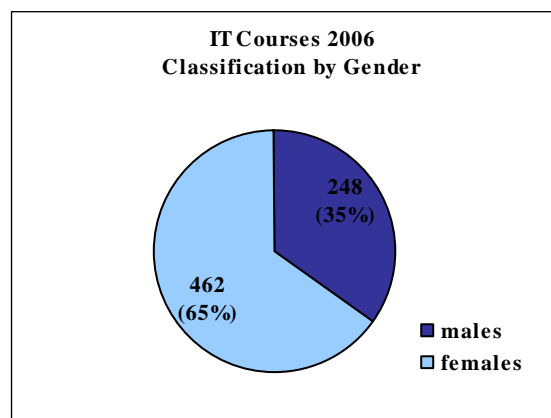
Age Profile of Participants attending LLL Centre

Computer Literacy

The demand for computer literacy is also on the increase. In 2006, 91 adults attended ECDL Start courses; 308 adults attended ECDL Core courses; and 137 adults attended ECDL Advanced courses offered by the Department in various centres.



Number of learners in ECDL Courses by level



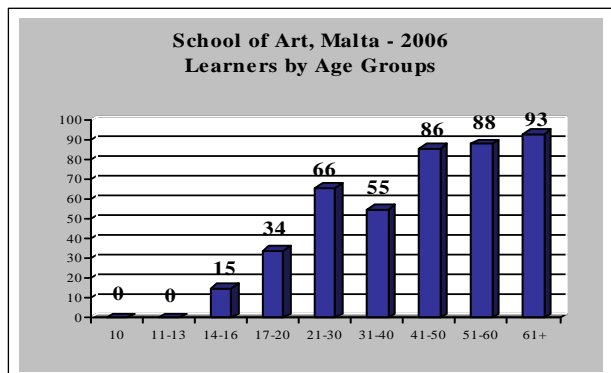
Number of learners in ECDL Courses by Gender

Number of learners by gender and course attending ICT Courses			
	Males	Females	Total
Computer Awareness	28	53	81
ECDL Start	1	10	11
ECDL Core	138	322	460
ECDL Advanced	68	105	173
Total	235	490	725

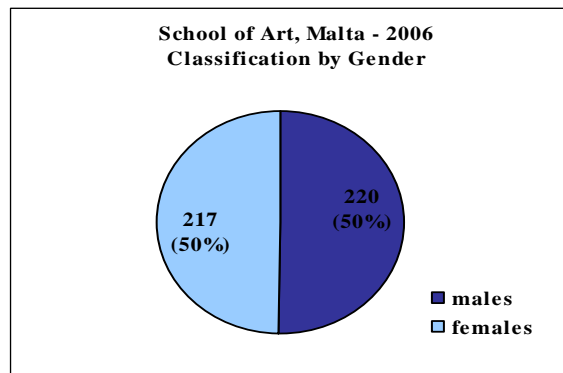
The Schools of Visual and Performing Arts

The DFSAE is responsible for the School of Art, the Mikelang Borg Drama Centre and the Johann Strauss School of Music in Malta; and the Schools of Art, School of Music and the Drama Centre in Gozo. During 2006, the aggregate number of students attending these schools stood at 3,367. Various initiatives are being taken by these schools, notably the various public performances given by the Johann Strauss School of Music and the Mikelang Borg Drama Centre.

The Gozo School of Art has been successful in attracting European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) to extend the school premises incorporating a Crafts Development Centre and an ESF project consisting of a number of craft courses promoting sustainable employability in Gozo. In all, 42 different courses in Art and Crafts were offered. The school was also involved in hosting exchange visits and several exhibitions both locally and abroad.

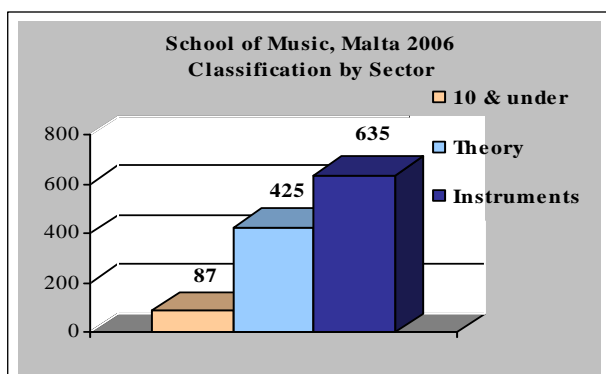


Number of learners by age

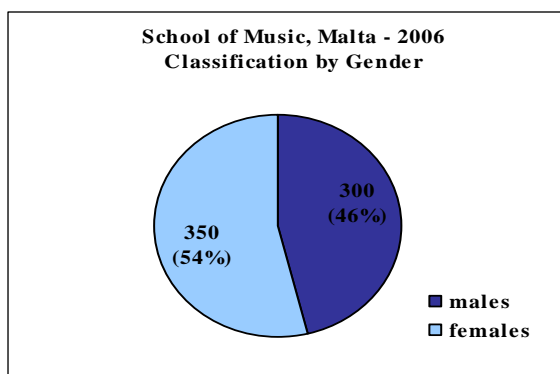


Number of learners by gender

No. of learners by age group attending School of Art, Malta - 2006																		
Age	-10		11 - 13		14 - 16		17 - 20		21 - 30		31 - 40		41 - 50		51 - 60		61+	
Gender	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
No of learners	0	0	0	0	10	5	14	20	25	41	30	25	35	51	47	41	59	34
	Males						Females						Total					
	220						217						437					



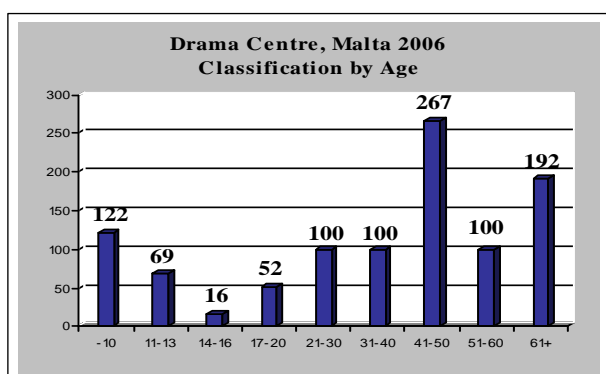
Number of learners by programme



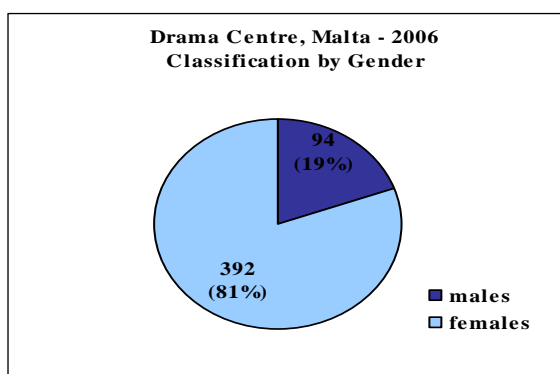
Number of learners by gender

No. of learners attending School of Music, Malta - 2006									
Age	-10			Theory			Instruments		
Gender	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
No of learners	34	53	87	204	221	425	300	335	635
	Male			Female			Total		
	300			350			650		

Data in above table includes double counting as learners may be enrolled in both instruments and theory. Actual number of learners enrolled is 650.

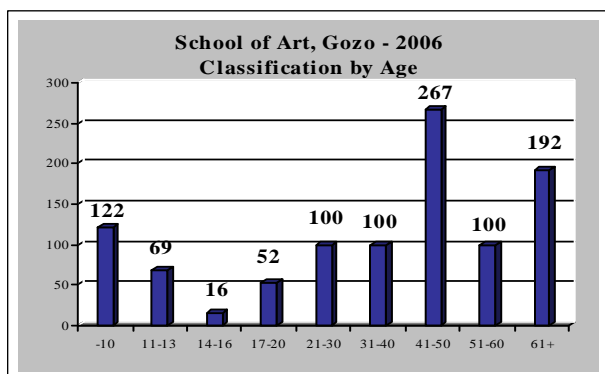


Number of learners by age

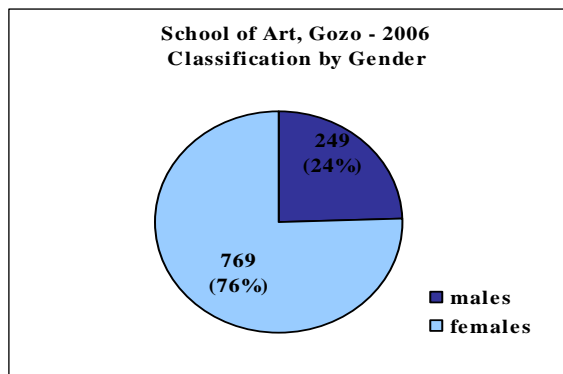


Number of learners by gender

No. of learners by age groups attending Drama Centre, Malta - 2006																		
Age	-10		11 - 13		14 - 16		17 - 20		21 - 30		31 - 40		41 - 50		51 - 60		61+	
Gender	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
No of learners	35	173	20	99	5	5	15	41	7	27	9	33	3	13	0	0	0	1
	Male						Female						Total					
	94						392						486					



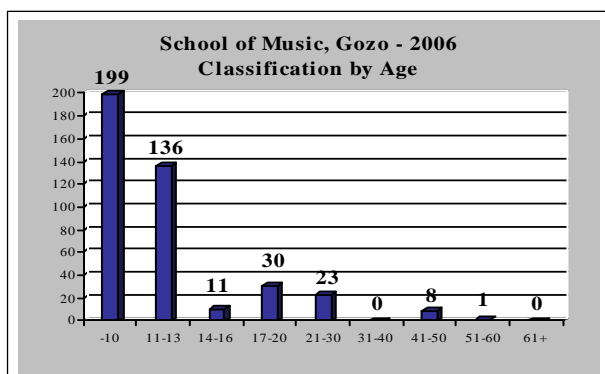
Number of learners by age



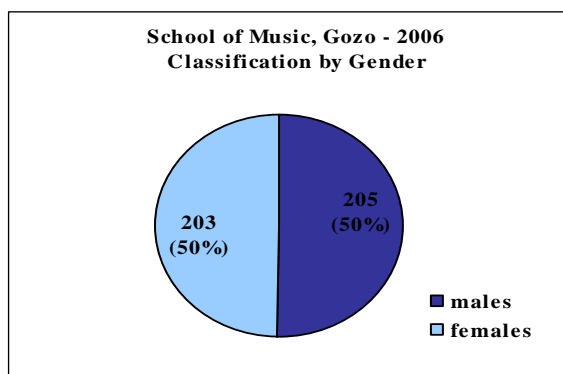
Number of learners by gender

No. of learners by age groups attending School of Art, Gozo - 2006

Age	-10		11 - 13		14 - 16		17 - 20		21 - 30		31 - 40		41 - 50		51 - 60		61+	
Gender	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
No of learners	60	62	34	35	7	9	21	31	27	73	32	68	38	229	5	95	25	167
	Male						Female						Total					
	249						769						1,018					



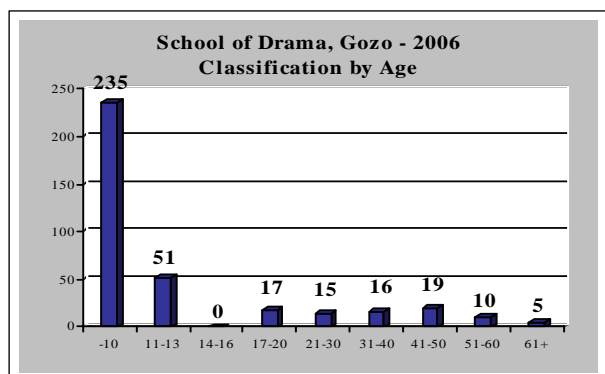
Number of learners by age



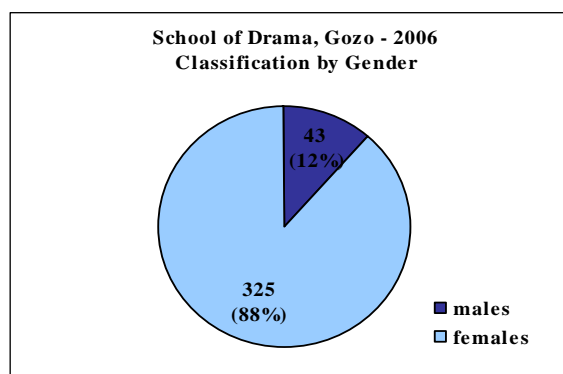
Number of learners by gender

No. of learners by age groups attending School of Music, Gozo - 2006

Age	-10		11 - 13		14 - 16		17 - 20		21 - 30		31 - 40		41 - 50		51 - 60		61+	
Gender	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
No of learners	105	94	68	68	6	5	10	20	13	10	0	0	3	5	0	1	0	0
	Male						Female						Total					
	205						203						408					



Number of learners by age



Number of learners by gender

No. of learners by age groups attending School of Drama, Gozo - 2006

Age	-10		11 - 13		14 - 16		17 - 20		21 - 30		31 - 40		41 - 50		51 - 60		61+	
Gender	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
No of learners	24	211	5	46	0	0	4	13	1	14	2	14	2	17	2	8	3	3
	Male						Female						Total					
	43						326						369					

Website and Prospectus

The Adult Education Branch within the Department published its annual Prospectus which was widely distributed with the co-operation of the local councils. Also, senior officials within the Department made use of several phone-in radio programmes to inform, encourage and invite the public to become active citizens through adult learning.

The official website registered over 180,000 hits throughout 2006. There was also an increase in the number of applications effected online over last year.

Payment of Fees

Necessary adjustments to transfer an outstanding balance of Lm161,434 was made from the HSBC a/c to the Treasury Department. Total revenue collected this year was over Lm56,000.

Public Private Partnerships

Various courses in Basic English, IT & Entrepreneurship were organised in conjunction with private companies, mainly Dowty, Playmobil, FITA and with the Parliamentary Secretariat for Small Enterprises.

Publications and Studies

During 2006, DFSAE produced several publications. The three adult literacy books forming part of the *Sisien* learning pack together with CD, charts and cards were published in October as part of an ESF project. In December, the DFSAE published *A study of Young People following Basic Skills Courses in Malta*, commissioned by the Department and conducted by Prof Charles Mifsud *et al.* The Adult Learning Courses Prospectus was published in August. The *Report on Adult Basic Skills* was finalised by the Working Group headed by the Director and presented to the Hon Minister in July. The *Euro Changeover Training Manual* was finalised by the National Euro Changeover Committee (NECC) Training Task Force which is chaired by the Director. A paper on Non Vocational Adult Learning was prepared by the Department for a Eurydice study. The Department also commenced a study on the Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning in conjunction with an OECD initiative in the field.

Education 22

The Education Channel 22 is a very important tool for lifelong learning. Its remit has been broadened to encompass a wider audience beyond compulsory school age. It is also a good medium for the dissemination of educational concepts and developments among parents and educationalists. The various developments and initiatives carried out during the year produced the expected results, increasing the viewership and giving a higher profile to the Education Channel. With the introduction of the programmes 22 am and 22 pm, the lifetime has increased considerably. The station has also increased the production of original programmes. Private public partnerships have also been sought through a public call for expression of interest in an effort to make the station more sustainable. Partnership in various ventures with the Public Broadcasting Service has been initiated in line with the public broadcasting policy. Studio space increased through the use of an outside fully equipped studio.

Teachers' Warrants Board

The Warrants Board continued with its project of strengthening the administrative procedure used in connection with the issuing of Permanent and Temporary Warrants, the renewal of Temporary Warrants and the granting of diploma and degree allowances to professional personnel. A business scope study has been conducted and discussions have been initiated to start procedures for applications online.

During 2006, the Teachers' Warrants Board convened 66 times, issued 380 Permanent Warrants, 14 Temporary Warrants and renewed 258 Temporary Warrants. The Warrants Board also authorised the granting of 123 qualification allowances.

The Teachers' Warrants Board organised its annual Teachers' Warrants Ceremony on 5 May 2006. During this ceremony, which was presided by the Minister of Education, Youth and Employment, 300 Permanent Warrants were conferred. A multi-media presentation entitled *Biex nirnexxu lkoll* was chosen as the main theme of the event based on the Ministry's publication *For All Children to Succeed*.

National Europass Centre

The Branch is responsible for the National Europass Centre and has been entrusted with the co-ordination, dissemination and promotion of the Europass portfolio. The National Europass Centre is also responsible for the setting up and management of information systems to support the Europass Network co-ordinated by the European Commission.

The national website for Europass is constantly maintained to ensure that users can access the latest information. The officers in charge of these initiatives have been actively involved in the preparation and translation work into Maltese of these documents and the production of promotional publications for EURES fair and the "Europe Close to You" fair.

Europass Dissemination

Publications in Maltese consisting of a folder incorporating a booklet on the Europass CV and leaflets with information about each Europass component are available for distribution to different stakeholders. This year information sessions on the Europass were held at the Heritage Malta, the Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Industries and National Commission for the Promotion of Equality.

National Consortium for ReferNet

The Branch has been entrusted with the role of CEDEFOP's ReferNet National co-ordinator. The ReferNet Consortium is committed to make the ReferNet Malta, the focal point for debate and the exchange of information, for monitoring progress and for benchmarking practices. This will ensure that research findings in the VET field lead to a clear and coherent implementation vision with concrete VET policy initiatives.

The Branch has been actively involved in the overview of the National VET System through the compilation of eleven detailed, thematic analysis. This core product of CEDEFOP database together with the annual ReferNet report and the Move-IT questionnaire, have also been forwarded to CEDEFOP. In December, the Branch was involved in the review of research findings and the ENRR report. Work on the VET Bib database is being monitored by the co-ordinator.

Preliminary work on the translation of the Thesaurus has been finalised and is in the process of being revised. This involves the translation into Maltese of the draft version published in 2002, which consists of 294 pages. Malta will be one of the first countries to have completed the translation of the Thesaurus.

DR CECILIA BORG
Director General (Education)

Examinations Department

Mission Statement

To administer local and overseas examinations that fairly and fully allow the demonstration of the candidates' learning abilities.

GENERAL

The main objectives of the Department are to:

- organise examinations for the Public Service;
- process registrations together with the organisation and conduct of examinations on behalf of the Matsec Examining Board;
- act as agent for overseas examining boards to process and administer examinations on their behalf;
- improve the environment of examination centres;
- offer a differentiated service delivery through the full use of e-Government initiatives;
- uphold and adhere to the provisions of the Quality Service Charter to ensure equity, impartiality and fairness in the delivery of services.

IT POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Throughout this year, the Department concentrated its efforts to promote further its online facilities through the website. To date, online applications feature only as a very small percentage of the total number of registrations considering that the larger percentage of applications are received in paper form from all schools. This year the Department launched a pilot project within three schools to submit their applications (approx 1,200) through the exams online system.

The Examinations Management System is also earmarked to be replaced, thereby providing better electronic access to all schools and private candidates. With this aim the Department held several meeting with MITTS and MIIT representatives on the matter.

Examination Centres

The Department stepped up its efforts to upgrade the facilities provided for at the various examinations centres throughout the island. New schools were included in the exams programme some of which had been recently refurbished, thereby injecting a fresh and modern environment during examinations. Major works were also carried out at St Elmo Exam Centre which included both structural and aesthetic improvements.

ANALYSIS OF 2006 EXAMINATIONS

Secondary Education Certificate and Matriculation Examinations

Secondary Education Certificate –May/June 2006

During May 2006 a total number of 7,949 candidates sat for the Secondary Education Certificate examinations with the total number of subject entries amounting to 49,215. In the re-sit session of

September 2006 a total number of 2,435 candidates sat for these examinations with the total number of subject entries amounting to 3,649.

Matriculation Certificate Examinations May/June 2006 / September Re-Sits 2006

A total of 2,637 candidates sat for the Matriculation Certificate in May 2006. There were 5,185 subject entries at Advanced Level and 10,319 subject entries at Intermediate Level for this session. In the September 2006 re-sits, 1,194 candidates sat for this session. There were 1,954 subject entries for Advanced Level and 1,114 subject entries for Intermediate Level.

Narrowly Failed Candidates

A total of 142 candidates sat for the Matriculation Certificate – Narrowly Failed Examination May 2006, with a total of 50 subject entries at Advanced Level and 92 subject entries at Intermediate Level. During the September 2006 the number of candidates was 40 with 18 subject entries at Advanced Level and 22 subject entries at Intermediate Level.

Advanced Single Subject Examinations

A total of 1,073 candidates sat for May 2006 Session for Advanced Single Subject Examination with a total of 1,345 subject entries at Advanced Level and 8 subject entries at Intermediate Level. During September 2006, the number of candidates was 204 with a total of 204 subject entries.

	May	Subject Entries		September	Subject Entries	
		Advanced	Intermediate		Advanced	Intermediate
Matsec Certificate	2,637	5,185	10,319	1,194	1,954	1,114
Narrowly Failed	142	50	92	40	18	22
Advanced Single Subjects	1,073	1,345	8	204	204	
	May	Subject Entries		September	Subject Entries	
SEC	7,949	49,215		2,435	3,649	

SPECIAL NEEDS ARRANGEMENTS

Requests for special arrangements during MATSEC examinations were all referred to the MATSEC Support Unit of the University of Malta. These were considered by the Special Needs Committee.

SEC Special Arrangements	May 2006	184
	September 2006	67
Advanced & Intermediate Special Arrangements	May 2006	18
	September 2006	6

Edexcel International London Examinations – January 2006 and May/June 2006

Edexcel London examinations are held twice a year, in January and in May/June, at both Ordinary and Advanced Level. For the January session, the subjects offered were less in number. The May/June session has a wider range of subjects. As in previous years there has been a constant decrease in the number of entries. A number of candidates requested special arrangements. These were processed by the Department and approvals were granted according to the regulations of the Joint Council for General Qualifications.

Session	Applications		Special Cases	Revision of Papers
	'O' Level	'A' Level		
January 2006	75	10	-	1
May/June 2006	2,039	201	17	-

Analysis of Results			
<i>London 'O' Level January 2006</i>			
Subject No	Subject	Sat	Pass
7011	Accounting	3	2
7120	Economics	2	2
7163	English Language	34	10
7193	French	1	1
7361	Mathematics	2	0
7540	Physics	2	1
Total		44	16
<i>London 'O' Level Summer 2006</i>			
Subject No	Subject	Sat	Pass
7011	Accounting	569	312
7020	Art and Design	65	33
7040	Biology	32	4
7042	Human Biology	125	53
7081	Chemistry	75	32
7100	Commerce	12	6
7120	Economics	232	114
7163	English Language	1,550	1,100
7171	English Literature	8	0
7193	French	55	20
7209	Geography	2	0
7233	German	10	1
7262	History B	1	0
7333	Italian	60	35
7361	Mathematics B	117	37
7540	Physics	308	170
7593	Spanish	24	18
7609	Chinese	1	0
7615	Modern Greek	1	0
7627	Maltese	48	32
Total		3,295	1,967
<i>London 'A' Level Summer 2006</i>			
Subject No	Subject	Sat	Pass
9011	Accounting	184	160
9040	Biology	5	2
9076	Business Studies	1	0
9080	Chemistry	6	4
9106	Computing	3	3
9121	Economics	4	2
9179	English Language & Literature	1	1
9540	Physics	1	1
Total		205	173

London Chamber of Commerce and Industry 2006 Examinations

The London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Examinations are held in Series 2 (spring), Series 3 (summer) and Series 4 (autumn) of each year. Series 3 and Series 4 sessions have a wider range of subjects offered.

Entries of subjects which lead to a Diploma are on the increase, coming mainly from MCAST and the Malta Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise. The total number of entries for 2006 was as follows:

Series 2 2006 Examinations	110 applications
Series 3 2006 Examinations	227 applications
Series 4 2006 Examinations	87 applications

Requests for Diploma Certificates	28
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Medal Awards

1 Gold – First World in subject English for Business 1st Level
 1 Gold – First World in subject Business Administration 2nd Level
 1 Silver – Second World in subject English for Business 1st Level
 1 Silver – Second World in subject Business Administration 2nd Level

London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Series 2 – 2006							
<i>Part</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Entries</i>	<i>Sat</i>	<i>Pass</i>	<i>Credit</i>	<i>Distinction</i>	<i>Fail</i>
Elementary	Book-Keeping	13	12	3	0	7	2
First Level	English for Business	32	31	0	8	23	0
	English for Business Preliminary	7	7	0	0	7	0
	Text Production	47	47	9	19	16	3
Intermediate	Business Calculations	1	1	0	0	0	1
Second Level	Book-Keeping and Accounts	1	1	0	0	0	1
	Business Statistics	5	5	0	3	0	2
	English for Business	84	82	14	44	19	0
	Text Production	44	44	13	9	10	12
Higher	Advertising	25	20	8	7	1	4
Third Level	Business and Industrial Administration	5	5	2	1	0	2
	Management Accounting	2	2	0	0	0	2
	Marketing	4	3	2	1	0	0
	Public Relations	19	19	6	11	1	1
	Selling and Sales Management	1	0	0	0	0	0
	English for Business	14	14	2	7	4	1
	Text Production	36	36	10	8	4	14
	Oral Test English Business Commerce 3	5	5	5	0	0	0
Total		345	334	74	118	92	45
London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Examinations Series 4 – 2005							
<i>Part</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Entries</i>	<i>Sat</i>	<i>Pass</i>	<i>Credit</i>	<i>Distinction</i>	<i>Fail</i>
Elementary	Business Administration	1	1	0	0	1	0
First Level	English for Business	4	4	0	0	4	0
	Text-Production	9	9	1	1	4	3
Intermediate	English for Business	3	3	1	1	1	0
Second Level	Text Production	21	16	5	5	4	2
Higher	Advertising	4	4	3	0	0	1
Third Level	Business and Industrial Administration	5	4	0	2	2	0
	Customer Service	4	3	0	0	0	3
	Management Accounting	1	1	0	0	0	1
	Marketing	9	8	3	0	0	5
	Selling and Sales Management	3	2	0	2	0	0
	English for Business	3	3	1	0	2	0
	Text Production	22	22	5	5	2	10
	Principles and Practice of Management	10	10	4	2	1	3
	Business Practice	1	1	0	1	0	0
Total		100	91	23	19	21	28
London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Series 3 – 2006							
<i>Part</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Entries</i>	<i>Sat</i>	<i>Pass</i>	<i>Credit</i>	<i>Distinction</i>	<i>Fail</i>
Elementary	Book Keeping	2	2	1	1	0	0
First Level	Business Administration	35	29	0	4	25	0
	Text Production	26	25	3	5	14	3
Intermediate	Book-Keeping and Accounts	43	43	5	4	2	32
Second Level	English for Business	40	40	7	18	15	0
	Text Production	26	25	3	9	7	6
	EFB Speaking Test Version 1	3	3	3	0	0	0
	Business Practice	57	57	13	20	21	3
	Business Administration	59	59	12	28	19	0
Higher	Advertising	16	14	7	0	0	7
Third Level	Customer Service	12	12	0	0	0	12
	Marketing	24	23	10	8	0	5
	Public Relations	3	3	0	1	0	2
	Selling and Sales Management	15	13	5	2	0	6
	English for Business ^(*)	53	53	15	26	10	0

	English for Commerce	1	1	1	0	0	0
	Text Production	44	43	13	9	6	15
	Principles and Practice of Management	10	8	2	4	1	1
	EFL Speaking Test Version	2	1	0	1	0	0
	Business Practice	1	1	0	0	0	1
	Business Administration	1	1	1	0	0	0
	Total	473	456	101	140	120	93

(*) 2 candidates were awarded a Discretionary Award.

EFL English as a Foreign Language 2006

This examination has gained momentum over the past three years it has been organised. The ever-increasing influx of foreign students who are attending courses in English language has raised the demand for teachers who teach English to these foreign students. Due to an increase in demand from candidates who intend to sit for the EFL Examination, the EFL Examination is being offered twice a year, in March and November.

Total number of entries for March 2006	75	Successful candidates	41
Total number of entries for November 2006	169	Successful candidates	44

European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) Testing 2006

During 2006, the Examinations Department conducted two ECDL Test sessions:

- One session was held in July 2006 for students in Form V who sat for seven modules. 1,592 applicants sat for over 11,000 tests in the various modules. 384 students passed all modules and obtained the full ECDL Certificate.
- Another session was held in November/December 2006 for candidates in Form III and IV (Academic year – 2005/2006). A total number of 2,324 applications were received at our Department. Results are still being processed.

City and Guilds of London Institute 2006 Examinations

City & Guilds examinations are mainly held in May/June and December. These examinations are held for candidates who attend vocational courses through evening classes or MCAST.

The City & Guilds of London Institute is continuing with the restructuring of syllabi in various subjects for today's needs and which conform to modern technological developments.

There has been a decline in the number of entries due to the fact that candidates who attend MCAST apply with the same College. The total number of applications for the May/June session was 145 for 154 components; no applications were received for December.

City & Guilds Examinations – May 2006			
Code No	Subject	Sat	Pass
4351/01	Computer Aided Draughting and Design	60	58
4351/03	Three-Dimensional Computer Aided Design	46	44
4351/09	Three Dimensional Computer Aided Design and Solid Modelling	46	45
Total		152	147

AQA Assessment and Qualifications Alliance 2006 Examinations

The AQA Examinations Board offers subjects at Advanced Level. Examinations are held twice a year.

The January session has the lowest number of entries compared with the June session, due to the fact that the subjects offered for this session are limited in number. Total entries for January were 25 while those for June were 88.

AQA Examinations – 2006			
January 2006			
Subject No	Subject	Sat	Pass
6320	Pure Mathematics	25	23
Total		25	23
June 2006			
Subject No	Subject	Sat	Pass
6360	Pure Mathematics	45	38
6421	Chemistry	37	32
6456	Physics	4	2
Total		86	72

Other Foreign Examinations 2006

University/College	Applied	Sat
Aston University	4	4
Brunel University	1	1
Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport	7	6
Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply	2	2
CIMA	7	5
CISA/CISM	45	39
College of Estate Management	4	4
European Institute of Education	22	22
Greenwich University	20	20
IMIS	35	22
Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers	1	1
Leicester University	2	2
Nebosch	1	1
Sound Engineering	2	2
Surrey University	36	35
The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants	1,011	965
The British Computer Society	19	18
Warwick University	5	5
Total	1,224	1,154
University of London Degrees 2006	Applied	Sat
BA English	4	4
BA Italian	1	1
BA Philosophy	2	2
Bachelor of Divinity	1	1
Computing and Information Systems Examinations	109	106
BSc Banking and Finance	2	2
BSc Economics	2	1
BSc Economics and Management	5	5
BSc Politics and International Relations	1	1
BSc Business	1	1
BSc Sociology	2	2
BSc Information Systems and Management	8	8
BSc Management	7	7
BSc Mathematics and Economics	1	-
Diploma in English	4	4
Diploma in Economics	24	23
LLM	8	7
LLB	1	1
MSc Information Security	5	5
MSc Health Systems Management	1	1

MSc Occupational Psychology	1	1
MSc Environmental Management	3	3
MSc Managing Rural Development	1	1
MSc Financial Economics	1	1
MSc Agribusiness Management	1	1
MSc Organisational Psychology	1	1
MSc Financial Management	1	1
MSc Biodiversity Conservation and Management	2	2
MSc Sustainable Development	1	1
PG Diploma Infectious Diseases	1	-
PG Certificate Biodiversity Conservation and Management	1	1
PG Diploma in Laws Banking and Finance	1	1
Short Course Programme SCS	1	-
Access Route	2	-
Total	207	196

LOCAL PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS & LOCAL LICENCES

Local Public Examinations			
	<i>Held</i>	<i>Sat</i>	<i>Passed</i>
AFM Regular Soldiers	Oct-05	353	76
Engine Drivers Land	May-06	16	13
Wireman Licence A	July-06	318	113
Wireman Licence B	July-06	82	33
Security Guards – Ministry of Rural Affairs	May-06	23	13
Officer i/c/ Minor Staff	May-06	25	20
Court Messengers Law Courts Malta	Jun-06	14	3
Engine Drivers Land	Nov-06	10	7
Armed Forces Regular Soldiers	Nov/Dec 06	277	still in progress
Armed Forces Tradesmen/Bandsmen	Nov/Dec 06	21	still in progress

ALFRED ZAFFARESE
Director of Examinations

Department of Libraries

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Libraries comprises the National Library in Valletta, the Central Public Library at Floriana, 7 Regional Libraries and 51 Branch Libraries situated in localities in Malta and Gozo.

The National Library acquires, assembles and preserves for posterity the national collections of printed, audio-visual and electronic documents which include past and current published and unpublished documents, as well as publications by Maltese authors, or about Malta, or in the Maltese language or about any aspect of Maltese studies whenever they are published.

The Public Library system provides reference and lending services and enhances the quality of life by providing library material for education, information and recreation purposes to all citizens. Such material includes printed text, audio-visual and electronic information resources.

NATIONAL LIBRARY

Customer Care

The function of the Customer Care Unit is to register the entry and exit of every person into or from the National Library premises, the aim being to guarantee security as well as to keep records. During 2006 the Unit welcomed a total of 5,806 visitors, a 3% drop from last year (6,004), with an average of 19 visitors per day of opening. The majority of visitors hailed from Germany but French and Spanish tourists visited the Library in considerable numbers as well.

Readers' Services

Several researchers patronised the Reading Room throughout the year, the majority conducting research in the newspaper collections with others consulting documents from the archives of the Order of St John as well as those of the *Università*. A total of 7,430 persons – an average of 24 per day - used the Library for research purposes, a 0.8% increase over last year's figure of 7,367.

This year the Library received 18 new local and foreign scholars who came over personally to conduct research, mainly into the archives of the Order of St John. Others came specifically to consult rare holdings of our library.

A total of 8,302 items were delivered during the year, a 10% decrease from last year and an average of 27 items per day of opening.

Items delivered by the Reading Room Staff during 2006						
	AOM/Treas. Mss	Univ. Mss	Library Mss	Adami Coll. Mss	Melitensia/ Reference	Periodicals/ Newspapers
Total	918	45	437	358	2,293	4,251
Grand Total			8,302			

Archives, Manuscripts and Rare Books

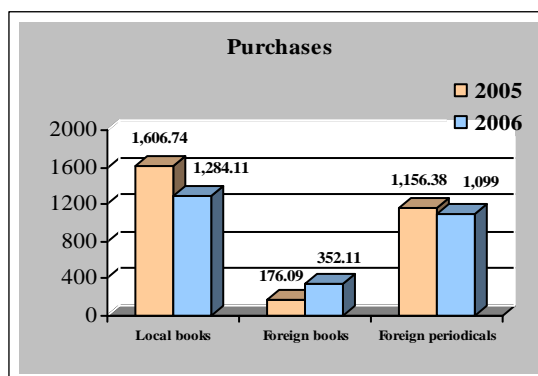
The Archives section received 154 electronic and postal enquiries from Europe, the US, Canada and Australia, a 10% decrease from last year. The bulk of the requests came from Italy and Malta, followed by France and the UK.

Australia	8	Italy	39
Austria	1	Malta	34
Belgium	1	Netherlands	2
Canada	1	Nigeria	2
Czech Republic	1	Portugal	1
Denmark	1	Spain	3
France	22	Sweden	1
Germany	10	Switzerland	1
Greece	1	United Kingdom	18
Hungary	1	United States	6
Total		154	

Bibliographic Services Unit

One of the major roles of the National Library is the preservation of the national imprint. This is achieved through the Legal Deposit Act, which stipulates that authors or publishers are bound by law to deliver to the National Library two copies free of charge, of any work printed and published locally. Throughout the year, 673 distinct books were deposited in total, together with approximately 496 local periodical titles that include journals, newspapers and magazines.

In addition to the works received by legal deposit, the Acquisitions Section purchased an extra copy of each book. In 2006, the sum spent on books published locally amounted to a total of Lm1,284.11, while a total of Lm352 was spent on books published abroad. A total of Lm1,099 was spent on subscriptions and memberships to foreign periodicals.



In September, the Malta National Bibliography for the years 2001 and 2002 was published by the Bibliographic Services Unit. Predominantly based upon the items received at the National Library by way of legal deposit, the publication lists new works published in the Maltese Islands during this period and describes each one in detail. It is edited, indexed and formatted with the aid of GEAC software. Work also progressed on the cataloguing and classification of bibliographical entries for inclusion in the 2003-2004 edition of the Malta National Bibliography.

Photocopying/Scanning/Duplication of Microfilms

While the photocopying of manuscripts is strictly forbidden, the photocopying of books is generally discouraged as the process inevitably damages them. Since the Library has most manuscripts and newspapers on microfilm, reproduction of these items is done from the microfilms. With regard to copying both from originals and from microfilms, this year registered a 18% decrease from last year with the intake

amounting to the sum of Lm1,892. Sixty-four orders for scanning were registered, a 6.6% increase over last year, with the intake amounting to Lm822.

During 2006, the Library also received four orders for the duplication of microfilms from negative to positive. Such requests are rare and always come from foreign clients who require entire volumes and who have access to a microfilm reader and/or printer.

Restoration/Bindery

The section collates and binds loose material of any nature, mainly newspapers and journals and also rebinds and sometimes restores damaged books or manuscripts which belong to the Library. As usual, the work of bindery staff this year concerned mainly the binding of newspapers and periodicals as well as the restoration of a number of manuscripts and books. They also cleaned some old maps of Malta which were badly foxed.

The bindery staff were also actively involved in the preparation and setting up of the two major exhibitions mounted at the National Library this year. Besides, they helped at the Malta Book Fair by mounting four exhibitions at the Mediterranean Conference Centre where the Fair was held in 2006.

Bindery/Restoration Section – 2006

Binding of: Maltese periodicals	175
Foreign periodicals	30
Newspapers	224
Books	31
Debates	50
Government Gazette	57
Repairs & restoration of manuscripts (20) and books (2)	22
Cleaning of maps of Malta	8
Binding of and making of case for Brocktorff volume	-
Folders for maps	100
Boxes for donation of papers by Mr P J Galea	2
Exhibitions for Malta Book Fair in November	4
Captions for and mounting of exhibition <i>CarolVs Rex Imperator</i> in May	
Captions for and mounting of exhibition <i>Dun Karm</i> in November	

Photography

Requests for photography or filming of National Library material were also received from local or foreign journalists who wished to collect information about Malta and its history. Those who applied for filming required images for television documentaries. The Director of the National Library has the right to refuse requests if these do not conform by the regulations stipulated for the photography or filming of documents, for example if the item is in a very bad state of conservation.

This year 63 applications for photography and 15 for filming were filed; of these applications, seven were submitted by foreign individuals or companies.

Sale of Publications

The sale of National Library publications included amongst others, the sale of Charles V's Deed of Donation, the National Library CD-Rom and the *Giuoco d'Arme dei Sovrani e degli Stati d'Europa* and the Malta National Bibliography. The sale of such items to the general public this year yielded an income of Lm339.

Participation in Conferences Abroad

- The European Library – Modular Extensions for Mediating Online Resources (TEL-ME-MOR) Project which was started in February 2005 is to last two years. During this year the department received intensive feedback and training on the project. Three teleconferences were held at the National Library and included officials from the TEL office in Copenhagen and library personnel who are working on the project. The five Work Packages were discussed in detail in various workshops held in Cyprus, Slovenia, St Petersburg and Estonia.
- Participation in the 72nd IFLA General Conference and Council held in Seoul Korea between 20 to 24 August 2006; a new vision of the library as an information hub in the 21st century was the key message of the performance signifying progression to the future, imagination of the present, and negotiating with the past.
- Participation in the 20th edition of the *Conference for European National Librarians* held in St Petersburg on 28 and 29 September 2006; important themes discussed during the meeting included CENL Working Language, Co-operation with European Digital Library, Digital Preservation Activities in Europe, and the Conference of INGO's of the Council of Europe.

Exhibition between the National Library of Malta and the Fundació Jaume II el Just, Valencia Spain

This exhibition entitled *Carol Vs Rex Imperator- Anima et Vida (1506-2006)* is centred on Charles V – King and Emperor – and his coming to power. Members of the National Library staff continued to work for the holding of the exhibition which was held jointly with the Valencian Fundació' Jaume II el Just and the Asociación Amigos de Malta in Spain.

The exhibition was inaugurated on Saturday 27 May by the Minister of Education, Youth and Employment in the presence of distinguished guests. It centred on the influence that books had on the young boy's – the future emperor's early life, and on the transition which matured him from a child into a man and a from a man into a Caesar. This exhibition lasted till the 8 September 2006. It has achieved its goals of promoting the historical connections between Malta and Spain and can be considered a huge success since it attracted thousands of locals and foreigners.

Commemorating our National Poet, Mons Carmelo Psaila

During November 2006 the National Library commemorated Mons Carmelo Psaila, Malta's National Poet and former employee of the Library. On 3 November a Literary and Musical Evening was organised at the Library under the patronage of the Minister of Education, Youth and Employment. On the same day an exhibition relating Mons Psaila's life and works was inaugurated at the National Library.

Seminar - Esperjenzi tal-Libreriji Pubbliċi f'Għawdex,

On 9 June 2006, a seminar with the subject *Esperjenzi tal-Libreriji Pubbliċi f'Għawdex*, was organised in Gozo by the *Kumitat għall-Iżvilupp tal-Libreriji Pubbliċi (KILP)* in conjunction with the Parliamentary Secretariat within the Ministry for Justice.

Workshop on 'Cost G7 Artwork Conservation by Laser'

On 1 February 2005 the Department of Libraries signed a cooperation agreement with the Restoration Unit, Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure for the restoration of the facade and outside surroundings of the National Library. Once restored, the building, being the last edifice built by the Knights of St John in 1776, will be brought back to its original glory. Work on the project commenced in July 2006.

The Restoration Unit of the Works Department organised a workshop on Cost G7 Artwork Conservation by Laser. This is the latest technique used in restoration works. The introduction to this international workshop was held at the National Library on 23 March 2006.

Notte Bianca – Lejl Imdawwal Valletta 2006

On 14 October the National Library participated in the first edition of Notte Bianca organised by the Ministry for Culture and Tourism. Hundreds of people visited the Library which remained open until the early hours of Sunday morning. During this activity visitors had the opportunity to learn more about the Library's history and collections and admire the architecture of this last building in Malta by the Knights.

Malta Book Fair 2006

Between 15 and 19 November the National Library, together with the National Book Council, organised the 22nd edition of the Malta Book Fair. The 2006 Fair comprised a number of activities which included discussions, reading sessions, story-telling for children, and music, and exhibitors themselves contributed to the Fair's success by organising activities on their stands.

Reconstruction of Store at Hal Far

The Department of Libraries was informed by the Malta Transport Authority that part of the building used to store Book Fair furniture had to be demolished because of the road widening and to eliminate the nearby curve which had an unsafe alignment. The Authority accepted the Department's proposal to build a garage instead, at its expense. The tender for the works in question were prepared and published in the Government Gazette.

Theatine Order Visited National Library

On 22 June, the General Secretary of the Theatine Order, Rev Fr Gaetano Rossell, and the learned scholar and author from the same Theatine Order, Rev Fr Pasquale di Pietro, visited the National Library. During this visit both Fr Rossell and Fr Di Pietro enquired about rare books and a new relationship between the National Library of Malta and the Library of the Theatine Order in Rome was established.

The General Secretary of the Order presented the National Library of Malta with a number of books and studies regarding the Theatine Order, Theatine Saints and Theatine Spiritual Writings. On the other hand Rev di Pietro presented two books he authored which include studies and teachings of a religious nature. The National Library presented the Library of the Theatine Order in Rome with a copy of a rare book about the founder of the Theatine nuns.

Brocktorff Watercolour Collections

In January 2006, the National Library enquired about the possibility of UNESCO providing funds for the publication of the 71 Brocktorff watercolour collections to be published by the National Library in three volumes in the next three years. In April, the National Library was informed that its project was accepted and placed first on the list of eligible projects. Immediately a committee was set up and three distinguished writers were chosen to start working on the publication. These include Judge Giovanni Bonello, as writer of the second volume and co-ordinator of the whole project, Ms Bernardine Scicluna and Mrs Cynthia de Giorgio. It is intended that two publications will be published in 2007 with the other volume to be published in 2008. This project coincides with the restoration of the façade of the National Library which has been started and is expected to take three years to complete.

CENTRAL PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Public Libraries in Malta and Gozo consist of the Central Public Library at Floriana; seven Regional Libraries at Paola, Mosta, Qormi, Rabat, Vittoriosa, Luqa and Birkirkara; 46 functional Branch Libraries including 11 at Gozo together with Hospital Libraries, two of which are run on a part-time basis, namely those at Zammit Clapp Hospital and the Gozo General Hospital.

The service points at the Central Public Library which is a public oriented library focus mainly on the following sections: the adult and junior libraries; the Melitensia and Reference sections; the audiovisual and the multimedia library. The section for people with special needs provides tape-cassettes by means of a postal service.

Information Technology Support Unit

Most significantly the simulation provided by GEAC regarding the new LIS software VUBIS SMART which presents an alternative option to replace the present software on which the Public Library with its computerised branches is running is undoubtedly a move to watch and scrutinise in detail. This new software has modules for the creation of interlibrary loans, housebound service and other facilities such as the sending of overdue notices by an SMS or e-mail; these saved on postage and are more efficient in informing patrons about their overdue books in time.

The second group of branch libraries that were computerised at the end of last year had their computers upgraded to Pentium 4 and working on a windows XP profile.

During the year, routine maintenance was carried out at sites where connectivity was lost or hardware had to be repaired to function properly.

Customer Care Unit

Besides its main role of enrolling new members to the library and keeping statistical track on membership, the Customer Care Unit performs other important tasks that establish a link between the public and the Central Public Library with its regional and branch libraries.

Library clients asking for assistance via e-mail, letters or through verbal approach are promptly attended to and their queries answered. Parents bringing their children with reading difficulties are directed how to make use of the facilities of the library in order to make reading a pleasant habit for their children who are reluctant to handle books.

The Customer Care Unit, along with the People with Special Needs Section, participated in the 2006 Malta Book Fair. People visiting the fair have the opportunity to enrol as library members there and then and also know about the services rendered by the Public Library while interacting with the electronic catalogue.

Much of the work at the Unit is dedicated to the enrolment of new members. 5,157 new members from all parts of Malta joined the Public Library during the year - 2,214 adults and 2,943 juniors. The following list gives a breakdown of new members by locality:

Library Membership - 2006								
Locality	Juniors	Adults	Total	Locality	Juniors	Adults	Total	
Attard	88	86	174	Mqabba	37	36	73	
Balzan/Lija	51	42	93	Msida/Pieta'/Ta' Xbiex	50	63	113	
Birkirkara/Mrieħel	153	167	320	Naxxar	106	54	160	
Birzebbuga	86	43	129	Paola	65	42	107	
Cospicua	17	13	30	Qormi	154	71	225	
Dingli	50	40	90	Qrendi	26	17	43	
Fgura	97	61	158	Rabat/Mdina	99	75	174	
Floriana	4	13	17	Safi	27	11	38	
Għargħur	29	14	43	St Julians/Kappara/St Andrews/Swieqi	115	88	203	
Għaxaq	69	58	127	St Paul's Bay/Burmarrad/Bugibba	109	74	183	
Gudja	49	68	117	Sta Venera/Fleur De Lys	39	36	75	
Gzira	38	35	73	San Ġwann/Ta' Ġorni	103	78	181	
Hamrun	58	49	107	Senglea	11	5	16	
Kalkara	15	16	31	Siġġiewi	67	43	110	
Kirkop	32	3	35	Sliema	56	98	154	
Luqa	76	49	125	Tarxien/Sta Lucia	77	38	115	
Marsa	20	18	38	Valletta	16	18	34	
Marsascula	80	54	134	Vittoriosa	11	30	41	
Marsaxlokk	53	33	86	Żabbar	156	90	246	
Mellieħa	43	74	117	Żebbuġ	69	51	120	
Mġarr/Mtahleb	37	16	53	Żejtun	81	61	142	
Mosta	228	136	364	Żurrieq	96	47	143	

<i>Juniors</i>	<i>2,943</i>	<i>Adults</i>	<i>2,214</i>
<i>Total</i>		<i>5,157</i>	

Number of members enrolled per month			
January	339	July	586
February	335	August	550
March	414	September	530
April	492	October	471
May	299	November	464
June	293	December	384
<i>Total</i>		<i>5,157</i>	

Services to People with Special Needs

A joint effort by the Education Division and the Department of Libraries resulted in a talking book project to find new voices for the reading of material for people with special needs.

47 teachers applied to read in English and 45 in Maltese. From the students, 71 opted to read in Maltese and 72 in English. However, as the number proved to be over and above the required total only the first ten in both languages from each section were considered to be the initial readers for the project. A ceremony was held on 24 February at Robert Samut Hall where certificates were presented to the first ten readers placing first in each category after attending an audition that was held before two selection boards. This activity was praised by the Council of Europe as an example of good citizenship whereby members of a community help voluntarily others who are in need of assistance and comfort.

Another project in the pipeline regarding innovations in creating ways to assist to people with special needs and on which the section is working is that of assistive technology. Various consultations have been going on to purchase basic equipment that could be borrowed by people with a special need to help them get on with their work.

During the year, 26,238 tape cassettes forming up 5,872 titles were loaned to people who are visually impaired, illiterate, persons with a disability, dyslexic and elderly. 723 new tape cassettes were recorded at

the Sound and Vision Studio managed by the Section, bringing the total of the collection up to over 30,504 tape cassettes. At present there are 522 members making use of this sterling service.

155 hours of recording were spent in the Sound and Vision Studio at the Central Public Library to add new material to the collection of tape cassettes. Four volunteers attended at the recording studio to help in the task. Other recordings were carried out for the talking book project.

The following are the number of titles found under the under mentioned different subjects:

Subject	No. of Titles
Biographies	196
Maltese Drama	278
Maltese Romance and Short Stories	561
Short Stories in English	986
English Drama	329
Non-fiction (various)	668
Music	1,551
Religion	802
Stories in Maltese for children	69
Stories in English for children	254
Junior non-fiction	14
Children's music	23
Total	5,731

Audio-visual Library

Since the use of video cassettes is dwindling with the introduction of DVDs, the Central Public Library has started investing in the purchase of DVDs and DVD players to meet the demands of the public. New material on DVD was purchased during the year, most of which is of a documentary nature. A new catalogue is being compiled to list the new DVDs and eventually will be downloaded on the library electronic catalogue (OPAC).

During the year, an increasing number of users made use of this non-book media library. Internet users totalled 608, while 64 persons made use of the video service and 33 persons listened to audio-tape cassettes.

Moreover, assistance to teachers from various schools was given throughout the year by lending them material to be used in their classrooms for their students.

Reference and the Melitensia Libraries

During the year, "weeding" of outdated stock at the Reference Library was carried out to keep the collection up-to-date as much as possible. Past catalogues that were no longer of use and were replenished by new material. The number of persons making use of the Melitensia service during the year was 1,876 persons, the majority of them students.

Area Libraries Support Unit

A major overhaul was carried out at San Ġwann Branch Library. All the present book stock was examined, and outdated and tattered books were withdrawn from the collection. The Reference section was also reviewed and a good number of books were made available for lending while the reference stock was kept to include books with general information that has to be readily available. The library itself, with the help of the San Ġwann Local Council, was given a facelift and walls were decorated and lighting was upgraded. To complement the move, the San Ġwann Local Council purchased a good number of new books for the library and increased the hours of opening.

In February, the transfer of Sliema Branch to its former premises at Blanche Street was carried out. The new premises were refurbished with the help of the Sliema Local Council.

During February, the St Andrews Branch Library was closed down as the school at St Andrews required additional classroom space. There is the possibility that the library will move to Pembroke at a place provided by the Pembroke Local Council.

In June the American Embassy invited a number of Branch Librarians to have an interactive session facilitated by a web camera with a renowned American Librarian to share the experience of public libraries in the USA. This activity was well attended.

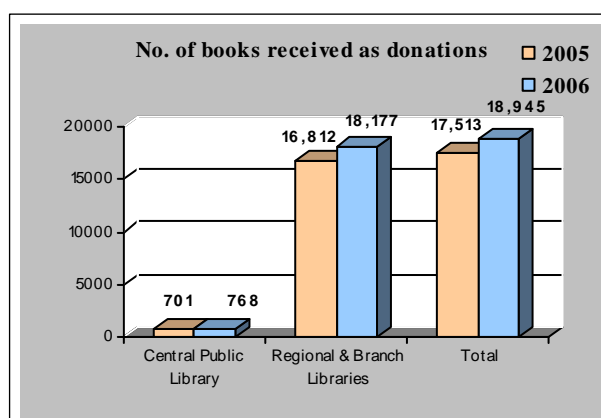
Various presentations of books by local councils to branch libraries within their locality during the year helped in enriching collections.

Regular monthly meetings were held by the Mosta Library Committee and also periodically by the Gudja Library Committee. These meetings serve as a contact point between the Department and the respective local councils in planning the way forward for the libraries within their constituency.

The number of books added in regional and branch libraries was 19,740, thus bringing the total of book stock in the said libraries to 335,829 books.

Book Stock, Book Donations and Loans

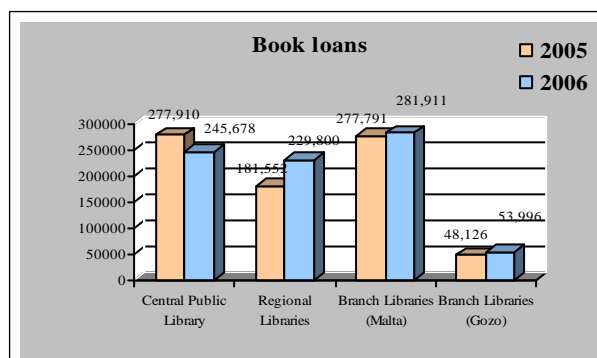
Lm8,000 were budgeted for the purchase of new material for the year 2006. From this sum, 255 new books were purchased for the sections of the Central Public Library; 795 for the Regional and Branch Libraries; a substantial amount was spent on barcodes and the British National Bibliography and the remainder on other ancillary material utilised in the preparation of books to be shelf ready for lending or for reference purposes. The number of books donated by the public and local councils to be used in the Central Public Library and the Regional and Branch Libraries totals 18,945 (an increase of 1,432 over last year) which divides itself into: 768 for the sections of the Central Public Library and 18,177 for the Regional and Branch Libraries.



The Central Public Library received two containers full of books from the Belfast Public Libraries. This donation of books which were in very good condition consisted of stock made up of several adult fiction and non-fiction books; a good part of them in large print.

The Central Public Library has got standing orders for the following publications: Sacra Militia, Treasures of Malta, Saghtar, Heritage Malta. Malta at War and the Kullana Kulturali for the Melitensia Library; Automobile Yearly; Guinness World Records, Stanley Gibbons Stamp Catalogues; Guardian International Film Guide; Writer's Handbook and Whitaker's Almanac for the Reference Library.

The total number of book loans issued by the Central Public Library, including the Regional and Branch Libraries, totalled 811,385.



Book Loans issued by Central Public Library and Regional/Branch Libraries- 2006				
Central Public Library	No of loans		Branch Libraries (Gozo)	No of loans
Adult Library	141,088		Nadur	16,814
Junior Library	104,590		Ghajnsielem	6,597
Total Central Public Library	245,678		Sannat	5,795
			Qala	5,142
Regional Libraries	No of loans		Gharb	4,527
Birkirkara	64,967		Xaghra	4,341
Mosta	39,468		Żebbuġ	4,206
Luqa	37,486		San Lawrenz	2,289
Qormi (St Sebastian)	34,341		Xewkija	1,795
Paola	33,983		Ghasri	1,170
Rabat	15,777		Gozo General Hospital	724
Vittoriosa	3,778		Kerċem	596
Total Regional Libraries	229,800		Total Branch Libraries (Gozo)	53,996
Branch Libraries (Malta)	No of loans		Branch Libraries (Malta)(cont)	No of loans
Żejtun	18,920		Qormi (St George)	7,203
Fgura	18,044		Gharghur	6,809
Attard	14,987		Kirkop	6,706
Gudja	14,210		Mġarr	6,034
Sigġiewi	13,535		Senglea	5,929
Mellieħa	12,993		Dingli	5,170
Birżebbuġa	12,830		Mqabba	5,051
Naxxar	11,781		St Paul's Bay	4,661
Żabbar	11,708		Safi	4,358
Marsaxlokk	11,384		Cospicua	3,246
Hamrun	10,771		Kalkara	3,083
Sliema	9,352		Msida	1,809
Żebbuġ	9,245		St Julians	1,584
Żurrieq	9,012		Sta Venera	1,565
Marsascula	8,744		Valletta	272
Għaxaq	8,371		Zammit Clapp Hospital	156
San Ġwann	7,600		St Andrews	138
Qrendi	7,401		Gzira	4
Lija	7,245		Total Branch Libraries (Malta)	281,911

Grand Total 811,385

PHILIP BORG
Director (Libraries)

Department of Industrial and Employment Relations

Mission Statement

To protect the interests of workers holding employment contracts while, in a spirit of social partnership, actively promoting a healthy relationship, and to contribute towards stable industrial relations.

Functions

The principal functions of the Department of Industrial and Employment Relations are:

- providing effective machinery for the establishment of standard conditions of employment, in consultation with the social partners, and their eventual promulgation as legal instruments;
- providing the necessary monitoring and enforcement of employment conditions as established by law;
- regulating employment contracts in an equitable manner so as to ensure that rights and obligations pertaining to each party in the contract are observed;
- protecting workers whose employment relationship has been terminated by an employer;
- eliminating discriminatory practices;
- providing support services to the Industrial Tribunal, Wages Council, National Employment Authority, Guarantee Fund Administration Board, and Employment Relations Board;
- providing effective mediation and conciliation in order to reduce industrial actions and trade disputes;
- promoting good relationship between employers' and workers' representatives.

Department Structure

In December 2002, Parliament approved the Employment and Industrial Relations Act, Cap 452 of the Laws of Malta, which set out the framework for the adoption of the EU Labour *Acquis* and the responsibilities of the Director responsible for the implementation and enforcement of the Act and subsidiary legislation. The Director has overall responsibility for the operations carried out by the Department.

These activities are carried out by the following Units:

- *Director's Office*: responsible for the strategic overview of the Department's operations; proper functioning of the three divisions of the Department; registration of trade unions; provision of the machinery for the voluntary settlement of trade disputes in terms of the Act and promoting such settlement; preparation of draft employment legislation.
- *International Affairs Unit*: allowing the Department to fulfil its role as the National Focal Point on issues relating to Industrial and Employment Relations to co-ordinate closely with local associations or organisations which have a role to fulfil in protecting the interests of parties engaged under an employment contract; and maintaining contacts at the technical level with governments and other international bodies including the EU and ILO.
- *Enforcement and Inspectorate Section*: carrying out the core inspection functions of the Department. This section is staffed by inspectors working in two units - Enforcement and Inspectorate. The Enforcement Unit processes queries and investigates complaints of clients, primarily related to employees whose employment has been terminated, whether of their own accord or by the employer and is also responsible for referral of cases to the Law Courts. The Inspectorate Unit is responsible for monitoring conditions of employment and processing complaints of workers who are still in employment. This involves an ongoing programme of routine inspections to target particular sectors, or

to investigate specific complaints. Complaints can be received directly from the person concerned, through correspondence or e-mail or even anonymously.

- *Administrative Unit*: providing administrative support services to the Department and to the Industrial Tribunal.

Human Resource Issues

During 2006, an Assistant Director, a Messenger and a Labourer retired from government service. An Assistant Director was recruited to fill the vacant position. During the period under review, there was one resignation and one outgoing transfer. Two employees were transferred to the Department.

During the period under review, members of this Department's staff attended various courses organised by the Staff Development Organisation. These included Information Technology, Employment and Social Policy and Training for Messengers courses.

Furthermore, two officers of the Department started their second year reading for a Diploma in Social Studies (Industrial Relations) organised by the Centre for Labour Studies of the University of Malta. Another officer obtained a Diploma in Public Administration after successfully completing a two-year course organised by the Institute of Public Administration and Management of the University of Malta.

Achievements - Employment Relations

Inspectorate Unit

The Inspectorate Unit carried out 1,518 inspections throughout the year, covering 39,000 employees, out of whom 2,341 were interviewed. 493 irregularities were observed, issuing 23 claims amounting to Lm38,981.

Officials in this Unit dealt with 21,000 enquiries regarding conditions of employment – both on the phone and through personal visits at the Office. In most cases of arrears of wages and other irregularities concerning contract of service, rectification was effected through the Section Officers' direct efforts. Other cases were followed up through court action.

Enforcement Unit

Throughout the year, officials in the Enforcement Unit served a total of 258 claims against employers in Malta, amounting to Lm566,438. Of these, 158 cases amounting to Lm40,462 were amicably settled out of Court, as a result of the direct efforts of the officers of the Enforcement Section. Lm2,900 were collected through Court intervention. 129 requests were made to the police for prosecution. Court hearings in Malta totalled 358. Nine appeals against Court judgements were made throughout 2006.

Employment Agencies

The number of Licensed Employment Agencies at the end of December 2006 was 43. During the period under review, 36 employment agencies renewed their licence. Seven new agencies were granted a licence to operate as such while two employment agencies changed their licence name.

The total amount received as licence fees amounted to Lm6,450. The section also vetted 290 advertisements placed by the licensed employment agencies in the local press as job vacancies.

Employment Relations Board

The Employment and Industrial Relations Act provides for the setting up of the Employment Relations Board. During 2006, the Board held eight meetings and discussed various issues relating to employment and labour conditions such as Public Holidays, minimum leave entitlements, part-time employment, etc.

During these board meetings, various draft legal notices, prepared by the Department's officers and forwarded to the Board by the Minister responsible for industrial and employment relations, were also discussed and forwarded to the Minister for his consideration.

Following this consultation process, the following three legal notices were published: -

- LN 10 of 2006 – Employee (Information and Consultation) Regulations, 2006
- LN 332 of 2006 – Wage Increase (Employees) National Standard Order, 2006
- LN 331 of 2006 – National Minimum Wage National Standard Order, 2006

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Conciliations and the Settlement of Trade Disputes

The Department always strives to take an increasingly more proactive approach towards the settlement of trade disputes to the mutual satisfaction of both the Enterprise and the Union involved. This mediation in the field of industrial unrest has largely contributed towards an increasingly stable industrial climate, avoiding strikes and other costly forms of litigation. The Department intervened on 72 occasions throughout the year. Agreement was successfully reached in 60 cases while such agreement failed to be reached in 12 cases.

Industrial Tribunal

The Industrial Tribunal, set up in terms of the Employment and Industrial Relations Act, holds its sessions at the Courts of Law. The Department provides administrative support services for the Industrial Tribunal, to ensure its proper functioning.

Throughout the year, 90 new cases of alleged unfair dismissals (of which two included allegation of discrimination) and 4 other cases of alleged discrimination/harassment/victimisation were received. Five cases of trade disputes and two cases of interpretation were also introduced. Seven cases were introduced in terms of other provisions of the Employment and Industrial Relations Act.

The Industrial Tribunal disposed of 73 cases of alleged unfair dismissals, 17 cases of alleged discrimination/harassment/victimisation, and eight cases of trade disputes. The Tribunal also disposed of four cases introduced in terms of other provisions of the Employment and Industrial Relations Act and one case of interpretation. All this was accomplished through 345 sittings, during which 646 cases were heard.

There were 482 cases pending on 31 December 2006. These include the 315 cases related to the re-organisation of the Shipyards, all alleging unfair dismissal and discrimination.

Industrial Actions

During 2006, eight strikes were ordered involving 7,023 employees. Strike action lasted for a total of 70 hours and resulted in a total of 2,934.5 man-days being lost.

Collective Agreements

Article 5(2) of the Employment and Industrial Relations Act states that where conditions of employment are prescribed in a collective agreement, the employer is obliged to send to the Director of Industrial and Employment Relations an authenticated copy of said agreement, within fifteen days of signing. In accordance with this article, the following agreements between industrial establishments and trade unions were registered at the Department during 2006:

New Collective Agreements	5
Renewals	29
Extensions	2
Side Agreements	3
Amendments	2

Registrar of Trade Unions

During the year, 11 organisations, 6 trade unions and 5 employers' associations were cancelled. Trade unions cancelled during this period were the Casino Employees Union, Għaqda (Union) - Uffiċjali Anzjani tat-Tarzna (DSESU), Għaqda (Union) Professjonisti tal-Korporazzjoni Għas-Servizzi ta' l-Ilma, Għaqda Professjonisti Legali tal-Uffiċċju ta' l-Avukat Ġenerali, Union Haddiema Università ta' Malta, and the Union of Legal Graduates of HSBC Malta. The employers' associations cancelled during 2006 were the Association of Private Hire Bus Owners, Assoċjazzjoni tal-Bdiewa, Malta Association of Travel Agents, Maltese Association of Incoming Tourism Agents, and the Yacht Traders Association.

During the period under review four organisations sought registration with the Registrar of Trade Unions. Two organisations, namely the Malta Dockers Union and the Professions and Services Employees Union (PSEU), were registered as trade unions, while the Assoċjazzjoni tal-Bdiewa and the FATTA (Federated Association of Travel and Tourism Agents – Malta), were registered as employers' associations.

At the end of the year the Register of Trade Unions was composed of 30 trade unions and 20 employers' associations.

Other Activities

Participation in Seminars, Conferences and Working Party Meetings Abroad

Department officials attended several conferences organised by various bodies, including the European Union and the International Labour Organisation, as follows:

- Between 31 May and 16 June 2006, the Director led a tripartite delegation at the 95th Session of the ILO Conference in Geneva. The Minister of Education, Youth and Employment attended and addressed this Conference. The Maltese delegation included a number of high-ranking officials from trade unions and employers' associations. The issues considered at this conference included a discussion on the adoption of a Recommendation on Employment Relationship and the adoption of a Convention and a Recommendation on Occupational Safety & Health. The conference also dealt with the role of the ILO in technical co-operation with member states.
- The Director also addressed a seminar on the Working Time Directive organised by TAIEX in Brussels and another seminar on the Employee Information and Consultation Directive's application in Malta also organised by TAIEX and held in Malta.
- The DG for Employment, Social Affairs & Equal Opportunities of the European Commission organised two meetings for Directors General responsible for Industrial Relations. These two meetings were held in Helsinki and Berlin and were attended by the Director. During these meetings, various issues were

discussed including the implementation of the Posting of Workers Directive, the Labour Law Green Paper and the evolution of social dialogue at Community level.

- The Director also attended various Expert Meetings, Seminars and Bilateral Meetings on the Working Time Directive.
- An officer of this Department attended meetings of the Expert group Mainstreaming CSR among SMEs organised by the European Commission, Directorate-General of Enterprise and Industry.
- An official also attended meetings of the High-Level Social Representatives on CSR organised by the European Commission, Directorate-General of Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.
- Two officers of the Department attended a Workshop in Budapest organised by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. This Workshop dealt with organisational, financial and skills capacities for building social dialogue at sectorial and company level of the new EU Member States and Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey.
- Officials also attended two Expert Meetings concerning the application of Directive 96/71/EC on posting of workers in the framework on the provision of services. During these meetings a Commission Communication on the guidance on the posting of workers in the framework on the provision of services was discussed. Participants were also asked to give a presentation on their responsibilities and tasks in the area of posting of workers.
- Two officials attended an Expert Meeting concerning the implementation of Directive 2001/23/EC on the safeguarding of employees' right in case of transfer of undertakings. This meeting was convened to present a synthesis of the replies to a questionnaire on the directive by all the member states. Participants acknowledged the inexperience of the majority of member states in the transfer of business law and across borders transfer law.
- An officer of the Department also attended the European Productivity Conference organised by the Finnish Presidency of the European Union. This was the first productivity event of its kind and addressed important issues which are pertinent if Europe is aspiring to become the most competitive region in the world.
- One of the Department's officials also attended a Conference organised by the EC on different dimensions of internal and external EU policies that are relevant for promoting decent work for all.
- An official attended a review meeting of the European Multistakeholder Forum on Corporate Social Responsibility organised by the EC Directorate-General of Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.
- An official of the Department was invited to attend the final session of the 3 MOIRE PROJECT. The conference was organised by the Agenzia Regionale di Lavoro and treated the subject of The Three Modern Opportunities Improving Regional Employment. The three objectives tackled were workers, working mothers and elderly workers, especially more so where social dialogue is concerned. Participating in this project, apart from Malta, were representatives of Belgium, Romania and Spain. The findings of the working committee of the project were passed on to the European Commission for future reference.
- One official formed part of a delegation on a study visit to Cyprus, sponsored by the Freidrich Ebert Stiftung (FES). The delegation had meetings with the heads of the institutions involved in social partnership and/or in labour issues and in the designation of policies related to pre and post EU Accession.

Visit/Seminar Organised by the Department

During December, the Director of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, led a high-level delegation to separately meet the Social Partners and to hold a seminar on The Fourth European Working Conditions Survey.

The Department of Industrial and Employment Relations, apart from participating at this seminar, was also involved in organising the whole visit. Apart from scheduling the meetings with the social partners, the Department also organised the seminar held on 7 December at Mediterranean Conference Centre. Invitations were sent to entities and personalities involved in the sector. Attendance at the seminar was very encouraging.

Newsletter

In August, the Department published the first edition of its newsletter *I Review* which was very well received by stakeholders. It is intended to continue issuing this newsletter on a biannual basis.

Self Employed (Loan) Scheme

The process of recouping funds from persons who had applied for, and benefited from, the Self Employed Loan Scheme was continued. For the year under review, Lm4,395.23 were recovered. Warning letters are still being issued to defaulters who fell back on their payment of instalments of said loan scheme

DR NOEL VELLA

Director (Industrial & Employment Relations)

Department of Corporate Services

The Directorate of Corporate Services provides support services to the Education Division and to the Ministry's line departments, particularly in the areas of financial and human resource management, information technology development and office management.

During 2006, the former Department of Finance and Administration within the Education Division was incorporated into the Department of Corporate Services, which now consists of the Ministry's Finance Section, Support Services, Human Resources, the Division's Finance Section and the Procurement and Administration Section.

FINANCE (MINISTRY)

The Department was responsible for drawing up the Business and Financial Plans for the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment for the period 2007-2009. It carried out a detailed analysis of the plans submitted by the departments and public entities falling under the Ministry's responsibility before these were submitted to the Ministry of Finance. During this process, the Minister and the Permanent Secretary were continuously updated of envisaged financial requirements in view of the discussions which were eventually held with the Ministry of Finance in connection with the Financial Estimates 2007.

The Ministry's Votes of recurrent and capital expenditure for 2006 were continuously monitored to ensure the best utilisation of financial resources and to take corrective action in cases where allocated funds were not sufficient. Through this process, it was ensured that such excess expenditure was offset by savings under other items of expenditure within the Ministry's Votes.

Monitoring of the financial position of government entities within the Ministry's portfolio was also carried out regularly to ensure that funds released to these entities were absolutely required for them to carry out their operations efficiently.

The Budget Office and the Financial Management and Monitoring Unit within the Ministry of Finance were continually updated with financial and other information requested by them concerning the revised estimates for 2006 and in preparation for the Financial Estimates for 2007.

In its drive to optimise the use of available resources and in order to economise without adversely affecting performance, the Ministry undertook several initiatives. A cleaning services contract was not awarded when the previous contract expired and cleaning is now being carried out by the Ministry's and the Division's own minor staff. Greater control was exercised on the consumption of fuel and the number of hired vehicles was reduced. Other economy and environment-friendly measures have resulted in cost reductions in utilities and office services.

The total expenditure for 2006 in the Operational and Maintenance Category was 90% of that incurred during the previous year, or approximately Lm24,000 less. This figure should be considered as quite significant, considering that during the last part of 2006, the staff made an effort to ensure that all invoices relating to the year were settled.

Better use was also made of available human resources. Even though the number of staff in the Section was reduced, its operations were not adversely affected as staff members co-operated by being flexible. Staff members attended several training seminars with the aim of improving their skills.

A healthy rapport with central agencies was maintained. These included the Management and Personnel Office, the Budget Office, the National Audit Office and the National Statistics Office. Requests for information received from these offices were promptly answered, as were a number of Parliamentary Questions.

SUPPORT SERVICES

- *The Students' Maintenance Grants Section:*
 - regularly issued remuneration to students in government and non-state higher educational institutions who are entitled to a Maintenance Grant; introduced an electronic attendance system to avoid overpayments and which has enabled the Section to effect adjustments as late as the eve of each pay day;
 - regulated the Swipe Card system operated by a private company and private outlets registered and licensed to deal in transactions which students may settle by defraying funds from their cards.
 - was also responsible for the placement of students who had applied for work assignments during their summer holidays.
- *The Travel Abroad Unit:* This Unit was created in 2006 when the Sections which catered separately for the Ministry's and the Education Division's needs were amalgamated. This has ensured greater flexibility and better utilisation of resources. The Unit is also responsible for follow-up procedures, including claims for reimbursements from the Ministry of Finance for expenditure incurred in connection with EU-related travel.
- *Customer Care Unit:*
 - facilitated the routing of complaints and queries to the appropriate service provider with the Ministry;
 - implemented the Customer Care Strategy, designed by the Management Efficiency Unit, which in 2006 drove quality services focusing on the customer;
 - disseminated information prepared by various department and entities within the Ministry to the general public and to members of staff;
 - handled applications for examinations and for vacant posts within the Ministry and co-ordinated the distribution of several items by the Ministry and the Division;
 - was responsible for bookings of the Despott Hall and the foyer at the Ministry for functions, meetings and exhibitions;
 - extended its office to a room where complaints, queries and requests may be confidentially and privately discussed between the customer and the Unit's staff;
 - provided its members of staff with summer and winter uniforms.
- *English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Monitoring Board:* The Assistant Director (Support Services) continued to act as Executive Secretary of the EFL Schools' Monitory Board. The number of foreign students who arrived in Malta in 2006 to study English as a Foreign Language amounted to over 60,000, exceeding considerably the annual average for the last five years. The MEYE completed two English Language Examinations in January 2006 and May 2006, for prospective EFL Teachers who did not have an Advanced Level in English, thus increasing the total number of EFL Teaching Permits to 2,118 as on 31 December 2006.
- *Programme Implementation:* The Master Project and Priority Database concerning the Ministry's programme implementation was updated regularly in 2006. Initially, there were 43 projects. 30 projects were completed in 2006 and the other 13 projects are ongoing and well in progress. The Permanent Secretary is informed quarterly about the progress in programme implementation.

HUMAN RESOURCES BRANCH

During 2006, the Human Resources Branch gave advice and continued support to the Director General, Director Corporate Services and the other line departments. It was also involved in the publication of 23 calls for applications for the recruitment and engagement of new staff. These included part-time clerks, casual cleaners, casual substitutes, school secretaries and various other departmental grades. 2006 was a year of consolidation especially with regard to the HR database (HRIMS). About 300 individuals were provided with individual training, especially through the use of the various training courses made available by Staff Development Organisation. These included Data Protection, Minor Staff training and the various IT courses. The Branch took care to circulate all the OPM and MPO Circulars to schools and Heads of Sections. Over 200 circulars were e-mailed to recipients practically on the same day of issue. This initiative brought about a large saving in postage, envelopes and paper. The HR Branch kept watch on the Division's website and maintained updated information apart from making available the forms in use at the Branch for the benefit of all staff.

- *Records:* During 2006, the Records Section was involved in the:
 - recording of all changes in personal records and appointment details of the Education Division's staff, including the Personal Record Sheets, the seniority and allowances lists;
 - registration and engagement of 450 new employees; also involved in the preparation of appointments of new recruits and promoted officers and in preparation of letters of progression;
 - processing of confirmation of appointments and increments, superannuations, retirements and resignations;
 - processing of requests for qualification and other special allowances, such as acting allowances;
 - drawing up and provision of service and leave record sheets to applicants applying under calls for applications.
- *Employee Relations:* The Employee Relations Section:
 - maintained an electronic record of all sick leave availed of by Education Division staff. Vacation leave records were maintained in the appropriate vacation leave cards;
 - processed a great number of requests for special leave, including parental, maternity, responsibility leave, pre-retirement, sports, marriage, bereavement, special unpaid leave, vocational and cultural leave, as well as requests for reduced hours;
 - kept a continuous communication with the Salaries Section in respect of pay and allowances deductions;
 - administered and processed all reported instances of injury at place of work. Injury Boards were set-up to investigate all cases of injury on duty.
 - took in hand the administrative requirements for the setting up of medical boards;
 - administered and processed the leave requirements of casual and part-time staff.
- *Resourcing:* The Resourcing Section was responsible for:
 - processing the progression of staff to the next higher scale and promotions to the next higher grade as provided for by the respective Classification and Regrading Agreements of the different Classes and Grades;
 - drawing up the monthly Employment Return which is forwarded to ETC and the Management and Personnel Office;
 - submitting to the Management and Personnel Office and ETC a weekly return of new staff engagements, transfers to and from other Departments, superannuations and resignations within the Education Division;
 - administering the Performance Management Programme (PMP) for the General Service grades and ensuring that every officer is, in fact, covered by a PMP;
 - referring new employees for the required medical test by the Occupational Health Unit.
- *Discipline:* The Discipline Section processed some 170 disciplinary cases in terms of the Public Service Commission (Disciplinary Procedure) Regulations, 1999.

FINANCIAL SERVICES BRANCH

The Financial Services Branch is composed mainly of two units: the Accounts Section and the Efficiency and Strategic Operations Planning Unit (ESOPU).

The Branch provides support services on financial matters to all departments within the Education Division, including outstations and primary and secondary schools in Malta. This includes the preparation and implementation of all monitoring and control mechanisms necessary to manage the Education Division's financial resources in line with the Government Financial Regulations.

The Financial Services Branch is responsible for the compilation of the three-year Business and Financial Plans, and the Annual Budgetary Estimates of the Education Division. The process of compiling the Business and Financial Plans and the Annual Estimates involves the amalgamation of the individual departmental plans into one holistic document and ensuring that these are consistent with Government's and the Ministry's policies.

A regular monitoring of Votes and Items of recurrent and capital expenditure was carried out. In particular, recurrent expenditure was continuously scrutinised and a monthly report submitted to senior management for control purposes. This monthly report was supplemented by detailed explanations of the variances from pro-rata estimates for each Cost Centre. As a result of this continuous monitoring of expenditure, action was immediately taken to make use of under-utilised funds under certain items of expenditure to supplement other items of expenditure which necessitated additional funding through the use of virements of funds. Through these endeavours, and in collaboration with the Ministry's Finance Section, the Branch strived to achieve the ultimate aim of keeping the Ministry's expenditure within the allocated budget.

The Accounts Section continued to scrutinise mid-day break supervision, transport supervision returns from schools and reimbursements for use of own transport, with the main aim of controlling expenditure on these items and to avoid double payments to individuals. These initiatives were part of the Branch's role of financial controller over the Division's accounting activities. This also involved support to all departments as well as advice on accounting procedures.

The Accounts Section also monitored the Materials and Supplies and the Repairs and Maintenance imprest funds allocated to primary and secondary schools in Malta. Interim and final reports on expenditure were received from these schools and these were checked by the Section. Remedies for the reconciliation of any irregularities were identified and implemented.

On the other hand, ESOPU monitored the capital expenditure vote of the Education Division, especially capital imprest funds forwarded to primary and secondary schools in Malta. Reports forwarded by schools were checked to ensure that capital expenditure transactions were made according to Government Financial Regulations. Furthermore, the Unit continued with the reconciliation of School Councils' Funds' returns.

The Unit was responsible for the drafting, issuing and awarding of a number of departmental tenders and quotations in respect of capital expenditure. Lm300,000 were spent on the introduction of information technology. In conformity with the requirements of the National Minimum Curriculum, Lm400,000 were invested in purchasing equipment and furniture for schools. Furthermore, the hardware maintenance agreement with MITTS was renewed for another year.

ESOPU also continued with the implementation of the e-Procurement system as regards the IT hardware. During the year, a total of 140 quotations were issued on behalf of government schools and Education Division units.

ESOPU continued to administer the sick leave verification exercise which monitors the man-hours being lost through sick leave. This entails the co-ordination of home visits by professionals appointed for this

purpose by the Division. The verification exercise was further streamlined in a continuous effort to achieve cost-effectiveness.

Both units of the Financial Services Branch verified, processed and issued payments for all materials, works and services for the Education Division. In particular, the Division, through more control, has managed to absorb the increase in the rates payable to school transport service providers, as a result of the 2005 agreement, from its own funds without the need for additional funds.

The Branch continued to compile important statistical information for the National Statistics Office and the Treasury concerning Education Expenditure, notably that concerning the School Council Funds of all schools in Malta and Gozo. The Branch has also compiled financial data on central government direct expenditure on education for the years 2004 and 2005 for EUROSTAT and the OECD.

As part of its role as financial adviser to the Education Division, the Financial Services Branch has provided information on the financial implications of the Education Division reform. Besides, it has performed value for money exercises, an analysis of the expenditure incurred by the Education Division in owning its own bus coaches, the use of private vehicles on official duties, the feasibility of leasing or purchasing vehicles for the Ministry, and expenditure related to Media Channel Broadcasting.

PROCUREMENT AND ADMINISTRATION BRANCH

- *Procurement:*

- processed 31 departmental tenders and nine quotations which were advertised in the Government Gazette; evaluated three hand quotations (costing less than Lm500 each); another 10 tenders whose value exceeded Lm20,000 were advertised through the Department of Contracts;
- 25 tenders were issued to procure textbooks for state schools, with a total expenditure of Lm449,003;
- 1,979 requisition forms and their corresponding local purchase order for the procurement of various items, services and repairs were processed;
- five Boards of Survey were appointed for the disposal of obsolete furniture and other unserviceable items;
- the Procurement Store at the former Umberto Calosso Boys' Trade School, Sta Venera was cleared from obsolete machinery before being handed over to the Technical Services Branch of the Division; the section conducted three sales of hand tools, obsolete machinery and scrap metal pertaining to the ex-Umberto Calosso and Floriana Trade Schools, netting the sum of Lm5,960 as revenue.
- the Division's car park became operational in April 2006 providing Education Division employees with adequate parking facilities.

- *Stores:*

- procured items of stationery and cleaning materials with a view to obtaining the best value for money;
- processed 488 requisitions for stores were processed;
- drew up 278 Local Purchase Orders amounting to Lm21,375 and made payments made to contractors accordingly. This represents a reduction of Lm8,962 over that for 2005, mainly due to greater control exercised in the evaluation of requests made by sections for stationery and cleaning material;
- distributed a total of 217,137 textbooks to state schools and 183 summer/winter uniforms to messengers, drivers and supervisory staff within the Division;
- kept up-to-date records of books, stationery, cleaning material and uniforms.

- *Registry Section:*

- opened 553 personal files, 629 general files and 450 fore files, while 333 personal files were marked as dead files; another 10 files for personnel on loan were opened - (an average of 120 files were processed daily);
- In view of the HR Documents Retention Policy issued by the Office of the Prime Minister in December 2004, an exercise was carried out to identify files relating to ex-employees who would now be 85 years old;

- the Mail Database, which was created in 2005 by one of the Registry staff, as well as other databases used to track file movements and circulars issued by the Ministry of Education and other ministries, were regularly updated.
- *Inventory Section:*
 - gave continuous support to school administrators to operate the new inventory system;
 - 66 schools and sections have now been entered in the General Database; assets are being given relative identification numbers, which will result in the labelling of 117,000 items;
 - in 2006, it was decided to incorporate the Ministry's Inventory Database with that of the Education Division, as requested by the National Audit Office. By the end of the year, inventory assets of the Ministry were amalgamated into those of the Division;
 - carried out major Inventory List updating of six DFSAE offices and Routine list updating of the remaining 151 Education Building offices;
 - 16 Boards dealing with thefts were appointed - work relating to theft cases included the Pro-Forma Compilation and action for the implementation of Board recommendations. A total of 67 theft cases were processed, including 23 new cases and 11 other cases of stolen items costing less than Lm50.
- *Minor Staff Section:* Although minor staff are attached to a particular school, with the re-organisation of state schools into colleges, College Co-ordinators may now make any necessary day-to-day arrangements to ensure that cleanliness is maintained in all schools forming part of the College. However, Head Office regularly carried out a number of inspections in state schools to ensure that minor staff observe the working time schedule. Disciplinary action was taken against 73 defaulters. These measures included the deduction of pay for the period of unauthorised absence.

In addition, during the year, the exercise of redeployment of staff ensured that the general state of cleanliness was maintained. In cases of resignations of Casual Cleaners in state schools vacancies were immediately filled.
- *Transport Section:*
 - was responsible for providing transport services to the Ministry, the Division and the various departments and sections;
 - continued to organise and supervise arrangements for Public Schools' Transport and transport in Special Schools, transport for Skolasajf activities, and the provision of services to the Marsaxlokk Youth Hostel, local councils, charitable institutions and other non-government organisations;
 - besides the daily delivery of mail to the post office and the Treasury, the transport section received over 1,500 requests for transport services;
 - as a result of the continuous control exercised on the use of fuel, a reduction in usage was registered; the use of five hired vehicles was discontinued.
 - apart from carrying out routine repairs to the Division's coaches and other vehicles, the Maintenance Garage made arrangements with the Works Division to carry out repairs on the Division's vehicles to ensure greater utilisation of resources;
 - assisted the Malta Transport Authority in organising an emergency hospital service during the industrial action by the Public Transport, in February 2006.
- *Electronic Servicing Unit:* responsible for the repair of electronic equipment, such as TV sets, video-cassette recorders, radio sets, hi-fi equipment and PA systems; during 2006, the unit repaired around 90 computer monitors, some 160 items of Hi-fi equipment, Public Address systems, amplifiers, TV monitors and UPS's belonging to state schools. Cost savings on repairs were thus made by the Division since previously such work was farmed out to private firms.
- *Furniture Restoration:* This unit was disbanded in July 2006. Up to that time, a total of 163 tubular tables, 957 tubular chairs and 27 tubular desks were restored and distributed to state schools against a nominal payment. Total revenue amounted to Lm6,740. The five workers forming part of the Unit were redeployed at Head Office under the supervision of a Senior Technical Officer to perform maintenance works as required.

YOUTH SECTION

The Youth Section supports non-governmental organisations and agencies that are concerned with democracy, active citizenship, participation, and Euro-Med dialogue and that provide services for young people. It supports numerous initiatives by youth non-governmental organisations, social agencies and voluntary organisations. It also creates and develops opportunities for holistic education and work by means of activities, programmes and initiatives organised on a national scale.

Gharfien Nazzjonali Zghazagh fis-Socjeta`

This award is the Government's official recognition of voluntary work carried out by young people in the non-formal educational sector, through work carried out locally or abroad. The ceremony was held on 22 April 2006 at Robert Samut Hall, Floriana. Thirteen youth groups and organisations were nominated by the public in recognition of their contribution towards their community. The winning youth group was Żghazagh Azzjoni Kattolika followed by Moviment Graffiti and Centru Żghazagh Balzan.

Youth Support Programme

This initiative is aimed at providing financial assistance to enable youth organisations to carry out projects that are of benefit to the community and address issues outlined in the National Youth Policy document. During the year, 51 non-governmental youth organisations were granted a total sum of Lm11,275 in order to cover expenses in connection with projects and activities that are community oriented.

Youth Specialisation Studies Scheme

The Youth Specialisation Studies Scheme is a joint venture between the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment and the APS Bank Ltd aimed at financially assisting young people who wish to pursue their studies abroad if such studies are not available locally.

According to the three-year agreement, this scheme allows students to apply for loans ranging from Lm5,000 to Lm10,000 with minimal or no collateral from APS Bank at 5.0% interest rate per annum. The total amount allocated for this year was of Lm100,000. The loan is repaid over a term of ten years including a maximum of a five-year moratorium. A total of 37 applications were received. 14 applicants were selected by a Credentials Committee and were granted a subsidy of 4.0% on the interest rate for the duration of their moratorium. The youth section's total expenditure for the subsidised interest for 2006 was of Lm3,861.27.

National Youth Day

On an annual occurrence, the Youth Section, in collaboration with the National Youth Council, the National Youth Information Centre, the Commissioner for Children and other youth NGOs organise activities to mark on a national level the role of young people in Malta. This year, the activities were held from 18 to 26 March. The opening ceremony was followed by a training seminar for young leaders and youth workers on Active Citizenship. The closing ceremony was held at Baystreet where young people took part in various artistic performances, displayed information stands about their organisations and participated in different workshops where they were given the opportunity to share their views with youth policy makers.

Youth Empowerment Centres

Eight Youth Empowerment Centres situated in Birkirkara, Mosta, Tarxien, Victoria Gozo, Fgura, Żejtun, Żurrieq and Qormi are fully operational and render service to youth within the given locality. During the year, the renewal of a two-year agreement was signed by the Empowerment Centres of Birkirkara, Fgura, Tarxien, Żurrieq, Mosta and Qormi.

Staff within the Youth Section visit the Youth Empowerment Centres whenever the need arises and attend all activities to which they are invited.

These centres provide young people with the information required to empower them in becoming more employable through furthering their academic and technical skills, create awareness on job opportunities and encouraging entrepreneurial initiatives. They provide young people with the opportunity of getting in contact with NGOs in their field of interest and create the necessary links with NGOs which might interest youth and assist them by empowering them.

Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Education

In order to enhance recognition of voluntary activities of young people, a consultation meeting on non-formal and informal education was held with youth organisations and young people. This was organised in collaboration with the National Youth Council on 17 June at Robert Samut Hall, Floriana.

The aim of this meeting was to accredit and give value to the work that young people have been doing within their youth organisation and to accredit the role that young organisations have been playing in society. The ultimate goal was to certify at a national level, the work that young people have been doing in society through a certificate that is valued in an educational or employment setting.

National Youth Information Centre

The National Youth Information Centre is committed in helping young people to identify their own resources, take their own actions and make their own decisions. The functions of the National Youth Information Centre (NYIC) is to ensure the provision of a relevant and effective Information Centre service in an atmosphere and setting attractive to young people. It develops relevant outreach and other information-related activities. It also keeps young people abreast of youth information developments at local, national and international levels.

The centre also has an online service. The web portal allows young persons to obtain quality information, through regular updates on numerous themes and subjects that might interest them.

By listening and responding to young people, the centre is always seeking ways to help ensure that young people are valued, nurtured and challenged to release their full potential.

Youth Newsletter

A monthly e-newsletter has been published and distributed to all youth and sports organisations, youth empowerment centres and local councils in Malta and Gozo. Its main objective is briefing all these organisations with local, European and international activities specifically aimed at young people. Various local initiatives have taken up the offer and post their activities to be included in the newsletter. The newsletter also conveys updates of all local youth empowerment centres, and brief readers with forthcoming activities.

Youth Organisations Network

Driven by the National Youth Policy, the Youth Section is keeping regularly up-dated all youth organisations and social stakeholders directly involved in youth work with local, European and international information and opportunities through e-communication. Youth organisations are regularly kept informed about activities, seminars and events held in Malta and EU opportunities such as funding and training courses for young people.

All Different – All Equal Training Seminar in Gozo

A weekend training seminar was organised in November at Ta' Sbejha Holiday Complex in Gharb, Gozo, as part of the *All Different – All Equal* European Youth Campaign's activities held in Malta. The main aim of the European Campaign for Diversity, Human Rights and Participation is to encourage and support young people to participate in creating a more peaceful and inclusive environment.

The training seminar was designed to equip youth leaders and youth workers with basic knowledge, abilities and skills that are needed to effectively develop and run activities with young people regarding the themes of the campaign. The training seminar brought together 33 participants, all coming from different organisations where they all had the opportunity to develop a network of ideas in order to enhance and distribute the effects of the campaign.

INSTITUTE OF TOURISM STUDIES (ITS)

The Institute of Tourism Studies:

- provides opportunities for work experience in the industry;
- recreates actual working environments on campus;
- provides training in a comprehensive range of practical skills;
- develops and enhances the intellectual ability of its students through a wide range of academic subjects;
- teaches generic skills essential for a smooth transition into the world of work;
- continuously monitors students' progress by tutors, review boards and internal and external examiners.

2006 Activities

Programmes of study

Higher Diploma in Hospitality and Tourism Management
 Diploma/Certificate in Hotel Operations
 Diploma/Certificate in Accommodation Operations
 Diploma/Certificate in Travel Agency Operations
 Diploma in Tour Guiding
 Diploma/Certificate in Food Preparation & Production and Supervisory Studies
 Diploma/Certificate in Food & Beverage Service and Supervisory Studies
 Extended Skill Training Scheme (Hospitality Trades).

There are 562 registered full-time students attending the Institute of Tourism Studies for the academic year 2006/7 in addition to around 350 part-time students.

International Internships

99 students commenced their international internship in July 2006. Students were placed in the following countries: Scotland 28, England 51, Ireland 1, Isle of Man 9, Germany 2, Italy 6 and Spain 2.

ITS Graduates - 2006

Course of Studies

Higher Diploma in Hospitality Management	15
Diploma in Hotel Operations	16
Certificate in Hotel Operations	17
Diploma in Accommodation Operations	5
Certificate in Accommodation Operations	6
Certificate in Food Preparation and Production	2
Certificate in Food Preparation and Supervisory Studies	32
Certificate in Food Preparation and Production – Level 2	8

Diploma in Culinary Arts	18
Diploma in Food and Beverage Service	1
Certificate in Tour Guiding	13
Certificate in Travel Agency Operations	15

60 students completed their studies in Food Preparation and Service – Level 1. 26 students completed their studies in the Extended Skills Training Scheme – Food Preparation and Service.

Participation in EU Programmes

During 2006 the Institute of Tourism Studies participated in the following programmes:

- Interreg IIIA Italia – Malta – Saperi e Sapori
- Leonardo Da Vinci NEW (No Borders European Workers) Hospitality
- Leonardo Da Vinci Exchange Programme – Delicacies in the Art of Pastry Making
- Leonardo Da Vinci Exchange Programme – Exploring the Umbria Region from an Oenological and Gastronomical Perspective
- Comenius Project – Food – Healthy Youth in a future Europe
- Comenius Project – European Business Handbook for young entrepreneurs.

LEONARD SACCO

Director (Corporate Services)

Directorate for EU and International Affairs

MAIN FUNCTIONS

The main functions of the Directorate for EU and International Affairs is to co-ordinate, manage and develop Malta's relation bilaterally, multilaterally and with the European Union on the issues falling under the Ministry for Education, Youth and Employment.

The Directorate EU and International Affairs was responsible for implementing the EU related priorities, liaising with the Maltese Permanent Mission Embassy in Brussels through the EU Secretariat, the other EU Directorates, and line ministries in the preparation of position papers, related documentation and reports and in the identification of *acquis* related issues.

The main tasks of the Directorate were:

- *Co-ordination and attendance of Council and Commission meetings* - involving the dissemination of meeting agendas, co-ordination of the attendance of officials at the meetings and the drawing up of Instruction Notes to be used by the Ministry officials and technical attachés participating in the meetings. Malta's position is drawn up in consultation with technical experts from both the public and the private sector.
- *Preparation of Memoranda for National Consultation* - co-ordinating the consultation process on proposals submitted by the Commission. Malta's position is drawn up in consultation with both internal and external entities. The Directorate was also responsible for presenting the proposals at the Inter-Ministerial Committee. Once approved by the Committee, the memoranda are presented to the Cabinet for endorsement, and thereafter to the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign and EU Affairs.
- *Transposition of EU Acquis* - monitoring the transposition of the EU regulations and directives into Maltese law. The Directorate monitored legislation from its proposal stage to its adoption as Maltese legislation. It also ensures that pre-infringement notices on legislative items that have not been transposed are followed up on time.
- *Replying to Questionnaires and other requests related to EU* - the co-ordination, compilation and clearance of questionnaires prepared by the European Commission and the Council of EU.

During 2006, the Directorate was involved extensively in a wide area of European Union matters pertaining mostly to education, training, employment and employee relations:

- Efficiency and Equity in Education and Training
- Vocational Education Training (VET)
- European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning
- EIT and modernisation of Europe's universities
- European Qualifications Framework
- Combating early school leaving
- Efficiency and Equity in education and training
- Modernising Higher Education in Europe
- European Quality Charter for Mobility
- Key Competences for Lifelong Learning
- Proposal to develop a European teaching aid as an introduction to the history of the arts in Europe

- Future of the European Schools *en marge* of the EU
- Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs)
- Finalisation of the text from a legal and linguistic point of view on the European Quality Charter for Mobility
- Employment guidelines
- European Globalisation Fund
- Portability of Supplementary Pensions
- PROGRESS
- Accession of Bulgaria and Rumania
- Green Paper on Labour Law
- Working Time Directive
- Decent Work
- Demography
- Employment in rural areas
- Equal treatment
- Flexicurity
- Free movement of workers
- People furthest from the labour market
- Better Understanding and Knowledge of Youth
- Youth In Action Programme (2007-2013)
- Implementing common objectives for participation by young people with a view of promoting their active European Citizenship

Senior Programming Office

Assumed the responsibility of a Senior Programming Office - SPO to co-ordinate with the National Authorising Officer/Paying Authority and the Implementing Authority with regard to EU Pre-accession funds and projects. Cash flow and budgetary reports on a quarterly basis are sent to National Authorising Officer.

National Authority/National Agency

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment assumed the role and responsibilities of the National Authority while the European Union Programmes Unit (EUPU) became the National Agency responsible for the running and administration of the Education Programmes, namely Socrates, YOUTH and Leonardo da Vinci.

The National Authority is responsible for determining the national general policies and strategies, approving the National Agency's (EUPU) work programme, ensuring effective financial and administrative implementation and monitoring of the Programmes by the EUPU, as provided for in the EU Provisions.

Pre-accession Funds (Framework Agreements; Technical Assistance) Structural Funds (ESF, ERDF) 2004-2006

Community Programmes, Transition Facility, INTERREG, V Italian Protocol

- Providing technical assistance to beneficiaries and intra/inter-ministerial co-ordination and consultation;
- Co-ordinating with the Planning & Priorities Co-ordination Division, the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity and the Ministry of Finance/Paying Authority on the Single Programming Document documentation and project submission;
- Attending conferences, seminars and training sessions to keep on updating the Directorate with the latest information and to become more familiar with the provisions of the Manual of Procedures, particularly the

programming procedures, the contracting procedures, the Framework/Twinning programmes, the payment procedures; budgeting and reporting mechanisms, procedures for request for funds, and reporting of irregularities; Facilitating and monitoring the submission of projects under the Pre-accession Programme (Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology - Technical Assistance) and the Transition Facility Programme 2004/2005 (*Fondazzjoni Sir Temi Zammit*, the Employment & Training Corporation, the University of Malta, in the areas of translation and interpretation, and the Occupational Health and Safety Authority/Department of Industrial and Employment Relations);

European Social Funds Projects including projects submitted by:

- the Education Division; ICT Training Programme, Pedagogical Training for Non-Formal Adult Education, Training teachers for Higher Level Roles of Special Educational Co-ordinators;
- the Foundation for Educational Services: Training Workers for Management Roles in the Context of School as Community Learning Centres;
- the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology: Foundation Training Programme for Adults with no Formal Qualifications, Preservation of Traditional Maltese Crafts, Re-training and Re-skilling of Workers for Electronics Industry, Re-training and Re-skilling of Workers for Engineering Industry, Re-training and Re-skilling of Workers for Building and Construction Industry; Technology Skills for Women Returning to the Workforce;
- the Employment and Training Corporation: Training and Employment Exposure, Literacy Programme, Employment Scheme for Persons with Disability, Childcare Programme, the setting up of a specialised Vocational Guidance and Counselling Unit at ETC; and
- the Malta Council for Science and Technology: In-House Research Capacity.

MARIO BUTTIGIEG

Director (EU and International Affairs)

Directorate of Policy Development and Programme Implementation

The Directorate for Policy Development and Programme Implementation (DPDPI) within the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment was set up in February, 2006 with the remit of initiating, developing and co-ordinating the formulation of policies with relevance to issues that fall under the responsibility of the Ministry. The Directorate also develops strategies and change management programme in relation to the Ministry's targets and objectives.

Setting up of Directorate

The initial part of 2006 was dedicated to the administrative setting up of the DPDPI. Training of support staff was given emphasis in 2006. In the first months of operation, an analytical exercise of posts that have been advertised across the public sector and public service have been analysed and evaluated in order to become accustomed with the type of posts and role descriptions that are being advertised. This exercise will serve as a basis to develop position descriptions within the Directorate.

Budget Measure Status

The PDPI directorate is the Ministry's contact with regard to budget measures status. The Budget Measures Monitoring Reporting System set up by the Office of the Prime Minister is being updated regularly by DPDPI. The PDPI directorate is regularly in contact with project leaders and ensures that updates are given so as to ensure that budget measures are on track.

National Reform Programme

The PDPI, apart from being MEYE's contact point for budget measures reporting, is also the contact point with regard to the National Reform Programme. The Directorate is also a focal point for NSRF projects. Involvement in these three processes gives this Office the possibility of co-ordinating and ensuring synergy between local funded projects and those funded by the EU.

ESF and ERDF

In the first year of operation of this Directorate, there has been regular and constant involvement in the proposals for ERDF and ESF funding. The PDPI Directorate itself has put forward a number of projects with regard to ESF covering areas such as inclusion, career guidance, early intervention programmes and policy development.

The PDPI Directorate was one of the pillars within MEYE that presented a proposal document to PPCD with regard to MEYE's suggested projects. Once approval is obtained, the implementation of such projects for 2007-2008 can initiate.

Policy Development

All policy documents co-ordinated by the PDPI involve a process of consultation with stakeholders during the development of the policy and also include a consultation period once the policy is published. All policies are placed on the Ministry's website and the general public is invited to give feedback and

responses are also given to this feedback. In the development of policies, all working groups were also specifically directed to consider the Gozo perspective. This has been especially beneficial in the policy related to career guidance that has just been presented in draft format for ministerial approval. The policy documents published so far are:

- For All Children To Succeed (2005)
- State Higher Education Funding (2004)
- The Inclusive and Special Education Review Report (2005)
- National Commission for Higher Education (2005)
- School Attendance Improvement Report (2005)
- MATSEC: Strengthening the National Examination System (2005)
- Early Childhood Education and Care Report (2006)

Other policies in process of publication are: Career Guidance; Adult Basic Skills; and Lifelong Learning.

Education Act

The first six months of 2006 were dedicated to finalising the process to review the Education Act and put forward amendments. The PDPI Directorate has been heavily involved in this process. Whilst reviewing the Education Act and giving legal basis to proposals put forward in the document For All Children To Succeed (June, 2005), the exercise also involved putting forward mechanisms to create more efficiency and effectiveness, such as the distinction between the regulatory and service provider role of the two directorates. Clear role distinction will guarantee not solely more focus on specific tasks, but work towards quicker and better solutions to situations and challenges.

Education Reform – For All Children to Succeed

In the period stipulated, the main objective for this target to be reached was the publication of the amendments to the Education Act (1988). This required intensive work on formulating amendments in accordance to the policy document For All Children to Succeed.

The PDPI has also been responsible for keeping close contact to the eight College Co-ordinators working on the pilot project of the education reform. This work involved regular meetings, support and guidance so as to keep the reform on track, learn from experience and make the necessary arrangements for solutions to be found. Regular meetings are held internally so as to plan out the following phase of the pilot project, which includes the introduction of more colleges. Regular meetings are held between FTS and this Directorate with regard to the synergising of the reform with the building of schools.

The PDPI Directorate also co-ordinated the basic skills assessment process in three colleges (Cottonera, Gozo and St Benedict's). As a result of this exercise, students will be allocated in classes according to their ability and receive educational programmes that will help them develop to their full potential.

Now that the amendments have been enacted, the process can start to concretely evolve the Education Division into two directorates; the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education and the Directorate for Educational Services. Internal meetings are already being held so as to gather feedback about the most effective way to facilitate this process.

Higher Education

As a member of the National Commission for Higher Education, feedback and suggestions were made to the Minister with regard to the legislation of the Commission.

The Director, PDPI is the Ministry representative on Libyan-Maltese Joint Working Group on Higher Education.

Inclusive and Special Education

Following the publication of the Inclusive and Special Education Report, (Spiteri, 2005) and the selection of a network co-ordinator, the PDPI Directorate has followed closely, supported and facilitated the implementation of recommendations made in the report. Such recommendations implemented include:

- inclusive and special education sectors within the Education Division brought under the same leadership;
- appointment of a Special School Network co-ordinator who is also charged with implementing the Spiteri report;
- setting up of an inclusive and special education administration centre bringing under one roof the management team as well as the early intervention team, peripatetic teachers and statementing moderating panel. This will ensure greater efficiency and monitoring of services;
- initiation of the process to transform special schools to resource centres;
- Heads of Special Schools regularly meeting and working together within the Council of Heads;
- a ten-week induction course for untrained facilitators. Out of the approximately 600 untrained facilitators, 514 have applied for this course voluntarily and the course will be provided over the next two years. Another 100 untrained facilitators are currently reading for a diploma and another 350 already have acquired the diploma. Another diploma course organised by the University of Malta will start next October.
- review of call for applications for supply kindergarten assistants, using new nomenclature, that of, supply learning support assistants;
- a research exercise analysing aspirations of Form V students with a disability and their plans for next year, so as to be able to plan better for post-secondary education. This exercise focused on those students who in all probability will benefit most from joining mainstream post-secondary institutions;
- discussions with MCAST to draw up an inclusion policy;
- purchase of service from Ghaqda Persuni Neqsin mis-Smigh for the provision of sign language interpreters;
- purchase of service for nurses in special schools;
- co-ordinator working directly on a limited number of cases that have proved to be difficult over the years and co-ordinating services needed to give the child their educational entitlement;
- more monitoring of IEPs in schools;
- external call of applications for BEd graduates to teach in special education sector;
- in-service training for teachers on teaching for diversity;
- amendments made to Education Act in accordance to recommendations of this report.

Recommendations in Process:

- Negotiations with University of Birmingham and the University of Leicester to train 40 specialists in special education sector (autism, hearing impaired, visual impaired, profound and multiple learning difficulties and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties).
- In 2007 a post-graduate course for specialists in specific learning difficulties (dyslexia) will be held.
- Bid for ESF funding for early intervention programmes, screening, and increase in capacity and training of psycho-social services.
- Draft memo to Minister, Permanent Secretary and Director General regarding the issue of financial support to NGOs. Initial phase of data collection in this matter has been initiated so as to be able to advise Government on possible ways forward.
- Evaluating the situation with regard to dyslexia and special examination arrangements.
- An initial document has just been presented to the Minister of Education, Youth and Employment, Permanent Secretary (MEYE), Director General, Education and Director, Policy Development and

Programme Implementation with regard to the rationale and issues to be considered in the setting up of a provision for post-secondary education for students with special needs. Initial analysis seems to indicate that a number of students attending special schools can benefit for a period of time from attending a further education set up that focuses mainly on the transition from school to work. This document explores the possibility of offering a vocational educational programme between the ages of 16 and 19. Another aspect of the report is the in depth analysis evaluating the advantages and disadvantages for students with severe disabilities being offered post-secondary educational provision in special schools.

National Commission for Higher Education (2005)

Following the setting up of an interim Commission, the official National Commission for Higher Education has been set up. Director, DPDPI is a commissioner on such commission that advises Government on issues related to Higher Education.

School Attendance Improvement Report (2005)

This document is currently being prepared for implementation. Terms of reference for a person to drive implementation are being drafted and discussed.

MATSEC: Strengthening the National Examination System (2005)

An analysis has been carried out to reflect on the implications of the implementation of the recommendations.

Early Childhood Education and Care

The Early Childhood Education and Care Policy document was published in June 2006 and during the latter part of 2006 this Directorate was receiving feedback from the general public. The DPDPI is working on a proposal for an implementation plan for the recommendations made. It has also worked with the Ministry for Family and Social Solidarity on the recent publication of Child Care Standards.

Learning Support Zones and Learning Support Centres

A draft policy regarding emotional and behavioural difficulties has been presented. Amongst several strategies proposed, the document recommends the setting up of learning support zones within school and out of school learning support centres. Expert feedback has been received and analysed. Implementation has now been initiated with the launch of a learning support zone and a learning support centre.

Customer Care

In the first stages of this research exercise, a literary review of customer care services, their aims and objectives and strategy has been carried out. Anecdotal experiences of stakeholders, staff, students and parents have been documented. Amendments to the Education Act that passed through Parliament in July 2006 also include for the provision of such services. The second phase now includes an implementation exercise.

Inter-Ministerial Collaboration

Regular meetings were held with ministries working on related areas of operation, such as childcare, mental health problems, challenging behaviour and environmental issues. A number of inter-ministerial forums have been set up and the PDPI Directorate represents MEYE on these fora.

EU Affairs

Ongoing discussions were held with EU the Affairs Directorate so as to ensure synergy between national and international policy direction. A number of EU policy documents have been regularly forwarded for feedback from the PDPI directorate. During the first few months of operation, the PDPI directorate has given its contribution to a variety of EU discussion papers, meeting notes and speaking notes for the Minister and/or his representative.

The PDPI directorate is represented by its Director in the Education and Training Working Group (EU working group) and also on High Level Group on Education.

Regular meetings have been held with the Permanent Secretary so as to ensure coherence of action and regular updating of processes being focused upon. The setting up of the Education Reform Steering Group, chaired by the Minister of Education, Youth and Employment has also enhanced synergy between sectors.

French Language Course

The MEYE and the French Embassy embarked on an initiative to offer French language classes to officials of MEYE. The PDPI Directorate was responsible for the organisation that was well received by officials.

Malta Government Scholarship Scheme

The PDPI was responsible for the administration of Lm200,000 allocated by Government for postgraduate scholarships in 2006 - 35 students received financial support for Masters and Doctorate programmes.

Commonwealth Scholarships

The DPDPI was once again responsible for the administration of the Commonwealth Scholarships. A number of candidates have been nominated for Masters and Doctorate studies in the United Kingdom.

Contacts With Other MEYE Entities

- *Employment and Industrial Relations*: Regular collaboration has been kept with ETC, especially with regard to NSRF, NRP and budget measure status reports. PDPI directorate was regularly in contact with DIER with regard to budget measures and NRP measures.
- *Libraries*: Regular meetings with various stakeholders in the field are being held with the PDPI directorate. Work has been carried out to outline an updated role description of a school or college librarian.
- *Sports*: Regular contact has been kept with the Kunsill Malti Għall-Isport. During 2006, work has been carried out by DPDPI in co-ordinating the drafting of a policy for use of sports facilities during and after school hours. This draft will now be presented for approval to the Minister.

Youth

Following the Commonwealth Youth Forum, where DPDPI was represented on the organising committee, a follow up working group was initiated in this past year. In this working group issues relevant to youth policy were discussed.

MICHELINE SCIBERRAS

Director (Policy Development & Programme Implementation)

Ministry for Tourism and Culture

Tourism

The aim of the Department of Tourism is to offer support and advice on issues related to human resource management, finance and administration to the Ministry for Tourism and Culture, the Permanent Secretary and other departments and entities falling under the Ministry. It also supports the Ministry in promoting the importance of Tourism to the national economy at all community levels and the public sector.

To achieve these objectives, the Department follows policy guidelines issued by the Ministry for Tourism and Culture and directives issued by the central administration.

CORPORATE SERVICES

The Corporate Services of the Department were involved in the co-ordination and preparation of the Business and Financial Plans as well as the Draft Estimates for the whole Ministry. Furthermore, it was also responsible for the co-ordination of the Revised Estimates process.

The Department provided the required support services to the Ministry's Secretariat, the Permanent Secretary's Office, and the EU Affairs, Policy Development and Programme Implementation Directorate in the procurement of goods and services.

Throughout the year, the Department dealt with, amongst other issues, the compilation of information in connection with the drafting of replies to Parliamentary Questions, the co-ordination of replies to requests for information requested from the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, and the preparation of documents related to travel abroad on official business for all ministry officials.

The Human Resources branch of the Department provided support services to the Ministry and other sections in the field of human resource management and development. The section provided the necessary support to the Permanent Secretary in the recruitment procedures related to the position of Head of Media Desk. The section was also involved with the preparations required for the introduction of a palm reader both in the Department as well as the Ministry. The Human Resources section was also responsible for the provision of data and other information required by the central government as well as identifying and nominating officers for selected training programmes as organised by the SDO in various topics. One officer is currently following a DPA course at the University of Malta.

The Department continued with the processing of requests for special leave with pay for cultural activities abroad, in compliance with the Public Service Management Code. The Department also maintained the records of all appointments to various boards and committees falling under the Ministry's responsibility. It ensured that the Minister was informed in a timely manner of the expiry of the terms of office of these boards and committees.

The events section during the year under review successfully undertook the production of major events such as the International Fireworks Festival, the Malta Historic Cities Festival, the Military Tattoo as well as the In Guardia Allarme parades that take place throughout the year in Fort St Elmo.

During 2006, the Department undertook the installation of a photovoltaic system within the Ministry building. Waste separation bins were also purchased and have been installed both at the Ministry as well as the Department.

During the year, the service of a private medical firm was again made use of consistently to check on the possibility of abuses by officers who reported sick.

The Registry section, which caters also for the requirements of the Minister's Secretariat and the Permanent Secretary's Office, continued to maintain all active files and open new files as required.

During the year, registry personnel undertook a clean-up exercise in collaboration with the National Archives that resulted in various files being sent to Santu Spirtu for preservation. The exercise created much needed space in the Registry.

EU AFFAIRS AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

Responsibilities

This directorate is responsible to act as the Ministry's focal point and guide on EU related affairs and as the fulcrum in the development of Government's policies in respect of tourism, culture and audiovisuals. The directorate is working on EU Council meetings, the accompanying tasks of examining council documentation, consulting stakeholders, and drafting Malta positions. The main committees which the directorate focuses its efforts upon are the Cultural Affairs Committee, the Media Management Committee, the Contact Committee on the TV without Frontiers Directive, the Audiovisual Working Party and the Tourism Advisory Committee. It is also focusing its efforts on EU Structural Funds, of both the 2004-2006 and 2007-2013 programming periods and on direct EU Funding programmes which are of relevance for tourism and culture. The directorate is also responsible for the development of Government's policy on tourism, culture and audiovisuals. It represents the Ministry and the Malta Tourism Authority in a number of fora including the National Commission for Sustainable Development.

EU Structural Funds Projects

Programming Period 2004 - 2006

Four projects under the EU's Structural Funds are being implemented by the entities falling under the remit of the Ministry which is responsible for the monitoring of such projects. The four projects are:

- Support for tourism enterprises: a grant scheme which provides 60% funding of eligible expenditure. The directorate, as part of its MTA remit, is managing the scheme for tourism enterprises.
- Haġar Qim/Mnajdra Temples Conservation Project, implemented by Heritage Malta.
- Tourism product improvements: Crucifix Hill and Howard Gardens, implemented by MTA.
- Training and Support Services Tourism programme, implemented by MTA.

The total project value of these projects is Euro 7.4 million. The directorate actively participates in the Structural Funds Monitoring Committee and supports the Permanent Secretary in chairing the Sectoral Monitoring Sub-committee for Tourism and Enterprise.

Programming Period 2007 - 2013

After a consultation process, carried out during 2005, among tourism stakeholders, cultural entities, organisations and representatives of civil society, preparatory work for possible projects that could be submitted for funding through the Structural Funds of the next programming period, 2007-2013 have started. These projects will range from schemes aimed at achieving competitiveness, to cultural projects, to product improvement projects. The Ministry has played a very active part in the National Reform Programme (NRP) process leading to the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF).

Other EU Funding

Over the past months the Ministry or its entities have prepared a number of applications to obtain funding from the EU for its projects. The directorate has also published a direct funding programmes guide for dissemination among tourism and cultural organisations.

Cultural Contact Point (CCP)

The CCP was incorporated within this Ministry earlier on in 2005. The role of the CCP is to provide information on the EU's Culture programme. The Cultural Contact Points facilitate the participation in the programme for the widest number of cultural professionals and operators. This is mainly done by:

- promoting the Culture programme;
- providing citizens with information on the Culture programme;
- providing consistent contact with the various institutions giving support to the cultural sector in Malta, contributing to complementarity between actions of the Culture 2000 and national support measures;
- providing information to potential candidates for financial support under the Community cultural mechanisms;
- widely distributing the calls for applications, as well as any other document intended for the cultural sector, emanating from the Directorate-General for Education and Culture of the Commission;
- giving technical assistance to the candidates on the presentation of applications under the Culture programme and if required, to direct them in the choice of any other more suitable mechanism to support their project;
- disseminating the results of finalised projects (promotion on national/regional level) of the trans-national co-operation.

Media Desk

In 2005, a Media Desk was set up within this directorate. The Media Desk is responsible for the promotion and for information dissemination of the EU's Media Programme, with the target audience being the audiovisual sector in Malta. This programme aims at supporting the European audiovisual sector. Its objective is to strengthen the competitiveness of the European film, TV and new media industries, increase international circulation of European audiovisual products and preserve and enhance European cultural diversity.

Culture Contact Point and Media Desk

During 2006 a number of initiatives were undertaken by both the Culture Contact Point (CCP) and the Media Desk. These included information dissemination on a one-to-one basis to cultural and audiovisual players, organisation of a number of information seminars and meetings such as the Seminar on Funding for the Culture sector which included workshops on provision of information with regard to the proposals for Structural Funds Schemes, the Audiovisual sector and the European Cultural Foundation, updating the database of contacts for information dissemination purposes, the creation of promotional material such as pencils, diaries, calendars and folders. Further initiatives include a publication on the Media Programme and a guide to Maltese producers as a means of promotion overseas. The CCP and the Media Desk also participated with a stand in the 'Europe Close to You' Fair in Valletta, spread over three days and organised jointly by the European Commission and European Parliament representations in Malta. Towards the end of 2006, the CCP and the Media Desk submitted a work plan to the Commission to obtain an operational grant for each of the desks.

Legislative and Non-Legislative Proposals

The directorate is responsible for screening EU legislation and proposals relating to or affecting tourism, culture and audiovisuals which are discussed with the Council structures. The directorate has drafted

memos, instruction notes and briefing notes for these meetings. Furthermore, given the nature of tourism, the directorate often provides the Ministry's position and views on proposals affecting other areas such as competitiveness, environment, employment, financial perspectives and the internal market.

During 2006, members of the directorate met with members of the Commission on a number of occasions. The aim of these meetings was to build contacts within the relevant Directorate Generals (DGs), namely within the Tourism Unit within DG Enterprise, the Head of Culture, and members of DG Regio.

Euro Changeover

The directorate is co-ordinating matters relating to the euro changeover. During 2006 it represented the Ministry on the Public Sector Sectoral Committee and co-ordinated efforts that will be leading to the euro changeover within the public entities relating to tourism and culture.

Academy of Music

The pre-budget document makes reference to the setting up of an Academy of Music. A Steering Committee was appointed to direct the setting up of the Academy of Music. An Executive Committee, composed of members of the directorate, was also set up to develop the policy, terms of reference, proposed budget and organisational structure of the Academy of Music. A Cabinet Memo was drafted.

Policy Development

Culture Policy

Basing on previous consultation processes, the drafting of a culture policy took place in 2005 and 2006 and was discussed with all relevant stakeholders in 2006. This policy is aimed at setting the objectives for and parameters within which Malta's cultural heritage and its living culture should be developed and managed.

Culture Heritage Strategy

The cultural heritage strategy was presented during the National Cultural Heritage Forum which was organised on 2 November 2006. The Ministry and the Superintendence for Cultural Heritage worked on this strategy together with a number of culture stakeholders who provided their support during the consultation period.

National Tourism Policy

Drafting of the National Tourism Policy has been finalised after a consultation period with all tourism stakeholders. The aim of this policy is to present the guiding principles upon which decisions, actions and other matters relating to tourism in Malta are to be based and the framework within which Malta's tourism activity is to be formulated in the coming five years.

The tourism policy recognises the issues and challenges facing our country as a destination, which operates and competes within the international and local scenario. It presents a number of policy responses together with a number of goals and tasks which Government is committed to deliver within the next five years, 2007 – 2011.

National Tourism Plan

This document aims at mapping out how the policy is to be implemented through the various approaches and actions to be undertaken by the various stakeholders, but particularly by ministries, government entities and the private sector. This document specifies the actions that are to be implemented within the next five

years, 2007 – 2011, to address the fourteen issues, specified in the tourism policy, facing our country as a destination.

Audiovisual Policy

Research on the audiovisual sector commenced at the end of 2005. This research will assist the Ministry in formulating an audiovisual policy.

Restructuring

The Directorate was also involved in MTA's restructuring process, particularly in the phase of designing the organisation chart of MTA, in identifying the functions of each directorate and in formulating the Cabinet Memo on MTA's restructuring.

Low cost airlines

The Directorate also participated in the discussions and in the formulation of the Ministry's position on low cost airlines. It assessed the different options available and assisted the Permanent Secretary in the preparation of a Cabinet Memo on the issue of low cost carriers.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT UNIT

During 2006 the Information Management Unit (IMU) within the Ministry for Tourism and Culture was responsible for the provision of Information Management services and related technological infrastructure to provide the necessary support for the Ministry, the Department of Tourism, the Malta Tourism Authority, Heritage Malta and the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage. An outline of the activities performed by the IMU follows.

E-tourism portal

One of the significant projects in which the IMU was deeply involved was the development of the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) e-tourism portal. For the last 5 years MTA has been actively promoting Malta through its very successful www.visitmalta.com website which was accessed by more than 11,000 daily visitors. Notwithstanding the success of the www.visitmalta.com website, its primary objective has always been that of the so-called 'informational website'. Due to recent developments in the travel industry it was decided to raise the level of the website to an online booking portal to serve as a prominent gateway to an experience on this island. The e-tourism portal will include an online booking channel that incorporates secure payment-transaction facilities, as well as enhanced tourist information, designed to satisfy the particular demands of the visitor planning a holiday in Malta. The portal will also act as a catalyst to bring together as many local service providers as possible. Development work has already started on this initiative and discussions with a number of local stakeholders have already taken place. The portal will be officially launched in January 2007. Additional functionality will be added over the following months in order to maintain a dynamic portal and enhance its overall capabilities.

ICT Business Plan

In the third quarter of 2006, work on the formulation of the Business Plan for 2007 was commenced. A number of meetings were set up with the Directors and Heads of the entities that fall within the remit of the Ministry. Following feedback gathered from the meetings, the ICT Budget Plan for 2007 was prepared and was presented to the Ministry for Investment, Industry and Information Technology.

MITTS Service Level Agreements

The IMU has negotiated and signed a services contract with MITTS Ltd for support and maintenance for 2006. This year, due to the provision of a core services contract across government, the services that were included have been drastically reduced, resulting in lower direct costs on the Ministry's ICT budget. Apart from the Ministry, the services contract also catered for the needs of the Department of Tourism, Heritage Malta and the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage.

Euro Changeover

After identifying all the IT systems that will be impacted by the euro changeover, project leaders for each entity were selected. Information sessions were organised and the necessary work commenced to bring all the IT systems within the Ministry and its entities in line with the recommendations of the NECC especially vis-à-vis the implementation of dual display in early 2007. The IMU has a co-ordinating and monitoring role in the whole process related to the euro changeover of IT systems.

Consolidation

As part of the ongoing ICT consolidation exercise, the IMU has migrated several ICT services within the Malta Tourism Authority on to the government IT infrastructure. These included mainly the migration of e-mail and Internet services. The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage was also fully consolidated with MITTS during 2006 and the old museums server was decommissioned.

Telephony

During the year under review the telephony system within Auberge d'Italie was upgraded to support VoIP and initiate the consolidation into one system of four different PABXs. These include the PABXs at the Ministry, the Malta Tourism Authority, the Department of Tourism and the MTA's Regulatory Unit at Spinola Palace.

Web

A completely new section entitled Audio Visual Media has been added to the Ministry website www.tourismandculture.gov.mt. Most development was also carried out on a new web portal to promote culture which will be launched in early 2007.

Training

The IMU co-ordinated a training programme for all MTA employees on the use of Microsoft Outlook which was delivered in conjunction with the migration of MTA's e-mail system on to the government platform.

Staff within the IMU also attended a number of training workshops in the following areas: Information Security and Web technologies including HTML, JavaScript, and Net.

MTA Contribution System on-line

A project to integrate the payment of tourist establishment licences and contributions at the MTA was commenced in mid 2005. The MTA collects licences on behalf of Government and a contribution for marketing the Maltese Islands from tourist service providers. The scope of the project was to put the payment of contributions on-line along with the rest of the licensing system to offer a one-stop-shop concept to the Authority's customers. During 2006 this process was concluded to bring all contributions for which the MTA is directly responsible into one consolidated online system. Meanwhile the necessary system analysis was carried out with MITTS Ltd so that the car registration system VERA owned by the

ADT will be modified to cater for the collection of contribution fees due to MTA from the owners of K and Y plate vehicles.

Heritage Malta ICT Consolidation

The scope of this project which was started in 2005 was to consolidate the IT infrastructure for Heritage Malta and subsequently connect all remote museum sites to head office and the Magnet. During 2006 a further five heritage sites were connected, which included the National War Museum, Tarxien Temples, St Paul's Catacombs, the Roman Domus and the Museum of National History, thus bringing the total number of connected sites to 12. The rest of the remaining sites will be connected in 2007. Turnstiles are also being installed at a number of sites to put online the automated ticketing system.

Data Protection

The IMU ensures that the Ministry is compliant with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2001. During 2006, a data protection policy for the Department of Tourism was formulated and approved by the OPM Data Protection Team. The Information Management Officer currently is acting also as the Data Protection Officer and represents the Ministry on the Data Protection Officer Forums.

NISCO

Through the IMU, the Ministry participated regularly in the meetings organised by National Information Society Advisory Council (NISCO) which the Ministry for Investment, Industry and Information Technology convenes on a quarterly basis each year.

MEDINA

During 2006, the Ministry co-ordinated the technical, financial and editorial issues related to the Malta side of the Medina project. The Medina Project (Mediterranean by Internet Access) is a project funded by the European Commission and involves a partnership composed of 14 countries namely Austria, Belgium, France, Greece, Italy, Algeria, Cyprus, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria and Tunisia. The project was being co-ordinated by Italy's Mediterranean Institute (IMED) and funded by the EU under the Eumedis Programme. The scope of the project was to develop a portal to promote Cultural Tourism in the Mediterranean region. The project was successfully concluded in June 2006.

The portal is now accessible on the following URL: <http://www.medinaproject.net/portal>.

WORLD TOURISM ORGANISATION

Malta is a full member of the UNWTO based in Madrid and is active in a number of areas of activity relating to this organisation.

To ensure that Malta derives maximum benefit from its members of UNWTO, a core team comprising of Malta's Permanent Representative, assisted by a Deputy Permanent Representative from the Department of Tourism and an MTA official was set up. This core team met regularly to review issues and developments and take timely actions, where necessary, on matters related to Malta membership.

During 2006 Malta participated very actively in a number of areas with the aim of further enhancing and increasing the opportunities arising from this relationship. In March 2006 a Maltese delegation, comprising of Malta's Deputy Permanent Representative to UNWTO and the Malta Tourism Authority's Head of Research and Business Planning spent two days at UNWTO Head Quarters in Madrid as guests of the UNWTO's Commission for Europe, so as to familiarise themselves further with the organisation workings. Meetings were held with all departments of the organisation. As a direct result of this visit, Malta benefited

from the expertise of a human resources expert who conducted a study of the human resource needs for the tourism industry in Malta identifying areas of weakness. The whole study was funded by the UNWTO.

In April 2006 Malta actively participated in the UNWTO Commission for Europe meeting in Kazakhstan, during which event the Deputy Permanent Representative was invited to present a paper on the principles of carrying capacity of tourism destinations with specific reference to Malta. Later during the year the Malta Tourism Authority benefited from the training practicum organised by UNWTO by sending a Research Executive to the training event in Spain.

Ongoing exchange with UNWTO also involved participation in a wide number of surveys relating to data exchange and members' benchmarking.

OIL POLLUTION RESPONSE MODULE (OPRM)

The Oil Pollution Response Module (OPRM), within the Ministry for Tourism and Culture endeavours to protect Malta's coastline from pollution by hydrocarbons and other chemicals.

During 2006, the Oil Pollution Response Module dealt with 18 cases of oil spillages and collected approximately 69 tons of oil from the sea mostly from port areas. The Unit is aware that the oil had originated not only from ships, but also from other land-based sources, and that most accidents happen during bunkering operations.

The module had to intervene on two major operations of massive amounts of oil which threatened the Maltese Islands. On 17 January 2006 the Module received a report from the Operations Centre, Luqa, that a massive oil spill had been sighted by an Air Malta pilot off the north coast of Gozo. The case was reported by this Unit to the Civil Protection Department and investigations were carried out. The spill turned out to be seaweed mixed with light diesel oil which covered a vast area and was constantly monitored.

Another reported case involved collaboration with the Malta Maritime Authority, the Drainage Department and the Environment Department, due to the chronic oil spill at Menqa, Marsa. Marsa was closely monitored by cameras placed by the Malta Maritime Authority. The Oil Pollution Response Module personnel cleaned up the debris and the oil that was floating around the area manually.

The Unit, as in the past, remained in constant contact with private aeroplanes, fishing boats and ships in the event of oil being sighted in territorial waters.

On 18 January, the San Lucian Oil Company at Birżebbuġia reported the presence of around 300 litres of oil next to the ship before they started bunkering. Operation personnel from this Unit were dispatched and the oil was cleared by means of an unknown source of absorbents.

Oil Spills 2006 Chart that was dealt by Oil Pollution Response Module				
Date	Place	Type	Qty	Measures Taken
17.01.06	North of Gozo	Diesel oil & sea weed	55 m ³	Surveillance and monitoring
18.01.06	San Lucjan	Light fuel oil	300 lts	Pads and manual clean up
21.01.06	Menqa Marsa jetty slip way	Heavy fuel oil	700 lts	Mechanical & manual clean up
04.02.06	Pembroke Osmosis Plant	Light fuel oil	250 m ²	Monitoring
11.02.06	Pieta`	Debris & light fuel oil	200 m ²	Energy waves MV Monka & M.M.A. 1 Vessel
04.03.06	Lab Wharf and port area	Light & heavy diesel	250 lts	Manual clean up & absorbents
05.03.06	Lab Wharf and port area	Light & heavy fuel oil	200 lts	Manual clean up carried out from previous day
08.03.06	Menqa Marsa	Heavy fuel & light diesel oil	200 lts	Deployment of boom and manual clean up
19.03.06	Sirens St Paul's Bay	Reported of fuel oil	500 m ³	MV Monka and monitoring

21 - 23.03.06	Pieta` Msida	Diesel oil	300 lts	Mechanical & manual clean up 2 sunken vessels
31.03.06	Regata Club Marsa	Heavy oil	400 lts	Manual clean up
10.05.06	Deep water quay 4	Chocolate mouse oil	150 lts	Manual clean up
28.05.06	Menqa area inshore pollution	Fuel oil	¾ ton	Mechanical & manual clean up
7 - 11.09.06	Menqa Oil Pollution	Heavy oil	7 ton	Mechanical and manual clean up and absorbent clean up
23.09.06	Oil spill Pembroke	Vehicle burnt oil	150 lts	Mechanical & manual clean up
10.10.06	M`Scala Jerma Palace	Grounding of Mistra vessel	No oil spilled	Standby
24.11.06	Menqa Marsa	Light fuel oil	800 lts	Absorbent material
17.12.06	Menqa diesel spill	Light fuel oil	250 lts	Absorbent material

For the second year running, on 7 July, this Module was directed by the Ministry for Tourism and Culture to intervene in pumping the excessive amount of stagnant water at Ghar id-Dud, Sliema which had originated from the outlets of a retaining wall. This operation was carried out by means of two 1,000 litre bowsers with megator pumps and took 3 to 4 hours of continuous pumping.

Another responsibility of the Module is that of collecting debris and flotsam from the sea on a daily basis. This year the Module's vessel MV Ambjent collected approximately 32 tons of debris whilst on its daily routine within the Grand Harbour, Sliema and the Marsascala area.

The Module also co-ordinates weekly underwater clean-ups with the participation of the various diving schools as an educational programme. Moreover, as in previous years, this summer, under the direction of the Ministry for Tourism and Culture, the Oil Pollution Response Module has decided to organise training courses instead of its major annual Clean Up the Seas Campaign. This involved three events, each in a different strategic locality, being Bugibba, Mellieħa, Sliema – St Julians, whereby the OPRM, the Malta Maritime Authority, the Civil Protection Department, the Beach Cleaning Section and a foreign company by the name of Alpha Briggs participated voluntarily. The Armed Forces of Malta and the Malta Police also assisted the Module during their training. The training consisted of the deployment and retrieving of booms, public order, beach protection, cleaning and communication between entities.

The Module also participates annually in the Clean Up the World Campaign, which is organised by the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment, in conjunction with the Malta Environment and Planning Authority and the local councils.

The three vessels of the Module, namely MV Monka, the MV Ambjent and the MV Pupilla, regularly undergo routine repairs. This year the MV Monka had its annual services, antifouling and its zinc anodes replaced. The MV Ambjent suffered engine trouble, and developed problems in its hydraulic arm, so it was out of action until repair works were carried out and completed.

BEACH CLEANING SECTION

The main task of the Beach Cleaning Section of the Department of Tourism is the upkeep of the sandy, rocky beaches and shores in the island. Presently the work force of the Beach Cleaning Section is organised into three areas, North, Central and South, a back-up group and a group for maintenance duties.

North	17 employees
Central	30 employees
South	25 employees
Back-up	11 employees
Workshop	9 employees

During the summer period, cleaning and maintenance of beaches was carried out throughout the week, including Saturdays and Sundays, to ensure a welcoming environment. In summer work starts very early

in the morning to ensure bathers find a clean and healthy environment. The cleaning of the beaches consisted mainly of the removal of seaweed in the early months of the year and litter picking, emptying of litter bins and raking of the beach during the summer period.

The work schedule in the winter period consisted of the immediate removal of seaweed and other debris deposited on our beaches. This was done with the use of machinery, namely a mechanical shovel and trucks, and in certain areas, manually. All seaweed and debris that drifted ashore was removed and dumped. During the year under review nearly 5,000 truckloads of seaweed and debris amounting to 35,000 tonnes, were removed from our beaches.

Beach furniture, namely litter bins and ladders, were manufactured at this section's workshop. Tanks were cut and sprayed in different colours, and then used as litter bins. Other bins were also provided for the disposal of the remains of charcoal left over from barbeques. During the year, over 1,200 bins were made and placed on beaches and shores.

Other beach furniture manufactured at the workshop consists of ladders and railings, which facilitate access to and from the sea to bathers. During 2006 over 200 ladders and railings were made, painted and fixed on beaches where access to the sea is difficult. This furniture was removed by the end of September for the necessary maintenance and repair and will be replaced by the beginning of May 2007.

This section is also involved in the various outdoor events organised by both the Malta Tourism Authority and the Ministry for Tourism and Culture by providing support services and general cleaning duties both during and after the event.

FRANCIS ALBANI

Director (Tourism & Corporate Services)

Ministry for Competitiveness and Communications

Department of Civil Aviation

REGULATORY WORK

The objectives of the Department as a regulator are to ensure that all aviation activities are carried out safely and in conformity with international standards which Malta has to apply as a result of its membership in the EU, ICAO, ECAC, EUROCONTROL and JAA. It achieves these objectives by the following tasks: regulation of air transport services; airworthiness certification and oversight; certification of aircraft operators; licensing of aeronautical personnel; determination of international air navigation obligations; oversight of MIA plc as aerodrome services provider and of Malta Air Traffic Services Ltd. as provider of air navigation services in the Malta Flight Information Region.

As far as regulatory work is concerned, this Department issues Air Service Licences and Air Operator's Certificates to commercial air transport operators as well as licences to aircraft engineers and aircraft crew. These commercial aircraft operators include Air Malta which is the national airline, Medavia which is a company that operates charter flights mainly in Libya, European 2000 and Eurojet. In addition, safety oversight is required with regard to aerial work and as well as flight training activities carried out by two Private Pilot Licence registered facilities.

The Department is also responsible for the approval of aircraft maintenance organisations after regular inspections have been carried out on their management, procedures, equipment and staff. These organisations include the Air Malta aircraft maintenance organisation, Medavia Ltd, Aeromaritime and Lufthansa Technik (Malta). All these organisations have been granted EASA Part 145 approvals.

The Department also oversees aerodrome services and air navigation services to ensure that they are provided in accordance with international standards.

LEGISLATION

During 2006 a number of legal notices were issued to amend existing legislation or publish new ones. These included legal notices amending the Air Navigation Order 1990, the Civil Aviation (Joint Aviation Requirements) Order 1998, the Civil Aviation (Route Charges for Navigation Services) Regulations 2002, the Carriage by Air (International and Non-International Carriage) Order 2004 and the Civil Aviation Act 1972 and the new Air Navigation (Dangerous Goods) Regulations 2006 and the Civil Aviation (Provision of Air Navigation Services) Order 2006.

STAFF

In order to be able to manage effectively its regulatory mandate, the Department's regulatory division has a staff complement of ten full-time specialists including the Director (Safety Regulation and Air Transport), three Assistant Directors, three Operations Officers, one Flight Operations Inspector, one Head of Airworthiness Inspectorate and one Airworthiness Surveyor. In addition four Flight Operations Inspectors, a lawyer and two medical officers are employed on contract on a part-time basis. One of the part-time Flight Operations Inspectors was recruited on 17 August 2006. Within the Department's regulatory division, there still remain three vacant positions in the grade of Operations Officer.

Action was taken to provide appropriate training both in Malta and abroad for the Department's professional officers so that the latter could carry out their duties more efficiently and also to keep abreast of developments in their specialised areas.

During 2006, the Department retained responsibility for staff career progression of those of its former employees now working with Malta Air Traffic Services Ltd who still enjoy government employee status.

PERSONNEL LICENSING

During 2006 the Personnel Licensing Section managed the following number of current licences issued by the Department:

- 145 JAR-FCL Airline Transport Pilot Licences (ATPL)
- 61 JAR-FCL Commercial Pilot Licences (CPL)
- 46 JAR-FCL Private Pilot Licences (PPL)
- 50 Air Traffic Controller Licences
- 56 Apron Controller Licences
- 28 Certificates of validation of foreign pilot licences including microlight pilot licences.

The Personnel Licensing section is responsible for the issue of licences and certificates of validation to private and professional pilots in accordance with the standards of the Joint Aviation Authorities (JAA). It is responsible jointly with the Flight Operations Inspectorate section for the approval of training courses, Flight Training Organisations and Type Training Organisations for flight crew.

The Personnel Licensing Section is also responsible for the issue of air traffic controller licences in accordance with the standards of EUROCONTROL and for the issue of apron controller licences. It is also jointly responsible with the Air Navigation Services Section to approve the training and competency scheme of the local Air Navigation Service Provider.

The Head of the Personnel Licensing section participated in the JAA Licensing Team meetings.

FLIGHT OPERATIONS INSPECTORATE

The Flight Operations Inspectorate carried out its periodic inspection programme on the existing operators. The programme included inspections at the operator's base, at outstations and in flight. There are four operators currently certified for commercial air transport operations and two applications have been received during the period under review for the issuance of an Air Operator Certificate.

Other tasks included the approval of simulators and the checking of training Captains for the issue of simulator instructor and examiner authorisations. Proficiency Checks were also carried out on the Inspectorate flying staff to ensure currency of flying skills. In association with the Airworthiness Inspectorate, ramp inspections on ten aircraft of foreign airlines were carried out in Malta as part of the Safety Assessment of Foreign Aircraft inspection programme of the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC).

A number of Operating Standards Circulars were published by the Inspectorate throughout the period under review containing information and guidance to aircraft operators.

The Inspectorate participated in the JAA Operations Sectoral Team meetings and also represented the DCA at the Air Safety Committee established by European Commission Regulation (EC) 3922/1991.

AIRWORTHINESS INSPECTORATE

The Airworthiness Inspectorate is responsible for the issue of Certificate of Airworthiness and Permit to Fly for Maltese registered aircraft; the continuing airworthiness oversight of Maltese registered aircraft; the approval of Continuing Airworthiness Management Organisations (CAMO) in accordance with Part-M Subpart G; the approval of Part-145 aircraft maintenance organisations; the approval of Part-147 aircraft maintenance training organisations; the continuous safety oversight of Part-M CAMO's, Part-145 AMO's, Part-147 AMTO's; the issue of Part-66 aircraft maintenance licences; accomplishment of SAFA inspections on foreign registered aircraft in conjunction with the Flight Operations Inspectorate; follow-up and investigation of Mandatory Occurrence Reporting related to airworthiness and maintenance; standardisation and liaison with the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) on airworthiness standards; minor certification tasks on behalf of EASA; International Civil Aircraft Register.

During 2006, the Airworthiness Inspectorate issued four new Certificates of Airworthiness in respect of two Airbus A320, one De Havilland DHC-8 and one Cessna C172, and renewed 26 Airworthiness Review Certificates. One new Permit to Fly was issued and eight were renewed following inspection. The Airworthiness Inspectorate also converted one Part-66 AML, issued three new Part-66 AMLs and carried out two changes to Part-66 AMLs. The various approvals (Part-145, Subpart G) continuous audit programmes were updated and accomplished according to plan and followed up. Ten SAFA inspections were also accomplished during 2006. The Airworthiness Inspectorate issued several Operating Standard Circulars and updated its internal procedures and website.

Airworthiness Inspectorate staff participated in the EASA Standardisation Visit Programme as Standardisation Audit team members and attended the (EC) No. 2042/2003 Standardisation Meetings at EASA.

In November 2006, an EASA Standardisation Visit was carried out on the Airworthiness Inspectorate.

AIR NAVIGATION SERVICES

The Air Navigation Services Section was heavily involved in normal day-to-day activities such as the management of all frequencies related to aviation, the investigation of all air traffic management incidents and regulation of Malta Air Traffic Services (MATS), the air navigation services provider for Malta. Apart from these activities, the Section was involved in conducting an inspection of MATS, the implementation of the European Airports Database programme and in the activities related to the Single European Sky. As a result of the inspection of MATS, the Department was able to renew a certificate of competence to MATS.

The Section also produced the necessary amendments of the Malta Aeronautical Information Publication, the annual update of the Local Convergence and Implementation Plan (LCIP) document in collaboration with EUROCONTROL and other technical matters related to procedures used by Air Traffic Services personnel.

In March 2006, the Section was involved in an audit carried out by EUROCONTROL on the state of implementation of ESARRs (Eurocontrol Requirements Safety Regulatory) in Malta.

AERODROME LICENSING

The Aerodrome Licensing Section carried out a number of inspections at Malta International Airport and the Gozo Heliport to ensure that both aerodromes were properly equipped, maintained and operated in accordance with international standards. Regular meetings were held between the Section and aerodrome operator staff to address various licensing issues that arise from local legislation and international standards. The annual inspections of Malta International Airport resulted in the re-issue of the certificate of competency to the airport operator.

The Section also routinely examined a number of building project applications which were made to MEPA to declare whether there are any objections from the civil aviation point of view or otherwise.

REGISTRATION OF AIRCRAFT

During 2006, five new aircraft were added to the Malta Register of Aircraft, consisting of two Airbus 320, one Airbus 319 and two light aircraft. On the other hand, two aircraft were deleted from the Register, namely one Boeing 737 and one Airbus 320.

At the end of 2006, there were 47 aircraft (including fifteen microlight aircraft) on the Malta Register of Aircraft. Aircraft of the Armed Forces of Malta are not included in the Malta Register of Aircraft.

AIR TRANSPORT

Air Services

International scheduled services were operated between Malta and Amsterdam, Athens, Barcellona, Belgrade, Berlin, Birmingham, Bristol, Brussels, Bucharest, Budapest, Cairo, Casablanca, Catania, Dubai, Dublin, Dusseldorf, East Midlands, Frankfurt, Geneva, Gerona, Glasgow, Hamburg, Istanbul, Kiev, Larnaca, Lisbon, London Gatwick, London Heathrow, Luton, Luxembourg, Lyons, Madrid, Manchester, Marseille, Milan Malpensa, Monastir, Moscow, Munich, Nantes, Naples, Newcastle, Nuremburg, Oslo, Palermo, Paris Orly, Pisa, Porto, Prague, Reggio Calabria, Rome, Sofia, Stansted, Stockholm, Toulouse, Tripoli, Tunis, Warsaw and Zurich.

The scheduled carriers operating at Malta were Aerosvit, Air Berlin, Air Malta, Alitalia, Central Wings, Condor, Emirates, Excel, Finnair, GB Airways, Germania Airlines, JAT, Libyan Arab Airlines, Lufthansa, Luxair, Ryanair, SAS, SN Brussels Airlines and Tuninter. Austrian Airlines and LOT operated codeshare flights with Lufthansa.

Charter flights were operated mainly from the UK, Scandinavia, Germany, Italy and France.

Passenger Movements

The number of passengers who travelled on scheduled flights during 2005 was 2,052,582 whilst the corresponding number of passengers for 2006 was 2,117,323. With regard to charter flights, the number of passengers who travelled on charter flights during 2005 was 696,463 whilst the corresponding number of passengers for 2006 was 574,696. From these figures, it can be noted that the increase in the number of passengers who travelled on scheduled flights was nearly half of the decrease in the number of passengers who travelled on charter flights.

COMPUTERISATION

During 2006, the Department continued with its plans to procure new computers to replace obsolete equipment and to standardise the computer software in use. The Department website www.dca.gov.mt has now been in use since July 2003 and has proved extremely useful. In 2006, it averaged 2,235 hits per month.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

As long as it has been functioning, the Department has maintained continuous contact with international organisations of which Malta is a member and took active part in international meetings, in particular those organised by ECAC and ICAO, and during the last years also by EUROCONTROL and JAA and since

May 2004, by the EU or its institutions such as EASA. As a result of these memberships, this Department keeps abreast of technological developments in the field of air transport.

During 2006, Department personnel participated in various EU related meetings, JAA Committees and in EUROCONTROL and ECAC meetings.

JOSEPH SULTANA

Director General (Civil Aviation)

Commerce Division

INTRODUCTION

The role of the Commerce Division is to assist business and facilitate trade by providing effective support and services within the relevant regulatory and administrative framework in its remit.

Initiatives aimed at fulfilling this role are undertaken through the concerted efforts of its three directorates namely the Industrial Property Registrations Directorate, the Trade Services Directorate and the Small Businesses and Crafts Directorate assisted ably by its Support Services arm.

OPERATIONS

The Commerce Division performs the following duties: registration of trademarks, certification marks, collective marks and designs; patenting of inventions; issuing of supplementary protection certificates in respect of medicinals and plant protection products; issuing of trade licences; recording of transfers, cancellations, amendments and renewals regarding trading licences as well as trademarks, patents and designs; authorisation of the export and transaction of dual use goods; issuing of import licences and export licences; administration of EU import quotas; administration of temporary state aid for sugar; licensing of auctioneers; dissemination of information relevant to the business sectors; acting as an intermediary vis-à-vis complaints and enquiries from businesses about services provided by Government and other entities; assistance in the setting up of business associations and facilitation of relationship of the latter with service providers; maintaining dialogue with entrepreneurs in their locality in collaboration with local council; running of Crafts Centre in St John Square, Valletta; providing support to the Malta Crafts Council, the Copyright Board, the Auctioneers Board and the Trading Licence Advisory Committee; hosting the EU SOLVIT Centre for Malta; co-ordinating the drafting of legislation relating to trade and intellectual property; providing input on drafting related EU directives and regulations as well as international treaties; participating in international and EU meetings as required.

SALIENT STATISTICS

Trade-Related

During 2006, 479 applications were received for a licence for premises based activities, 11 to register a commercial activity in licensed commercial premises, 130 for street hawkers, 66 for market hawkers, 97 applications were lodged to register a personal commercial activity which is not premises based or hawking, 33 for car boot sales, 82 for commercial fairs; 93 for change of licensed activity and 914 for cancellations and transfers. In addition 1,339 applications were received for import licences while 33 were filed in respect of export licences.

Industrial Property-Related

During 2006, the number of applications received for the registration of trademarks was 1,306 whilst 810 applications were received for the patenting of inventions. Industrial Property searches numbered 2,480.

Crafts

Members registered with the Malta Crafts Council as on 31 December 2006 stood at 794 craftsmen and 424 entrepreneurs. Visitors (including locals and tourists) to a local exhibition of crafts at Crafts Centre, Valletta were 37,393.

ASSISTING BUSINESS

Business Care Unit

The Division continued to upgrade its Front Office service by setting up the Business Care Unit (BCU) managed by the Small Business and Crafts Directorate. The focus of the Business Care Unit that started operating in May is to give first-hand assistance and advice to clients who require any service offered by the Division as well as receive complaints from small businesses in respect of excessive bureaucracy and inefficiencies by service providers.

During the year, 3,959 telephone enquiries and 3,696 personal visits were registered, related mainly to services offered by the Commerce Division.

Outreach Activities

During the year, a total number of 46 meetings (including two meetings held in Gozo) were organised at various local council offices for entrepreneurs operating in the respective localities. These meetings provided an opportunity for those who attended to meet the Parliamentary Secretary responsible for Small Businesses and the Self Employed to discuss difficulties concerning their businesses. Sixteen other meetings were held in different industrial zones.

Malta SOLVIT Centre

As from 1 May 2004 the Commerce Division began hosting the EU SOLVIT Centre for Malta. SOLVIT is a network of centres throughout the EU and EEA, committed to solve cross-border problems which hinder the rights of citizens and businesses in the Internal Market. The network works through an online database maintained by the EU Commission.

SOLVIT Malta received 35 enquiries during 2006. Out of these, 31 did not qualify as SOLVIT cases whilst the other four cases were inputted in the SOLVIT database, with Malta acting as Home Centre.

AWARENESS ACTIVITIES AND MEETINGS WITH BUSINESS ORGANISATIONS

During 2006, the Division organised 15 meetings which included discussions with representatives of various sectors of entrepreneurs, meetings with service providers as well as a number of consultation meetings on specific issues of interest to the small business community.

The Commerce Division also organised or participated in 22 seminars or meetings aimed at raising awareness amongst local stakeholders concerning import control, non-proliferation of arms, intellectual property, crafts and SOLVIT.

During the last four months of 2006, an intensive awareness campaign on IP was carried out as a result of the implementation of an EU project under Transitional Facility Funds.

The Pavilion of the Commerce Division was almost entirely dedicated for the exhibition of craft products by 40 Maltese and Gozitan craftspersons. The Division was instrumental in organising participation by craftsmen in the Great Spring Show, the *Festival ta' l-Għana*, *L-Imnarja*, *Notte Bianca Event* and Malta Lace Day.

These initiatives were complemented by articles and adverts in local newspapers as well as billboards.

LEGISLATION AND BETTER REGULATION

The Division is regulated in its activities by the following main legislation: the Auctioneers Act; the Commercial Code; the Trading Licences Act 2001 as amended; the Supplies and Services Act; the Trademarks Act; the Copyright Act and the Patents and Designs Act. These are complemented with a significant amount of subsidiary legislations.

During 2006, the Copyright Act was amended by means of Legal Notice 174 of 2006 which was published on 14 August 2006. This amendment provides for a resale right to artists. The EU Regulation on the Compulsory Licensing of Pharmaceutical Patents also came into force within the EU and therefore automatically is now part of national legislation. In addition, all the above-mentioned intellectual property laws have been further complemented by Act No XX on the enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights which was published on 12 December 2006.

The Trading Licences Amendments Act XXI 2005 was enacted on 23 December 2005 and the new regulations were published in January 2006 by LN 1 of 2006.

Following substantial discussions and preparation of necessary documents as well as the necessary Parliament approval, the instruments for Malta's accession to the European Patent Convention and the Patent Co-Operation Treaty were submitted on 1 December 2006. These will come into force for Malta on 1 March 2007.

Meetings Abroad

Officials from the Division participated in EU and international meetings pertaining to its remit or in order to assist other entities. Meetings concerned the following issues: Sanctions Monitoring, Dual Use Goods, Enterprise Policy, the European Charter for SME's, Trademark Practice and Procedures, Protection of Designs, Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, Patents, Copyright, Patent Libraries, Better Regulation, the Internal Market Information System, European Enterprise Awards and Regulation 2679/98 EC on Disruption to the Internal Market.

In his role as Comptroller of Industrial Property, the Director General Commerce also participated in the General Assembly of the world Intellectual Property Organisation, the Administrative Council of the European Patent Office and in the Administrative Board and Budget Committee of the Office of the Harmonisation of the Internal Market.

TRAINING

Officials from the Directorate attended various courses organised by the SDO during the past year.

Ongoing exposure was given to the members of the SOLVIT team through participation in workshops partly funded by the EU Commission. Other officials participated in workshops and training sessions organised by the Office for the Harmonisation of the Internal Market and by the European Patent Office. This was complemented by an ongoing twinning light project funded under the EU Transition Facility. This project *inter alia* provides for training provided by the Danish Trademark & Patent Office with a view to creating a co-operation strategy between the main local government dealing with the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights i.e. Police, Customs, Attorney General and the Commerce Division.

GODWIN WARR

Director General (Commerce)

Consumer and Competition Division

Mission statement

To ensure fair competition in the market and safeguard consumer rights.

It is the aim of this Office to bring to the attention of both traders and consumers their rights and obligations under the Competition and Consumer legislation. The Office informs and advises consumers on how to obtain value for money and how to seek appropriate redress whilst ensuring the safety of products in the market. It also aims at safeguarding fair competition in the market by ensuring that no anti-competitive agreements or abuse of a dominant position take place to the detriment of other undertakings or consumers.

LEGISLATION

The Consumer and Competition Division is responsible for administering the following Acts and their subsidiary legislation: Competition Act, Cap 379; Consumer Affairs Act, Cap 378; Product Safety Act, Cap 427; Doorstep Contracts Act, Cap 317; and the Trade Descriptions Act, Cap 313.

ORGANISATION STRUCTURE

The Division is made up of three Directorates, namely the Policy and Regulatory Services Directorate responsible for the application and enforcement of consumer and competition laws falling within the remit of the Division; the Operations Directorate responsible for monitoring and intervening in the market when necessary; and the Information and Client Affairs Directorate responsible for mediating between consumers and traders and disseminating information regarding the various legislation for which the Division is responsible. The Consumer and Competition Division incorporates within it the Office for Fair Competition and the Department of Consumer Affairs.

POLICY AND REGULATORY SERVICES DIRECTORATE

The Policy and Regulatory Services Directorate, which is mainly composed of lawyers and economists, is responsible for handling complaints and carrying out investigations regarding potential infringements of the competition and consumer legislation. The Directorate advises the Director General regarding the exercise of his powers under the various laws and draws up reports and issues formal decisions on the basis of investigations conducted.

The Directorate also tenders advice through the Director General to the Minister, Parliamentary Secretary and the Permanent Secretary on competition and consumer policy in general. It also tenders advice to, and actively co-ordinates with other public authorities, constituted bodies, traders and consumers.

Since 1 May 2004, the Office for Fair Competition was designated as the Maltese National Competition Authority in terms of EC Regulation 1/2003 and has thus assumed the responsibility of investigating infringements of Articles 81 and 82 of the EC Treaty within the Maltese territory.

Since 29 December 2005, the Department of Consumer Affairs, the regulatory functions of which are assumed under the Directorate, has also been appointed as the Single Liaison Office and Competent Authority for Malta under the Consumer Protection Cooperation Regulation (EC Regulation 2006/2004), to investigate possible cross-border infringements of EC Consumer Directives falling within its remit. The

Regulation set up a network of public authorities, which started functioning in December 2006. In view of this new function, the Directorate had to draft amendments to the Consumer Affairs Act (Cap. 378) and to co-ordinate with other authorities located within other ministries in order to discuss proper and timely implementation of the Regulation. All the necessary amendments were included in Bill 65 of 2006, which was adopted on 8 August 2006 as The Consumer Protection Laws (Amendment) Act, 2006. The amendments are already in force.

During 2006 the Directorate was also responsible for the drafting of other legislative instruments, which include the revision of the Merger Regulations and the drafting of a new Bill to regulate unfair business-to-consumer commercial practices. Both exercises are still underway and the latter includes also other consequential amendments to other pieces of legislation brought about by Directive 2005/29/EC concerning Unfair Business-to-Consumer Commercial Practices in the Internal Market.

As part of its continued efforts to make the public aware of the pertinent legislation and its content, the Directorate continued to participate in various seminars organised by the Division and by the private sector through papers presented by its legal officers. The Directorate has assisted the Information and Client Affairs Directorate in providing information to the public in a number of TV and radio programmes and has presented a paper in the Malta European Consumer Centre (ECC-Malta) Conference entitled *Consumer Confidence in the Tourism Industry*.

Competition Complaints

During 2006, a total of 57 cases were investigated by the Office for Fair Competition, 23 of which were newly submitted complaints referring to alleged infringements of the Competition Act concerning *inter alia* the fuel and energy sector, the transport sector, the industrial gas manufacture and importation industry and the maritime sector.

Investigations

Investigations carried out by the Directorate during 2006, concerned primarily:

- predatory pricing practices in the pharmaceutical sector
- abuse of dominance and discriminatory conditions imposed in the fuel industry
- an exclusive agreement between a gas importer/producer and its customers
- an abuse of dominance by a company providing waste management services
- restrictive and discriminatory pricing practices in the maritime transport sector
- an abuse of dominance concerning the yachting and berthing sector
- an abuse of dominance in the pay television sector
- an exclusive agreement between television stations and a sports organisation
- an abuse of dominance in the maritime safety and port pilotage sector
- an abusive practice concerning harbour towage services
- restrictive practices concerning the supply of ice-creams to retailers
- discriminatory codes of practice as regards the approval of licences in the transport sector

Decisions

In 2006, the Office for Fair Competition delivered seven decisions. Two decisions concerned alleged restrictive practices in terms of Article 5 of the Competition Act, four decisions concerned alleged abuses of dominance under Article 9 of the Competition Act, and one decision concerned infringements of both Articles 5 and 9. Twelve cases were considered inadmissible on grounds of no jurisdiction or lack of evidence. The decisions issued concerned the foreign publications industry, the car-parts retail market, the sale and retailing of fuels, the sale of food commodities, the pharmaceutical industry, the waste services sector, pilotage within harbours and the road transport sector. In one case, the Office submitted a request for an interim measure before the Commission of Fair Trading, which was granted.

Concentrations

In 2006, the Office received 15 notifications submitted to it under the Control of Concentrations Regulations 2002. Twelve decisions were issued. The acquisitions notified, although deemed to be concentrations in terms of the said Regulations, were not found to substantially lessen competition in Malta or a particular territory thereof. The notifications made concerned the industrial polymer market, the hotels and accommodations market, the food retailing and manufacturing market, the financial investments market, and the IT market.

Advice Tendered

Another important aspect of the work carried out by the Directorate is the tendering of advice. In 2006 the Directorate was approached on several occasions by government departments, local authorities, law and accountancy firms, businesses and individual consumers to tender advice on competition issues. Advice was also tendered to foreign companies and law firms.

Advice to companies and firms dealt mainly with the following issues:

- Notification procedures concerning concentrations
- The Block Exemption Regulations concerning Vertical Restraints
- Exclusive Purchasing agreements in different sectors of the economy
- Tendering procedures

Relations with Local Authorities

During 2006 a number of informative meetings were held between the Office for Fair Competition and the Malta Communications Authority concerning the market definitions adopted by the latter in terms of its regulatory framework, and the proposed obligations to be imposed on undertakings found to have significant market power on the said markets.

The Office also convened meetings with the Malta Resources Authority in respect of competition issues relating to the energy sector.

Relations with the European Commission and other Competition Authorities

The Office for Fair Competition has participated in a number of meetings and working groups organised by the European Competition Network (ECN) at the Commission's headquarters in Brussels, concerning the application of the EC competition rules – Articles 81 and 82 of the Treaty Establishing the European Community – to, *inter alia*, the pharmaceuticals and professional services sectors.

The Office keeps abreast of ongoing developments within the field of EC competition policy as well as the national competition policies of other countries on a continuous basis, and regularly analyses new documents issued by the EC institutions on the subject.

The Office has on various occasions liaised with national competition authorities of other EU Member States in relation to matters concerning Maltese Competition law and the Office's decisions and investigations.

Consumer Complaints

In 2006, the Directorate investigated 19 complaints regarding alleged breaches of the provisions of the Consumer Affairs Act and other legislation enacted under it. Out of these, 12 complaints were new and the remainder carried forward from previous years. From the 12 new complaints, one was found to be inadmissible; one concerned a commercial guarantee; one on consumer credit; one on unfair contract

terms; one on distance selling; one on a pyramid selling scheme; three on comparative advertising and the remaining ten on matters involving misleading advertising.

The main investigations carried out by the Directorate dealt with cases involving:

- Misleading advertising
- Comparative advertising
- Unfair contract terms

Advice Tendered

The Directorate was asked on approximately 73 occasions to tender advice regarding consumer law and policy issues. Advice was tendered mainly internally to other directorates within the Division and government departments, and externally to the Consumer Affairs Council, the Consumers' Association, constituted bodies, law firms, traders and consumers in general. The advice given was mainly in connection with:

- misleading and comparative advertising
- commercial guarantees
- pyramid selling schemes
- consumer credit.

EU Affairs

In 2006, the Directorate drafted seven Explanatory Memoranda on European Commission documents in the field of consumer policy. It has actively followed the modified proposal for a Decision establishing a programme of Community action in the field of Consumer Protection 2007-2013, adopted as Decision No 1926/2006/EC on 18 December 2006, and the modified proposal for a Directive on Consumer Credit. This entailed the regular updating of Malta's position on the dossiers in preparation for the Council Working Party (Consumer Protection and Information) meetings held in Brussels.

The Directorate also participated in the Consumer Protection Co-operation Committee meetings, as established under Regulation 2006/2004/EC, and in the Commission Working Group meetings, set up to assist Member States in transposing the Unfair Business-to-Consumer Commercial Practices Directive, all held in Brussels.

The Directorate has also continuously provided comments on a number of initiatives in the field of European consumer policy, namely the European Contract Law project, the Revision of the Consumer *Acquis* and Mortgage Credit. Feedback was also provided for a number of questionnaires on matters concerning implementation of various European Directives and consumer policy in general.

The Directorate was also involved in the implementation of Council Directive 98/27 on Injunctions and the implementation of Regulation EC 2006/2004 on consumer protection co-operation.

COMMISSION FOR FAIR TRADING

The role of the Commission for Fair Trading is judicial in nature. It issues formal decisions with regard to competition cases of a serious nature, as well as cases concerning the application of Articles 81 and 82 EC, on the basis of reports submitted to it by the Director of the Office for Fair Competition. Furthermore, decisions taken by the Director may be reviewed by the Commission at the request of the undertaking/s concerned by the decision. It can also order interim measures intended to suspend any restrictive practice under investigation in order to avoid a situation likely to cause serious, immediate and irreparable prejudice to the interests of any undertaking or to harm the general economic interest.

A number of sittings were held before the Commission for Fair Trading during 2006 with regard to twelve different cases. The Commission delivered a total of three decisions, which concerned a case involving a supermarket chain, a case relating to the sale of ice-cream products and another concerning the sale of poultry and poultry products. The Commission dismissed another case on the ground that the parties had reached an agreement, and overturned an OFC decision concerning the supply of blood to private clinics at a charge. Another case concerning an exclusive loan agreement was referred to the Commission from the First Hall (Civil Court).

OPERATIONS DIRECTORATE

The Operations Directorate is responsible for market surveillance under the Product Safety Act to ensure that only products that do not represent a risk to the health of persons are placed on the market. The Directorate is also responsible for monitoring the market and being on the lookout for any possible restrictive practices taking place or infringements of any of the provisions of the various consumer laws, especially the Price Indications Regulations. It also monitors the prices of medicines and this year was also entrusted with the subsidy on Maltese-type bread.

Monitoring of Products

In 2006, its officers carried out inspections in 57 retail outlets in Malta and Gozo during which they monitored 600 products that are considered to be market leaders. These items fall under four main categories of products namely food, beverages, detergents and toiletries. As a result of these inspections, it transpired that there were 299 items whose recommended price shown on the label was above that actually recommended by the importer or manufacturer. The retail outlets were ordered to correct the recommended consumer prices and to have all products carry a correct indication of the price. This enabled the consumer not to be misled and to be in a position to compare prices and evaluate better the discounts offered.

The Directorate carried out a number of exercises to monitor how the prices of particular products like eggs, meat products, white goods etc have changed over a period of time and whether these can be attributable to any infringement of any law for which the Division is responsible.

Medicines

The Medicinal Unit last year visited 37 pharmacies and monitored the price of 300 items to verify whether the profits are kept within the approved margins. The Unit also investigated 35 complaints received concerning the price of medicinal items. These complaints were found to be unjustified except for seven which resulted in the Directorate requesting six pharmacists to refund the amount overcharged.

During 2006, an extensive exercise was carried out to establish the consumer prices of medicines that were on the market in April 2006.

Product Safety

The Directorate is responsible for ensuring that only safe products are placed on the market. During 2006, inspections were carried out in 1,946 retail outlets. These inspections have served not only to find 26 non-compliant products but also to advise and guide owners of retail outlets regarding the Product Safety Act and its subsidiary legislation. These non-compliant products involved Personal Protective Equipment, Toys and Low Voltage Equipment. Meetings and correspondence were held with various importers and manufacturers in order for them to take the necessary steps to ensure that the products conform to the regulations.

The Division continued to co-operate with the Customs Department to identify products imported from third countries which do not conform to regulations issued under the Product Safety Act. Through this

collaboration, the Directorate prohibited the release from Customs of two consignments that concerned functional toys and lampshades that did not conform to the regulations. The Directorate also ordered the destruction of two other consignments consisting of plastic ducks and trailing sockets which posed a danger to the health and safety of persons.

During this year, the Directorate continued receiving information from the European Commission through the RAPEX system on non-food products that could pose a risk to the health and safety of persons. The Directorate monitored 716 alerts and found 14 such products on the local market. Steps were taken to ensure that corrective action on 13 products was taken by the importer to make the product safe. This was not possible in the case of one other item and the importer withdrew the product from the market. The Directorate informed the EU Commission about a lamp holder that was found unsafe in Malta in order to pass on the information to other Member States.

Inspections were also carried out mainly in pharmacies to verify whether medical devices which the Division is alerted about, are found in the local market. Five such products were found and the Division made sure that the importer took the corrective action to ensure that the consumers' health is not put at risk.

The Directorate is also the competent authority in Malta for notifications of dangerous products by manufacturers and distributors. The Directorate was notified about certain kind of batteries which were installed on various laptop computer brands which could possibly give rise to overheating and fire risks. The Directorate identified three brands on the local market and ensured that press releases were issued to the major local newspapers with the details of the local representative to whom Maltese consumers could revert.

The Directorate participated with other EU Member States in a project on portable luminaries whereby apart from verifying technical documentation, samples were also sent for testing to check whether these conform to the low voltage electrical equipment regulations.

This year, Malta became member of ICSMS which is an internet-supported information and communication system which enable the market surveillance authorities to exchange information amongst themselves.

Price Indications

The Directorate continued its undertaking to ensure that more retail outlets maintain their compliance to the Price Indication Regulations. From an exercise carried out in the main shopping areas in Malta and Gozo, it emerged that 94% of retail outlets have complied with the regulations. Warning letters were issued to those retail outlets that have not taken steps to do so. Compliance Orders were given to those who still persisted with disobeying these regulations in spite of the fact that they had been warned. The Directorate investigated 59 complaints received and it found that 19 of these complaints were unjustified while action was taken against those outlets to ensure that these took the necessary steps in order to be compliant with the regulations.

Quality Service Charter

The Directorate has sought not only to maintain the standards established through the Quality Service Charter that was launched in 2006 but also to increase the level of service by offering the services in less than the times stipulated in the Quality Service Charter.

INFORMATION AND CLIENT AFFAIRS DIRECTORATE

The main functions of this Directorate are:

- a. dealing with all consumer complaints and trying to settle case amicably with the trader;
- b. referring cases that could not be settled amicably to the Consumer Claims Tribunal;

- c. dealing with enquiries received regarding both consumer and competition issues;
- d. carrying out an ongoing educational campaign to ensure that both the trader and the consumer are aware of their rights and obligations under the laws administered by the Division;
- e. responsibility for the setting up of the European Consumer Centre and monitoring thereof;
- f. acting as National Partner for the publication and distribution of the *Europa Diary* which is funded by the EU; and
- g. responsibility for the introduction of the educational IT Tool *Dolceta* and for keeping it updated.

Consumer Complaints

Mediation, as stipulated by Section 23 (4) (a) of the Consumer Affairs Act, was initiated on 829 formal complaints which had been registered with this Division, out of which 117 had been brought forward as complaints which had still not been dealt with in 2005. By the end of the year, 839 complaints were dealt with and were concluded as follows: (i) mediation was successful in 267 cases; (ii) 160 cases were either withdrawn or else not followed up by complainants; (iii) no amicable settlement was reached in 416 cases and complainants opted to proceed with their complaint in front of the Consumer Claims Tribunal as provided for by Section 23 (4) (b) of the legislation. At the end of the year there were 107 cases that were still pending and therefore were carried forward to 2007.

At the Gozo Office, 54 complaints were registered and 32 enquiries were made. Eleven complaints were referred to the Consumer Claims Tribunal. Information leaflets were also distributed to students and also to the general public from the Gozo Office.

Freephone

During the year, the Freephone service was again widely used by the general public to seek advice and lodge complaints regarding consumer issues. The consumer also used this service to lodge complaints and make enquiries that did not fall under the competence of this Division. Nevertheless these were forwarded to the responsible directorates/departments and public corporations to be dealt with. The Freephone service was extended to a 24-hour service throughout the whole week, by installing an answering machine.

Consumer Education

Since consumer education is an ongoing process, during 2006 the Directorate continued its educational campaign as was done in the previous years. Officials from the Information and Client Affairs Directorate took part in 151 media programmes, out of which 48 were on television whilst 103 were on radio. These programmes were aimed at educating consumers and traders. Talks in schools amounted to 40. Another eight talks were delivered to parents, voluntary organisations, and to a group of beauty therapists at the Institute of Community Services. Efforts to disseminate as much information as possible were made through articles on Consumer Education that were published in various newspapers. The Directorate's contribution also appeared regularly in various school magazines, such as *Sagħtar* and *Tagħna t-Tfal*. These magazines also provide a monthly competition for schoolchildren, and rewards will be given to winners during the World Consumer Rights Day Activity which will be held in March 2007. Articles have also been published in the *Teachers* magazine.

Other educational material consisted of articles published in the weekly magazine *Il-Gwida*, and in the monthly magazine *Flimkien* which has a distribution of 100,000 copies.

The 12 leaflets regarding the legislation administered by the Consumer and Competition Division, which had been printed at the end of 2004 through EU funds, were regularly distributed among senior students who have Consumer Affairs as one of their subjects. Reprinting was carried out in order to continue furnishing schools with the information.

The publication of the Newsletter *Fair Deal* continued to be issued on a regular basis during 2006. Four issues were compiled and distributed to 1,200 persons by post, and 120 by e-mail. This newsletter is also distributed to schools that invite directorate officials to give talks to their students.

COMPETITIONS

During 2006 the Directorate organised regularly two monthly competitions for school children. These competitions featured in the school magazine *Sagħtar* and the newsletter *Tagħna t-Tfal*. Prizes to winners of these competitions will be given during the annual activity of World Consumer Rights Day in March 2007.

Activities

World Consumer Rights Day, 15 March 2006

This year's slogan was *Qatt ma' taf biżżejjed – zomm ruhek infurmat*. On the occasion of World Consumer Rights Day, the Directorate once again organised an activity to be enjoyed by all the family at the St Monica School Hall in Gżira. After an introductory speech by Ms B Buttigieg, Director (Information and Client Affairs Directorate), the audience present enjoyed an entertaining programme. The evening came to an end when the Hon Mr Edwin Vassallo, Parliamentary Secretary, and Mr Marcel Pizzuto, the Director General of the Consumer and Competition Division delivered their speeches and presented prizes to the young winners of the competitions which had been organised during the year by the Directorate.

Quality Service Charter

In order to prove its efficiency, and promise to give better service to consumers, this Directorate had, during the previous year, launched a Quality Service Charter that gives its staff the responsibility to keep the target of 15 days in which to deal with a complaint and give results. The Directorate has maintained these standards throughout 2006 and has also kept the general public informed of its rights and obligations, as well as informed and educated the trader. This Charter had been launched in October 2005.

Website

The Information and Client Affairs Directorate was responsible for the daily running and the updating of information submitted for publication on the Consumer and Competition Division webpage of the Ministry for Competitiveness and Communication's website. Information regarding the various guidelines to consumers and recent amendments to the legislation falling under the Consumer and Competition Division featured in the website. Consumer Claims Tribunal decisions were published and updated monthly. Furthermore, complaint forms on this site enabled consumers to download the necessary forms on which they could submit their complaints online.

International Contacts

In order to keep abreast of developments in the Consumer Protection field outside our country, meetings organised in other European countries were attended whenever possible. The Directorate kept in touch with various UK Bodies including the Institute of Consumer Affairs, various Trading Standards Departments, the Office of Fair Trading, and strengthened the contacts with DG Sanco and the European Commission, as well as kept in contact with Consumers' International, Consumer Citizenship Network and the International Consumer Protection Network.

The Directorate became the National Partner with Generation Europe as regards the publication of the *Europa Diary*. This diary is a teaching tool for senior classes especially school leavers. It is distributed free of charge and is partly funded by the EU.

Another international project is the educational website for adult learning, the *Dolceta* website. During 2006 this website was brought in conformity to local legislation, and is available online throughout the 27 Member States.

EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE

Through the strong ties that had been maintained with the Commission and DG Sanco, the Directorate succeeded in maintaining the running of the European Consumer Centre in Malta, which had been set up during the last quarter of the previous year. This centre's main responsibilities are to inform the general public about their rights throughout Europe, and also to deal with cross-border complaints. This centre will make it possible for Maltese people to seek redress when things go wrong with products bought from other countries, and also will make it possible for foreigners who visit Malta and have trouble with their purchases when they go back home. This centre will increase confidence in online shopping. During this year three new leaflets were distributed regarding *Consumer Rights in Germany*, *Guarantees* and *The European Consumer Centre*. All of these leaflets were partly funded by the European Union.

CONSUMER CLAIMS TRIBUNAL

The Consumer Claims Tribunal, which is presided by an Arbiter, has jurisdiction to hear and determine claims made by consumers against traders where the value of the claim does not exceed Lm1,500 and when the claim relates to:

- h. the purchase or hire of goods by a consumer from a trader; or
- i. the provision of services by a trader to a consumer.

During 2006, 416 cases were referred to the Tribunal. The Arbiter pronounced his decision on 227 cases. 74 cases were appointed but left unheard, and will be dealt with in 2007. 115 cases had been withdrawn. During 2006, 199 cases were decided in favour of the consumer, whilst 28 cases were decided in favour of the trader.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

Recruitment of Staff

During 2006, calls for applications were issued to fill various vacant posts in the top management strata of the Consumer and Competition Division. Interviews were held during the latter part of the year. The posts included that of Director General, Director (Enforcement) and Director (Policy and Regulatory Services) and three Assistant Directors for the following Directorates - Information and Client Affairs, Support Services and Operations. An Assistant Director was engaged in the Policy and Regulatory Services Directorate during the year. The filling of these posts will strengthen the Division's administrative framework and put it in a position to carry out its functions under the various legislation for which it is responsible in a more efficient and professional way.

Seven part-time Market Surveillance Officers were engaged to monitor the market for unsafe products and unfair trading practices.

Visits Abroad

The Division took part in various conferences and seminars covering both Consumer and Competition issues.

Officials from the Policy and Regulatory Services Directorate attended workshops and seminars organised by the EU on Competition Policy, Consumer Protection, Consumer Centres Network and Review of

Consumer *Acquis*. They also took part in meetings of the European Competition Network (ECN) and participated in Commission Working Party on Consumer protection.

The Director (Operations) attended a technical seminar on market surveillance organised by Euromed and a TAIEX workshop on medical devices. Other officials from this Directorate attended training under a Twinning light project on recreational crafts, lifts and medical devices, a workshop on gas appliances and training on cigarette lighters.

The Director (Information & Consumer Affairs) attended meetings of the Consumer Policy Network, the Consumer Citizenship Network, TAIEX – Study Visit re European Consumer Centres, ECC Network meetings, and ECC Co-operation Day. Meetings concerning the European Consumer Centre were attended by her in her capacity as Acting Director.

Local Training

Officials attended various seminars and training initiatives organised by SDO and other in-house training programmes organised by officials from this Division to keep abreast of Competition and Consumer legislation.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS COUNCIL

The main functions of the Consumer Affairs Council are described in Chapter 378 of the Laws of Malta. These are to advise/assist the Minister on policy formulation, monitor trading practices that may be detrimental to the consumers and protect consumer interests.

During 2006, Council strove to enhance dialogue with the private and public sectors. It organised meetings with regulators and advised government on a wide variety of issues including Tribunal cases which are not honoured, Unfair Commercial Practices Directive, *Made in Malta proposal for Council regulation* and the Dual Pricing Regulations.

Dialogue with the Private and Public Sectors

The Consumer Affairs Council had several meetings with both public and private sectors. The subjects discussed included:

- *The increasing cost of medical health insurance.* The annual percentage rate of increase in the price of health insurance is escalating. If current trends continue, elderly people may not afford to pay for a medical insurance. In view of this, the Council recommended to the Minister to reconsider the price caps on the prices charged by medical professionals.
- *Eco-tax and deposit schemes.* This issue was discussed with all the stakeholders including GRTU, Malta Deposit and Return System Ltd (MDRS) and Green Pak and MEPA. The meeting focused on the different systems of waste collection that are needed in Malta to meet the producers' environmental obligations. Council emphasised the need to enhance competition in the interest of both producers and buyers.
- *Anti-competitive behaviour.* Council invited the OFT to give an overview of Competition Policy in Malta. Members from this Office explained the measures that the OFT can take to stop anti-competitive behaviour. Measures include fines for obstruction of competition. Moreover, parties to an agreement may be ordered to cease and modify their activities. Council members recommended that in serious cases where consumers are affected negatively due to abuse of dominance by a particular company, the OFT should reduce timeframes to safeguard the rights of the consumers.

Enhancing Dialogue with Regulators

Liberalisation of the inland fuel market

Council met MRA representatives who explained the objectives of the liberalisation process. During the discussion, the need of the energy regulator to protect the interests and rights of consumers, especially vulnerable ones, was highlighted. Consumers' rights are upheld by guaranteeing security of supply, promoting fair competition to protect suppliers who compete loyally and ensuring fair prices. Council lauded the regulator's proposal to adopt high safety standards at petrol stations and storage terminals and to promote the production and consumption of alternative clean fuels. Council recommended that while restructuring and monitoring are an integral part of liberalisation, every effort should be made to contain costs so that retail prices of fuels do not rise.

Use of e-commerce among the Maltese population

MCA presented Council with the results of a comprehensive survey on the use of e-commerce amongst the Maltese population. The survey results confirmed that e-commerce though a growing trade is still relatively low and is more commonly used by males than females. Online banking is the most popular type of online shopping. The majority of online shoppers do not encounter problems. Non online shoppers said that they would be tempted to buy online if there is more information, sites are more secure, there are more competitive prices and less complex sites.

Recommendations to Government Related to Consumer Protection

Unfair Commercial Practices Directive

On several occasions Council alerted Government that this directive should be implemented by all Member States by June 2007. In February 2006 some Member States had already started their public consultation process. Council advised Government that a structured public consultation should be started in Malta in time before implementation, possibly before November 2006.

Consumer Claims Tribunal decisions

Council is pursuing Consumer Claims Tribunal decisions which are not being honoured by traders. In every case, the sum due is less than Lm500. Council also proposed to Government to appoint a second arbiter who can tackle cases where conflict of interest arises. Such a measure would ensure that all consumers have access to quick redress.

Dual Pricing

Council advised Government that the proposal made by the National Euro Changeover Committee (NECC) to issue guidelines related to dual prices in preparation for the euro changeover was useful but insufficient to protect consumers against abusing retailers. Council recommended that NECC publishes the names of rogue traders in newspapers and on the NECC website. Such a measure would help contain price increases and avoid abusive price hikes.

'Made in' proposal for Council regulation

In principle, Council agreed with the objective of the regulations. However, it noted that the goods listed in the annex were mainly intermediate goods rather than final products. Council recommended that the list should be extended to all other goods. Regulations should protect consumers and not particular markets. Moreover, Council advised that the marking should be on goods and not on packages. This measure would protect consumers who buy goods which are not traded in their original package.

Other submissions by Council

Council gave its view on other matters including indications of prices of products offered to Consumers (Com) 325 and the Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Programme of Community Action in the field of Consumer Policy 2007 –2013

Consumer Education

Raising awareness of food safety

Council discussed the feasibility of organising educational and information courses on food safety in collaboration with the private sector and the Food Inspectorate department. During these short courses, consumers will be informed of preparation of food for long-term storage, food related illnesses and good food practice in the home. The course aims to diminish food diseases and to instigate the food industry to improve food safety standards. Work on this project will continue in 2007.

Consumer Affairs Conference

In March 2006, the Council organised a regional conference on the Promotion of Consumer Interest. The conference was carried out jointly with the International Association of Consumer Law. The themes discussed were the Sale of Goods, Consumer Credit and Unfair Commercial Practices. Seventeen foreign and two local speakers presented papers on these topics.

MARCEL PIZZUTO

A/Director General (Consumer & Competition)

Market Surveillance Directorate

The Market Surveillance Directorate (MSD) co-ordinates, reviews and assesses market surveillance operations and enforcement related to product safety undertaken by government organisations. In conjunction with these organisations, the Directorate plays a critical role in the development of market surveillance policy in Malta as well as creating a co-ordinated and uniform approach to ultimately ensure that consumers come across safe products and that business entities work within a fair and level playing field. It also periodically supervises and audits the functions of the Food Safety Commission.

MARKET SURVEILLANCE

During 2006 the MSD continued to focus primarily on co-ordinating all the efforts being done by various government organisations through co-ordination meetings related to both the food and non-food sectors. Particular emphasis was given to the various twinning light projects which commenced during 2006 in which a substantial number of government organisations were involved. Through these meetings, co-ordination further developed with the key players involved in Market Surveillance, namely the Consumer and Competition Division, and the Malta Standards Authority, with the other departments involved in Market Surveillance, by virtue of Memoranda of Understanding entered into with various departments, in particular Customs, the Malta Maritime Authority, the Services Division (previously known as the Building Construction Industry Department), the Malta Communications Authority, the Occupational Health and Safety Authority and the Health Division.

Co-ordination also continued with the Secretariat for Small Business and the Self-Employed whereby this Directorate participated in additional co-ordination meetings organised by the Secretariat related to both government organisations as well as co-ordinated various seminars and workshops for the business sector with the help of this Secretariat. This mainly ensured that even businesses were fully aware of their responsibilities whilst at the same time, it continued to be a means of highlighting any existing problems that may be faced by the small businesses in Malta vis-à-vis Product Safety Legislation.

TRANSITIONAL FUNDING

The three main twinning light projects under the project fiche relating to the “Additional Support in Specific Technical Areas for the continued implementation and operation of the Market Surveillance System in Malta” started to be implemented during 2006.

Other areas of the project fiche were also delegated to MSA to cater for specific areas which were directly under their responsibility.

A number of government organisations benefited from these twinning light projects, covering mainly the following sectors:

- Medical Devices, Recreational Craft and Lifts;
- RTTE, Construction Products, Machinery, PPE AND Noise Emission;
- Chemicals.

Short-term experts not only visited Malta to give additional expertise to the respective organisations but a substantial number of market surveillance officers from various government organisations attended one-week training visits abroad to enhance their practical experiences in their field of product safety.

INTERNATIONAL LIAISON

The MSD continued to participate in PROSAFE (Product Safety Enforcement Forum of Europe) and RAPEX (Rapid Exchange of information System for Non Food Products) meetings. It also continued to participate in the GPSD (General Product Safety Directive) Standing Committee and the European Network as established by the new GPSD 2001/95/EC which came into force as from January 2004 as well as in some of the European ADCO (Administrative Co-operation) Groups related to market surveillance. All this ensured that this Directorate kept up to date with the latest trends in market surveillance as requested by Article 27 of the Product Safety Act Cap. 427.

As from 2006 the MSD has been actively participating in a special Cross Border Market Surveillance project organised by PROSAFE which is called EMARS (Enhancing Best Practice through Market Surveillance). Fifteen government organisations from different countries across the European Economic Area are participating in this project and MSD is also involved in the core administration and implementation of this project.

RAPID ALERT SYSTEM

This Directorate continued to follow throughout the year all the day-to-day developments concerning the Rapid Alert System (RAPEX), which provides the rapid exchange of information on dangers arising from the use of consumer products. The system is designed for handling urgent situations caused by consumer products that present a serious and immediate risk to the health and safety of consumers. Within this context MSD liaised closely with the Consumer and Competition Division regarding products featuring on RAPEX.

FOOD SAFETY COMMISSION

This year, the Directorate focused its attention on advising and assisting in practical terms the Food Safety Commission by getting the key players of the Commission closer together. Special meetings were organised, in particular between the Veterinary Services and the Health Division so as to ensure a more co-ordinated approach as suggested in previous audits organised by this Directorate. It is envisaged that the next audit will be held some time during 2007.

BETTER REGULATION

Two better regulation exercises identified during 2006 by this Directorate were both accepted by the Ministry and OPM and it is envisaged that these exercises will be implemented as planned during 2007.

One exercise is related to the transfer of certain legal notices from the Product Safety Act to the Food Safety Act in order to ensure a more co-ordinated and focused approach in market surveillance activities. The other exercise is related to a higher co-coordinative role between the Health Division and the Market Surveillance Directorate together with the Consumer and Competition Division with regard to the gathering and analysis of accident statistics. These accident statistics are to be further used by various organisations in the process of identifying product sectors which need to be surveyed more in view of the high-risk involved thus ensuring a safe market to consumers.

NOEL TOLEDO

Director (Market Surveillance)

Corporate Services Directorate

The Corporate Services Directorate provides support and advice to the Ministry and the Parliamentary Secretary's Office on matters of finance, administration and human resources, and assists in the control and monitoring of the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the divisions, departments, directorates and entities which fall under the Ministry's portfolio. It is also directly responsible for the Revenue Unit.

The Revenue Unit (formerly the Wireless Telegraphy Department) was integrated within the Corporate Services Directorate in August 2004 and was entrusted with the responsibility for the administration and enforcement of the provisions of the Radiocommunications Act (Chapter 49) and related regulations, for those functions which were not migrated to the Malta Communications Authority, namely, the issuance and administration of Broadcast Receiving (Colour Television) as provided for in Government Notice no 835 of 30 July 2004.

This responsibility was taken over from the Public Broadcasting Services with effect from 1 January 2005. The intervening period between the issue of the afore-mentioned Government Notice and this date was utilised to bring the system previously operated by PBS in line with government business processes in general, and with those of the Corporate Services Directorate of this Ministry in particular.

A formal agreement was entered into with Maltapost plc in order to enable licence holders to effect payment at all Maltapost branches without bearing any added cost. This Agreement consolidated the arrangement that had been reached between PBS and Maltapost plc for the months of November and December 2004.

Ever since 2005, the system taken over from PBS has been further enhanced on an ongoing basis in an effort aimed at improving the quality of service offered to all clients by making it both easier for the citizen to pay TV licence fees and effect any other transactions related to TV licences (new registrations, transfers, etc) as well as to eliminate inconveniences.

Total revenue collected in respect of TV licence fees during 2006 exceeded Lm2 million.

JOSEPH TONG

Director (Corporate Services)

Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure

Works Division Office of the Director General

LEGAL OFFICE

The Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure, the Works Division and the Services Division, including the various departments, constantly consult the Legal Office, as well as request its assistance with respect to the drafting of contracts, as well as in judicial proceedings before the Law Courts in order to safeguard their interests.

This led to the filing of approximately 110 judicial acts in Court during 2006, on behalf of various departments within the Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure. As a direct result of such legal action, the Works Division recouped the sum of at least Lm99,840 in 2006.

The Legal Office assisted the various departments within the Ministry, as well as the Ministry itself, in approximately 45 cases before the Law Courts and the Small Claims Tribunals, apart from providing assistance in arbitration proceedings before the Malta Arbitration Centre. The Legal Office was also involved in the drafting and amendment of laws falling within the competence of this Ministry.

Lawyers within the Legal Office attended a number of seminars and conferences held both locally as well as abroad, and also submitted relative reports. The Legal Office also contributed to various reports which were compiled and submitted to the Euro Project Co-ordinator.

DOOR NUMBERING UNIT

Door numbering exercises were completed in the following localities during 2006:

Locality	Government Gazette	Number of Streets
St Paul's Bay	17,930	29
St Paul's Bay	17,975	23
Rabat	17,975	12
Birgu	17,947	13
Paola	17,910	12
Fgura	17,933	9
St Paul's Bay	18,001	18
Total		116

The Unit carries out its work in full co-operation with the Electoral Office, the Commissioner of Police, the Water Services Corporation, Maltapost plc and the local councils.

During 2006, some changes were introduced in the way the door numbering exercise is carried out. These changes were mainly required to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act.

Furthermore, a committee was set up consisting of representatives of the Works Division and the Electoral Office. This committee meets periodically to review the situation and introduce any improvements that are felt necessary in the procedures and guidelines of the door numbering exercise.

WORKS PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT UNIT

During 2006, the main task carried out by this unit was the preparation, and updating progress, of a programme of works for various projects undertaken by the Works Division.

Programme of Works carried out during 2006

Projects

Aqueduct in St Venera – paving and lighting	Wied Babu Żurrieq – embellishment
B'Bugia Parish Square paving project Phase I & II	Villa Francia – Lija
Hasting Gardens embellishment project	Ta' Qali – American Embassy site
Misrah San Leonardu in Kirkop – upgrading	Restoration works of various projects
Lija Parish Square paving	Ghar id-Dud Sliema – embellishment
Mixtla ta' Bormla Recreational Area	Mall Garden in Floriana
Xemxija Promenade upgrading	Ta' Xbiex Promenade
OPM Registry Auberge de Castille Valletta	Church Parvis at Żurrieq
13 St Paul's Street, Valletta – OPM Offices	Qrendi Village Core – embellishment

Programme of Works for Projects commencing in early 2007

Xatt is-Sajjeda M'Xlokk	St John's Square in Valletta – paving
Wied Babu - Haġar Qim Panoramic Rd – embellishment	

Refurbishment Works at the Auberge de Castille

- *Installation of Glass Doors:* A number of glass doors were to be installed so as to help improve the entrance procedures into the Auberge and enhance general security and better control on access. The glass doors have now been installed including the glass vestibule for the main door overlooking Castille Square. Only minor items remain pending and these are expected to be concluded in the first quarter of 2007.
- *Restoration and installation of a lighting system for the façade:* Reports, method statements, proposals and estimates for the complete restoration of the façade, as well as the installation of a lighting system for the same façade, had been presented in 2005. During 2006, the Restoration Unit within the WD carried out consolidation works on the façade as a preliminary measure to contain further damage.
- *Refurbishment works in the Registry offices:* The work consisted in the complete refurbishment of the registry area to better accommodate the employees and to store the files more efficiently. The third and final phase of the project has now been completed so that this project is now complete.
- *Paving of the semi-external courtyard:* The final phase of this project has been completed so that all the semi-external corridors at ground floor level are now paved with porfido material.

Works at 13 St Paul's Street and 14-16 Melita Street, Valletta

- The works consist in the refurbishment of these premises so that they could be utilised by Government. Works were taken in hand following the approval by MEPA to carry out refurbishment works and the publication and award of the necessary tenders. The works included some structural alterations, the installation of a new electrical/ELV system, an air-conditioning system, tiling and plastering, new and/or restored apertures, and other finishes and amenities. The refurbishment works have now been completed and the premises are now to be used as offices by the staff of the Office of the Prime Minister.

RAY FARRUGIA

Director General (Works Division)

Works Division

Building and Engineering Department

INTRODUCTION

During 2006 the Building and Engineering Department maintained its role as the principal design arm of the Works Division in respect of projects originating from the Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure (MRES), as well as for projects originating from other ministries and departments.

The main projects that originated from the Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure were landscaping projects aimed to enhance the environment and the quality of life of the local populace and tourists. The main project that originated from outside the MRES was the demolition of structures at Ta' Qali area, including the disposal of hazardous wastes.

The departmental set-up for 2006 incorporated the Office of the Director, the Design Unit which assimilates the Office of the Draughtsmen, the Office of the Records and Archives, and the Architectural and Engineering Office responsible for the design and project management of assigned projects, the Services Unit incorporating the Electrical and Mechanical Engineers Office, the Quantity Surveying Unit which is responsible for preparing tender documents (Pre Contract) and measurement of works carried out (Post Contract), the Land Surveying Unit responsible for carrying out land surveys and related work, and the Rehabilitation Project Office incorporating the Valletta Rehabilitation Project, the Mdina Rehabilitation Committee, and the Cottonera Rehabilitation Committee all in their turn responsible for monitoring of projects in these sensitive areas.

THE DESIGN UNIT

The following is a list of projects that were executed during 2006 and projects which commenced during 2006 and are still in progress:

Projects Originated by the Ministry

- *The Mdina Paving Project:* Works here consisted in the removal of overhead public utility services, the scarifying of existing roads and the construction of a concrete sub-base, the installation of manhole inspection covers, and overall paving in *hardstone* material. Cost of project (excluding services and labour): Lm690,414. Project was completed in April 2006.
- *The Hastings Gardens Project:* Works here involved the construction of a decorative perimeter wall, the paving of walkways in local stone and granite, the construction of a *gardjola*, and the installation of lighting fixtures, street furniture, and other amenities for use by the general public. Cost of project: Lm326,000. Project was completed in July 2006.
- *Upgrading of Pjazza Trasfigurazzjoni in Lija:* The works here comprised the paving of the square in front of the village Parish Church, including the street leading up to the square. The project included also the installation of lighting fixtures, street furniture, and other amenities. Cost of project: Lm47,000. Project was completed in 2006.
- *The Church Parvis at Żurrieq:* The Żurrieq Church parvis project required the removal of an existing staircase and paved areas leading to the parvis, and replacing same with solid granite steps and granite paving. The project is still ongoing and the cost is estimated at Lm50,000.

- *The Mixtla ta' Bormla Project:* This is a landscaping project which includes the formation of footpaths, squares, decorative lighting and street furniture and other amenities. This is another ongoing project estimated to cost some Lm277,000.
- *Upgrading of the area around Birżebbuġa Parish Square, including the Church Parvis:* These works consisted of upgrading the area at the back, sides, and the parvis of the parish church.
- *Upgrading of Għar id-Dud Promenade Project:* This area is being upgraded to the same design as adopted for the existing promenade, stretching from Għar-id-Dud to Spinola Bay. The works include the construction of a sea wall to replace the existing one which was rendered in a bad state of repair, the demolition of the structure known as the *Chalet*, paving, installation of railings, banisters, planting of trees, and installation of other amenities. Estimated cost of project: Lm200,000.
- Demolition of ex-Jumbo Lido, Qui-Si-Sana.
- Construction of Bridge at the Marsa Sports Ground (Marsa, Athletics Track).
- Construction of a monument at Żurrieq in honour of Carmelo Caruana.
- *The Wied Babu Project:* The upgrading of Wied Babu Promenade consisted of a landscaping project and the widening of the walkway. The project included the construction of retaining and parapet walls, paving of the pedestrian walkway, installation of street furniture and lighting fixtures, and other amenities.
- *The Upgrading of the Village Core at Qrendi:* This project comprises the removal of overhead public utility services, the paving of walkways, the upgrading of the Parish Church parvis, the installation of lighting and street furniture and other amenities for the enjoyment of the general public. This project started during October 2006, and the cost is estimated at around Lm200,000.
- The Upgrading of Ta' Xbiex Promenade Project: Works here started in October 2006. The project is estimated to cost Lm90,000.
- Upgrading of the Garden at the Mall in Floriana: Works began in December 2006. The estimated cost is of Lm100,000.
- *Upgrading of Xatt is-Sajjieda at Marsaxlokk:* The design and tender documents in respect of this project were initiated in 2006, with a view that work will start in 2007. This project includes paving with *natural* materials of and along the Promenade at Marsaxlokk.
- *Paving works at Merchants' Street and at St John Street in Valletta:* The design and tender documents in respect of these projects were prepared during 2006. Work here is envisaged to start in 2007.
- *Construction of an Open-Air Sports Facility at Blue Grotto Avenue in Żurrieq:* This project is still in the design stage and consists in the construction of a five-a-side football pitch and a multi-sport arena for children to engage in different sporting activities.
- *Construction of the Clock Tower at Birgu:* Designs were carried out for the reconstruction of the Clock Tower at Birgu. An application was submitted to MEPA for approval.
- *MSD Fuel Pumping Station at Kordin:* A tender was issued for the relocation of existing MRES fuel station from Kirkop to Kordin.
- The Wied Żurrieq Upgrading Project: Preliminary designs were carried out for the upgrading of this area. The project is still in the design stage.
- A Project to address problems related to flooding at St George's Bay, Birżebbuġa
- A Project to address problems related to flooding at Misraħ ir-Repubblika, Żurrieq
- A Project to address flooding problems at Wied Għollieqa and at Triq Turu Rizzo, both in Gżira
- Upgrading of war time underground shelters at Hal Safi
- Structural inspections to address structural problems at the church dedicated to Sant'Ubaldesca in Paola
- Consolidation of fortifications at the Salient of St Christopher Bastions in Valletta

Projects originated by other Ministries and Departments

- *Demolition of structures denominated as the Counting Halls at Ta' Qali, including the removal of hazardous waste:* This project was the main project entrusted to the Works Division from other entities. Works consisted in the demolition of existing structures, the removal of services, the excavation to rock level and construction of a road, and the removal of 800m³ of asbestos.
- *Extension of offices at the Police General Head Quarters at Floriana:* This project consisted of the construction of one level of stores and two levels of offices in one of the vaults at the Police HQ.
- Installation of Passenger Lift at the Police General Head Quarters in Floriana.
- *Offices for MITTS:* Plans were carried out for the conversion of a factory at Rinella in Kalkara to house new offices for MITTS.
- *Garden at Manikata:* This is an ongoing project being financed by the Mellieħa Local Council. The Building and Engineering Department is involved in the design and supervision aspects of the project.
- *Works at Main Hall at San Anton Presidential Palace:* This hall, presently being used as a large kitchen, is being converted into a dining hall. This involves structural works and the installation of partition walls, suspended ceiling, replacement of flooring and the construction of a fire place.
- *Upgrading works of Villa Francia, Lija:* Studies were carried out for the better utilisation by Government of this Villa. Works here include the restoration of the existing building structure and the rehabilitation of the landscaped gardens.
- *Parliamentary Mediterranean Assembly at Spinola Palace in St Julians:* Designs were carried out so that part of this building could host conferences connected with the Secretariat to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean.
- *Upgrading of Gardens at Villa Rundle in Rabat, Gozo:* Designs were carried out for the complete rehabilitation of this garden. The scope of this project is to give a new life to this garden with a view to integrate it with the physical, social and economic aspects of social life in Rabat today.
- *Extension of Addolorata Cemetery in Paola:* This project involves the extension of the existing cemetery, including landscaping and planting as required.
- *Detention Centre at Ta' Kandja:* Plans were carried out for a new detention centre at Ta' Kandja.
- *Alterations and Additions to offices at AFM:* Works consisted in extending the main buildings at the barracks of the Armed Forces.
- Installation of Lift and related construction works at the San Anton Presidential Palace.

Projects Currently at the Design Stage

- Construction of the Regatta Club at B' Buġa
- Demolition and reconstruction of the B' Buġa Water polo Club
- Construction of a Parish Centre at Ta' Xbiex
- Upgrading of Toilets at school formerly known as Tal-Pilar in Valletta
- Extension of the building formerly housing the ex Department of Lotto with a view to house the Ministry of Finance
- Alteration to the buildings housing the Department of Contracts, Ministry of Finance in Floriana
- Construction of a reservoir at ir-Razzett tal-Ħbiberija complex situated in M'Scala

THE SERVICES UNIT

Services Unit – Mechanical

- Ghajn Tuffieħa camping site (cost – Lm108,000 excluding sub-station)
- Hastings Gardens

- Parish Church – Kirkop
- Transfiguration Square – Lija
- The Palace, Valletta (installation of lift)
- Auberge de Castille (installation of lift)
- St Vincent De Paule (air-conditioning and ventilation in halls 9 and 10)
- Home for the Elderly at Mosta (air-conditioning)
- Police Depot – Floriana (installation of lift)
- Transfer of Fuel Pumping Station from Kirkop to Kordin
- Public Garden – Mixtla ta' Bormla
- The San Anton President Palace (air-conditioning and ventilation to dining hall)
- Villa Francia, Lija (air-conditioning)
- Garden at Villa Rundle
- St Vincent De Paule (air-conditioning and ventilation halls 11, 12, 13 & 14)
- OPM offices in St Paul Street in Valletta (air-conditioning)

Services Unit – Electrical

- Flood lighting of architectural important buildings at Mdina including the main entrance gate
- Lighting at The Mall Garden, Floriana
- Lighting of Chapel of San Bert, Żurrieq
- Lighting of Wignacourt Aqueduct, Mrieħel
- Lighting of Hastings Garden, Valletta
- Maintenance of flood lighting at Bieb il-Bombi
- Decorative lighting at the Mixtla ta' Bormla
- Lighting at the Gate of Santa Liena in Bormla
- Lighting at the B' Buga Parish Church project
- Maintenance of lighting at Fort St Angelo
- Lighting of Gate ta' Sant' Anna, Isla
- Substation at AFM Safi Barracks
- Lighting of bridge at Marsa Sports ground
- Electrical works at Land Registry offices in Valletta
- Lighting at Wied Babu Promenade
- Decorative lighting at Qrendi Parish Square
- Decorative lighting at Parish Church Parvis, Żurrieq
- Decorative lighting at Xemxija Promenade, St Paul's Bay
- Decorative lighting at Ta' Xbiex Promenade, Ta' Xbiex
- Decorative lighting at M'Xlokk Promenade, M'Xlokk
- Decorative lighting at St John Square in Valletta
- Decorative lighting at Għar id-Dud Promenade, Sliema
- Decorative lighting to façade of San Pawl Chapel in Attard
- Decorative lighting at San Bazilju Chapel in Mqabba
- Electrical works at San Anton Presidential Palace, Attard
- Electrical works at Villa Francia, Lija
- Electrical works at Villa Rundle in Rabat Gozo
- Decorative lighting of façade at Auberge de Castille, Valletta
- Installation of new electrical lighting system at Library of the Permanent Committee to the House of Representatives
- Installation of central standby generator for use at the Palace, Valletta
- Electrical installation and other services to corner buildings in St Paul Street corner with Melita Street, Valletta
- Second Phase of electrical works at the Auberge de Baviere, Valletta
- Installation of a CCTV system at the Central Public Library in Floriana
- Electrical works at the Department of Contracts, Floriana
- Lighting installation at the driveway and yard at San Anton Palace

- Installation of a lightning protection system at the Verdala Palace in Buskett, l/o Siggiewi

Valletta Rehabilitation Project

- Preparation of a Master Plan for Valletta
- Monument in honour of Enrico Mizzi, Valletta
- Copy of Bust of King George V, Floriana
- Maintenance to corner statues in Valletta
- Maintenance to Great Siege Bell Memorial
- Continuation of restoration to Sarria Church, Floriana
- Continuation of restoration to paintings in Victory Church, Valletta
- Restoration of the 16th Century organ at St John Co Cathedral, Valletta
- Continuation of restoration to Paladini paintings at The Palace, Valletta
- Restoration of Kappella tas-Salvatur, Kalkara
- Restoration of Kappella Santu Rokku, Mdina
- Saluting Battery – Upper Barrakka Gardens
- Maintenance of façade and ceiling at the Jesuit's Church, Valletta
- Pagus Project - Programme of Assistance and Sustainable Urban Management, Regional Framework Operation (RFO) initiative presented by the Umbria Region to the European Commission within the framework of the INTERREG IIIC Programme. A project co-financed by the EU.

THE LAND SURVEY UNIT

The Survey Unit carried out 167 survey downloads besides setting out to various projects. The Survey Unit caters for the following entities:

- The Works Division
- MITTS Ltd
- The Armed Forces of Malta
- The Wignacourt Museum

The Land Survey Unit was involved in all of the following hereunder listed projects namely:

Works Division Projects

General

- Wied Babu Promenade
- Haġar Qim Promenade
- Cospicua Garden
- Floriana Mall Garden

Valletta

- Hastings Gardens
- St John Street
- Merchant Street

Town/Village Main Church Squares/Parvis

- B'Buġa
- Mqabba
- Qrendi
- Safi
- Żurrieq

- Kirkop
- San Ġwann
- Żabbar
- Qormi, San Ġorġ
- Luqa
- Mqabba

Storm Water Projects

- Marsa
- Burmarrad/Kennedy Grove
- Blue Grotto Avenue in Żurrieq
- Kappara/Gżira
- Safi/Kirkop (Karwija)
- Wied Żembaq in B' Bugia
- Wied Qirda in Żebbuġ

Panoramic walks

- Dingli Cliffs

Other Projects

- Mdina Paving Project
- Żurrieq Xarolla/Safi Road depressions
- Wied iż-Żurrieq Village
- Addolorata Cemetery
- Qrendi Maqluba
- Żurrieq, Bubaqra road formation
- Ta' Xbiex Sea Front re-embellishment
- Lija, Villa Francia restoration
- Pembroke
- Żurrieq, Triq it-Torri road formation
- Paola, Wied Blandun access to valley
- Ta' Qali, ex-counting Hall excavation
- Sliema, Ghar id-Dud paving
- Mqabba, Triq il-Mixtla
- Project House basement level
- M'Xlokk Sea Front
- Hal Far recreational area
- Korradino, MSD new fuel station

MITTS Limited

- Rinella relocation factory

Armed Forces

- Hay Wharf new workshops
- Luqa Barracks car park
- Ta' Kandja Quarry

Wignacourt Museum

- Rabat Wignacourt Catacombs

Expropriation Files

- Gudja, St Catherine Street
- Kirkop, St Joseph Street

QUANTITY SURVEYING UNIT

The main duties carried out by the Unit are:

- the preparation of Budget Estimates at pre-planning stage;
- the drafting of particular specifications;
- the preparation of Bills of Quantities;
- the drawing up of estimates for allocation of funds for tendering purposes;
- the evaluation of tenders and drafting of technical reports;
- giving advice regarding contractual procedures and interpretation of conditions of contracts;
- the drawing up of monthly evaluations for issue of interim payments to contractors;
- the re-measurement of all contracted works;
- the drawing up of final accounts and agreeing rates for variations with contractors;
- checking, evaluating, and reporting on extra contractual claims submitted by contractors.

During 2006 the following works were handled by the Q.S. Unit:

- tender documents, Bills of Quantities and Estimates were prepared for 91 tenders with an estimated value of Lm1,214,495.00;
- 48 Final Bills on a re-measurement basis were prepared for completed contracts with a total value of Lm981,742.16;
- the value of 59 contracts awarded but still in course of construction and being re-measured by the Q.S. Unit at the end of 2006 was of Lm11,088,651.56
- valuation for monthly Interim Payments to contractors during the course of contracts amounted to Lm232,752.84.

Besides the work load mentioned above, staff were involved in other activities namely:

- advice to Architects/Engineers on contractual procedures regarding disputes with contractors and consultants;
- a professional Grade Q.S attends the Law Courts in cases of litigation;
- EU funding projects for restoration works: restoration works to Senglea spur, Senglea bastions, St Andrew bastion and lower platform, Valletta, St Andrew bastion and tenile, St John demi-bastion and surrounding area (Valletta landfront);
- estimating and measuring of works carried out by the Construction and Maintenance Department employees on behalf of local councils;
- preparation of other estimates including: pre-contract works included paving works to Merchants' Street, Market Square and St John Square in Valletta. Value of works at Lm700, 000; pre-contract works included restoration for the St John Cavalier Phase I of Valletta Landfront (EU funding project). Value of works at Lm300,000; and budgetary estimates for the Cospicua recreational area. Value of works at Lm527,455.00.

Priority is given to the training of our staff. Various members of the Unit attended courses organised by the University of Malta.

Final Accounts Settled During 2006

Building and Engineering Department	Lm 931,160.63
Construction and Maintenance Department	Lm 25,322.22
Drainage Department	Lm 22,195.89
Storm Water System Department	Lm 3,063.42
Total	Lm 981,742.16

Payments on Account Certified During 2006

Building and Engineering Department	Lm 135,872.56
Construction and Maintenance Department	Lm 32,098.59
DG Services	Lm 26,911.72
Storm Water System Unit	Lm 37,869.97
Total	Lm 232,752.84

EMANUEL BUTTIGIEG
Director (Building and Engineering)

Works Division

Construction & Maintenance Department

The Construction and Maintenance Department (CMD) is one of the largest departments within the Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure. This Department has a workforce of around 900 employees that includes administrative, professional, technical, and direct labour personnel.

The CMD is made up of the following units:

- The Restoration Unit
- The Central Districts Office
- The Supporting Services
- The Lija Workshop

As the name implies, the Restoration Unit carries out specialised restoration works. The Central Districts Office executes various projects and works such as and including embellishment and maintenance works as commissioned by various entities amongst which are ministries, government departments, and local councils.

The CMD provides other services through the Supporting Services Unit, such as waterproofing works and supply of *franka* stone blocks from the Ta' Robba Quarry which is owned by Government. The Lija Workshop carries out various iron works in connection with the various projects being executed by this Department.

RESTORATION UNIT

Various maintenance works have been carried out at the following sites, premises, monuments, historical buildings and fortifications:

Restoration of the Wignacourt Aqueducts	Restoration of Our Saviour Church, Kalkara (1 st phase)
Internal restoration works at Our Lady of Sorrows Church, Pieta	Restoration of San Bażilju and St Michael Church in Mqabba
Restoration of St Mary and St Roque statues at Qrendi	Maintenance works at the Jesuits' Church in Valletta
Restoration of the façade of St Bartholomew Chapel at Żurrieq	Restoration of the façades of the Sarria Church in Floriana
Maintenance works to Hastings Gardens Bastions	Restoration of the façade of St Roque Church, Mdina
Various works at the San Anton Presidential Palace	Restoration of various bastions in Birgu
Restoration and Maintenance works at the Ospizio, Floriana	Restoration of the Madonna ta' Loretu Statue in Kalkara
Maintenance works at St Jacob and St Philip Chapel in San Gwann	Restoration of St Joseph Statue in Kalkara
Restoration of St Mary Statue in Valletta	Restoration of St Lawrence Statue in Birgu
Cleaning of various bastions located in Valletta, Floriana, Mdina, and Cottonera	Restoration works at the premises housing the Notarial Archives (phase 1)
Restoration of St Paul Church at tal-Qlejja, Mosta	Paving works at St Helen Gate in Bormla
Restoration of the façade of St Gregory Church in Żejtun	Completion of a three dimensional survey of the Haġar Qim temples, Mnajdra, and its surroundings
Cleaning/removal of graffiti from various historical sites	Three dimensional survey and digital interpretation of St Elmo Bastions in Valletta
Restoration of Sta Luċija Chapel at Mtarfa	Initiation of restoration works at the National Library Portico in Valletta

Restoration of Santa Maria ta' Cappuna Chapel in Marsa	Commencement of restoration works at old Parish Church in Siġġiewi
Restoration of Sta Barbara Bastion in Valletta	Paving works at Triq id-Dejqa, Bormla
Replacement of roof located in Our Lady of Victory Church in Valletta	Restoration works at Victoria Gate in Valletta
Various works at the Presidential Palace in Valletta	Maintenance works at the Verdala Presidential Palace
Maintenance works to the Westreme Battery in Mellieħa	Photogrammetric survey of St John Cavalier, St Andrew Bastion, St Andrew Tennaille, Marina Curtain, Castille Curtain, and St Christopher Bastion all in Valletta, St John Bastions and Couvre de Porte in Birgu, the Senglea spur and Grunenburg Bastion in Senglea, and St Paul Bastion and D'Homedes Bastion in Mdina.
Restoration of a historical house at Argotti Botanical Gardens in Floriana	
Restoration of the façades of the three Churches in Balzan	
Installation of a new Electrical Network at the Presidential Palace in Valletta	

CENTRAL DISTRICTS OFFICE

During the year in review, the Districts Section carried out works commissioned by local councils. Works were also carried out on commission from various government departments and also from the Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure. These works consisted mainly of the laying of new pavements, reinstatement of same, embellishment works, the upkeep of roads and gardens, patching of primary and secondary roads, cleaning of canals, building of walls, and various maintenance works on government-owned tenements (non residential) as requested by the Estates Management Department.

The main projects undertaken by CDO during 2006 were the following:

Maintenance work to balustrades located at Piazza Sta Margherita in Cospicua	Embellishment works at St Anthony Square in B'Kara
Paving works in front of St Francis School in Cospicua	Embellishment works at Ta' Xbiex Promenade
Reconstruction of the front entrance stairs of the Żurrieq Parish Church Parvis	Preparatory works in connection with the paving works at Mdina
Works at the Mġarr Parish Church Parvis	Embellishment works at Lija
Reconstruction of decorative boundary wall at Ċentru Hidma Soċjali in Sta Venera	Embellishment works at B'Buġa
Construction of hall at Gharghur (on behalf of Gharghur Local Council)	Embellishment works at Mixtla ta' Bormla
Embellishment works at Hastings Gardens, which included the reconstruction of the boundary wall and the <i>Gardjola</i>	Restoration and refurbishment works at Villa Francia in Lija
Embellishment works at the Wied Babu Promenade at Żurrieq	Paving of the Parish Church Parvis in Qrendi
Embellishment works at Kirkop Square	Embellishment works at the Mall Gardens in Floriana
Embellishment/paving works at Wignacourt Aqueducts	Embellishment of Ghar id-Dud Promenade in Sliema
Embellishment works at Mellieħa, Siġġiewi and Selmun	Paving works at the Saluting Battery in Valletta
Embellishment works at the Xemxija Promenade	

Works carried out in government-owned tenements were the following:

Maintenance works at 40/42 Lascaris Wharf, Valletta	Construction of a substation at the Auberge de Baviere in Valletta
Works at the SPCA premises in Floriana	Replacement of roof at Casa Leoni in Sta Venera
Replacement of roofs of a farmhouse at Bur iċ-Ċaġħaq in Bulebel	Other maintenance works of a minor nature in government-owned property

SUPPORTING SERVICES SECTION

The waterproofing section laid some 7,400 square metres of waterproofing membrane on various government-owned premises and departments.

Apart from the usual cutting of *franka* stone blocks, the quarry workers at Ta' Robba were also employed in extending the surface area of the quarry floor by a considerable amount of square metres.

Materials issued from tar-Robba Quarry during 2006 were the following:

	Qty
<i>Samrotti bit-talut</i> (Storm Water Project)	1,957
<i>Blokki kbar</i> (2'x3'x4')	1,394
<i>Kantun tal-5"</i>	4,250
<i>Kantun tas-6"</i>	7,050
<i>Kantun tas-7"</i>	500
<i>Kantun tad-9"</i>	46,224
<i>Kantun tal-11"</i>	96
<i>Ċangatura tat-3"</i>	27,161

NICHOLAS GRECH

Director (Construction and Maintenance)

Works Division

Financial Management Department

The Financial Management Department continued with its role of providing the various departments within the Works Division and the Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure with assistance in matters relating to finance and procurement of supplies and services. The Department is also responsible for the administration of the main registry and the provision of security services throughout the Ministry.

FINANCE BRANCH

The Finance Branch is made up of the following sections - the Accounts Section, the Financial Control Unit, and the Revenue and Salaries Support Unit. This new structure is the result of the newly set-up Financial Control Unit (FCU) and the transfer to Gozo of the back-office work relating to the computation of salaries, for which a supporting unit was set up in our offices in Malta.

The Accounts Section

During 2006, the Accounts Section continued with its restructuring programme – a programme that has now been running for the past five years. Code-named *Management Efficiency Programme* (MEP), this programme is having the effect of transforming the Accounts Section into a proactive role, whilst integrating concepts such as accountability and value for money within all its structures and work practices.

The MEP sets out the clear objectives of the Accounts Section and implements a whole re-engineering of all the work processes, transforming the Accounting Officer's role from a passive role to an active and dynamic one. Thanks to this programme, a new and innovative structure was set up within the Accounts Section aimed towards increasing efficiency and cost effectiveness in accounting processes, particularly the early settlement of dues to the Department's suppliers.

Through the MEP, several initiatives and new comprehensive financial reports were introduced within the Works Division and the Ministry. One such report is a detailed financial report regarding Capital Projects. This report is issued monthly and within five days of the following month for which period it covers. This comprehensive report presents a detailed and clear financial status position on each capital project being undertaken by the Ministry – from the early soft commitment stage throughout the whole life-cycle of the project until it is fully paid up.

With a view to implementing new concepts in managing finances more efficiently and effectively, the MEP introduced the Project Management Programme (PMP). The PMP served as a valuable management tool whereby senior officers from the Accounts Section set up monthly meetings with every Project Manager responsible for each Capital project undertaken by the Ministry. These project management meetings serve to establish expenditure targets of each project and to regularly monitor the progress in the implementation of such projects. The outcome of this Project Management Programme is to better manage our Capital Vote through clear projected expenditure and to step up project implementation.

Through the MEP as undertaken within the Finance Branch, several structures and systems within the branch have also been re-engineered. One such outcome was the setting-up of a new unit within the branch: the Financial Control Unit (FCU).

Financial Control Unit (FCU)

The scope for setting up the FCU was to see the implementation of the planning and control measures being permeated through the MEP.

The main role of the FCU is:

- to exercise financial control over the expenditure being incurred by the various departments and units within the Ministry; and
- to formulate and initiate cost-cutting measures/structures with the sole view of imbuing a value for money culture in our operations.

The FCU specifically addressed the rather wide ‘gap’ existing at the time of initial implementation of the MEP between the commitment stage and the date on which the full payment is effected to the supplier. This ‘gap’ was clearly not only portraying a bad creditors status image of our Ministry and the Public Service in general, but was also putting under question the accountability status of the outstanding dues involved.

Hence, the FCU engaged itself fully to implement more control and monitoring on the commitments being raised and the relevant outstanding payments. In fact, through a structure that was set up and is being co-ordinated by the FCU, monthly management meetings are now being held with every Director/Head of Department within the Ministry regarding commitments that their Department had generated, with a view that these commitments and their respective settlement be more effectively managed.

Furthermore, new systems were set up within the FCU whereby desk officers could now identify commitments that are effectively due for payment, even through information received directly from the suppliers themselves (in a 360° system), in order to expedite the payments and hence be more responsive to suppliers’ claims.

Positive outcomes that have been registered through these measures introduced by the FCU include: allotted funds are being utilised much more efficiently and effectively, expenditure wastage or excess is continually being identified and rectified, the suppliers’ ‘credit period’ has drastically been reduced from an average of nine months to only 30 days, the formulation of business plans and projections is much more realistic, and financial data is being gathered in ‘real time’ and being reported upon on a much more regular basis.

The FCU is also engaged in the introduction of several programmes and exercises that are directed towards effective control and monitoring of the expenditure being generated both relating to the operations in general (e.g. overheads) of all the departments within the Ministry, and also to capital infrastructural projects that our Ministry is undertaking. The main focal thrust exercised by the FCU is to create or regenerate the ‘value for money’ concept within all operations/structures throughout the Ministry and also to establish itself as a catalyst in curbing government expenditure.

The following is a list of programmes and exercises that were initiated (and now being implemented) by the FCU:

- *Tenements programme* – a control/monitoring programme vis-à-vis rental dues/payments. This programme involved a detailed analysis of all the tenements that were listed under our Ministry; tenements that the rental value of which was substantial and, up to year 2003, used to reach almost Lm225,000 yearly.

From this *tenements* analysis, a team from the FCU compiled a full and correct inventory of all the tenements that are to be registered under our Ministry and for which a rental obligation was truly due. The positive outcome of this exercise was the release of tenements amounting to around Lm55,000 – tenements that either were of no beneficial use or have over time been developed into other structures. The programme is now being updated and addressed on a regular basis.

- *Utilities programme* – a control/monitoring programme in respect of telephone, water and electricity bills.

Telephone: A full and correct inventory of all the telephone lines registered under the various departments and entities falling within this Ministry was undertaken. During such a comprehensive exercise, a lot of lines, which had been identified as being of no use or need by our Ministry, were eventually removed. Many such lines had, along the years, been procured at the initial stage of several projects and remained under our name even when the project (say, a road or housing estate) had long been completed, lines which during this exercise had been found hanging and lying around for no use at several sites or places, but for which lines rent was still being claimed and paid.

As a result of this inventory compilation, all the telephone billings are handled by the FCU. The FCU, beside maintaining and updating this inventory of telephone lines, also monitors the operational cost of each line and audits excessive bills through itemised billings.

The positive outcome of such an extensive monitoring exercise is that the total expenditure incurred on telephone billings, related to all the departments falling within this Ministry, registered a savings for the period up to August, when compared with the same period in 2003, of 20% or Lm31,200.

Water and Electricity: The same exercise conducted for telephone bills is also being carried out on Water and Electricity billings. The first phase of this exercise, i.e. the removal of several meters, has already been addressed through the compilation of the Tenements programme. The FCU then initiated the process of setting up a proper structure for the close monitoring of all bills under this item. Today, following the initiation of this programme and the related effective monitoring structure, substantial savings were registered on water and electricity consumption billings pertaining to the departments falling within our Ministry during last year.

When compared with the same period in 2004, the expenditure for a seven month period in 2006, incurred on rent and consumption for water and electricity pertaining to all the line departments within the Ministry, dropped by 21%, or Lm23,000.

- *Materials Control Programme (MCP)* – a control/monitoring programme regarding material being issued on capital projects undertaken by the Ministry's own workforce.

Another initiative being adopted at the FCU is the programme that aims to control the substantial materials being issued and used on major projects. Since major projects are now being implemented through our own workforce instead of farming out to third parties, the need arose to set up internal audit structures in order to better control/monitor the purchase of materials for these projects.

The MCP effects the necessary auditing on all the materials authorised, issued, and paid for on each major capital project. The programme matches the materials being issued and registered for payment at the Accounts Section within the Finance Branch with the quantities of the materials as measured on site of the respective project by our Quantity Surveyors. A report on the findings following such an exercise is then drawn up through the MCP by the FCU.

The projects that have already been or are being analysed under this programme include: St Thomas Bay, M'Scala; Storm-water Systems project in Marsa and Qormi; Buġibba Dawret il-Gzejjer project; Caravan Site project; Xghajra embellishment project; Żurrieq Ġnien il-Bennej Garden; Mqabba Garden; Safi Barracks; Streets and pavements embellishment project; Hastings Gardens.

- *Reconciliation of Materials Programme (RECOM)* – a control/monitoring programme re material being issued from our Central Stores and utilised on specific jobs undertaken by the Ministry's own workforce.

The FCU has also initiated and implemented a programme – RECOM – with the objective of maintaining an audit trail on all the materials being issued from our Central Stores in Mriehel. The RECOM programme matches the materials that are being issued 'per job' from our Central Stores with the materials being reported by our District Officers within the Construction and Maintenance Department, as being used on the job for which it was issued or still in hand within the sub-store of the respective district office.

The RECOM programme issues a fortnightly report on its findings, where it exposes any discrepancies, and its cost, that may result from this auditing process.

- *Transport Programme* Transport costs have also been addressed by the FCU. In fact, the expenditure relating to the hiring of vehicles up to August 2006 registered a drop of 76% or Lm81,300 when compared with the figure registered for the same period in 2003. Moreover, the hired fleet size dropped, when comparing these same two periods, by 72%; from 94 vehicles in 2003 to 26 last year. This downsizing in our hired fleet resulted in yearly savings of around Lm156,000 – when comparing the number of hired vehicles today as against the number registered in 2003.

A programme is also being undertaken by the FCU whereby all expenditure relating to transport costs is being mapped out and related to each individual vehicle. The outcome of this complex programme is aimed: to identify the true cost of each individual vehicle within our vast transport fleet and suggest, through a cost-benefit analysis, measures that would result in a reduction of transport costs.

- *Datatrak - Vehicle Control Programme (DT-VCP)* This Ministry has established a Datatrak system in order to better control its transport fleet. The FCU has just begun a programme (DT-VCP) whereby data captured from the Datatrak system is being matched with the sections/departments logbooks or other means registering the authorised work assignments/movements of the vehicle concerned.

The main objective of the programme is to maximise the effective utilisation of the Ministry's transport fleet and also to better control/monitor the movement of our vehicles with a view for increasing productivity and minimise excessive fuel consumption.

All of these initiatives, introduced through this restructuring programme (MEP), are aimed towards being a new and effective tool in fulfilling our commitment in achieving a modern management environment, in line with the targets set out by the public service reform. The Finance Branch within our Ministry is, in fact, committed to act as a catalyst in the dynamic process towards a management that is more effective and real.

Revenue Section

A restructuring programme is also underway at the Revenue Section. The section has now been reorganised into two units, the Cash Office and the Collection Unit.

In collaboration with the Contracts and Procurement Section, the Cash Office within the Revenue Section has a 'One Stop Shop' regarding tendering/payment procedures.

Up till now, prospective bidders had to call at the Contracts and Procurement Section, and in some cases even at the Chief Draughtsman's Office in Project House, before and after attending the Cash Office in order to effect payments relating to quotation/tender documents. With the setting up of this 'One Stop Shop', all quotation/tender documents and any plans that form part of these tendering documents are to be sold as one complete set at the Cash Office, without the need of the prospective bidders to call at other sections.

Levels of efficiency and effectiveness continued also to be improved at the Collection Unit within the Revenue Section. New systems and structures have been introduced in order to step up the control and monitoring processes regarding the collection of outstanding dues from various departments within the Works Division and on the proper registration of claims.

Salaries Section and the Salaries Support Unit

In line with Government's policy of providing work in Gozo for Gozitan staff currently working in Malta offices, the Salaries Section within the Finance Branch of this Department was dismantled and the process of the computation of the Works Division's employees' salaries was transferred as 'back office' work to

offices in Gozo. This 'back office' work is now being done by Ministry of Gozo employees under our direct management.

The transfer process was successfully implemented through the guidance of the Works Division Financial Management Department. The current organisation structure was also mapped out by this Department, wherein the Salaries Support Unit (SSU) was also set up within the Finance Branch.

The SSU is there to co-ordinate the flow of information that is transmitted from our offices in Malta to the Gozo-based Salaries Section. The SSU acts as the centre or liaison office through which the information is channelled. It also serves the purpose of customer care to our 'clients' (that is, our employees).

Monthly management meetings are also being held between the top officials of the Financial Management Department within our Ministry and the Salaries Section in Gozo in order to closely monitor the whole process, maintain the high efficiency levels expected from this section and to issue monthly expenditure projections.

CONTRACTS & PROCUREMENT BRANCH

This Branch is responsible for all the procurement needs of the Works Division as well as the issue of all contracts that are needed to implement the various projects that the Division undertakes during the year.

The Branch is daily engaged in the processing of various and voluminous number of requisitions for the procurement of all type of materials, equipment, stationery, the purchase and repairs of machinery, and other stores through the nominated period contractors. For this purpose there is a large central store at Mriehel, with a smaller store for stationery and other ancillary items at Floriana.

The Contracts & Procurement section also deals with the disposal of various unserviceable items from various departments by means of tendering procedures. It also disposes of obsolete/unserviceable items through appointed boards of survey.

Another major task entrusted to this Branch is the compilation and management of the Inventory within the departments of the Works Division. The importance of this exercise will be much more imprinted once the Accrual Accounting system is in place.

The Contracts and Procurement Branch is currently engaged in talks with the Ministry's Information Management Officer and the MITTS in order to set up a database management programme to monitor and control better the procurement function. The programme is currently in its final screening phase and is envisaged to be made *live* early next year.

Activities in the line of duty of the Contracts & Procurement Branch from November 2005 to October 2006

The Branch processed 261 contracts for a total value of Lm2,662,315.98.

	Qty	Lm
Contracts Department Tenders	15	748,031.94
Departmental Contracts	86	692,739.82
Quotations	45	72,759.04
Hand Quotations	100	137,051.64
Direct Orders	15	1,011,733.54
Total	261	2,662,315.98

The Section processed also a total of 1,927 GSPOs in purchasing items from contractors having period contracts with the Department. The value of these purchases was of Lm864,361.41.

The Stores Section within the same Contracts and Procurement Section processed 1,467 GSPOs vis-à-vis purchases of items of stationery for a total value of Lm105,864.

Six hundred and thirty nine tender documents were sold to prospective bidders. Revenue collected from this process was of Lm7,402.

There were two instances of sale of items in their *tale quale* state. Revenue collected from these sales totalled Lm485.

Contracts processed by this Section

- Design, supply and installation of mechanical and electrical services and equipment for the new Fuel Station at Corradino (Lm99,373).
- Electrical installation and wiring works at the Palace, Valletta (including main distribution panel and cable distribution network) (Lm101,206.25).
- Demolition of existing building and excavation works at Ta' Qali (Counting Hall site, adjoining Building and open areas) (Lm837,633.44).
- Civil engineering works, shifting of copper and fibre optic cables in connection with the Marsa Storm Water Project (Phase 2) Jetties Wharf, Marsa (Lm41,181).
- Demolition of building and excavation works including the carting away of material from site at Hay Wharf, Floriana (Lm15,873).
- Supply of decorative lighting for Hastings Gardens at Valletta, Valletta Rehabilitation Project (Lm14,801).
- Cleaning and clearing of run-off water culvert at Marsa: loading and transporting of silt and other alluvial deposits from Jetties Wharf, Marsa, to Offshore Sport Ground (Lm18,290).
- Supply and delivery of luminaries for the Cospicua Recreational Area (Lm17,698.80).
- The Valletta Master Plan study project (Lm22,455).
- Supply and delivery of *gres porcellanato* tiles to Aqueducts project at B'Kara and Balzan (Lm40,070.90).
- Conservation of the vault painting at Our Lady of Victory Church in Valletta (Lm25,094).
- Urgent construction of a storm water culvert at Wied Rmiedi in Attard (Lm14,013.18).
- Supply and delivery to Malta on a CIF basis of hard stone material (Lm56,852).
- Supply and installation of a passenger lift at Police General Head Quarters, Floriana (Lm11,805).
- Piling works to bridge abutments at Jetties Wharf, Marsa (Lm49,985).
- Supply of modular aluminium suspended platforms for the Restoration Unit (Lm38,758.49).
- Supply and delivery of *gres porcellanato* tiles to aqueducts site at Sta Venera (Lm30,075).
- Purchase of ready mixed concrete for general and maritime use in Malta (North & South Region - from August to December) (Lm58,730).

The Registry Section

Last year, the refurbishment programme at the offices of the Registry Section continued with the installation of more effective and modern equipment. IT hardware, including PCs, is currently being upgraded to meet the level of efficiency required by the Section. It is hoped that such initiatives will serve to improve substantially the performance and effectiveness of this vital section.

The Security Section

A special unit within the Security Section was set up in June 2003 to carry out daily after-office-hours inspections to Watchmen employed by the Works Division to watch various sites across the island. In 2005, these inspections were extended to cover vehicles parked around our premises during the night. During last year, more than 2,500 night inspections were conducted and moreover, the Security section was also engaged in regular inspections on day workers when called for by line department Directors.

In 2004, the Security Section was equipped with an innovative patrol monitoring system denominated 'Checkpoint'. This system is intended to record the number of checks/inspections that are to be carried out at identified sites by our security personnel. It will serve to better monitor these inspections by ensuring that these inspections are truly carried out at the desired times and frequency.

To date, this system has been installed and is fully functional at the Administrative Buildings in Floriana, where six hourly patrols are conducted every night along fifteen points allocated around these buildings. It is intended that during next year, further sites will be identified for the installation of this patrol system.

MARIO RODGERS

Director (Financial Management)

Services Division

Office of the Director General

Mission statement

To provide a comprehensive range of quality services through its departments and units in projects for the Government of Malta and to clients of the Division in an efficient manner and with the required value for money.

INTRODUCTION

The Division was set up in December 2005 when three departments and a number of units that formed part of the Works Division were transferred to this Division. The departments were the Building Construction Industry Department, the Cleansing Services Department, and the Manufacturing & Services Department. The Building Construction Industry Department was later dissolved, but the Units that formed this Department continued with their activity under the direct responsibility of the Director General.

BUILDING REGULATION OFFICE

Development of New Legislation

As in the previous years, the Building Regulations Unit maintained its focus on the development of new building regulations with the following initiatives:

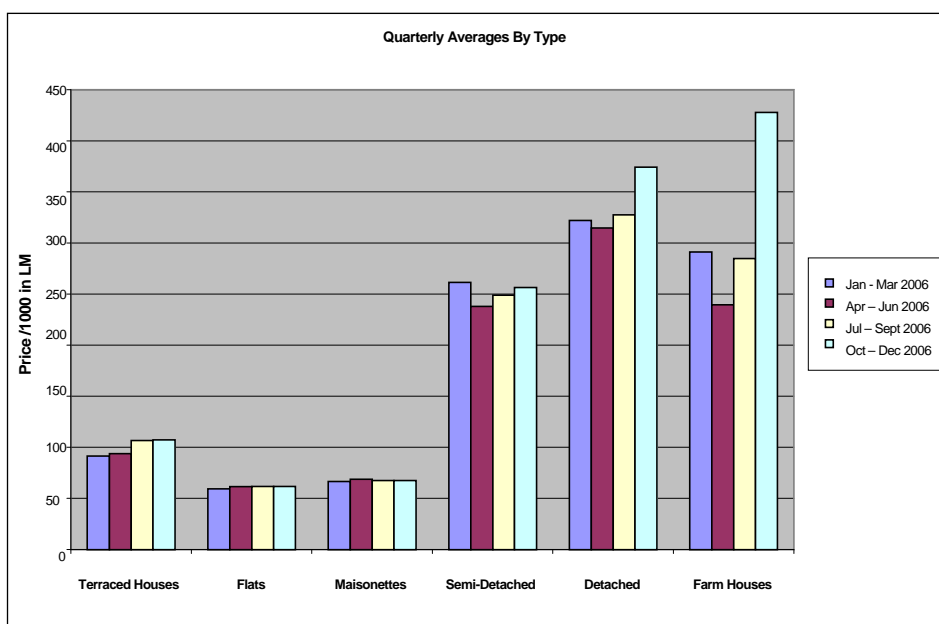
- The publication of a document on *Minimum Requirements for the Energy Performance of Buildings in Malta*, known as Technical Guidance Document ‘F’. This document, which was launched in October 2005 for public consultation, was amended as necessary and issued in conjunction with Legal Notice 238 of 2006 and 269 of 2006 through Government Notice No. 1002 to form part of the new legislation that transposes articles 4, 5, and 6 of Directive 2002/91/EC.
- The co-ordination of a working group to formulate a national methodology for measuring the energy performance of buildings in order to comply with the requirements of Directive 2002/91/EC. This working group met on four occasions during 2006 to discuss and agree on the proposals that were made by individual members on specific topics. The draft proposal for a methodology to be used in connection with residential buildings was amended to be brought in line with the requirements of Document F and research was carried out for a proposal dealing with other building categories.
- Participation in the *Energy Demand Management Committee* of the EC, which met twice in Brussels, and also the participation in the Concerted Action Group, which met in Finland (Lahti), and Hungary (Budapest).
- Became a member of the *Display Campaign* which is being organised by *Energie Cités* Association of European local authorities for promoting a local sustainable energy policy. This campaign will promote the display of large posters on public buildings that will provide information on the performance of the buildings in terms of primary energy use, water consumption and CO₂ emissions.
- Participated in technical committees of the Malta Standards Authority dealing with Eurocodes on Structures and codes of practice on Ventilation of premises and Occupational Health & Safety.
- Participated in work done by the Ministry’s EU Affairs Directorate on matters dealing with *Free Movement of Services, Mutual Recognition of Qualifications, Education & Training in the Field Of Architecture* and the Floods Directive.

- Participated in work on amending the *Engineering Professions Act*.
- Drafted and proposed amendments to the *Building Price Control Act*.

The Building Regulations Unit also did a number of fire safety design checks on a number of projects being designed by the Building & Engineering Department, amongst which were the proposed alterations to the Contracts Department offices and Project House in Floriana. The Unit also prepared tender documents for the purchase and installation of fire doors and fire evacuation signs for Project House.

Property Prices Survey

Information gathering on the fluctuation of prices in the domestic properties market continued throughout 2006. The information was taken from adverts in the local papers and logged into the department's database. The following chart represents an indication on a quarterly basis.



MARKET SURVEILLANCE ON CE MARKING OF CONSTRUCTION PRODUCTS & QUALITY ASSURANCE

CE Marking of Lift Installations

The Unit responsible for market surveillance of lift installations screened some 4,000 permit applications and 3,000 DNO's as submitted to MEPA. Permit applications having a lift installation were noted into the lift installation database recording system, which system has been in use since 30 June 2002. The Unit also made 400 site inspections and held a number of meetings with individual installers and the Association of Lift Installers. The Unit took part in a twinning light project that was organised by the Market Surveillance Directorate of the Ministry for Competitiveness and Communications.

CE Marking of Other Construction Products

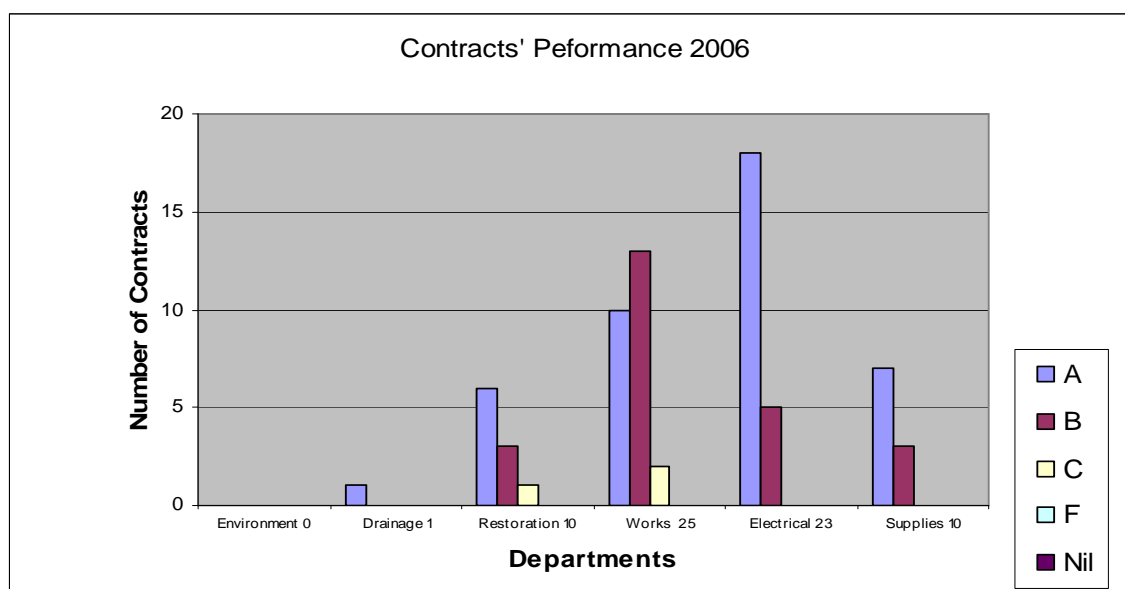
The Unit continued with its participation in a technical committee set up by the BICC and the MSA that is evaluating the preparedness of Maltese enterprises for the introduction of CE marking of construction products such as aggregate, doors and windows, concrete block-work, thermal insulation materials, and certain pre-cast concrete elements. The Unit also participated in a meeting held in Sweden (Malmo), and which was attended by national representatives of most of the 25 Member States, including representatives from Romania, Bulgaria, and Turkey.

Quality Assurance on Works Division and Services Division Projects

The Quality Assurance Unit continued with its work of gathering samples and co-ordinating the testing of materials that are used on projects carried out by both the Works Division and the Services Division. This year's work was again mainly focused on the Storm Water Project adjoining the localities of Qormi and Marsa, the pre-casting of concrete elements that will be used for the Burmarrad-Salini project, the Wied iż-Żurrieq Road Promenade project, the Hastings Gardens embellishment project, and on various other embellishment projects being undertaken throughout Malta. Around 1,730 samples were gathered and tested (an increase of 147% over 2005) at the Malta University and other private laboratories. The Unit also provided the services of one of its technical staff to help in the running of the laboratory of the faculty of Architecture & Civil Engineering Department at the University of Malta to offset some of the Division's costs for testing at this laboratory.

Database of Contractors' Performance

The Quality Assurance Unit continued with the screening and evaluation of the Contract Completion Reports of tenders issued by the Works Division and the Services Division, logging the results in the database that is being maintained to monitor quality assurance to help in the process of adjudication of tenders. Due to unforeseen circumstances, only 69 reports were evaluated and logged in the database throughout the year.



Occupational Health and Safety Unit

The Health and Safety Unit continued with its drive to increase awareness of health and safety practice of the workforce at the Services Division.

Routine Work

The unit made 234 on site of work inspections (an increase of 18% over 2005), and issued 226 reports (an increase of 35% over 2005), in connection with these inspections. It also investigated 39 cases of accidents where employees suffered some sort of bodily injury, and another 21 complaints made by various employees or Units. Regular bi-monthly meetings were also held with the H&S workers' representatives where various complaints and other matters relating to H&S issues were tackled. Ten on-site project risk assessments were also carried out together with the supervisory staff of the actual projects.

Awareness and Training Courses

The Unit organised a seminar on Safety and Road Signage that was attended by some 60 employees in the grade of architects, senior managers, and employees of both Divisions. The Assistant Commissioner of Police and the Director of the Traffic Management Directorate of the ADT were guest speakers in this seminar. A member from the Unit is also co-ordinating with the BICC a programme on safety of construction workers and on-site training called the *Safety Bus programme*.

Other Initiatives

The unit updated the Pandemic Flue Plan, compiled a study and a report on the risks encountered by workers when using hardened steel nails, and carried out an exercise and compiled a report to determine the amount of and the condition of both safety and road signage that are available to both Divisions. The Unit also analysed and gave its recommendations on tenders for the procurement of safety gloves, boots, hard-hats, soap, eyewear, respiratory equipment, and sun lotion. All members of the Unit attended several seminars and courses as part of a continuous professional development programme.

ARCHITECTURAL CONSULTANCY SERVICES UNIT

During 2006, this Unit focused mainly on preparatory work in connection with the Birkirkara-Msida Flood Relief and Water Conservation Project. In conjunction with the Water Services Corporation, the Unit is engaged in the preparation of documents and the issuing of a contract for works in connection with a Storm Water Masterplan for Malta and Gozo. The unit was also in charge of the project management for the construction of the last phase of the Qormi-Marsa storm watercourse.

MARINE AND STORM WATER UNIT

The following works were carried out by the Marine and Storm Water Unit:

- *Hay Wharf*: Project management and site supervision of works here were continued on the construction of the quays, denominated as phase B and C of the project, with 90% of the works on the quay construction now being complete.
- *Slipway at Pembroke*: New designs were prepared and an application submitted to MEPA.
- *Slipway at Marsa Regatta Club*: Design and submission of application to MEPA.

Storm Water Projects

- *The Qormi-Marsa Flood Relief*: Construction of the last phase of the storm watercourse was continued and has, for the greater part, been completed. The watercourse in this last phase of the project was 280 metres long, and works involved the manufacture and laying of 130 pre-cast concrete elements to form part of the canal embankments, each element weighting around 12 tonnes. Another 650 elements were laid to form the bed of the watercourse, with some 1800 blocks of special sized stone also laid to cover the embankments. A road bridge was constructed at the point of discharge of the watercourse, built of 70 pre-stressed concrete beams and having as its foundations 23 concrete piles. A number of archaeological findings were discovered during these works, and these had an impact on the duration of the works. These finds were uncovered, measured, and documented by qualified archaeologists, and the project works adapted in such a manner as to enable these finds to be recovered if necessary.
- *Burmarrad-Salini Flood Relief*: Dredging works to clear the Sökkors watercourse were completed. An EIA study, a Cultural Heritage study, and studies to evaluate the impacts of the proposed storm watercourse on the geomorphology, landform, and visual aspects were also carried out. Work was also continued on the manufacturing of pre-cast concrete elements that will form the embankments of the water channel of which 1,600 have already been cast.

- *Flooding in various localities:* Scheme designs to solve the problem of flooding in the following localities were completed, namely in Pembroke, Gżira, Marsaskala, B'Buġja, Żebbuġ, Żurrieq, Ghaxaq, Wied Blandun and Safi.

INTEGRATED VALLEY MANAGEMENT UNIT

The Valley Management Unit (VMU) is responsible for the maintenance and rehabilitation works in valleys. The specific activities and objectives of valley site operations in 2006 varied and included:

- the removal of illegally dumped material and rubbish, aimed at keeping the valleys clean;
- the regular clearing of excessive sediment especially from water retention areas, behind dams, and from culverts, under bridges and in pipes, and the repair of such infrastructure to restore the water carrying and holding capacity of watercourses;
- the clearing of alien species and introduction of vegetation more suited to the particular environment in order to restore and rehabilitate natural habitats;
- measures to reduce risks of flooding of agricultural land and access roads, and to improve accessibility.

In 2006, work was undertaken in a number of different valleys in different locations as follows:

- *Wied is-Sewda:* Sections of this valley were again cleared of material that accumulated in the water course and behind the low dams along the valley. Illegally dumped rubbish, including building debris, white goods and other items were also removed from areas notorious for illegal dumping. Repair work on three masonry water retention structures were completed thus restoring the water holding capacity at various locations. At a peri-urban location of Wied is-Sewda, a number of indigenous tree species were planted intended as a pilot project in tree planting along valleys.
- *Wied Qlejgha:* A long stretch of this valley is being considered for rehabilitation. Consultations were started with MEPA in 2006, and a planning application for urgent works for the repair of a collapsed dam was submitted and approved. The construction works, together with clearance of debris and sediment were carried out in the summer months. Part of these works also included the reconstruction of high walls to retain soil in agricultural land situated on the upstream side and adjacent to the breach in the dam.
- *Wied Inċita:* A reservoir that had silted up was cleaned and maintained, with repair and cleaning works carried out to all connecting pipes and culverts. Sections of the watercourse were also cleared of excessive sediment and dumped material and rubbish that had been washed down by runoff water.
- *Wied ta' l-Isqof:* Works carried out included the clearance of dumped material from along the watercourse, and sediment that impeded water flow in constrictions in the water course, pipes and under bridges. A number of access bridges to agricultural land were also constructed.
- *Chadwick Lakes:* Large amounts of sediment were removed from a number of locations, especially behind dams, bridges, and small retention structures. Other works along this part of the Qlejgha watercourse included grass cutting, road resurfacing, and cleaning of water tunnels and culverts.
- *Office-based tasks:* The VMU office staff has embarked on a cataloguing and recording system that is comprehensive across all valley systems. The above sites where works have been undertaken are now on record and under regular monitoring. The same approach is to be taken for all forthcoming works in different locations.

CARMEL MIFSUD BORG
 Director General (Services Division)

Services Division

Manufacturing and Services Department

Since last year, the Manufacturing and Services Department (MSD) was shifted from the Works Division to the Services Division, which had been newly set up under a separate Director General within the same Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure.

MARSA BRANCH

As in previous years, during 2006 the Marsa Branch continued to provide specific technical engineering works for new embellishment projects in different localities, and maintenance services on existing public facilities and infrastructure. Staff complement at this Branch amounted to 382 employees, including the members of a governmental co-operative scheme operating within the Department. *Jobs* opened here during the year amounted to 826, to which must be added another 414 which had been opened during the previous year, but work on which had been continued and completed during the current year, thus totalling 1,240 jobs. All clients were government departments and other public entities.

By the end of 2006, major project works were initiated at various locations namely that at Villa Francia in Lija which was related to various types of restoration and new steel, timber, plumbing, and electrical works. Another project consisted of the installation of a new metal-framed bridge with timber and acrylic plastic (Perspex) slat-flooring through St Helen's Gate at Cospicua. There was also the upgrading of promenades such as that at Ghar id-Dud in Sliema and the one at Ta' Xbiex which required the installation of a metal railing, electrical lighting, benches, and street furniture. These works shall be continued in 2007.

Metal Trades Section

In conjunction with the Carpentry Section, the Metal Trades Section carried out steel fabrication, installation, finishing and/or maintenance works in connection with major embellishment and other types of projects. These included the half-a-kilometre run of steel railing at the Wied Babu Promenade in Żurrieq, the external and internal railings and gates at the Mixtla in Cospicua and Hastings Gardens in Valletta, and the completion of 500 double man-hole covers of various sizes for the Mdina project. A large steel-framed with timber-strips fence was manufactured and installed at the lower end of Sir Paul Boffa Avenue in Paola. New steel frames for all 20 canopies at Independence Garden in Sliema were manufactured and installed. Steel formwork mouldings for the laying of concrete-bases regarding several storm water mitigation projects were also prepared. The main stand for the carnival festivities was erected and dismantled at Freedom Square in Valletta, as were poles and flags erected in place in occasions of public festivities and official visits by high foreign dignitaries. Many other routine and smaller jobs involving metal and steel works were undertaken by the Section for various localities.

Carpentry Section

In conjunction with the Metal Trades Section, the Carpentry Section manufactured and installed various types of timber products such as handrails, benches and field gates at the Wied Babu Promenade. Wooden Iroko (*Chlorophora excelsa*) benches, dust bins, and other street furniture were manufactured and installed in place at the Mixtla in Cospicua and Hastings Gardens. Work at the Mixtla included shading paths, cladding of toilets, and playground equipment. The three main entry doors at Mdina were restored, and 3 wooden ramps were installed near the Cathedral. Seventy doors and three reception counters, including 30

benches, were manufactured for the St Vincent de Paule Residence, while almost all of the canopies at Independence Garden in Sliema were sheeted with wood.

Works at the main squares in Kirkop, Birzebbugia and Lija concerned mainly the manufacture of benches, bins and other street furniture. Oak panelled doors (20 in all) were manufactured on commission from the Construction & Maintenance Department in line with their refurbishment programme, while carpentry work at OPM, including work commissioned in connection with the new Annex, concerned mainly aperture work and the construction of furniture. Structural timber interventions were also carried out at OPM, while a balcony at San Anton Presidential Palace was also restored. The Law Courts commissioned aperture works and repair work, while play furniture was done for the Mqabba Primary School.

Plumbing Section

This Section was responsible for the setting up of the irrigation system at the Wied Babu Project in Żurrieq. Work here included reservoir water tanks testing, including the installation of the pumping system. Irrigation systems and new fountains were installed at the Mixtla in Cospicua and in Hastings Gardens in Valletta. The Mixtla Project included new plumbing systems to the public toilets. A small fountain was installed near the Bastion at Mdina. Scaffolding and temporary chain fencing was erected for enhanced public safety until the completion of the works at Ghar id-Dud including around the former Chalet. Another project was the laying of new water main pipe and reconnection of water systems at Wignacourt Aqueducts in Sta Venera and Transfiguration Street in Lija.

Besides, the Plumbing Section carried out the new installation of chain fencing at various sports grounds such at Qrendi, Birzebbuga, and Lija, and carried out repairs of existing chain fencing at the Żabbar, Marsaxlokk and at Sta Luċija sport grounds. Similar works were carried out at the Chinese Garden in Sta Luċija, at the Sta Margerita area in Cospicua and in other locations. Furthermore, this Section serviced public fountains in various localities and carried out maintenance and repairs of plumbing systems in several governmental buildings, namely departmental offices in the Valletta and Floriana area.

Electrical Section

The Electrical Section carried out maintenance and repair works in some 150 different project localities, besides giving a considerable contribution to various major embellishment projects. These included new installations of various types of lighting systems including ground-recessed and/or wall-mounted and/or pole-mounted floodlights, switching and distribution boxes, timers, conduit laying and wiring. Works were carried out at St Anne's Gate in Senglea, at St Helen's Gate in Cospicua, at Hastings Gardens in Valletta, at the Mixtla in Cospicua, at the Ghar id-Dud area in Sliema, at the Wignacourt Aqueducts in Sta Venera, and at the Wied Babu Promenade in Żurrieq, as well as the installation of a 3 kilometre-run festoon along the Sliema/St Julians Promenade.

Other project works included installations at the main Squares in Qrendi, Kirkop, Lija and Birzebbugia, and at the CMD Offices, the Mall Gardens, the War Memorial, and at the Ospizio at Floriana. Other sites included the Xemxija Promenade and the Ursuline Sisters' convent in Valletta. Maintenance work was done to the floodlighting system in Republic Street Valletta, and also around the Valletta and Mdina Bastions.

The Traffic Lights Unit, which forms part of the same Electrical Section, installed new traffic lights in Sliema (Bus Route), in Regional Road (relating to the current bridge upgrading), in the localities of Luqa, Mellieha, Birguma, and Siġġiewi, and at the Park & Ride Junction at Blata l-Bajda. The Section also maintains the entire traffic and pelican lights network all over Malta and Gozo.

Aluminium Section

The number of jobs taken up by the Aluminium Section during 2006 amounted to 41, of which the bulk was completed by the end of the year. This Section was only recently set up after the former aluminium co-operative based at MSD closed down towards the end of 2005.

Works included the manufacture of aluminium apertures for the Safi Barracks on behalf of the Refugee Commission, the manufacture of aluminium partitions for IPSL at San Ġwann, manufacture of aluminium windows and doors for the Lily of the Valley School in Mosta as commissioned by the Ministry of Education after a call by public tender, the installation of gypsum boards partitions and false ceilings (soffits) for the Construction and Maintenance Department, installation of false ceilings, panels, and windows for the new Annex of the Office of the Prime Minister, assembly of and dismantling of Polling Booths for Local Councils' elections for the Electoral Commission, and aluminium apertures for the ITS and for the Welfare Committee.

Besides, the Aluminium Section has carried out several secondary jobs in government ministries and departments, in public schools and in recreational areas. Other public entities also commissioned several works during 2006.

Lifts Section

The Lifts Section was responsible for the maintenance of about 88 lifts, escalators and hoists which are installed in government-owned buildings including offices, hospitals and old people's homes such as St Luke Hospital, the Law Courts, and St Vincent de Paule Residence. From January to December 2006, the Section registered about 500 calls for technical assistance, including emergency requests.

A works-scheduling procedure was also introduced for preventive maintenance synchronised for better control and traceability with six-monthly testing of lifts. It is planned to bring about technical improvements in the workshops so that an even better service could be given by the Section's personnel.

Air Condition Section

This Section is responsible for the repair and upkeep of approximately 3,000 split-unit air conditioners and 20 centralised plants located in government-owned buildings. During low activity periods, overhauls were carried out to various units. An approximate number of 1,140 calls for technical assistance were received, all of which were dealt with by the Section, including advice on best practice. In line with the policy of improving the working environment, substantial refurbishing improvements were made in the workshops, rest rooms, and offices utilised by the Section.

In collaboration with the Malta College of Arts, Science & Technology and the Malta University Services Ltd, two training courses were held, giving the opportunity to the Section's personnel to remain updated on modern technological developments on installation and maintenance.

Traffic Signs and Markings Co-operative (Koptasin)

Koptasin continued to thrive successfully, both in terms of operating activity and profits. The Co-operative continued to invest in new technology and products, and for this purpose, three of its members attended a specialised Commercial Fair in Amsterdam. Koptasin plans to strengthen its resources as a result of the tender system for the works contracts for the supply and installation of traffic signs and markings, as introduced by the Awtorita' Dwar it-Transport (ADT). The main client of Koptasin has been the Transport Authority (ADT), with other major clients being the local councils.

KORDIN/KIRKOP BRANCH

Kordin Workshop

The Kordin Workshop currently employs 111 workers, and is responsible for the repair and maintenance of the fleet of vehicles and plant equipment of the Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure, some 282 units in all. These include wheel shovels, road rollers, bull dozers, air compressors, *vibro* tampers, trucks, cars, pick-up vans, jeeps, cranes and tower ladders. Repair and maintenance was also carried out to equipment belonging to other departments as requested. Specialised work such as engine overhauls, body work and spray painting is also carried out by the Workshop. Moreover, heavy vehicles are maintained in line with VRT regulations.

During the year under review, the Workshop purchased two dumpers, one fork-lifter, a vehicle for collecting household waste, and a truck with a mounted-crane. Preparations are in hand for the purchase of a water carrying tanker and five pick-up vans.

The Workshop was also given the responsibility to issue period contracts for the hiring of equipment to be utilised by the Works Division on various projects. This comes apart from the other supply period contracts which are issued annually for the supply of certain types of commonly used spare parts such as filters, engine oils, and tyres for use within the Workshop itself.

Kirkop Fuel Station

The MSD Fuel Station at Kirkop distributes fuel to vehicles commissioned by the Ministry as well as to some other government entities. This service is provided either to vehicles calling at the station itself, or through the service of a fuel carrying tanker to site as necessary. The Station provides all types of fuel except bio-diesel.

The following is a comparative data for the distribution of fuel issued during 2005 - 2006:

	2005	2006	Variation
LRP/Unleaded	227,181 Lts	197,546 Lts	(29,635 Lts)
Diesel/Diesel (Bowser)	497,345 Lts	480,530 Lts	(16,815 Lts)
Biodiesel	2,286 Lts	17,970 Lts	15,684 Lts
Total Quantity	726,812 Lts	690,046 Lts	(30,766 Lts)
Total Cost (Lm)	Lm277,282	Lm304,141	Lm26,859

The above figures indicate an overall increase of 9.7 % in the total cost of fuel, notwithstanding a decrease of 4.2 % in the consumption of all types of fuel when compared to the previous year. This can be partly attributed to stricter controls that are continuously enforced by the Fuel Section, where fuel quotas are checked, and by the Fleet Management Section, which regularly monitors 100 of the vehicles and plant owned by the Department through the computerised Automatic Vehicle Locating (AVL) system.

NATIONAL WORKER OF THE YEAR AWARD 2006

In December 2006, Mr James Mercieca, employed by the Department as Senior Technical Officer in charge of the Electrical Section based at the Marsa Branch, was awarded the National Worker of the Year Award. Apart from the personal merit aspect, this was also an indicative acknowledgement of the achievements of the Department and the Ministry in general.

PHILIP SCHEMBRI

Director (Manufacturing and Services)

Services Division

Cleansing Services Department

INTRODUCTION

The Cleansing Services Department provides *waste management services*, particularly public cleansing to central government entities and to local councils with the objective to keep urban and non-urban areas free from litter and illegally dumped waste. Public cleaning works are also carried out regularly on behalf of entities holding public activities when there are mass crowd gatherings such as during carnival festivities and other public celebrations including local feasts.

For a number of years, the CSD was involved in promoting awareness activities for the recycling of waste. Waste separation takes place regularly in respect of all the waste collected during the cleansing activities. Construction material from demolition sites and other operations such as collection of illegally dumped material is deposited at suitable waste depositories. Wood and metal articles collected as bulky waste from households are separated from other waste and recycled. Grass and other vegetation are collected mainly from arterial roads and delivered to be processed into compost, while paper and glass is also separated and recycled. The Department also runs and maintains a bring-in-site for the recycling of waste at an MRES premises in Floriana.

During 2006, the Department continued with its ongoing plan for an integrated approach focusing on public cleansing responsibilities falling under central government, with a view to save on expenses whilst providing a better service.

ADMINISTRATION

Throughout this year, the Department carried out its operations through a workforce of approximately 610 employees. Most of these are unskilled workers, with the average age being 50 years. During 2006, there were 40 cases of retirements or medically boarded out cases. None of these employees were replaced although departmental operations were increased. However two vacancies of PPCO scale 6 were filled. The filling of these posts was crucial to the ongoing drive to provide a more and better service with fewer resources. Action was also taken for the internal redeployment and upgrading of 20 heavy plant drivers in order to implement the MRES overall strategy. After introducing flexible timetables, these measures were further consolidated during 2006 without inducing extra costs in shift allowances and other overheads. Some 40 employees were allocated duties to carry out cleaning works in arterial roads. The work schedule is carried out in and between the afternoon and late evening, with another 10 workers deployed to work late at night to clean up areas which for various reasons could not be cleaned up during daytime.

Firm and impartial action was taken to sanction a number of employees whose performance was lacking. Thirty one cases of disciplinary action were instituted against employees, the majority of whom were caught malingering or not found at their place of work following surprise inspections. All cases were dealt with through departmental disciplinary boards appointed for this purpose.

Health and safety issues were considered with utmost seriousness, and the Department's obligations in this field of operation were implemented to the full and at all times. Personnel were issued with safety clothing and provided with the necessary signage required for all operations.

A 'notification form' system of reporting attendances was implemented across the department. The attendance for work report is being updated daily by 9.00am, where all employees (610 in all) are being noted in writing to HR as either present, on sick leave, or as absent from work. This measure is being carried out using telephones, fax machines and courier. Accordingly, abuses have decreased dramatically.

REVENUE COLLECTION

Arrears of revenue due from the deposit of waste at Magtab landfill continued to be collected throughout 2006. Where appropriate, legal action was taken against defaulters. A breakdown of the revenue collected in 2006 is as follows:

Items of revenue generation				
	Local Councils	Landfills	VAT	Legal Fees
Total Lm	322,655.78	13,890.41	87,885.67	142.63

Revenue from contracts of services & from other services		Revenue from landfills & related services	
Local Councils	322,655.78	Landfills	13,890.41
Extra Services	137,508.66	VAT	2,482.61
Others	15,951.91	Legal Fees	142.63
VAT	85,403.06		
Total Lm	561,519.41	Total Lm	16,515.65
<i>Total Revenue Collected during 2006</i>		<i>Lm 578,035.06</i>	

COLLECTION OF BULKY WASTE

The Department continued to provide a bulky waste collection service to approximately 30 local councils. The waste is collected from households free of charge. The cost for the provision of this service is absorbed through a tendering process initiated by local councils and collected as revenue by the CSD.

Total Revenue from Bulky Waste collected		
	Number of household calls	Amount Invoiced (Inclusive of VAT)
Total Cost (Lm)	28,764	57,301.24

Amount of Bulky Waste Collected from Households									
	Total Calls	Metal	Wood Furniture	Mattresses	Sofas	White Goods	Computers and TVs	Glass Others	Total Items
Total	28,328	11,643	15,058	6,110	2,643	13,257	4,733	21,057	74,501

CONTRACTS WITH LOCAL COUNCILS

During 2006, the Department continued to utilise part of its workforce in providing various cleansing services under contract to various local councils and other entities. Contracts with local councils, which varied in nature from street sweeping to collection of bulky waste and the manning of public conveniences, were renewed in a number of localities. The following table gives an indication of the value of these contracts as well as the localities contracting the services.

Annual Values of Contracts with Local Councils			
Local Council	Street Sweeping Contracts (Lm)	Pub. Conv. Contracts (Lm)	Bulky Waste Contracts (Lm per item)
B' Bugia	11,760.00	7,400.00	No Contract
B' Kara	20,500.00	7,500.00	1.85
Birgu	7,562.00	5,440.00	2.00
Bormla	No Contract	2,392.00	No Contract
Fgura	No Contract	No Contract	1.75
Gharghur	3,708.00	No Contract	2.00

Ghaxaq	12,300.00	No Contract	No Contract
Gudja	8,860.00	3,500.00	1.80
Gzira	10,850.00	3,390.00	1.80
Hamrun	No Contract	5,420.00	No Contract
Kalkara	3,708.00	No Contract	No Contract
Kirkop	3,708.00	No Contract	2.50
Lija	3,708.00	1,165.00	2.50
Luqa	12,000.00	3,500.00	1.85
M'Scala	No Contract	3,227.00	No Contract
M'Xlokk	7,094.00	3,325.00	1.90
Marsa	12,300.00	7,500.00	2.00
Mdina	No Contract	2,806.00	No Contract
Mellieha	No Contract	11,223.00	1.80
Mġarr	No Contract	2,000.00	2.10
Mosta	No Contract	1,165.00	No Contract
Mqabba	6,000.00	No Contract	2.00
Naxxar	8,275.00	4,700.00	2.00
Qormi	24,200.00	7,200.00	1.80
Qrendi	3,442.00	2,678.00	2.50
Safi	3,708.00	No Contract	2.50
San Ġiljan	32,555.00	8,304.00	2.00
San Pawl	No Contract	No Contract	1.80
Sta Luċija	4,450.00	2,500.00	2.50
Sliema	43,470.00	14,400.00	2.20
Swieqi	No Contract	No Contract	2.00
Valletta	55,000.00	No Contract	No Contract
Xghajra	3,708.00	No Contract	2.50
Żabbar	31,000.00	10,000.00	No Contract
Żejtun	12,313.00	8,209.00	1.90
Total	346,179.00	128,944.00	
<i>Total Lm 475,123.00 (inclusive of VAT)</i>			

PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

During 2006, the Department continued to act as the central focal point for the administration of public conveniences. Twenty four contracts with local councils were renewed, and public conveniences that fall under the responsibility of central government were also maintained on a regular basis.

CUSTOMER CARE SERVICE

The Cleansing Services Department endorsed its Quality Service Charter in 2005. This Charter was revised and reviewed in 2006, where all standards endorsed by the CSD have been improved to meet the new service standards threshold as endorsed across the public service. The following table shows data on the number of complaints received through the Customer Care complaints system. All complaints were dealt with and finalised within the stipulated timeframe.

Customer Care Complaints Handling								
	No of Calls - Freephone	Received by e-mail	Received by fax	Newspaper Cuttings	Complaints referred to Local Council	Carried out by CSD on same day	Carried out within one week	Referred to other entities
Total	874	520	-	5	529	533	219	118

CLEANING OF ARTERIAL ROADS

The Unit providing this service makes use of both mechanical and manual methods of sweeping. Some 40 manual workers are employed on these jobs. The Unit is also making use of five mechanical sweepers and five water transport vehicles. Arterial roads and other areas and sites are cleaned on a regular basis according to exigencies and requirements. This Unit is also continuously engaged in urgent cleaning of

arterial roads outside the normal schedule such as removing dead animal carcasses from streets, and urgent cleaning of roads from waste illegally dumped and mostly the result of droppings from vehicles. The Unit also caters for the removal of unauthorised posters and the cleaning of roads following road accidents. This work means that public cleaning services are actually being provided by the Department on a round the clock schedule.

LITTER BINS

The Department provides for a daily schedule for the emptying of bins situated mainly along the route from the Malta International Airport to the Auberge de Castille in Valletta, and along the promenades of St Julians. In all, this daily routine involves the emptying of some 150 bins.

WASHING AND CLEANING OF TUNNELS AND SIGNAGE

The CSD carries out regular washing and cleaning of tunnels, pedestrian walkways, the Valletta bus terminus and other sites as necessary. Cleaning of signage situated in arterial roads is also carried out especially during the summer months. Most of these works are performed late in the evening or during the night in order to take advantage of the low volume of traffic during this period of the day. Machinery used here includes a power washer and a water transport vehicle and a tower ladder. The services of a Police Constable or a Local Warden are secured for the duration of works so as to enhance the safety of our workers.

Works Carried out on Arterial Roads							
	<i>Cleaning & Grass cutting</i>	<i>Mechanical sweeping</i>	<i>Removal of Material</i>	<i>Litter Picking</i>	<i>Cleaning of Culverts</i>	<i>Cleaning of Pits</i>	<i>Masonry Works</i>
	Km	Km	Tonnes	Km	Mtrs.	No.	Sq. Mtrs.
Total	1,653.97	12,813.00	790.76	10,929.72	7950.00	55.00	55.00

Works carried out on arterial roads by afternoon gangs						
	<i>Cleaning and Grass cutting</i>	<i>Removal of Material</i>	<i>Litter Picking</i>	<i>Cleaning and Repair of Culverts</i>	<i>Cleaning and Repair of Pits</i>	<i>Masonry Works</i>
	Km	Metric Tons	Km	Mtrs.	No.	Sq. Mtrs.
Total	431.98	1,587.90	9,253.40	1,542.00	761.00	752.00

Dumped material during 2006, including removal of illegal dumping from valleys and other sites, litter picking, grass cutting and cleaning of culverts and pits totalled 29,401.56 tonnes.

The cost involved at Lm32 per tonne (including collection, transport and disposal) results in a total of Lm940,849.92 spent on collection.

Extra work carried out by CSD on behalf of various entities during 2006	
<i>On Behalf Of</i>	<i>Description of Works</i>
Renaissance Productions	General cleaning after mass events
Gżira Local Council	Cleaning, flushing and repairing of culverts and pits at The Strand, Gżira
MUDR	General cleaning and removal of material of Horns Works Ditch
Sliema Local Council	Cleaning, flushing and repairing of culverts and pits, repair of kerb at The Strand, Sliema
NNG Promotions	General cleaning at Luxol Grounds after concerts
Marsaxlokk Local Council	General cleaning after Festa tat-Tonn
Kunsill Malti għall-Kultura u l-Arti	General cleaning after Carnival Festivities
Soċjeta` Agrarja	General cleaning after Imnarja Festivities
Kunsill Malti għall-Kultura u l-Arti	General cleaning after Freedom Day Festivities
Port Cottonera Limited	General cleaning and removal of material
NNG Promotions	General cleaning and washing after Jazz Festival
Midi Consortium	Cleaning and carting away material from Manoel Island, Gzira
Ministry for Competitiveness & Communications	Cleaning and carting away material from Industrial Estates

Mellieha Local Council	Cleaning and flushing of culverts
MTA – Sliema and Gzira Local Councils	Cleaning and washing of promenades at Gzira, Sliema, Valletta & Mdina
MUDR	General cleaning after Regatta Festivities
Tigne Point Marketing Ltd	General cleaning at Manoel Island, Gzira
Valletta Local Council	Cleaning after Mount Carmel Feast, St Dominic Feast and Wine Festival
MTA – M.M.A.	Cleaning and washing at Pinto Wharf, Marsa-Valletta
Swieqi Local Council	Cleaning and flushing of culverts
Sliema Local Council	Litter picking and emptying of litter bins at Sliema Seafront
St Julians Local Council	Cleaning of culverts and pits at various roads, St Julians
Midi Consortium	General cleaning and carting away of material at Manoel Island
Lands Department	Demolition works at Hamrun and Bombi - Floriana
Birgu Local Council	Cleaning and flushing of culverts
Balzan Local Council	Cleaning and flushing of culverts
Birkirkara Local Council	Cleaning and flushing of culverts
Mgarr Local Council	General cleaning
Foundation of Tomorrow Schools	Cleaning of catacombs
MTA	Demolition of Jumbo Lido
Sta Luċija Local Council	Cleaning of Girna
Marsa Local Council	General cleaning after village feast
Various private entities	Opening of Public Convenience at Upper Barrakka
Various Local Councils	Cleaning of rural areas after festas, Sundays & Public Holidays

The value of these extra services exceeded Lm100,000 (exclusive of VAT).

PARTICIPATION IN INFRASTRUCTURAL PROJECTS

A Unit within the Department undertakes construction work on various infrastructural projects mostly dealing with storm water relief projects.

- Works on the Marsa Storm Water Project (Phase 2) - Erection of steel shutters and fixing in place of reinforcement steel and concreting. The watercourse bed was excavated and the material carted away to various dumps, and the pre-cast elements forming the embankments were laid. Stone blocks from Ta' Robba Stone Quarry were transported to the site at Marsa and laid on the pre-cast elements. Other work concerned the laying of drainage pipes and plastering of embankments.
- The Burmarrad Project - The process of manufacturing of pre-cast elements for the embankments was continued from last year, where 987 elements were cast from January to June 2006. Work here included the preparation of foundations and cleaning of material for phase A.

VARIOUS OTHER CLEANING WORKS

Cleaning works were carried out at Ghajn Tuffieha, the Ospizju in Floriana, at the Mriehel Aqueducts, at Hastings Gardens, the Police General Headquarters in Floriana, at the Mdina Football Ground, at Hal Far (removal of illegal dumping), at Fort Delimara and Wied Babu, at the Upper Barrakka Gardens, at San Anton Presidential Palace, at the Gudja reservoir, at Lija Parish Square, at the Correctional Facilities in Kordin, at Wied l-Isqof in Rabat, at the Portes des Bombes (ex-District 1), at the Ghammieri Reservoir, and at the Chadwick Lakes. Tonnes of material were transported from these sites and disposed off in controlled areas. Demolition works were also carried out at the Marsa Sports Complex, on the old bridges of the Qormi-Marsa watercourse, and at the Sliema Chalet Huts were demolished and material transported away from the Ta' Qali Crafts Village.

INERT WASTE COLLECTED FROM VARIOUS WORKS CARRIED OUT BY THE CLEANSING SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Collection of Inert Waste	
	Tonnes
Marsa Project	18,978.31
Tar-Robba quarry	2,840.00
Zurrieq (Wied Babu)	710.00
Jumbo Lido	618.00
Chalet	266.00
Ta' Qali Crafts Village	160.00
Bombi -Park and Ride (not inc. the trips made by Impressed trucks)	250.00
Albertown	20.00
Total	23,842.31

JOSEPH SAMMUT

Director (Cleansing Services)

OIL EXPLORATION DEPARTMENT

The principal activities of the Department during 2006 are outlined below:

- The department monitored the activities of five companies holding exploration licences in offshore Malta to ensure that they fulfil their contractual obligations. The companies were TGS-Nopec, Malta Oil Co Ltd, Global Petroleum Ltd, Medoil plc and Pancontinental Oil & Gas NL.
- Two requests of farm-ins were approved in 2006, one to Anadarko Energy International Co in the licence of Pancontinental Oil & Gas NL, and the other to RWE Dea in the licence of Global Petroleum Ltd. As a result of these two farm-ins, a seismic survey was acquired by RWE Dea in Blocks 4 & 5 of Area 3, and a second seismic survey in Area 5 by Anadarko Energy International is scheduled to be acquired.
- Exploration opportunities in offshore Malta were promoted with several oil companies. As a result, one major oil company started discussions with the OED with a view to apply for an exploration licence. Discussions were ongoing at the end of 2006.
- The surveillance of exploration activities in the Central Mediterranean continued to be a priority activity of the Department during 2006, particularly since a neighbouring state awarded offshore licences in areas overlapping the Maltese claim. No activities were reported in these areas of overlap.
- Discussions were held with Italian Authorities over the delimitation of the continental shelf between the two countries.
- The Department participated in discussions with Tunisian Authorities to establish an area for the joint exploration and development of petroleum between the two countries. The discussions were still ongoing at the end of the year in review.

GODWIN DEBONO

Director (Oil Exploration)

EU AFFAIRS, POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION DIRECTORATE

The EU Affairs, Policy Development and Programme Implementation Directorate at the Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure is the Ministry's focal point on EU matters. It also facilitates the development of the Ministry's policies and the implementation of centrally-mandated programmes.

EU PROPOSALS

The Directorate screens EU dossiers, both legislative and non-legislative. The Directorate co-ordinates, supports, and provides input for the consolidation of explanatory memoranda outlining Malta's position on these dossiers.

Dossiers handled by Directorate in 2006					
<i>Council formation</i>	<i>Originator</i>		<i>Contributor</i>		<i>Total</i>
	<i>Legislative</i>	<i>Non-Legislative</i>	<i>Legislative</i>	<i>Non-Legislative</i>	
Agriculture & Fisheries		1	1	1	3
Competitiveness			4	11	15
Economic & Finance		1		2	3
Environment	2	2	8	6	18
General Affairs & External Relations	1	2	2	3	8
Justice and Home Affairs				1	1
Transport, Telecommunications & Energy	6	16	6	4	32
Total	9	22	21	28	80

In addition to memoranda, the Directorate also prepares Instruction Notes, Briefing Notes, and Speaking Notes for Maltese representatives participating in Council Working Parties (generally the Energy Working Party but also on occasion, the Environment Working Party), and COREPER and Council meetings. The Directorate also follows meetings of expert groups, comitology and expert conferences.

TRANSPOSITIONS, NOTIFICATIONS AND REPORTING

In 2006, the Directorate was involved in supporting line departments and entities in transposing two Directives: Directive 2002/91/EC on the energy performance of buildings (transposed as Legal Notice 238 of 2006), and Directive 2004/67/EC concerning measures to safeguard security of natural gas supply (transposed as Legal Notice 317 of 2006). Preparations on the transposition of Directive 2004/8/EC on the promotion of co-generation were completed and the Legal Notice is expected to be published early in 2007.

Throughout 2006, the Directorate was responsible for channelling monthly reports on oil stocks (as required by Directive 68/414/EEC), and the annual reports required by the Directive on the Promotion of Electricity from Renewable Energy Sources (Directive 2001/77/EC), and the Directive on the Promotion of Bio fuels (Directive 2003/30/EC).

IEE AND TEN-E

The Directorate is the National Contact Point for the Intelligent Energy Europe (IEE) programme and the Trans-European Networks of Energy (TEN-E). The Directorate promotes the programmes in Malta, disseminates information, and participates in the comitology committees of the two instruments. Shortly

after the launch of the 2006 IEE call for applications, the Directorate organised in June an IEE Info Day for stakeholders with the participation of a speaker from the IEE Agency in Brussels.

NRP AND NSRF

The Directorate coordinated the Ministry's ongoing contributions to the National Reform Programme (NRP) and the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) for the years 2007-2013. With regards to the NRP the Directorate provided information and participated in the drafting of Malta's replies to evaluations made and questionnaires sent by the European Commission throughout 2006. With regards to the NSRF, the Directorate contributed to the sections on energy, water, storm water relief and the state of repair of the fortifications.

CUSTOMER CARE SERVICE

The Ministry's Customer Care Service forms part of the Directorate under its Programming Implementation function. Complaints received are registered daily and forwarded to the relevant entity.

GREEN LEADER

An official of the Directorate serves as the Ministry's Green Leader, participating in the network of Green Leaders throughout the Public Service and encouraging the Ministry's departments to take up environmental-friendly measures.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND RELATIONS

The Directorate was involved in providing input for Malta's and, eventually, the EU's position in dealings with third countries and international organisations. These included relations with Russia, OPEC, the Energy Community, the Energy Charter Treaty, OECD and the International Energy Agency (IEA), the UN, the WTO and the G8.

FRANKLIN MAMO

Director (EU Affairs, Policy Development & Programme Implementation)

PEOPLE MANAGEMENT & SUPPORT SERVICES DIRECTORATE

The People Management & Support Services Directorate contributed to the collective management of the Ministry, by enhancing and directing the support services provided at Ministry level to the line Departments, particularly in the areas of human resource management, and Ministry wide discipline and office management.

RESOURCING

The Directorate assisted line departments in determining the complement and deployment of their staff. The Ministry had a staff complement of 2,536 employees within the Divisional Departments as at the end of 2006. A manpower plan of these officers, including their grade extensions, was drawn up. A total of 27 employees were redeployed within the Departments. The Directorate also processed the transfer of 27 officers who were transferred to this Ministry and 35 employees transferred to other ministries. An HR Plan on staff requirements for the whole Ministry was finalised.

The HR Branch was involved in the process of confirmation of appointments, increments, and progressions of staff. It initiated and processed 40 appointments by calls for applications and 4 appointments on the basis of seniority, while 7 officers were employed on a contractual basis.

During 2006, the Directorate monitored the implementation of the Performance Management Programme for General Service and Professional Grades within the Ministry.

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

The Directorate processed requests for parental and responsibility leave, reduced hours, private work and the granting of qualification allowances.

The HR Unit received 49 reports of instances concerning injury of workers on duty. Another 40 cases were related to the medical fitness of employees. In this regard, the HR Unit liaised with the Health Division. The appointed Medical Board of Investigation had the responsibility to ascertain whether the employees concerned were fit enough to continue with their duties or not. The Unit also processed 81 pension papers of employees who reached retirement age.

DISCIPLINE

During 2006, a total of 180 disciplinary cases were initiated according to the Public Service Commission (Disciplinary Procedure) Regulations of 1999. Nineteen officers were found guilty of a serious offence whilst 16 employees found guilty of a minor charge. At present, there are 10 officers against whom criminal procedures are being instituted, 5 of whom are currently interdicted.

During 2006, the Tribunal for the Investigation of Injustices terminated its term of office with all the cases involving employees of this Division having been concluded. The Directorate continued making use of the services of a private medical firm to verify the incidence of sick leave availed of by employees.

JOHN BORG

Director (People Management & Support Services)

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT UNIT

Completed tasks for the year under review include the following:

- The Construction and Maintenance Department: the Restoration Office at Birgu and the District Offices of Mellieħa and Lija were connected to the Government of Malta Network. Employees were provided with email and internet services for business use.
- A new fibre-based network infrastructure was set up at the Manufacturing and Services Department, Kordin Garage, Kordin, which links all the sheds to the main administration building.
- In conjunction with the EU Affairs Department, a website was designed for the Intelligent Energy Europe Malta branch, to cater for Intelligent Energy information dissemination and as a forum service for interested parties. This project is still in progress.
- A Customer Care Point was set up at the reception area at Project House to cater for any general public queries.
- SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) was introduced at the Financial Management Department as a management tool to aid the FMD's Financial Management Unit employees in providing statistical data for the department and MRES senior management.
- A number of desktop publishing software was purchased for the Oil Exploration Department (OED) and for the Directorate General (DG) Services for desktop publishing services.
- The Engineering and Architect Warrants application processes were analysed and a report presented to MIIIT to automate these processes as part of MIIIT's e-gov strategy of providing all public-oriented services on-line.
- The Ministry was involved in the initial stages of the Maltese Language Lexicon Project (together with MITTS), whereby Maltese words and phrases relating to the Engineering and Architect professions were identified. This project is still in progress.
- A number of new Computer-Aided Design (CAD) network-licences were procured for use by architects and draughtsmen at DG Services and DG Works.
- In conjunction with MITTS, a Euro Changeover project was initiated to identify all ICT related procedures (including software), that will be impacted by the introduction of the euro. This project is still in progress.
- Other routine ICT-related activities such as and including e-mail/internet administration, boards of survey for obsolete IT hardware, procurement of hardware, upgrading of software, desktop support and liaising with MITTS.

WINSTON PIROTTA

Information Management Officer

Ministry for Gozo

Department for Projects & Development

The Department for Projects and Development incorporates the Works Branch, the Construction and Maintenance Unit, the Public Cleansing Section, the Beach Cleaning Section, the MRES Salaries Section and the Agriculture and Fisheries Branch.

The Department for Projects and Development aims to carry out infrastructural works in Gozo, to ensure a clean environment, to provide facilities for back-office work and to provide and extend the necessary services in the Agricultural and Fisheries sectors so that progress and growth can be achieved in these industries.

WORKS BRANCH

Finance and Administration

The main functions of the Finance and Administration Section are the management of human resources, contracts, stores and registry and the provision of administrative support to all the other sections within the branch.

Districts Section

The Districts' Section's main function is the provision of services to local councils on a contractual basis. The section is also involved in carrying out work which falls within the responsibility of Central Government.

During 2006, its principal involvement was in the maintenance and embellishment of playing fields, construction of pavements, concrete works on farm access roads, patching of streets in different localities, building and maintenance of retaining rubble and *franka* stone walls and the building and cleaning of water culverts.

Roads Section

The Roads Section is responsible for the general upkeep and maintenance of roads in Gozo. The Section was engaged in the construction of retaining walls and pavements, repair of rubble walls, maintenance on roundabouts and central strips, patching with hot asphalt in all arterial and distributory roads, the fixing and maintenance of traffic signs and applying of road marking paint.

This section was responsible for the issuing of tenders for new roads and for the supervision of works carried out by contractors. During the year under review new roads were completed in the following localities: part of Triq Dun Frangisk Mizzi, part of Triq 26 ta' Jannar, Triq Firilla and part of Triq il-Barumbara at Ghajnsielem; part of N/S off Triq Guzeppi Bajada at Xaghra; Triq Maxrabija at Ghasri; and Triq Francesco Masini at Victoria. Re-surfacing with hot asphalt was carried out at Tal-Hniena Road at Xewkija, Triq tal-Qaċca at Xaghra and Triq Ras il-Bajjada at Munxar.

By the end of the year, work was still in progress on different roads as follows: Triq l-Imhalef Cremona, N/S off Triq Ghajn Qatet and part of Triq Pawlu Portelli at Victoria; Triq is-Sajjed and part of Triq ta' Barda at Marsalforn; Qasam San Ġorġ, Triq il-Karmelitani and Triq Kerċem/Wied il-Lunzjata at Kerċem;

Triq Bertrija and Triq Liberat at Xaghra; Tal-Qala Road at Xewkija; Triq iż-Żernieq at Nadur and part of Triq l-10 ta' Ottubru at Sannat.

During 2006 various tenders for the construction of new roads were awarded but were not yet taken in hand. Others were issued but were still at the adjudicating stage by the end of the year.

Manufacturing and Services Section

The Manufacturing and Services Section comprises carpentry, electrical and metal units. The section also carries out repair and maintenance work on government-owned vehicles and machinery.

During 2006, new furniture and apertures were manufactured for the EU Directorate within the Ministry for Gozo, NGO's, Exhibition Hall, Health Office, new offices at the Administration Centre, Law Courts, Beach Cleaning and at the ITS school at Qala. The carpentry unit was also responsible for the execution of works in connection with the Bird Breeding Project at the Government Farm and the manufacture of a site office at the Citadel.

Throughout the year this unit constructed a number of platforms in connection with cultural activities and the CPMR conference which was held at the Ċittadella. The unit was also responsible for the erection of the carnival stands and set-up of cubicles for the Local Council Elections.

The electrical unit is mainly concerned with the maintenance of decorative lights at various sites. Localities under its responsibility include Fontana, Kerċem, Marsalforn, Mġarr, Munxar, Nadur, Rabat, Sannat, Santa Luċija, Xaghra, Xewkija, Xlendi and Żebbuġ. The unit also carried out installation of flood lights in connection with various cultural activities such as Carnival and the Gozo Agricultural show. Other works carried out included new electrical installations at Mġarr Quay, Cold Stores and the Health office at Nadur and the installation of decorative light poles at Xlendi. The unit also carried out on a daily basis routine maintenance works on electrical units at Qbajjar Promenade, traffic islands, St Mary's Cemetery, Villa Rundle and public conveniences.

The metal section manufactured benches, railings and beach ladders which were installed in various beaches and tourist resorts. During the past year, lampposts for use at Xlendi, billboards and a tent at Villa Rundle were also manufactured. The unit carried out maintenance on metal works at the horse racecourse at Xewkija and the Administrative Centre. A team from this unit was responsible for the laying and maintenance of waterproofing membrane at various departments and offices.

Building and Engineering Section

This section is responsible to carry out works in connection with land and quantity surveying, draughtsmanship, issuing of tenders and the keeping of related records. It is also responsible for the various works that are carried out by direct labour.

Direct labour works mainly consisted of undertaking new projects and carrying out maintenance on government-owned property. Works carried out in 2006 included the restoration of the Victoria Cemetery boundary wall and refurbishment works at the Citadel and Sabina Square with purfido tiles. Embellishment works were carried out at Xatt l-Ahmar, Marsalforn, Xlendi Bay, Qbajjar, Għar Qawqla l/o Marsalforn and Mġarr Harbour. The section continued with its programme of works at the Administration Centre at Victoria.

Projects entrusted to the section included the building of a new belvedere at Tal-Qaċċa at the main entrance to the village of Xaghra and the demolishing and re-building of a new public convenience at Xlendi.

During the year under review various farm access roads and a parking area in Mġarr Harbour close to the temporary Gozo Channel offices were laid with concrete. This section was also responsible for the

supervision of works that were carried out by contract, namely, the construction of a water culvert at Sta Domenica Street in Victoria, cleaning of part of Marsalforn Valley and of part of Salve Regina Valley l/o Żebbuġ.

Building, Maintenance and Restoration Section

This section, stationed at the Ċittadella, is mainly responsible for the carrying out restoration, maintenance and construction works.

Works within the Citadel precincts included the restoration of a 30-metre stretch of revetment wall, restoration and/or maintenance works of the façade of the Gozo Law courts, maintenance and/or restoration works of various stretches of rubble walls lining public pathways, laying of flagstones within a particular area, redecoration and tiling works within the Museum of Archaeology and concrete resurfacing works along the route leading to Cathedral Square.

This same section was also responsible for the execution of other works outside the Citadel precincts, namely the restoration of the aqueduct's arch crossing Triq Papa Ġwanni Pawlu II, relocation and subsequent restoration of an *ex voto* plinth located along Triq l-Arċisqof P. Pace, works in connection with the erection of a monument dedicated to Architect Saver Cassar within Pjazza Indipendenza. Scaffolding was erected at various sites.

The Department's marbler, stationed with the above mentioned section, also carried out various works relating to the manufacture and/or restoration of marble inscriptions at various sites.

CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE UNIT

The Construction and Maintenance Unit renders services to government departments, NGOs, local councils and to the general public mainly in the construction and maintenance areas.

During 2006, the main responsibilities of this Unit were the carrying out of maintenance work, construction works and embellishment in playing fields and public areas. Employees carried out construction works in schools, government offices and in government tenements. Plastering and painting works were also carried out mainly in schools and in other government premises. This Unit also carried out painting works on wooden apertures at the Adult Training Centre, the Gozo University Centre, in government offices and in club houses.

In order to facilitate access to persons with special needs, some 700 metres in length of pavements and 48m of ramps were constructed in various localities. General maintenance work was carried out at the Heliport Offices, the Adult Training Centre, Xewkija Football Club and on various fountains. Plumbing work was carried out at the Education Department, Taċ-Ċawla Housing Estate and Qala Primary School. Other works carried out by CMU employees included the installation of cabling and trunking for IT in various government offices and the running of the Handyman Service scheme in Gozo which entailed the carrying out of various odd jobs. The CMU manufactured at its blacksmith workshop grates and iron railings which were used in belvederes and other sites. Maintenance and installation of chain link fencing was carried out at the Kerċem football ground and tennis courts, Nadur football ground and Żebbuġ Shooting Range.

This unit conducted excavation works for the re-construction of retaining and boundary walls with *franka* stone. Rubble walls which were damaged or caved in due to heavy rainfall were also re-constructed by the Unit's employees. An average of 316m x 9 courses of retaining walls, 159m x 4 courses boundary walls and approximately 811m x 2.5m of rubble walls were built.

The CMU carried out levelling and surfacing of farm roads, ramps and passages with concrete so as to provide access to farmers in fields. An average of 1,510m x 5m of farm access roads, 397m x 3m of ramps and 1,275m x 1.50m of passages were re-constructed and surfaced.

The small number of CMU employees who are temporarily on loan with local councils carried out maintenance to local council offices, upgrading of playing fields, rubble wall building, maintenance to roundabouts and central strips, repair of footpaths, road cleaning, weed cutting and other sundry works required by the local council.

PUBLIC CLEANSING BRANCH

This section's main responsibility is the management of waste and the upkeep of the environment through the services it offers.

Scavenging was provided on a daily basis, except Sundays, in all urban localities in Gozo with the exception of Victoria, Nadur, Xewkija, Ghasri, San Lawrenz, Sannat, Ghajnsielem and Fontana which make use of private contractors' services. Additionally, this service was even provided on Sundays in the core area of Victoria, in Mġarr, Marsalforn and Xlendi and in localities celebrating the parish titular feasts.

The Public Cleansing Section is responsible for the removal and disposal of cumbersome refuse. During 2006 the Department attended to around 736 requests to remove and dispose of bulky material.

Furthermore, the Section was responsible for the running of 16 public conveniences in Gozo and one in Comino. Maintenance and repair works were carried out regularly by the section's maintenance team. During the summer months, the public conveniences at Marsalforn, Xlendi, Dwejra, Ramla and Hondoq ir-Rummien were kept open for longer periods in order to cater for residents and tourists alike.

During the year, the public convenience at Dwejra was renovated and refurbished to include showers for use by divers. The introduction of this new service was well-received by both operators and divers. In the same year, a new public convenience was constructed at Xlendi to replace the existing one.

Other operations carried out by the section included the cutting of weeds and clearing of debris from urban areas and arterial roads which fall under the direct responsibility of the central Government and where the section has a contractual obligation with local councils. Furthermore, during the past year, the section was involved in the *Country Walks* programme. Its main involvement consisted in the general cleaning of countryside lanes, footpaths and other areas of scenic beauty.

BEACH CLEANSING SECTION

The Beach Cleaning Section is responsible for the maintenance, upkeep and cleaning of beaches in Gozo and Comino. These services are delivered to local councils free of charge on the basis of a contractual agreement which covers 12 beaches and bays in Gozo and three beaches in Comino. During the summer season these services are even provided on Sundays and public holidays. In April 2006 particular attention was directed at Xlendi Bay.

Teams of employees from this section were involved in the maintenance of street and beach furniture, particularly at popular summer resorts like Xlendi, Marsalforn, Dwejra, Ramla and Hondoq. Other works included the cleaning of beaches from seaweed and litter and the removal of tar. All waste generated on Comino was transported over to Gozo, thus eliminating the need for a waste dump on the island. The section continued with its extensive cleaning and reinstatement programme at Marsalforn valley, initiated in 2005, in order to facilitate the flow of run-off rainwater thus preventing flooding problems at Marsalforn.

SEWERAGE MASTER PLAN

Construction works on the Gozo Sewage treatment plant, which is co-financed by the EU, started off in the beginning of 2006. Since the project had encountered a number of delays, the EU Commission, on the request of the Maltese Government, granted an extension for the completion of the project. The plant is expected to start operating and be commissioned by the third quarter of 2007.

Meanwhile, during 2006, construction work on the San Blas pumping station at Nadur was initiated and by the end of the year work was nearing completion. During 2006, an application for the development of another pumping station at Wied il-Mielah, limits of Gharb was submitted to the Malta Environment and Planning Authority. The construction of these two pumping stations will eliminate the raw sewage outfalls at San Blas and Wied il-Mielah, and re-direct sewage towards the sewage treatment plant in the south of the island.

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

As in the past years, during 2006, the Ministry for Gozo supported WasteServ Malta Ltd in its operations in Gozo. This support consisted primarily through the allocation of equipment and machinery and the deployment of nine employees at the Waste Transfer Station.

GREEN OFFICE

Through its Green Office, during 2006, the Ministry for Gozo maintained its contribution towards the public sector's corporate environmental responsibility.

Following the introduction in 2005 of the collection of separated waste at the Ministry for Gozo, in 2006 this service was extended to other public sector buildings outside the Ministry's office block. There are 31 sections (comprising around 425 employees) which are now equipped with this service. Collection of separated waste from these offices is carried out by staff from the Cleansing Services Branch of the Projects and Development Department. Also in 2006, new bins for the collection of obsolete batteries were distributed in government offices.

A 10kW photovoltaic (solar panel) system was installed at the Ministry for Gozo during this same year. This renewable energy-producing installation system is expected to produce at least 5% of the energy requirements of the Gozo Administrative Centre (equivalent to the EU Commission's targets).

The Green Office has also embarked upon an educational campaign concerning energy efficiency and water conservation. The office is also evaluating possibilities of improving energy efficiency and water conservation within the Gozo Administrative Centre.

During 2006, this office has also taken initiatives regarding the efficient and sensible use of office stationary. A set of stickers facilitating both the external and internal re-use of envelopes were produced during the year under review. It is estimated that this initiative has the potential of reducing the use of envelopes by 50%. In this area of activity, this office is also promoting printer sharing and the procurement of double-side printers.

The Green Office has also taken up a project for the re-instatement of a disused water reservoir present within the perimeter of the Gozo Administrative Centre. It is planned to install a new second-class water distribution system within the Administrative centre, servicing bathrooms, irrigation and other uses which do not require potable water. This project is expected to reduce potable water use within this office block in a drastic manner.

MRES SALARIES SECTION

The main function of this Section is to process the salaries including allowances and overtime of all the employees of the Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure.

AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES BRANCH

Veterinary Services

This section is responsible for the regulation of animal husbandry and slaughter in Gozo. It incorporates the Civil Abattoir; Field work; Imġarr Inspectorate; Prevention of Diseases; and Extension Service.

Civil Abattoir

During 2006, the refurbishment process at the Gozo Civil Abattoir was still not concluded as a tender for the supply installation and commissioning of equipment and related services had to be re-issued. The slaughter of livestock had to be carried out at the Civil Abattoir in Malta. The number of livestock slaughtered in Malta amounted to 1,303 cattle comprising 640 cows and 629 bulls. The corresponding number for swine was 5,403 heads. All fallen animals, condemned meat and offal were disposed of by incineration.

Field Work

During 2006 all farms supplying milk to Malta Dairy Products were tested for TB and Brucellosis. Testing was carried out on 58 cattle herds which supply milk to the MDP as follows: 2,753 TB Tests; 2,753 Brucella Tests.

TB/Brucella testing was also carried out on 629 non-MDP farms as follows: 5,844 Brucella tests on sheep; 1,637 Brucella tests on goats.

Blood tests were carried out at the Civil Abattoir laboratory. In certain cases, blood samples were sent to Malta for further testing.

Blood Tests			
	<i>Bovines</i>	<i>Sheep</i>	<i>Goats</i>
MDP	2,753	-	-
Non-MDP	-	5,844	1,637

Pig Tattooing	
No. of tattoos	7,411
Registration of Deaths	1,092
Registration of slaughtered animals	5,403

All pig units were inspected and a technical report and census made.

Poultry

During 2006 inspections were carried out on all poultry cutting establishments on a frequent basis. Emphasis was made with the owners of these establishments on the need to abide by the respective regulations governing their trade.

Poultry farms too were subjected to routine inspections. Prior to the slaughter of broilers, an inspector carried out an exhaustive anti-mortem inspection to ensure that broilers were fit for consumption. Laboratory analyses were conducted on a regular basis on random samples of faeces and eggs collected from various units in order to detect any diseases, should they manifest themselves, at an early stage.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Committee

The committee set up in 2004 to co-ordinate and set up a contingency plan to counter the threats of this disease continued to operate in 2006. Officials from the Veterinary Services in Gozo and other officials

from various departments like the Malta Police, Armed Forces and Civil Protection met on several occasions to discuss the matter.

Imġarr Inspectorate

One of the functions of the Imġarr Inspectorate is to prevent contagious diseases from reaching Gozo. In this regard inspections were carried out on vehicles crossing over to and from Malta. These inspections are carried out on a shift basis the whole week.

Prevention of Diseases

Foot rot/lameness diseases were still significantly present on farms. Farmers were advised to use baths/hygiene and better antibiotics.

Milk fever is a common disease on a number of farms. There was good response to extra mammary treatment and systematic antibiotics. Farmers were advised on hygiene and good farm management in order to prevent diseases.

The occurrence of bloat was rather common. This is due to overfeeding of concentrates and under feeding of hay and other silage.

Inertia and retention of placenta is also a major problem. Brucella testing was immediately carried out to exclude its incidence.

Pregnancy toxæmia claimed quite a number of lives, although treatment was successful when started early enough.

Viral disease, VHD virus and mexamatose caused quite a number of deaths in rabbits.

Extension Service Unit

The Extension Service (Animal Husbandry) was provided mainly in these areas - dairy, poultry and swine, development permits, and contacts with farmers and breeders.

During the past year this unit attended to some 28 applications for the development of new farms and other units. This involved the carrying out of inspections of relative sites and drawing up detailed reports which were referred to MEPA or to Officer in charge Land and Water Use.

Advice was given to 65 livestock breeders on the restructuring of a waste management plan, including the building of manure clamps and cesspits. Moreover, farmers sought advice mainly on milk quotas. This unit carried out inspections of cheeselet producers who applied to be included in the list of new certified cheeselet producers.

Close liaison is kept with various authorities and ministries. Reports and recommendations were submitted to the Malta Resource Authority, in connection with Waste Management Plans. MEPA-MRAE consultation meetings regarding applications for Development were attended regularly. Other representations included sittings on the Financial Assistance Committee and meetings on the publication of a new Rural Development Plan.

Gozo Marketing Centre

The Marketing Centre's main function is the selling of local vegetables and fruits. During 2006 the total volume of produce in weight sold through the centre amounted to 2,062,528 kgs for a total value of

Lm457,982. Compared with the previous year, there was a drop of 24,731 kgs or 1.2% in weight whereas an increase in value of Lm18,481 or 4.2% was registered.

Sale of Agricultural Produce through the Gozo Pitkali Centre				
	2005		2006	
	<i>Kgs</i>	<i>Lm</i>	<i>Kgs</i>	<i>Lm</i>
Pitkali	155,357	23,525	110,899	21,701
Co-operative	1,931,902	415,976	1,951,629	436,281
Totals	2,087,259	439,501	2,062,528	457,982

Gozitan farmers sell more than half their agricultural produce through the Marketing Centre at Malta. In fact the amount of produce sold through both centres stands at Lm1,076,325 for 2006 which represents a decrease of Lm10,480 or 1% when compared with the previous year.

The Pitkali Markets Management System provides a direct link with the system in Malta. This enables instant inputting of data on deliveries by farmers, sales from each pitkali store, issuing of invoices to farmers and greengrocers. Through this system, queries about deliveries and farmers' sales can be traced and checked from the Gozo Centre.

Afforestation

This section is responsible for the various public gardens and nurseries and for the embellishment and upkeep of central strips, roundabouts, verges and other soft areas.

During 2006, a total of more than 25,500 seasonal flowering plants, ornamental trees and shrubs, which were supplied by the Department's own Nurseries, were planted all over Gozo. Work included weeding, cultivation and watering, amongst others. Another function of the Unit is the pruning of trees which is carried out throughout the year.

This Unit, as in previous years, honoured its contractual obligations with a number of local councils in maintaining their Soft Areas, as per contracts signed between local councils and the Department for Projects and Development.

The Villa Rundle Gardens were once again the venue for the holding of the Gozo Agricultural, Industrial and Cultural Show in August and the Flower Show in May.

The Nurseries

The Agriculture Branch manages two nurseries - Tad-Dawwara and Tal-Hlewwa - which during 2006 propagated thousands of decorative trees, shrubs and seasonal flowering bedding plants, as well as some carob and olive trees. Production is principally targeted for use at the Department's afforestation sites, public gardens as well as central strips and roundabouts. A total of 25,539 plants were supplied to the Afforestation Unit.

Some 1,700 plants were donated to various local councils, schools and NGOs. The nurseries contributed planting material to a trail project labelled *Greening of Gozo* which was launched by the Ministry for Gozo some years ago. This project involves the reclaiming of idle land, preventing soil erosion and embellishing the environment with a greener landscape.

The two tunnels built in 2004 were used in the propagation of plant species which thrive in warm temperatures. Plants propagated under the tunnels include Bougainvillea, Jasmine, Lantana and Akalfa. In 2006 the nurseries supplied hundreds of potted plants on return basis for various cultural activities.

The general public can also purchase plants from these nurseries. Revenue from sales of ornamental trees and shrubs to the general public amounted to Lm1,731 during 2006.

Government Experimental Farm

The Government Experimental Farm is mainly concerned with the cultivation of crops and trees using the latest techniques. During the year, 1,140 kgs of unprotected crops consisting mainly of cauliflowers, onions, kohlrabi and aubergines were produced at the farm without the use of any pesticides. This amount shows a drop over the previous year. On the other hand, some 4,603 kgs of crops, which is slightly higher than in 2005, were produced in the glasshouses, using organic spray and feeds and solarisation techniques. Vegetable seedlings, mainly onions and cabbages, were sold to the public.

The Government Farm propagates fruit and citrus trees for eventual sale to the public. During 2006, more than 600 trees and 1,450 vine rootlings as well as 600 kgs of soft fruit and 1,200 kgs of citrus were sold for a total amount of Lm1,258.

Land and Water Use Section

This section is responsible for monitoring and preserving soil on the island. During the year, in accordance with the Fertile Soil Preservation Act of 1973, the section received 61 notices for the removal of approximately 9,475 cubic metres of soil. Officers from this section called on site to ensure that all fertile soil is removed before the commencement of construction works. Soil thus dislodged is then used for developing gardens on building sites, reclaiming poor land or stored for future use.

This section processed 58 applications for the purchase of fruit trees and vine rootlings and provided the necessary licence to five commercial vintners who between them pressed around 28,640 kgs of fresh grapes.

Land inspections were carried out in connection with applications for development permits and repair of farm access roads. Two meetings were held at the Government Farm for persons interested in Apiculture.

Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS)

The Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS) was set up in 2002 to register lands under cultivation. For this purpose, a computerised database, the Land Parcel Identification System (LPIS), is maintained. The LPIS is continuously updated through adjustments of land ownership transfers and the registration of new land. Every registered farmer is requested to produce a site plan of all parcels of land being cultivated in order to facilitate identification. Most of the problems, which occurred mainly due to overlapping and incorrect land location, were solved. However, some cases were referred to the Board of Disputes.

There are 3,545 farmers registered on the LPIS, cultivating a total of 3,020 hectares of land subdivided into 28,752 parcels. Various aid schemes were made available to farmers as in previous years. During 2006 IACS employees processed some 1,263 applications covering the following aid schemes. All farmers' applications, together with respective annexes, are filed in hard copy form and recorded in a computer system.

Farmers Aid Applications			
	<i>Applications</i>	<i>Area in Hectares</i>	<i>Parcels</i>
Arable Aid	1,061	1,204.37	9,113
Tomatoes for Processing	146	92.78	567
New Vine Planting	44	23.32	101
Additional Aid for Vines	326	86.46	626
Rubble Walls	173	33,635 (sq m)	384
Organic Farming	2	1.31	6
Fruit & Vegetables for Production	1,105	6,422.79	6,871
Potatoes	151	26.82	317
Olive Trees	152	26.77	258
Less Favoured Area	1,280	2,098.13	16,865
Ad Hoc measures	146	-	-

A control unit within IACS is responsible for carrying out on-the-spot checks in order to verify the crop declared and area of land. Inspections were carried out, mainly during the summer months, on some 3,610 parcels of land belonging to 141 farmers. The information gathered on the spot was inputted into a computerised control system and the resulting anomalies were acted upon.

Other tasks included the updating of farmers registration cards (FRCs) which are inputted in a computerised database and the processing of some 75 applications for agricultural land development permits referred by MEPA.

Fisheries Section

- *Fishing population:* During 2006 there were 433 registered fishermen (155 full-time, 259 part-time, 19 recreational).
- *Maintenance works:* Maintenance and repair works were carried out on the electric winches at Marsalforn and Xlendi Bays as well as on the winches located in various bays. Other works included changing of berthing rings cleaning of sand in front of the slipway at Mġarr Harbour, replacement of fenders on Xlendi Bay quay and Mġarr Harbour. Refurbishment works were also carried out at the Fisheries Office at Mġarr.
- *Licences:* 31 fishermen (one of whom part-time) were given a licence to lay *kannizzati* in Xlendi (15); Marsalforn (10); Mġarr-Grigal (3); Mġarr-Lbiċ (3). In addition eight full-time fishermen were issued with tuna fishing licences and seven set surface long line licences (*irmigġi*) were issued to three full-time and four part-time fishermen.
- *Crafts:* In 2006, a total of 350 fishing vessels (97 professional full-time, 233 professional part-time, 20 non-commercial recreational) were registered with this section. The bulk of the fishing vessels are located at Mġarr Harbour whereas Marsalforn and Xlendi Bays hold smaller numbers. A very small percentage of vessels are distributed in other small bays. Regular inspections at all fishing centres were carried out during 2006. Palm fronds were distributed as in previous years to full-time fishermen in August.

JOSEPH A PORTELLI

Director (Projects & Development)

Department of Customer Services

INTRODUCTION

The objectives of the Department of Customer Services are:

- to ensure a liaison system among the various operation centres with the objective of improving customer services for the population;
- to ensure proper planning relating to customer services; and
- to manage the branches, offices and sections of the Ministry for Gozo which provide a direct service to the public, ensuring that customers are always given a service of high quality.

During 2006, the Department of Customer Services was directly responsible for 28 sections and liaised with the Gozo branches of the Inland Revenue Department, VAT Office, Public Lotto and Electoral Office.

EDUCATION OFFICE

The Education Office in Gozo provides a wide range of services to all state and church schools including the three special schools namely the Art School, School of Music and Drama School. Around 5,963 pupils and the public in general were also offered services which were also improved throughout the year 2005 by new initiatives.

All schools in Gozo were upgraded and refurbished where the need was felt. Construction works, refurbishment and maintenance works were carried out in practically all the primary schools. Other construction works at the Agius de Soldanis Girls' Secondary and Junior Lyceum and Ninu Cremona Lyceum Complex were carried out by the Education Office personnel. Refurbishment programmes were performed all year round at Victoria Primary, St Lawrence Primary, Żebbuġ Primary, Xaghra Primary, the School of Art, Ghajnsielem Primary, Għarb Primary, Xewkija Primary and Sir Michel' Angelo Refalo Post-Secondary School.

The Literacy Centre was further equipped with books and periodicals and all schools could make use of its resources throughout the whole scholastic year.

Peripatetic teachers posted at the Education Office continued to offer their services to all primary schools.

The YSO section is responsible for the holding of adult Education Courses in Gozo. This section is responsible for the organisation of evening classes in a number of subjects both at Ordinary and Advanced level. This unit also provided the necessary support for the organisation of the Children's Carnival in collaboration with the Gozo Cultural Committee. The Annual Sports Rally and other extracurricular activities were taken in hand in which all schools including the church schools participated in organised leagues in football and netball. A new programme in gymnastics was also introduced in Gozo schools. The YSO Section is also responsible for the organisation of weekly visits by students from primary schools to the Environmental Centre at Lunzjata. Programmes are also being organised regularly throughout the scholastic year.

The school population and teaching staff in Gozo schools as at end 2006 was: Primary Schools (including kindergarten students) - 1,829; Secondary and Junior Lyceums - 1,700; Specialised Schools (Art, Drama &

Music) - 1,890; Post-Secondary Schools - 544; Teaching staff in all schools (Heads, Assistant Heads, Teachers, Instructors, Facilitators, Kindergarten Assistants) - 560.

Curricular and Extracurricular Activities

Various initiatives and activities have been organised at a College Level. Some of these are:

- creative writing workshops for primary/secondary schools and junior lyceums;
- Innovative Animation Sessions for English for Year 6 and Form V pupils and students in preparation for the JL exam and SEC; past papers were creatively explored through drama;
- Home-Sci-Home, a very successful, very innovative, week-long science fair for all students and the whole community. This took place in a typical, Gozitan farmhouse where visitors could experience how science is present in every nook of our homes and lives. A shield, created for the occasion is being presented to the school with the best projects inspired from the fair;
- ICT fair at Agius de Soldanis for all;
- a forum on literacy on World Book Day in conjunction with the Literacy Unit and Gozo National Library with an important input from the children especially with regard to the importance of the multi-sensory in the learning of languages;
- Health and Safety exhibition prepared in synergy by all the Health and Safety teachers with exhibits by pupils and students from each and every school in the College;
- Healthy Breakfast Day for all primary school pupils, at the Sports Centre, organised in conjunction with the Health Promotion Unit. Wednesday of every week inaugurated as the permanent Healthy Breakfast Day for each school inside the College;
- regular seminars and sharing of experiences on phonics and Abacus for all primary school teachers;
- professional training and hands-on sessions for KA's;
- environmental issues: a good number of schools participating in EKO-SKOLA and other environmental projects;
- facilitating the passage from primary to post-primary:
 - scientifically-run screening exercise for English, Maltese and Maths by DCM and FES;
 - A week-long seminar by PSD teachers for all Year 6 pupils working hands-on in small groups under the guidance of a PSD teacher;
- citizenship education sessions for the link teachers of the College;
- hands-on projects with on-site visits in social studies;
- hands-on farming projects;
- Arts and Crafts stand by Gozo College Arts and Crafts School at Gozo Fair;
- Arts and Crafts maxi-exhibition of works carried out by Arts and Crafts School;
- Music festival by Gozo College School of Music;
- Drama festival by Gozo College Centre for drama;
- common half-yearly examinations in a number of subjects at both primary and secondary level;
- students with special needs:
 - seminars for all the parents and facilitators of children with special needs, for example, seminars on self-advocacy and epilepsy held in conjunction with national agency and foreign experts;
 - INSET 2006 will be devoted to Diverse Needs of Learners with a day being reserved for children with special needs including gifted children;
 - visits by experts to Council of Heads and other school meetings to improve the service;
 - facilitating inclusion in all activities of the College.

Education Salaries Section

This office is responsible for the processing of the salaries of employees at the Education Division in Malta.

During the year, 698 returns regarding payment of salaries of casual staff were received every four weeks. Wage sheets were then issued to every casual employee. Also in 2006, around 15,267 mid-day break supervision claims were processed. These were paid quarterly. Professional development claims amounted to 8,132. Payments to TAS and ESTS students were also processed by this section.

This Section also dealt with refunds of ex-teachers pensioners and teachers still in employment who were overpaid due to resignation, being boarded out, unpaid leave and sick leave, maternity and so on.

The staff monitored incoming requests for information and complaints and assisted the public with the best service possible. This section has dealt with a large volume of incoming queries and requests which were forwarded by the Ministry and other offices.

EXAMINATIONS CENTRE

The Examinations Centre in Gozo is responsible for the running of all local and external examinations held in Gozo. During 2006, the Centre handled the following work:

- *Applications (Local, Matriculation and External Examinations)*: 2,084 GCE and equivalent applications and 90 local examinations and 5 others were received (718 Matsec May; 220 Matsec September; 40 London January; 342 Ordinary May; 35 Advanced May; 325 Matric May; 150 Matric September; 25 LCCI Series 2; 40 LCCI Series 3; 8 LCCI Series 4; 25 English as a Foreign Language; 156 ECDL applications; 38 Wireman Lic A & B; 40 Regular Soldiers in AFM; 5 Foreign University degrees; 12 AFM Cadets). On average, 20,000 examination sittings were held.

Both local and external examination applications were vetted and acknowledged. As this office is connected to the Examinations Department network in Floriana, all Gozo candidates are invoiced through this office and the waiting period from application to payment date is two days.

- *Examination sessions*: There were 403 examination sessions (External, Matriculation and Local Examinations). When the number of candidates was more than 40, outside help by engaging invigilators from other departments to ensure the smooth running of the examinations in session was sought.
- *Certificates*: Over 1,520 certificates were received for distribution to successful students who had sat for the London, ECDL, Degrees and London Chamber of Commerce examinations.
- *Information*: Information is provided re the various local, Matsec and external examinations to the hundreds of students who call at the Centre. Examination timetables, syllabuses, results, applications and other related data are also available for ease of reference. In October various lectures were held in the secondary schools to familiarise students with examination procedures.
- *Past Examination Papers*: The past examination papers library was updated and students and teachers make regular use of it. This library covers a period of over 18 years and includes local, Matsec and London examinations.
- *ECDL examinations*: For the 4th year running this section has been nominated to co-ordinate the European Computer Driving Licence examinations. These examinations are now being held in Gozo.
- *Special Cases room*: Work on the special cases room was finished in January 2006 and full use of this new room was made in the following session.

CULTURE SECTION

Administration

During 2006, the principal efforts of the Culture Section were the following:

- establishing a new set-up and *modus operandi* for a more effective and participative Gozo Cultural Council;
- establishing a new structural set-up for the work of the Gozo Cultural Section creating four areas, each with its own co-ordinator – administration; events; finance; equipment;
- revising and establishing a fixed working schedule for the industrial workers within the Stores and Maintenance Section; and
- preparing the necessary refurbishment works at the Sentinella Place to accommodate the new offices for the Events Section.

During 2006, the Organising Committee Culture, which preceded the newly appointed Cultural Council, held 12 committee meetings to discuss and plan the various cultural initiatives held throughout the year.

Organisation of Activities

During 2006, the Culture Section was responsible for the organisation of the following activities:

- The commemoration of five annual National Days, together with the 30th October 1948 tragedy anniversary and the commemoration of victims in the two world wars in November (better known as Poppy Day). This year the *Jum Ghawdex* celebration was also introduced on 28 October to commemorate the anniversary of the victory of the Gozitans against the French in 1798.
- Two evenings of traditional song and dance held near different characteristic Gozitan towers. The initiative called *Torrijiet* was held near Torri Isopo in Nadur and near the Dwejra Tower in the summer months and was very well received by those present.
- A concert by the La Stella Band of Victoria in Independence Square, Victoria on the occasion of the 2nd Anniversary of Malta's accession to the EU.
- During the summer months the Culture Section organised two very popular and well-attended shows in Marsalforn and Xlendi.
- Around 24 Art exhibitions were held in collaboration with Gozitan, Maltese or foreign artists at the exhibition venues at the Ministry for Gozo, the Banca Giuratale foyer and the Sentinella Base in the Citadel.
- The Christmas season was marked by two concerts, one held at the Ministry hall and another at the Oratory Don Bosco Hall. One concert with orchestra, soloist and choir was conducted by Mro Colin Attard while the second one, organised in collaboration with the Boys' Museum Branch (Nadur), was under the baton of Mro Antoine Theuma. The subsidy scheme for static and mechanical cribs attracted a record participation of 36 participants.

Carnival 2006

Five triumphal floats, four musical bands, one set of grotesque masks, eight dance groups, 16 school companies, three hilarious companies, eight individual costumes and one individual costume with grotesque mask took part in the Gozo 2006 Regional Carnival.

Grants

Besides thousands of liri being distributed in the form of help by the Organising Committee Culture to local artists, musicians, actors, crib builders and for the Christmas illumination of various streets in Gozitan villages, the Ministry for Gozo kept its annual commitment with the two Gozo opera theatres. A grant of Lm2,500 was given to each theatre as a subsidy towards the expenses involved in organising the annual opera performances.

GOZO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The Gozo Public Library network consists of the Gozo Public Library, the Gozo Lending Library and 12 local branch libraries, including one library at the Gozo General Hospital. The Gozo Public Library acquires and preserves a copy of the national collection printed material and provides reference material for research, whereas the other libraries provide educational, informative and recreational books for home reading.

Computerisation

The implementation of the computerised system at the Gozo Public Libraries has proved fruitful. In fact, since its inception, library users have availed themselves of the facilities offered through the On-Line Public Access Catalogue and the Circulation Module. This year, having introduced the Serials Module, all serial titles and periodicals received are entered into the database. Their relative receiving, acknowledging and chasing operations is processed via this computerised system.

Collections

- *Legal Deposits:* The Melitensia collection at the Gozo Public Library was enriched by 759 books. Besides, the library received a copy of government publications, newspapers and periodicals published locally.
- *New acquisitions:* The sum of Lm4,707 was spent on the acquisition of 1,851 new books (221 for the Gozo Public Library, 939 for the Gozo Lending Library, 691 for the Local Branch Libraries).
- *Donations:* 549 books were donated to the Gozo Public Library, 119 books to the Gozo Lending Library, and 2,330 to the Local Branch Libraries.

Readers' Service

- *Internet service:* 5,879 persons availed themselves of the Internet Service (Gozo Public Library - 5,318 persons; Gozo Lending Library - 561 persons).
- *New members:* 760 persons requested to borrow books for home reading (Gozo Lending Library – 425; Gozo Public Library – 335).
- *Book loans:* A total of 117,881 books (1,924 more than the preceding year) were issued for home reading (Gozo Lending Library – 63,885; Gozo Branch Libraries – 53,996).

Publicity and Promotion

- *Library orientation visits:* 544 students from all over Gozo together with their respective teachers paid an orientation visit to the Gozo Public Library and the Gozo Lending Library to familiarise themselves with the facilities and services offered at our libraries.
- *Storytelling:* Storytelling sessions were held during the scholastic year, every Wednesday afternoons at the Gozo Lending Library. A total of 135 students attended.

Exhibitions

As part of the promotional campaign to promote library services, two exhibitions were held. From 5 to 30 April, the Gozo Public Library was the venue of an exhibition of about 1,000 new books. For the first time, a student forum was held with the participation of librarians, teachers and students. These activities coincided with World Book Day 2006.

On the initiative of the Gozo Philatelic Society, an exhibition was held on 9 - 30 October 2006. A delegation of the Malta Study Circle based in the UK was present for the inauguration.

Other Activities

A seminar with the theme *Esperjenzi tal-Libreriji Pubbliċi ta' Ghawdex* was held at Guze' Micallef Hall in Xewkija. This seminar, which was attended by librarians, branch librarians and Mayors of local councils, was chaired by the Hon Dr Carmelo Mifsud Bonnici Parliamentary Secretary at the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

The National Archives Act enacted on 10 May 2005 made provisions for the appointment of a National Archivist and an Assistant National Archivist for Gozo together with other dispositions ancillary thereto. National Archives (*Gozo Section*) is a sub-agency of the National Archives. Mgr Dr Joseph Bezzina was appointed as Assistant National Archivist with effect from 1 September 2005 for a period of three years.

The NAG — National Archives (Gozo Section), inaugurated on 24 November 1989, is the public record office for the documentation produced and received by past and present government departments and establishments of the islands of Gozo and Comino. The NAG, as at end 2006, held deposits from 24 different entities, each of which is subdivided to reflect the diverse activity carried out by those entities.

During 2006, the staff at the National Archives (Gozo Section) carried out the following tasks:

- Paid visits to the Ministry for Gozo and at the Gozo General Hospital to make an appraisal of the documents preserved. A number of registers were identified for their transfer to the NAG from these two entities. Transfers from the Ministry have already been carried out. Visits are scheduled to more government dispensaries (*Bereġ*) in other parts of Gozo. During the year, a total of 188 volumes/items were transferred to the NAG and catalogued.
- Undertook the cataloguing of documents transferred to the Archives.
- Scrutinised the oldest section of the Archives, the records of the old *Universitas*, the administrative body of Gozo during the rule of the Knights.
- Conducted research on the oldest section of the NAG, namely the *Universitas*, which is used in the publication of a document every month. Serialised in the monthly magazine *Il-Hajja f'Ghawdex*, the only Gozo magazine, under the designation *Ghawdex tliet mitt sena ilu – Gozo three hundred years ago*, the series has proved very popular and will be retained for the 16th consecutive year. Up to December 2006, 150 documents have been transcribed, translated, and published with an explanation.

Exhibitions

During 2006, the NAG-Gozo mounted two exhibitions to coincide with the Archives Awareness Week.

One exhibition was entitled *Religious aspects of life in Gozo from the deposits at the National Archives*. The exhibition consisted of 30 important and interesting documents and photos directly related to the religious history and heritage of Gozo, selected from several of the 25 entities whose records are deposited at the National Archives Gozo. These included, among others, the report of an Apostolic Visitation in 1575, a meeting related to the Santa Marija horse races in 1587, permissions for the building of new churches with plans attached, certificates authenticating relics, papers related to several confraternities in Gozo, a Latin-Italian-Maltese version of the Gospel of St John, and many other interesting items. An exhibition catalogue in English was published and also made available online on the website of the Ministry for Gozo.

Concurrently with this, another exhibition was mounted - *Religious Publications in Maltese (1863 to 2000)*. This consisted of religious publications, some extremely rare, made available from two private collections.

The exhibitions, which were inaugurated by the Hon Giovanna Debono, Minister for Gozo, on 16 November, were kept running until end November. A number of people and a good number of secondary and senior primary school children from both the public and the private schools visited the exhibition during the fortnight.

Webpage

On 16 November, after the opening of the exhibition, the Minister for Gozo inaugurated the webpage of the National Archives Gozo Section. This webpage is hosted by the Ministry for Gozo at <http://www.gozo.gov.mt> and has five sections: History, National Archives Gozo, Entities, Facsimiles, and Info. The Maltese version of the webpage was eventually put online on 11 January 2007.

Researchers

The number of researchers at the NAG during 2006 was 125, while the number of research hours rose to 240. Considering an average of three/four requests per person, it means that about 400 volumes were handled throughout the year. This amounts to about 4.5% of the NAG holdings.

GOZO SPORTS COMPLEX

The Gozo Sports Complex, the venue for the sporting community in Gozo, during 2006, reached its main objectives successfully.

Sporting activities at the Gozo Sports Complex were on a regular basis. Sport disciplines, such as basketball, volleyball, table and lawn tennis, squash, karate, kick-boxing, spirit combat, and aikido were organised mainly through Gozitan Sports Associations, with the five-a-side football (futsal) being the most popular. The Basketball Association, as in previous years, once again challenged U/17 female teams in Malta with matches played at home and away basis. The Complex was used as the home venue for matches played in Gozo. Dancing sessions, fitness classes such as yoga, strike aerobics, dancing and aerobics were also practiced at the Gozo Sports Complex. Physical education teachers of secondary schools used the complex for their PE lessons. Annual sports day activities and Christmas concerts by several private and state schools were held. On 9 November, the Taekwondo Dragon Club tournament was organised at the Gozo Sports Complex.

Skola Sport entered into its eighth consecutive season, offering 15 different sports disciplines to children every Saturday from November to May. Attendance was satisfactory and encouraging, reaching a record level of attendance with an increase of 50 students from the previous year. For the first time this year, two new disciplines - indoor climbing and spirit combat - were introduced. With the help of the Gozo Climbing Association, an isolated area next to the squash court was developed into a climbing area, with a capital investment of Lm5,000.

During 2006 the Gozo Sports Complex was the show-case for the organisation of the IT Fair and the Gozo Trade Fair.

The urgent need for a refurbishment facelift for the premises was a priority during 2006. Works included the addition of a reception area; transfer of the administration offices to the upper floor; rebuilding of the toilets; installation of new Gym equipment; maintenance work on the main hall roof.

NOTARY TO GOVERNMENT

The Office of the Notary to Government in Gozo prepares, drafts and publishes deeds to which the Government, including parastatal bodies, are a party.

This office is also responsible for the conservation of Notarial Acts according to law and for the safekeeping and custody regarding immovables situated in Gozo and Comino. Such acts can be inspected by the public, who can also demand a copy of relevant deeds according to the relevant laws. During the year, 905 individuals requested copies of relevant deeds. Revenue collected amounted to Lm1,780.60.

The majority of Notaries practising in Malta continued to send copies of deeds published in Malta relating to transfers of immovables situated in Gozo and Comino.

This Office also has a storage room in the Gozo Administration Centre, where registers of deeds deposited at this office are kept.

LAND REGISTRY OFFICE

This Section deals with applications in connection with registration of property in Gozo. The following applications were received during the year:

Applications LRAs	1,816
Charges	495
Official searches	292
Site plans	2,000

LAND SECTION

The main functions of the Land Section in 2005 were:

- administration of the rent-producing government property in Gozo on behalf of the Commissioner of Land;
- compilation of records indicating government property in Gozo;
- administration of Refalo Legacy Fund.

PUBLIC REGISTRY

During the year, 2,770 Notes of Enrolment were registered in this Office while there were 2,072 Notes of Hypothec. Notes of References relating to hypothecs were 668 while 35 Legal Hypothecs were registered. The number of Schedules of Deposit relating to redemption of ground rent of immovables in Gozo and Comino was 64. There were also 39 Warrants of Prohibitory Injunctions and 14 *subbasti*.

The acts registered by the Civil Status Section were the following:

Births	275
Marriages	184
Deaths	261

The certificates issued by this section were:

Extract Certificates	7,476
Full Certificates	182

The Marriage Registry processed 186 marriage applications. During the same year there were:

Religious Marriages	133
Civil Marriages	51
Other Religions	NIL

During 2006, searches regarding transfers and hypothecs, as well as their input and testamentary searches were ordered through the Gozo Public Registry. The official searches were delivered through the Public Registry.

Public Registry Data Inputting Section

The main function of this office was to input data regarding birth certificates. In 2006 the total number of birth certificates inputted had reached 95,661. The data inputting was supplied by means of the Birth Certificate Registers which were sent from the Public Registry of Malta.

During November, this Office moved to another building housed in the Administrative buildings within the Ministry for Gozo.

SOCIAL HOUSING OFFICE

The objectives of the Social Housing Office are:

- to provide social accommodation to needy families;
- to encourage married and engaged couples to become owners of their own place of abode;
- to assist financially owner-occupiers to upgrade their housing standards.

The number of new applications received and the subsidies paid in 2006 were:

Scheme	Details	Applications	Amount Paid Lm
-	Alternative Accommodation	9	-
K,P,Q	Ground Rent Redemption	2	-
R	Rent Subsidisation	11	3,630
W	Adaptation Works – Government Dwellings	3	-
Z	Cash Grants/Loan Subsidy/Owner Occupied Private Dwellings	4	5,018
5	Adaptation Works – Leased Dwellings	4	-
7	Adaptation Works – Handicapped Persons	4	3,000
-	Grants First Buyer – VAT Subsidy	45	42,471
-	Sir Sid Darek – RTB	6	8,500
-	Subsidy on Sale of New Premises	-	41,900
-	To open a shop on Home Ownership Scheme plot	1	-
-	To sell private property to Housing Authority	2	-
-	Cash Grants to new tenant of Govt. Flats	1	-
	Total	92	104,519

*Refunded by VAT Department

In September 2006, three maisonettes at Qala (Ta' Gokk), one at Victoria (Tal-Far), and one at Xewkija (Ta' Gokk) were offered for sale under Legal Notice "Shared Ownership 2" - 28 applications were received for these maisonettes.

In addition, 64 requests were received for repairs and maintenance works at Taç-Ċawla Housing Estate, Victoria. Most of these requests were approved and works carried out.

INFORMATION OFFICE

During the last calendar year, the Information Office issued 20 press releases, the majority accompanied by photographs or video clips. The section continued to market the Government Gazette as well as other government publications.

The Gozo Information Office continued to receive E111 forms and scholarship forms for transmission to the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs respectively for processing.

PASSPORT OFFICE

The aim of the Passport Office is to provide a high standard of passport services. During the year, 2,174 new passports for adults and children were issued.

Other services provided to the general public included:

- issuing of collective passports;
- providing information to persons enquiring about dual citizenship, freedom of movement, Maltese citizenship.

Notification of births and deaths was also dealt with by this office. During the year, notifications for 275 births and 262 deaths were received. Such notifications were then referred to the Public Registry Office for registration purposes.

LICENSING AND TESTING OFFICE

During 2006 the number of vehicles licensed in Gozo was 14,705. This Office processed new registration of vehicles to both Gozitan and foreign residents, renewal of road licences, transfer of ownership of vehicles (also through inheritance), logbook changes as a result of changes of engine and colour and conversions from self-drive to private and from commercial to private.

During the year, 467 new driving licences were processed. Renewal of driving licences for persons of age 70 and over was also taken in hand. The Section also dealt with queries that may arise regarding the issuing of new driving licences for persons of 18 years and over.

TRADE OFFICE

This office offers services related to commerce. Apart from issuing import/export licences, this office deals with the processing of trading licences for establishments and small shops and with MFSA registry of companies.

During the year the following activities were undertaken:

Import Licences	16
Trading Licence Applications	129
Trade Marks	12

This office also receives new company registrations and other documents which may be requested for the running of a commercial company.

GOZO CRAFTS CENTRE AND TA' DBIEGI CRAFTS VILLAGE

Gozo Crafts Centre

The aim of the Crafts Centre is to revamp the lost interest in the local handicrafts sector which forms part of the national heritage. To carry out this task, a permanent exhibition of locally handmade products is on show at the Crafts Centre in Victoria, Gozo.

At the end of 2006, local handmade crafts exhibited totalled over 1,300 items, while the number of firms and craftsmen was 55, of which 33 firms are Gozitan while the rest are Maltese-owned. 42% of the total exhibited items belong to Gozitan firms.

During the year, 28,211 visitors visited the Crafts Centre. These include foreign visitors, local people and students from various schools who were on cultural and educational visits to the Centre.

During 2006, several firms and craftsmen changed or added new handmade crafts while action was taken to encourage more firms and craftsmen to make more use of the Gozo Crafts Centre by holding individual exhibitions. Direct information about the crafts, firms, and the place was passed to all those who asked for it, while a leaflet about the history of the place and the aim of the Centre was distributed both to local and foreign visitors.

Ta' Dbiegi Crafts Village

Work on the construction of new workshops continued at Ta' Dbiegi Crafts Village during the year. A new workshop opened for business and the majority of the workshops opened to the public.

GOZO TOURISM OFFICE

Courses held at the Institute of Tourism Studies, Qala during academic year 2005/06		
Hospitality course	Full-time – 2 yrs (Extended Skills Training Scheme) (commenced Oct)	17 students joined first year 14 continued second and final year
Food Hygiene	Short course	21 students
EU Funded Courses (organised by ETC in collaboration with Ministry for Gozo)	3 courses of 30 lessons each	23 students

The ITS Restaurant was open to the public for lunch and dinner, four times weekly during the academic year 2005/06.

GOZO GENERAL HOSPITAL

Gozo General Hospital has a total bed complement of 276 distributed as follows: Acute Wards - 104 beds; Geriatric Wards - 120 beds; and Psychiatric Wards - 52 beds. The total staff complement at the end of the year consisted of 660 full-time workers and 26 part-time workers.

Major Works Carried Out

Refurbishment of Kitchen and Upgrading of catering services

Refurbishment works at the Kitchen included replacement of part of the electrical installation and switch gear, new electrical installation for trolleys in kitchen and in each individual ward, replacement of hot and cold water distribution systems, minor civil alterations, tiling, plastering/painting works, maintenance works on metal furniture. The project including the food trolleys was commissioned in February.

Refurbishment of the Dining Room

Refurbishment works included the removal of asbestos false ceiling from the dining room, kitchen, ex laundry area, changing rooms and corridor leading from boiler house to lifts area, the replacement of the existing roof with new roof cladding, the installation of new false ceiling in the areas already referred to, new electrical and mechanical services as appropriate and tiling, plastering and painting works.

Refurbishment of the Male and Female General Wards

The project was undertaken in two phases: the first phase included the installation of a fire alarm system and the replacement of the aluminium apertures; the second phase includes the installation of a nurse call system and bedhead trunking units, electrical and extra low voltage wiring, plastering and painting and the replacement of floor vinyl sheeting.

General Statistical Information

- The average number of beds occupied was 210.47 or 73.08%.
- The average length of stay in hospital (excluding the chronic ward) was 4.06 days per person.
- The average turnover (the mean number of patients occupying any one bed) in 2006 was 19.54 patients.
- The average turnover interval (the mean time, in days, that a hospital bed was left empty between successive patients) was 4.06 days (chronic wards excluded).

	Admissions	Population
Male Ward	1,897	8,215
Female Ward	1,675	8,684
Male Geriatric Ward	27	11,064
Female Geriatric Ward	43	28,794
Paediatric Ward	430	1,193
Maternity Ward	294	1,000
Coronary Care Unit/ITU	655	1,864

Gynae Ward	396	717
Long Stay Ward	10	13,220
Short Stay Ward	207	2,069
Total	5,634	76,820

Attendance of patients

Out-patients		40,562
New Cases	11,089	
Follow-ups	29,473	
Emergency and Admitting Department		14,474
Admitted to wards	4,430	
Transferred to SLH	37	
Discharged to home or Out-Patients	10,007	
Fresh Trauma Clinic Patients		1,245
New cases	887	
Follow-ups	256	
Failed to turn up	102	
Physiotherapy (treatment sessions)		18,625
Out-Patients	6,659	
In-Patients	11,966	
Occupational Therapy (patients)		6,690
Speech Therapy (treatment sessions)		1,318
Obstetrics (registered deliveries) (274 infants)		270
Renal Unit (treatment sessions)		1,085
Podology (patients) (new cases - 1,067)		7,426
Blood donation (donors)		1,735
Male	1,236	
Female	499	
Acupuncture Clinic		275
New cases	-	
Follow-ups	275	

Operations Performed

	Intermediate	Minor	Major	Major Plus	Major Complex	Total
Surgical	167	327	57	6	12	569
Orthopaedic	109	15	47	49	-	220
ENT	38	18	-	-	-	56
Ophthalmic	13	74	136	-	-	223
Gynaecology	95	154	170	-	-	419
Dental	-	11	-	-	-	11
Pace-maker	-	-	24	-	-	24
Endoscopies	210	256	7	1	-	474
Total	632	855	441	56	12	1,996

Investigations carried out

X-Rays	12,341
Ultrasounds general	1,480
Ultrasounds gynae	787
Electrocardiograms	6,106
Echocardiograms	160
Holter Monitoring	154
Laboratory Tests	209,762
Lab Samples sent to Malta	53,418
Stress ECG	335
Lung Function tests	36

Primary Health Care Gozo

Attendance at Primary Health Care - Gozo	
General Practitioner	50,512
Treatment	12,945
Home Visits	55
Foreigners	419
Immunisation	4,409
<i>Bereġ</i> (GP)	14,389
Medicine	1,839
Total	84,568

Attendance at <i>Bereġ</i> – Gozo		
	GP	Medicine
Xewkija	1,686	287
Ghasri	624	49
Gharb	928	106
St Lawrence	794	97
Nadur	3,449	206
Qala	1,437	94
Għajnsielem	1,478	108
Munxar	417	-
Kerċem	549	64
Żebbuġ	436	42
Sannat	652	58
Xaghra	1,939	233
Total	14,389	1,344

Immunisation Service	
Type of Cases	No
Di Te Per	252
Polio	308
Hib	260
MMR	150
Yellow Fever	21
Tab Inj	109
Meningitis	19
Hepatitis B	263
Hepatitis A	5
Adult Dip/Tetanus	45
Di Tetanus	12
Tetanus	376
Rabies	2
Flu Inj	3,747

School Medical Service Gozo

A total of 960 school medical examinations were carried out at primary schools in Gozo during 2006. These were 650 in state schools (149 pre-kinder; 233 Year 1; 268 Year 6) and 310 in private schools (113 pre-kinder; 102 Year 1; 95 Year 6).

During 2006, in line with the primary schools in Malta, students in Year 3 were vaccinated for Hepatitis B – 339 first dose, 339 second dose and 352 third dose. In addition, students in Year 4 and Year 5 received the second dose of MMR – 331 and 410 respectively.

In May 2006, the Form IV students in all secondary schools were also vaccinated with the fifth dose for Diphtheria, Tetanus and Polio. In all there was a combined total of 388 students (boys and girls). Of these 360 were vaccinated as the rest were not attending school.

Prior to school closure for the summer holidays, the immunisation of the four- to five-year-olds at school against Diphtheria, Tetanus and Polio (Pre school booster vaccine) was effected.

Total students	296
Students vaccinated	268
Postponed	28

Secondary School Immunisation - Forms covered Form I for BCG

BCG Campaign	Students Present	Mantoux Test Negative	BCG Done	Postponed
Lyceum Boys S.S. Victoria	153	153	152	1
Sacred Heart Seminary, Victoria	54	54	54	-
Girls S.S. Victoria	156	156	156	-
Bishops' Conservatory School	37	37	37	-

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICE

The Gozo Regional Office provides the services that are normally offered by various units in Malta such as the Drug Control Unit, Environmental Health Unit, Food Safety Unit, Burials Administration Unit, Diving Cards (licences) section.

In liaison with the Administrative Unit of the Department of Public Health in Malta, this office is responsible for maintaining strict surveillance on the priority communicable diseases, food safety, non-communicable disease, risk factors and environmental hazards and to take the necessary measures to remove or reduce these threats to the health of the population of the islands.

The services provided by this office are as follows:

- Health Inspectorate Services;
- Pest Control;
- Burials Section (St Mary's Cemetery);
- Diving Permits Section.

Food Control Section

This includes maintaining constant supervision over food premises (catering establishments, food manufacturers, retail outlets, kiosks and stalls), ascertaining that a food safety management system is adopted and implemented. Inspections are carried out in premises engaged in the preparation, processing, storage and sale of food and drink by using a Risk Assessment Monitoring system in order to ensure compliance with the Food Safety Act 2002 and the standing regulations.

Complaints with regard to the Food Safety Act 2002 are investigated in order to ascertain that food and drink are of the nature, substance and quality demanded by the purchaser and are safe and fit for human consumption and that the premises are kept in a high standard of hygiene and in compliance with the standing Public Health Laws and Regulations.

Environmental Health Control Section

The role of this section is to investigate complaints in connection with public health issues and to ensure the abatement of nuisances by preventive and remedial action.

Stoppages in drains and accumulations of litter in open spaces were the foremost amongst the complaints submitted. Other complaints received include alleged infringements of certain provisions of the Code of Police Laws such as keeping of animals in unhygienic premises, accumulation of refuse in open spaces, state of cleanliness of refuse skips and pest control, as well as others which constitute a health hazard or nuisance in breach of the Public Health Act 2003 and Tobacco (Smoking Control) Act.

This section is also responsible for monitoring the quality of the public water supply from boreholes, reservoirs, reverse osmosis plants and various points through regular sampling.

In collaboration with the Environmental Health Unit, this section monitors the popular bathing areas in Gozo and Comino by sampling and analysis of seawater.

Inspections performed at food premises by category and grading by Risk Assessment Monitoring Programme

Food Premises	Inspections	Grade %				
		A	B	C	D	E
Retail Outlets	248	1.6	54.0	43.4	2.0	-
Food Manufacturers	84	13.1	73.8	13.1	-	-
Catering outlets	177	12.4	59.9	24.8	2.3	0.6
Hotels	17	29.4	47.1	23.5	-	-

Inspections and samples taken in connection with investigations/ follow-up cases of Food Poisoning

Inspections	47
Samples Taken	83

Miscellaneous

Inspections of premises icw MEPA applications for development permission	44
Inspections of pharmacies, clinics, private hospitals, old people's homes	29
Fumigation of premises	2

Other inspections of Food Premises

Routine Inspections:	287
Follow-up inspections re deficiencies/contraventions	60
Product recall	16
Labelling of foodstuffs	67
Inspection re refrigeration of dairy products	139
Other inspections in connection with:	
a) Sampling programme	38
b) Undertakings	26
c) Emergency Control Orders	4
d) Emergency Prohibition Orders	1
Inspection of premises in connection with licensing	
a) Department of Health	1
b) Department of Trade	36
c) Malta Tourism Authority	23
d) Department of Customs	2
Total	700

Contraventions

Food related	2
Environment related	3

Samples taken by category

Food	142
Beverages	1
Drinking Water	6
Other Samples	1

Environmental Issues

Service Water – Direct Mains	125
Service Water – Other Services	92
Infiltration Water	43
Bathing Water	561
Swimming Pools	1
Other Samples	18

Investigation of Complaints

	No of Complaints	No of Inspections
<i>In connection with Food:</i>		
Unhygienic premises & unhygienic practices	6	10
Food unfit or past durability date	1	1
Labelling of food	14	30
Other food complaints	18	27
<i>In connection with Environment:</i>		
Defective drains	29	68
Blockages in drains	20	40
Premises or sites dirty or containing accumulations	70	126
Infiltrations	57	149
Other complaints (rat sightings)	363	363
Re Tobacco (Sanitary Control Act)	6	22
Total	584	836

Nuisance reports issued

Defective drains	17
Blockages in drains	15
Premises or sites dirty or containing accumulations	22
Other complaints (rat sightings)	2
Total	56

Undertakings

Total no. of undertakings	26
Number concluded	19
Still pending	7

Destruction of Food Items

26 kilos of food items were destroyed by this office.

Pest Control

The pest control section carries out regular routine rat baiting of sewers and public open spaces throughout the island have so as to keep the rats and mice population on our island under control.

Operatives in this section attended to complaints regarding insect infestations in public areas. Various disinfestations by spraying with effective insecticide were carried out in many localities during the year.

	No. of Areas	No. of Baits
Localities	655	11,551
Complaints	396	6,896
Sewers	114 (444 manholes)	845
Insect disinfection by spraying	18	-
Cases of Murine Typhus	5	120
Packets delivered to the Public	12,400 packets	

Control Cards for Narcotic/Psychotropic Drugs

1,465 applications for the issuing and renewal of control cards for narcotic/psychotropic drugs were processed and issued by this office.

Burials Section

This section is responsible for the administration and management of St Mary's Cemetery, Xewkija and Tal-Ghonq Cemetery in Victoria, and the application of various laws and regulations related to internments. This involves the administration and management of personnel, the general upkeep of cemeteries, proposed extension of cemetery and construction of new additional graves and research work to establish burial and grave ownership rights.

The number of burials effected at St Mary's Cemetery, Xewkija during 2006 was 65 in private graves and 20 in common graves. 20 transfers of remains were carried out from one grave to another or from St Mary's Cemetery to other cemeteries in Malta and Gozo. There were also 38 cleaning of graves. During the year restoration works were undertaken on the façade and boundary walls of St Mary's Cemetery. Pruning of trees and other maintenance works were also carried out in the cemetery.

Diving Permits

No diving permits were issued in 2006.

SECTION FOR THE CARE OF THE ELDERLY

This section is responsible for a number of support services aimed at enhancing the quality of life of elderly persons and those with special needs and to support independent living in the community.

- *Home Help Care Service*: This is the main service offered by this Section, having 883 beneficiaries in 691 households. The service is delivered by 115 part-time Social Assistants. Home Help Care Service (Gozo) is allocated by a Board, which in 2006 held 22 sittings, during which all adjustments in hours were decided, together with the policy governing this service. As stipulated in the Quality Service Charter, the Board is meeting regularly every two weeks.
- *Handyman Service*: This service provides maintenance works and sundry jobs in the homes of the elderly and special needs clients in collaboration with the Construction and Maintenance Unit. During 2006, a total of 63 jobs were carried out. The Quality Service Charter ensures same day service for urgent works and all others within 24 hours.
- *Telecare Service*: A Care Worker is assigned responsibility for this service. 67 applications were received and 60 were installed during the year. Regular home visits are carried out on a weekly basis following installation, to ensure the correct use of the service.
- *Incontinence Service*: The incontinence service is also the responsibility of this office, although it is administered by a clerk from the Family Welfare Section. During 2006, four new applications were received under Scheme A while 92 new applications were received under Scheme B. There are 77 clients who benefit regularly from this service under Scheme A while 321 clients benefit under Scheme B.
- *Meals on Wheels*: This service operates as a joint venture between the Ministry for Gozo, the *Moviment Azzjoni Soċjali* and the Society of the Friends of the Sick and the Elderly in Gozo. This service provides a daily mid-day hot meal delivered to the clients' homes. A total number of 3,822 meals were delivered in 2006.
- *Social Activities*: Mother's Day Mass and Christmas Party.
- *U3E Gozo*: This section re-launched the U3E in Gozo in collaboration with the University Gozo Centre and the Division of Gerontology. Transport is provided and to date 43 persons are attending these courses.
- *Day Centre*: This Centre has been running as a joint venture between the Ministry for Gozo, Caritas and 12 local councils since 1999. The Day Centre is at present operating on a four-day weekly basis. Overall

attendance in 2006 was 6,810 elderly persons. Transport is provided by contributions from the local councils. Older persons who attend benefit from the services of a doctor, nurse and hairdresser on request, as well as from social and cultural outings both in Malta and Gozo and recreational activities. During Easter, the Day Centre organised mass at Marsalforn, a competition for the best decorated *figolla* and an Easter Dinner. In September, 50 elderly persons and helpers participated in a seven-day tour to Belgium, Holland, France and England organised by the Day Centre. Two Christmas activities were organised for the elderly – a mass at St Paul’s Church in Marsalforn celebrated by HL Bishop Emeritus Mgr Nicholas J Cauchi, a competition for the best decorated Christmas Cake and a Christmas Dinner; the second activity was a mass at the Bishop’s Seminary in Victoria, celebrated by the Bishop of Gozo HL Mgr Mario Grech and followed by a variety show where all the staff of the Day Centre and some of the elderly took part.

ADULT TRAINING CENTRE

- *Policy:* The Centre’s policy is to provide the highest quality service possible for all our service users and to create a relaxed, supportive and comfortable atmosphere, where the service user is treated with respect dignity and compassion, by well-trained professionally led staff, who are highly motivated and are aware of their legal, ethical and moral duties.
- *Aims:* As a main supplier of day services for people with disabilities in Gozo, the centre’s aims are: access, integrate, supervise, link, give support, rehabilitate, enhance and care. The centre also strives towards the ability not the disability and is responsive to the needs of the individual.
- *Structure:* The Elderly and Special Needs Office manages the administrative section in close co-ordination with the Adult Training Centre Head. 40 persons with various disabilities attend the centre regularly. Members are organised in seven units with the aim of giving more individual attention to those most in need. Lunch is provided from Gozo General Hospital daily for all members. Through a structured life skills programme, members are trained for better independent living. The centre caters for both mental and physical disability.
- *Liaison with other agencies:* A healthy co-ordination exists with most agencies for people with special needs in particular the seven ATCs in Malta, KNPD, Support Living Division, NPSPD, Eden Foundation Gozo, ESN Sannat and Association for the Deaf Gozo while first-hand support is being given to GAVI, Enabled Housing Association Derbyshire, UK, Gozo Federation Persons with Disabilities. The Centre also has ongoing contacts with agencies in America, Poland, Czech Republic, Denmark and Austria.
- *Referrals:* Normally referrals are made through the Head. For 2006, one person was referred from Arka Foundation, five persons from ESN Sannat Special School, one from Psychiatric Social Work Unit.
- *Services:* Services of Personal Aids were given to 15 individuals – these included communication therapy (12 sessions), lace (32 sessions), lace and weaving (60 sessions), ophthalmic (3 sessions) and podology (6 sessions); MMDNA nurse and dentistry services; and a weekly mass service.
- *Placements:* the following students had placements during the year - six from MCAST; four student-facilitators from University (40-hour); two social work students from Sheffield University through the EDGE project (3-month); 18 students from Holy Cross University in Manchester (15-day).
- *Cordial Visit at the Centre:* One of the highlight for the Centre this year was the official visit of the new Bishop for Gozo Mons Mario Grech. Other visits were made by delegations from Derbyshire and Sheffield; five from different European Countries; one by an American group; ten from different Gozitan organisations; two individuals from Poland in conjunction with the KNPD organisation from Malta; three individuals from Denmark; six individuals from EDGE programme; 48 persons with disabilities from different European countries; Resource Centre at Mtarfa; 11 persons from OASI; KNPD Chairmen and Executive Director.
- *Support Group:* Members from the Centre train, help and participate in the running of the Bazaar in Victoria. Social help to people in need is provided from this outlet. Dancing, horse riding therapy, weaving, lace and craft training sessions were organised.

- *Outwork:* Work was done for Ta' Ċenċ Hotel, San Lawrenz Resort, NGO, Enable Living Foundation flat in Gozo, ETC, Eden Foundation in Gozo, MAS apartments; support in transportation of rehabilitation equipment and maintenance on accessories was effected at primary schools, members' residences and other entities; in liaison with Commercial Couriers Co Ltd, the courier service was continued; work was done for Magro Brothers.
- *Cultural Activities:* Members took part in cultural activities in Malta, Gozo and Comino such as Carnival, Fun Games, Crafts Exhibition, Crib Exhibition, an international Sports Day held at the Sports Complex, day outings to various places of interest in Malta and Gozo, visit to Malta Police Headquarter. The pool therapy programme at Arka Foundation was continued and various social events such as parents' outing, day camp in Comino, swimming were organised.
- *In-service Training Courses:* Various courses and talks were attended on self-esteem, health and safety, management, epilepsy, service user, enforcement of programmes, teamwork and others.

FAMILY WELFARE (GOZO SOCIAL WORK UNIT)

The Gozo Social Work Unit in the Ministry for Gozo offers social work intervention with a generalist approach. There were 137 new cases during 2006 (including cases at the Gozo General Hospital), 32 of which were 'reactivated' cases. By the end of the year the Unit had 178 cases that required follow-up (67 cases requiring weekly intervention; 63 cases an intervention at least once every two weeks; 33 cases that were terminated; 15 cases requiring periodical intervention). 78 cases required one-time intervention. Such cases are not considered as part of the Unit's caseload and therefore not recorded therein. The Telephone Interventions service is delivered daily. The On-call Service, providing social work service after office hours, received 36 calls that needed outside intervention.

In 2006 there were:

- 19 case conferences that were attended by staff members;
- supervision was carried out on a weekly basis with all staff members at the Unit;
- 4 university students had their social work practical placements with the Unit during spring/autumn 2006;
- SW service was delivered at the Detox Centre, and GGH;
- 5 Juvenile Court sessions were held;
- 58 court appearances by social work staff were carried;
- 5 cases of supervised access visits ordered by the Court were also carried out involving weekly visits at the Ċentru Hidma Soċjali, Gozo;
- 18 applications for Carer's pension were taken care by the Unit;
- 4 persons who benefited from the Social Administrators service every month;
- 28 social reports were prepared by the Unit for various departments, agencies, courts and places of work;
- social work service delivered to psychiatric wards at Ta' l-Ibraġġ Hospital, as well as the Gozo General Hospital by 2 Support Social Workers who were assigned on full time basis there and worked under regular supervision with 45 new cases and 26 reactivated cases while 6 cases were put away;
- taking care of clerical and telephone work involved in the Incontinence Service;
- 28 applications were submitted to the Community Chest Fund where 15 clients received material support through the Unit's intervention with the Fund;
- 13 persons who benefited from services given by the National Commission Persons with Disability after the Unit's intervention;
- social work interventions were carried out with the elderly;
- 57 talks related to social work delivered by SW staff in various localities and on various community radio stations.

SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICE

Victoria Area Office

This Office deals directly with the general public in connection with applications, monitoring and queries regarding National Insurance Pensions and other contributory and non-contributory Social Security benefits and assistance. The following are the main activities:

- *Non-Contributory Pensions/Assistance/Benefits/Welfare*: responsible for applications for non-contributory assistance, review for current benefits and financial investigations for free medical aid (Pink Form).
- *Contributory/Foreign Pension*: deals with applications in connection with pensions for which NI contributions have been paid. It is also responsible for filling of Foreign Pension forms from Australia, the UK, Canada and all EU countries.
- *Children's & Supplementary Allowance/Marriage Grant/Maternity*: processes applications, declarations and queries in connection with these benefits; also responsible for filling of marriage grants and maternity applications.
- *New Registrants/Medical Certificates*: registration under the Social Security Act of newly employed workers. Medical certificates referred to this section are daily entered on computer system.
- *Medical Boards*: medical boards in connection with Medical Assistance, Social Assistance, Invalidity Pension, Disabled Pension, Sickness Benefits, Injury Benefits and Foreign Pensions were held regularly every Thursday at the Gozo General Hospital. During 2006 the Board processed about 1,400 cases.
- *Statistics*: the office deals directly with the public either personally or by telephone, helps people to complete claim forms and deals with all their queries. The following table shows the number of claimants visiting and calling at the office, and the number of new applications completed together with the number of queries raised during 2006.

	Total	Query	Application	In Person	By Telephone
Non-Contributory Pension					
Age Pension	308	277	31	276	32
Blind Pension	-	-	-	-	-
Carer's Pension	52	47	5	49	3
Handicapped Pension	85	79	6	67	18
Contributory & Foreign Pension					
Retirement Pension	2,630	2,374	256	2,235	395
Widow's Pension	467	419	48	359	108
Invalidity Pension	987	897	90	792	195
Foreign Pensions	1,119	1,020	99	1,057	62
SVB APP	1	-	1	1	-
Social Assistance					
Social Assistance	680	633	47	605	75
Social Assistance Female	27	21	6	24	3
Drug Addicts	57	35	22	55	2
Single Parent	86	71	15	74	12
Unemployment Assistance	3,762	3,577	185	3,459	303
Social Assistance Board	3	3	-	3	-
Short-term benefits					
Marriage Grant	98	8	90	96	2
Injury Benefit	31	31	-	30	1
S/Unemployment Benefit	633	633	-	592	41
Milk Grant	2	1	1	1	1
Sickness Benefit	670	670	-	608	62
Child Benefits					
Disabled Child Allowance	15	6	9	14	1
Children Allowance	3,293	1,344	1,949	3,152	141
Maternity Benefit	166	18	148	161	5
Foster Care	-	-	-	-	-

<i>Medical Assistance & Medical Aid</i>					
Tuberculosis Assistance	-	-	-	-	-
Leprosy Assistance	4	4	-	4	-
Sickness Allowance	731	635	96	670	61
Pink Form or Card	1,642	1,111	531	1,577	65
Supplementary Allow.	3,426	1,010	2,416	3,291	135
NI3 Insurability	915	464	451	845	70
Rebate Electricity & telephone	270	199	71	241	29
<i>Exemptions</i>					
NI Contributions	864	864	-	754	110
Foreign Bonus	288	67	221	280	8
Waiving of Fees	40	15	25	40	-
Total	23,352	16,533	6,819	21,412	1,940

Number of sickness certificates received and entered on computer: 18,988.

Nadur Area Office

Welfare

This section is responsible for every type of new applications for different assistances and contributory and non-contributory pensions. The number of persons who called at the Area Office in connection with the various benefits offered by this Office is shown in the following table:

Benefits	Questions/Reviews	New Applications
Unemployment Assistance	237	89
Social Assistance	99	32
SAF (Social Assistance Females)	10	2
SUP (Single Unemployed Persons)	12	-
SAB (Social Assistance Board)	-	2
Handicapped Pension	22	1
Age Pension	82	49
Carer's Pension	16	5
Sickness Assistance	106	26
Water & Electricity Rebates	30	36
Supplementary Allowance	110	515

This section is also responsible for financial investigations for free medicines and also revisions for current benefits which were as follows:

New Applications for Free Medical Aid	186
Revisions for Free Medical Aid	92
Pink Card for Free Medicines	142

Contributory Pensions

At this Area Office, retirement, invalidity and other pension's applications are also filed. These benefits are based on the number of social security contributions paid by the individual lodging the application. During the year the number of clients calling at this Office in connection with this type of applications was as follows:

Benefits	Questions/Reviews	New Applications
Invalidity Pensions	48	21
Retirement Pensions	88	50
Widows Pension	14	23
Marriage Bonus	2	3
Maternity Bonus	4	15
Over 75 Bonus (XM3A/82)	7	107
Children's Allowance	193	411
Foreign Pensions (Australia, Canada, UK)	30	13
Injury Benefit	4	9

Special/Unemployment Benefits (UB & SUB)	59	-
Sickness Benefit	138	-
Direct Credits Applications	3	48
Change of Addresses	-	17
Power of Attorney (<i>Prokura DSS</i>)	8	11
Stop Payments	1	8
NI 64	-	7
NI 3	11	32

As in previous years refunds being repaid by individuals that were overpaid to claimants were also being collected at this Area Office. The amount of refunds for this period was Lm1,348.48.

INDUSTRIAL AND EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS

During the year this Section carried out 224 routine inspections covering 525 employees, during which inspections 369 employees were interviewed and 14 irregularities were detected. Action was taken to have these irregularities rectified; 119 follow-up/special visits were undertaken. 76 claims amounting to Lm26,940 were issued in respect of arrears in wages, wages below the Wage Regulation Order/National Standing Order, vacation leave, bonuses, overtime remuneration, and weekly allowance not granted. Two officers from this Section attended 27 court sittings/*perizias*.

CENTRE FOR NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS

During the period in caption, the number of non-government organisations and voluntary groups making use of the service offered by the association surpassed the 172 mark, while those making use of the premises on a regular basis reached the 50 mark. These 50 organisations held 476 meetings. All registered organisations benefited from almost 21,082 photocopies at a heavily subsidised rate. Various sittings regarding the Wardens' Tribunal as well as those relating to the protection of the rights of minors started being held at the Centre. Examinations for driving tests were also carried out at this Centre by ADT personnel. Apart from this, the NGO Centre, in collaboration with the Ministry for Gozo, was responsible for the co-ordination of the Annual Subsidy Scheme for all Gozitan NGO's.

UNIVERSITY GOZO OFFICE

During 2006 the following courses were organised:

- *Completed:*
 - Diploma in Information Technology (ended June 2006) – 3 students completed the course and were conferred with their diploma in November at the University of Malta;
 - Course leading to the MA in Islands and Small States Studies (ended June 2006) – 10 students completed and were conferred with the degree in November at the University Gozo Centre.
- *New courses:*
 - a 2-year course leading to a Diploma in Commerce (commenced October) – 11 students;
 - a 1-year course leading to a Diploma in Lace Studies (commenced October) – 12 students;
 - a 2-year course leading to the MA in History (commenced October) – 3 students;
 - a 2-year course leading to a Postgraduate Degree in Education – Administration and Management (commenced February) – 32 students.
- *Short courses:* the following short courses were offered at the University Gozo Centre during 2006 – Artistic Production on the Island of Gozo, in collaboration with Heritage Malta; Revision Classes in Systems of Knowledge, in collaboration with GECS; EU Institutions; Use of the Internet; International Course in Maltese Lace Making.
- *Courses part-financed by the European Union:* Eight courses, part-financed by the European Union under the Structural Funds Programme for Malta 2004-2006 ESF, were offered by the Ministry for Gozo at the University Gozo Centre. The first set of four courses were held between December 2005 and June 2006,

and consisted of Introduction to Agriculture; Introduction to Business Studies; Introduction to E-Commerce and IT; and Introduction to Environmental Planning and Management. 39 participants completed such courses. A second set of four courses in the same areas of study commenced in October 2006 and are scheduled to come to an end in 2007.

Extra Curricular Activities

- 25 experts from Commonwealth countries and international/regional organisations participated in a workshop on constructing an index of economic resilience of small states, held at the University Gozo Centre between 10 and 12 April 2006. The workshop was organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the University of Malta. Participants included high-profile experts from the World Bank, the United Nations, the FAO, the Indian Ocean Commission, the Pacific Forum Secretariat, the Commonwealth Secretariat and from universities of a number of small island states.
- On 30 April, the Lace-Making Programme at the University of Malta Gozo Centre organised the annual event *Gozo Lace Day* for the tenth consecutive year. The event was held at the University Gozo Centre premises and consisted of a number of exhibitions and demonstrations of Gozo lace and a number of talks on matters related to lace-making.
- On 11 August the Centre organised its annual summer activity consisting of a Greek Comedy entitled *The Arbitrants* by Meander and performed by the Associazione Culturale Politecnico Teatro, who were on a tour from Italy. The event was organised by the Organising Committee of Culture, in collaboration with the University Gozo Centre and the Sicilian Region.
- On 1 December the Award of Certificate' event was held at the University Gozo Centre. During this event certificates were distributed to 39 candidates who successfully completed courses offered by the Ministry for Gozo at the University Gozo Centre between December 2005 and June 2006. These courses were part-financed by the European Union under the Structural Funds Programme for Malta 2004-2006 European Social Fund.

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT (GOZO)

The Inland Revenue Department is responsible for the administration of the Income Tax and Capital Transfer Duty Acts and the enforcement of Social Security Contributions. The Gozo Branch deals specifically with Gozitan individual taxpayers as well as bodies of persons and it offers assistance and information to the general public in complying with their fiscal obligations.

FSS and Provisional Tax

FSS deductions, as well as Provisional Tax paid during 2006 are as a rule first set off against tax assessed for the year of assessment 2007; any balance remaining is then credited against outstanding tax for earlier years, if any, or else refunded. During 2006 the number of employers who submitted the FSS annual reconciliation documents for 2005 amounted to 769. The FSS Division captured and reconciled data covering 3,337 employees for 2005. The FSS Division also issued 313 notices for collection of outstanding tax and social security contributions due by employers. FSS collected by the Gozo Cash Office amounted to Lm672,917 as against the Lm561,627 collected in 2005.

Provisional Tax collected during 2006 amounted to Lm1,053,320 exceeding 2005 amounts by Lm70,269. Provisional Capital Gains Tax withheld on deeds of sales increased slightly from Lm1,907,475 (2005) to Lm2,603,908.

Revenue

Revenue from Income Tax collected during the year ending 31 December 2006 amounted to Lm6,050,863, an increase of 6% over the previous year. The following schedule is a breakdown of revenue by system of collection as received through the Gozo Office.

	2006	2005
	Lm	Lm
PAYE/FSS (Private Employees only)	672,917	561,627
Provisional Tax	1,053,320	983,051
Provisional Tax (Capital Gains Tax)	2603,908	1,907,475
Provisional Tax (Self-Assessment)	1,269,506	1,804,848
Part-Time Self-Employed	56,297	42,243
Penalties	51,535	68,789
Agricultural Scheme	20,960	18,839
Miscellaneous	206	394
Settlement Tax	322,214	344,584
Total Income Tax Receipts	6,050,863	5,731,850
Social Security Contributions	2,888,591	2,674,815
Total Income Tax & Social Security Contributions	8,939,454	8,406,665
Duty on Documents Acts	2,889,809	2,940,274
Death and Donation Duty	19,542	4,009
Miscellaneous	194	218
Total Capital transfer Duty	2,909,545	2,944,501
Grand Total	11,848,999	11,351,166

Social Security Contributions are received at the Gozo Cash Office on behalf of the Social Security Department in respect of Gozitan self-employed persons and Gozitan private employees. Receipts in respect of Income Tax and Social Security Contributions were as follows:

	2006	2005
Income Tax	11,219	10,579
Social Security	<u>12,772</u>	<u>12,676</u>
Total Receipts	23,991	23,255

Collection of Tax

As part of the Department's drive to collect outstanding tax balances, a 1% per month additional tax is being imposed on any outstanding balances. As a result of this, 84 agreements were entered into between the Department and taxpayers on instalment plans to settle their dues either by direct settlement or else by means of the FSS System. Settlement tax receipts amounted to Lm322,214; however, tax withheld by means of the FSS system vis-à-vis Gozitan government and parastatal employees is paid in Malta and is not included with receipts recorded by the Gozo Branch.

Tax and Other Clearances

During 2006 the Branch processed 260 authorisations for tax clearances in connection with the repatriation of funds from Malta. It also issued 34 approvals for the exemption or reduction of the 7% Capital Gains Tax rate on deeds of sale. These approvals are requested prior to deeds of sale in those cases where a rate lesser than the statutory 7% tax will be enough to cover any ensuing capital gains tax. 85 pension scheme applications were issued to the Department of Social Security.

Self-assessments and Declarations

The old system of Assessments is being gradually phased out and all pending assessments under this system are being cleared. 300 such assessments were raised during 2006. The Branch received 4,536 Declaration Forms during the year and acknowledged electronically 6,229 Self-Assessment returns (196 of which were for previous years). 92 objection cases covering 244 years of assessment were dealt with. 166 Correction Forms were raised against Self-Assessments raised by the Department.

Agriculture Scheme

This scheme which was introduced during 2005 enables farmers to opt to be charged at source a Final Withholding Tax of 3% when selling their products to registered payers. During 2006 the Branch acknowledged electronically 400 Part-timer and 230 Full-timer Agricultural Scheme returns.

Duty on Documents – Transfers ‘Inter Vivos’

During the year this Branch examined 1,486 deeds of sales and other transfers of immovable property, of which 1,043 were inspected by the Department's engineers. As a result 515 original claims were raised. Stamp duty on such transfers amounted to Lm1,821,495. During the year, 86 new objections were registered and 45 cases were concluded. Besides duty on transfer of immovable property, Lm4,743 was collected in respect of share transfers. Duty collected from additional claims issued amounted to Lm42,538. Additional duty on such claims amounted to Lm13,484. Outstanding balance of assessed duty, including disputed duty amounted to Lm704,200.

During the period under review 978 promises of sale were registered with the Department. Provisional stamp duty paid on these promises of sale amounted to Lm474,717 (Lm371,177 during 2005).

Duty on Documents – Transfers ‘Causa Mortis’

The number of returns *causa mortis* filed during 2006 was 370, of which 22 cases were inspected by the Department's engineers. 289 original claims were raised during the year. Stamp duty on such declarations amounted to Lm479,912. 30 new objections were registered and 23 cases were concluded during 2006. Revenue collected from additional claims issued amounted to Lm27,160. Additional duty on such claims amounted to Lm1,556. Outstanding balance of assessed duty, including disputed duty, amounted to Lm109,989.

Death and Donation Duty

65 additional returns were filed during 2006. 30 assessments were raised, whilst 25 transmissions were found to be exempt from tax. Duty claimed during the period was Lm10,239, and revenue collected, including Lm9,271 interest, totalled Lm19,542. Outstanding balance of assessed duty, including disputed duty up to and including 31 December 2006 amounted to Lm91,957.

VAT OFFICE

- *New Applications:* This Office received 295 applications for a new VAT registration number.
- *Returns:* VAT returns from Gozo taxpayers were received regularly throughout the year. These returns amounted to 8,310.
- *Fiscal Receipt Books:* 5,213 personalised fiscal receipts books were distributed to VAT registration holders. 4,912 personalised and 442 non-personalised were collected from taxpayers.
- *Cancellations:* 102 taxpayers applied for de-registration of their VAT number.
- *Appeals:* 4 appeals were received at this office from Gozitan taxpayers. These appeals were acknowledged and relative papers were forwarded to Secretary Appeals Board.

- During the year the principal attended several court sittings in connection with VAT returns.
- The officers of this section helped taxpayers in filling the returns, authorised 102 fiscal cash register transfers, helped in filling 157 VAT refunds for funerals and 52 applications for marriage VAT refunds and dealt with numerous queries from the general public.

ELECTORAL OFFICE (GOZO)

The Electoral Office (Gozo Section) receives applications for the registration of voters, transfer of residence, change of status, or other required corrections to be included in the revised electoral register.

In conjunction with the Commissioner of Police, the office deals with the issue, renewal and distribution of identity cards. The staff of the Electoral Office in Gozo regularly carries out street inspections in connection with naming/renaming of streets to ensure that the names of voters listed under old street names are correctly registered under the new street names in the electoral register and to change ID cards. The Office also provides a service to housebound and bed-ridden patients in hospitals and institutions for the aged and in many private residences where the sick and aged persons residing there request new identity cards and voting registrations.

Local Councils' Elections in Gozo at Rabat, Sannat and Gharb were held on 11 March 2006. This Office was involved in the preparations for such elections, which included the setting up and inspection of polling places, distribution of undelivered voting documents, issuing of special voting documents, receiving applications regarding AECs, counting staff and other related matters.

Before the elections were held, the Electoral Commission assigned one of its members at the Gozo Electoral Office to receive nominations from interested candidates for the elections. During polling day the Commission sent its representatives in Gozo to supervise and to settle matters that arose and to ensure, by its presence, the smooth running of the elections. In October, the Office was also involved in the Local Councils Association election to elect its members.

The number of transactions carried out in connection with the Electoral Register and ID cards were as follows:

New Registrations:	
(Electoral Register April 2006)	247
(Electoral Register October 2006)	258
Change of address	752
Change of status (due to marriage)	163
Corrections	149
Replacement of lost and damaged ID cards	557
Issuing of ID cards for foreigners (Aliens)	330

JOYCE DIMECH

Director (Customer Services)

Department of Corporate Services

Mission Statement

To provide - through the Permanent Secretary - a central support service and to co-ordinate the corporate activities of the departments falling under the Ministry for Gozo.

During 2006 the Department of Corporate Services continued to improve the quality of the support services provided to the other departments and branches of the Ministry for Gozo, particularly in the areas of financial planning and management, human resources management, information technology development and office services. The department co-ordinates the production of the Business Plans and Financial Estimates and ensures the timely and accurate preparation of management information. It contributes to the collective management of the Ministry through policy development and the development of information technology as an administrative tool.

Other works carried out by the Department during 2006 consisted of:

- updating monthly returns regarding commitments raised under the various capital projects;
- compiling information related to replies to parliamentary questions;
- raising financial returns as requested by the Ministry of Finance, the Treasury Department and the National Statistics Office;
- co-ordinating requests for information made by the central agencies;
- co-ordinating progressions and promotions of staff in the Ministry and line departments;
- vetting and approving requests for the receipt of a 'qualification allowance';
- raising on a quarterly basis financial information regarding Accrual Accounting;
- approving advance payments made by the various departments under the Ministry;
- raising quarterly returns of suppliers who do not provide the Department with a fiscal receipt;
- recording inventory items procured by this Office and making the necessary information available to the departments in order to update their respective asset records; and
- facilitating the implementation of central and ministerial policies and initiatives across the Ministry.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The Department liaised with the other departments to ensure the effective implementation of corporate human resources policies, systems and procedures prescribed by the Management and Personnel Office. It also continued to provide support and assistance to the Ministry's line departments in the recruitment and deployment of human resources. In all, 15 appointments were issued during the year and the Department co-ordinated the promotion exercise in respect of two officers as well as the progression of one Medical Officer, one Registered Social Worker, seven Principals, two Senior Technical Officers, one Senior Dental Technologist, one Occupational Therapist, one Marshal, four Enrolled Nurses, two Tradesmen, two Assistant Care Workers, four Clerks, one Bookbinder, 20 Supervisors, three Health Assistants and three and four employees in Groups IV and III respectively. Moreover, the Department co-ordinated the exercise for the confirmation of 38 employees in their respective appointment.

In particular, it provided support services in the field of human resources management and development. It also ensured conformity with policies, systems and procedures and the provision of data and other information required by central government agencies. As part of its task to ensure the effective implementation of corporate human resource policies, systems and procedures, the Department continued liaising with the Ministry's other line departments. In this connection the staff complement of the Ministry

was monitored and vacancies were filled in accordance with the requirements of the departments. The Department was also responsible for the recruitment of casual substitute officers on definite contract to replace employees on long absences from work.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

During the year staff development continued to be given a high priority by the Department. Training programmes on the following topics were organised, in collaboration with the Staff Development Organisation and other departments, for government employees serving in Gozo in order to enhance and upgrade their competence level in accordance with today's needs and challenges:

- a training programme on the use of EU templates for tendering procedures intended for public officers directly engaged in procurement
- a programme on Effective Communication Skills for Managers
- two training courses on housekeeping for messengers and minor staff aimed at helping participants improve the service they render to the public
- an in-house training course for Hospital Auxiliaries
- courses in MS Windows XP, MS Word XP, MS Excel XP, MS Access XP, MS Powerpoint XP, MS Project XP
- a programme on Joining the Euro Zone: Implications for a Member State
- a programme on Cohesion Policy
- a course on The Role of an EU Member State in Decision-making
- a training session on the Performance Management Programme
- a course in General Financial Accounting and in Cost Management Accounting, held in conjunction with the Ministry of Finance; Ernst & Young Corporate Finance Ltd facilitated the lectures
- two in-service courses for Care Workers and Assistant Care Workers serving at the Adult Training Centre
- training on Electronic Government Mail and Internet
- a programme on Sustainable Development in the European Union
- a programme on Rural Development 2007-2013

CO-ORDINATING ACTIVITIES

During 2006 the Department took measures to ensure that government services in Gozo are provided in an efficient and effective manner. *Inter alia*, the DCS was responsible for the co-ordination of the verification of sick leave availed of by government employees with a view to curbing abuses, on which initiative the Department maintained a database. During the year the Department asked for 7,088 medical visits to be carried out.

The Department was also involved in a number of initiatives in accordance with the legal obligations stipulated in the Data Protection Act as well as the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

The Department continued to maintain inventory lists and temporarily store and dispose of obsolete, unserviceable and surplus items within the Ministry as provided by the Financial Regulations.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

During the year IT infrastructure and services were expanded and improved. The whole network infrastructure available within many departmental branches as well as the connectivity to the Data Centre has been enhanced.

Cabling and trunking works were carried out at the Administration Centre, Government Farm, NGO Centre, Medical Stores of the Gozo General Hospital and the DOI Call Centre. Subsequently Local Area Networks were set up at these sections and the latter were connected to the MAGNET via a fibre link.

The new DocReg System, a corporate computerised system, was installed at the Department's Registry so as to track file movements and provide improved management reporting capabilities. The Registry's employees were also provided with the necessary training.

Concurrently with the above programme, IT courses were held in Gozo for government employees with the aim of enabling them to operate technology efficiently and effectively. During the year new users were given access to e-mail and internet. At the end of the year the numbers of e-mail account users and internet account users were 376 and 179 respectively. New users were given access to the Ministry's local area network. Generic e-mail accounts were opened for various departments/sections. In addition offices in Gozo were supplied with 98 additional computers whereas a number of existing computers were upgraded. Obsolete and unserviceable IT equipment was replaced Ministry-wide. During the year the Department continued to fund and monitor the contracts for the provision of support for technical infrastructure and software applications entered into with MITTS Ltd.

E-PROCUREMENT

A new Government initiative launched during the last years had laid the foundation for electronic procurement (e-procurement) in Government. The software supports the decentralisation of the procurement of standard office automation hardware and software for the Public Service.

This initiative was aimed at increasing transparency, achieving better value for money for Government in its procurement expenditure, reducing cost of doing business for both government and local industry, reducing duplication of effort, bringing about more efficient purchasing and increasing the ability to capture strategic information on procurement, including purchasing patterns.

The Department evaluated and endorsed several requests for IT equipment. There were 56 quotations that were awarded via the e-procurement system during 2006.

SCHEMES

The Department processed 42 applications for special passes submitted by Gozitans who reside in Malta and have either one of their partners or a close relative residing permanently in Gozo.

The Department of Corporate Services also administered the scheme for the payment of a monthly accommodation subsidy of Lm50 to Gozitan students following University courses in Malta on a full-time basis – 649 students benefited from this subsidy in 2006. A subsidy of 54 cents is also paid to Gozitan employees with government-funded or government-owned institutions for every day of attendance at their workplace – 1,673 applications were received.

Moreover, the Department continued to administer the loan subsidy scheme offered by Bank of Valletta to operators in the Crafts and Cottage Industry in Gozo for the purchase of machinery and equipment and for the provision of working capital to improve productivity and the quality of the product. The Bank charges interest at 7.5% whereas the Ministry for Gozo gives an annual 4.5% subsidy thereon.

The scheme aimed at giving financial assistance to non-government organisations continued to operate in 2006 – 114 Gozitan voluntary organisations have benefited from this scheme which should help them in their endeavours to strengthen the social fabric of the Gozitan community.

TRANSFER OF DEPARTMENTAL ACTIVITIES TO GOZO

The Department assisted the Permanent Secretary in the identification of functions or activities which could be transferred from Malta to Gozo to provide government employees, particularly those in the clerical grades, with meaningful work opportunities in Gozo itself. During the year further job-transfer opportunities for Gozo were identified and the matter was taken up with the relative directorates.

Following the identification of these activities, ongoing liaison was maintained by the Department during the year with the stakeholders involved. Subsequently works on the preparation and setting up of the

requisite infrastructure were taken in hand. During the year the Call Centre of the Department of Information started to function from Gozo.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

During 2006 the Department continued to monitor the expenditure performance under both the Capital and Recurrent Votes of the Ministry for Gozo and to keep a constant watch to maintain financial accountability in the Ministry. The Department was involved in the processing of Gozo Treasury Pensions; stocking and distribution of counterfoil books; accounting for receipts of all government departments in Gozo and winding up of bank accounts held with the Government Savings Bank. The following figures show revenue/expenditure of the Ministry and the number of Treasury pensioners in Gozo as at end 2006:

Revenue	Lm	Treasury Pensions	
Fees on contracts/Notarial fees	1,890.40	Civil	1,124
Court Fees	100,127.22	Police	137
Services rendered to Local Council	43,005.91	Widows	138
Miscellaneous Reimbursement	101.00	P.I.S.	2
Miscellaneous Receipts	15,858.33	Total	1,401
Expenditure			
Recurrent	20,866,432.83		
Capital	4,547,361.71		

During the year this section continued to carry out the DAS consolidated function in Gozo including the vetting and processing of the Ministry's financial transactions and the performance of the cheque run routine. This office also continued to deal with requests from the general public regarding, *inter alia*, the division of holdings between the heirs of deceased stock holders, changes of addresses, power of attorney, re-dating of dividend warrants and the application of the 15% Final Withholding Tax on dividends.

MARIO CALLEJA

Director (Corporate Services)

EU Affairs, Policy Development & Programme Implementation Directorate

The EU Affairs, Policy Development and Programme Implementation Directorate is responsible for the management of all aspects relating to EU affairs, domestic and EU related policy development and programme implementation within the Ministry for Gozo. The functions of the Directorate are:

- managing the Ministry's participation in EU structures and processes, as well as, ensuring effective co-ordination of all EU-related matters at a domestic level and with other EU stakeholders;
- co-ordinating the formulation of the Ministry's position on policies proposed by the EU, including the responsibility for the dissemination of related information;
- fulfilling the role of Senior Programming Officer for the Ministry for Gozo with respect to all EU funded/co-funded projects and initiatives;
- initiating, developing and co-ordinating policy options;
- ensuring the effective management of the Ministry's Change Management Programme, including facilitating the implementation of the Ministry's endorsed policies, strategies and change management programmes;
- monitoring the implementation of the required programmes and projects including Customer Care.

EU AFFAIRS

EU Policy Co-ordination

During 2006, the Directorate provided input to various EU proposals and European Commission communications that were of relevance to the Ministry's portfolio. It also participated in the consultation process that the Conference for the Peripheral and Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR) launches on EU communications and proposals that are of relevance to island regions like Gozo.

Management of EU Funds

The Department also manages the EU funds allocated to the Ministry, in particular, managing the implementation of EU financed/co-financed projects to successful completion. Throughout the past year the Department continued to work closely with the project leaders who are leading the implementation of EU funded/co-financed projects, providing guidance and support on an ongoing basis and ensuring that funds are utilised in an effective manner and disbursed in accordance with established procedures.

During the course of this year, the Department continued to fulfil the role of Senior Programming Officer, not only in the case of projects for which the Ministry for Gozo is the final beneficiary, but also for an environmental project under the Structural Funds Programme for Malta 2004-2006 whose final beneficiary is Gharb Local Council.

The Department has sourced opportunities for the funding of projects and provided advice on the application for funds under different funding instruments for line departments and interested parties, including local councils, NGOs, private sector organisations and the general public. The Department submitted a project proposal for co-financing under Priority 2 of the Single Programming Document and this was approved for funding. It has also gained approval for a project to provide cold storage facilities in Gozo. This project is co-financed under Priority 3.

Structural Funds

Under the Structural Funds Programme for Malta 2004-2006, the Department is managing ten projects. Four of these projects are co-financed by the European Social Fund and are aimed to improve the employability of the labour force and to create employment opportunities in Gozo. Five other projects are co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and are intended to upgrade the basic infrastructure in various sectors, namely, transport, tourism and crafts. Another one of these project aims to upgrade the cold storage facilities for fishermen in Gozo. It is co-funded by the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG).

By the end of the year, 25 tenders were awarded. During 2006, two ERDF projects, namely, the Museum of Archaeology Display Project and the Niche Tourism for the Island of Gozo project were completed. The implementation of three of the ESF and three of the ERDF projects is well under way. These will be completed by the second quarter of 2007.

Pre-accession Phase 2

The Department had been successful in gaining approval for funding of a project aimed to study technical options for the construction of an alternative route at the port of Mġarr. The project, which is funded out of Pre-accession Funds - Phase 2, includes four studies, namely, a geotechnical study, a feasibility study, an environmental impact assessment and technical design of an alternative route at the lower junction of the port of Mġarr. The project which was led by ADT has been completed.

EEA/Norway Fund

Following the call for expressions of interest under the EEA/Norway Funds which was issued in 2004, the Department submitted two project proposals to the Planning and Priorities Co-ordination Division for funding under these financial mechanisms. The cultural heritage proposal which aims to develop a master-plan for the restoration and management of Ċittadella has been selected by the Malta Focal Point and has also been screened by the representative of the EEA/Norway Financial Mechanism Office (FMO). It is currently awaiting approval by the EEA/Norway FMO.

Dissemination of Information

An important function of this Department is the provision of assistance, advice and the dissemination of information on EU-related matters to line departments and interested parties, including NGOs, private sector organisations and the general public. This Department receives a significant number of requests for information as well as queries. Queries arise from both internal and external stakeholders for which the Department responds expeditiously. Besides the extensive use of e-mail to inform identified internal/external stakeholders, the Department holds meetings with these stakeholders as may be required. It also maintains contact with a number of officials from regions of other EU member states through CPMR. This has created a two-way information exchange channel with this Department.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

During the past year the Department continued to monitor on a continuous basis EU developments, in particular, Commission and Council proposals in the areas of regional policy, state aids, tourism, human resources, and business support, in order to co-ordinate the formulation of domestic policies in these areas. The Department has been instrumental in initiating internal debate and consultations with the relevant stakeholders on these areas, particularly, state aids and tourism which are of crucial importance to Gozo.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

The Department co-ordinates and monitors the implementation of the Ministry's programmes and projects. The Department worked in close co-operation with the project leaders who are leading the implementation of the EU co-funded projects. Since certain projects, such as the Sewage Treatment Plant project co-funded out of pre-accession funds and the Reconstruction of Mgarr Road project co-financed from the Cohesion Fund, are implemented in conjunction with other ministries and government entities, the Department monitors their implementation through its participation in the Sectoral Monitoring Sub-committee Meetings on a regular basis and by maintaining close contacts with the ministries/entities concerned.

National Reform Programme

Besides the co-ordination and monitoring of projects, this Department also monitors initiatives which contribute to the National Reform Programme. These initiatives include employment creation schemes and initiatives to improve and upgrade the employability of the labour force in Gozo. The Department is also supporting and monitoring the implementation of these initiatives. The Foster Entrepreneurship Scheme which was aimed to create and support start-up businesses in Gozo has been completed.

Euro Changeover

The Department is also co-ordinating the Euro Changeover process within the Ministry for Gozo, through regular participation in meetings held by the Management Efficiency Unit of the Office of the Prime Minister and the dissemination of information to the Ministry's line departments. It co-ordinates the activities of the Ministry's departments in this area to ensure a smooth transition to the euro. Of particular mention is the Ministry's communications plan aimed to inform not only the Ministry's staff but also a number of vulnerable groups in Gozo.

Green Initiatives

This Department, in collaboration with the Ministry's Green Leader, has introduced a number of green initiatives for the reduction, re-use and recycling of waste generated within the Ministry. In addition to the initiatives undertaken so far, namely, the introduction of waste separation bins, and the re-use of paper and envelopes, a solar energy generation system has been introduced within the Ministry's administrative block.

Customer Care Co-ordination

During 2006 the Department handled 874 queries, complaints and requests for assistance of a generic, as well as of a specific nature, mostly through the electronic system and supplemented by direct telephone contact and response to queries for information.

The Department continued to carry out an in-depth analysis of the queries, complaints and requests forwarded to it and subsequently took the following initiatives to improve upon the existing system, namely:

- Maintained ongoing co-ordination with local councils in Gozo. This has led to improved efficiency and effectiveness of the complaints forwarded to the Ministry;
- Held meetings with officials from MITTS and officials from the Office of the Prime Minister responsible for the Customer Care System, with the aim of reviewing the categorisation of complaints of the electronic system and eliminate unnecessary delays in the delivery of complaints to the appropriate ministry/entity;
- The Department continued to insist with the officials responsible for the Customer Care System (CCS) to extend the CCS to the Gozo offices of those entities where it was still unavailable. As a result the Customer Care System was extended to the Water Services and Enemalta offices in Gozo and thus has eliminated the unnecessary delays in the delivery of complaints to the appropriate entity;

- The Department held a Customer Care Forum for the first time. This was held in January. In June a two-day training programme on the Customer Care System was organised. The number of participants for both events was very encouraging. The training sessions were held in Gozo and were attended by staff from local councils and the employees responsible for the handling of complaints within this Ministry. The training sessions enabled more effective use of the Customer Care System.

RITA CUTAJAR

Director (EU Affairs, Policy Development & Programme Implementation)

**Ministry of Health, the Elderly
and Community Care**

Health Division

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL HEALTH

The Director General Health (DGH) continues to manage the Health Division supported by a management team of Administrative Directors. The DGH is responsible to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Health, the Elderly and Community Care. The DGH is directly accountable to the Minister for all matters relating to Health.

INTERNATIONAL HEALTH

The International Health Office within the Office of the Director General continued to negotiate, follow up and implement various international projects of the Health Division. A number of projects were co-ordinated by this office under the World Health Organisation (WHO) Biennial Collaborative Agreement (BCA) 2006-2007. The main projects under this agreement mainly covered the areas of Environmental Health, as part of Malta's commitments made at the Budapest Fourth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health in 2004, as well as Quality of Health Services and Medicines Policy.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Capacity building in environment and health was given priority under the BCA agreement 2006-2007, through public health post-graduate training in Environmental Epidemiology and Environmental Health Policy by Distance Learning at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine through the University of London. Plans for training in CME setting of Public health physicians in Environmental Burden of Disease (EBoD) methodology were finalised under this BCA and a plan of work for 2007 submitted to the WHO Regional Office for Europe.

Public health physicians trained to train in Children's Health and Environment (CHE) were consulted in the preparation of the May 2006 Environment and Health module as part requirement for the Diploma in Family Practice. The aim of this module is to empower family doctors with the skills to be alert for possible links between environment and health in their practice and within their community and to encourage a proactive approach, acting as role models and educators within their community and in the national scenario. As part of continuing these CHE activities, two lectures (in Maltese) on Children's Health and the Environment were also held for parents in two public schools (B'Kara Primary and Lija Primary).

The Office of the Director General (Health) recognises the need for an integrated approach to tackling environmental issues that could adversely affect children's health (and therefore the health of all concerned) and aims to improve existing collaboration between different ministries and sectors in areas such as transport, environment, education, social policy, local government, in a bid to integrate health across policies. Another project under the WHO BCA Agreement 2006-2007 included the revision of National Environment and Health Action Plan (NEHAP) for Malta to include child-specific actions, as part of a Children's Environment and Health Action Plan (CEHAP) for Malta was led by the Office of the Director General (Health).

A draft document was formulated and was the basis for discussion at a stakeholders' workshop on *Addressing Environmental Risk Factors of Children in Malta* held on 28 February 2006, organised by this

office in collaboration with the WHO Regional Office for Europe. The first National Environment and Health Action Plan for Malta (1997) was revised to cover the period 2006-2010. Besides ensuring that all the relevant national stakeholders were involved in the process, the workshop addressed the need of the revised plan to incorporate child-specific actions as recommended by the Declaration of the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health. These actions are centred around four Regional Priority Goals determined by the Children's Health and Environment Action Plan for Europe (CEHAPE). The workshop was also successful in setting the way for the formation of an Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) by recognising the need for a secure institutional framework to address the revised NEHAP. Priority areas focus on children's health in relation to clean air and prevention of accidents and injuries. A delegate from the National Youth Council is being invited to attend the IMC meetings.

In 2006 a local study on the health effects of transport-related air pollution on children's health was started following the recommendations which emerged from a technical meeting held in November 2005 between the visiting WHO expert on Air Quality, Mr Michal Kyrzanowski and the local Transport, Health and Environment Committee. A detailed work plan was sent to WHO and the study will continue through 2007.

PREPARATION FOR THE WHO INTERGOVERNMENTAL ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH MID-TERM REVIEW

A representative from the DG's Office, also national WHO focal point for Environmental Health, has regularly attended Children's Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe (CEHAPE) Task Force meetings, focused on each of the four Regional Priority Goals dealing with public health actions to control and prevent environmentally-related illness in children, in particular that related to water, air, accidents and injuries and the physical environment, as well as physical agents. A country profile in this area of work was compiled by the National focal point and may be viewed on the WHO website.

The Office of the Director General of Health is also committed towards collecting information on environmental health indicators that support the monitoring of the implementation of the CEHAPE and to the strengthening and harmonisation of a pan-European Environment and Health Information System. These CEHAPE related indicators will be used in two products in preparation by WHO and member states for the Intergovernmental Conference to be held in Vienna in June 2007: (1) a report - *Children's Health and Environment in Europe: first assessment* and (2) a web-based information system. To this effect, during April 2006, a representative from the Director General of Health Office attended a meeting at the WHO Regional Office for Europe, Bonn, *Preparing an Environment and Health Information-based Assessment Report*. Follow-up action to this meeting included providing data to the Environment and Health Information System (EHIS) Working Group by regularly updating information related to environmental risk factors and environment and health policy indicators in Malta. This information will be included in the EHIS-based report, which will be presented at the Intergovernmental Conference.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME FP6

During 2006, the Office of the Director General co-ordinated two research activities under the European Commission Framework Programme FP6 Project.

The Health Impact Assessment in New Member States and Accession Countries (HIA-NMAC) project was launched in August 2005 and is supported by the EC, DG SANCO. This project aims to further develop HIA in new member states and accession countries. The project, conducted by a group of countries including Malta, Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey, Lithuania, and co-ordinated by University of Southern Denmark and WHO-EURO, Rome office, includes capacity building, methodological development, implementation on local level and the development of a set of policy HIA case studies. Malta is participating within Work Package 5 on Tourism and Recreational Water Policies with the development of a case study on the health impact analysis of diving policies. A mid-term project meeting was held in Budapest, Hungary on 17 October 2006 for all partners to present and discuss the

individual work themes and hence finalise the presentation of the project to date during the 7th IUHPE European Conference on Health Promotion and Health Education Globalization and Equity: Consequences for Health Promotion Policies and Practices held in Budapest on 18-21 October 2006. At the time of this conference, the project had concluded its first year and experience on Health Impact Assessment (HIA) capacity building, socio-economic determinants in HIA, implementation on local level and first experience from case studies were presented within the allotted workshop. Work on the project continues with co-ordination and communication via web-based meetings. The national case studies should be completed around February 2007 when another meeting will be held to finalise progress to date so that a first draft of the final report can be delivered by April 2007. This project was presented by this office in the *EU Funds, Community Initiatives and Progress 2004-2006* seminar held on 21 November 2006.

During the year, the Office of the Director General (Health) co-ordinated an application to participate in the project, Pollution Reduction Options Network (PRONET) and has involved the other members of the Health Division driven Transport, Health and Environment (THE) Committee [representatives from the Malta Transport Authority (ADT) and the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA)] who will also participate as consultants to the project. The main objective of the PRONET project is to facilitate exchange and evaluation of interventions on environment and health exposure reduction measures on a regional level and promote implementation of successful measures in other regions of Europe. The project will focus on the exchange of useful practices in reduction of traffic-related health hazards and improvement of indoor air quality and will commence in January 2007.

REPRESENTATION ON GOVERNMENT-APPOINTED BODIES

A representative from the Office of the Director General (Health) appointed by the Prime Minister continues to serve on the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA) Board as well as on the National Commission for Sustainable Development (NCSD). A representative from the Director General's Office represents the Ministry of Health, the Elderly and Community Care on the recently set-up Inter-Ministerial Committee on Climate Change.

CLEAN AIR CONSULTATIVE GROUP

The Clean Air Consultative Group, chaired by a Consultant in Public Health Medicine within the Office of the Director General (Health) includes representatives from the Public Health Directorate, MEPA, ADT, Malta Resources Authority, Chamber of Engineers and the Federation of Industry. This group continued to meet regularly to revise legislation regarding air pollution, more specifically a revision of the Clean Air Act, which is to be repealed under Section 25 of the Public Health Act.

PUBLIC HEALTH MEDICINE SPECIALIST TRAINING COMMITTEE

Two representatives from the Office of the Director General continued to represent the Employer on the tripartite Public Health Medicine Training Committee, together with two members from the Malta Association of Public Health Medicine (MAPHM) and two members from the University of Malta (Public Health). The Training Portfolio drawn up by the Training Committee was approved by the Malta Association of Public Health Medicine in early 2005. During 2006, three junior doctors completed the specialist training in Public Health Medicine.

PUBLIC HEALTH JOURNAL CLUB

The lunchtime journal club for Public Health professionals and students continued on the initiative of public health physicians in the Office of the DGH and the Department of Institutional Health participating in the Merit Award Scheme. This initiative provides an opportunity for continued professional

development mainly through creating a forum for critical appraisal and discussion and encouraging the use of literature in evidence-based decision-making in public health.

PARTICIPATION AT EUROPEAN COMMISSION MEETINGS

A public health officer from the Office of the Director General of Health represented the Ministry of Health, Elderly and Community Care in the EU Member States experts meeting on health, AIDS and population in the field of development, held in Brussels on 24-25 October 2006.

PUBLIC HEALTH PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL SEMINARS

The DG (Health) Office actively participated through a panel member presentation in a Seminar on Child Safety on the Roads, organised in May 2006 by the Malta Association of Public Health Medicine (MAPHM) in collaboration with sponsors. The aim of the seminar, held on 25 May 2006 in St Julians, was to raise awareness and instigate positive change on the issue of children's safety on the roads and to promote a multi-sectoral approach to deal with the issue. The conference tackled school transport, local and European Union regulations and standards, the educative approach towards road safety, environmental issues and local regulation of the transport and roads sector.

A presentation on the health effects of air pollution was given by a Public Health Consultant in the DG (Health) Office during a public conference organised by MEPA entitled A National Conference for the General Public with the Aim of Improving Air Quality in the Maltese Islands, held in St Julians on 3 October 2006.

SPECIALIST ACCREDITATION COMMITTEES (SAC)

Overview

The Specialist Accreditation Committees (Medical and Dental) function according to the Health Care Professions Act (HCPA) which came into force on 23 November 2003. Their functions are to issue certificates of completion of specialist training, to accredit post-graduate training programmes and to accept for registration specialists in the fifty medical specialities and two dental specialities recognised under the HCPA. The SAC is advisory to the Minister and the Medical Council on issues concerning specialist training and registration.

Medical SAC

The SAC met thirteen times during 2006. The Committee assessed all the remaining applications for entry to the specialist registers and letters were sent to applicants with results. The initial call for applications for entry to the specialist registers was made in April 2004, and over 1,700 applications were received. Fifteen new applications were received in 2006. Certificates of Completion of Specialist training are now being distributed, while at the same time, the Medical Council is updating demographic and other details on its Registers, in addition to preparing the General Register and Specialist Registers for publication. The SAC website including relevant information can be accessed at <http://www.sahha.gov.mt/pages.aspx?page=76>.

The SAC has agreed a framework for structured post-graduate specialist training programmes. The document describes the organisation and process of post-graduate training, the recruitment, training and duties of trainers, and assessment and certification process. This ensures consistency between specialities and the attainment of minimum educational and competence standards. Together with Specialist Associations, a detailed business plan for postgraduate training programmes is being formulated.

The SAC has developed links with the National Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) and the Malta Qualifications Council in order to keep abreast of national and international developments in the education

sector. It has participated in meetings with *Healthcare Professionals Crossing Borders* which is an informal partnership of healthcare regulatory authorities in the EU.

Dental SAC

The Dental SAC met once in 2006. The format of the Certificate of Completion of Specialist Training was agreed. Certificates are now ready for distribution. The completed Specialist Lists will be published in due course by the Medical Council. No new applications for entry to the Specialist Lists in oral surgery and orthodontics were received in 2006.

Appeals Committee

The Appeals Committee for health care professions envisaged by the HCPA was constituted in 2004. The Committee is composed of members appointed by the Prime Minister and elected representatives from among health care professionals. Its functions are to hear and decide on decisions of relevant Councils or Specialist Accreditation Committees refusing to register health care professionals. The Secretariat is provided by staff from the Office of the Director General. During 2006 the Committee met eight times and treated 24 cases.

TWINNING LIGHT PROJECT 'FREE MOVEMENT OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS'

Staff from the Office of Director General has prepared a project proposal in order to seek twinning with a European Union country in capacity building and technical assistance for the five regulatory councils responsible for the regulation of healthcare professionals. The objectives are to develop the necessary systems and procedures to implement the relevant European Directives in an effective and efficient manner, and to inform and educate healthcare professionals on the associated issues. The project proposal was accepted as a Twinning Light project and will be implemented in 2007-2008.

THE QUALITY ASSURANCE INITIATIVE ADJUDICATING COMMITTEE

This Committee is responsible for the Merit Award Scheme initiated by the Government-Medical Association of Malta agreement of February 2002. The Merit Award Scheme was set up to reward good practice. As stated in the agreement "it recognises the need for specialists to keep abreast of the rapid progress made in the various fields of medical and health specialisation and the effort it takes for such specialists to keep themselves abreast of developments, to improve professional standards and to provide quality assurance in the health system." The Chairperson and Secretary of this Committee are staff members from the Office of the Director General. Over 180 proposals for projects were submitted from clinical chairmen, consultants, senior registrars and principal medical officers in February 2006. These were assessed according to agreed criteria. Final reports are submitted by the end of February 2007.

QUALITY IN HEALTH CARE

Clinical Audit Training

As part of the quality assurance role of the Office of the Director General, a training seminar on Clinical Audit for multi-disciplinary healthcare professionals was prepared and piloted at Mount Carmel Hospital.

This consisted of didactic talks, set exercises and group sessions. These seminars were evaluated and will be rolled out to the other hospitals and health centre staff in 2007.

Patient Safety Initiative

The Ministry of Health has become a signatory to the World Alliance for Patient Safety which is a World Health Organisation initiative. This initiative aims to promote a culture of safety within the healthcare system and to develop mechanisms enhancing patient safety. It aims to reduce the amount of injuries, illnesses and even deaths suffered by patients while receiving healthcare. With this aim, the healthcare system is committed to reduce healthcare associated infections. Plans for a concerted campaign on Hand Hygiene within hospitals and health centres have been finalised and will be implemented in 2007. These will include a study of knowledge and attitudes of healthcare professionals, educational events, audit of facilities and observational studies.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY - TASK FORCE TEAM (H&S TFT)

The Health & Safety Task Force Team, set up jointly with the Directorates of Corporate Services, Finance & Administration and Human Resources, met twice during 2006. The H&S TFT ensures that risk assessments are carried out at the Head Office, Valletta and in all other directorates.

Whereas the risk assessment at the Head Office has been completed, other directorates are in the process of carrying out their own risk assessments. The final task of the H&S TFT is to ensure that all directorates within the Division are aware of their responsibilities vis-à-vis the OH&S legislation and regulations.

DEVELOPMENT OF A NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASE STRATEGY

A working group was set up at the end of December 2004 with representatives from four directorates including Public Health, Health Information, Health Promotion, Nursing Services and a co-ordinator from the Office of the Director General.

The role of the working group is to direct the formulation of a non-communicable disease strategy for the Health Division. Discussions have been finalised and a second draft has been prepared.

DEVELOPMENT OF A CANCER STRATEGY

A working group was set up at the end of December 2005 with representatives from three directorates including Health Information, Health Promotion, Nursing Services and a co-ordinator from the office of the Director General.

The role of the working group is to direct the formulation of a Cancer strategy which will benefit the Maltese population. Discussions are ongoing and a second draft of the document was produced.

DATA PROTECTION ACT COMPLIANCE

The implementation of general recommendations with regard to ensuring that the “fair and lawful processing” principle is adhered to has been fully completed in all areas of St Luke’s Hospital.

Boffa Hospital is partially complete and will be fully compliant by the first quarter of 2007.

LEGAL OFFICE

The Legal Office within the Health Division tackles all legal claims against the Division *per se* and against its employees. Last year ended with 38 civil cases pending before the Civil Court. The facts under dispute range from alleged professional negligence, health and safety issues, promotions to money due by or from the Division. The case before the Arbitration Tribunal concerns a traffic collision. The Office last year filed 480 affidavits on behalf of doctors. In this manner doctors could keep the service going in health centres and hospital. The Office also filed 60 Judicial letters.

Pending Cases

Civil Court First Hall	38
Court of Magistrates (Malta)	2
Court of Appeal -Superior	2
Court of Magistrates (Gozo)	3
Small Claims Tribunal	1
Civil Arbitration	1

Others

Judicial Letters	60
Affidavits	480

REGULATORY COUNCILS

The four regulatory councils, namely the Medical Council, the Pharmacy Council, the Council for Nurses and Midwives and the Council for Professions Complementary to Medicine, were set up in terms of the Health Care Professions Act 2003. The principal scope of the act is to regulate the practice of health care professions in Malta. New registrations effected by each council during 2006 are indicated in the following table:

Medical Council		Professions Complementary to Medicine	
Medical Practitioners	87	Chiropractors	4
Dental Surgeons	6	Dietician	1
		Medical Lab Scientists	6
		Physiotherapists	17
		Radiographers	6
		Speech Language Path.	15
Pharmacy Council			
Pharmacists (Permanent Reg)	15		
Pharmacists (Temporary Reg)	23		
Nurses and Midwives			
Nurses	183		
Midwives	7		

NATIONAL MEDICINES POLICY AND AUDIT UNIT (NMPAU)

The remit of the National Medicines Policy and Audit Unit is to support the Director General (Health) in the setting and implementation of pharmaceutical policy. NMPAU is responsible for and co-ordinates the administrative and technical aspects of legislation, policies and guidelines regarding pharmaceutical policy on a national level as well as policies within the Government Health Services including the Formulary of the Government Health Services.

Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursor Chemicals

NMPAU implements local legislation and fulfils international obligations with respect to narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals. A number of reports required by the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) were compiled - namely Forms A/P (4 reports), Forms A (4 reports), Form B, Form C, Form D and Form P, as well as other INCB and United Nations Office On Drugs and Crime (UNODC) questionnaires. Other authorisations were issued as follows:

Import Permits for narcotic drugs	20
Export Permits for psychotropic substances	1
Import Permits for psychotropic substances	99
Withdrawal Permits	124
New Methylphenidate approvals	71
Renewal of Methylphenidate approvals	237

The Third Schedule to the Medical Kindred Professions Ordinance was amended by Legal Notices 135 and 260 of 2006, thereby placing under national control *1-benzylpiperazine*.

POLICY SETTING - PHARMACEUTICAL POLICY, LEGISLATION AND COMMUNICATION

The NMPAU is responsible for the setting of policies in various pharmaceutical areas. This is done with the technical support from the World Health Organisation through a biennial collaborative agreement (WHO BCA).

Availability of Medicines

NMPAU has the responsibility of setting policies for the management of the availability of medicines in Malta with consideration to the impact of the new system for medicines registration. Policies are set to ensure the availability of medicines in Malta through the selection of medicines for reimbursement with the implementation of the Transparency Directive (Directive 89/105/EEC). The legislation transposing the Transparency Directive was reviewed to include the list of products and the criteria for additions with the list. The procedure for the implementation of the Transparency Directive was set, and a system aimed at supporting this implementation was proposed. This also included the planning of the Government Formulary List which was developed and published on the NMPAU website.

NMPAU developed a monitoring system whereby through a list, the medicines not covered by a Marketing Authorisation or authorisation via 126a, and therefore not available on the Maltese market, could be known. Such list would be published on the NMPAU website in 2007.

Another policy reviewed extensively by NMPAU in 2006 was that regarding the use of the unlicensed medicines. The aim was to keep in line with the current legislation, to clarify responsibilities and to improve the traceability of the medicinal products supplied through processes which are not covered by the Medicines Act 2003 and its subsidiary legislation. The development of an internal policy for the Government Health Services (GHS) was discussed.

Rational Medicines Use

NMPAU is responsible for the policies regarding the use and implementation of evidence based therapeutic guidelines. In 2006, the NMPAU started the groundwork which will lead to the development and setting of a policy regarding both therapeutic guidelines as well as the rational use of medicines. A policy to keep the patients and healthcare professionals informed on the medicinal products available on the market, with the aim of ensuring the rational use of such medicines was discussed. The National Formulary was planned.

NMPAU aims to establish and implement a process for the monitoring and evaluation of medicines use. The discussions on the setting of such policies triggered the setting of databases which enable traceability. The databases developed in 2006 can serve as a template for future databases which aim to facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of the use of medicines in Malta.

The policy to improve the system, whereby patients are supplied with free medicines from the Government Health Services (GHS) and its transparency, led to the review and publishing of the Government Formulary List in terms of entitlement and protocols. This also ensures the improvement of rational use of medicines within the GHS.

Pricing and Reimbursement

The introduction of a pricing policy in Malta is under the responsibility of the Consumer Competition Division. In June 2006, the NMPAU continued to actively support the Consumer Competition Division (CCD) as regards the various technical issues of pricing and reimbursement.

The Head of Department for Pharmaceutical Affairs, Ministry of Health, Iceland, acted as a short-term pharmaceutical consultant for WHO Regional Office for Europe in his visit from 29 October to 3 November 2006. The purpose of his visit was to give advice in setting up a system for reference pricing mainly by sharing experience with the implementation of such systems, adopting existing IT systems, databases, processes and operating procedures for the new system, sharing information and possible collaboration on other policy regulatory areas.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

NMPAU is responsible for the development of policies as well as for the proper implementation and continuous monitoring of the set policies.

Access and Availability

The Unit was responsible for updating the list of active ingredients which were in the Derogation list (accession treaty) and which were not covered with a Marketing Authorisation. The list was reviewed and updated in line with the MAs issued. The (ATC) classification system was used to classify (by using ATC codes) all active ingredients in this list according to its main therapeutic use, on the basic principal of only one ATC code for each pharmaceutical formulation. Over 400 active ingredients with ATC level 5 were not covered by a PMA/MA. These active ingredients were included in the list of medicinal products which are eligible for an Authorisation. The ATC classification system was also used to classify all active ingredients in the list of medicinal products which are eligible for an Authorisation.

This list indicates the medicines essential for public health needs which however are not covered by a Marketing Authorisation in Malta.

Unlicensed Medicines

In 2006 the guidelines for the use of unlicensed medicinal products were reviewed and in September the DH circular 270/2006 was issued to explain the *Guidelines for the supply of medicinal products for human use through processes which are not covered by the Medicines Act, 2003 and its subsidiary legislation (unlicensed medicinal products)*. The Unit is responsible for the implementation of these guidelines and follows the recommendations of the Unlicensed Medicines Committee. The Unit is responsible for the processing of individual requests for medicinal products by prescribers and for departmental use in public hospitals and private hospitals. 129 unlicensed medicines requests were processed in 2006. Only one was not approved. The Unit also dealt with various queries from foreign medicines agencies/boards, local health professionals and patients, regarding guidelines, procedures, and availability of medicines.

MANAGEMENT AND AVAILABILITY OF MEDICINES WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT HEALTH SERVICES (GHS)

Government Formulary List

The Government Formulary List was updated and modified to include the disease category, Anatomical Therapeutic Chemical (ATC) classification system, prescriber criteria, departments and entitlement through Schedule II (pink card system). This list was made available on the National Medicines Policy and Audit Unit (NMPAU) Website on 19 December 2006, as per European Union (EU) Council Directive 89/105/EEC of 21 December 1988. The formulary list is being updated at regular intervals.

Transparency Directive

In order to come fully in line with the European Union (EU) Council Directive 89/105/EEC of 21 December 1988 (Transparency Directive), a working group was set up to amend LN399/03 (Medicinal

Products covered by the Government Health Services Regulations 2006), regarding the availability of medicines within the GHS. Four meetings were held to discuss the necessary changes to the current legislation. Criteria for decision-making were scheduled as part of the legal notice, thereby ensuring transparency in the whole procedure. New application forms allowing the Market Authorisation (MA) holders to request the introduction of a medicinal product on the government formulary were also set. Proposals regarding changes to the current tendering systems and other processes to support the implementation of this directive were reported to the Director General Health.

DTC Secretariat

Within the NMPAU lies the secretariat of the Drugs and Therapeutics Committee (DTC). No official meetings of the DTC were held.

Evaluation, taking into consideration research and discussion, was carried out with the consultants and pharmacists concerned, as well as with the Chairman DTC. Final approval was sought from the Director General (Health) with respect to:

- the introduction of new medicinal products on the government formulary list - There were 19 requests by consultants working within the GHS in 2006, while three requests were submitted by Marketing Authorisation holders;
- the supply of medicines on a named patient basis – 243 named patient requests were processed in 2006. Seventeen of these were not approved;
- amendments to already existing protocols – The DTC protocols (214) were reviewed and updated, and then put online on the NMPAU website;
- development of new protocols – Various medicinal products were introduced into the formulary as protocol regulated products, thus improving the access to medicines for patients in need;
- deletions of medicinal products from the formulary list – The deletions which were recommended and approved in 2006 concerned 21 items;
- update of product specifications – The specifications of several medicinal products were changed to ensure the availability of the needed medicinal products;
- various other queries, Parliamentary Questions, Ombudsman letters, newspaper letters, etc, related directly or indirectly to the Government Formulary List.

The health professionals working within the Government Health Services were constantly informed, via e-mails or circulars, of any change in guidelines, implemented with the aim of improving and ensuring the rational use of medicines. Seven Department of Health Circulars prepared by DTC were issued in 2006.

PARTICIPATION AT EUROPEAN COMMISSION MEETINGS

The Unit represented the Ministry of Health, Elderly and Community Care in the following Committees:

- The Pharmaceutical Committee (European Commission statutory committee regulating pharmacists and related professions).
- The Pharmaceutical Working Group for the High Level Committee on Health (European Commission advisory committee).
- The Access to Medicines Committee (European Commission committee mainly as an e-discussion group).
- The Transparency Committee of DG Enterprise which deals with the implementation of the Transparency Directive.
- Pharmaceutical Forum and the Working Group on Pricing which is considering mainly issues with access and availability of medicines in the EU, and with support of innovation.

WEBSITE AND DATABASES

NMPAU Website

The website of the NMPAU was extensively updated in November 2006, with the aim of improving transparency, informing the public on policies and their implementation, and facilitating the possibility of contacting the pharmacists at NMPAU and making queries. The website provides information about (<http://www.sahha.gov.mt/entities/nmpau.html>):

- The mission of the National Medicines Policy and Audit Unit
- Controlled substances – administrative and technical aspects
- Availability of Medicines – access and availability of medicines in Malta; unlicensed medicines; medicines not covered by any type of authorisation; etc
- Medicines within the Government Health Services – entitlement to medicines; Government Formulary List; DTC protocols; Transparency Directive; etc
- Pharmaceutical Policy – Management and availability of medicines; Therapeutic Guidelines; Rational medicines use; etc
- All relevant Legislation, Circulars and Forms
- Related Links
- The website also provides the possibility of contacting the NMPAU with any query related to its work.

NMPAU Databases

Databases which can improve record keeping, traceability, and access to information on medicines availability and use were discussed. Some were developed and implemented in 2006. The following databases were set up so as to keep track of the cases and their process: Unlicensed Medicines; Non-formulary Medicines; Introduction of New Medicines; and Transparency Directive.

The databases planned to be functional by the beginning of the year 2007 were: Deletions; Specifications; Protocols; and Queries.

TRAINING COURSES, SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES

The *Evidence, Money and Drug Selection: a short course on pharmacoeconomics* was held in Istanbul, Turkey (June-July 2006). It was organised by the World Health Organisation in collaboration with the University of Birmingham (UK), University of Newcastle (Australia) and the Turkish Ministry of Health. This course had as its main purpose the development of knowledge and skills in economic evaluation and evidence-based medicine as an aid to formulary and purchasing decisions of medicines. The course explained the principles and methods of pharmacoeconomic evaluations, and provided assistance for the development of skills in the application of these principles for drug selection processes. Emphasis was placed on case study analysis and problem solving. The course included various tasks in the drug selection process, making decisions based on the effectiveness, safety and cost of drugs, evaluation of available information and the development of guidelines. Attendance at this course was funded by the WHO Biennial Collaborative Agreement of 2006-2007.

FOOD SAFETY COMMISSION

During 2006, the Food Safety Commission met 22 times. Participation for these meetings was as follows: Chairperson 10 times, the Director Public Health 21 times, the Veterinary and Fisheries Division, MTA and Plant Health 14 times, Malta Standards Authority 19 times, Consumer Competition Division 9 times, Health Promotion Department 14 times and MEPA 9 times. Manager Health Inspector and acting Secretary was present for all the meetings.

Correspondence

During 2006 the Commission discussed, decided and replied to more than 80 letters addressed directly to it. This correspondence dealt on various subjects mainly relating to the granting of labelling exemptions, transposition of regulations, co-ordination of external visitors, procedural matters and directions from EU. Since it was set up, the Commission dealt with 285 letters and correspondences.

Legislation

On the agenda, during 2006, the Food Safety Commission had 22 different items relating to different food legislation. Discussions ensued and decisions have been taken in relation to new legislation, additions to already existing legislation, drafts of EU proposals, comments on new EU Directives and their transposition into local legislation.

Requests for Approval

The Commission had on its agenda under the item Requests for Approvals 10 separate requests. Most of these items dealt with the approval of HACCP Guidelines to specific food sectors, particularly the Catering Sector, Street Vendors, Fish Hawkers, Dairy Distributors and Pest Control Providers. Other requests for approval included a request from a Russian company for the approval of Mineral Water, approval of EU Guidelines of HACCP in SMEs and a publication regarding an Explanation of Food Safety Legislation to food operators.

Research and Criteria

During 2006, under the agenda item Research and Criteria, the Food Safety Commission discussed nine separate subjects ranging from scientific committees, a survey on colour, additives and sweeteners as requested by EU, updates on GM Rice, as well as guidelines on the single integrated multi-annual national control plan. 2006 saw the termination of the FP6 project SAFEFOODNET for which the FSC was a partner.

Proposals, Comments and Contributions by FSC Members

Thirty-three different subjects have been discussed during 2006 relating to this item of the FSC agenda. The subjects were varied and included issues like the future of FSC, approval of cheeselets manufacturers, qualification requirement for HACCP Auditors and Providers, the provision of wash-hand basins in open-air markets, salmonella in local meat products, approval of cold stores, sale and labelling requirements of poultry products, complaints re olive oils, withdrawal of food items from the local market, marketing regulations of meat products, various rapid alerts, issues regarding imported tea and herbal products and others.

Meetings

During 2006, FSC members attended a number of international meetings related to food and feed. These meetings include Codex alimentarius meetings, SCOFCAH meetings, specialised conferences and working group meetings and working parties. Other meetings have been put on the agenda but it was not possible to attend for all the meetings discussed. For some meetings where Malta's participation was compulsory the Irish proxy was used. Also under this item, the FSC discussed several FVO Missions to Malta that took place during 2006 as well as the reporting on said meetings and FVO missions. All reports generated from these meetings have been circulated amongst members for their comments and discussed during FSC meetings.

Proposals for Community Legislation

Three proposals for Community Legislation have been discussed during FSC meetings during 2006. These dealt with proposed procedure for proposed Community Legislation, a proposal for an amendment of the directive on food additives other than colours and sweeteners, and a proposal for a regulation on maximum residue levels of pesticides in products of plant and animal origin.

Other

From time to time and when specific matters have to be discussed, the FSC invited different people from different government and non-government bodies as well as foreigners to attend and discuss a particular agenda item. Most of the meetings are held at the Food Safety Commission Secretariat, 34 The Annex, Triq Antonio Nani, Ta' Xbiex.

DEPARTMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL HEALTH

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Department of Institutional Health are:

- to identify the hospital needs of the population and to ensure that optimum use is made of the hospital services and clinics provided by Government;
- to set national standards for hospital care and to monitor and enforce such standards;
- to liaise with all private hospitals, institutes, homes and clinics and public hospitals;
- to prepare licence for homes for the elderly, private hospitals and clinics; to assess the provision of services provided by these institutions and to monitor the quality of care given therein;
- to prepare strategic business and financial plans for the Department and to ensure implementation of such plans within the financial resources allocated to the Department;
- to plan for and to co-ordinate appropriate hospital service development within the public sector;
- to be responsible for all government hospitals, including the quality of care given therein, until the changes necessary to suitably delegate authority to lower levels of management are fully effected;
- in the case of publicly funded hospital services, to perform value for money audits, health technology assessment and evaluation of outcomes, in the context of commitments that government may enter into, for the provision of publicly funded hospital services; and to propose corrective measures as necessary;
- to ensure that adequate ambulance services are provided;
- to co-ordinate the response in the case of national disaster or emergencies;
- to establish standards for First Aid services.

Malta has an integrated network of public and private hospital services. Clinical services are adequate for hospital services to perform efficiently and at high levels and standards. During 2006 further deterioration in clinical support services in Radiology and Pathology was compounded by the disappointing response to calls for application. Public hospital services still lack adequate non-clinical support facilities, mainly cleaning and clerical services. Hospital services need to be complemented by effective primary health and community care facilities and sufficient rehabilitation services and long-term care beds in order to ensure optimum use of allocated resources. In February 2006, Government announced the proposed construction of a new rehabilitation facility to complement the acute care facilities and to widen the scope of the services of Geriatric Rehabilitation to include all rehabilitation services. Proposals are being worked out to start this service in temporary facilities until the new building becomes available. No change has occurred in primary care, as has been the case for many years. This continues to place unnecessary pressure on the acute hospital sector especially during the colder months of the winter season when there is an exacerbation of chronic illnesses, a natural increase of acute respiratory illness and a consequent increase in the acute referrals and admissions to hospital.

Government is decentralising management of publicly funded hospitals. The status of delegated responsibility and decision-making to the appropriate level has no legal and regulatory framework. This framework has to enshrine accountability, delegation of responsibility, subsidiarity in the decision-making process, quality assurance schemes and motivation and tangible rewards to staff for good performance. It is through efficient implementation of these principles that effectiveness of the managerial structures of hospitals and units can be improved.

The role of the Department of Institutional Health will continue to be that of ensuring as smooth a transition as possible whilst co-ordinating the activities of the various hospital services. At the same time, it must continue to develop the regulatory aspects of hospital and institutional care in all settings throughout the Maltese islands.

THE YEAR UNDER REVIEW

The main targets of the Department of Institutional Health for 2006 were:

- support of the work on the Mater Dei Hospital at Tal-Qroqq focusing on operational policy and systems development and medical equipment delivery;
- implementation of the framework within which decentralised management hospital will operate;
- sustainable service development at St Luke's Hospital, with the ultimate aim of complementing from St Luke's Hospital, the services to be provided from Mater Dei Hospital once commissioned - a process which shall only end once all acute services are effectively transferred and operated from Mater Dei Hospital;
- support of management structures delegated to provide management of public hospitals;
- business process re-engineering of clinical services and piloting of new policies that will eventually be implemented fully at the new hospital;
- implementation of EU legislation applicable to hospital care;
- refinement of monitoring systems of recurrent expenditure in each hospital with particular attention to controlling overtime costs;
- introduction of quality standards and audit programmes in clinical departments;
- support of the management at Boffa Hospital and Mount Carmel Hospital.

THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE (DIH)

Publicly funded hospitals will remain the main providers of specialised tertiary medical care. The Department of Institutional Health is progressively divesting itself from the responsibility of the day-to-day management of public hospitals. It is gearing up to develop further co-ordination and monitoring of the delivery of care in publicly funded hospital services on behalf of Government, whilst continuing to consolidate the role of regulator of public and private hospital services. Eventually the regulatory function will have to be separated from the operational co-ordination role to ensure a level playing field in the regulatory function of all hospital services whether public or private.

Standards of care and benchmarks are being established in order to be utilised for inspection, certification and licensing of hospitals, clinics and homes for the elderly, both public and private. This involves extensive research and adaptation to the local hospital context of existing standards, guidelines and practices already implemented in centres of excellence abroad. This involves extensive interaction with local service providers and should lead eventually to the establishment of a consolidated accreditation scheme for hospital services.

In order to address the increasing surgical waiting lists, the DIH identified a number of issues related to the management of these lists. Discussions were held with clinicians regarding the future computerisation of waiting lists.

An Ophthalmic Feasibility Study was also carried out. The study analysed the current situation of the cataract waiting lists, the criteria for entry into the waiting lists and patient categorisation, calculation of the

approximate waiting times for surgery, based on the output achieved during 2005, extrapolation of the data for 2005 and 2006 to illustrate the most likely scenarios in 2007 and 2008, establishment of criteria for patient eligibility to participate in any future waiting lists initiatives, indications of the current cost of cataract operations and proposal of possible schemes/options that can be employed to decrease waiting lists for cataract surgery, such as government part sponsorship, extra cataract lists carried out at SLH or negotiation of best packages with the private sector. Although the feasibility study refers to cataract surgery, the principle can be applied to other procedures such as general surgery.

During 2006 the DIH was responsible for planning and embarking on a change programme to ensure a smooth changeover to the euro in all government hospitals.

As the regulator of Care Homes for the Elderly, the responsibilities and performance in 2006 included:

- Co-ordination of the inspection team.
- Routine pre-announced inspection visits were performed in all the licensed homes of the elderly in Malta and Gozo. Together with their licence, all the homes have received an individual report on their performance with indications for future improvements. This year's emphasis was on the physical environment of homes, the state of sanitary facilities particularly kitchens, and the level of social activities. There were 28 licensed homes for the elderly with 1,537 beds by the end of 2006.
- Unannounced inspections to investigate cases of complaints; in cases when certain standards are noted to be low during the routine inspections, a timeframe is set to effect improvement. Seven such inspections in four different homes were carried out.
- Response to the consultations from the Malta Environment and Planning Authority regarding proposals for new developments of old people's homes. Five new applications were assessed.
- 5 licensed homes were closely supervised as they were performing restructuring work.
- Updating of guidelines regulating the issue of a licence to operate a care home for the elderly was finalised in 2006. A recommended set of National Minimum Standards has been submitted for final approval at policy level. The temporary guidelines adopted in recent years were necessary to regulate the avalanche of old hotels that were applying to enter this caring sector when most of these buildings have serious structural design faults that make the care of the old people in such environments very difficult to deliver.
- Handling of complaints from the general public regarding the care of the elderly in homes.
- 15 potential developers sought guidance prior to submitting applications for homes for the elderly.

Concerning the licensing of clinics and private hospitals, this office nominates and co-ordinates the team that is appointed to inspect and recommend such licences. The activity for 2006 included:

- Inspection and licensing of three private hospitals with a total of 153 general beds, a CICU, a Renal Dialysis Unit and eight maternity beds; and of eight private day care or overnight stay clinics with 30 general beds, a Renal Dialysis facility and one maternity bed.
- Response to inquiries from professionals regarding prospective applications for licensing of private clinics/hospitals and investigations into claims of unfair competition (for example, the performance of procedures in unlicensed premises).

The Department piloted several new initiatives and handled miscellaneous regulatory assignments such as:

- National Neonatal Phenylketonuria (PKU) screening.
- Co-ordination of a National Policy on Syphilis Screening with microbiology, virology, Gynaecology and Obstetrics, and STD Departments. This involves planning for centralisation of laboratory services to gain economy of scales and make the process more effective and efficient.
- Proactive Reactivity to Heat waves and Vulnerable Populations in collaboration with the Departments of Public Health and Civil Protection and the Meteorology Office, the response to the eventuality of heat waves especially relaying of alerts and advice to hospitals, homes for older persons and the community in general, in order to prevent heat strokes.

As a full member of the European Hospitals' Committee (HOPE), the Department continued to be actively involved in the work of its Board of Governors and its plenary assembly and several subcommittees and working parties. HOPE is a major lobby group on hospital and health affairs that is extensively consulted by the institutions of the EU particularly the European Commission and the European Parliament. It develops and maintains information about planning and operation of the hospital services and of the health systems within which they function. HOPE advises members on matters relating to standards of provision, organisation and operation of hospital services. One of the longest standing initiatives is the promotion of exchange and twinning programmes and training of staff and healthcare professionals in the EU and elsewhere in the world. Our sustained participation in HOPE gives us an additional, indispensable, pan-European forum and a strategic alliance from within which the Ministry can push further Malta's national agenda on hospital and health care issues that arise from time to time within the EU.

Besides heading the Malta delegation for HOPE, the Director of Institutional Health was unanimously elected as Vice President of HOPE in June 2005 and takes up the position of President for three years from June 2008. The HOPE Subcommittee of Economics and Planning (SCEP) is currently working on three very important projects: comparative studies on Diagnostic Related Groups; EU enlargement and access to the labour market; and purchasing price of drugs, medical devices and medical equipment across the European Union. The HOPE Subcommittee on Co-ordination (SCC) concluded its work on the issues related to malpractice and clinical negligence and on quality of care improvement strategies. During 2006, three Maltese participants took part in the HOPE Exchange Programme. Three European exchange participants from Czech Republic, Sweden and Austria were hosted in Malta.

Throughout 2006, the Department represented Malta in several European Commission and TAIEX meetings and questionnaires with regard to current and forthcoming EU legislation on setting standards of quality and safety for the donation, procurement, testing, processing, storage, and distribution of human tissues and cells. The mother directive (EC 2002/98) has been transposed into national legislation (Blood and Tissues Act 2006) together with Directives EC 2004/33 (Certain Technical Requirements for Blood and Blood Products), EC 2005/61 (Traceability Requirements and Notification of Serious Adverse Events and Reactions) and EC 2005/62 (Quality System for Blood Establishments).

The Department also attended meetings concerning the regulation of organ donation and transplants. It is recognised at EU level that organ transplants are highly beneficial life-saving procedures. There is however a pan-European shortage of organs and therefore the risks associated with organ trafficking are also very high. Since there are huge variations in accessibility and in waiting times across Europe, and significant societal participation and many ethical principles involved, it is evident that these issues affect the availability of organs in different member states and may thus make harmonisation of practices more difficult. In response to a Commission consultation, Malta expressed its preference for guidelines rather than a Directive on Quality and Safety and/or Organ Trafficking.

The Department continued to provide leadership for the Blood Project. This Project, co-funded by the Government and the EU under Transition Facility 2004, is making good progress. Target completion date is now end 2008. Throughout 2006, the project team worked very hard to successfully overcome several unexpected developments. Halfway through the year it was decided that the National Blood Transfusion Centre should vacate its current building within two years and that it was therefore no longer feasible to continue with current refurbishment plans. It was decided to build a new specifically designed blood processing facility. A green field site was identified and a new tender for the works required is being finalised. These unexpected delays posed a serious threat to meeting the EU contracting deadline at end 2006. With a lot of goodwill by all stakeholders we managed to meet the contracting deadline at end 2006.

The Donation Area will be relocated to the ground floor of the GPS building in April 2007 following extensive refurbishment. It will provide blood donors with a comfortable donation centre that fulfils all EU safety and quality standards. The EU transition facility has also funded a successful Twinning Light programme for the benefit of NBTC staff to acquire proficiency in quality systems as applied to blood banking. NBTC will be in a position to achieve ISO certification of its work practices and systems by end

2007. This project has also served to build an extremely good ongoing relationship between the NBTC and the German Red Cross which promises to be of mutual benefit in the future. 2006 also saw the call for applications, interviews and selection boards for senior positions of staff in the NBTC as required by EU legislation.

Malta will also be participating in the project Development of Pan-European standards and criteria for the inspection of blood establishments (EU-Blood-Inspection) under the EU Public Health Fund Call for Proposals 2006. The EU-Blood-Inspection project should enable Malta to develop a sustainable programme for inspection and regulation of its blood establishments.

Patient safety remains a top priority on the local and EU Health agenda. In 2006 the Department continued to represent Malta in the Working Group on Patient Safety (PSWG) of the EU's High Level Group on Health Services and Medical Care. The Working Group has been focusing its efforts to produce a Draft Recommendation on Improving Patient Safety in the European Union which sets out the framework for the development and implementation of a strategy for patient safety at national and EU levels, and provides an overview of the key mechanisms that will be used to achieve EU and member state goals across a range of patient safety issues. Member states will be making a statement of strong political leadership and commitment to treating patient safety as a high priority to address at both national and EU levels.

In 2006, the Department was represented on the following Committees:

- National Pandemic Preparedness Committee
- Medical Equipment Consultative Committee
- Health Ethics Committee
- Gender Mainstreaming Committee
- Quality Assurance Steering Committee
- Risk Management Subcommittee
- Malta Resuscitation Council
- Clinical Waste Consultative Group
- Child Abuse Committee
- National Commission of Children
- Social Protection Committee
- Public Private Partnership Committee
- General Services Board.

During 2006 the Department took over the co-ordination of the Health Division Influenza Pandemic planning and preparedness at various levels. Two members of the Department provided active leadership in the Planning group within the National Pandemic Preparedness Committee, chaired by the Principal Permanent Secretary within the Office of the Prime Minister. The task involved reviewing, revising all the work done by a previous colleague and ensuring that all specified actions could be implemented. Policies and protocols were brought to the Health Directors' committee, discussed, amended, approved and finally compiled as a final document *Health Division Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plan for the Maltese Islands* which was published in December 2006.

Within the National Committee, the Department facilitated the drawing up of the National Influenza Pandemic Plan. Meetings were held with representatives of key stakeholders in Malta and out of each individual contingency plan a national matrix was compiled. The various plans will form the key sections of the National Plan. Work was done to increase influenza pandemic awareness within the general population. Various messages were posted on billboards in various strategic localities. The themes included Seasonal Influenza Vaccination, hand washing, proper food handling and correct food storage. Other information was distributed at schools as posters and printed matter. The Department was instrumental in the setting up of a National Influenza pandemic website housed within the Health Division official website.

Various meetings were held within the Accident and Emergency Department to improve our Major Accident Pre-Hospital response. The Civil Protection Department donated a van to be used as a Major Accident Response vehicle. This is equipped with Major Accident equipment and will significantly cut down on the response time from time of a major accident to the arrival of Major Accident equipment on site. A group of motivated staff got personally involved in restoring and retrofitting the van to serve for the purpose. They gave a lot of their free time, in an anonymous way, to work on the van hence minimising the costs on the Health Division.

Training forms part of our continued state of preparedness and response. The Department was proactive in co-ordinating the Health Division's participation in various exercises. Once again the role of the non-government organisations was crucial to the success in achieving the training objectives of these exercises. Mixed feelings were raised as to whether these exercises were being done to train the voluntary services instead of the Health Division hospital staff. In order to encourage participation of staff from hospital, a training vote was obtained prior to the publication of Budget 2007 to enable getting in extra A&E staff during these exercises.

During 2006, the Department responded to various real life accidents of potential major accident dimensions. These included various fires at various landfills, MediGrain Terminal, Galaxy Hotel and St George Park Complex. Meetings were also held with various entities for the compilation of Major Accident Plans for Enemalta and the oil bunkering industry.

Prior to the Malta International Air Show, the Health Division played an active role through its participation within the Civil Protection Council to ensure proper Medical Emergency Contingency plans to cater for any major accident following the Malta Aero Show accident.

Immigrants came at regular intervals and in groups of varying numbers during 2006. Besides the response of the Emergency Response Team, the Department forwards reports to Public Health, Port Health and the Armed Forces Medical Doctor for further follow-up. On numerous circumstances, we served as the focal point to address various problems encountered by the Detention Services.

MATER DEI HOSPITAL AT TAL-QROQQ (MDH)

Mater Dei Hospital will become Malta's main acute general hospital and will incorporate teaching and research facilities. DIH was actively involved in the Medical Equipment Co-ordinating Committee which met 20 times in 2006. This committee is of critical importance because project completion depends on the timely delivery of equipment. Moreover the Committee had to see through the process of urgent replacement of equipment at St Luke's Hospital that is obsolete and requires immediate replacement. The development of operational policies and systems is being co-ordinated by a team of health planners with the very active contribution of the hospital staff in the relevant departments. These multidisciplinary teams were involved from the very start in extensive discussions to prepare the detailed designs, and equipment requirements and specifications. In future they will be responsible for piloting operational policies and manuals for their respective departments and services. The DIH contributed to the revision of the Migration Plan and the proposed changes as part of the agreement with Skanska and Inso for the completion of the Mater Dei Hospital. During 2006, no progress was registered on the revision of work practices and other reforms which were the subject of intense preparatory negotiations with the unions representing Health Care staff. Further direction is awaited to resume the detailed discussions on the human resource issues that will be fundamental to the overall management of the new hospital.

ST LUKE'S HOSPITAL (SLH)

2006 was characterised by the continuation of ongoing initiatives and the start-up of many new projects and developments. The management team consolidated its position and relationship with the rest of the hospital. The Executive Management Committee met on a regular basis. The organisational structure was

strengthened through the appointment of a Director for Nursing Services, a Chief Engineer and a Chief Information Officer. Reporting relationships were also clarified.

The main themes agreed upon internally for 2006 were as follows:

- preparation for the migration of services from SLH to Mater Dei Hospital (MDH) to occur in a timely, safe and organised manner and without too much impact on services and staff;
- identifying current vacancies in all grades at SLH and to make all efforts to recruit these vacancies;
- procuring of the Phase I modules of the new Integrated Health Information System and make plans for their implementation;
- relocating the social cases at SLH to more suitable accommodation outside the hospital;
- improving the level of cleanliness of SLH wards and clinical areas;
- setting up a Medical Admissions Unit, a Bed Management Unit and a Fast-Track Discharge Team;
- continuation of offering current services at SLH.

Preparation for the migration to MDH was the main project carried out at SLH over and above the routine patient care workload. In order to achieve the hospital objectives set in connection with MDH and the migration, the following departmental goals were established for 2006:

- each of the current departments, sections and units at SLH should evolve from their present structure and function to the structure and function they should assume at MDH to be in line with the facilities at the new hospital; and
- some new departments, sections and units not presently found at SLH should be set up, to utilise the expanded facilities found at the new hospital or to support the functioning of MDH.

One of the very positive outcomes to report for 2006 is the change in attitude of SLH staff to the MDH project and the migration. At the beginning of 2006, staff attitudes to MDH ranged from neutral to very sceptical. This was countered with the provision of information, involvement of staff in planning and with site visits to MDH. The latter were especially successful and feedback from staff during and following visits was very positive. Also, most staff has readily participated in migration planning and preparations, notwithstanding the significant workloads.

A cross-mapping exercise was carried out early in 2006 to identify the extent of the differences in the number of wards, beds and operating theatres for each speciality between SLH and MDH, department by department. An out-patient clinics allocation exercise was also carried out. This led to the identification and assignment of responsible persons for each department and unit at MDH, an essential first step in the subsequent operational and migration planning required for each department.

Significant emphasis was placed on staff training as it is considered to be one of the main determinants of the success of the migration, and also because a large amount of training is required for each of the 3,500 staff at St Luke's Hospital. The necessary training is being split into three phases: orientation and general information about the hospital; orientation and general information on the specific area of work; and detailed training within the specific area of work

Up till the end of the year, general hospital orientation visits were held for 2,364 staff members. From September 2006, presentations on the new engineering systems at MDH were started at SLH. These lectures covered the pneumatic tube system and the nurse call system. Medical staff training covered various areas – out-patients, wards, theatres, etc. Clinical Chairmen were taken on individualised site visits and then they indicated training requirements for the doctors in their department.

The migration planning process is being carried out at three levels: Whole-hospital issues like transport, procurement, support services, etc; Inter-Departmental level interfaces and interactions between departments; and the Migration Sequence – the optimal sequence in which the various departments, sections and units migrate. Ensuring patient safety is the over-riding principle of the migration sequence. The plan aims to have the shortest possible duration, due to the logistical complications and resource

implications of two-site operation. The most difficult patients move at the end. Rehabilitation patients and social cases will not be moved to MDH.

An SLH/MDH Communications Committee was set up and started making preparations for an internal communications campaign to provide staff at SLH with the information necessary to ensure a full and effective participation by everyone in the preparations for the migration to and operation of Mater Dei.

Several specific meetings on Mater Dei and the migration were held with the unions during 2006. The main aim of these meetings was to provide each union with information on Mater Dei and the migration. Unions themselves were asked to indicate what information they required and on which migration-related issues it expected to be consulted on. Specific site visits were organised for each union.

Considerable work was undertaken in 2006 in order to plan human resource requirements and commence or follow up urgent recruitment/redeployment procedures. An exercise was carried out in mid-2006 to identify current staff vacancies at SLH and intensive efforts were made throughout the year to fill these vacancies. Recruitment of the posts within the corporate structure proved to be extremely problematic. The hardest-hit areas included procurement, HR department, finance, support services and engineering. It was found that there were a very large number of vacancies in nursing, professional and midwifery grades. This situation was partly resolved through the employment on a casual basis to fill vacancies in professional health care grades.

There are a large number of pressing vacancies in many grades of non-clinical support staff at SLH which have dire consequences on both the current and future hospital services. Action is being taken to recruit porters, laboratory operators, security guards, ward clerks and cleaners.

In the case of clinical support staff, training courses have not been held for many years locally and SLH management had to work to identify alternative courses or to set them up from scratch. MCAST courses fulfil the training requirements for pharmacy technicians, nursing aides and care workers. MCAST and SLH clinical staff put together a training course for Paramedic Aides (Decontamination).

It was established that the number of employees in the IT department at SLH was not enough to handle the added requirements associated with the implementation of the IHIS in a short space of time. In-house staff will be utilised for certain functions, namely user IT training, data management and records management. Other functions will be fully outsourced to MITTS Ltd.

An exercise was carried out to identify how the work requirements of MDH can best be fulfilled. The resulting plan called for the recruitment of about 20 additional staff to handle the added requirements of operating and maintaining the blocks at MDH. This recruitment was initiated and the relative calls for applications were issued in November.

Social cases and extra patients at SLH reached unprecedented levels in January to April 2006. During March, a record number of social cases (103) and extra patients (173) were recorded at St Luke's Hospital. This gave rise to serious emergency situations where, at times, there was no further space available to place extra beds, not even in the corridors. The situation did not lead to a complete breakdown of the hospital system only due to the enormous effort put in by staff and management. The emergency situation was somewhat alleviated by the transfer of 20 social cases to SVPR at the end of March and the transfer of 34 social cases to the new St Jeanne Antide ward at Mount Carmel Hospital in April.

One of the objectives set by SLH management for 2006 was to improve the level of cleanliness in the wards and other clinical areas. Support services, nursing and infection control together planned an improved cleaning system for all clinical areas in the hospital. The basis of this new system was that the ward Nursing Officer again became responsible for the cleaning of the ward. In turn, the NO was given the necessary authority and number of cleaners. The proposal to supplement in-house cleaners with contracted cleaners was accepted and the necessary planning was carried out so as to get the maximum benefit from

the increased cleaning hours. The Infection Control Unit started an audit programme to monitor the level of cleanliness in the hospital's clinical areas on an ongoing basis.

The Medical Admissions Unit opened on 1 November 2006. Half the beds in the MAU will be used for medium-dependency patients, and the rest for borderline admissions. At present the ward can only handle 28% of all emergency medical admissions to SLH. The new Bed Management Unit started functioning in earnest in October. This multi-disciplinary team was set up to spearhead fast-track discharges focusing on social cases and potential social cases. Efforts are being directed at independent patients and their families to encourage and facilitate their discharge home. There were several successes in this regard, but it should be pointed out that this also means that the social cases that remain at SLH are the more dependent ones for whom a bed in long-term care may be the only alternative.

The total number of ward admissions in 2006 was 87,645. There were 47,458 (54.2%) new inpatient admissions, 12,544 (14.3%) ward transfers, 13,678 (15.6%) day cases and 13,965 (15.9%) dialysis sessions. The mean length of stay for inpatients was 4.6 days. The average number of new ward admissions daily was 164.4. With a total of 275,261 occupied bed days, the hospital had a mean bed occupancy rate of 89.6% in 859 inpatient beds. The overall throughput was 70.8 patients per available inpatient bed. The turnover interval was 0.5 days. In 55 day care and dialysis beds 27,643 cases were dealt with – 1.4 patients per bed per day. 27,031 bed days which were occupied by 361 social cases have a significant impact on workload and overall bed occupancy statistics.

The overall activity results, including social cases, were as follows:

	Length of stay	Occupancy
Medical Wards	6.3 days	115.8%
Surgical Wards	4.4 days	79.1%
Orthopaedic Wards	7.3 days	90.3%
Obs/Gynae (Excl Labour)	3.1 days	75.6%
Paediatric Wards	4.0 days	70.5%
Intensive & HDU Care	4.4 days	93.2%

There were 1,611 deaths in hospital in 2006.

The number of surgical operations carried out in the various operating theatres was 33,298. This includes 3,081 procedures performed at the Cardiac Catheterisation Laboratory which are considered as part of the operative activity of the hospital. There was a net increase of 4% (1,298 operations) in overall operative activity in 2006. 5,075 (15.2%) were registered as “emergency” episodes whilst 28,223 were “elective” episodes. 51% of episodes were performed on female patients, 49% on male patients. On the basis of a preliminary analysis, the complexity of operations performed was classified as follows: Complex Major, Major + and Major 29%; Intermediate 34%; Minor 36%; Unspecified 1%.

The workload was distributed as follows:

Main Theatre	25.0%	(-0.6%)
Orthopaedic OT	10.3%	(+0.5%)
Karin Grech OT	18.4%	(+0.1%)
Gynae Minor Ops	8.7%	(+0.5%)
Burns Theatre	2.6%	(+0.1%)
Endoscopy Unit	21.0%	(-0.2%)
Labour Theatre	3.6%	(+0.4%)
Casualty Theatre	1.1%	(-0.3%)
Cardiac Catheterisation Laboratory	9.3%	(-0.4%)

110,100 patients attended the Accident and Emergency Department. Of these, 14,764 (13.4%) were brought by ambulance. 26.8% were referred by their GP or the Health Centres whilst 79,847 (72.5%) were self-referred. 22,875 (20.8%) required admission to hospital which means that 48.2% of all inpatient admissions were from the A&E Department.

882 patients were treated at ITU. 633 patients were treated in the High Dependency Unit. 1,595 patients received inpatient care at the Coronary Care Unit. 1,987 patients had invasive coronary angiograms and cardiac catheterisations. 323 “electrical”, invasive and pacemaker procedures were performed. These included insertions of triple chamber pacemakers and intra cardiac defibrillators. 584 PTCA’s were performed; of these, 83 (14.2%) were primary PTCA’s. There were 4,332 out-patient episodes of care in the cardiology department, of which 1,388 were new cases.

545 Cardiothoracic operations were performed. Of these, 412 operations required cardiopulmonary bypass, including 352 Coronary Artery Bypass Graft operations, 59 operations involving heart valves and one heart transplant.

3,772 echocardiograms (including 79 trans-oesophageal procedures), 2,784 Exercise Stress tests (of which 243 were part of myocardial perfusion scans), 1,573 Holter examinations and patient activated monitors and 840 Blood Pressure 24-hour monitoring studies were performed at the Cardiac Laboratory.

The Department of Medicine, which includes General Medicine, Respiriology, Neurology, Infectious Diseases, Gastroenterology, Nephrology, Rheumatology and Diabetes and Endocrinology, followed 51,842 patients in its various out-patient clinics. 12,250 were new cases and 39,592 were follow-up visits. 15,511 patients were treated as inpatients and 1,413 were treated as day cases. The physicians within this department performed 1,707 endoscopic procedures.

The Department of Surgery, which includes General Surgery, Paediatric Surgery, Neurosurgery, Plastic Surgery, Urology and ENT Surgery, followed 45,477 patients in its various out-patient clinics. 11,067 were new cases and 34,410 were follow-up visits. The pre-op clinics were a resounding success and 4,053 persons were attended to in these sessions. The Breast Clinic had 1,634 patient contacts, and the Stoma Clinic offered services to 175 patients. The surgeons within this department performed 5,283 endoscopic procedures and 2,710 day case surgical procedures. 10,263 operations of varying complexity were performed divided as follows: General Surgery – 4,731, Paediatric Surgery - 643, Neurosurgery - 465, Plastic Surgery - 1,173, Urology – 1,471 and ENT Surgery – 1,780. 14,288 patients were treated as inpatients and 6,798 were treated as day cases. This was remarkable considering that the various surgical wards had to give up a total of 3,666 bed days in order to accommodate 181 general medical cases during the winter crisis, thus alleviating the overcrowding in other parts of the hospital.

The Department of Orthopaedics performed 3,548 operations of which 1,791 (50.5%) were trauma cases and 1,757 (49.5%) were elective operations. 54 complex spinal surgical operations were performed. The elective procedures included 83 total hip replacements or revisions, 237 knee replacements or revisions, 89 hemiarthroplasties and 421 arthroscopies. 2,976 patients were treated as inpatients and 1,009 patients were treated as day cases.

The Department of Ophthalmology performed 2,367 operations of which 1,583 (66.9%) were major operations and 784 (33.1%) were minor operations. The elective procedures included 1,356 cataract operations, 108 vitrectomies, 46 conventional retinal detachment surgery, 55 trabeculotomies and 22 corneal transplants. Over 85% of all operations were as day cases under local anaesthesia. There were 11,050 ophthalmic casualty cases. 3,420 new out-patient cases, 16,700 follow-up visits, 1,253 Argon laser treatments and 376 Yag laser treatments were performed at the out-patient clinics.

Besides supporting the Maternity (3,172 newborns assisted) and A&E services (10,200 children seen in Paediatric Casualty), the Department of Paediatrics had 4,814 general paediatric ward episodes, of which 54.4% were inpatient admissions, and 45.6% were day cases and ward attenders. There were also 181 oncology patients, 974 cardiology reviews, 342 admissions to the Special Care Baby Unit and 19 children admitted in the Adult Intensive Care Unit. There were 11,040 child attendances in the various out-patients’ clinics and 3,553 episodes of care at the CDAU.

The Obstetrics and Gynaecology Department had 5,325 operative episodes in 2006. These included 1,845 major operations of various complexity which included 1,161 Caesarian sections, and 3,840 operations of an intermediate or minor nature. 9,907 patients were treated as inpatients. This was remarkable considering that the gynaecology wards had to give up a total of 1,474 bed days in order to accommodate general medical and social cases. 4,420 new gynaecology out-patient cases, 13,163 gynaecology follow-up visits, 3,292 new obstetric out-patient cases, 7,069 obstetric follow-up visits, 117 diabetic patient attendances and 8,231 bone density examinations were performed at the Out-patient clinics. There were 3,366 live births registered in Karen Grech Hospital Maternity wing. 3,252 were singleton deliveries, 53 were twins and three were triplets. 34.5% were delivered by Caesarean section whilst 4.3% were assisted vaginal deliveries. About 45% of expectant mothers attended Parentcraft classes; of these 73% were accompanied by partners. 13,890 ultrasonographic examinations, 12,022 cardiotocographic examinations, 673 Doppler examinations and 6,857 bone density scans were performed in the Obstetrics Unit. 1,195 mothers attended the walk-in breastfeeding clinic and in excess of 2,500 help-line calls were also registered.

Visits by foreign specialists to St Luke's Hospital generated a number of activities. 137 surgical procedures were carried out in Paediatric Cardiology, Hand Surgery, Orthopaedic Surgery, Spinal Surgery, Uro-Surgery, Vascular Surgery and Interventional Radiology, Paediatric Surgery, Pain Management and Ophthalmic Surgery. Other specialities were Paediatrics (Oncology, Gastroenterology, Endocrinology, Neuromuscular Disorders, Nephrology, Neurology, and Respiratory Diseases), Cochlear Implant, Orthotics and Prosthetics. 265 patients were referred to the UK for treatment. 3,199 persons qualified for free medical aids and appliances, whilst a total of 42,903 applications for free medicines under Schedule V of the Social Security Act were processed.

169,146 examinations were carried out in the Department of Radiology units within St Luke's Hospital. 47.3% of all radiological examinations were carried out at the A&E Department. 17.3% were carried out at the Out-Patients Unit.

The examinations performed at the Main Radiology Department were as follows (percentage change from 2005 in brackets):

General Planar Radiography	33,634 (+15.6%)
Magnetic Resonance Imaging	6,110 (+ 14.2%)
Ultrasound examination	17,270 (+ 6.5%)
Mammograms	4,219 (+ 8.3%)
All contrast medium studies	4,171 (+2.8%)
CT scans	14,503 (+ 27.5%)
Angiography (not cardiac)	835 (+ 13.6%)
Gamma Scans	2,592 (+9.1%)

The Dental Department examined 13,211 new cases and 9,060 follow-ups. 396 were operated under general anaesthesia. 2,922 patients were seen and treated in the Oral Hygiene Unit. 1,287 patients received dental appliances.

There were 199,410 transactions between the Inpatient Pharmacy and the different hospital wards in order to ensure availability of pharmaceuticals in all treatment areas. The Out-Patient Dispensary provided service to 140,086 clients, dispensing 392,754 pharmaceutical items (2.8 items per patient) contained in 210,000 prescriptions (1.5 prescriptions per patient, 1.87 items per prescription).

The performance of the Department of Pathology during 2006 (and percentage change form 2005) was as follows:

Service	No. of Tests	% Change from 2005
Cytology	9,631	+ 7.2
Histopathology		
<i>Surgical Cases</i>	14,300	+ 5.3
<i>Frozen Sections</i>	131	- 14.9
<i>Needle Biopsies</i>	147	- 2.6
<i>Autopsies</i>		
Hospital	42	- 22.2
Forensic	173	+ 8.1
<i>Slides</i>	70,822	+ 1.8
Haematology	358,259	+ 13.1
Clinical Chemistry	1,946,323	+ 19.6
Bacteriology	620,354	+ 6.7
Virology	57,458	+ 30.9
Mycology	4,667	+ 16.7
Immunology	84,747	+ 9.4
Toxicology	52,103	+ 27.3
Emergency Lab.	1,003,710	+ 10.4
Genetics, Molecular	11,353	- 1.6
Blood Bank	55,943	- 1.0

The Orthotics and Prosthetics Unit had 1,212 new referrals and carried out 2,625 treatments. Of these 60.7% were carried out by local staff, 39.3% by visiting staff. 1,947 items of orthoses, 82 items of prosthesis and 82 swap sockets were supplied. The total number of clients seen in the Orthoptic Clinic was 2,981. These included also follow-up cases of glaucoma and referrals from CDAU.

There were 8,536 new adult cases and 43,893 follow-up visits performed by the Physiotherapy Out-Patient service. 968 paediatric new cases and 6,075 treatments were also offered by the Out-Patients Service. Concerning inpatients, 8,718 patients were given a total of 76,412 treatments in the various wards.

10,106 patients received Occupational Therapy services as inpatients, out-patients and at CDAU. 30,601 sessions amounting to 109,104 units of care were delivered. 2,519 patients were new cases. 449 home and school visits were performed.

The Speech Language Clinic provided services to 457 inpatients, for whom 3,462 sessions were performed. Another 250 patients were being regularly followed up as out-patients.

Despite severe staff shortages, 2,974 patient contacts for dietetic services were registered in 2006. These included 2,165 new referrals, of which 304 were from all other hospitals and health centres.

MOUNT CARMEL HOSPITAL (MCH)

The year 2006 was characterised by new initiatives in community services and by staff training and development programmes. The modernisation programme for wards maintained its momentum and resulted in the refurbishment of several wards and units. The new St Jeanne Antide Ward which caters for the elderly was also opened in April 2006. The clinical and para-clinical services are still hindered by a severe shortage of non-consultant medical and multidisciplinary staff. Shortage of doctors, psychologists, occupational therapists and social workers is having a negative effect on the services delivered to patients. Unfortunately, there does not seem to be a solution to this problem in the short term, even though funds are available for the recruitment of these much needed professionals. In an effort to increase the quality of nursing care, the nursing department organised an intensive nursing training programme. In December 2006, the first group of nurses graduated with a degree in psychiatric nursing from the Institute of Health Care. Nurses were involved in a number of initiatives such as the wards' modernisation programme, the opening of St Jeanne Antide ward and Female Ward 1 and the further development of the community mental health services.

Without any doubt, the most important development in the Community Sector was the opening of two community-based hostels. These hostels, located in Floriana and Marsa, are run in partnership with the Richmond Foundation and with the Fondazzjoni Suriel-il Bniedem, and accommodate 24 patients. Furthermore, the number of patients cared for by the Qormi Primary Care Team increased from 81 in 2005 to 382 in 2006 – an increase of 470%.

The most important projects during the year were the opening of St Jeanne Antide Ward and of Female Ward 1 after being fully refurbished and modernised. Intensive works were also carried out on the High Secure Unit. A new balcony was constructed to make this unit more attractive and secure to both nursing staff and patients alike. 2,600 square meters of internal roads were resurfaced to embellish the environment and make the common areas safer. Other projects which were either completed or initiated during the year were the modernisation and refurbishment of the Occupational Therapy Department, the Lecture room, the transport section and the Half Way House.

An inflation rate of 3.1% and the drastic increases in the cost of fuel and water and electricity had a negative effect on the operational costs of Mount Carmel which increased by nearly Lm360,000. The introduction of the Continued Professional Development allowance for nurses increased running costs by Lm80,000. During the period under review the cost of medicines also shot up by 10% over the previous year. Despite this, Mount Carmel Hospital actually decreased its total expenditure by Lm296,402 when compared to 2005.

There were 402 first admissions and 694 re-admissions. Statistics for patients admitted to Mount Carmel Hospital are summarised by the following activity figures:

MCH Admissions	Males (%)	Females (%)	Total
Informal	380 (68)	177 (32)	557
Compulsory	291 (64)	164 (36)	455
Re-transferred	43 (51)	41 (49)	84
Total	714 (65)	382 (35)	1,096

Discharges	Total (%)
Males	722 (65)
Females	388 (35)
Total	1,100 (100)

The Short Stay Psychiatric Unit is an eleven-bedded mixed gender open unit at SLH admitting informal patients for up to three weeks and controlled by a protocol. All eight consultants admit to this unit which is mainly run by nurses supported to some extent by other multidisciplinary team members. This year there has been a severe problem because of poor occupational therapy support which is indispensable to the therapeutic milieu of the unit. Patient activity was as follows: 243 admissions of which 63.4% were females and 36.6% were males. The re-admission rate was 53.5%. 904 psychiatric consultations were provided to acutely ill patients at St Luke's Hospital.

During 2006, the Psychiatric Out-patient department was enlarged and refurbished to accommodate the recent consultant expansion and their supporting multidisciplinary teams. In 2006, there were 1,235 new cases and 14,508 follow-up attendances. There were 307 depot injection attendances.

At the Child Guidance Clinic, there were 284 new cases (181 males and 103 females) and 1,311 follow-up attendances (928 males and 383 females). During 2006 there were 51 Neuropsychiatry Clinic sessions during which there were 17 new cases and 251 follow-up attendances. There were 67 new cases and 281 follow-up attendances at the Perinatal Psychiatry Clinic.

348 Electroconvulsive Treatments were delivered during this year.

3,419 patients were seen in Community Health Centre Clinics.

The Occupational Therapy (OT) department has gone through significant restructuring in 2006 with various staff movements and transfer of resources to a newly refurbished unit. Several therapeutic events have taken place and a number of service users in community resettlement. This year marked the introduction of regular ward based group sessions, general revision assessment forms and checklists. Clients are encouraged to attend the OT dept for a full programme of activities. Therapists work in close liaison with the multidisciplinary team members and NGOs concerned with participation in case studies, attending team meetings and carrying out home visits. Operational protocols for the work scheme (e.g. referral forms, initial interview, job match, feedback questionnaires and liaison) have been restructured. OT staff members employed at this social centre provide a repertoire of activities 7 days a week throughout the year. Afternoon community activities are limited by budget constraints on overtime. Some of these took place in the evenings and consisted of a song festival at MCH theatre, picnic at Buskett, beach activities, visits to village feasts, boat trips, accompanying pts for PC course, carnival and MCH festa activities, bowling, BBQ, football match, pizza nights, Good Friday processions, folk festival, Gozo trip and Christmas activities. Across the entire service including day care and day centres, 1,161 patients were offered 4,172 sessions which amounted to 24,400 units of care.

The Psychology Department based at MCH has continued to offer a spectrum of psychological services to a variety of users ranging from young people and adolescents to adults and elderly persons as part of multi-disciplinary teams in different clinical settings. In 2006, psychologists have followed up 897 new cases and 602 follow-ups.

The social work department offers holistic care interventions to clients in various clinical and community settings. Social workers actively participate in anti-stigma campaigns organised by the media, and give educational talks to secondary school children. Social workers also assist clients with living arrangements when resettled in the community after years of hospitalisation. 562 new cases were opened in 2006.

During 2006, physiotherapists have worked within the multi-disciplinary team, attending ward rounds as necessary, and liaising with various mental healthcare professionals. A total of 71 new cases were referred for physiotherapy from the wards, and 4,113 treatment sessions carried out. Treatment sessions took place either in the respective patients' wards or in the Physiotherapy Department.

During the past year there have been several improvements at MCH pharmacy. This has been achieved despite skeleton staff and despite a further increase in workload. During 2006 there were 65,250 transactions which represent a 2% increase in the number of transactions over the previous year. The net cost of pharmaceuticals has risen from Lm522,000 to Lm574,000.

MCH continues to offer a limited but useful laboratory service staffed by two technicians. In 2006 the laboratory processed 86 different tests amounting to a total of 200,407 test requests. Of these, the five most commonly requested were CBCs - 2,857 tests (14%); TFT's - 1,852 (9%); serum electrolytes - 1,670 (8%); serum creatinine - 1,646 (8%); and blood urea - 1,592 (8.6%).

The main focus of the nursing department during 2006 was on staff development and training. 2006 was marked with the opening of a geriatric unit. This unit serves as a transit unit between St Luke's Hospital and placement in long term accommodation for our senior citizens. The introduction of this unit has been a success. In Female Ward One, apart from the physical set-up, it was agreed to increase the number of nursing staff in order to give more personal attention to the patients. It is expected to have a positive effect on the care given to the patients. Since a new psychiatric ward and an ECT suite will form part of the new Mater Dei Hospital, the nursing management was heavily involved in meetings with the appropriate assigned co-ordinator. A number of on-site visits both for nursing staff and management were organised in order to familiarise ourselves with the new environment. In order to be in line with the Dangerous Drugs Act the hospital had to change all the medicine cupboards to standard requirements. The nursing management also took an active part in the meetings/seminars on the National Action plan on Health and Long Term Care and the Influenza Pandemic contingency plan. The nursing management works closely with the Community Manager. This year three more members of the nursing staff joined this unit.

The Qormi Primary Team has seen a dramatic increase in patients, and the team members are opening out more into the Community, spending less time inside the clinic and more time performing domiciliary visits and other Community-based services. 382 patients are now being followed up. The team is now preparing itself to reach out to local organisations, schools and GPs based in the catchment area, and have in fact drafted a leaflet in order to help educate and inform people on the services available to them. A Day Centre was opened in February 2006 and it was following 26 patients on a regular basis by end 2006.

St Jeanne Antide Ward was officially inaugurated on 20 April 2006. The cost for these works, which also included a new passenger lift, were approximately Lm155,000. A further extension, which will replace the formal Male Ward 8 throughout, is being planned. Works at the Female Ward 1 had come to a standstill and were taken over and finalised by the maintenance personnel of the hospital. Total refurbishment works cost Lm135,000 and included air-conditioning throughout and this, coupled with the extensive garden areas surrounding this ward, offers a very welcoming environment to all those working or residing at this ward.

Works on the High Security Unit was finalised. The first phase of works at the Occupational Therapy Department was aimed at making the place more accessible to wheelchair users. The second and third phases saw a complete refurbishment of the entire building which now houses a gymnasium, a multipurpose hall, a kitchen, a laundry, a woodwork workshop, a pottery workshop, a computer room, offices, an internal recreational yard, showers and toilets. The work carried out on a daily basis by the maintenance personnel, entailed some 4,600 works requisitions that were dealt with during this year.

SIR PAUL BOFFA HOSPITAL (SPBH)

During 2006, Sir Paul Boffa Hospital (SPBH) continued to offer Oncology and Radiotherapy Services, Dermatology Services and Neuro-Rehabilitation Services. Following Government's decision in February 2006 to transfer Boffa Hospital services to Zammit Clapp Hospital, a project team was set up to assume responsibility for the transfer. The project team identified the requirements for the successful completion of the project. There were regular consultations with the Health Policy Board so that decisions pertaining to the mode of project delivery, funding mechanisms, equipment requirement and time constraints, could be taken. The team carried out extensive consultation with the service providers, finalised project plans for the new oncology and dermatology hospital and a MEPA application was submitted. An external consultancy with a foreign expert to assess Malta's current and future radiotherapy requirements and to advise on the required equipment and related market prices was also undertaken.

The proposed project plans includes an extensive refurbishment of the existing Zammit Clapp Hospital building that will house Oncology Inpatients and Dermatology Services and the building of a new unit located below ground level and adjacent to the existing Zammit Clapp Hospital which will accommodate the Oncology Treatment Services - Radiotherapy, Chemotherapy and Out-patient clinics. It is proposed that the unit will contain three high-energy containment bunkers to hold the radiotherapy linear accelerators.

Work was completed on the upgrading and extension of the former female Oncology ward wherein the Neuro Rehabilitation Unit has been re-allocated. This offered additional space and two new beds where rehabilitation of neurological patients can be done with increased comfort. The old NRU started to be transformed into a multipurpose facility for lectures and social events. A new CT simulator was commissioned as a joint venture between the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Malta Cancer Foundation, and the Maria Bugeja Cancer Support foundation in collaboration with the Ministry of Health.

The Oncology Department had 926 new cases referred for treatment. Of these, 724 received radiotherapy at the time of presentation, 165 received chemotherapy as out-patients, and 278 received hormone therapy. A number of patients received a combination of therapies. The number of treatments was as follows: Radiotherapy – 13,884; Chemotherapy – 5,253; simulator planning - 713; mould room appliances - 80. 34 High Dose Radioactive Iodine, 25 Low Dose Radioactive Iodine, five Radioactive Phosphorus and three Caesium insertion treatments were administered in the Isotope Administration Unit. The Department has

catered for 1,099 admissions in the 28 beds at its disposal for inpatient treatment. An additional 178 day-cases were attended to (41.9% males; 58.1% females). The out-patient clinics at Boffa Hospital and Gozo provided 6,962 follow-up visits.

In the Dermatology Department there were a total of 27,287 out-patient visits during 2006. The ratio of new cases/follow-ups was 1.6. There was a variable swing in activity in all the aspects of the service, which showed an overall increase of 4.95%. The detailed activity swings were: 6,671 new cases (+3.3%), 4,126 follow-ups (-4.1%), 1,332 minor operations (+9.4%), 5,519 leg ulcers (+17.1%), 2,642 warts (+4.4%), 684 skin tags (+26%), 122 patch tests (+3.9%), 304 laser (0.3%), 3,725 PUVA/UVB (+1.4%), 220 plastic surgeon (-19.7%) and 1,942 at the GU Clinic (+4.1%). There were a total of 84 admissions in the 11 beds of the Dermatology Ward amounting to a total of 2,972 bed days, an occupancy rate of 74%, with a mean length of stay of 35.4 days per case.

In 2006, the Neuro Rehabilitation Unit continued with its main objective of rehabilitation of patients with CVA, brain injury, spinal abscesses, Guillian-Barré Syndrome, cervical laminectomy, multiple sclerosis, paraplegia, spinal fractures, cervical canal stenosis, eclampsia, cerebral palsy, etc. The Unit had 42 admissions in 2006 and 38 were successfully discharged back into the community following treatment. Considering that the Unit was 100% occupied throughout the year, 3,942 occupied bed days amounted to a mean length of stay of 103.7 days per discharged case.

During 2006, the Social Work Unit at Boffa Hospital continued to provide an effective medical social work service which facilitates optimum social and emotional well-being among patients and those affected by their illness. This includes: assessment of patients and their social context; meeting with family members; home visits; pre-assessment of patients for rehabilitation admission; liaison with other agencies and government departments including completion of application forms; counselling patients and family members; family therapy sessions; multidisciplinary team meetings and discharge plans. Working with Cancer patients and their families necessitates good psychosocial assessments in order to be able to offer the best supportive and caring services. It is a very daunting experience and needs sensitivity, reality and patience. A total of 200 patients received social work support.

The Radiology Unit performed 6,453 X-Ray procedures using 8,503 films during 2006. These procedures included 3,595 chest, 1,834 extremities, 940 spines, 40 skulls, 67 abdomen and 7 others. The major users of this service are the Chest Unit at Floriana and the Floriana Health Centre which between them exceed 80% of the total workload. The relocation of the X-Ray machine to a suitable room within the Floriana Health Centre will need to be planned when Boffa hospital services migrate to Zammit Clapp Hospital.

There were 6,297 physiotherapy treatment sessions for 781 patients and 4,898 occupational therapy sessions amounting to 13,695 units of care.

As in the past years, during 2006 the SPBH Pharmacy catered for two different services namely, Dispensing and Chemotherapy service. A total number of 7,013 cytotoxic doses were reconstituted throughout the past year. This figure can be translated into an average of 134 doses per week or 23 doses per day. The total number of items dispensed to out-patients alone in 2006 was 61,279 while 19,363 items were dispensed to the wards. As regards extemporaneous preparations, the total number for 2006 amounts to 4,882 preparations.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH POLICY AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Health Policy and Programme Implementation sustained its momentum in introducing effective and efficient financial and management systems within the health sector to guarantee value for

money from the available resources. These systems are also required in view of our international obligations to submit health services cost data to the European Commission and the OECD.

EU GREEN PAPER ON MENTAL HEALTH

The Director was part of a small group of experts appointed by the EC to draft the Green Paper on Mental Health. The Director was also appointed by the EC to act as the rapporteur for the consultation process on the Green Paper with the member states.

Training in Mental Health Prevention

The Department submitted a proposal to the EC for co-funding to organise a multi-professional training programme on the early detection and treatment of depression in children. The proposal was accepted and will be implemented in 2007.

Depression in School Children

Research indicates that the incidence of depression in children between the ages of 9 to 14 is increasing. Perusing European incidence rates, it is estimated that circa 14% of children in this age group are suffering from depression or anxiety state. The Department initiated discussions with all key stakeholders and a seminar was also organised to formulate a strategy for the 2nd prevention of depression in this age group. Discussions are still ongoing and it is envisaged that a pilot project will be initiated with the active collaboration of the Ministry of Education and the NGOs towards the end of 2007.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Crude indicators were applied to analyse the unit operational costs at Mount Carmel Hospital. From the analysis, important management information was attained to enable hospital management to further curtail costs and make better use of human resources.

HR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

An integrated computerised HR management system was introduced at SVPR after the required business re-engineering and training was carried out. The *Dakar Human Resources Management Computerised System* went live within SVPR in July 2006. Through this system it is possible to monitor and ensure optimum use of the available human resources, facilitate audit and correlate between the salaries paid and actual attendance for work.

LEGISLATION

The Department was responsible for the drafting of two key health sector Acts.

The *Health Services Act* gives the legal framework for the organisation of the public health sector which includes the division of roles and functions between the Funder, Purchaser, Provider and Regulator of the health services.

The drafted *Mental Health Act* ensures that the health services to this client group are personalised and client centred and provided by multi-disciplinary teams. The rights of users and their carers are protected and it facilitates the social inclusion of mentally-ill clients. The new Act proposes the establishment of a Commissioner for the promotion of rights of persons with mental disorders.

PHARMACY OF YOUR CHOICE (POYC) SCHEME

The Department had submitted in 2005 a policy paper outlining the reform process required to implement this Scheme. During 2006 further discussions were held with all stakeholders to initiate the Scheme on a pilot project for eventual roll-out on a national level. The discussions are still ongoing.

KOLS LTD

The laundry co-operative set-up by this Department continued to consolidate its operational systems and took over the laundry provision for SVPR at substantial cost savings to the exchequer. KOLs also consolidated its market position in the private healthcare sector. In view of the need to further expand the premises of this laundry an application to MEPA was submitted to build additional premises adjacent to the current laundry. The permit was granted and the necessary tender was drawn up for publication in 2007.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

In line with Government's national policy for gender equality, equal opportunities and gender mainstreaming, this Department continued to be actively involved in the development of a Gender Management System within the Health Care Sector.

OPERATIONAL REVIEW

A staff member of this Department was appointed by the Minister for the Family and Social Solidarity as a member of a Working Group to carry out an operational review and financial audit of the High Support Service (Foundation for Social Welfare Services) and the Young People's Unit at Mount Carmel Hospital. The recommendations submitted are being evaluated by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity.

PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS PLANNING

This Department continued to actively participate through a member of its staff in the formulation of the Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plan for the Maltese Islands.

HEALTH PROMOTION DEPARTMENT

The Health Promotion Department had a very dynamic and constructive year again in 2006, with the first quarter focussing mainly on the Health Behaviour of School-aged Children Study. The second quarter highlighted mainly the Tobacco issue through the organisation of the Quit & Win competition. For the last half of the year, the focus of the Department shifted mainly towards the issue of obesity, which is being given priority by the World Health Organisation, the European Commission as well as by the Division.

PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES

Tobacco

Quit & Win 2006

The Quit & Win 2006 competition was successfully launched for the seventh time at the HPD on 11 April. Up to this date, a record of over 1,400 applications to quit smoking and at the same time compete for a price were received. The campaign was promoted on various media and the Department worked hard in enrolling smokers for this international event. As a consequence of the successful Quit & Win campaign, there was a great demand for Smoking Cessation classes.

Participants in this year's Quit & Win anti-smoking campaign have risen significantly by 50% over the campaign of two years ago (from 1,035 to 1,560). The competition came to an end on World No Tobacco Day, 31 May, when the five winners were officially announced during a press conference by the Director (Health Promotion). Malta has been taking part in this international competition since 1994. Although over the years the percentage of smoking men has decreased from 40% (25 years ago) to 20% today, the opposite unfortunately is occurring for women. Previous Quit & Win campaigns have shown that between 10 to 30% of the participants stay completely smoke-free for a whole year.

The EU anti-tobacco campaign HELP that is carried out throughout the member states is continuing in Malta too through the initiative of the Health Promotion Department. The campaign uses television advertising during prime time, as well as distribution of material and information to young people in the settings where they learn or play. The tent specially brought from Brussels was put up in many instances, including University and MCAST, and it generated interest by a vast number of young people.

A meeting in Luxembourg for the 'HELP' campaign for EU member states was attended. The aim of this meeting was to create a working group to develop collaboration and optimise the coherence between the campaign and the national tobacco control initiatives.

A European Network Smoking Prevention (ENSP) meeting for Member States that was held in Sofia was attended between 20 and 22 November. The meeting reviewed current tobacco research and the need for further research by policy makers. An interesting highlight was the information regarding instruments that measure the amount of carbon monoxide in a building environment

Smoking Cessation Classes

Smoking Cessation Programme 2006				
Locality	No. of Courses	Applicants		Total
		M	F	
Mosta	5	94	40	134
Qormi	5	63	37	100
Rabat	1	29	5	34
Gozo	1	26	8	34
Floriana	6	77	67	144
Paola	10	167	133	300
B'Kara	5	82	48	130
Gzira	4	57	57	114
Total	37	595	395	990

Counselling

Individual one-to-one counselling was provided throughout the year, even more so this year; as a result of the Quit & Win campaign, the demand was even higher. Individuals were provided with nicotine replacement therapy when required.

Tobacco Advertising Ban

As from 15 April, the law regarding tobacco advertising ban was enforced in all public places.

Talks

Several talks and presentations on tobacco use and cessation as well as its harmful effects were delivered at: Senglea, Paola and Floriana (for youths and for unmarried mothers); Hamrun Girl Guides; Senglea Parish; San Blas; Caritas Support Group; Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary School; MCAST (for building and construction students); Catholic Institute and Żammit Clapp Hospital (for Health Care professionals); Villa

St Anna (for the Prison Inmates Programme group); St Martin's College, Swatar; Mosta Centre; I-Iklin Centre.

Other talks were held on TV programmes *Donne*; *Kollox ma' Kollox*; and *Education 22*.

As part of the Workplace Health Promotion, talks were delivered at ST Microelectronics and to health care professionals dealing with cardiac patients as well as at Aeromaritime. This served as support to all the smokers that continued to abstain and facilitated compliance. This service proved to be practical in helping ex-smokers to remain healthy.

Local meetings

Meetings were held with local tobacco companies and importers concerning the Ban on Advertising and Promotion of Tobacco Products Regulations, 2005; the MSA to draw a National Standard for Ventilation Requirements for Commercial Premises; pharmaceuticals importing companies regarding future procedures and dissemination of information regarding nicotine replacement therapies; local tobacco manufacturers and importers to discuss pictorial warnings.

Other meetings were held with advertising agencies for advertising on the backside of receipt chits and portable cigarette end holders, and a new smoking cessation facilitator who will run classes at Rabat.

A meeting was held with the Minister of Education, Youth and Employment regarding participation in Youth Day celebrations. Another meeting was held with a facilitator who will be running the Smoking Cessation Classes. An important meeting was also held with the person in charge of the Pulmonary Function Lab in order to facilitate the dissemination of information and offer counselling to persons willing to quit tobacco at St Luke's Hospital.

Activities

As part of the Youth celebrations, the HPD participated and put up stands at the MCAST and Baystreet. Carbon monoxide testing was also carried out.

The European Network of Quit Liners, in which the local Quit Line within the Department is an active member, has been awarded one of the WHO awards. These awards are given annually for recognition of significant contribution to movements. The Department regularly contributes in questionnaires and reports, gives ongoing quit line service locally, and supports other EU countries in their own quit line.

In addition to the usual Health Promotion stand at the Trade Fair grounds, a 'HELP' tent supported by funds from the EU was also set up. During this activity, smokers were tested for carbon monoxide, and advised to take smoking cessation classes (that are carried out by trained facilitators). As expected, there was a high turnover of participants; 916 smokers underwent carbon monoxide tests, whereas 347 smokers applied for Smoking Cessation Classes that are regularly held throughout health centres in Malta and Gozo.

The Department participated in the annual event of the Health and Safety week at the MCAST. The objective of our participation was to create awareness, promote cessation and prevent youths from taking up smoking. The tent and promotional material was sponsored by the EU. Carbon monoxide testing was carried out on 282 individuals, and it resulted that 170 were under the minimal age for buying tobacco products.

Tobacco Networks

The Department forms part of the European Network Smoking Prevention, and as part of its commitment it approved, updated and corrected mapping exercises related to legal trends in the tobacco field, and also updated the media communication actions.

Correspondence and answering to questionnaires for The European Network of Smoking Prevention was carried out. Questionnaires were related to our local Tobacco legislation, trends towards tobacco smoke free provisions, implementation of EU ban directives and regulation of tobacco sales to minors. A second EU survey dealt on the implementation by member states regarding the measures on the prevention of smoking and on initiatives to improve tobacco control. The last questionnaire was related to interventions by EUROCADET.

NUTRITION AND WEIGHT REDUCTION

Ministerial Conference

An officer from the HPD participated along with other member states for the WHO European Ministerial Pre-Conference on Counteracting Obesity, Noordwijk, the Netherlands (June 28-30).

The two and a half day Ministerial Conference was successfully held between 15 and 17 November. The Hon Minister's speech entitled, Children and people of lower socio-economic status was presented on the first day of the Conference. The Conference aimed at raising awareness of high-level commitment to action against obesity, placing it high on the agenda of the Region. Emphasis was placed on the most vulnerable groups, namely children, adolescents and people of lower income. Participants presented and discussed policy developments, and reviewed best practices of effective actions.

Weight Reduction Classes

Weight Reduction Classes were conducted throughout the whole year at various health centres in Malta and Gozo. There were 30 classes in all and 561 people participated. The average weight loss was of 3.3kg.

Weight Reduction Programme 2006				
<i>Locality</i>	<i>No. of Courses</i>	<i>Participants</i>		<i>Total</i>
		<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	
Qormi	2	2	42	44
Floriana	4	10	59	69
Gżira	4	12	56	68
Mosta	6	13	93	106
Paola	8	15	93	108
B'Kara	5	13	92	105
Nat Council of Women	1	-	21	21
Gozo Gen Hospital	1	-	14	14
Total	31	65	470	535

Walking Bus Project

The aim of 'Walking Bus Project' was to promote physical activity among school children. The Siggiewi Primary C was selected as a pilot study. The Project was launched on 18 May 18. Short speeches were made during the ceremony by school officials, representatives from the HPD, the *Kunsill Malti għall-Isports*, the Director General (Education), the Permanent Secretary (Education), and the Commissioner for Children. About fifty primary school children from the Ġuże` Delia Primary School, Siggiewi are now walking daily to their school, thanks to this initiative.

Breastfeeding

A press release for the Breastfeeding Week (1-7 August), which included a review of national breastfeeding rates from 1992 to 2005, was prepared. An interview with The Times was held to highlight the benefits of breastfeeding to mother and child, and to stress on the need for society to become more baby friendly. For the Breastfeeding week (1-7 August), three billboards were positioned in strategic major roads. An

interview was held with RTK, emphasising the importance of breastfeeding as stipulated by WHO in its Infant Feeding Guidelines. A press release was sent out to all the media, showing statistics that revealed a 50% increase in breastfeeding mothers over a span of 15 years. The Breastfeeding issue that featured on The Malta Independent daily and on Sunday was closely monitored. Reply letters on behalf of the Department were published on 14 September and 1 October.

DAFNE V Project

The Household Budgetary Survey dataset for the year 2000 as well as for the year 1995 was sent to Athens University Collaborating Centre. Information regarding the DAFNE Classification Tables (Food and Socio-economic) as well as other replies to queries regarding the 1994 and 1995 datasets was also sent to Athens. Arrangements were made between Athens and the contact points from NSO and HPD to attend the Bilateral Session in Athens to 'clean' data of the DAFNE V classification (food and socio-economic) tables. Adjustments were made during the Bilateral Meetings in Athens (26-28 September) to the methodology table for 1994, 1995 and 2000, and sent to Athens. Issues with reference to the Food aggregation tables were discussed by the project co-ordinator. The Malta datasets as well as the classification of the Socio-Economic tables were discussed between the DAFNE team and local statisticians. Further work included data reading, cleaning, and solving queries.

Nutrition and Physical Activity Network

The sixth meeting of the Nutrition and Physical Activity Network, Luxembourg was attended on 1 December. Along with other member states, Malta had to present a brief update of the current and proposed policies against obesity. The experience gathered from the German Platform that targets children and young people should act as a model to other countries.

Local meetings

A meeting was held between members of the Coeliac Association and the Department's dietician to discuss the production of a leaflet on coeliac disease and gluten free diet for the general public for launching on World Coeliac Day. A meeting was held with paediatricians, school health specialists and the hospital dietician to discuss childhood obesity in Malta.

Other meetings involved the Children's Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe; and university students about the Department's efforts on obesity.

TASNE

A meeting of TASNE discussed the role of nutrient and food standards for inclusion in the final policy document. Other meetings of TASNE included: Towards a Healthier Nutrition Environment in Maltese Schools. Further progress was made in finalising the draft of the Food and Nutrition policy for schools.

Talks

Several talks and presentations on nutrition, healthy eating and related subjects were delivered to: primary school children, parents, women, pre-retirement workers, drug addicts and geriatrics living in the community; University of Third Age in Valletta; carers and patients at the Hospice Movement, Balzan; parents of the Step-by-step Foundation; volunteers and foster carers of the *Appogg* agency; local community of I-Iklin (on women's health); members of the scientific committee of the Health Plus project (childhood obesity); nurses and other allied healthcare professionals (physical activity in relation to cardiovascular diseases); *Skola Sajf* children at St Julian's Primary School; support group from the Richmond Foundation.

Presentations were also delivered: during a conference organised by MUMN on Enhancing Outcomes in Women's Health; during a seminar in conjunction with a pharmaceutical company; to a group of Danish lecturers (the Maltese health system and the role of health promotion); and as part of a training course organised by the Marsaxlokk Youth Network for young people from different EU countries.

An officer participated at the TDM 2000 Malta seminar for youths from EU countries held at Sprachecafe, Paceville at which a one-hour presentation on *Eating Healthy: a solid foundation for life* was delivered. The officer also delivered a presentation on Globesity at the MIT 2006 seminar held at the Paradise Bay Resort Hotel for youths from EU countries.

WHO Correspondence

WHO prevalence data on overweight and obesity was checked, and any further data on National anthropometric surveys conducted before 1999 data were sent for inclusion. An updated version of the WHO Questionnaire to EU Member States on food and nutrition policies was returned to WHO after consultations were made with different government departments, MEPA and MSA.

A questionnaire was also sent to WHO for further feedback with regard to the proposal for the Second Action Plan for Food and Nutrition Policy.

Meals Board Committee

A visit was carried out at SVPR and Mosta and Gzira Old People's Homes and a report was sent to the chairperson of the Hospital Meals' Board. A meeting was held between the Meals Board, James Caterers and Head of Homes. The main items discussed were: the actions taken within the Homes following the last meeting; the recent complaints regarding meals being supplied to Government's Old People's homes and the winter menus.

EU Affairs

The Joint EU Platform-WHO (Regional Office for Europe) meeting was held in Brussels on 13 March. The meeting led to an exchange of experience between the European Platform and similar national initiatives. It helped to identify good practice in this area in the hope that it will tempt countries who have not yet such operating schemes. The meeting also helped to determine how the European Platform and its members, as well as national multi-stakeholder initiatives, can contribute to the objectives of the Ministerial Conference on Counteracting Obesity.

A questionnaire on nutrition and physical activity was completed for eventual discussion during the German Presidency in February. This was sent to the Director (EU Affairs).

WHO Meeting

A two-day WHO meeting on Non-communicable Disease (NCD) strategy, Copenhagen, was attended in order to discuss and ultimately to present the second draft of this strategy to member states during the 57th Regional Committee meeting. The meeting included presentations from CDC, DG (Sanco) and WHO advisers in nutrition and alcohol.

Euro Health Net

A report on nutrition was compiled and submitted for the Euro Health Net based in Brussels.

SEXUAL HEALTH

World AIDS Day

A poster was designed for World AIDS Day (WAD), entitled: *Protect yourself against HIV/AIDS – It's as easy as ABCD*, where every letter represents a healthy message. Five thousand copies were ordered for public places. WAD was highlighted with a press conference during which the ABCD prevention message was officially launched. The officer co-ordinating this field was present at a music event held in a public club in Paceville, distributing information leaflets and a CD carrying prevention messages.

The 2006 HBSC survey data was handed to the media and future plans to address sexual health were announced in a press release sent to all Sunday newspapers.

Talks

Several talks and presentations on HIV and other STI's, and also on sexuality, physical activity and cardiovascular diseases were delivered at: Sta Maria Drug Rehab; De La Salle sixth form; Access; Hamrun Girl Guides; St Aloysius Secondary School; Catholic Institute; Millennium Chapel; Robert Sammut Hall; and Coastline Hotel.

Counselling

Confidential health advisory and counselling services were provided on a regular basis at the following places: Corradino Correctional Facility; Dept of Public Health; Sedqa; Sta Maria; Prevention Programme Luqa; Aġenzija Appoġġ; Caritas; Dar Ġużeppa Debono Gozo; Oasis Foundation Gozo; Post-secondary Schools; GU Clinic; Sir Temi Żammit Unit; and St Luke's Hospital including Detox Centre.

Collaboration was effected with the nutritionists on three cases which needed counselling and psychological advice. One case was referred to the Psychiatric out-patients. On a one-to-one basis, two other cases were given supportive treatment. The clients were motivated to adhere to the programmes designed by their nutritionists.

Advice on contraception, family planning, and STIs was also offered at Corradino Correctional Facilities.

Sexual Helpline

The awareness of the Sexual Helpline (23266121) was reinforced together with the email address: sexualhealth@gov.mt. Particular cases related to mental health were however referred to other professionals.

Meetings

A meeting was held with officials from *Kummissjoni Djoċesana Żgħażaġh* (KDZ) to review material for printing of leaflets on sexual health. A committee meeting on Sexually Transmitted Infections was also called by the Consultant for sexual health.

Meetings on sexual health and general health education were held at Caritas; Catholic Institute; B'Kara Health Centre; Floriana HC; Department of Education; and Boffa Hospital.

A Curia representative was involved in the discussion of the WAD messages in church schools. A decision was taken that in the future, all church schools' PSD teachers should be involved in sex education.

Discussions were initiated with a local company on the possibility of sponsoring condoms and 'condom-use models' for sexual education requests from YMCA and *Appoġġ* for the coming months.

Talks

Two lectures were delivered at the IHC for nurses and midwives. Furthermore, two half-day seminars on sexuality and sexual health, including contraception issues were delivered to psychologists at University.

Two sessions on *STI's: Informazzjoni għall-prevenzjoni* were delivered to a group of people at St Anna rehabilitation home.

A presentation entitled *HIV/AIDS and Human Rights* was delivered to Form V students at St Martin's College. Another presentation addressing sexual health risks and STI prevention was delivered to youths attending the Future Focus Programme organised by ETC, at Floriana.

Activities

One-day reach-out activities were held at Naxxar Higher Secondary and Junior College. These involved distribution of material as well as open discussions with students. Students at MCAST and UOM were reached through the participation of the Medical Students' Association, the Pharmacy Students Association and the National Youth Information Centre at MCAST.

During the one-week Health & Safety Fair organised by MCAST (on 23-27 October), students had the opportunity of talking to the sexual health adviser at the stand.

Training was given to a group of young people (14-23 years old) on Sexual Health. The group was made up of Maltese and Slovak youths taking part in an exchange programme.

RESEARCH

The Health Behaviour of School-aged Children Study was carried out among 1,800 young people in schools. Preliminary results show an increase in underage drinking patterns, sexual activity and consumption of unhealthy food. The report will be published in early 2007.

SCHOOL SETTING

The HPD's was involved in an initiative of the Centre Franco-maltais. The Department set up a stand and awarded prizes to the winning entries in a competition on healthy eating. A presentation on *Health Education and Promotion across the curriculum* was provided.

School health promotion meetings were attended at Gozo College regarding Healthy Colleges; Żejtun Kindergarten on Dental Health Promotion in Young Children; Hamrun Junior Lyceum on Cycling marathon in a school.

The School as a Health Promoting Environment was the topic for discussion on Education Channel 22, on 6 January.

The Healthy College Initiative aims at encouraging children to adopt healthy behaviours from an early age, especially the intake of healthier and more nutritious food and the uptake of physical activity. The project was launched on 3 March at the National Sports Centre in Victoria, and involves Year 4 children from all the primary schools in Gozo. The Department put up an attractive display of healthy food, mainly consisting of traditional Maltese fruit and vegetables.

Since the day of the launch, the school timetable of these primary schools has been adjusted to allow ten minutes for children to have breakfast. The children bring their own breakfast items from home. Parents were briefed on what constitutes a healthy breakfast.

An initiative held at Żejtun Kindergarten, on 15 March, was the *Kids Smile 4 Health*. The event, co-ordinated by the HPD, the Head of School and the School Council, consisted of a talk for parents on dental care, and a healthy breakfast for children who also had the opportunity to brush their teeth. A stand depicting health promotion messages was put up in the school foyer.

A working document of the proposed Food and Nutrition Policy for Maltese schools was reviewed. Feedback was given on the European Network of Health Promoting Schools, the whole school approach and initiatives of the HPD taking place in schools.

The HPD worked extensively with administrators and teachers of St Benedict's college, Kirkop, with the aim of making the College a Health Promoting School. Besides health topics across the curriculum, the college has a healthy tuck shop and extra double lesson of Physical Education per week, besides giving importance to the organisation of sports events.

The college was awarded the Healthy College award by the Department for these achievements during a Sportfest which the school organised on 25 May. Besides vetting the food and drinks items that were available for the day, the HPD also presented the certificates given to each pupil.

It is planned that meetings will be held over the summer months in order to strengthen the college's position with regard to its health promoting strategy, and to be able to include the other schools.

The HPD has recently become a partner in the Shape Up Europe project. The three-year project (2006-08) encompasses a European network of 26 cities and schools that take a school-community approach to influence the determinants of a healthy and balanced development. It is funded by the European Commission Directorate General for Health and Consumer Affairs. An officer from the Department attended the first meeting held in Barcelona between 5 and 7 June.

A local promoting group of the project was set up and an initial meeting was held. The aim of the meeting was primarily for members to get to know each other and to discuss the plan of action for the coming months.

A meeting was held with the co-ordinator of St Benedict's College to discuss the way forward in the Healthy Colleges initiative.

A meeting with the head of school and a group of teachers from Dom Mauro Primary School (Senglea) discussed a new project for the coming scholastic year. The HPD attained funds for a Comenius Project on Building Self-Esteem in Young Children. The school was chosen as the local participant in the project.

The Shape Up Project regional meeting was held in Italy, between 27 and 28 September. The meeting was organised for participants from Southern Europe, and focused mainly on the planning of the project for the next six months.

On 10 November, a seminar was held in collaboration with the Education Department at Le Meridien Hotel, Floriana to launch the local Shape Up Project. The officer co-ordinating the project explained the aim and methodology of the project, whilst a nutrition officer presented a detailed overview of the Maltese obesity scenario in childhood and highlighted the key determinants that require a careful study to curtail this national public health issue amongst children. One of the presentations was entitled *Shaping up the school environment to reduce childhood obesity* while the main presentation explained the project concept and methodology.

A meeting at the PAU Education in Barcelona was attended by an officer in preparation for the Shape Up Project. The aim of the meeting was to discuss what was required from the Local Promoting Group in the immediate future to counteract childhood obesity.

A training session at St Paul's Bay Primary school was held on 31 October. The teachers had the opportunity to learn about the Project, to discuss their concerns as regards children's health, and to plan what they would be doing as part of the Shape Up Project.

On 30 October and 6 November, the same officer co-ordinating the Project participated on 22AM (Channel 22) to discuss the Project. A radio programme on the same topic, on PBS on November 3, was also aired.

A teleconference was also set up between the seminar and the Faculty of Education in Copenhagen, Denmark.

The business meeting of the European Network of Health Promoting Schools in Copenhagen was attended. The aim of the meeting was to plan the way forward for the Network, now that the Technical Secretariat will be hosted by the Netherlands Institute for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention.

WORKPLACE SETTING

Workplace Health Promotion is a new approach for improving health at the workplace. The HPD started compiling a list of workplaces for future use. A talk on *Breast Care* was held at Cardinal Health, Marsa Industrial Estate. A similar talk was also presented at Mosta Community centre.

The Department hosted the third international meeting of the FOLIC project held on 20-22 March. The project focuses on health promotion initiatives aimed specifically for employees over the age of 45 and the role of the employer in this regard.

The HPD hosted the rapporteur of the Dragonfly project. The purpose of the delegate's visit was to compile a report on the status quo of Workplace Health promotion activities in Malta. The project aimed at the development of structures for dissemination of good practices in this field.

The Department has acquired a database of workplaces in Malta. The list will be used to start building contact with employers or human resource managers within workplaces for the Workplace Health Promotion initiative.

The third meeting of the FOLIC Project was held between 13 and 15 September in Nottingham. The meeting focused on the dissemination of the tools created within the project to workplaces in the participation countries, as well as administrative and reporting processes.

A survey among workers in a local factory has been carried out and a questionnaire was administered. The aim of the survey was to evaluate the smoking habits and willingness of both employees and management to avail themselves of a Tobacco Cessation programme within their workplace environment.

UNDERAGE DRINKING

A conference on Binge Drinking organised by SEDQA on 27 January was attended.

The issue of Binge Drinking was the subject of public debate in some discussion programmes shown on various local television programmes.

The HPD participated in a seminar held at Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary School, Naxxar during a Safety Awareness Week. The topic presented by the Director and two other members of the staff was Binge Drinking.

An officer from the Department was nominated as a member of the Inter Ministerial Focus Group on Underage Drinking. The focus group was set up on the initiative of the Minister for the Family and Social Solidarity (MFSS). The aim of the focus group is to create awareness about the proposed amendments to

the Police Code (Chapter X of the Laws of Malta) with regard to regulation of sale, procurement, possession and consumption of alcohol by minors who are under 16. Both the media launch held on 21 July and the first meeting of the focus group held on 26 July were attended.

Two further meetings of the Inter Ministerial Focus Group on Underage Drinking were held at MFSS. The aim of the focus group is to create awareness about the proposed amendments to the law regarding regulation of sale, procurement, possession and consumption of alcohol by minors who are under 16 years of age.

A meeting for the Alcohol Focus Group was held on 7 September at MFSS. Three design contractors were interviewed for the campaign on Underage Drinking. On 16 September, a presentation on Alcohol and Young People was held for a group of about 30 participants, during a seminar organised by the KDZ, at the Seminary in Rabat.

An officer attended a meeting of the Inter Ministerial Focus Group on Underage Drinking held at MFSS and participated in two further meetings with marketing companies meant to devise a strategy for the PR campaign on alcohol. The same officer also attended a bilateral meeting of the Focus Group with the Commissioner for Children. The last bilateral meeting was held with the Association of School Councils on 13 November, and incorporated both state and church schools.

A meeting of the Inter Ministerial Focus Group on Underage Drinking was held at MFSS. The same officer participated in a bilateral meeting with the Sense Group.

CANCER PREVENTION

A Cancer Policy document for the Health Division is being formulated and the HPD is participating in its development.

March is designated as Colorectal Awareness month. For this purpose, the HPD, in collaboration with St James Hospital, launched an informative campaign to make the general public aware of this malignant type of cancer, the risk factors involved and prevention measures.

A talk was also delivered to women at Żurriq Local Council regarding breast care. Another talk was also given to women at Ċentru Parrokjali Qormi regarding Women's Health.

The Sun Awareness campaign, which targets mainly children, was finalised. A photo session was held at the Park of Friendship for the design of 3,000 posters which will be displayed in every primary school classroom. Year 4 pupils were also given a sample of a sun protection cream and teachers were encouraged to prepare a lesson on the topic. An article on Sun Awareness was presented for a publication for children and parents, and will be distributed in schools. A talk on the same topic was organised for children attending the Summer School at Gozo.

The HPD will be further collaborating with the Park of Friendship by running an advertising campaign on Sun Awareness, promoting the Park itself and encouraging people to donate the money saved from not smoking, to the Park.

The HPD also collaborated with the Dermatology Department in promoting World Melanoma Day, focusing on early prevention by screening for moles.

The Breast Care Support group held further meetings with the Department for planning of the Breast Care Awareness Campaign 2006. The Department once again held the Breast Care Awareness Month during October, in collaboration with the Breast Care Support Group Europa Donna Malta. The highlight of the campaign was the billboards depicting women who have passed through the experience and survived. The message portrayed was: "There is life after Breast Cancer".

The Department is currently planning for the Breast Care awareness campaign to be held in October, in collaboration with the Breast Care Support Group. In this regard, a photo session was held at the Lower Barakka where photos will be used on billboards.

Furthermore, the Hilda Schembri Memorial Lecture was held on 27 October, where the main speaker was Ms Jans Jongs, a member of the European Parliament and a strong advocate for Breast Cancer screening.

PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS

The HPD is participating in the Bird Flu Pandemic National Awareness Committee. The Committee aims to create an informed network of stakeholders through which to facilitate prevention, provide early detection and promote well-being in the general population. The committee met three times during February. The Committee has been entrusted with keeping the public aware of the current situation.

An EU-driven meeting led by the Director EU Affairs focused on the health agenda of the upcoming Finnish Presidency. The meeting discussed various issues including the stockpiling of the Influenza vaccine and the flu pandemic preparedness. Such meetings will be held every six months to brief departments on the key health agendas to be handled by each new presidency.

The Pandemic Preparedness public information campaign was launched at the beginning of July, promoting hygienic practices throughout summer. The Campaign consists of seven billboards depicting four different messages. A meeting of the Pandemic Preparedness Communications Committee was held on 4 July.

The Department participated in a meeting held as part of the consultative process in preparation for the National Action Plan on 'Health and Long-term Health Care'. The meeting was aimed at policy makers and service providers.

Other training events attended included a three-day training programme on Health Policy and Planning, organised by the Malta Association of Public Health Specialists and a one-week programme on Health Policy and Planning organised by the Association of Public Health Medicine

A series of radio programmes to be aired on Campus FM were planned and co-ordinated. The role and function of the HPD, as well as the services it offers, were recorded.

Talks were delivered to mothers at Żejtun Primary School on Empowerment and Health; to sisters of Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, Balzan, on Healthy Ageing; and to a group of widows living in Gudja on Emotional Health and Wellbeing.

MENTAL HEALTH

A seminar on *Improving the Mental Health of the Population: Towards a Strategy on Mental Health for the European Union* held on 21 April at St James Cavalier was attended. The seminar was organised by the Richmond Foundation, which invited all stakeholders to contribute to the preparation of a possible EU-strategy and an Action Plan on mental health.

The Department participated in a Mental Health seminar organised by the Department of Policy Development and Implementation. The seminar detailed participants on the project, *Mental Health Promotion and Prevention Programme for Young People and Adolescents*. The workshops discussed the strategy for Mental Health.

ACCIDENT AND INJURY PREVENTION

A national seminar on *Child Safety on our Roads* was held on May 25, with the objective of raising awareness and instigating positive change on this national issue which requires a multi-sectoral approach to

address the challenges of securing our children's safety on the roads. Some of the facets tackled during this seminar included school transport, the educative approach towards road safety, and local regulation of transport and road sectors.

This first European Conference was organised by Eurosafe, in Vienna (25-27 June). The conference coincided with the adoption of the new EC Communication *Actions for a Safer Europe*, and the subsequent proposal for a Council resolution on Injury Prevention.

The first meeting for Injury Prevention Focal points organised by WHO Rome was attended in Salzburg. The meeting was followed by capacity building training in Injury Prevention, also organised by WHO.

During the Inter Ministerial Committee meeting on Accidents and Injury Prevention (27 July), a short presentation on two memoranda were given: (1) A communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on Actions for a Safer Europe (com (2006) 328 final); and (2) A council recommendation on the prevention of injury and the promotion of safety (com (2006) 329 final). Both memoranda focused on the prevention of accidents and injuries in member states by public health action.

COMMUNITY

The Health Promotion Department took part in the Trade Fair that was held between 5 and 16 July. The services offered by the HPD included measurements of body weights and heights, promotion of Weight Reduction Programmes, and dissemination of leaflets and other publications.

The public was invited to participate in a food survey in collaboration with a local food importing company that also supplied free food samples. A local major supermarket supplied the ingredients for the health recipes (found in the Cancer Prevention publication) that were prepared by ITS chefs. The Malta Blood Bank also offered a service to the public. Apart from this, a separate anti-smoking stand was put up for the first time.

MEDIA

The Department participates very actively in all the media, including all television stations and radio. During 2006, the Department had high exposure through its participation in a number of programmes aired on various local popular television and radio programmes and printed media.

GRAPHIC DESIGN

The Graphic Design Unit had a particularly busy year, designing and producing all the resources of the Department as well as other work commissioned by the Ministry and the Division.

Noteworthy is the fact that one of the graphic design apprentices currently sponsored by the HPD won an international competition, with an Anti-smoking campaign message. This competition was organised by the 7th International Antismoking Festival.

HUMAN RESOURCES

A Health Promotion Officer left the Department and was replaced by a Casual Health Promotion Officer. A casual clerk working with the Department has been assigned elsewhere.

The Department is offering an apprenticeship to a Graphic Design student at MCAST to carry out her practical with the Department over a three-year period.

The Department collaborates with the University of Magdeburg in Germany, and has accepted students for their internship in Health Promotion. The students would have finished their studies in Health Promotion

and aim to get practical experience in this field from Malta through a scholarship awarded by the Leonardo da Vinci programme. Three students completed their internship with the Department during 2006.

TRAINING

A three-day training session organised by the Public Health Association dealing on health impact assessment principles was attended. This was important to Health Promotion initiatives, specifically those that focus on health determinants like environment, transport and tourism

ADMINISTRATION

The Quality Service Charter of the Department was upgraded with the support of the Charter Support Unit of the Office of the Prime Minister.

On 9 February, the Ministry for Health, Elderly and Community Care, in conjunction with the Ministry for Investment, Industry and Information Technology, launched the e-Health Portal at the Health Promotion Department. The website for the portal is www.ehealth.gov.mt and provides the general public with the means to apply online for a number of services provided by the Ministry of Health.

The Department developed its Data Protection Policy which is available for the general public on the Department's website.

EURO CHANGEOVER

The Euro Changeover plan of the Department was officially accepted and a trainer attended a 'Train-the trainers' course to eventually train other members of the staff in the Department.

A conference on the euro was attended at the Westin Dragonara on 27 November, which informed participants on the progress made so far in the introduction of the euro in January 2008. The speakers were key foreign experts from the Commission and representatives of countries in the Eurozone.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

This Department within the Health Division consists of the five main Sections, namely:

- *Health Inspectorate Service*: promotes and safeguards the well-being and health of the general public. It provides its service through the Regional Offices; the Port Health Services; the Food Safety Unit; Environmental Health Unit; the Pest Control Services; the Burials Services; the Drug Control Unit; Institutional Health Inspectorate Unit; Public Health legal proceedings and other Public Health prevention programmes; Food Safety Commission Secretariat.
- *Disease Surveillance Unit*: is mainly concerned with the control of communicable diseases and undertakes outbreak control. It conducts epidemiological research and gives advice on travel health.
- *Chest Unit*: is concerned with the prevention and control of tuberculosis.
- *Occupational Health Unit*: is mainly responsible for the medical screening of personnel in employment.
- *Public Health Laboratory Service*: provides technical support to the investigations performed by all the branches/units within the Department.

HEALTH INSPECTORATE SERVICES

The Regional Offices

Health inspectors have been deployed to work in a centralised system, comprising six regional offices around Malta and one in Gozo. The Health Inspectorate has carried out the following:

Inspections in connection with Licensing	617
Undertakings (re. Article 39 of the Food Safety Act of 2002)	417
Inspections for Risk Assessment Grading purposes	5,062
Inspections of food premises (other than Risk Assessment)	3,765
Samples taken during inspections of food premises	660
Samples taken in connection with environmental issues	2,326
Samples taken in connection with sampling programmes	419
Nuisance reports	1,162
Inspections re. food poisoning	175
Inspections to verify immunisation of children	1,213
Inspections re. complaints – food related	1,350
Inspections re. complaints – environment related	8,463

The Food Items destroyed during 2006 and the charges issued by the Health Inspectorate are summarised in the following tables:

Items of food and drink destroyed under supervision			
<i>Product</i>	<i>Weight (Kg)</i>	<i>Volume (ml)</i>	<i>Other Amounts</i>
Meat & Meat Products	2,333.43		
Fish & Fish Products	22.27		24 pkts
Dairy Products	3,139.77		
Confectionery & Bakery Goods	74.56		
Vegetable & Fruits	19.12		
Savouries & Sweets	313.37		
Juices & Beverages		380	
Additives & Additional Ingredients	78.36		
Sauces	1,308.77		
Cereals	3.05		
Seasoning	1.41		
Nuts	24.00		
Pasta	41.01		
Delicatessen	10.63		
Grocery items	1,345.25		559 pkts
Total Amount Destroyed	8,715.00	380	583 pkts

Number of Charges Issued	
Food Hygiene Regulations of 2002	580
Code of Police Laws	141
Food Safety Act of 2002	124
Labelling, Presentation and Advertising of Foodstuffs (Amendment) Regulations	50
Registration of Food Premises Regulations	32
Registration of Food Handlers Regulations	40
Sausages, Salted Meat and Other Prepared Meat Regulations	12
Smoking in premises open to the Public Regulations	44
Nutrition Labelling for Foodstuffs Regulations	2
Public Health Act	12
Swimming Pool Regulations	7
Regulations respecting the construction of houses and drains	8
Trading Regulations 2004	5
Dairy Farms Regulations	2
Control of Legionella Regulations 2006	3
Egg Marking Regulations	1
Total	1,063

Port Health Services

The Port Health services were offered from the Border Inspection Post at Freeport, Floriana Port Health Office and Malta International Airport Health Clinic (Gudja).

The Airport clinic was responsible for the implementation of the International Health Regulations, foremost the prevention of priority communicable diseases of being imported into Malta.

(i) Miscellaneous activities of Port Medical Services

Number of ships granted <i>pratique</i>	10,656
Examinations of irregular immigrants	1,786
Sick/injured persons seen at MIA clinic	4,344

(ii) Miscellaneous activities of Port Health Office, Floriana

Inspections of marine crafts requested by Malta Maritime Authority	27
Inspection of refrigerated vehicles requested by Commissioner of Police	82
Repatriation of human remains	108
Processing of requests in respect of import declaration of foodstuffs	12,667
Processing of requests for importation of pharmaceuticals and allied products	5,602
Issuing of Deratting Exemption Certificates	226
Number of Inspections of Catering Establishments and Warehouses	124
Samples taken of imported items of food	136
Health/Radiation free Certificates issued	547
Undertakings	131
Inspections of incoming consignments	594
Destruction Certificates for unfit food	10
Registration of trader's application	60

Food Safety Unit

This Unit was responsible for:

- giving consultations prior to licensing food businesses or refurbishing already licensed food businesses;
- inspection of food premises prior to licensing and issuing approvals connected with Trade Licences; Malta Environment & Planning Authority and Malta Tourism Authority applications;
- issuing of approvals in connection with Local Councils applications: (Agriculture – cheeselet producers; Customs – producers of alcoholic beverages; Police – temporary licences; Health – SPH licences).

Environmental Health Unit

The main functions of this Unit included:

- investigation of complaints originating from noise pollution, air pollution and mobile phones' antennae;
- monitoring of bathing water, recreational water and service water (assisted by regional offices);
- acted as a contact point with the EU Directorate and MEPA regarding environmental health issues;
- taking of 41 service water samples with respect to the 20 various Water Quality Zones (WQZ) referred by the Water Services Corporation in view of current legislation;
- taking of 4,625 bathing water samples; and
- issuing of eight health warnings in respect of bathing water sites.

Pest Control Services

The Pest Control Section deployed two teams of operatives in Malta; 101,114 point baits and 59 sewers were baited.

Burials Services

The Burials Section was responsible for the running of Addolorata, Żebbuġ, Mosta, Burmarrad, Rabat, Mellieħa and Ta' Braxia Cemeteries. Burials carried out at government cemeteries were 1,644 in Addolorata and 307 in other cemeteries.

Drug Control Unit

This section was responsible for the issuing of Control Cards for narcotic and psychotropic drugs as per Drugs (Control) Regulations 1985 and Dangerous Drugs (Internal Control) Rules 1939. The unit was also responsible for the licensing of Clinics, Laboratories, Radiology Departments, Blood Banks and Tattooists. The following licences were issued:

Acupuncture Clinics	3
Chiroprody Clinics	5
Dental Clinics	94
Physiotherapy Clinics	11
Medical Diagnostic Laboratories	8
Radiology Departments	17
Blood Bank	1
Tattooists	15

A total of 23,979 Control Cards were issued during 2006.

Institutional Health Inspectorate Unit

This Unit was responsible for securing public health standards of those institutions such as hospitals and old people's homes.

372 food swab/samples and 624 service/other water samples were taken for analysis. 22 inspections were performed in Old People's Homes with respect to renewal of licence for 2006. 48 risk assessment inspections were performed in various tuck shops and food handling areas situated in schools (as from last semester). 2 applications for clinics were also dealt with during 2006.

Public Health Legal Proceedings and other Public Health Prevention Programmes

During 2006, 38 Health Sittings were appointed to be heard before the Magistrates Court of Malta. The total number of cases heard by the presiding magistrate was 1,709^(*) of which 285 were decided.

The number of Health Sittings appointed to be heard before the Gozo Court of Magistrates was 12. The number of cases heard by the presiding magistrate and decided was three.

^(*) Cases may be heard more than once during the year

Food Safety Commission Secretariat (FSCS)

During the year, 1,631 food businesses were registered. The number of food handlers registered and issued with the required document during 2006 was 4,868. The total number of food handlers registered so far was 33,532.

During 2006, nine new Food Hygiene Course Providers (FHCP) were authorised by the Unit. Presently there are 32 FHCPs individuals or organisations approved to provide food hygiene courses. The two FHCPs who were temporarily suspended have been reinstated in 2006.

A total of 830 cheeselets' producers were registered during 2006 to bring the total registered by the end of 2006 to 1,300.

As from 1 May 2004, Malta became a member of the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) of the European Union. The FSCS is entrusted with the daily checking of all notifications received by e-mail from the RASFF network. During 2006, 934 notifications, tables and other communication, i.e. an average of more than 78 e-mails per month were checked.

DISEASE SURVEILLANCE UNIT

The Disease Surveillance Unit continued its primary work of surveillance, investigation and control of communicable diseases notified to the Department of Public Health.

As from 1 May 2004, the Disease Surveillance Unit was entrusted as the contact point for the Rapid Alert System for communicable diseases. The following is the notifiable disease report for 2006:

Annual Notifiable Infectious Diseases 2006

Section A: Confirmed individual case reports, by sex and by quarter

(Q1 - Jan-Mar; Q2 - Apr-Jun; Q3 - Jul-Sep; Q4 - Oct-Dec)

Note: Except where otherwise indicated, figures refer to resident cases.

Notifiable Disease	Total	M	F	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
AIDS ⁽¹⁾	6	4	2	1	3	-	2
Chickenpox ⁽²⁾	286	156	130	81	107	63	35
<i>non-resident cases</i> ⁽³⁾	4	1	3	-	3	1	-
Chlamydia	44	23	21	17	6	6	15
<i>non-resident cases</i>	1	-	1	1	-	-	-
Cryptococcal Meningitis	1	-	1	1	-	-	-
Cryptosporidiosis	14	7	7	1	2	8	3
Cytomegalovirus	1	-	1	-	-	1	-
Erysipelas	2	-	2	-	-	-	2
Food borne illness, Campylobacter	54	37	17	14	13	9	18
<i>non-resident cases</i>	2	-	1	-	-	1	-
Food borne illness, E. Coli ⁽¹⁾	15	6	9	2	3	6	4
<i>non-resident cases</i> ⁽¹⁾	3	1	2	-	2	1	-
Food borne illness, Salmonella ⁽³⁾	62	34	28	10	9	23	20
<i>non-resident cases</i>	2	1	1	-	-	2	-
Food borne illness, Scombrototoxic	3	3	-	-	1	2	-
Food borne illness, Unspecified ⁽¹⁾	49	23	26	16	9	8	16
<i>non-resident cases</i>	3	1	2	1	2	-	-
Giardiasis ⁽⁴⁾	6	1	5	-	3	1	2
<i>non-resident cases</i> ⁽⁴⁾	5	3	2	2	3	-	-
Gonorrhoea ⁽¹⁾	29	24	5	4	1	12	12
<i>non-resident cases</i>	3	3	-	2	-	1	-
Hepatitis A	7	4	3	1	1	2	3
Hepatitis B ⁽¹⁾	6	4	2	3	-	1	2
Hepatitis C ⁽³⁾⁽⁵⁾	14	10	2	3	5	3	3
<i>non-resident cases</i>	1	1	-	-	-	1	-
Herpes simplex	1	-	1	-	-	-	1
HIV ⁽⁶⁾	22	14	8	4	9	4	5
<i>non-resident cases</i> ⁽¹⁾	1	1	-	1	-	-	-
Legionnaire's Disease	2	1	1	1	1	-	-
<i>non-resident cases</i>	3	2	1	-	1	2	-
Leishmaniasis, Visceral	3	2	1	1	1	-	1
Leptospirosis	1	1	-	1	-	-	-
Malaria ⁽⁷⁾	1	1	-	-	1	-	-
Measles	1	1	-	-	1	-	-
Meningitis, other bacterial	28	17	11	2	-	11	15
<i>non-resident cases</i> ⁽⁸⁾	1	-	1	-	-	1	-
Meningococcal, meningitis	11	8	3	1	-	5	5
<i>non-resident cases</i>	1	-	1	-	-	1	-
Meningitis, septicaemia	24	14	10	5	10	6	3
<i>non-resident cases</i> ⁽¹⁾	2	1	1	1	-	1	-
Mumps	1	-	1	-	-	-	1
Rubella	1	1	-	-	1	-	-
Shingles, Herpes Zoster	48	29	19	12	12	18	6
<i>non-resident cases</i>	1	1	-	-	-	1	-
Syphilis Latent	6	3	3	1	-	2	3
<i>non-resident cases</i>	1	1	-	1	-	-	-

Notifiable Disease	Total	M	F	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Syphilis Secondary	4	4	-	1	-	-	3
<i>non-resident cases</i> ⁽⁷⁾	1	1	-	-	-	1	-
Tuberculosis, Non-Pulmonary ⁽³⁾	7	3	4	3	3	-	1
Tuberculosis, Pulmonary	29	23	6	11	2	6	10
Typhus, Murine	19	12	7	-	2	12	5
Typhus, Tickborne	2	2	-	-	2	-	-
Whooping Cough	2	-	2	-	-	2	-

Notes to Section A

- (1) one of these cases was imported
 (2) include 40 clusters of two cases, 20 clusters of three cases, 9 clusters of four cases, 1 cluster of five cases, 1 cluster of six cases
 (3) two of these cases were imported
 (4) four of these cases were imported
 (5) gender not known in two cases
 (6) seven of these cases were imported
 (7) this case was imported
 (8) this outbreak was imported

Section B: Cases involved in outbreaks, by sex and by quarter

(Q1 - Jan-Mar; Q2 - Apr-Jun; Q3 - Jul-Sep; Q4 - Oct-Dec)

The figures in brackets indicate the number of implicated outbreaks.

Outbreak Type	Total	M	F	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Cryptosporidiosis (1) ⁽⁸⁾	8	3	5	-	-	8	-
Food borne illness, Campylobacter (5)	14	7	7	-	12	-	2
Food borne illness, E. Coli (1)	2	-	2	-	-	-	2
<i>non-resident cases</i> (1)	2	-	2	-	-	2	-
Food borne illness, Salmonella (16)	41	23	18	2	9	24	6
<i>non-resident cases</i> (1)	3	1	2	-	-	3	-
Food borne illness, Scombrototoxic (3)	9	4	5	-	4	3	2
Food borne illness, Unspecified (24)	101	48	53	40	36	20	5
<i>non-resident cases</i> (2)	4	2	2	-	2	-	2
Gastroenteritis (15) ^(8*)	111	47	34	-	47	34	-
<i>non-resident cases</i> (1) ^(***)	105	-	-	-	105	-	-
Hepatitis A (1)	3	-	3	3	-	-	-
Norovirus, Gastroenteritis (3)	117	32	85	-	55	-	62
<i>non-resident cases</i> (3)	253	128	125	64	87	-	102

Notes to Section B

- * This case was imported
 ** Gender distribution of one case is unknown
 *** Gender distribution of this case is unknown

Section C: Reported deaths from Notifiable Infectious Diseases

During 2006 there were 11 deaths from notifiable diseases.

Notifiable Disease	Total number of Deaths
AIDS	4
Cryptococcal Meningitis	1
Hepatitis B	3
Legionnaire's Disease	2
Tuberculosis, Pulmonary	1

CHEST UNIT

This Unit was mainly concerned with tuberculosis prevention and control. The following reports the activities of the Chest Unit:

Category	Total	Outcome
Foreign work permits	1,574 applicants 47 family members	8 abnormal CXRs*** which were followed up at Chest Clinic SLH; none required preventive treatment
Prison	94 prisoners 33 Maltese 61 foreigners	no cases of active TB; no prisoners followed up
Foreign students	253 school children	2 high tuberculin reactors referred to Chest Clinic SLH; one was given preventive treatment and the other discharged
Irregular immigrants *	1,431	17 abnormal CXRs; these were followed up at Chest Clinic SLH
Refugees, humanitarian cases **	1,169	48 strong tuberculin reactors; 33 abnormal CXRs; 31 referred to Chest Clinic SLH
Miscellaneous referrals to Chest Unit	54	23 abnormal CXRs; 34 strong tuberculin reactors; 17 referred to Chest Clinic SLH

* Screening of irregular immigrants means the TB screening of irregular immigrants *on their arrival* in Malta. In this table this refers to those immigrants who arrived in Malta in 2006.

** Screening of refugees, humanitarian cases and other immigrants released after a period of maximum detention refers to the TB screening of asylum seekers *before they leave the closed barracks to open centres*.

*** CXR means chest X-ray

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH UNIT

During the year the Occupational Health Unit continued to screen personnel in employment and persons studying locally. The main activities are summarised below:

Department	Cat. I (Periodical)	Cat. II (Pre-placement)	Cat. III (Certification)	Cat. IV (Sundry)
Agriculture	60			
Customs Dept		11		
Education		597		
ETC - Extended Skill Training Scheme		148		
ETC - Colour Vision				82
Health		269		
Institute of Tourism Studies		179		
Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni b' Dizabilità			347	
Licensing & Testing Directorate			285	
Malta Maritime Authority		12		
Miscellaneous		29		
Office of the Prime Minister		107		
University/Institute of Health Care		183		
Works	296	1		
Water Services Corporation	494			
Żammit Clapp Hospital		6		
Total	850	1,542	632	82

PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY

The Public Health Laboratory underwent major refurbishments in respect of the chemistry section. This complemented the refurbishment that had taken place some years ago in the microbiology section. Extensive training was also given this year to all staff at the laboratory as a result of a twinning project funded by the EU and which took place with CSL, UK. The laboratory continued to provide the vital technical back-up service for the whole Department. This laboratory examined a total of 7,614 samples as a result of various sampling and environmental monitoring programmes. The following list summarises the samples submitted from different sources as well as the samples analysed in the different sections of the Laboratory:

Food for Chemical Analysis	222
Water for Chemical Analysis	1,958
Food for Microbiological Analysis	1,015
Samples (Swabs) for Hygienic Standard	388
Water for Microbiological Analysis	3,869
Samples for legionella spp. Testing	73
Clinical samples for Microbiological Analysis	89
Total	7,614

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH INFORMATION

The mission of the Department of Health Information is to provide accurate information for the protection of Public Health, statistical purposes, research and preventive medicine. It promotes and supports the development of Health Information systems. The Department is made up of National Registries, the Health Survey Unit, the Statistics Clinic and the Director's Office.

NATIONAL REGISTRIES

During 2006, this branch continued with the management of health data sets on mortality, cancer, congenital anomalies, organ transplants, obstetrics, accidents and injuries and hospital information systems. Throughout the year, routine work of data collection, entry, processing, validation and reporting continued; and *ad hoc* queries from Parliament, government departments, clinicians, managers, researchers, journalists, students and local and international organisations were answered.

MALTA NATIONAL MORTALITY REGISTRY

Data Collection Analysis and Dissemination

During 2006 all death certificates of residents of the Maltese Islands as well as those of non-residents that were received by the Department of Health Information were validated, coded and entered on Dbase program. An extra effort was done in collecting information on Maltese residents who died abroad as these should be included according to Eurostat recommendations. Accuracy and completeness of information was increased by reviewing the deceased patients' medical records when available, liaison with certifying doctors, pathologists, Disease Surveillance Unit, police as well as the cancer, congenital anomalies and national obstetric information register. Ad hoc requests were made to other registries when needed.

It was noted that doctors were not adhering strictly to guidelines issued by WHO as well as Eurostat in reporting perinatal deaths. Because of this, guidelines were created and circulated as a DH circular (DH 10/07). Information regarding perinatal deaths is also being obtained from "babies book" at St Lukes Hospital to improve coverage as much as possible.

Requests for information from students, doctors, nurses, media, other departments, parliament and others were answered. Monthly lists of demographic details of all deaths were distributed to health centres as well as other departments needing this information. Data for the year 2005 was submitted at a national level to the National Statistics Office for inclusion in the demographic review, and internationally to the World Health Organisation for inclusion in the Health for All database, and the Statistics Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT), for inclusion in the EU New Cronos database. Detailed data regarding deaths from illicit drugs based on toxicology reports for the years 2002-2005 were submitted to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA). Some analysis regarding drug related deaths by locality of residence was done with the help of the Department's Statistician and will be reported in the national report of the National Focal Point on drugs and drug addiction in Malta.

This year the registry began to do some more detailed analysis of mortality and the effects of temperature. This was done in liaison with the Malta International Airport.

The Annual Mortality Report 2004 is available on the Department of Health Information website.

MEETINGS ATTENDED

Technical Meeting on Causes of Death Statistics

The medical officer in charge of the registry attended the technical meeting organised within the EU Partnership Health Structure. The overall goal of these meetings is to improve the collection, analysis and dissemination of comparable causes of death within the European Union.

The main topics discussed during the meeting were: minimum requirements of European death certificate, ACME coding, ICD-10 updates, glossary of terms on causes of death, quality control, electronic death certification and regulation.

EMCDDA Meeting on Drug Related Deaths and Mortality Among Drug Users

This is a yearly meeting organised by EMCDDA. The objectives for the meeting were to promote links between situation and responses to drug related deaths; promote a broader public health perspective on drug mortality, exchange information with Eurostat, promote mortality cohort studies, discuss improvements in mortality registries, promote implementation of ICD-10 updates, review quality of REITOX reporting, and improve information on substances involved in DRD. Finally, in line with promotion of a broader perspective on drug mortality, a workshop focused on improved methods to assess total mortality related to drug use.

Peristat II Meeting

The aim of the EURO-PERISTAT II project is to complete the development of a strategy for monitoring and evaluating perinatal health in the European Union. A meeting held in June 2006 was aimed at bringing together experts both in perinatal health field as well as data providers, to share experiences on how to collect better quality data and how this data can be made more use of.

PROJECTS

ANAMORT Project

The Anamort project has been developed by InVS and Inserm with the financial support of the European Commission (DG Sanco) to evaluate the quality and comparability of injury mortality statistics in Europe and to produce indicators on the causes of death by injury, useful for public health decisions.

According to European statistics, injury related mortality accounted for more than 5% of all deaths during the year 2003. However diversity of mortality statistics production process limits interpretation of mortality rate differences between countries. The aim of Anamort project is to undertake comparative analysis of injury related mortality in Europe.

In March 2006 the 2nd steering group meeting was held in Malta. During this meeting the preliminary results of the questionnaire sent to all EU countries regarding death certification, coding and injury related mortality were discussed. Plans were also made for the 1st general meeting.

During April 2006 the first general meeting for all EU member states as well as some other countries was held in Paris aimed at presenting and analysing the results of the two questionnaires created by the steering committee and which had been completed by the EU member states.

Task Force on Glossary for Causes of Death Statistics

As international collaboration in the field of Causes of Death Statistics becomes more widespread and involves very peculiar details of methodology, the need for a specific glossary for COD became more apparent. Both previous task forces on *Quality Control on COD statistics* (2004) and the Task Force on *Minimum requirements for the European Death Certificate/European COD statistics* (2005) recommended that at least a basic glossary of terminology used in COD is required.

The participating countries in this Task Force include United Kingdom, Ireland and Malta (English-speaking countries), Bulgaria and the Netherlands together with a representative from Eurostat.

The main objectives of the task force are to:

- Produce a list of terms used in Causes of Death Statistics and for which a definition is needed.
- Supply every item with a clear and unambiguous definition. In case an international definition already exists, then this one is to be used.
- In case a term has more than one meaning or its meaning is very vague, the Task Force should propose a definition that can be used as European reference definition.

Transition Facility Programme 2004: Improvement of Statistics of Causes of Death January 2006-December 2007

The main objective of this project is the improvement of data quality of causes of death statistics. The actions will be aimed at certification and codification process. It is expected that these activities will increase awareness among doctors of the importance of good certification and therefore increased accuracy. The implementation of new codification practices e.g. automated coding should reduce inter-coder variability and reduce differences in statistics between countries due to differences in coding practices. During 2006 a revised death certificate was drafted in accordance with recommendations by WHO/Eurostat. Also a presentation about the importance of death certification, common errors in certification and examples of how a death certificate should be completed was made during the sixth medical school conference in November 2006.

MALTA NATIONAL ORGAN TRANSPLANT REGISTRY

Data collection and data entry for this register continued in a regular way. Data was checked with the renal department at St Luke's Hospital as well as the Nurse in charge of corneal transplants. The transplant website of the Department of Health Information is updated on a yearly basis with figures regarding organs donated and transplanted during the previous year.

MALTA NATIONAL CANCER REGISTRY

During 2006, the Cancer Registry continued to work according to strict criteria set by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) and establishing itself as the most reliable source of information on cancer incidence and mortality in the Maltese Islands. Incidence data for selected cancer sites and type from 1995 to 2004 and cancer mortality data for the same sites and types from 1995 to 2005 by age groups and gender were published on the Cancer Registry's website. This information is updated regularly and has information on 29 specific cancer sites by gender for both incidence and mortality. Other documents on the web page are also updated from time to time to reflect the most recent publishable information available from the registry.

The Principal Medical Officer in charge of the Registry did not attend any international meetings in cancer registration during 2006 due to unavailability of funds. The last international meeting attended was in 2002.

Cancer data on cases diagnosed from 1998-2002 that has received comprehensive validation using IARC check programs supplied to the registry, were submitted for analysis and future publication in the Volume IX of the Cancer Incidence in Five Continents. This publication is currently in preparation and is expected to be issued in mid-2007. It is a five-yearly publication of the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC). Malta has already participated in Volumes III, VII, and VIII.

The project proposed by the Malta Action Group of the EUROCHIP-2 project was approved and collection of the data for this study was started in 2006. The project involves the evaluation of the cancer screening activity on the Islands that occurred between 2003-2005 for breast cancer and cervical cancer. A full report on the findings will be submitted by the end of 2007. Two members of this action group attended a meeting for the panel of experts of this project in Maiori, Italy in June. The registry has participated in the HEAMACARE study. This study aims at revising and improving the coding for leukaemias and lymphomas.

The registry has performed a lot of work in the compilation of the following three papers that have been submitted for publication to peer-reviewed scientific journals. These include:

- A profile of invasive cutaneous malignant melanoma in Malta: 1993-2002. This paper was published in the Journal of the European Academy of Dermatology and Veneorology, Volume 20, pages 958-963.
- Effectiveness of opportunistic screening for cancer of the cervix uteri. This paper was published in the November issue of the Malta Medical Journal.
- Cutaneous melanoma in the Maltese Islands: 2000-2004. This paper was submitted to the European Journal of Cancer in November and the replies to the reviewers' comments have already been posted to the editors.

Information from the registry has also been published in the Special Issue, Volume 42, No 13, September 2006 of the European Journal of Cancer titled: Cancer in Children and Adolescents in Europe. This publication was the result of an extensive collaboration study that was conducted by the ACCIS (Automated Childhood Cancer Information System) under the auspices of IARC.

The EUROCORE 4 study which is evaluating the differences in survival from cancer across Europe is nearing completion. The cancer registry has edited the small number of problem records that have been sent from the study core group for re-checking prior to the final analysis of the data. Malta is participating fully in this study with the cancer cases registered from 1995 to 1999 and followed up till end-2003. The Head of the registry has been invited to a meeting in Italy in February 2007. During this meeting the results of the analysis will be presented to the participants before they are sent for publication.

The cancer registry was represented at the Sixth Maltese Medical School Conference that was held between 30 November and 2 December with analysis of its data in three oral presentations and a number of posters presentations.

The Principal Medical Officer in charge of the Registry has performed extensive work on a National Cancer Plan for the Maltese Islands.

The PMO in charge of the cancer registry participated in the delegation from Malta that attended a data protection (health sector) exchange visit in Germany as part of a Twinning Light project on Data Protection. The first day of the two-day visit involved a visit to the Cancer Registry of Rhineland-Palatine in Mainz. During this visit extensive presentations describing the processes of this cancer registry were delivered and discussed in depth. A report of this visit was submitted to the Director for Corporate Services, MHEC and to the OPM Data Protection Team.

The development of the new software for the cancer registry has reached an advanced stage. During 2006, pilot data entry was conducted with the registration of cases diagnosed in 2005. This exercise has yielded several needs for amendments and additions to the program to improve the suitability and versatility of this software. The results were very encouraging and it is envisaged that the program will soon reach the stage

of acceptance which will be followed by the population of this database with the records that has been entered for the years prior to 2005 in the old dBaseIV software. This new database will include a lot more information on each registration in an electronic format and this will eventually reduce the paper-format needs of the registry. The information in the register will also become more readily available and retrievable. This will enable the easier generation of studies that were considered very time-consuming and laborious with the paper-based register.

MALTA CONGENITAL ANOMALIES REGISTRY

Throughout 2006, the Malta Congenital Anomalies Registry continued with routine data collection and processing and responded to requests for information from students, clinicians, journalists and other government departments.

The Registry has worked on developing a new, updated database software and this is being tested prior to its going live. This new database will include more comprehensive information in a format required by ever-changing and growing demands.

The Registry's website was kept updated throughout the year and updated summary statistics until 2004 were made available on the web.

The Registry continued to work as an active member of two international organisations: EUROCAT (European Association of Congenital Anomaly Registries) and ICBDSR (International Clearinghouse for Birth Defects Surveillance and Research), responding to all requests from these international organisations. Malta data for 2004 was sent in the required format to both these organisations. Malta data until 2004 is now available in interactive format on the EUROCAT website alongside data from other EU countries. Through membership with these organisations, the Registry also participated in several ongoing collaborative research studies.

As a member of EUROCAT, the Principal Medical Officer (PMO) in charge attended the Annual Registry Leaders' meeting held in Graz, Austria in June 2006. Updates and changes in data collection systems advised at this meeting are being implemented. As a member of the ICBDSR, the PMO in charge of the Registry completed a second year in office as Vice Chair of the Executive Committee of this organisation and attended an Executive Committee meeting held in April 2006. The PMO was entrusted to develop a new website for this international organisation. This new website was launched at the Annual Meeting of the organisation in September 2006 and the PMO will continue to work as webmaster for this site.

A student from the University of Ulm had a six-week attachment with the Department of Health Information and as one of her projects she helped complete a Geographical analysis of the Prevalence of Specific Congenital Anomalies on the Maltese Islands. The report of this analysis is available on the web.

NATIONAL OBSTETRIC INFORMATION SYSTEM (NOIS)

The functioning of this Register continued with data being collected from all private and public birthing centres on the islands using standard NOIS data sheets – a total of just under 4,000 births per year are registered and these cover all deliveries on the islands.

In May 2006, the Registry published the Annual NOIS 2005 report; this was widely distributed to all involved partners and media. In addition, the standard quarterly reports were published using NOIS data and distributed to all system partners. The NOIS website was also regularly updated and all reports available on this site. The Registry continued to meet the several ad hoc requests for information from students, clinicians, journalists and other government departments.

Through participation in an EU funded project – EURO PERISTAT II the Registry has developed a set of standard indicators of maternal and infant health. These can now be used to monitor care within the local scenario and also to compare local indicators with those of other EU countries.

In collaboration with the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, the Registry has developed, printed and implemented a new updated Antenatal Booking Sheet to replace the one used by the Antenatal Clinic. This sheet will further improve information available both from a clinical aspect as well as from a data collection aspect.

With the help of a public health trainee attached to the Department, a first audit of the NOIS system was carried out. Results were very encouraging, showing a high degree of accuracy of the system. The full report of this audit is available on the website; it is hoped that such an audit can continue to be carried out on a regular basis and serve as a reliable quality indicator.

NATIONAL HOSPITALS INFORMATION SYSTEM (NHIS)

Hospital Data

This new System will eventually collect data on hospital activity from acute state and private hospitals.

NHIS has collected full record-based data from Gozo General Hospital since July 2004. Data regarding hospital activity for the whole of 2005 has been validated and analysed to produce a clear picture of activity at this hospital for the whole year. A report of detailed hospital activity for Gozo General Hospital for 2005 is available on the Department's website. Data on hospital activity for 2006 will be validated and analysed in the coming months.

Anonymised record-based data from St Luke's Hospital has been collected for 2005 from the hospital's HAA system. The data is needed for analysis and forwarding to EUROSTAT. However the data being received from St Luke's Hospital is not in the format that is being requested by EUROSTAT in its request for non expenditure health care statistics data.

The system still has to tackle data collection from private hospitals.

System of Health Accounts (SHA)

The Medical Officer i/c was appointed a member of the SHA Implementation Steering Committee set up within the Ministry of Health, the Elderly and Community Care. To date he has attended several meetings of the said Committee. He has attended for the SHA workshop on *ancillary services in health care* held in Lisbon, Portugal in February. In April 2006 he also attended for the workshop on expenditures by patient characteristics held in Luxembourg.

In a meeting called by Director General on 10 July 2006, to discuss the way forward for developing a System of Health Accounts within the MHEC, it was decided that the Directorate for Policy Development and Programme Implementation (DPDPI) shall be responsible for leading the implementation of SHA. The Department of Health Information (DHI) shall support DPDPI in this task.

EUCOMP Database

The Medical Officer i/c has been instrumental in filling up the EUCOMP database for Malta over the first five months of 2006. He has attended the EUCOMP workshop in Lithuania in May 2006. EUCOMP (which is an acronym for "comparability on health care data") lists all the actors (players/providers) within a particular health care system. The full EUCOMP database lists all the actors in the health care systems within EU 25 together with their characteristics, actor activities, mode of production and provider code within SHA. It will have to form the basis/foundations for the implementation of SHA.

Health Labour Accounts (HLA)

This is an NSO Transition Facility Project 2004 for the implementation of HLA for Malta. The deadline for this project is June 2007. NSO has passed on this project to the Ministry of Health, the Elderly and Community Care.

Injury Database (IDB)

Data Collection

Data collection regarding Accidents and Injuries from the Emergency and Admitting Department at Gozo General Hospital is still ongoing. A report of the first year of data collection was submitted to Department of Home, Leisure & Sports in Austria for collation of IDB Final Report of participating EU countries.

Data collection from health centres on a routine basis could no longer be sustained due to lack of human resources and it is envisaged to collect ad hoc data for two months every year from which estimates can be produced.

Negotiations are underway to start collecting data from St Luke's Hospital during 2007.

The Consultant attended various meetings concerning the finalisation of the first EU IDB I project and the launch of the IDB II within the SAFESTRAT project.

The EU Health Portal

Following the launch of the EU-Health Portal in May 2006, an officer from the Department of Health Information has been nominated as a member of the EU-Health Portal Editorial board. The Public Health Portal of the European Union addresses the need for European citizens to have access to simple, clear and scientifically-sound information on health and health-related activities. The portal should become a known and trusted source of information in all European languages and citizens should have the confidence that in using the portal they are accessing information from a reliable source. To meet this objective, the European Commission has set up an editorial board which decides upon an editorial policy based on the expert advice of members and in line with the quality criteria set out under the EUROPA guidelines. On 10 November 2006, an officer from the Department of Health Information attended the First Meeting of the EU-Health Portal Editorial Board held in Luxembourg. Topics discussed in the meeting included a description of the EU Health Portal, its genesis, and the role of the editorial board. The editorial board agreed on the guidelines for operation procedures, the publishing standards (including editorial, language and link policies) and accreditation procedures. The functions of the EU-Health Portal were described in detail and a presentation of the European Community Projects that can be linked to the EU Health Portal was given. Possible opportunities for promotion of the portal and future communication activities were discussed.

The officer who was nominated as an editorial board member will in addition be responsible for contributing new content for the EU-Health Portal, for providing new links and assuring the quality and trustworthiness of the content and the links.

HEALTH INTERVIEW SURVEY

Global Report on the Health Status in the European Union (EUGLOREH)

The Department of Health Information is participating in the preparation of the Global Report on the Health Status in the European Union (EUGLOREH 2007).

The report will be based mainly on a comparative analysis of a number of health and health-determinant indicators. The main objectives of the project are the evaluation of the health status in the European region

through selected indicators and their trends and an analysis of the health determinants underlying the evolution of health indicators and of the related national and European Community policies. Thus the report aims to provide a valuable tool for the European Commission, national policy-makers and other stakeholders to monitor impacts of main health interventions and policies. The final objective of the report will be the identification of priority health issues for the future and of valuable relevant practicable approaches and policies.

The report will be completed in 2007 and published in mid-2008. The full report in English and the Executive Summary in all partner languages will be published in the websites of the project and the European Commission. Moreover, copies of the report and its Executive Summary will be published in CD-ROM and distributed to the Commission bodies, EU member states, EFTA and candidate countries and international organisations. This project is co-financed by the European Commission in the framework of the Community Action Programme, Work Plan 2005.

During 2006, the officer responsible for co-ordination of the project attended the EUGLOREH plenary meeting held in Luxembourg on 27-28 June 2006. Issues discussed during this first meeting of the partners and the collaborating institutions participating in the project included: reaching an agreement on the outline and structure of the report, identification of the relevant health and policy indicators to be used in the report, analysis of the available data sources and the quality of available data and identification of databases and possible authors and contributors for the various chapters of the report. The roles and responsibilities of the partner countries were defined and a timetable of activities was devised.

During 2006, work done on the project included providing the project leaders with the most recent national health reports, a document describing the national system for gathering, analysing and reporting health-related data, and a collection of national health policy and planning documents and health action plans. An audit of the Maltese health data available in international databases for the indicators which will be used in the EUGLOREH Project was carried out. Other possible data sources including local national statistics, national registers, administrative sources, local health surveys and ad hoc studies were identified. Data collection and submission of data is still ongoing.

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

The office is responsible for strategic planning, information analysis, EU related projects and statistics, relations with other departments, the public, flow of data and information in and out of the Department, budgetary control (except IT) and day-to-day management.

The Consultant in charge represents the Health Division/Ministry at DG SANCO's Network of Competent Authorities and EUROSTAT's Working Group Public Health Statistics besides other working parties and technical meetings. On a local level he is the Secretary of the Health Ethics Committee.

With regard to EU Projects, this year the Department is participating in eleven projects ranging from mortality to surveys to public health reports analysis and to eating disorders. Most are already underway whilst a few are in their final stages of approval by the European Commission, prior to initiation.

During 2006 this Department continued to benefit from 2003/4 Transitional Facilities through the National Statistics Office in the domain of Health Labour Accounts and Health Interview Surveys. A new application for 2005 facilities has been submitted.

WHO-EURO Health for All (HFA)

Data on Health Indicators for the year 2005 has been submitted to WHO-EURO towards the end of 2006. For this submission we could supply some new indicators particularly relating to specialist physicians. Experience obtained with WHO is being used to develop methodologies for the implementation of EUROSTAT's ECHI indicators.

Statistics Clinic

Statistical services have been available at the Department since 2002 and used by all the registries for the compilation of reports. A mean of 20 requests per month for statistical consultancy were received during 2006. Most of them were reporting on studies for the purposes of publication, or else as part fulfilment for postgraduate qualifications. The busiest period was October-November 2006 in the run-up to the Malta Medical School Conference. Appointments have been limited to Tuesdays and Thursdays where possible.

DG SANCO's WP on Health Indicators held another two meetings during 2006. The ECHIM core group is now at the stage of cataloguing which indicators are available, both at national level and on international databases, in each member state. In addition, the Department have been invited to appoint a delegate on the Task Force on Healthy Life Expectancy. This task force is developing the methodology for the implementation of this indicator and promoting its use across the EU.

During 2006, our statistician has been involved with the preparation for a pilot run of the next Health Interview Survey which will be the national vehicle for the European Core Health Interview Survey (ECHIS) which is to be implemented between 2007 and 2009. Indeed, Malta is planning to carry out this survey late in 2007 and on to 2008. The piloting of this questionnaire is expected to happen during the first half of 2007. In addition, he has been working in close liaison with the Office of the DG on a draft non-communicable disease strategy for 2015.

Data Protection

During the year, the Department has been very active in participating in the Data Protection Officers' meetings. All recommendations provided by the OPM Data Protection Team have been carried out. The Department's privacy policy has been revised to fulfil all aspects of data protection. The data archiving system in our databases is still undergoing changes so as to afford more protection and confidentiality of the data. New application forms for requesting of health data together with privacy policy are available online.

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE DEPARTMENT

OVERVIEW

The Department of Primary Health Care is responsible for providing a comprehensive primary health care service, which includes the following:

- General practitioner – clinic and home visits
- Dental surgery and dental hygienist
- Specialised services (Medical Consultant clinic, Schedule V clinic, ECG clinic, Gynaecology and Antenatal clinic, Well Baby clinic, Diabetes clinic, Radiography services, Mental Health clinics, Ophthalmic and Glaucoma clinics, Pathology investigations)
- Community Pharmacies
- General Nursing care
- National Immunisation Service
- School Health Services
- Allied Professions services (Podology clinic, Physiotherapy clinic, Speech Language Pathology clinic).

The Primary Health Care Department strives to provide these services with an emphasis on disease prevention and health promotion, while assuring the best possible treatment, care and support. As in previous years the Department had to deal with a shortage of health care manpower, although towards the end of the year the nursing vacancies were all filled. There was also some improvement in the number of general practitioners as a small number of future GP trainees were recruited, with the GP trainee programme due to start in the early part of 2007. Still, the opening schedule for the health centres remained: Rabat, Qormi, and Cospicua, open all day but closed at 8pm from Monday to Friday and from

1pm Saturday to 8am the following Monday, with the general practitioner service at these health centres stopping at 5pm. The other health centres were kept open for 24 hours, namely Mosta, Paola, Floriana and Gżira, but the general practitioner service switched over to 'emergencies only' between 5pm and 8am week days and from 1pm Saturday to 8am the following Monday.

In the other medical and paramedical services, appointment waiting times were maintained at an acceptable level and services were streamlined. The exception was the ophthalmic clinic as this had to be contracted out due to a complete lack of orthoptists remaining in the service. The general public appeared to be relatively pleased with the standard of services and relatively very few complaints were received. The new identity badges for all staff were well received. Following pressure from the union, an appointment system in the Health Centre GP clinics was introduced for prescriptions and now this seems to be working well.

The new vetting office receiving requests for domiciliary care developed into the Commcare Department that is working to provide a more holistic approach in assessing the patient's needs beyond just nursing care. Plans for a comprehensive Management Information System for the Primary Health Care Department have been completed (including an electronic health records system) and a detailed report by two UK experts in medical records has been finalised.

ESTATE

Various local clinics were refurbished with the collaboration of the local councils and detailed plans for complete refurbishment/new building for Attard and Żurrieq Bereg were prepared. Two new dental clinic chairs were purchased and various other ancillary equipment has been installed.

SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE AND REVIEW

General Practitioner Service

GP episodes in Health Centres	357,105
GP episodes in District Clinics	197,079
GP Home Visits by day	13,226
GP Home Visits by night	2,019
Total GP encounters	569,429

While the full complement required to run the service is 110 medical officers, the available number of full-time equivalent doctors was 89 in 2006. The shortage of doctors again rendered the service unsustainable during certain hours. Consequently the only option left to the Department was to retain the previous schedule of reduced GP service in the health centres adopted in May 2000. On some days there were still problems to provide a full service from 8.00am to 5.00pm and on frequent occasions, house visit requests had to be limited to urgent cases only. Despite this, the 15 new clinic sessions introduced for the closed centres to see to the basic medical needs of the irregular immigrants were maintained throughout the year.

Medical Consultant Services

Preventive Medicine (Medical Consultant) Clinics		
<i>Health Centre</i>	<i>Schedule V</i>	<i>MCC</i>
Floriana	548	796
Gżira	719	1,224
Qormi	530	764
Mosta	1,195	880
Rabat	515	843
Paola	1,117	700
B'Kara	590	823
Cospicua	336	721
Total	5,550	6,751

In comparison to the previous year there was an increase in total attendances of 184 (3.32%) for Schedule V clinics and a decrease of 613 (-9%) at the Medical Consultant's Clinic. The service has been made more accessible to patients in the catchment area of Rabat, B'Kara, Cospicua and Qormi at the same time easing the load on the other health centres.

Glaucoma Screening

The glaucoma screening programme, launched in January 1996 with the support of the Lions Club International, at Floriana, Qormi, Gzira, Mosta and Paola Health Centres continued in 2006. The total number of attendances for Glaucoma Screening in the Health Centres was 2,676, out of which 1,138 were new cases. Clients with High Intra Ocular Pressures were 470 and with Defective Visual Fields 175. 692 clients were referred to the specialist for further investigation and another 46 were referred to SLH.

Other Specialist Services

Service	Number of attendances
Diabetes Clinic	13,653
Obs/Gynae Clinic	7,060
Ophthalmic Clinic	5,709
Mental Health Clinic	4,842
Dental Clinic *	21,880
Well Baby Clinic	6,177
Acupuncture	2,561
Total	61,882

*only services provided by Dental Surgeons are included

Other Professional Services

Allied Professionals Services	
Service	Number of clinic attendances
Nursing Care in the treatment rooms	193,070
Podology	52,771
Speech Therapy *	19,711
Radiology	11,733
Pathology	49,477
Physiotherapy	24,911
Dental Hygienist	5,244
ECG	4,206
Total	361,123

*At health centres and district clinics

The Speech Therapy services were also extended to normal schools (3,214 clients), special schools (1,622 clients), hospitals (10,129 clients), special interest clinics (354 clients) and ATCs (2,411 clients).

Community Service Pharmacies

The community pharmacies provide direct dispensing services for Schedule II (Pink Card) patients, Schedule V (Yellow Card), various others entitled to free drugs (such as clergy, members of the Police Force, etc), an indirect dispensing service through the *Bereġ*, and dispensing advice and other customer services. The two-monthly dispensing system introduced in the pharmacies and the increase in pharmacy staff gave excellent results and considerably cut down queues and waiting times for service at the pharmacy. Also in the more popular pharmacies the opening times were extended with staff on overtime to further reduce the queues.

Total	Patients	Prescriptions	Items Dispensed
2005	456,931	673,548	1,261,096
2006	520,996	769,842	1,461,382
% change	+12.0%	+12.0%	+14.0%

Community Nursing and Midwifery Services

These services continued to be provided by the MMDNA in terms of the agreement between the Association and the Department. A new agreement, more closely linked to the actual time of the visits, has been prepared and will be signed in the beginning of 2007. All requests are carefully vetted through the CommCare section and all calls are being verified and, once approved, forwarded to the MMDNA for the visits. During the home visits patients, relatives or carers are being involved more in the patients care plan and are being informed on different related issues such as education, handling of patients and awareness on other services and are being encouraged to make use of them when possible. If patients are mobile and are able to attend the health centres, MMDNA service is not approved and they are encouraged to seek the service at the health centres.

Service	Number of attendances
General Care	71,050
Surgical cases	85,249
Injections	11,227
Diabetic patients	182,082
Post-Natal Cases	12,898
Total	362,506

School Health Service

The School Health Service continued to provide a monitoring and surveillance programme within the mainstream public and church primary schools, as well as the four special schools. The emphasis was on the early detection of physical, social, psychological and learning difficulties and disabilities, health promotion and health education. All children were examined at school entry (where they were accompanied by their parent/s), then again at 6-7 years and at 10-11 years. Screening procedures were carried out for developmental abnormalities, learning difficulties, visual acuity, scoliosis and hearing impairment.

Furthermore, the eight doctor/nurse teams carried out a heavy immunisation programme throughout the year and this included three doses of Hepatitis B vaccine to all students at Year 3 level, the second dose of Measles, Mumps and Rubella vaccine to all students at Year 4 level, the BCG vaccine to state school students at Form II level (January – February) and to church school students at Form II and Form III level (October – November).

The following is a breakdown of the services rendered by the School Health Service in 2006:

Service	No of child encounters
Medical examinations	7,316
Height and weight measurement	8,029
Development assessments	5,863
Visual acuity tests	8,434
Injury at school	151
Scoliosis screening	3,771
Ophthalmic referrals	633
Dental referrals	26
ENT referrals	19
Speech/Language Pathology referrals	379
CDAU/Child Guidance referrals	136
Education Psychologist referrals	29
Statementing Board referrals	46
Surgical referrals	32
Paediatric referrals	9
Orthopaedic referrals (inc. scoliosis)	92
Health Centre referrals	105
Chest Clinic referrals	6
Podology referrals	8
A & E Department referrals	9
Dermatology referrals	11
Immunisations	
Hep B 1 st dose	2,347
Hep B 2 nd dose	2,198
Hep B 3 rd dose	2,022
MMR	5,737
BCG (State Schools)	2,462
BCG (Church and Independent)	3,385

During the months of July, August and September 2006, all nurses working at School Health Service were assigned to the Anticoagulant Clinic at B'Kara and Qormi Health centres for two hours a day on a roster basis.

School Dental Clinic

The School Health Service also incorporates a programme of dental services for school children. In 2006 Dental Surgeons and Dental Hygienists from the health centres continued with regularly scheduled visits to schools within their health centre catchment areas to carry out routine dental examinations. Children with dental problems were referred to their Health Centre Dental Clinic or the School Dental Clinic at Floriana.

Service	No of child encounters
Check-ups	1,553
Total Extractions	741
Total conservative treatment (fillings)	2,437
Scalings/Polishing & Oral Hygiene	1,117
Fixed Appliances	701
Surgicals	25
Orthodontic new cases	894
Orthodontic reviews	2,674
Orthodontic impressions	828
Orthodontic fits	639
Total Patients Attending	11,609

The National Immunisation Service

The National Immunisation Service at Floriana Health Centre co-ordinates all the services given to the community both through each health centre, as well as through the Immunisation Clinic at Floriana Health Centre. All clinics in the health centres carry out the scheduled vaccinations for infants and children (vide immunisation schedule below). The scheduled vaccines for infants and children up to 16 years are free of charge. However all vaccines given to travellers abroad are given against payment. Also the clinic supplies vaccines against payment for use by the general practitioners in the private practice (those vaccines which are not available from the private pharmacies) and provides immunisation service to various government departments, parastatal entities and private enterprises.

As a result of the latter activities, the Floriana Immunisation Clinic is the only revenue generating section within the Primary Health Care Department.

During 2006, a lot of work was carried out together with the e-health programme manager regarding the new immunisation system. The plan is that all information regarding vaccines (i.e. from where they are purchased, the amount we have in stock, records of those immunised and others) is all computerised, giving access to personnel and others in range of merit, to have access to this system.

This system was supposed to be functioning by November 2006; however because of teething problems the system is planned to be in operational by early January 2007.

With regard to campaigns, as in previous years, the NIS participated in the School Health service Vaccination programme (MMR, Hepatitis B and BCG [tuberculosis] vaccination). Defaulters from these campaigns receive their vaccination from the NIS.

As to the Influenza Vaccine, this year also, as in previous years, there was a smooth running of the campaign, co-ordinated from the NIS at Floriana Health Centre. Three consignments were received, giving a total of 101,000 vaccines.

Apart from the routine childhood and influenza immunisation, the following activities were carried out in 2006:

- Hepatitis B, Tetanus and Typhoid vaccinations for staff working at the Waste Recycling Plant, Waste Disposal Section, Waste Strategy Implementation Department, Green Skips workers, Beach Cleaners and others.
- Tetanus and Typhoid vaccinations for drainage workers, Works Division employees and Water Services Corporation employees.
- Tuberculin testing/scar examination and Hepatitis B for Health Department employees.
- Vaccinations for foreign students.
- Typhoid vaccinations for all food handlers.
- Vaccinations for Hepatitis B contacts, IV drug users, patients with blood, hepatic and renal diseases.
- Recalls sent monthly to all those who fail to come for their due vaccinations.

Child Immunisation Schedule		
Age	Vaccine	Remarks
At 2 months of age	Dip/Tet/Per	
	Polio	
	Hib	
At 3 months of age	Dip/Tet/Per	
	Polio	
	Hib	
At 4 months of age	Dip/Tet/Per	
	Polio	
	Hib	
At 15 months of age	Measles	
	Mumps MMR	to all children
	Rubella	
	Hepatitis B 1 st dose	
At 16 months of age	Hepatitis B 2 nd dose	to all children
At 21 months of age	Hepatitis B 3 rd dose	to all children
During the 4 th year	Dip/Tet	3 years after the 3 rd dose of basic course
	Polio	
At 7 years	MMR	to all children
At 8 years (year 4 junior sch)	Hep B	to all children
At 12-14 years	BCG	to all children
Booster at 16 years	Dip/Tet	5 doses of tetanus vaccine offer a lifelong protection. No further doses are necessary unless specifically indicated. To continue with diph. (adult dose) and polio every 10 yrs.
	Polio	

Vaccine	Floriana	Qormi	Gżira	Paola & Cospicua	Mosta	B'Kara	Rabat	Total
DTP	1,151	785	760	2,028	1,272	690	487	7,173
DT Vax	430	333	301	803	471	226	204	2,768
Polio	3,282	1,514	1,484	4,032	2,310	1,187	926	14,735
HIB	1,183	786	764	1,902	1,282	687	489	7,093
Tetanus	366	133	250	247	277	86	161	1,520
Rubella	-	1	-	188	-	-	-	189
MMR	1,230	655	696	1,209	794	477	324	5,385
Diphtheria	327	12	47	27	21	12	-	446
Influenza	5,220	3,346	4,569	6,611	3,921	3,172	2,052	28,891
Varicella	12	17	-	7	-	1	1	38
Tuberculin/MTX	362	-	-	-	-	-	-	362
Tuberculin Reading	312	-	-	-	-	-	-	312
Tuberculin Screening	67	-	-	-	-	-	-	67
Hep A	979	5	-	-	-	-	-	984
Hep B	3,164	1,266	1,183	2,546	1,437	918	632	11,146
Twinrix	1,843	14	119	-	141	2	-	2,119
Rabies	374	-	-	-	-	-	-	374
Cholera	114	-	-	-	-	-	-	114
Typhoid	2,939	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,939
Yellow Fever	484	-	-	-	-	-	-	484
M. Meningitis ACWY	259	-	-	-	-	-	-	259
M. Meningitis A&C	125	-	-	-	-	-	-	125
di-Te adult	2,604	510	553	1,385	730	324	266	6,372
Infanrix	32	2	-	-	-	-	-	34
Total	26,859	9,379	10,726	20,985	12,656	7,782	5,542	93,929

DIRECTORATE NURSING SERVICES

During 2006 the Directorate Nursing Services has progressed and nurtured ongoing developments, as well as embarked on new initiatives. Responsibilities falling under this office include both running and co-ordinating particular projects by individual persons, and also the set-up, and discussion of other projects

involving a hefty element of team work. Nurses working at this Directorate are involved in various initiatives, including those substantially carried through by individuals themselves and also in collaboration with other departments.

Certain projects fall under the direct responsibility of this office, such as Enrolled nurse – Staff nurse (EN-SN) conversion course, and intravenous therapy (IV) course, the formulation of particular policies and guidelines, and manpower. Teamwork and collaboration to development and refining of projects such as input in the Pandemic Contingency Plan were also challenges taken up by this office.

Clinical interests and areas are varied such as child and adult nursing, primary care, intensive care, development of the profession clinically and otherwise, and also oncology care.

THE INTRAVENOUS THERAPY COURSE

One initiative arising, continued and developed was the IV Course which is run and co-ordinated by this office.

In December 2005, the Directorate Nursing Services embarked on a nationwide training programme in intravenous therapy for all qualified nurses. The main idea behind this course was to increase nurses' awareness about the implications of various aspects of intravenous therapy and also to enhance nurses' empowerment in this shared clinical responsibility. The IV course was also incorporated in the EN – SN Conversion programme.

Participants at the course included nurses allocated and working at St Luke's Hospital as well as in other hospitals and locations. Several sessions were organised monthly at the Institute of Health Care, (IHC). The number of nurses who participated and completed the IV programme in 2006 was 500.

During 2006, sessions of IV Therapy course were organised at Sir Paul Boffa Hospital (SPBH) and Gozo General Hospital (GGH) and while all nurses at SPBH have now received and completed their training about two-thirds of all nurses working at GGH and in the Victoria Health Centre have received training.

In July and September 2006, two courses in issues related to chemotherapy administration were organised at Gozo General Hospital. All nurses working in the male and female general wards at GGH, who are normally involved in chemotherapy administration, participated in this course. This will provide patients in Gozo who need chemotherapy avoiding having to be transferred to Malta solely for the purpose of receiving chemotherapy.

IV Course Database, Website and Meetings

Throughout the year the IV Course co-ordinator updated and maintained a database indicating which nurses have completed the course. The course website was also revised and regularly updated with course programmes and venues, clinical assessors' allocation, lecture notes and other useful material. In June 2006 a meeting for all clinical assessors was organised at the IHC with the aim of discussing the main difficulties encountered during the assessments as well as details about the assessment criteria.

Future Direction of the IV Course

Plans for the coming year focus mainly on providing this course to as many nurses as possible. In fact plans are currently underway to start organising monthly courses at SVPR, monthly sessions of the IV Course for SLH and ZCH nurses will proceed during 2007. GGH will also be included in this plan, as well as Mount Carmel Hospital (MCH). Contacts have also been made by one of the private hospitals to organise a series of IV courses at their hospital. In order to carry on with smooth running of courses, more IV clinical assessors will be recruited and trained.

An evaluation meeting with the participation of all clinical assessors is planned towards the end of the current academic year, so as to accommodate or make any changes as identified.

PRIMARY AND COMMUNITY CARE

Nursing – Primary and Community Care

Another ongoing project and area focus within the Directorate Nursing Services is that of Nursing and Primary and Community Care. A general proposal of how the nursing and midwifery professions can be developed and enhanced within the PHC was finalised. This proposal was shared with the Primary Health Care Department. Upon its completion each area is now being addressed in more depth.

School Health Service

Particular importance is currently being given to the School Health Service. A document is being prepared focusing on the role, competencies and needs of school nurses within the school health service. The various possibilities of developing the school health service is also being planned, striving to move away from the current medical model of surveillance and screening provided. The Education Division has shown an interest to collaborate with the Health authorities in this regard and, in view of the current reforms taking place in their domain, now is the opportune time to do so.

Development in Primary Health Care Nursing

In an effort to truly utilise the full potential of primary health and community care, the DNS believes that providing nurses with the appropriate professional competence is essential. During 2006, in collaboration with Dr Isabelle Stabile and the IHC, a CPD course was offered for the first time to nurses working in relation to PHC titled *Primary Health Care Nursing – Role Development*. The course was offered in March and October with both groups having 40, the maximum number of participants.

The DNS in collaboration with Dr Stabile continue to discuss and plan further initiatives. Two important milestones this year was the sponsorship for two nurses to follow an MSc degree in Community Nursing with the University of Salford for one year and the compilation and proposal of introducing a BSc (Hons) in Community Health Nursing, locally with the University of Malta. This has been approved by the Senate and is expected to start in February 2007.

Other Developments

Regular contact was maintained with the Primary Health Care Department (PHCD) clinics. Currently a series of visits to *Bereġ* is providing a fruitful insight on what needs to be addressed prior to considering the initiation, enhancement or expansion of nursing services within. Targeting these clinics is a sure way to give the nursing services a boost and to truly provide community care. A report is being compiled on what is noted as well as what can be done in the short term and the long term. The possibility of extending nursing services through key clinics within Health Centres is also being explored.

Children, Adolescents and Health Needs

During 2006 clinical practice was carried out twice weekly within the Children's Out-patients at St Luke's Hospital. This gave the opportunity to not only maintain clinical contact but to view the needs and challenges children and adolescents live with on a daily basis, hence highlight possible areas for development within the Community. The number of children living with chronic disease continues to increase, including diabetes, asthma and epilepsy amongst others. Many times when difficulties arise the hospital is the place of reference as specific health services for children in the community are limited. The

knowledge gained from this experience is currently being utilised in the compilation of the proposal for the school nursing and the school health service.

EN – SN CONVERSION COURSE

General Overview of the Progress of EN - SN Conversion Courses

Another initiative is the EN-SN Conversion Course. The selection process for the March and September 2006 intakes and initiation of the programmes were organised together with the course co-ordinator.

In course 10, the 38 students successfully completed the course. In the meantime, in March 2006, a new group of 34 nurses commenced their studies (Course 13). A total of 33 enrolled nurses were successful in the examination held in June 2006 and were duly registered as first level nurses. Another intake of students occurred in September 2006 (Course 14), with 34 nurses commencing including two students who later suspended their studies. Preparations were initiated in November 2006 of nurses in Course 12, so as to enable participants to sit for the final examination to be held in January 2007.

The course programme was reviewed to include larger components in geriatology and paediatrics which will be integral components of future courses. The clinical component of the course was also revised. During 2006, EN–SN Conversion Course students were provided with preceptorship/mentorship. This relationship is maintained throughout the entire course and includes both academic and clinical support. During this year, students were from various departments and entities. These included nurses from Żammit Clapp Hospital, Primary Health Care, private entities, MMDNA and St Vincent de Paule Residence.

Introduction of a Website

During these months a website dedicated to CPD and especially to the EN - SN conversion course was put on line on the initiative of the course co-ordinator. Since the beginning of this website on 25 August 2006 till the end of the year, the site was visited more than 2,000 times. This indicates that students may be finding this medium useful and appropriate to their learning styles and needs.

POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

During the past year policies have been issued, others revised while others are in the process of being drafted. An overview of the work in this respect carried out during 2006 follows:

Controlled Drug Policy

Further amendments were made to the Controlled Drugs policy and the circular DH4/2006 was drafted. Meetings were held with Manager Nursing Services of SLH, KCH, GGH, SPBH, SVPR, MCH, Primary Health Care Department and Elderly homes to discuss clarification of issues and difficulties surrounding the policy.

The layout for printing and choice of paper for the controlled drug registers and balance books was co-ordinated with the Government Printing Press. Several meetings were held regarding procurement and storage of registers and balance books, and a database system was set up so that books could be tracked.

Literature searches and a meeting with the pharmacist were held regarding audit tools for the controlled drug policy. Drafted audit tool, gathered feedback and made amendments to the Controlled Drugs Policy audit tool. The audit tool was pilot tested and a meeting was held with the statistician regarding data input from the audit. Further amendments were made on the audit tool based on the pilot test.

A report of the pilot audit was drafted and sent to nurse in charge for feedback, comments and suggestions. A list of wards for auditing was obtained and a stratified random sample of wards was selected.

Standards in Homes for the Elderly

Feedback was formulated on *Standards of admission to a state community home*. A meeting was held at Ċentru Hidma Soċjali regarding elderly dependency assessment and staffing ratios, while literature searches on staffing ratios for elderly homes and care standards for homes for the elderly were conducted. An outline of care standards for homes for the elderly was drafted. A meeting regarding standards for elderly care homes was held with the Director responsible for the Elderly.

Formulation of Guidelines and Policies

Various guidelines were formulated and drafted regarding guidelines in different areas. These included guidelines for nurses when applying for a transfer; guidelines and scheduling of registrations for continuous professional development scheme. Chemotherapy administration policies and guidelines were sought through a literature search and respectively sent to the haematology nurse while an initial draft of chemotherapy clinical practice guidelines were forwarded to Gozo General Hospital. Pandemic documents were reviewed and discussed, with further literature searches on pandemic issues carried out so as to formulate guidelines.

The administration of medicines policy was reviewed and is presently in the process of being amended. Also, literature searches related to the nurses' uniform policy were tapped into and initial drafts of the policy concerning this were written.

Several documents concerning guidelines were reviewed and feedback was formulated. This included CPR guidelines, the protocol for the Development of Nurse-led Clinics in Rheumatology, voluntary work guidelines, and midwifery national legislation while liaising with respective key persons.

ONCOLOGY NURSING SERVICES

Development of Oncology Nursing Services

In view of current and prospective health care needs, trends and direction of the Maltese Population currently or potentially using nursing services, the Directorate Nursing Services foresees the increasing relevance of nursing in the Oncology arena.

In this perspective, a staff nurse with a particular interest in the field was recruited in September 2006, so as to assume the role of developing oncology nursing services. Work that has been done in this respect since then included establishing contact primarily with the Oncology Department. This was with the aim of initiating a working and collaborative rapport where needs of various stakeholders are assessed, so that this area of care is further developed.

Development will include the provision of a structural and process framework whence quality cancer nursing care can be maintained, delivered and improved. Preliminary contacts have been made, and work is being done with individual managers and nurses concerned, that can provide insight and input in this endeavour.

Malta and the European Oncology Nursing Society

A leading European Oncology Nursing Society (EONS) was contacted in October 2006 and negotiations commenced. Concessions were given to nurses from Malta to be observers in the first Masterclass in Oncology Nursing to be held in Malta, during February-March 2007. To date nine observers have been conceded this opportunity, while on the initiative of this Directorate, four other nurses interested and motivated in this area of care were accepted as participants. Since topics to be covered are in line with Malta's most common cancers, discussions, updates, workshops and messages are expected to be highly relevant to the nurses attending.

Continuing Professional Development

Continuing nursing education in cancer care will have support and commitment so as to provide nurses in Malta with courses relevant to this area in care. This would be in line with resources, priorities and also with other organisations that can be involved in providing this care. This Directorate has been approached to co-ordinate together with the IHC a short course in Oncology Nursing relevant to the current needs of nurses involved in this area of oncology care.

OTHER INITIATIVES

The Directorate and the Council for Nurses and Midwives

The Directorate Nursing Services was also involved in attending meetings where objectives of this Directorate and Council for Nurses and Midwives (Malta), were closely related. Regular attendance with Council for Nurses and Midwives meetings, as well as sub-committee meetings and attendance to Appeals Committee sessions was maintained, while co-ordination and collaboration with the Directorate Nursing Services from this Council is also maintained.

Retirement Event

Events that the Directorate Nursing Services is directly related to include upkeeping of records and database of nurses close to retirement age. A get-together was held on 3 February 2006 for 41 nurses and midwives, who retired during the year 2005. These nurses and midwives were presented with a certificate and souvenir by the Hon Minister of Health, Elderly and Community Care as well as Director Nursing Services, who also both addressed the occasion. This is the first time this event took place and it was very well received.

Continuing Professional Development

The commitment of the Directorate Nursing Services to maintain, develop and uplift the nursing profession, nursing services and nurses' work, reflect in various endeavours that the Directorate is involved with. Such was the initiative regarding Nurses' Continuous Professional Development (CPD). The CPD agreement came into affect as from 1 June 2006. This Directorate was not only involved with agreement processes but also in much of its initial execution of registration of applications. There were a total of 1,282 applications registering CPD activities during October, November and December 2006 while 168 applicants have had their request for reimbursement approved.

Organisation of a Two-day Conference

Staff at the DNS organised a two-day conference in March 2006 addressing various issues and areas of practice. The conference entitled: *Developing Nursing Strategy through Consultation*, outlined the areas to be addressed to develop a nursing strategy for Malta and Gozo. It included a thirty-minute presentation entitled *Developing Nursing in Primary Health Care – A logical Path* and a workshop *Primary Health Care – The Challenges Ahead*. The purpose of the presentation and workshop was to serve primarily as part of the consultation process such a project requires. It also gave the opportunity to network with other fields of nursing, providing a dynamic and comprehensive perspective on how to move forward.

A theme of the conference addressed the EN to SN conversion course. A paper was prepared addressing the present EN to SN conversion courses entitled *The philosophy of unconditional positive regard*, with talks from nurses who completed the course. Presentations in the plenary speeches included students' experiences of the course and a sample of students' work during the course.

The Quarterly Newsletter

The Link a quarterly newsletter set up, edited, and distributed through this Directorate had Issues 12, 13, and 14 cover various topics in Nursing. Various contributions from arenas of research and professional development were included in these issues.

Maltese version for the Directorate Title

The Director Nursing Services, together with the *Kunsill Nazzjonali għall-Ilsien Malti* established the Maltese version of the title of the Directorate, such that *Direttorat għas-Servizzi Infermeristiċi* (DSI) to be the standard official title in Maltese.

Research with the World Health Organisation

In a WHO European Strategy for Nursing and Midwifery Education, including the standardisation of nurse education across borders, this Directorate has been involved with sending out and collecting data through questionnaires looking at a Prospective Analysis of Nursing/Midwifery Education. Meetings with various Chief Nursing Officers across Europe were attended in Copenhagen in December 2005, and collaboration between countries was established in this regard.

The Pandemic Contingency Plan

All those at the Directorate contributed and collaborated in a project focusing on the Human Resources Contingency Pandemic Plan for the Maltese Islands. A plan covering areas of expertise and relevant topics significant to the Contingency Plan was formulated and approved and is being endorsed as part of the current Pandemic Contingency Plan.

MANPOWER PLAN

The Director Nursing Services has completed a report entitled Nurse Workforce Projections 2007-2020. The report projects the nursing workforce needed to cater for services provision for 2007-2020.

During 2006, 39 nurses retired, 13 nurses and one midwife resigned, four nurses were boarded out while one nurse and one midwife passed away. A total of 92 recently qualified nurses and five midwives were recruited. Regular contact is maintained with all Hospitals and Departments and every month each area is requested to forward a monthly audit of nursing and midwifery activity to facilitate the maintenance of an accurate database and monitor attrition, current and future projections.

The manpower requirements of elderly homes are being evaluated and it is planned that an assessment and rehabilitation team will assess elderly dependency and therefore will provide a foundation to evaluate the workload and needs. A similar exercise is being considered to be done within the Primary Health Care Department in relation to Nurses and Midwives.

Specialist Posts

Specialist Nurse and Midwifery Positions allocated during 2006 included Resuscitation Nurse, two Stoma Care Nurses and Continence Nurse Advisor.

Parliamentary Questions

During the year 2006, the Directorate Nursing Services received and replied to 13 parliamentary questions.

ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS ABROAD

The Director Nursing Services attended the following events abroad in 2006:

- two meetings of the European Nurses Federation (FEPI), in Brussels regarding the Regulation of the Nursing Profession and Public Health Protection on 12-13 January and on 19 July;
- a meeting for European Union (EU) Chief Nursing Officers in Thessaloniki on 12-13 October;
- a Global meeting for Chief Nursing Officers held in Atlanta, USA on 29 October 29 – 4 November. The Director was invited to speak about the experience of a Government chief nurse.

OFFICIAL BOARDS

The Director Nursing Services is a member of the following boards/committees:

- the Bioethics Committee and an ex-officio member of the Council for Nurses and Midwives and Gender Mainstreaming for the Health Division;
- working groups for the drafting of non-communicable disease strategy for Malta and Cancer Strategy for Malta;
- the European Working Group, of the WHO, of Government Chief Nurses in relation to standards of nursing education across Europe;
- the European Federation of Nursing Regulations (FEPI), working group to establish standards of nursing education across the European Union and also a member of the working group about nursing regulation across the EU.

The Director Nursing Services is Chairperson of the IHC Diploma Nursing Board of Studies and Degree Nursing Board of Studies, and Mental Health Studies; and the EN-SN Conversion Course Board of Studies.

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

Developments of Services

Various developments have taken place in primary setting particularly in staff training and professional development including basic areas of updating and training such as basic life support and new initiatives as nurse-led clinics. A hypertension nurse-led clinic is currently running at the Floriana Health Centre, while a check-up project was launched as a health awareness initiative at B’Kara Health Centre.

DEVELOPMENTS AT HOSPITAL OR DEPARTMENTAL LEVEL

Sir Paul Boffa Hospital

- Four newly-qualified staff nurses were allocated to SPBH.
- Nursing staff development occurred namely in the Department of Dermatology and that of Oncology. Issues regarding dermatological conditions and wound management both local and abroad were addressed, while both departments participated in presentation sessions.
- One nurse is currently undergoing a diploma in dietetics.

Gozo General Hospital

- Five nurses were trained as assessors in the IV administration course.
- Courses held included the Basic Life Support-Provider and Automated Defibrillation Course, the administration of Cytotoxic Chemotherapy; an intensive 10-day course in Baromedicine funded from the EU Regional Development. Other educational activities involved health care staff and the general public. Sessions on Clinical Audit and Data Protection in the Health Sector were carried out.
- British National Formulary Books for reference by health care workers were purchased.
- A committee with the main aim of organising social activities for Elderly and Psychiatric patients was set up within the hospital.

St Luke's Hospital and Mater Dei Hospital (SLH & MDH)

Meetings

The Directorate's responsibility includes induction of new nursing staff, staff development and in-service training, while issues of deep involvement include, manpower planning of nursing services of Mater Dei Hospital (MDH), the production of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for nurses in the new hospital and in the migration process.

Meetings between Directorate officials and Managers and staff of other directorates were held on a regular basis on issues related to change management, Mater Dei Hospital manpower planning, policy and migration sequence, the opening of the Medical Admission Unit (MAU), preparation for the pandemic flu, bed states, ward practices including the upkeep of the Patient Administration System (PAS), and Controlled Drug policy.

Discussion with other sectors such as outsourcing part of cleaning service, as well as with pharmacy and laboratory management to discuss their supporting role in the Mater Dei Hospital migration were carried out, while the Director Nursing Services (SLH & MDH) held regular meetings with the Executive Management Committee and Migration Committee.

Preparation for Migration to Mater Dei Hospital

Besides various meetings and discussion by senior nursing management, a number of working groups and meetings were organised to familiarise staff with the new hospital and to receive feedback. Formal presentations are being delivered by the PDNs to all staff regarding the Pneumatic Tube System and Nurse Call System while other presentations are being prepared on other issues related to new equipment and systems that shall be in use in Mater Dei Hospital.

Meetings between Departmental Nursing Manager meetings and Migration Project Manager discussed Standard Operating Procedures, Man Power Planning, and Migration Plans while meetings with the Malta Union Of Midwives and Nurses (MUMN) have also started to ensure there is agreement with current proposals before their implementation.

Introduction of Bed Management Team

A new Bed Management Team (BMT) was introduced, composed of a Departmental Nursing Manager designated as the Bed Manager (BM), and a Discharge Facilitating Team (DFT) composed of the Area Service Leader for Social Work, an Assistant Principal Physiotherapist, and a Senior Occupational Therapist. The team's main responsibility is to ensure beds are available for the hospital's admission and transfer needs and endeavours to achieve this through a number of ways, including making arrangements for the discharge of patients with social problems and a general reduction in length of stay.

New Appointments

In 2006 five Departmental Nursing Managers (DNM) were newly appointed, while around 50 nurses joined the rest of staff at SLH. This addition was much needed and made a considerable difference to staffing levels.

Courses and Conferences

Continuing professional development occurred across all levels of staff including DNS (SLH & MDH) and DNM's. The Director Nursing Services (SLH & MDH) and the Departmental Nursing Managers attended a three-day residential workshop on *Management and Leadership in the Health Sector*, providing an

excellent opportunity for networking with managers of other disciplines and enhancing conflict resolution in future inter-professional meetings.

Other CPD courses and sessions involved several Nursing Officers and Deputy Nursing Officers while a number of staff attended courses such as EN-SN conversion and diploma to degree courses, post qualification diplomas, and master's degrees. Nurses also completed short courses such as those organised by the Staff Development Organisation (SDO), while other conferences both local and abroad, seminars and study days were utilised by staff as different methods of professional development.

Obstetrics and Gynaecology Department

- Numerous members of staff in this department are undergoing courses including master, bachelor, and diploma levels. Shorter courses are also being pursued by midwives and other educational opportunities such as conferences.
- Seven midwives and five nurses have been employed on casual basis.

Mount Carmel Hospital

- **Opening of New Unit:** This last year was marked with the opening of a geriatric unit St Jeanne Antide Ward that has a complement of 34 patients. This serves as a transit unit between St Luke's Hospital and other services/residences and provides a service for senior citizens. The Directorate Nursing Services was directly involved in the identification of nursing staff for the ward.
- **New Wards, Initiatives and Refurbishment:** Total refurbishment of one of the Female wards was carried out, while management together with the nursing staff of the same ward agreed on Ward Management guidelines. Changes were effected to bring all the medicine cupboards up to standard requirements in line with the Controlled Drugs Policy. The hospital nursing management also took an active part in the meetings/seminars on the National Action plan on Health and Long Term Care and the Influenza Pandemic contingency plan.
- **Staff Development:** A first group of nurses graduated in Mental Health Nursing while another two more groups are attending similar courses. An association with the main aim of improving patient care is being set up. Drafting of Risk Assessment at Mount Carmel Hospital was carried out, six nurses are following EN-SN conversion courses and the Worker of the Year award was given to a nursing member of staff within the MCH.
- **Training in Mental Health:** Three more members of the nursing staff have joined this unit.

St Vincent de Paule Residence

- Various members of nursing staff are following courses including EN-SN conversion course, masters in nursing, health service management diploma, and other post-registration courses, and conferences.
- Three large blocks with female residents were closed while another three blocks were opened; 144 residents were transferred over three consecutive mornings, and considerable planning and care was given to the smooth running execution of this move.
- Residents have been helped with programmes for mobility and increased ambulation measures, while many activities including social activities have increased. Cooking of special Maltese dishes is encouraged and well participated in by residents, while other activities such as outings and tombola add enjoyment to many residents. Visits such as those carried out by girl guides were encouraged and calendar events such as Good Friday, Christmas and important events are celebrated and accompanied with outings. Nursing staff is becoming more aware of the significance of giving holistic care to residents.
- **New Introduction:** A colour-coded system for trolleys and cleaning was introduced; wall-mounted dispensers, alcohol hand rub were introduced in each room; hand moisturising lotion and pill crushers were also utilised in the wards; spontaneous on-the-ward assessments on infection control were carried out.

NURSING SPECIALTIES

Specialties in nursing cover various aspects of care and are spread across the Maltese Islands, differing health care settings and aspects of care.

Infection Control

Co-ordination of services was facilitated through certain procedural changes such as informing infection control nurses outside SLH of results indicating multi drug organism resistance. In addition, there is now direct access to the microbiology database. Education sessions were carried out with various nurses across numerous units and hospitals while the procurement of equipment, waste management systems and facilitation for infection control practice was emphasised. Total needle stick injuries totalled 184 in 2006.

Regular meetings with nurses and other staff concerned with infection control were carried out. Challenges identified included improvement in insertion and maintenance of peripheral lines, reduction in MRSA carriage rates for babies at the nursery or SCBU, and controlling outbreaks of infection together with other health care professionals.

Domestic Cleaning Audits including waste handling and disposal audits were carried out every three months.

Ophthalmic Nurse

The main role was in the day-to-day running of the eye bank. The current waiting list for corneal transplant is 12, while waiting lists for cataract operations are long. Meetings with nurse managers were carried out and recommendations put forward.

EXPANSION OF SERVICES

- **Clinical Nutrition Services:** An average of 350 new patients on enteral nutrition were recorded, of whom 40 were new in respect to parenteral nutrition. Patients sent home with total parenteral nutrition (TPN) involved a process of education and supervision of patients and relatives.
- **Service of Nutrition Services in Home Setting:** Insertion of low profile gastrostomy kits in clinical and home setting were carried out. Relatives of patients were included in training for this procedure in the home setting.
- **Haematology Nursing:** A point of contact system has been developed and introduced where patients can decide to directly contact the haematology nurse. Patient education, staff education including nurses at the Gozo General Hospital, and the development of a database system are some of the major roles in this area of care. Current problems include lack of a space for privacy in communicating with clients, lack of funding, and storage space and also manpower. New initiatives include Chemotherapy Administration Guidelines and others such as Hickman line care and maintenance.
- **Breast Feeding Walk-In clinic:** This Clinic has increased its workload since last year and the number of mothers visiting the clinic was 1,197. Further advice is given over the help line with over 2,500 calls recorded.
- **Bereavement Midwifery Service:** Individual Support Services given to 57 persons suffering miscarriage, 28 of whom required intensive support; 26 persons dealing with perinatal death, 15 of whom required intensive support; 48 other persons with need of support, 35 of whom required intensive support. A help line was established while meetings with staff and student midwives were carried out. Teamwork with other organisations and departments was also carried out.
- **Research in Breast-feeding Practices:** Practice Development Midwife Initiatives and developments included a programme organised together with the IHC, a course repeated twice due to high demand. A breast-feeding study is currently being carried out covering the first six months of life. A sample of 405 mothers was selected for the study.

INSTITUTE OF HEALTH CARE

The Institute of Health Care (IHC) is committed to the provision of, and involvement in, continuing professional development of nurses. New and ongoing courses are part of nurses' initiatives and agenda in all areas of care. 10 short courses were offered throughout 2006. The IHC has 30 full time staff, 21 part-timers and around 400 students.

Ongoing Courses

Four courses were being run in the Diploma in nursing, and another four courses offering a BSc degree in Nursing. Three courses are being run offering a BSc degree in Midwifery. Two courses are currently offering a Diploma-degree mental health nursing, while two courses offering a Masters in Nursing/Midwifery are also currently being offered.

PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT NURSES

The Secondary Care Setting holds practice development nurses in the following areas of various accident and emergency (A&E), Obstetrics and Gynaecology (Obs. & Gynae), Surgical, Medical and Orthopaedic areas of care.

Initially in the year, work concentrated on development of training initiatives in clinical area and organisation of educational activities. With the focus shifting to migration preparation and process to Mater Dei Hospital (MDH), work related to these issues.

Overview

Surgical practice development of staff focused on theory and practice issues, while orthopaedic practice development included programmes, sessions, and assessments in orthopaedic care. The first international Orthopaedic Nursing conference was held in 2006 in Malta through major work and activity of the Orthopaedic Practice Development Nurse.

Continuing Professional Development programmes, substance misuse mother and child, educational sessions and observational experience were opportunities given to nursing staff in these areas of care. The medical update programme was reviewed, charts and guidelines revised and/or updated. New nurses were introduced to the induction programme provided.

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The main function of the Department of Finance and Administration is to render financial and administrative support services to all the other departments which fall under the Health Division. Administrative and financial advice was given to the Permanent Secretary, the Director General (Health) and administrative directors of the Ministry of Health.

The areas falling under this Directorate are: Finance, Administration, Supplies & Services, Capital Projects and Transport.

This Directorate monitored on a monthly basis the Expenditure and Revenue of the Health Division. Continuous liaison was maintained with the Ministry of Finance during 2006. Monthly re-assessment of expenditure reports were sent to the Director (Budget Office), indicating the estimated shortfalls up to December 2006.

During 2006, total payments for drugs, medical devices and prosthetics reached Lm23,937,535. Arrears for drugs and medical devices as on 1 January 2007 were Lm12.3 million. Revenue in 2006 was Lm490,644,

a decrease of about 13.2% over 2005. Recurrent Expenditure increased from Lm77,779,219 in 2005 to Lm82,266,838 in 2006, a 5.7% increase.

Registry Services

The Registry Section serves as a distribution centre for departmental files, personal files and disciplinary files. Correspondence for both incoming and outgoing files is also channelled through central registry.

During 2006, incoming mail amounted to about 80,000 items. These were received from the general public, government departments, parastatal bodies, hospitals, outstations, local councils and other origins. Outgoing mail during 2006 amounted to 150,739 classified as:

Local Ordinary Mail	140,651
Local Departmental Mail	4,382
Local Registered Mail	2,236
Overseas Ordinary Mail	2,741
Overseas Registered Mail	729
Total	150,739

The Registry also keeps a record of all registered letters sent both locally and abroad as well as recording the amounts of the two daily consignments of mail dispatched.

The following circulars were also processed and distributed by the Registry Section, mostly by e-mail.

Office of the Prime Minister (MPO + OPM)	204 (144 + 60)
Ministry of Finance	3
Contracts Department	34
Treasury Department	5
Health Division (DH circulars)	356
Others – Memos	38

Moreover, 702 advertised calls for applications (600 for various posts and 102 for courses of study) were issued. The Registry opened another 3,216 new files during 2006. The Registry is also responsible for the custody of about 5,600 personal files together with 5,900 files of retired, deceased and recruited employees.

Transport

During 2006, the Transport Section received numerous requests for the use of cars from staff of the Health Division whilst the ambulance service was continuously on demand and gave a very efficient and timely service.

Most Motor Transport drivers' and ambulance drivers' vacancies were filled in November/December 2006. Repairs and maintenance services of the Division's transport were carried out by the garage staff and with the help of two students who are on an apprenticeship course. Total expenditure for spare parts during 2006 was 45,011. Expenditure for fuel was Lm93,748.

The ambulance service made 31,403 trips on emergency cases and lift vans and light cars made 18,814 trips to transport patients for treatment at hospitals and departmental staff during the course of their duties. During 2006, the transport section handled 20 collision reports.

Supplies and Services

During 2006 the Supplies and Projects Section of the Health Division published 174 departmental tenders. Another 28 tenders valued over the departmental limit of Lm20,000, were published through the Department of Contracts. A total of 46 quotations, estimated to cost below Lm2,500, were issued.

The Section issued 147 Letters of Acceptance in respect of departmental tenders and 33 Letters of Acceptance in respect of quotations whilst another 20 Letters of Acceptance were awarded on behalf of the Health Division by the Director General Contracts. 15 direct orders were placed. The contracts awarded were for the procurement of medical and non-medical equipment, provisions, store material, capital projects, refurbishment of various wards and repairs and service agreements for St Luke's Hospital, Public Health Department and Primary Health Care Centres and all other departments falling under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health, the Elderly and Community Care.

Apart from these tenders, the General Stores processed thousands of requisitions for the procurement of equipment, general store items, spares and repair and servicing of equipment. These were procured through the issue of quotations and/or direct from the open market when the amount involved was minimal. During the year in review, the Supplies and Projects Section transferred its offices at G'Mangia to make way for the new Blood Donations Unit.

Salaries Section

The Section's primary function is the payment of personal emoluments on a four-weekly basis. This task entails a considerable amount of preparatory work, culminating in the inputting of adjustments according to established procedures and timeframes, thus ensuring that specific targets and deadlines are met.

During 2006, the Health Department's Personal Emoluments Expenditure amounted to:

Item	Totals (Lm)
1110 – Holders of Political Office	30,279
1210 – Salaries	29,546,455
1310 – Bonus	551,280
1410 – Income Supplement	478,040
1510 – Social Security Contribution	3,212,861
1610 – Allowances	8,292,528
1710 - Overtime	1,086,038
Total	43,197,481

The Salaries Section performs a number of associated functions, essential for the smooth running of the Division. It contributes towards the formulation of the Departmental Business Plan (Personal Emoluments Vote) and submits monthly financial reports on a regular basis. It is responsible for the continuous monitoring of the Department's financial position, the monthly expenditure trend, fund status and the anticipated cost of the various items constituting the Personal Emoluments Vote. Such reports have a direct bearing on the submission of requests for additional funds to the Department of Finance or the redistribution of funds onto other votes if approved by the Ministry of Finance.

The Section may be described as an information hub, where the collation and segmentation of data forms an integral part of the routine. This process facilitates the formulation of various reports and provides a sound basis for analysis. It is responsible for the daily performance of numerous transactions involving the payment and recouping of funds and the preparation of draft replies to parliamentary questions. The Section also deals with numerous general and inter-departmental queries, including matters raised by employees deployed within the various departments of the Ministry of Health.

The Salaries Section operates concurrently and co-ordinates particular functions involving other paying sections within the government hospitals and the Department of Primary Health Care. In November 2006, in view of the plan to migrate back-office work of the Salaries Section to Gozo, five Gozitan employees have been deployed to the Section for training purposes. Progress of training is being monitored so that the transfer of back-office work may be effected in early March 2007.

Accounts Section

During 2006 the Accounts Section's task to effect payments for goods and services without delay and to provide monthly funds position reports and other financial statistical data to the various administrative directors within the Division continued to function smoothly. Data which is obtained by means of the Departmental Accounting System (DAS) is used to draw up necessary financial reports which are requested by the various directors. Such reports are used for the drawing up of cash flow, revised estimates and sometimes replies to various parliamentary questions.

Another important function performed by the Accounts Section is the drawing up, together with Salaries and Revenue Sections, of the quarterly accrual accounting report which is requested by the Ministry of Finance. Such report is also compiled by means of data provided by the DAS system.

During March the Accounts Section was split up in two separate sections - one Section to cater for the accounts of the department and the other one to cater for the accounts of St Luke's /Mater Dei Hospitals. The aim behind this move was to improve the accounting function of the Mater Dei Hospital when it is opened.

A total of 882 batches of payment vouchers, schedules and transfer and adjustment vouchers generated respectively by Accounts, Supplies, Salaries and Revenue sections within the Health Division were submitted by the section to Treasury Department for processing.

The table below shows recurrent expenditure for 2005 and 2006:

Item	2005 (Lm)	2006 (Lm)
Personal Emoluments	41,680,022	43,197,481
Operational & Maintenance	6,575,649	6,929,168
Special Expenditure	27,430	-
Programmes/Initiatives	22,547,246	23,125,518
Contributions to Govt. Entities	8,430,662	9,133,430
Total	79,261,009	82,385,597

Revenue Section

One of the main targets of this section for 2006 was to decrease the arrears of revenue. New billing policies regarding foreign patients requiring treatment at St Luke's Hospital were implemented with effect from 1 January 2006 whereby the billing section is responsible for the issuing of the invoices and for the follow-up action to recoup any outstanding amounts due from these foreign patients, while the Revenue Section is responsible for the follow-up action of outstanding debtors including hospital bills of foreign patients up to 2005. During 2006 an exercise was carried out at the Revenue Section and several past hospital bills were written off since all efforts from our end were in vain. Thousands of reminders were sent as follow-up action to these outstanding debtors and in some cases legal action was taken for the settlement of unpaid bills.

This section also issued other bills in respect of deratting exemption certificates, fines, licences, penalties, overpayments, examination and course fees, medical tests regarding certain employees and overtime performed by Health Inspectors in hotels.

All funds collected by various departments' outstations were sent to the Revenue Section where it was checked and entered in the main cash book. All cash together with local and foreign cheques was remitted daily to the Central Bank of Malta.

Two imprest accounts are held at the revenue section and these serve for paying petty cash directly from these funds.

Refunds were effected to 3,069 persons who returned previously hired medical aids. All personal effects relating to deceased persons at St Luke's Hospital are received at the Revenue Section. During the year 120 personal belongings were received and action was taken to release these effects to their respective relatives on the legal consultant's advice.

During the year swipe card transactions amounted to Lm43,342.

The sum of Lm242,913 was deposited in the Below the line Accounts as follows:

Item Below the Line A/C	Lm
Conversion course	6,591
Receipts obo other departments	3,588
Deposits re sale of graves	119,900
Loans of Medical Aids	59,386
Monies received by NBTC	3,695
Pharmacy Council	6,496
Public Health Fees	38,007
Medical Spec. Acc. Comm.	3,640
Appeals Committee	1,610
Total	242,913

Total Revenue collected for 2006 amounted to Lm490,644. From January 2006 onwards, pharmacy licences were collected by the Medicines Authority and not by the Revenue Section. The table below shows a breakdown of the revenue collected during 2006.

Revenue by Item	Lm
Miscellaneous Licences	17,744
Attest, Certificates, Permits	3,889
Miscellaneous Fees	34,500
Services to 3 rd parties	20,944
Ambulance and Funeral Expenses	2,701
Sale of medicines	114,317
Hospital Fees	261,024
Sale of Graves/Gravesites	1,971
Miscellaneous Receipts	33,554
Total	490,644

The Revenue Section collected a total amount of Lm733,457 – Lm242,813 deposited in the Below the Line Account and Lm490,644 as Revenue.

GOVERNMENT PHARMACEUTICAL SERVICES

The Government Pharmaceutical Services is responsible for managing the procurement, storage and distribution of over 10,000 pharmaceuticals and medicinal devices within the National Health Service, in a timely, quality-approved and cost-effective manner, in line with financial regulations and current legislation. Moreover, ongoing collaboration with other departments has continued, in an active effort to incessantly ameliorate the services provided.

Furthermore, the policy of GPS is to promote family-friendly measures, and the approval of maternity leave, parental leave, responsibility leave, and employees on reduced hours has continued; always taking in consideration the need of GPS to continue providing an efficient and cost-effective service.

NATIONAL FORMULARY MANAGEMENT SECTION

Activities of the NFM

The duties of NFM pharmacists include:

- checking and updating of specifications;
- adjudication of offers and recommendations based on information submitted with offers and from the Medicines Authority;
- attendance at Contracts Committee Purchasing Section meetings;
- dealing with problems arising during the procurement process with the necessary input of other sections including the purchasing and contracts section and stores;
- release of items; and
- dealing with complaints, rapid alerts and batch recalls.

Using the presently available IT system and other available software, progress has been made in improving the processing and availability of information and data emanating from the computerised stores and distribution system for use by the NFM section as well as for the benefit of clients.

Releases

Senior pharmacists released more than 4,630 batches of medicinal products from quarantine after confirming that all the necessary requirements were met. Plans are in hand to make use of a new custom-made IT program which will improve the input and retrieval of data regarding releases of products.

DDA's Store

The DDA stores' stock take was carried out in the second week of January 2006. The total number of requisitions amounted to 284 and the total number of items issued amounted to 2,156.

During this period there were 84 consignments delivered to the DDA stores. A number of these consignments involved the direct collection from Customs by the NFM pharmacists.

Green Prescriptions

During 2006, the unit continued receiving green prescriptions from government and retail pharmacies, which were processed, filed and for which receipts were issued.

Direct Importation

During 2006 circa 33% of the pharmaceuticals bought by GPS were directly imported from different suppliers; mainly from the UK. Some of these pharmaceuticals were imported directly on more than one occasion.

Importation from Non-EU Countries and from Manufacturers

A number of pharmaceuticals originating from non-EU countries were also purchased during 2006.

Interface Unit

This Unit has been assimilated further within the NFM Section. The section addresses customer care issues, the management of out-of-stock items and the urgent processing of orders. The remit of the Unit comprises the daily monitoring of received goods and out-of-stock items throughout the whole NHS system, monitoring of quarantine items, the effective management of redistribution of items between clients so that urgent patients' needs may be fulfilled, management of information pertaining to deleted items,

liaison with the Drugs and Therapeutics Committee and the Clinical Section within SLH regarding the procurement and receipt of new items and collation of statistical data.

OFFICE OF THE RESPONSIBLE PERSON

The Office of the Responsible Person (RP) within the Government Pharmaceutical Services started operations during April 2006. The mission of the RP office is to ensure that GPS procures, stores, and distributes quality pharmaceuticals and medical equipment according to current National and EU legislation. This section also supports the GPS' regulatory affairs framework.

Setting up the Office of the Responsible Person

The RP office is an offspring of the previously QP (Qualified Person) office. During this transition documentation has been collated and archived, unfinished tasks identified and a master plan devised for the operations under the modified mission statement and as per updated legislation. The modified mission statement has been publicised with the involved parties within GPS.

Self-inspection

During the month of May 2006 a self-inspection of the Guardamangia stores was carried out in phases, using the current Guidelines on Good Distribution Practice.

Quality System and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

Following the self-inspection, the quality system has been put under review, the various processes have been looked into and modified accordingly, available SOPs reviewed and a number of new SOPs had to be drafted and are in the process of authorisation. The requirement of new processes has been identified and a methodology initiated for each.

Routine Tasks

Batch recalls and drug/device alerts

Batch recalls and drug alerts received from the Medicines Authority amounted to 43, these were treated according to the specified SOP and processed within the time frame specified according to the relevant classes of alert. Two out of the 43 cases necessitated the recall and replacement of stock from GPS clients.

During 2006 this office has started to maintain a database with records dating back from 2004.

Medical Device and Medicinal Product Defect Reports

GPS has a system of processing quality defects from its clients. During this year 12 cases have been reported and investigated, few of which resulted in actual quality defects.

Projects

Acceptability form application

Preparatory meetings were held during August 2006 with senior pharmacists to identify the requirements in creating a unique, secure and server-based database that maintains Regulatory Affairs data on pharmaceuticals procured by GPS and released for distribution by the senior pharmacists. The criteria governing the database were the current national and EU legislation and regulations on GDP and Regulatory issues. This application has been devised by the Health Information Service.

Migration to Mater Dei

The migration of the Inpatients Pharmacy, the Out-patients Pharmacy and MMMU (Medical Materials Management) from St Luke's Hospital to Mater Dei is expected in the second quarter of 2007. The Pharmacies and MMMU are the two major GPS clients, thus meetings and site visits have been carried out to identify equipment and logistical requirements for the efficient distribution of stock to the pharmacy department and the MMMU.

Data Protection

Since the GPS holds data of clients, suppliers and employees it is involved in the Data Protection Act and the Public Service Data Protection Officers' forum, and a data protection policy has recently been drafted.

Marsa Stores Refurbishment

The leased Marsa stores are being studied from a GDP point of view, and a plan is underway to identify any critical or major deficiencies in attaining standards. These deficiencies shall be monitored and corrective action will be taken as required

CONTRACTS SECTION

This section is responsible for issuing contracts for the purchase of drugs, medical equipment (together with prosthetics and orthotics), and general items, either through tender or by direct order. GPS Contracts' Section also co-ordinates procurement by Direct Order for purchases below and over the value of Lm2,500.

The following table indicates the number, type and value of the tenders and direct orders generated by GPS for the procurement of drugs, medical equipment and general items during 2006:

Government Pharmaceutical Services: Letters of Acceptance Issued during 2006		
<i>Number Issued by Category</i>	Total number issued	753
	Drugs	359
	Equipment	388
	General	6
<i>Number Issued through</i>	Treasury (Contracts' Dept)	112
	Departmental	473
	D/O via tender	168
<i>Cost by Category</i>	Drugs	Lm 6,608,903
	Equipment	Lm 4,480,184
	General	Lm 31,044
	Total Cost	Lm 11,120,131

* Amount in Malta Liri is an estimate since in various instances awards issued are in foreign currencies.

TENDERS, QUOTATIONS AND PROFORMA INVOICES PROCESSED BY GPS

The GPS purchasing sections operates in terms of the Government Financial Regulations, in order to purchase supplies of pharmaceuticals, medical devices and general supplies. Use is made of the GPS website in order to advertise the various requests made for the purchase of such items.

Statistical information regarding tenders, quotations and proforma invoices processed during 2006	
Tenders issued via Contracts Dept.	156
GPS Departmental tenders	860
D/O via GPS Dept. tender (ex-MST quotations)	311
Govt Gazette quotations	839
Proforma invoices requests placed on website	812
Direct proforma invoices requests	712

STORES

GPS purchases and stores approximately 10,000 medicines, foods, medical devices and disposables that are procured for use within the National Health Service.

Until August 2006, GPS made use of a 10,000 square metres warehouse, owned by Government, at Ta' Qali in which approximately 1500 euro pallets of pharmaceutical and medical devices have been stored. During 2006, GPS had to embark on a migration project when the Ta' Qali Stores were closed down. New stores were leased in the industrial area of Marsa, and the stock stored at Ta' Qali were transferred to the new destination. The RP section together with other sections at GPS were involved in various meetings at different levels within GPS and other departments in the selection of new premises, in the preparation of the selected premises, and in the transfer and logistics co-ordination, which process was carried out in a 3-month time frame. This was followed by the co-ordination of the actual transfer from the Ta' Qali Stores to the selected stores at Marsa of stock, equipment and other movables and the resumption of storage and distribution operations within a period of two weeks.

The GPS also has two other main stores situated at G'Mangia and Madliena. Stores form another vital part of the GPS operations. The efficiency in the running of this Section directly influences client satisfaction and timely availability of pharmaceutical supplies.

Stockholding

During 2006 GPS continued to reduce its stockholding, hence experiencing a further reduction in stock holding costs and expired supplies. The effect of this measure on the total yearly expenditure was almost completely offset by a considerable increase in consumption by GPS clients in particular of some major expensive drugs.

The following statistical information shows all the relevant monthly data regarding activities generated within the stores sections at G'Mangia, Ta' Qali and Madliena.

<i>Depot</i>	Goods received from suppliers	Goods issued to GPS clients	Items requested from all outposts	Transport Usage (inc. the door to door deliveries of CAPD good to patients)	
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Depot</i>	<i>Total</i>
G'Mangia F1 & F2	3,513	21,024	22,390	G'Mangia F1 & F2 & REC.	875
G'Mangia Equip.	6,562	-	-	G'Mangia Receiving	299
Ta' Qali/Marsa Pharmac.	748	18,105	5,998	Ta' Qali/Marsa Pharmac.	1,246
Ta' Qali/Marsa Equipment	373	5,663	4,655	Ta' Qali/Marsa Equipment	293
Madliena Conjoints	1,975	8,503	9,992	Madliena Conjoints	197
	13,171	53,295	43,035		2,910

FINANCE SECTION

The Finance Section within the GPS consists of two units:

The Accounts Payable Section is responsible for issuing payments to suppliers of pharmaceuticals and surgical materials, as well as Prosthetic and Orthotic equipment. Accounts Payable is involved in various payment transactions including letters of credit, inward bills for collection, telegraphic transfers, advance payments, local payments, etc, amounting to an average of Lm2.005 million per month. During the financial year 2006, Accounts Payable paid out all the budgetary provision of Lm24,062,248. Notwithstanding this, Accounts payable has been left with over Lm12,306,144 worth of arrears as at 1 January 2007.

The Management Accounts Section is responsible for the issue of payments to suppliers related to the administration of GPS. Management Accounts is mainly involved in amending commitments in DAS before Accounts Payable proceeds with payment. During the financial year 2006, the section paid out over Lm121,700 worth of payments. Payments issued during 2006 are shown in the following table:

Payments issued during 2006 <i>(to suppliers of pharmaceuticals, surgical material, prosthetic and orthotics)</i>		
Total Payments Effected	Average Payments Per Month	Arrear Charges
Lm24,062,248	Lm2,005,187	Lm12,306,144

The Finance Department also provided support and background information for reports, routine returns and *ad hoc* assignments. In 2006 it was actively involved in the management of shifting of stock from the Ta' Qali Stores to the newly leased Marsa Stores.

The Finance Department operated both a DAS and SAGE Line 100 accounting package. The work flow of the Finance Department includes reconciliation of suppliers statements, year to date balances for the GPS Dataset, monthly reports for pending commitments and invoices, billing to government-controlled hospitals, preparation of commitment forms for Contracts tenders and costing duties.

OTHER INITIATIVES

Influenza Pandemic Plans

The GPS has in 2006 continued to be involved in the meetings of the National Influenza Pandemic Standing Committee. Stockpiling of pharmaceuticals, including the anti-virals specific for this disease, and disposables for use during any eventual pandemic outbreak has also continued throughout the year.

Euro Changeover

The GPS had various meetings and discussions with the appropriate authorities regarding the forthcoming euro changeover, with a view to being in a position of carrying out a smooth transition of its systems.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The information and statistics provided in this report convey numerical data with regard to the activities of the GPS throughout 2006, which data is indicative of the role of this department within the National Health Service.

It has been evident during the last years that there has been a continuous increase in the number of pharmaceuticals and medical devices purchased by GPS, as well as an evident increase in the total expenditure resulting from such purchases. For another consecutive year the expenditure of pharmaceuticals is higher than the cost of medical devices, the former cost being 71% of the total payments effected during 2006. Moreover, the total budgetary provision for the purchase of pharmaceuticals and medical devices has been increased once again.

DR RAY BUSUTTIL
Director General (Health)

Department for the Elderly and Community Care

The year 2006 continued with the provision of services in various care settings dedicated to the elderly sector. These settings include both the residential ones and also those in the community.

The total budget allocation for 2006 was of Lm495,000 for Capital Expenditure while Lm16,057,500 were allocated for the Recurrent Expenditure.

The Department has two Assistant Directors in its management set-up – one is to cater for the administration of St Vincent de Paule Residence while the other focuses on the Residential Homes for the Elderly and Community Care.

During 2006, the Department for the Elderly and Community Services had the following responsibilities:

- providing domiciliary services to enable the elderly person to remain living in familiar surroundings within the community;
- setting up and running of Day Centres in various localities to enable the elderly person to continue leading an active life in the community;
- providing rehabilitation services and the best possible conditions for health improvement in geriatric institutions;
- providing institutional residence to elderly persons who are unable to benefit from any of the foregoing services;
- providing modern facilities and services to the elderly persons, which help them remain independent; and
- commissioning of gerontology studies and educational facilities (training courses and participation in national and international conferences).

RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

St Vincent de Paule Residence

The main aim of the Residence remained, during the year under review, that of giving the elderly person who cannot live in the community, a better way of living in an attractive, comfortable and modern environment. During 2006, a lot has been done to attain this goal and where possible, have the residents' state ameliorated.

The fact that the average living age of the Maltese population is on the increase is reflected in the demand for admission to the Residence. An Admission Board vets all applications and each application is treated on its own merits, giving special attention to the social and medical conditions of the individual. The major problem during the last year has been the considerable number of social cases referred from St Luke's Hospital.

At the end of 2005, the total population at St Vincent de Paule stood at 1,025 made up of 338 males and 687 females while the population at the end of 2006 stood at 1,014 consisting of 334 males and 680 females. This shows a slight decrease over the previous year.

Bed Complement for SVPR – 2006		
<i>Admitted from</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
Community	24	50
Homes	7	11
Respite	41	82
SLH	61	49
ZCH	10	18
MCH	3	0
MCH ST. JA.	0	17
SPBH	1	0
Admission from Respite	2	11
Total	149	238

To cater for the accommodation, services and well-being of all residents, the modernisation and upkeep of the residence had to be ongoing. For this reason, during the year under review, several projects have been undertaken or completed.

Major Projects

The major project during 2006 was the completion and inauguration of Mother Theresa Block with 108 beds. Besides this, there has been an ongoing programme of refurbishment, modernisation and redecoration of wards to upkeep the standards of the Residence and services. These included:

- Construction works on two lift shafts at the Administration Block
- Installation of a new A/C System at Male Wards 5/6
- Preparation of tender documents for the installation of a new A/C System at Male Wards 7/8
- Opening of a new premises for the Day Clinic, Ophthalmic Clinic and Dental Clinic
- Completion of the restoration works on the façade of the Main Chapel
- Procurement of two second-hand vehicles with tail lift
- Preparation works for the laying of a new water main
- Restoration works on the belfry of the Main Chapel
- New Electrical Installation for Male Wards 5/6 and 7/8
- Procurement of new Heated Food Trolleys
- Completion of the overhaul at the Main Kitchen
- Dismantling of services from the ex-new block (Female 15/16, 1/2/3/4)
- Installation of new roof water tanks for better water supply to Female Wards 11/12
- Preparation of tender documents for the installation of a new A/C System at Wards 13/14 and 15/16
- Completion of works and opening of a new Activity Centre
- Replace all water culverts at the female courtyard
- Replace all drainage pipes at Ruzar Briffa Complex
- New parking area for doctors.

Information Technology Section

During 2006, the IT Section and its stores continued with procurement, stocking and issuing of hardware, software, consumables and cleaning material related to computer equipment. Since the setting up of this section, expenditure on these items has decreased considerably.

Physiotherapy Services

As in the previous years, the Physiotherapy Department continued to provide its services to its clients. Services provided are:

- *Residential Care Services:* A new in-patient service required was the geriatric ward opened at MCH, Jean Antide Ward. This 29-bed female ward is a transient ward admitting patients from SLH before their transfer to SVPR. The need of PT service in this ward varies according to the rate of patient admissions and transfers. On average it requires 20 hours of services.

SVPR inpatient services were routinely provided. With the increasing dependency and morbidity levels of the residents, the role of PT is gradually changing. The need is becoming more focused on advice on the management of a dependent older person with multiple disabilities and less on the acute rehabilitation of the patient. To ensure that all the residents receive the appropriate care, PTs screen regularly all the residents for their mobility skills and mobility independence needs.

The Residential Homes are another source of PT services. Here the demand is increasing owing to the greater dependency of the residents and the increased reliance on the rehabilitation services provided there with earlier discharge from acute and rehabilitation institutions. The number of PTs on this service has been increased to 1.75 whole time equivalent.

- *Out-patient Services:* As in previous years, this service is available to patients over 60 years. Transport is provided by SVPR to those unable to use private conveyance.
- *Domiciliary Services:* The statistical data on this service, in comparison to 2005, shows that the demand and supply for this service has actually doubled. This again reinforces the need of more community-based services for the older people.
- *Health Promotion:* More Day Centres were opened this year. Also, apart from the normal invitations from Government Day Centres, this year saw an influx of invitations for educational programmes to the older people from NGOs.

SVPR Inpatient Physiotherapy Services									
	No. of Patient Referrals			No. of Patients on Treatment			No. of Treatment Sessions		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Year Total	289	490	779	515	1,032	1,547	1,989	3,912	5,901

SVPR Physiotherapy Services in Statutory Residential Homes									
	No. of Patient Referrals			No. of Patients on Treatment			No. of Treatment Sessions		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Year Total	38	135	173	116	514	630	163	918	1,081

SVPR Out-patient Physiotherapy Services									
	No. of Patient Referrals			No. of Patients on Treatment			No. of Treatment Sessions		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Year Total	91	157	248	225	465	690	652	1,454	2,106

SVPR Domiciliary Physiotherapy Services									
	No. of Patient Referrals			No. of Patients on Treatment			No. of Treatment Sessions		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Year Total	13	24	37	31	68	99	57	115	172

Occupational Therapy Services

The work delivered by the occupational therapists is as follows:

- *Residential Services:* all older persons being admitted at SVPR are assessed by an occupational therapist to identify any areas where rehabilitation is needed. The occupational therapist is part of the Rehabilitation Team and so attends ward rounds as necessary. Home visits are also arranged for older persons prior to returning home if function has improved during their stay at SVPR.
- *Groups:* Occupational Therapists carry out a number of group activity sessions ranging from high mobility groups, reminiscence groups, discussion groups, creative groups, to groups for specific conditions such as dementia.

The emphasis on input given by Occupational Therapists on the Psychogeriatric wards was maintained throughout 2006.

The Activity Centre within the OT Department offers therapeutic activities such as cane, rugwool, woodwork and various handcrafts such as knitting, sewing and crochet. Through these activities, the older person achieves not only hand on arm function, but learns how to remain active mentally, how to function socially and maintains a high self-esteem.

- *Social Activities*: Occupational Therapists try to help older persons at SVPR to remain part of society as much as possible; therefore they organise or take part in activities outside the residence.
- *Out-patients*: there has been a marked increase in the number of home visits for out-patients, since these are referred from day centres specifically to assess the safety of their home settings. This could be possible after older persons are becoming aware of the services offered through the Health Promotion programmes of the day centres.
- *Community Services*: these services are carried out in the Residential Homes for the Elderly and day centres.

<i>SVPR Services - Direct Resident Contact (1 Unit = 15 minutes)</i>										
	<i>No. of Residents</i>	<i>No. of Treatment Sessions</i>	<i>Units of Treatment Sessions</i>	<i>No. of Group Sessions</i>	<i>Units of Group Sessions</i>	<i>No. of Assessments</i>	<i>Units of Assessments</i>	<i>No. of Reviews</i>	<i>Units of Reviews</i>	<i>Total Units</i>
Totals	4,434	3,152	6,199	404	3,824	620	2,130	3,023	3,367	15,520

<i>Activity Centre (1 Unit = 15 minutes)</i>									
	<i>No. of Residents</i>	<i>No. of New Residents</i>	<i>No. of Group Sessions (a.m.)</i>	<i>No. of Units</i>	<i>No. of Group Sessions (p.m.)</i>	<i>No. of Group Sessions - Wards (p.m.)</i>	<i>No. of Units</i>	<i>Transport (Units)</i>	<i>Total Units</i>
Totals	971	61	662	5,296	244	76	2,361	1,077	8,734

<i>Out-patients (1 Unit = 15 minutes)</i>											
	<i>No. of Out-patients</i>	<i>No. of Treatment Sessions</i>	<i>No. of Units</i>	<i>No. of Assessments</i>	<i>No. of Units</i>	<i>No. of Home Visits</i>	<i>No. of Units</i>	<i>Contacts + Liaison (Units)</i>	<i>Transport (Units)</i>	<i>Documentation (Units)</i>	<i>Total Units</i>
Totals	77	194	682	5	32	14	122	73	683	38	1,630

<i>Community Homes - Direct Resident Contact (1 Unit = 15 minutes)</i>										
	<i>No. of Residents</i>	<i>No. of Treatment Sessions</i>	<i>Units of Treatment Sessions</i>	<i>No. of Group Sessions</i>	<i>Units of Group Sessions</i>	<i>No. of Assessments</i>	<i>Units of Assessments</i>	<i>No. of Reviews</i>	<i>Units of Reviews</i>	<i>Total Units</i>
Totals	687	260	447	55	371	108	236	247	243	1,297

<i>Health Promotion Programmes for Day Centres/Church Centres/Local Council Groups (1 Unit = 15 minutes)</i>									
	<i>No. of Localities</i>	<i>No. of Lectures</i>	<i>No. of Units</i>	<i>No. of Participants</i>	<i>No. of Individual Sessions</i>	<i>No. of Units</i>	<i>Transport (Units)</i>	<i>Planning and Contacts (Units)</i>	<i>Total Units</i>
Totals	62	62	240	2,006	162	108	286	184	818

<i>Scheme 7 - Home Visits (1 Unit = 15 minutes)</i>							
	<i>No. of Home Visits</i>	<i>No. of Units</i>	<i>Contacts Units</i>	<i>Documentation Units</i>	<i>No. of Meetings</i>	<i>No. of Units</i>	<i>Total Units</i>
Totals	94	447	95	281	11	160	983

Speech Language Pathology Service

The aim of the SLP Unit at SVPR is to assess and treat inpatients with disorders, including language and communication difficulties and dysphagia as a result of acquired neurological disorders. The Unit also aims to maximise the communication potential of the clients in SVPR by identifying, modifying and enriching the communication environment in which the client resides.

<i>Speech Language Pathology Services</i>	
	Total
No. of days of service provided by SLPs	379
No. of clients on SLP register	1,393
No. of clients who attended group sessions	160
No. of clients who attended individual sessions	1,531
Total sessions attended	1,691
Ward Rounds	43
Case Conferences Attended	16
Workshops given by SLPs to SVPR staff	18
Meetings with family/carers	104
Meetings with other professionals	167

Entertainment Section

During the year under review, this section continued with its programme of activities so that the elderly person continues to enjoy his/her life to the full. In August 2006, an Entertainment Co-ordinator was engaged with the Department so as to organise the entertainment activities.

Several activities were carried out. These included religious, cultural, outings by the seaside and BBQs apart from the other activities that were done in the Theatre, as well as lectures, meetings, parties, invitations, traditional events, outdoor activities and other special occasions that were organised on regular basis.

Respite Care

Inpatient Respite Service is a service that is widely accepted as being an integral part of the community support package, the aim being to temporarily alleviate the burden on carers of older persons that are living within the community.

The main reasons to request Relief Admissions include: relief of carers under stress; to temporarily alleviate care; in cases where carers develop states of conflict of roles; and holiday admissions. Requests for respite care during 2006 were 224 (79 males; 145 females).

The range of duration at the Respite Unit over the past year ranged from a maximum of five weeks to a minimum of six days. Of the 224 applicants received during the year, 124 applicants ended up utilising the service. Of the remaining 100 applicants who did not utilise the service, 28 were found to be unsuitable for respite care, 13 had been admitted to another Home or hospital, 10 did not utilise the service as the beds were fully booked, 10 applied to be on the waiting list only; 9 applicants passed away prior to admission; and 30 cancelled their application prior to admission and no additional reason was given.

Infection Control Unit

During the year this Unit maintained its objectives of issuing policies regarding Infection Control practices and keeping staff well informed and updated with current issues. The Unit also gave ongoing advice and guidance to employees performing home visits to the elderly and those working in centres for persons with disabilities.

Ongoing meetings were held with the Medical, Nursing and Paramedical administration of the Residence to promote Infection Control standards amongst their personnel. Other meetings were carried out regarding the new colour-coded trolleys and the Pandemic Flu.

42 cases of MRSA were recorded together with 13 cases of Herpes Zoster, 1 case of Salmonella, 1 case of TB, 1 case of Hepatitis B, two cases of Pubic Lice, 1 case of Hepatitis C, 4 cases of Pseudomonas Aeurogenosa, 2 cases of E. Coli, 1 case of Clostridium Difficile and 1 case of Enterococcus Faecalis.

1,823 influenza vaccines were given to residents and staff at SVPR and 1,002 vaccines were given to residents and staff of Residential Homes. 166 Hepatitis B vaccines were also given to staff at SVPR and staff working at Elderly Homes.

New initiatives carried out in 2006 included: introduction of colour-coded cleaning system; introduction of hand moisturising lotion; vaccination programme for Hepatitis B for staff in Elderly Homes; setting up of a Pandemic Committee for SVPR; and setting up of an Infection Control Team for SVPR.

Assessment and Rehabilitation Team Programme

Care for older people in long-term residential settings includes a spectrum of services, which are set to meet the needs of clients according to the different levels of dependency. Such services range from warden supervised sheltered units for independent older people suffering mainly from social problems, to long-term hospital type of settings which aim to meet the needs of frail older people in need of high dependency care.

As in previous years, relocation and extra care services assessments and the exposure to a continuing education programme for staff were made available to all state community homes. On the other hand, post admission assessment and requests for medical and rehabilitative intervention were still being mainly restricted to Mtarfa Home.

Yet, this work continued to extend to all other homes. All this was subsequently analysed in the early months of 2006 and were published in a final document *The Five State Community Homes-Study - An Edited Report* which was presented to higher authorities. The aim was to obtain a better appraisal of contemporary needs in the residential settings under study.

During 2006, the AR Team was invited to participate in a new department initiative, that is, the Community Homes Administrative Working Group (CHAWG). The aim was to address issues on delivery of care, promoting a holistic approach to care, setting of standards, audit, and continuing education.

A final document on setting standards on admission to care has been set up. The committee has also approved the format of an *Incident Report Form* which is to be used to document any accidental incidents in the Homes.

During 2006, 8 Extra Care Services Assessments were performed – 4 at Żejtun and 4 at Bormla Homes. No visits were performed at Casa Serena as no residents were on ECS.

Also, the AR Team received 41 requests for relocation. As a result of assessment and appropriate rehabilitation, of these 41 cases, 29 (71%) were found to require relocation to an alternative care setting.

Besides, two educational activities in the form of half-day seminars were performed. These seminars tackled the issues of the management of urinary incontinence in the elderly and the prevention and management of falls. All participants were asked to fill out a Seminar Evaluation Form and were subsequently given a Certificate of Attendance.

Continence Care Clinic

The Continence Advisor Nurse was appointed in December 2005. During 2006, the work included ongoing training sessions to employees, giving advice and guidance on continence promotion at day centres and commencing a nurse-led clinic at SVPR.

The Clinic also formulated an official logo, referral, assessment and clinical forms, continence promotion leaflets and guidelines to practice in elimination for all wards at SVPR and state community homes. During October 2006, a quantitative study was carried out amongst all Ward Managers at SVPR to obtain information on the prevalence of incontinence and the monthly consumption of nappies and inco-sheets. Results of this study show that about 80% of the population (N=1,044) have incontinence problems.

Clients Assessments and Review Data									
Cospicua Home	Floriana Home	Gżira Home	Msida Home	Mosta Home	Mtarfa Home	Żejtun Home	SVPR	Domiciliary	Total
4	14	3	3	1	13	30	73	6	147

COMMUNITY HOMES FOR THE ELDERLY

During 2006 the Department continued to sustain its efforts to offer all residents in state community homes a better environment and more effective care. In this regard, with the financial assistance of the Welfare Committee, works have been carried out in certain homes so that the residential homes for the elderly would be better furnished for the greatest benefit of the elderly persons.

During 2006, the Assessment and Rehabilitation Team included Floriana Home, besides Mosta Home, in providing a post acute medical service to residents who are referred for specialist geriatric team intervention.

The major refurbishment of Mosta Home continued. Improvements consisted of internal and structural works in the kitchen, residential rooms, bathrooms (to render them fully accessible to all wheelchair users), new water and electricity supply systems in rooms; internal plastering and painting of the home (Lm110,000); air-conditioning and related new electrical system throughout the home (Lm20,000/Lm18,000); new furniture for all residential rooms within the same home (Lm63,000); external plastering and painting (Lm4,800); soft furnishings for all residential rooms and common areas.

Other initiatives carried out in the other homes during 2006 included:

- *At Floriana Home:* the whitewashing of all internal areas, a new A/C system in the kitchen together with a large freezer and a fridge; a new industrial washing machine, a household machine and a new dryer in the laundry; two new television sets in the common areas.
- *At Mtarfa Home:* several improvements were carried out including new bedspreads and curtains, plastering and painting of the home from the interior, replacing of all water pipes of the solar system and the upgrading of the AR Team office and the Administration office.
- *At Gżira Home:* installation of a new water pump for the roof tanks and the laundry section; plastering/painting of all perimeter walls; deployment of a qualified nurse on full-time basis.
- *At Msida Home:* major facelift of the whole home which commenced during 2005 continued in 2006.
- *At Żejtun and Cospicua Homes:* introduction of different menus for summer and winter seasons; free glucose testing for diabetics or insulin/hypoglycaemic drugs; increase in full-time staff within kitchen and caring areas; various in-service training for home employees; scheduled weekly physiotherapy and falls prevention sessions for home residents.

During 2006, the Department maintained its agreements with private entrepreneurs for the provision of beds for government-referred residents in private home settings.

During the previous year, the Community Home Admission Working Group (CHAWG) finalised the Standards on Admission Process to State Community Homes which standards commenced with effect from 1 January 2007 for a trial period of three months.

On the initiative of the CHAWG, all medical files were transferred from the Medical Records Department at SLH to the respective homes. In doing so, all residents within government homes are now fully ensured that their medical file is available for quick reference by both medical and nursing staff at their home as required.

Due to past experience, it has long been felt that the government state community homes should be gradually transformed into nursing homes which must cater for the needs of dependent persons. This objective requires the re-orientation of some community homes from hostel type to homes where nursing care takes place in response to new and emerging needs of the elderly persons.

In view of this proposed radical stage, a Dependency Level Report in respect of these five homes was drawn up in June 2006. This report depicted the resident's dependency level impact on staffing levels due

to various depending levels; equipment needed due to various dependency levels; and house structure adjustment vis-à-vis dependency levels.

During 2006, a total of 109 residents were admitted at the Residential Homes of the Elderly, while a total of 515 applied for admission.

Home	Males -60	Females -60	Males +60	Females +60	Total
Cospicua		3	32	93	128
Floriana			15	30	45
Gżira			4	27	31
Mosta	1		18	39	58
Msida			14	49	63
Mtarfa	1	3	34	85	123
Żejtun	1	1	30	132	164
Total	3	7	147	455	612

DAY SERVICES

Day Centres

Presently, there are 16 day centres in Malta, the last one - Safi Day Centre - being officially opened on 11 October 2006.

The aim of the day centre is to help to prevent social isolation which an elderly person usually encounters. The benefit of these day centres is that the elderly person has the opportunity to attend regularly so as to socialise, obtain valid information regarding one's health, stay physically active and get help to structure one's life through activity programmes.

The recurrent expenditure includes the personal emoluments of three full time employees and 70 part-time Social Assistants. Membership fee paid by the members varies between Lm1.00 and Lm2.50 per month depending on attendance.

The transport of elderly persons to attend the day centres continued to be a problem. Not all local councils agreed to finance such an issue, yet one is to say that the Local Councils of Dingli, B'Kara, St Paul's Bay, Mosta, St Venera and Naxxar are all financing the transport for their members while the transport of Żurrieq Day Centre is being shared by Qrendi, Kirkop and Safi Local Councils.

Physiotherapy, Podology and Occupational Therapy services are all carried out at the day centres. The aim of these services is to help the elderly person to continue to live in the community by performing activities of daily living.

Inspections were carried out in all day centres by the Institutional Health Inspectorate Unit. Several recommendations were requested to be implemented. The Officers-in-Charge took immediate action to rectify any actions deemed necessary. During 2006, all staff working at the Day Centres attended a basic Food Handlers Course as per LN 178/2001.

Students of different ages from primary, secondary and also from the University carried out site visits in various day centres and were involved in various inter-generational activities.

Regular Members Attending Day Centres		
Centre	Male	Female
Żejtun	111	1,139
Hamrun	198	1,844
Dingli	86	772
Qormi	10	1,141
Sliema	72	744
Żurrieq	120	1,094
Mtarfa	36	1,392
B'Kara	72	1,266
Cospicua	102	864
Luqa	120	720
St Paul's Bay	240	1,200
B'Bugia	147	802
Mosta	39	1,005
St Venera	215	657
Naxxar	116	577
Safi	17	127
Total	1,701	15,344

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Telecare Service

This emergency telephone community service was inaugurated in 1991 and is a venture between Maltacom plc and the Secretariat for the Elderly. As at end 2006, the installations reached a total of 9,260 (97 Carelink installations).

Breakdown of Calls Traffic in Control Room	
	No. of Calls 2006
January	17,750
February	12,321
March	11,562
April	9,503
May	10,306
June	9,476
July	10,546
August	9,509
September	9,831
October	10,545
November	10,553
December	10,846
Total	132,748

Telecare Centre is totally funded by the Secretariat for the Elderly as the highly subsidised rental fee is in the region of Lm1 – Lm1.33 + Vat per month is collected by Maltacom plc. Also, those clients who are 60+, in possession of a pink form and do not have persons under 60 residing with them are eligible for the exemption of the rental fee.

During the year, Maltacom invested further in the Telecare Service by switching the PNC4 system from 8 telephone lines to 16 telephone lines in order to increase efficiency.

Besides Carelink service, Maltacom plc introduced an enhancement of Carelink, whereby a person having an alarm system could apply through Maltacom for an automated trigger alarm to call at Telecare Centre and the operator would contact 112. Such alarms include burglar/flood/smoke/natural gas and bogus caller button.

Incontinence Service

Up to end 2005, there were 678 persons making use of this service under Scheme A. During 2006, there were 61 new applications while 35 others stopped the service, that is, up to end 2006, there were 704 users.

On Scheme B, there were 2,022 elderly persons who benefited from the service up to end 2005. In 2006, 741 new applications were registered while 562 stopped the service, bringing the total of persons benefiting from the service to 2,201 by the end of 2006.

Breakdown of Scheme A and Scheme B			
	Malta	Gozo	Total
Scheme 'A'			
Applicants as on 31.12.2005	608	70	678
Terminated service	29	6	35
New applications	54	7	61
Applicants as on 31.12.2006	633	71	704
Scheme 'B'			
Applicants as on 31.12.2005	1,729	293	2,022
Terminated service	513	49	562
New applications	652	89	741
Applicants as on 31.12.2006	1,868	333	2,201

Handyman Service

This service continued to be popular amongst the elderly because it gives them an efficient service at subsidised rates and for those who have the pink card, this service is given free. During 2006, the section received a total of 1,391 applications, of which 1,420 were completed. The most requested jobs were: plumbing (577), electrical works (346) and carpentry (345).

Kartanzjan

During 2006, the Electoral Office processed 8,982 cards for new holders (60+) and (75+). During the same year, 2,343 complaints (lost cards) were passed on to the same office and all cards were renewed. The total number of cards processed by the Electoral Office in 2006 was 11,325. The number of persons who died up to October 2006 was 2,128.

Social Work Unit

The main aim of this Unit is to provide help in the form of a psychological nature, counselling and guidance. It also discusses all referred social cases. At present seven Social Workers co-ordinate the work. The officer in charge helps clients who come for intervention at the office or liaises with referring agencies.

The work of the Unit is to take care of all assessments to elderly clients in need of Home Help, Admission to Homes, Admission to SVPR, Carer's Pension, Alternative Housing, Telecare Cases and Court Cases.

Social Work Caseload carried out in 2006							
	Social Cases	Admission into Homes	Home Help	SVPR	Carer's Pension	Telecare <60	Total
Total	325	1,569	1,408	548	167	0	4,017

Home/Help Unit

The aim of this service is to ensure that elderly persons and those persons with disability retain their independence and continue to live in their own homes and within their community as long as possible. This is done by delivering home help according to specific criteria.

During 2006, the Board of Allocation met 18 times to decide whether the service should be given depending on the social assessment and the medical certificate. Old persons who live alone and suffer from certain diseases are given priority. The service is also given to those persons with disability who have certain psychological problems.

The Home-Help Service started as a pilot project in certain areas in 1988 and by the end of 1989 the service was extended all over the island. Up to the end of 2005, there were 2,411 households which benefited from the service. During 2006, 647 new cases were presented; thus the total number of households up to the end of December 2006 stands at 3,201.

	Board meetings	New applications received	Cases reviewed	New cases and cases for ext. of hrs approved	Hours approved
January/February	4	111	161	110	212
March/April	3	105	126	104	234
May/June	3	100	150	111	239
July/August	3	122	168	100	183
September/October	3	111	150	96	191
November/December	2	98	97	68	145
Total	18	647	852	589	1,204

Telephone Rebates

This service came into force in January 1996 whereby the client can apply for a discount on the rental charges of the telephone if one has the Kartanzjan and the pink card. By the end of 2006 the number of beneficiaries stood at 6,045.

Rent payable is Lm6.42 yearly instead of Lm30.78 as long as the subscriber satisfies the conditions submitted. There were no pending applications as at end December 2006.

Meals on Wheels Service

Generally, the service, run by the Maltese Cross Corps, remained popular with the elderly. In fact, 2006 proved to be a remarkable success whereby 59,033 meals were distributed. This figure is an increase of 759 over the previous year.

CONCLUSION

The year 2006 proved to be another successful year in providing valid services to elderly persons. The Department is committed to fulfil such role in giving the best quality of care to all the clients that fall under its responsibility.

MICHAEL BEZZINA

Director (Elderly & Community Services)

Department of Corporate Services

Mission Statement

To promote and provide for the health care needs of the Maltese people and to deliver appropriate services.

FINANCE

Business and Financial Plans

During 2006, the Department of Corporate Services worked closely with the Department of Finance and Administration in the preparation of the Ministry's annual budgetary Estimates. The Department was also involved in the assessment of the monthly management reports and accounts submitted by a number of government entities falling under the responsibility of the Ministry.

The Department monitored, month-by-month, the various targets set in the business plans of the Ministry and the government entities. It scrutinised requests from the entities for the periodic tranches prior to recommending these requests to the Ministry of Finance. It advised the Permanent Secretary in financial matters arising during the year related with the Ministry, its departments and the government entities.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Planning and Organisation

Whilst maintaining electronic records of the authorised complements of the various sections of the Health Division, this Department continued in 2006 to submit monthly employment returns and other returns containing statistical data about the employment situation in the Health Division.

Resourcing

As in previous years, the Department processed the recruitment, appointment, progression and promotion of personnel in various grades. There were a large number of calls for applications which were issued to fill posts/positions at St. Luke's Hospital/Mater Dei Hospital. The following tables indicate the posts filled, number of resignations, retirements and transfers processed by the Department:

Grade	Progression		Internal Call		Public Call		Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
General Service	1	10					11
Professional	1	2	63	42	89	34	231
Technical			3				3
Departmental	17	34	51	75	73	118	368
Industrial	7		68	7			82
Total	26	46	185	124	162	152	695

Grade	Resigned/Dismissed		Retired		Medical Grounds		Transferred		Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
General Service		1	4	2	2	1	8	3	21
Professional	5	4	2				2		13
Technical			3				1		4
Departmental	2	1	11	9		3	3	1	30
Industrial			18	1	3	1	7	1	31
Total	7	6	38	12	5	5	21	5	99

During 2006 this Section continued to deal with the voluminous work in connection with the progression and promotion of employees as a result of the various agreements signed with the unions.

Employee Relations

During 2006, the Department processed the following requests:

- *Injury on Duty* - 173 cases in respect of Health employees (85 males and 88 females);
- *Medical Boards* - 317 requests (231 males and 86 females) for medical boards on behalf of ministries, government departments, corporations and other organisations;
- *Private Work* - 129 applications (67 males and 62 females);
- *Discipline* - as per table below:

Discipline	Males	Females	Total
Number of charges issued during 2006 in terms of Regs. 18,19,20 and 36 of the PSC Discipline Regulations	187	88	275
Criminal Offences	9	1	10
Cases finalised by the end of the year 2006	149	67	216

- *Industrial Relations* - Meetings were also held between the Administration and delegations of the unions representing the various categories of employees in this Department, during which several issues affecting the conditions of work and duties of employees as well as their working environment were discussed.

Staff Development

The Department continued to invest more in the training of its employees to ensure the provision of trained personnel required to man the Health Services.

During 2006, a significant number of employees were granted study leave in connection with qualifying examinations, training courses both locally and abroad, as well as clinical attachments in hospitals/ conferences abroad as indicated in the following table:

Study leave in connection with courses and examinations			
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
Medical	366	219	585
Paramedical	102	101	203
Nursing/Midwifery	135	217	352
Engineering	4	-	4
Pharmacists	14	33	47
Other	12	15	27
Total	633	585	1,218

Grant of paid leave in connection with workshops/conferences abroad			
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
Medical	44	20	64
Paramedical	-	12	12
Nursing/Midwifery	10	14	24
Total	54	46	100

A substantial number of employees attended courses organised by SDO and other training providers.

EUROPEAN UNION

The Department of Corporate Services continued to provide support and guidance to the EU and International Affairs Directorate insofar as financial and HR matters were concerned.

ENTITLEMENT UNIT

2006 was characterised by the introduction of the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) which replaced the form E111. A publicity campaign which informed the public about this card was carried out throughout the year. The success of this campaign was proved by the fact that 67,944 EHICs were issued in 2006. This was an increase of 61.3% from the previous year's number of E111s that were issued.

During 2006, the process leading to the atomisation of almost all the forms used by the Entitlement Unit was continued. The administrative problems created by the huge request for the EHIC meant that this process had to be suspended for a large part of the year. The automation process is expected to be finalised during 2007.

During 2006, the Entitlement Unit registered 402 E121 forms (foreign pensioners) and 92 E106 forms (posted workers), and issued 1 E121 form and 87 E106 forms.

AUDIT BOARD

As in previous years, the Ministry of Health, the Elderly & Community Care was represented by the Director Corporate Services in the June and November 2006 Audit Board meetings. During the November meeting, the Maltese delegation presented its claims situation in accordance with Articles 94 and 95 of the Regulation (EEC) 574/72.

During 2006, the first Average costs for Malta (in relation to the year 2004) were issued and approved by the European Commission's Audit Board. As a result, the Entitlement Unit was able to send its first claims which amounted to Lm15,741.80. In 2006 the Entitlement Unit also paid its first claims for benefits in kind given to holders of a Maltese E111 or EHIC in 2004, 2005 and 2006. The total amount paid was Lm44,070.79.

The situation for E125 claims (for treatment given under the E111) is as follows:

Claims Received					
	2004	2005	Total Received	Paid	Pending
Austria	€2,128.77	€3,026.45	€5,155.22	-	€5,155.22
Belgium		€72.34	€72.34	-	€72.34
Czech Republic	1469.96Kč	203.50Kč	1,673.46Kč	-	1,673.46Kč
Finland		€214.10	€214.10	-	€214.10
France	€964.28	€25,841.37	€26,805.65	-	€26,805.65
Germany	€4,109.33	€3,717.60	€7,826.93	-	€7,826.93
Italy	€8,714.58		€8,714.58	-	€8,714.58
Luxembourg	€102.80	€45.70	€148.50	-	€148.50
Netherlands	€189.18	€271.56	€460.74	-	€460.74
Poland	166.50PLN	152.37PLN	318.87PLN	-	318.87PLN
Slovenia	743.70SIT	3,076.00SIT	3,819.70SIT	-	3,819.70SIT
Spain	€727.35	€4,650.18	€5,377.53	-	€5,377.53
Sweden	52,465.00SEK	12,061.00SEK	64,526.00SEK	-	64,526.00SEK

Claims sent (MTL)												
	2004	Paid	Rejected	Pending	2005	Paid	Rejected	Pending	Total Sent	Total Paid	Total Rejected	Total Pending
Austria	3,541	3,452	50	39	4,015	1,925	-	2,090	7,556	5,377	50	2,129
Belgium	1,742	742	-	1,000	639	268	-	371	2,381	1,010	-	1,371
Czech Rep	192	192	-	-	360	-	-	360	552	192	-	360
Denmark	-	-	-	-	75	75	-	-	75	75	-	-
Finland	3,218	-	-	3,218	560	-	-	560	3,778	-	-	3,778
France	7,405	3,611	-	3,794	9,796	-	-	9,796	17,201	3,611	-	13,590
Germany	14,874	-	-	14,874	25,720	-	-	25,720	40,594	-	-	40,594
Greece	115	-	-	115	1,290	-	-	1,290	1,405	-	-	1,405

Hungary	125	-	-	125	55	-	-	55	180	-	-	180
Iceland	-	-	-	-	10	-	-	10	10	-	-	10
Ireland	4,046	-	-	4,046	2,784	170	-	2,614	6,830	170	-	6,660
Italy	12,409	-	-	12,409	25,782	-	-	25,782	38,191	-	-	38,191
Latvia	-	-	-	-	2,440	-	-	2,440	2,440	-	-	2,440
Lithuania	-	-	-	-	15	-	-	15	15	-	-	15
Luxembourg	-	-	-	-	62	42	-	20	62	42	-	20
Netherlands	508	508	-	-	635	-	-	635	1,143	508	-	635
Norway	1,902	-	-	1,902	5,690	-	-	5,690	7,592	-	-	7,592
Poland	5,225	-	-	5,225	420	-	-	420	5,645	-	-	5,645
Portugal	230	-	-	230	565	-	-	565	795	-	-	795
Slovakia	565	-	-	565	544	202	-	342	1,109	202	-	907
Slovenia	-	-	-	-	210	-	-	210	210	-	-	210
Spain	6,758	-	-	6,758	1,396	-	-	1,396	8,154	-	-	8,154
Sweden	7,346	-	-	7,346	10,627	-	-	10,627	17,973	-	-	17,973
Total	70,201	8,505	50	61,646	93,690	2,682	0	91,008	163,891	11,187	50	152,654

CUSTOMER CARE

CC System – Local Councils

In 2006, the Customer Care System – Local Council generated a total number of 1,867 complaints (56 of which came from *servizz.gov* through OPM), of which there were: Pending complaints – 165; Settled complaints – 131; Closed complaints – 1,571.

The CCS-LC has been intended to move towards Phase Two (linking MHEC departments to all local councils by electronic portals), but due to lack of funds this activity is still on hold.

Yearly Reports

As part of CCC workings, annual reports on customer care activities for the year 2006 were collected from all MHEC entities, follow-up meetings scheduled and salient issues were discussed with respective Heads of Sections/Units/Directors.

QUALITY SERVICE CHARTERS

A road show on QSC was organised by OPM for senior management at MHEC. The scope of this initiative was to launch the new Service Standards and to re-define QSC. In a nutshell, all services rendered to the general public are to meet the Service Standard requirements and only those with excellent quality standards are to arrive at and be nominated for a Quality Service Charter.

Ongoing meetings and site visits were carried out with respective Directors, CEOs, Managers and Head of Units with the aim of taking stock of the current situation, facilitating communication and enhancing support vis-à-vis customer care activities and service standards.

PROJECTS

National Action Plan on Health and Long-Term Care

This EU project formed part of a larger project with the Ministry of Family and Social Solidarity and Ministry of Education in which a national action plan on health and long term care was established. To this extent a number of meetings were attended, together with gathering information, reading of documents, co-ordinating a focus group and seminar, formed part of activities.

Staff Enhancement and Support

The scope of this working group was to gather and consolidate information on staff support initiatives already transpiring within MHEC, and to set up a basic structure that facilitates the development of a strategy which provides psycho-social support to all members of staff across MHEC.

NGOs/Volunteering

A number of meetings were held with Malta Resource Centre and other internal stakeholders to gather and consolidate information about NGOs/volunteering activities across MHEC to establish some guiding principles for a proposed job description and strategy. Meanwhile a draft proposal agreement is being developed with MRC, the scope of which is to recruit and co-ordinate volunteers for the provision of non-clinical and non-medical services that assist and support patients, relatives and other service users. Currently this proposed agreement is in its final draft.

Other Activities

Other activities were concentrated mainly on attending various seminars, meetings, workshops and/or conferences. Time was also dedicated to providing members of staff, personal and professional support, as well as, giving assistance in educational and/or research issues.

Travel

In 2006 there were 203 travel cases. The majority of these cases were conferences in connection with the EU. Others were conferences organised by WHO.

European Healthcare Fraud and Corruption Network Conference

The Ministry participated once again at the annual Conference of the European Healthcare Fraud and Corruption Network which was held in Madrid between 10 and 11 October 2006. The Conference aimed to facilitate networking amongst healthcare counter fraud and corruption specialists across Europe, and enable the public and private healthcare sectors from across Europe to work together to ensure proper standards and controls are developed.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Overtime

Efforts to control the level of overtime across the Ministry were consistently maintained during the year, with special attention focused on St Luke's Hospital which absorbs the highest percentage of the overtime expenditure. This was in part achieved through a series of initiatives such as rationalised recruitment of personnel in specific categories within critical areas, constant assessment of requests and regular reviewing of real needs. Allowance had to be made for extra inevitable expense incurred in the migration (to Mater Dei Hospital) process necessitating the release of groups of personnel for familiarisation on-site visits and professional training.

Parliamentary Questions

This Office processed a total of 472 PQs during 2006, reflecting virtually the same level of PQs registered in 2005. This exercise entailed the co-ordination of additional efforts by the Office of the Director General, the Ministry Private Secretariats, and Heads of Entities.

Occupational Health and Safety

The OHS Task Force based at Head Office maintained its monitoring exercise through regular meetings and some valid initiatives.

Green Initiatives

Following in the footsteps of initiatives undertaken during the first year of the Green Initiative in 2005, a series of other 'green' initiatives were embarked upon, spread over a good number of departments and entities within their competences. As regards Head Office, the following environmental measures were embarked upon: (1) procurement and installation of photo-voltaic Generation Unit (3,200 KWatts) at Mosta Home for the Elderly; (2) procurement of 16 sets of waste separation bins c/w trolleys; these two measures could be taken in hand in good time in 2006 on the basis of the relevant framework tenders issued by MRAE on behalf of all ministries. Energy Audit and Energy-Efficient Lighting Measures are earmarked for active consideration in 2007 once the relative framework tenders are in place and based on financial resources available (Lm5,000 in 2007); (3) planting of 25 trees at Kennedy Grove, Salini as contribution towards the 34U National Afforestation Campaign.

These environmentally-friendly measures virtually absorbed the allocation of 2006 funds reserved for the 'Green' effort.

Boards & Committees

This Directorate undertook the routine exercise to re-appoint a number of statutory and departmental boards and committees within the Ministry which were due to expire in 2006.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT UNIT

The Information Management Unit (IMU) led the Ministry's ICT strategy aimed to enhance service delivery standards. The primary focus of the IMU was the strategic direction and management of information management investment within this Ministry to ensure that data is translated into information as a strategic resource. The following were the major initiatives:

Network Infrastructure

The demand on the data network has grown rapidly with the implementation of various applications and is forecasted to grow as new applications and services are rolled out within the Ministry.

The IMU ensured that the Ministry is prepared for the changeover to Magnet II. Thus a number of changes had to be implemented including the provision of fibre optic cable, installation of ADSL backup equipment, routers, switches UPS units and equipment cabinets.

In addition, new sites have been connected to the Malta Government NETwork II (MAGNET), namely the TeleCare Unit, the new Government Pharmaceutical Services Stores, Burial's Administration Unit and Welfare Committee. The existing network infrastructure was further extended to provide further connectivity points to employees making use of technology. Furthermore, ageing networking equipment is being gradually replaced with new networking equipment aimed to improve bandwidth speed to meet the ever growing demands and expectations.

Ministry of Health Website

The Ministry's commitment is to offer updated information and this is being achieved through the Ministry's website (www.sahha.gov.mt). The website continued to augment its audience and clients can search and retrieve information by going directly to the service of interest.

New features and functions have been added to various pages. Furthermore, healthcare-related guidance, advice and information has also been regularly revised and updated to make available the provision of a wide range of healthcare information aimed to improve healthcare in the Nation.

Consolidation

In line with the Government's policy to consolidate all ICT services with the aim of reducing total cost of ownership, MHEC embarked on the consolidation of services. The consolidation of data at MITTS Ltd was another achievement. The IMU also extended the consolidation to servers found in MHEC entities. This consolidation will continue in 2007 where it is deemed feasible.

Integrated Health Information System

The IMU participated actively in the tendering process for the procurement of an Integrated Health Information System Strategic Partnership for the Mater Dei Hospital.

Technology Upgrades

A number of technology upgrades were carried out within the Ministry. PCs and peripherals were replaced as part of an ongoing technology refresh programme. During the year the unit was also responsible for the reviewing, monitoring and approval of ICT requests made by the various departments and entities under the Ministry.

Data Protection

The IMU ensures that the Ministry is compliant with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2001. The Information Management Officer in his capacity as Data Protection Officer also represented the Ministry during meetings of the Data Protection Officers Forum.

NISCO

Through the IMU, the Ministry participated regularly in the meetings organised by the National Information Society Advisory Council (NISCO) which the Ministry for Investment, Industry and Information Technology convenes on a quarterly basis each year.

eHealth Portal

The scope of the ehealth Portal (www.ehealth.gov.mt) is to provide a facility for prospective applicants to submit online application forms or requests for a number of services. MHEC is providing this facility in addition to the conventional channels of applying for service delivery. The online services include:

- *The Entitlement Unit* within the Corporate Services Directorate - which provides healthcare entitlement and travel advice to Maltese citizens travelling abroad, and to foreign citizens on a temporary stay in Malta. The service provided by this Unit targeted for the ehealth Portal is the request for a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) for Maltese citizens travelling inside the European Economic Area, to be eligible for free or reduced-cost emergency treatment in public hospitals or other public health facilities.
- *The Health Promotion Department* provides information on certain health issues such as smoking, nutrition, and sexual health to the general public. Online requests for services provided by the department which can be submitted through the ehealth Portal include smoking cessation clinics, presently operating in five health centres, weight reduction clinics run by qualified professionals and requests to attend a sexual and reproductive health counselling session/s run by qualified professionals from the Health Promotion Department.

- *The ehealth portal* also provides the facility for registered Medical Doctors with the necessary privileges to request an appointment at out-patient clinics within St Lukes's Hospital. Access to this service is controlled through the e-ID. Through the ehealth portal a registered patient may cancel or re-schedule an existing appointment.
- *The Health Inspectorate Service* within the Department of Public Health promotes and safeguards the well-being and health of the public via several sub-units. One of these units is the Complaints Administration Unit which co-ordinates and monitors the outcome of numerous complaints, which are investigated by the various units of the health inspectorate. The service provided by the Complaints Administration Unit that has been targeted for the ehealth Portal is the facility for the online submission of a variety of public health complaints such as infiltrations of drainage in private property, leaking cesspools, accumulations of refuse, rubbish, debris or stagnant water; pest infestations, and other issues relating to food sanitation and unhygienic conditions within food establishments.
- *The Genitourinary (GU) Clinic* within Sir Paul Boffa Hospital, which offers diagnosis and treatment for sexually transmitted infections, other genital conditions not necessarily sexually acquired and counselling and testing for HIV. The service provided by the GU Clinic through the ehealth Portal is the facility for the submission of an online request for advice/information on sexually transmitted diseases, genitourinary infections or related issues.
- *The National Blood Transfusion Centre* collects, processes, screens and provides blood and blood products to the best safety and quality standards as fast as possible. The service provided through the ehealth Portal is the facility to enrol online as a potential blood donor by completing an online eligibility questionnaire and if successful, registering one's address, e-mail and/or SMS to receive additional information and receive automatic notification when blood reserves are low.

In order to provide the *Department of Health* with an online Patient Electronic Library through the ehealth portal, the MHEC has partnered with A.D.A.M. Inc., a leader in the consumer health information market. A.D.A.M. Inc. develops and publishes health information products that are used by leading health care organisations, governments, websites, and academic institutions. Its proprietary digital assets include an indexed and fully illustrated database of articles on thousands of diseases and medical conditions.

A.D.A.M., Inc. is accredited by URAC, also known as the American Accreditation HealthCare Commission (www.urac.org). URAC's accreditation program is the first of its kind, requiring compliance with 53 standards of quality and accountability, verified by independent audit. A.D.A.M. is among the first to achieve this important distinction for online health information and services.

Visitors to the ehealth Portal will also be able to enquire a list of licensed pharmacies. This section also includes another page through which the visitor may select a date from a list of coming Sundays and public holidays for which a roster of open pharmacies and graphical maps indicating the location of the requested pharmacy will be displayed.

Furthermore, the Immunisation Database System which will be implemented during the first quarter of 2007 is required to record all vaccinations currently being administered primarily through health centres as well as schools, private clinics and other external entities.

The system will have different levels of access. Users with a valid user account accessing the system from within the Magnet shall be able to manage and administer the system.

The system can also generate a daily report of the total number of vaccinations and the total ml given by vaccine. This will be used to assist stocktaking and to keep track of wastage.

Patient Administration System

The Patient Administration System (PAS) continues to be the backbone of patient management. During 2006, Sir Paul Boffa Hospital out-patient clinics were brought online and therefore appointments and attendances are now being carried out electronically.

The system's billing module will be upgraded to cater for the euro changeover. Talks with the foreign supplier were initialised to ensure a smooth transition during the dual display period.

System performance was given a boost through the purchasing of a new server. Thus complex data extraction tasks and statistical reports can now be accomplished in a shorter interval.

NATIONAL BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICE

During 2006, the National Blood Transfusion Service continued to provide a sustainable and safe blood supply to all patients in the Maltese Islands.

Following the transposition of the relevant EU Directives into Maltese legislation the Department has undergone significant changes and is still in the process of developing new strategies.

In 2006, a Consultant in charge of Hospital Transfusion Medicine was appointed. The Transfusion service thus has two distinct institutions – the Blood establishment, responsible for the recruitment of donors, collection, processing, testing and distribution of blood; and the hospital blood bank responsible for clinical issues.

2006 was significant as other very important decisions and events occurred relating to the Blood Establishment. The EU funded Twinning Light with the German Red Cross was initiated and completed. This was an excellent and fruitful experience with tangible results.

The new Donation Centre has been started and is in an advanced stage of construction. It is earmarked to be inaugurated in April 2007.

The National Blood Transfusion Centre participated in a EU project (EU-Q-SOP) with the aim of improving and standardising transfusion services in Europe.

During the year, 14,806 donations were recorded, an increase of 426 donations over 2005 levels.

In 2006, NBTS introduced an accounting package that includes an inventory system. This has helped to control and rationalise deliveries and FIFO issuing of goods to eliminate wastage and enhance traceability.

Tenders partly financed from EU Transition Facilities have been finalised. These included procurement and commissioning of laboratory furniture, flow cytometer, blood bank refrigerators, freezers, blood transport boxes, plasma thawing systems and temperature monitoring/logging systems for the maintenance of the cold chain, access control and fire detection/alarm system.

2006 was also marked with the procurement of a number of new IT equipment. A new webmaster was identified to maintain the department website. Meanwhile, the implementation of a new module and upgrade of the blood establishment main application *Progesa* took off.

A number of staff members benefited from training initiatives, including training in foreign institutions.

JOSEPH CHURCH

Director (Corporate Services)

EU and International Affairs Directorate

INTRODUCTION

During 2006, the EU and International Affairs Directorate worked to provide seamless co-ordination nationally and with the Permanent Representation in Brussels on all aspects pertaining to health and health services. The importance of public health and health services matters at European Union level has continued to increase. This has resulted in several new legislative proposals in the areas of food, medicines and public health. The open method of co-ordination has been extended to the health and long-term care sectors and the Directorate was heavily involved in the preparation of the first national strategy report and action plan on health and long-term care for submission to the European Commission. As a result of the increasing workload in this area, for the first time an attaché with full-time responsibilities for health and consumer protection was appointed within Malta's Permanent Representation to the European Union in Brussels.

This Directorate was involved in the preparation of submissions for projects to be funded by the EU Structural Funds for the period 2007-2013. It also continued to monitor the implementation of projects under the Transition Facility Fund and the European Social Fund (ESF 2004-2006).

The main functions of this Directorate are:

- managing the Ministry's participation in EU structures and processes, as well as ensuring effective co-ordination of all EU-related matters at a domestic level and with other EU stakeholders, including other ministries, the Permanent Representation of Malta to the EU, the EU Secretariat within the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- co-ordinating the formulation of the Ministry's position on policies and pipeline legislation proposed by the EU including responsibility for information dissemination and consultation with local stakeholders;
- ensuring compliance with obligations emanating from EU membership and membership in other International conventions and organisations;
- fulfilling the role of Senior Programming Officer for the Ministry of Health, the Elderly and Community Care with respect to all EU funded projects and initiatives;
- proactively building and maintaining both bilateral and multilateral relationships with countries and organisations for the purpose of increased collaboration in the field of health; and
- acting as the Ministry's reference point for the exchange of communication and adherence to bilateral or multilateral agreements or arrangements.

EU AFFAIRS POLICY CO-ORDINATION

The core tasks pertaining to the EU Affairs Directorate on a daily basis in the field of policy co-ordination are the following:

- preparation of Explanatory Memoranda on EU pipeline legislation;
- drawing up of Instruction Notes;
- compilation of questionnaires;
- responding to queries;
- submission of reports to the Commission;
- co-ordination of transposition and notification of EU-related legislation.

Explanatory Memoranda

Explanatory memoranda on EU pipeline legislative and non-legislative proposals are drawn up for discussion and approval at the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Affairs. The EUIAD also acts the focal point for transmission of the approved memoranda to the Parliamentary Scrutiny Committee and provides additional feedback and information as may be requested by Parliament.

The Ministry of Health, the Elderly and Community Care gives due importance to contributions from stakeholders towards these new Commission proposals and engages in proactive and timely consultation utilising various methods ranging from electronic consultation to specific meetings depending on the nature of the issue. The EUIAD also organises regular briefing meetings for all Ministry Directors to keep abreast on developments in the field of public health and health services at EU level.

Instruction Notes

The drawing up and co-ordination of Instruction Notes for meetings is one of the core tasks of the EUIAD. Over 100 Instructions Notes were drawn up for Council meetings and COREPER during 2006. In addition to these, dossiers were prepared for Ministerial Health Council meetings.

Questionnaires and Reports

The EUIAD co-ordinated the responses to questionnaires on the following issues:

- Tissues and cells
- Drugs and Driving
- Cross border care
- Policy on expatriates and pandemic influenza
- Radiological Risk Questionnaire.

This Directorate also co-ordinated the submission of the following reports:

- Bathing water
- Average cost of sickness insurance benefits in kind
- National legislation for reproductive cell donations
- Report on measures taken by member states to endeavour to ensure voluntary and unpaid donations of tissues and cells in compliance with article 12 of Directive 2004/23/EC
- Report on application of Blood Directive
- Report of the visit of the RASFF team to Malta on 26 till 28 September 2006.

Responses to Commission Consultations

This Directorate was responsible for drawing up Malta's responses to the Commission on the following topics:

- Green paper on mental health
- Green paper on nutrition, obesity and physical activity
- Consultation on organ transplantation.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN THE FIELD OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HEALTH SERVICES AT EU LEVEL

The following is a list of the main items discussed under the Austrian and Finnish Presidencies within health groups and meetings.

- Advanced therapies
- Air thematic strategy
- Avian and Human influenza

- Better regulation
- Combating HIV
- Common values and principles in EU Health systems
- EU strategic stockpile
- EU Strategy to reduce alcohol related harm
- EU Sustainable Development Strategy
- Food additives other than colours and sweeteners
- Framework Convention on Tobacco Control
- Genetically Modified organisms
- Health in all policies
- International Health Regulations
- Nutritional health claims
- Paediatric medicines
- Patient mobility
- Prevention of injuries and accidents
- Programme of Community action in the field of Health and Consumer protection 2007 – 2013
- Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles and on the Prevention of Type 2 Diabetes
- Status of the European Community in the World Health Organisation
- Women's health.

Co-ordination of Participation in Overseas Meetings

The EUIAD co-ordinated attendance at EU meetings in order to ensure that Malta was appropriately represented at all meetings where important decisions are taken. The meetings attended overseas by officers within this Ministry are shown in the following table. During the first half of 2006, the EUIAD had to cover all the relevant working party meetings from Malta as there was no attaché in place.

	Council	Commission	Presidency	WHO	Others	Total
Ministerial	4	2		4		10
Public Health	15	13	1		2	31
Food		14			4	18
Medicines	7	10				17
Health Services		5			8	13
Social protection/social security	2	8				10
Health promotion		1		1	10	12
Health Information		10	1		2	13
Regulatory committees; tobacco, blood, tissues & cells		2				2
Others	1	7	3	2	16	29
Total	29	72	5	7	42	155

National Action Plan Health and Long-term Health Care (2006-2008)

The EUIAD was tasked with the drawing up of the first National Action Plan on Health & Long-term care as part of the report on National Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion presented to the Commission in September 2006. This process forms part of the open method of policy co-ordination organised at EU level. Reporting on health and long-term care has been included for the first time as a new obligation. This Ministry worked closely with the Ministry for Family and Social Solidarity in the whole process that led up to the compilation of the national report. A widespread consultation exercise was organised so as to inform the content and nature of the health and long-term care section. The consultation was conducted through several focus groups as well as a full-day consultation seminar, which included four parallel workshops. The consultation process was well received and marked a new dimension in the development of targets and measures for the health and long-term care sectors.

Local Conferences

The EUIAD supported the organisation of several conferences as part of its strategy to reach out to interested parties and promote information about health policy and initiatives at a European level.

Mr Nick Fahy, Deputy Head of Unit, Health Strategy, DG SANCO, was invited as a keynote speaker to the Malta Medical School Conference by EUIAD. Mr Fahy's presentation, on the health services initiatives at EU level, was very well received by the audience made up of practising clinicians and students.

The EUIAD actively supported the organisation of two conferences in the area of mental health and a conference closing a Euro-Mediterranean project in the field of Infection Control.

The Director presented papers at the conference on the National Sustainable Development Strategy held in March 2006 and at the annual meeting organised by the Breast Care Awareness Support Group in October 2006.

EU FUNDED PROJECTS

The EU and International Affairs Directorate carried out the function of Senior Programming Officer for this Ministry during 2006 as in previous years. The main role played by this office was in the identification of new projects suitable for EU funding as well as the monitoring of the project implementation with successful remedial action being taken where necessary such that no funds were lost and contracting/disbursement deadlines were met.

Structural and Cohesion Funds 2007-2013

This Directorate was responsible for compiling the background documentation for the health sector in the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) as well as in contributing towards the preparation of the Operational Programmes for the forthcoming EU financing period.

European Social Fund 2004-2006

During 2006, the EUIAD continued to monitor the implementation for two ESF projects entitled:

- Improve retention of specialist staff by developing structured specialisation and post-qualification training programmes locally in collaboration with professional associations and NGOs (ESF 8).
- To improve the representation of women at specialist and managerial levels at the main public hospital in Malta (ESF 9).

Despite some initial difficulties, implementation of these two projects took off successfully during 2006. The indicators for ESF 8 already show that the output targets have been well exceeded. The EUIAD was responsible for the administrative processing of finances in accordance with Structural Funds regulations. During 2006, the EUIAD held several project monitoring meetings to ensure that procedures were followed and the projects were being implemented successfully. A request for project extensions until March 2007 was submitted and accepted.

During 2006 a call for proposals for ESF, EUIAD has actively contributed to the submission of two projects entitled:

- Enhancement of Occupational Skills of Support Staff at St Luke's Hospital
- Developing and delivering a training programme in preventive mental health

Both projects were accepted initially on a reserve list basis, however due to some savings in the ESF programme, both projects are being reconsidered for implementation during 2007.

Transition Facility Fund 2004 - 2006

During 2006, this Directorate was responsible for several projects funded through the Transition Facility. It also successfully applied for new projects to be funded through this facility. Responsibilities included chairing the Evaluation Committees of the project selection as well as those related to tenders for the investment components. This Directorate also held regular project monitoring meetings. These were instrumental in ensuring that all contracting and disbursement deadlines were met despite various problems that arose which resulted in delays to the implementation schedule. The Evaluation Committee, in line with the Contracts regulation, defended all objections raised by the bidders for adjudication of the investment components within the Transition Facility successfully.

The following projects funded through the TF 2004 fund were implemented during 2006:

Upgrading the National Blood Transfusion Service to Quality Standards as specified in Directive 2002/98 EC

The Twinning Light component of this project was successfully implemented and this results in training of officials within the National Blood Transfusion Service by officials from the German Red Cross. With regard to the investment component, a difficulty arose since a decision was taken half way through the year to build a new facility instead of refurbishing the existing premises. The investment tenders were successfully redesigned where necessary and contracting deadlines were met. It is expected that construction and commissioning of the premises will take place during 2007 so as to allow successful disbursement of this component.

Strengthening the overall capacity of the Department of Public Health to enforce control of foodstuffs

The project entailed a full twinning with partners from the UK and Ireland. The aspect related to training of Environmental Health Officers in HACCP methods proceeded smoothly and successfully. Major difficulties were encountered in relation to the refurbishment of the Chemistry Section of the Public Health Laboratory, which took longer than envisaged. The equipment for this project was successfully procured and installed and training was delivered successfully albeit within a tight time schedule.

Training for health inspectors on the investigation procedures of domestic residential noise and on the use of noise monitoring equipment

A twinning light project on aspects of residential noise control was implemented successfully during 2006 and was successfully accomplished within the stipulated time frames. This resulted in training of environmental health officers on the investigation procedures and on the use of relevant noise monitoring equipment.

During 2006, five projects were successfully submitted for funding under the Transition Facility (Unallocated envelope programme). These were as follows:

- Further Capacity-building at the Medicines Authority
- Capacity-building for the Implementation of a System of Health Accounts-based Accounting System and the Development of an associated Statistical/Management Information System
- Capacity-building and technical assistance to implement the EU *acquis* in relation to the regulation of the free movement of health care professionals
- Auditing the Authorities represented within the Food Safety Commission.

These projects will undergo selection procedures for Twinning Light partners and implementation will commence during 2007.

Other EU Funded Projects

The EUIAD worked closely with the Armed Forces and the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs in the implementation of a project to provide the necessary health services to detained irregular immigrants. This project was funded through the ARGO fund that provided emergency financing for Malta to cope with the influx of irregular immigrants.

For the first time ever, the Ministry of Health, the Elderly and Community Care had the opportunity to participate in a project in which funding was received from the EU in order to provide training to Libyan health care workers in HIV prevention and treatment. This funding was obtained from the Benghazi Action Plan and provided an opportunity for participation as an expert rather than as a recipient of expertise.

PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMME

As the focal point for the public health programme, the Directorate continued to assist with identification of local partners for international consortia and networks submitting projects for funding. Malta is participating in several projects under the Public Health Programme 2003-2008. The Ministry is represented on the Public Health Programme Committee. This Directorate contributed to the discussions and drafting of the Proposal for the Public Health Programme under the 2007-2013 funding envelope. The following list presents the projects that were actively implemented during 2006:

- European surveillance of travel associated legionnaires disease (EWGLINET)
- Invasive bacterial infections surveillance in the European Union (EU-IBIS)
- Dedicated Surveillance Network for Enteric Pathogens (ENTER-NET)
- European Programme for Intervention Epidemiology Training (EPIET)
- Eurosurveillance
- European Influenza Surveillance Scheme (EISS)
- European Surveillance of Sexually Transmitted Infections Network (ESSTI)
- EpiSouth
- PERISTAT II
- ANAMORT
- EUROCAT
- EMCCDA
- Policy Impact Assessment – Public Health Reporting
- INJURY DATABASE (IDB)
- ISARE III –Health Indicators in Regions of Europe
- EHSID – European Health Surveys Information Database
- SAFESTRAT
- EUGLOREH – Preparation of the Global Report on the Health Status of the EU
- DAFNE V
- EUROSTAT Core Health Interview Survey (ECHIS)
- EUROCHIP 2 - European Cancer Health Indicator Project (phase 2).

During the last quarter of 2006, a half-day information session was organised, where the project leaders could expose and give an overview of the benefits being obtained through Malta's participation in the Public Health Programme.

Commonwealth Technical Assistance

During 2006 the two proposals originally submitted in 2004 under the Commonwealth Technical Assistance were implemented successfully. These were:

- Restructuring of the Medical Records System within the Primary Health Care Department
- Strengthening capacity building and setting up an appointment system at the Psychiatric Out-patient Department.

The International Records Managements Trust has been nominated to conduct specific studies and has submitted a Final Report with a Status Analysis and recommendations for improvements.

Bilateral Affairs

The Ministry of Health, the Elderly and Community Care successfully concluded an administrative arrangement within the framework of the reciprocal health agreement with the United Kingdom. The administrative arrangement provides for the necessary procedures in view of Malta's accession to the European Union. It offers UK and Maltese nationals with benefits superior to those provided for by the EU Regulation on Co-ordination of Social Security.

During the second half of 2006, EUIAD collaborated with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in the preparation for a Joint Commission meeting between Malta and Libya. Specifically, collaboration in the area of pandemic preparedness and communicable disease surveillance will be pursued.

World Health Organisation

The European Union has stepped up its efforts to co-ordinate its policy and actions within the World Health Organisation. In this respect, the EUIAD has supported preparation of regional and world health assembly statements and positions vis-à-vis EU co-ordination activities.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Staff within the EU and International Affairs Directorate attended continuing professional development events and SDO courses throughout the year. The Director also contributed to teaching on the SDO course for employees returning after a career break. The Performance Management Programme was implemented for the relevant officers.

Local training and information covered topics such as structural funds, infringement procedures and pandemic influenza. This office also participated actively in a local training course of the Documentation Management System on the EU Forum software system, which will be eventually introduced in all EU Affairs offices.

The EUIAD successfully facilitated a collaborative initiative with the Ministry for Family and Social Solidarity and the University of Malta, which resulted in a Workshop on Performance Management for senior managers within this Ministry. Prof Jan Walburg, a visiting professor from Trimbos Institute in The Netherlands, conducted this workshop.

CONCLUSION

Health issues have increased in visibility and importance on the agenda of the European Union. This is not only in areas where the EU has traditionally played an important role such as foodstuffs and medicines but in newer areas such as public health issues in their widest sense and more recently the foray into health services and long-term care. The incorporation of the indicator "healthy life expectancy" in the Lisbon score sheet and in the EU sustainable development strategy illustrates how the EU is mainstreaming health into its core activities. The prioritisation of health infrastructure within the proposals for utilisation of EU structural and cohesion funds in the new member states is yet another indication of the importance being given to health systems at EU level. During 2007, the Commission is expected to publish a White Paper on the health strategy as well as a proposal for an initiative in the field of health services. Co-ordination of Malta's response and furthermore implementation of these issues will undoubtedly be the main challenge for the EUIAD in the coming twelve months.

DR NATASHA AZZOPARDI MUSCAT
Director (EU and International Affairs)

**Ministry for Investment, Industry
and Information Technology**

Ministry

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Most of the items on the service contracts with MITTS were revised during 2005 and usage optimised during 2006 with the objective to accommodate a further reduction in the allocated budget for the year. The sharing of peripherals for better office automation was also enhanced, thus minimum stand-alone hardware was purchased. All equipment at MIIT was enhanced and upgraded to utilise the latest MS Enterprise versions.

MIIT was the first Ministry to take up MS Exchange. The changeover was swift and benchmarks were set for the whole of Government. MIIT is also in the process of utilising other management tools such as MS Share Point.

During the year, MIIT requested various services for which the IMO was appointed to chair various adjudication boards. These programmes included the request for both Major ICT Projects and e-Government Programmes. These included the setting up of a Framework Tender for e-Government Consultancy Services, an e-Trust Mark Portal, an e-Procurement Portal, e-Health Phase II, the ADT Driving Licence back and front desk system, e-Registration of Vehicles, an electronic Change of Address, the Recruitment Portal, the Children Allowance and Supplementary Portal, a main Portal for the MJHA, the MCAST full-time courses Portal, Death Notification Portal, Will Searches Portal, Registration of Small Crafts, Starting a new business, e-Democracy Portal, Scholarship and Judiciary Portals and some others. All programmes were taken up from scratch in conjunction with the respective ministry. Other e-Government initiatives were put on for discussion, some of which were either discarded at Project Mandate stage or will be carried forward to 2007.

The IMO function was instrumental in the unfolding of the Ministry ICT Programmes for 2006 which included the revision of the Government ICT Core Services Agreement, the expansion of the Community Training and Learning Centres, MS XP Maltese Language Localisation, the development of an e-Mall System, the MS School Agreement, the Government Tourism Portal and the setting up of various ICT projects. The participation of the IMO in both the ICT in Government Unit and the Information Society Secretariat has proven to be beneficial to MIIT.

ICT IN GOVERNMENT UNIT

This unit was set up by the Ministry responsible for Information Technology as part of the reforms undertaken in 2005 to improve the co-ordination and promotion of ICT in the public sector. In this context, Malta was recognised by the EU Commission as third ranking EU member state in the availability of online public services and second ranking in the sophistication of those services. This benchmarking process, which is carried out on an annual basis by Capgemini on behalf of the EU Commission, is conducted in the form of a web-based survey on electronic public services. The official report of the 6th measurement was published in June 2006, with a special reference to Malta's achievements as "the spectacular jump of Malta from the 16th to the 2nd place is due to a set of different governmental action in the field of e-Government."

A renewed e-Government Implementation Programme was rolled out during 2006 in all Ministries that aimed to give more ownership of the e-Government initiative to line Ministries. The guidelines issued for the implementation programme were endorsed by the Core IT Advisory Committee (CITAC) following

consultation with all Information Management Officers. Against this vertical effort, horizontal initiatives – electronic Identity, the www.mygov.mt portal, the electronic Payment Gateway and a mobile government framework – were further developed to support the drive for the planned rollout of new, more sophisticated e-Government services.

Since 2004, the Electronic Identity Project (e-ID) has delivered an authentication system based on a 'username and password' method to provide security for a number of e-Government services.

The second phase of the e-ID project will allow citizens to use Digital Certificates that can provide higher levels of secure login and electronic signing. To reach that point, in 2006, a Government Certification Authority was set up at MITTS Ltd to run the infrastructure required. Progress was registered in developing the required software which is now undergoing a quality assurance process. The software is funded through the Vertical Strategic Alliance with Microsoft. The project is slightly behind schedule as changes were necessary to accommodate the evolving demands of secure authentication mechanisms.

The Transport Authority (ADT) portal allows car owners to renew their licences online. The portal allows insurance firms to act as agents and pay licences on behalf of their customers. The technology framework used for 'agents' is also in use by professionals submitting their clients' income tax returns. Digital certificates, purchased from a third party supplier are already in use for the process, and these will be replaced by those issued by Government's Certification Authority when this is set up.

A newly launched e-Health Portal also uses e-ID for authentication and is the first sector-specific government portal to be launched. Other e-ID dependant services related to planning, public service recruitment and tax among others have also been developed.

Government has also completed improvements to identity registration processes to accommodate an increasing demand for identity management across the Government. A Registration Authority will continue to be responsible for the registration of electronic identities. The revised processes will commence along with the second phase of the e-ID solution which will now be based on PKI digital certificates in addition to the username and password mechanism. Once registered, a citizen's details are stored securely to be used, should the individual grant their consent to provide better e-Government services and to issue official identity credentials such as the new electronic ID cards and the new machine readable biometric passports.

Improvements to the identity management infrastructure will allow MITTS Ltd to offer increased capability in related core services to the wider Public Sector. The Ministry worked with the MJHA to define requirements for the required technology to be known as the National Identity Management Systems which will be used for core processes such as the issuance of electronic ID cards and the new machine readable biometric passports and visas. It will also form part of the border checkpoint control systems, the systems for the registration of third country nationals and the development of a population register.

A new e-Government Services Portal, branded as *mygov.mt* and accessible at www.mygov.mt, will allow citizens to define their personalised profile and needs when acquiring e-Government services. Using e-ID authentication, citizens will be able to log into a dedicated portal, apply for a service and, if they wish to, delegate the use of the service to a person they trust. They will also be able to select the services they use more frequently and avoid having to browse through web pages they do not need.

mygov.mt will provide services to both individual citizens and businesses. Clients will have reason to return to the portal frequently giving the new online space considerable commercial value which the Government wishes to exploit to help finance identity management and other ICT initiatives. All currently available e-Government services and future ones will be accessible through the Portal.

Users will be able to use the same portal for their own personal use but, provided their credentials are recognised, they can also access services on behalf of someone else or an organisation (or several) to which

they belong. A number of services will be restricted according to the profile of the user (say only doctors will be able to use services specifically provided to them).

The Government's electronic payment gateway in addition to the related services already provided by BOV, now also accepts HSBC debit cards as a result of an agreement that now brings all stakeholders in the sector together, providing a more complete service to citizens and business.

Talks with the mobile operators are underway for a new mobile government framework that should allow for the introduction of 'push-pull' mobile government services where citizens can directly interact with the Government using SMS.

A new draft national eHealth vision and strategy proposes specific deliverables and targets on a national basis to guide initiatives in this sector. The draft will be released for public and stakeholder consultation during 2007.

Twenty-one fully transactional e-Government services together with several other informational websites of government departments are now available. These include a new e-Health Portal launched in February 2006. Patients can now access online an outpatient reservations service, and apply for the European Health Card or health care programmes provided by the Health Ministry. A new data protection portal provides a suite of services enabling citizens to effect payment, check data controllers and obtain any information relating to data protection. The following transactional e-Services are now available:

- eRent – A convenient and secure way to pay rent bills for government property in Malta.
- Certificates online - Provides all relative information to obtain an existing Public Registry civil status certificate, including Birth and Marriage certificates. Orders may be made online together with any payments necessary and the certificates will be sent to the delivery address.
- Local enforcement system - Pay contraventions issued by Police Officers and Local Wardens on the internet.
- MCAST short courses - Online application/enrolment and payment for part-time courses at the MCAST colleges.
- Examinations applications - Students can apply and pay for their exams online.
- ETC employers service - This service enables registered employers to search for candidates online through their CV's, submit a vacancy form, submit an engagement form, submit a termination form and order ETC certificates.
- ETC job seeker services - This service offers a whole range of service including the search facility for jobs, submission on CV's, online application for courses offered and job alerts through e-mail and SMS.
- Renewal of licences - Online renewal of licences issued by the Trade Licensing Unit, the Malta Tourism Authority and the Malta Transport Authority.
- Data protection - A suite of services enabling the citizen to effect payment, check data controllers and obtain any information relating to data protection
- Road licence renewal - Online renewal of the road licences issued by the Malta Transport Authority.
- National Statistics Portal - All NSO press releases, surveys and publications are available online. Through a payment gateway clients can order and effect payment on any NSO publication.
- Online VAT return - Submission of the VAT Return from the comfort of one's computer. Notes are available to assist persons filling in their VAT Return
- VAT online Statement - This facility allows the citizen to view balances for specific tax periods.
- VAT forms online - A number of VAT services which can be accessed either through the download of specific forms or online submission of forms. These include: Registration for VAT, ordering of fiscal receipt books, change of register, request for reactivation, reprint of VAT certificate and partnership registration.
- Business branches VAT services - Downloading of an application form for the expansion business activity and opening of new premises.
- Inland Revenue – Corporate Tax payer services - This services enables tax practitioners to, on behalf of their corporate clients, file Income Tax returns and Financial Statements, submit Provisional Tax

Reduction forms, access their clients' accounts to confirm payments and tax statements, and access their clients' tax return submission status.

- Inland Revenue – Employers and FSS services - This enables employers, who employ thirty or more employees, to submit FSS end-of-year records electronically.
- Inland Revenue – Individual Tax payer services - This service enables tax payers to submit payments online for Self Assessment, Settlement Tax, Provisional Tax and Social Security Contributions (Class Two) due. Individual taxpayers can submit their personal Income Tax Return online. Taxpayers need the eID to access this service.

The development of several other new e-Government services has been initiated for delivery during 2007.

The method of funding Government's ICT operations has been revised with improved guidelines for the methods of assessing plans for major Government ICT capital expenditure. CITAC evaluated business proposals submitted by line Ministries, submitting in turn, its final recommendations to the Ministry of Finance.

The Government embarked on setting up the necessary framework for the provision of core ICT services that would be common across all levels of Government. In 2006, MITTS Ltd offered a portfolio of services which are critical to Government's operations through a consolidated environment. The services offered included amongst others:

- Connectivity with the newly implemented MAGNET II fibre optic network and other broadband connections.
- Services related to the Electronic Payment Gateway, e-ID, m-Government Gateway (Web Framework).
- Network Management, Server Management, Systems and Database Management.
- Incident and Problem Management, Reporting and First Line incident resolution through the MITTS Service Call Centre.
- E-mail and VoIP services.
- Internet Gateway (GovNet) and Service Provision.
- Quality testing services related to third party website development, and the quality check of third party development according to Government Architecture standards.
- Hosting of Office Automation, mail boxes, and software applications.
- Anti-virus, Intrusion detection, Anti-Spam, Patch Management.
- Disaster Recovery Services.
- EU Council Networks.
- Desktop Management services for 500 PCs in sensitive offices in Government.
- Support on the local area networks (at gateway level to MAGNET).
- Maintenance and support on Core and Strategic Software Applications.
- Contracts and Supplier Management Service.

The provision of the above consolidated services promoted a higher return on investment made in Government ICT infrastructure and helped to reduce the duplication of services across Government.

INFORMATION SOCIETY SECRETARIAT

In 2006, ISS continued with the implementation of the National ICT Strategy. The effort to increase awareness on basic ICT skills continued as the myWeb course started to be delivered at the Community Technology Learning Centres (CTLCs). A CTLC was set at the UHM in Floriana and at Richmond Foundation in St Venera. As a result of the vertical strategic alliance between the Government and Microsoft and HP respectively, the CTLCs offered ICT training and services to members of the NGOs running the Centre and people in the community.

As part of the HelloIT programme, ISS facilitated the availability of the Windows Office XP in Maltese. This initiative was completed in partnership with Microsoft. As part of the same efforts to increase the

availability of digital content in Maltese, ISS and the National Council for the Maltese Language organised a conference with the aim of identifying the main initiatives for the increase of Maltese digital content.

Initiatives to increase ICT accessibility were also co-ordinated and included the launch of the third Microsoft software for students. The third offer consisted of the new Operating System Vista (Ultimate Upgrade) and Office 2007 (Enterprise). All full-time students were eligible for the offer which was offered at a fraction of the commercial price. Persons with disability were offered the software free of charge. Another initiative targeted at persons with disability was the PC Refurbisher Programme through which a number of PCs are being refurbished and leased.

ISS continued to provide content and participate in the ICTV programme that is aired on PBS. The 30-minute weekly programme featured the latest developments in ICT and focused on the application of these tools in the daily lives of people.

As part of its programme to increase ICT skills in Malta, the myPotential programme was launched. myPotential is a vehicle through which Government is providing tax incentives to companies and individuals that follow ICT certifications that are demanded by the industry. The programme registered an outstanding success with hundreds of participants taking ICT certifications in the first six months of its launch. Through the programme, a number of training providers have partnered with Government to offer ICT certifications and raise awareness on the opportunities of ICT career paths.

The Student Placement Programme was organised, and a number of students following ICT courses at MCAST and University were placed in ICT jobs during their summer holidays.

ISS co-ordinated the positive submission of a project under the last call of the European Social Fund. The project included a study on the demand and supply of ICT skills in Malta and the delivery of ICT training to a number of people, some of which were considered to be at risk of unemployment.

The National Information Society Consultative Council (NISCO) continued to meet in 2006. The topics discussed included eBusiness, Internet Governance, Broadband and Malta's participation in INEC.

A vertical strategic alliance was signed with IBM. The three-year agreement will see the implementation of a number of initiatives related to ICT certification, including the delivery of training on Linux. A number of students will also be placed with IBM subsidiaries abroad and will gain experience in consultancy related jobs in European countries. IBM will also facilitate the participation of Maltese stakeholders in EU projects, including the Seventh Framework Programme.

The HP Micro Acceleration Programme was launched for micro enterprises. The programme includes three courses that illustrate how technology can be applied in a business environment. It covers topics ranging from the use of technology in marketing, human resources, financial management and in other business operations. The eCommerce gap analysis was completed. The analysis highlighted the main inhibitors that are limiting the take-up of eCommerce at the business and household level.

ISS also participated in various meetings at the EU level, particularly in committees related to the implementation of the i2010 information society action plan.

PRIVATISATION UNIT

During 2006 the Privatisation Unit successfully concluded the sale of 60% of government shareholding in Maltacom. This represented 60% of Maltacom's outstanding shares. The Unit also continued to work on the commercialisation of the Petroleum Division of Enemalta. In the meantime the process for the sale of government shares in the Bank of Valletta was discontinued. Later on during the year the unit commenced work on the sale of government shareholding in Tug Malta.

The process to commercialise the Gas (LPG) Division of Enemalta was also taken in hand, and by the end of the year the process had reached an advanced stage.

The share sale exercise in Maltacom continued and by mid-January the Privatisation Unit received the binding bids. Following the evaluation of these bids a preferred bidder was selected. Negotiations were taken in hand and on 19 May the share sale agreement was finalised. The proceeds from this sale amounted to Lm94.446million.

Work on the commercialisation of the Petroleum Division of Enemalta continued. MIMCOL completed an exercise providing a detailed inventory of the assets to be transferred. Financial advisors were appointed and together with the legal advisors the Privatisation Unit was busy preparing the necessary documentation for the process. The legal advisors, together with a Notary Public who was appointed to look at the immovable property assets, provided a number of papers to chart the way forward for the possible assignment of these assets. A third draft of the Request for Proposal together with the legal terms of the concession was at an advanced stage by the close of 2006.

The Bank of Valletta share sale process continued during the first nine months of the year. The Memorandum of Understanding with Banco di Sicilia was renewed twice. After communicating with a number of financial institutions a teaser letter was sent to those who expressed an interest. Presentations were made to a number of interested parties. As the final interested parties did not provide the strategic fit that Government was looking for, the Privatisation Unit advised Government to stop the process. In October, following this advice Government announced that for the time being it was withdrawing its Bank of Valletta shares from the market and the process was stopped.

Early during the year the Privatisation Unit commenced work on the sale of government shares in Tug Malta. Following an agreement with the other shareholders and the appointment of legal and financial consultants, the process got underway. A Request for Proposals was prepared and a request for Expression of Interest was issued. A number of reputable companies have replied positively. The due diligence process was finalised in November and bids are now expected to be submitted early in 2007.

In the middle of the year the Privatisation Unit was requested to work on the commercialisation of the Gas Division of Enemalta. The Request for Proposals had already been prepared by MIMCOL and the process moved on quite fast. By July the call for Expression of Interest was made public and a month later the data room was made available to the prospective bidders. In the meantime a firm of technical advisors was appointed to assist in the evaluation process. Bids were received in November and the adjudicating process was taken in hand in December. This was expected to be completed in January 2007 with the final stages of the process expected to be completed by April 2007.

JOHN GATT

Permanent Secretary MIIT

Corporate Services Directorate

The Corporate Services Directorate continued to provide support services to the various secretariats, directorates, authorities, corporations and other entities within the Ministry, particularly in the fields of financial planning & management and human resource management & development (HRM&D).

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

During the year under review the Corporate Services Directorate co-ordinated and assisted with the preparation of the business and financial plans and draft estimates of the Ministry, as well as of a number of entities. The Directorate was also responsible for the co-ordination of the Revised Estimates process.

The Directorate provided the required support services to the Ministry, in the procurement of goods and services.

The Directorate managed requests for the release - in line with directives issued from time to time by the Ministry of Finance - of approved Capital and Recurrent budgetary subventions and other financial allocations submitted by the various entities falling under the responsibility of the Ministry. These included MGI/MIMCOL, Water Services Corporation, Malta Shipyards, Malta National Laboratory, Malta Air Traffic Services, Malta Freeport Corporation, Malta Enterprise Corporation, Public Broadcasting Services, Privatisation Unit, Malta Industrial Parks and the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner.

During 2006 the Directorate was also involved in leading the process to award tenders and direct orders; compiled information in connection with the drafting of draft replies to Parliamentary Questions; co-ordinated replies to various requests and enquiries received from OPM, Finance, Treasury, Office of the Ombudsman, National Audit Office and the Internal Audit & Investigations Directorate; assisted with the preparation of travel documents required by ministry officials when they travel abroad on official business; and monitored expenditure from capital, recurrent and other approved financial allocations.

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT

The Directorate provided support services in the field of human resource management and development. It also ensured conformity with current policies, systems and procedures, as well as the provision of data and other information required or requested by central government agencies.

Following the decentralisation of functions from the Management and Personnel Office, the Human Resources Branch undertook the issuing of letters of progression, confirmation of appointments and the authorisation of increments.

The Directorate encouraged, identified and nominated officers for selected training in programs covering various topics regarding Information Technology, Registry Services, Strategy Development, Reception Skills, Customer Care, use of EU Tendering Templates, and Public Procurement EC Directives 2004/17 and 2004/18.

Support was provided in the drawing up and compilation of Performance Management Programmes.

MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES

The Director Corporate Services assisted the Permanent Secretary in his duties and contributed to the collective management of the Ministry by serving as member on the Ministry's Management Committee and MIIIT's Project Review Board (PRB).

The Directorate ensured the timely implementation of decisions within the set timeframes.

ALFRED CALLEJA

Director (Corporate Services)

EU Affairs Directorate

During the year under review, the EU Affairs Directorate within MIIIT continued to improve its provision of service; this was mainly possible through the addition of one more clerical officer. As a result, the work was now better organised to cope with the daily ongoing consultation and information role of the Directorate.

PARTICIPATION IN WORKING GROUPS

The Directorate continued to co-ordinate consultations on a number of Council and Commission working groups. This was the case for the Council Working Group on Telecommunications and Information Society, which although normally attended by the Technical Attaché for the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council, is at times attended by ministry officials. The Directorate is responsible for ensuring that the fortnightly meetings of this working group are attended and the instruction notes well prepared, in order to ensure that the National Position is clearly communicated to the Commission and to the other Member States. The Ministry is also the 'lead' in the field of data protection. Participation during the year also included the Council Working Group on Data Protection, as well as participation by the Data Protection Commissioner who is the Malta representative to the Article 29 Working Party on the Protection of Individuals with regard to the Processing of Personal Data and by the Director of EU Affairs who is the member on the Article 31 Committee on the Protection of Individuals with regard to the Processing of Personal Data. Meetings of this latter group and of the Council Working Party on Data Protection, both held during the year, were attended by the Directorate staff.

The Directorate continued to ensure participation of all working and expert groups previously attended by CIMU, such as IDABC (Intergovernmental Delivery of European eGovernment Services of Public Administrations, Businesses and Citizens). The Directorate also continued to monitor and co-ordinate the twinning project being implemented by MITTS and the participation of the Commission Working Groups now attended by MITTS.

Participation in Other Meetings

The Directorate participated in a number of locally organised seminars and conferences in relation to EU funds, procurement regulations and EU related matters.

CONSULTATIONS AND EU DECISION-MAKING

In order to ensure that all interests within the Ministry's remit are taken into account during the EU decision making process, consultations with other Ministries were ongoing during the year and the Directorate continued in its role as the Ministry's focal point between other Ministries (MCMP, MRES, MHEC, MFIN, MRAE and MFA) and entities, on a myriad of technical matters, subject of EU proposals. Council documents and other EU related information received was adequately distributed to the appropriate entities, to enable them to provide feedback in order that the Ministry could then formulate its position and brief the 'lead Ministry' accordingly. Following such consultation the Directorate also contributed to the National Position, as presented in Memoranda to the Inter-Ministerial Committee on EU Affairs and Instruction Notes for use by the Technical Attachés. This process, although ongoing in most areas concerning entities within the Ministry's remit, becomes all the more challenging when proposals concern

various Ministries. Through the improvement in work practices during the year, the Directorate has enhanced this process and is now in a position to bring to the attention of its entities, upcoming meetings concerning proposals of direct interest to them. Follow up has equally been improved and this in turn has enhanced our input into positions taken by lead Ministries. This way the Ministry can ensure that when a National Position is adopted, consultations with entities within its remit have been given due consideration and are accounted for in the National Position. Part of this process concerns the explanatory memoranda on each proposal discussed at the IMC on EU Affairs, approved by Cabinet and sent to the House of Representatives. Here again, the Directorate has ensured that these memoranda when approved by Cabinet are sent in a timely manner to the Scrutiny Committee on EU Affairs of the House of Representatives.

The Directorate is also the Euromed contact point for the Ministry.

HARMONISATION WITH THE EU ACQUIS

The Ministry continued to monitor the implementation of the *acquis* by the entities within its remit. A number of targets have to be achieved and these concern both legislative amendments as well as structural changes. In order to comply with the EU environmental *acquis*, a number of projects have been allocated EU funds. Through the European Regional and Development Fund, Enemalta Corporation, Water Services Corporation, Malta Industrial Parks and Malta Enterprise are all benefiting from EU Funds. The total which amounts to approximately 15 million euros is being monitored by the EU Directorate. Other funds include pre-accession funds which will finance a Sewage Treatment Plant in Gozo and the now completed accreditation of laboratory facilities at the Malta National Laboratory among others. Malta Enterprise is also benefiting from approximately 0.36 million euros from the European Social Fund. These funds will be distributed over two different initiatives. The first is a project aimed at enhancing the Competitiveness of SMEs and Micro Enterprises through Lifelong Learning, and the second, which forms part of the EQUAL EU programme, is aimed at encouraging entrepreneurship among the local unemployed through a series of initiatives such as training, supplying hands-on experience, assistance in the form of grants for start-ups and continued support following start up. During the year under review, the Directorate continued to monitor closely the progress of these projects, and was actively involved in tendering, reporting and payment processes connected with these projects.

Following its work on the NSRF and NRP last year, although the Directorate will not be managing the next programming period of Structural Funds, the Directorate continues to monitor closely the possibility for entities to benefit from these funds in order to finance the implementation of the new *acquis*.

The Directorate also frequently represented the Ministry during the Sectoral Monitoring Sub-Committees (Environment; Human Resources and Employment; and Tourism and Culture) and the Monitoring Committee on Structural and Cohesion Funds, and thereby acting as interface between Ministry and the Planning and Priorities Co-ordination Division OPM.

Other funds such as the EEA Norway, Funds Transition Facility 2006, ESF second call and the Malta UK Action Plan, were brought to the attention of the entities and ministry agencies and assistance given in the application process.

ADHERENCE TO THE ACQUIS

The Ministry was also involved in various aspects of the environmental *acquis*, which involved its various entities in implementation measures and reporting to the local regulator. The Directorate liaised with its counterparts on these various issues, also attending meetings with other stakeholders and regulatory bodies.

Membership Obligations

Following the signing of the Accession Treaty, Malta assumed certain commitments some of which fall within the Ministry's remit. One such example is the ongoing reporting on the restructuring of the

Shipyards, which is done biannually and submitted to the Commission. Various queries concerning state aid relating to government undertakings and commission requests for explanations following receipt of complaints were also dealt with on behalf of the Ministry.

LUCIENNE MEILAK
Director (EU Affairs)

Policy Development and Programme Implementation Directorate

AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The areas of responsibility of the Directorate include Parliamentary Questions, Customer Care, Green Issues, Occupational Health and Safety, Euro Changeover, Pandemic Influenza and Better Regulation, Budgetary measures and the NRP.

PQ Section

During the year the section dealt with 690 Parliamentary Questions, with the highest number of 91 PQs during May alone. The Principal Officer in charge of this section was also responsible for work regarding visits abroad by officers of the Ministry. There were 17 requests for visits abroad. During the year this responsibility was entrusted to the Accounts Section.

Customer Care

The Customer Care system continued to provide the opportunity to the public to address any problems encountered both with the Ministry as well as with the various entities within the aegis of the Ministry for Investment, Industry, and Information Technology. During the year, 63 queries regarded Enemalta, the Water Services Corporation, the Public Broadcasting Service, Maltacom, Airmalta, Maltapost and the Ministry's Information Technology Section were dealt with and resolved within a very reasonable timeframe.

Budget Measures

This Directorate was entrusted with the reporting on the 2006 budget measures concerning our Ministry. Despite some logistic problems the majority of the measures were accomplished whilst progress on some others was proceeding in a satisfactory manner.

Structural Funds

Following in the steps of the four Working Groups namely (i) Accessibility; (ii) Employment; (iii) Environment; (iv) Competitiveness, tasked to carry out relevant functions in relation to the programming of Structural Funds 2007 – 2013, Operational Programmes 1 and 2 were set up. The Ministry presented various projects for inclusion.

Euro Changeover

The Director, as the Ministry's co-ordinator, attended all monthly meetings and seminars as member of the Public Sector Sectoral Committee (PSSC) in connection with the changeover. During the year a number of information meetings were held for managers of various entities. Attendance was very satisfactory. A revised plan by the PSSC was issued in May six months after the first programme was launched. The changeover programme in the entities falling within the ambit of the Ministry is on the right track.

Pandemic Influenza

The Director was nominated as member of the Pandemic Preparedness Committee and to substitute the Permanent Secretary as necessary. Meetings of the PPC were held regularly. The Director was nominated Chairman of the sub-committee which helped in the formulation of measures to be taken prior to, during and after a local Pandemic influenza outbreak. A contact point was nominated from all entities. The entities were all represented during a three-day seminar for all entities held to discuss the various measures related to Pandemic preparedness. Measures proposed by entities' representatives were discussed individually with the Director.

Better Regulation

The Director co-ordinated action in connection with Better Regulations. Nominated representatives of the entities were encouraged to propose changes to better regulations during meetings held with them. In October MIIIT was informed of the two measures that it had to steer in the following months.

Green Issues

Various green measures taken by this Ministry during the year included the separation of paper from other waste; the re-use of envelopes; the collection of used/spent batteries; the purchase of duplex printers; the carrying out of a semi-professional energy audit; the introduction of motor sensors in all rest rooms; the replacement of a number of electric bulbs with energy saving devices; and the planting of 81 trees at Salina. A lecture on waste separation was delivered by MedEcology. The feasibility of installing a photo voltaic system is under consideration. During the year the Director performed the role of Green Leader as the incumbent moved to another Ministry.

Gender Issues

The committee was chaired by a female officer from the DCS's office, and composed also of a female officer from ISS and a male officer from the DCS's office. A number of seminars held during the year were attended by the Director, Assistant Director and Policy officer within the Directorate and the members of the committee. The Gender Mainstreaming "Way Forward" was launched during the year.

Occupational Health and Safety

The issues dealt with during the year and in which the Directorate was actively involved, concerned the elimination of health hazards and other issues contributing towards a safe environment at the Office of the Permanent Secretary. A member of staff was sponsored to attend a seminar on first aid. It is intended to train more officers during 2007.

Chairmanships

During the period under review both the Director and Assistant Director acted as Chairmen of Evaluation Committees regarding the award of various tenders.

JOSEPH M GERADA

Director (Policy Development and Programme Implementation)

Office of the Data Protection Commissioner

During the year under review, the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner sustained the structured efforts to effectively promulgate data protection awareness to the public at large. The coming into force of the Data Protection legislation on 15 July 2003 led to a culture change in the way organisations were processing personal data and also instituted essential rights exercisable by the data subjects. Emerging new technologies in the fields of biometric identification and remote frequency identification are also shaping the way how personal data is being processed in that more adequate and stringent security safeguards need to be in place.

During 2006, the Commissioner held regular meetings with representatives from the various sectors to discuss data protection issues and develop guidelines regulating the processing of data in the relative various sectors. These included financial institutions, journalism, insurance, social welfare, education and Police. Discussions were also initiated with representatives from two other sectors, the photographers and security service sectors, where specific matters required the intervention of the Commissioner to ascertain that privacy rights were being safeguarded. It is envisaged that guidelines in these sectors will be developed by the end of next year. In February the guidelines for the promotion of good practice in the insurance business sector, developed in conjunction with the Malta Insurance Association, the Association of Insurance Brokers and MFSA, were launched during an information session. These guidelines refer to the processing operations in the insurance business relating to the preparation and issue of insurance policies, premiums, settling of claims and reinsurance. The Office maintained close co-operation with other regulatory authorities, associations and federations.

On 25 January the Office's new portal was officially launched by the Minister for Investment, Industry and Information Technology during a press conference held at the Office. The new system was developed as part of the e-Government programme. This system provides the general public with online services and caters for back-office facilities to ease the administrative workload so that human resources could be better utilised on core technical data protection matters.

During this year, the Office continued with the implementation of the twinning light project which commenced in October 2005 with the German Federal Commissioner for Data Protection. The global objectives were to assist the Commissioner to strengthen the expertise to fulfil his duties and obligations in the administration of the Data Protection Act and also assist the Data Protection Unit within the Office of the Prime Minister to enhance data protection skills in the Public Service. The twinning agreement was concluded on 3 June. The programme rendered significant positive results both in terms of knowledge transfer and in the adoption of concrete recommendations delivered by the various experts in the areas of competence. During the period, experts were attached to the Office as part of the team; in that, they participated in meetings, advised the Commissioner on resolution of complaints and were also involved during inspection visits. Further to the twinning project, this Office has further strengthened the relationship with the German counterparts.

As part of Malta's preparations for accession to Schengen, the Office was subject to a peer review carried out by the Schengen Evaluation Data Protection Committee composed of 12 European evaluators. Experts called at the Office to evaluate the internal operations and procedures, in particular the exercise of the Commissioner's supervisory role. Presentations by the Commissioner, technical staff and the data protection officer within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were made. The outcome of the evaluation was

presented to the Schengen Working Party during the Council meeting where the Data Protection Authority was given high marks for being adequately geared to exercise the role of data protection regulator on all data controllers including the Police. The Office commenced the regular inspections of Police systems, where the first in a series were carried out with the assistance of German IT experts. Such systems are inspected to ensure that the maximum level of security is in place to safeguard personal data against unauthorised access and to ascertain that these are compliant with other European obligations; in certain cases recommendations were made. As part of the regulatory functions, the Commissioner is also expected to carry out inspections on data controllers. Fourteen inspections were carried out and these included the Maltese Embassies and Consular Offices in Tunis and Moscow.

During the year, the Office honoured the commitment to participate in international data protection fora. These meetings included the Article 29 Data Protection Working Party, the European Conference of Data Protection Authorities, the International Conference on Privacy and Personal Data Protection, meetings of the Joint Supervisory Authorities, Council of Europe and the Case Handling Workshop.

In 2006, presentations were delivered to various organisations and constituted bodies with the objective to further raise awareness and involve the key players in the evolution of the data protection culture. News articles on different aspects of data protection were published in local media. A substantial number of queries, both by telephone and by e-mail, reached the Office while 32 complaints were lodged. One request for prior checking was received. The Commissioner decided on the case and subsequently the decision was appealed by the parties before the Data Protection Appeals Tribunal. The Tribunal decided in favour of the Commissioner. The parties felt aggrieved by such a decision and according to the provisions of the Data Protection Act appealed, on a point of law, before the Court of Appeal. The case is still for hearing before the Court.

PAUL MIFSUD CREMONA
Data Protection Commissioner

Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment

Rural Affairs and Paying Agency Division

RURAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

EAGGF GUIDANCE

Measure 3.1 - Investments in Agricultural Holdings

The second call for applications was launched on the 1 September 2005 and closed on the 31 October 2005 after an extensive publicity campaign.

Under this 2nd call for applications, a total of 248 applications were submitted, of which 58 applications failed to reach the mandatory requirements, whilst 14 applicants failed to submit the missing supporting documentation after being notified.

A total of 176 applications passed for the selection process of which 129 failed to reach the minimum required score, whilst 47 applications qualified as potential Final Recipients. This was revised to 49 by the Appeals Board but since a potential recipient opted out, there were 48 Final Recipients.

During September 2006, all contracts were signed between the RDDt (Final Beneficiary) and selected applicants (Final Recipients). Applicants were given a maximum of one year to complete the investment applied for. The total investment to be carried out by the final 48 recipients amounts to 3,860,234.64 Euros of which 1,658,114.93 Euros or 42.95% of the total project cost was requested as a grant.

During 2006 The RDDt (Final Beneficiary) processed grant payments amounting to 1,843,980.34 Euros of which 1,260,021.13 Euros had been executed by the Treasury by end of December 2006, whilst 583,959.21 Euros remained pending at the Treasury.

Measure 3.2 – Improving the Marketing and Processing of Agricultural Products

The second call for applications was launched on the 1 September 2005 and closed on the 31 October 2005 after an extensive publicity campaign.

Under the 2nd call for applications, a total of 35 applications were submitted. Of these, 9 applications failed to reach the mandatory requirements, and 3 applicants failed to submit the missing supporting documentation after being notified. A total of 23 applications passed for the selection process, 6 failed to reach the minimum required score, and 17 applications qualified as potential Final Recipients.

During August 2006, all contracts were signed between the RDD (Final Beneficiary) and selected applicants (Final Recipients) in which applicants were given a maximum of one year to complete the investment applied for.

The total investment to be carried out by the final 17 recipients amounts to 3,398,395.27 Euros of which 1,581,058 Euros was requested as a grant.

During 2006, the RDD (Final Beneficiary) processed grant payments amounting to 614,235.94 Euros of which 551,464.06 Euros had been executed by the Treasury by the 15 December 2006, whilst 62,771.88 Euros remained pending at the Treasury.

RDP GUARANTEE

Agri-environment Measures

Two major objectives were the focus for 2006: (a) ensuring the final 20% payment for the Pre-Accession - Rural Stewardship scheme and (b) administering controls for the 2006 application campaigns in conjunction with the 2004 and 2005 campaign.

Pre-Accession Scheme

The pre-accession Rural Stewardship Scheme was concluded in August 2006. A 100% check was made for all the 81 beneficiaries.

The percentage of rubble walls restored under the pre-accession scheme was as follows:

Completed	0% – 25%	=	20.96%
	26% – 50%	=	20.96%
	51% – 80%	=	12.9%
	80% and over	=	45.16%

There were several farmers whose restoration exceeded the original declared limit.

Approximately 51,461.61 euros in payments were distributed as the final 20% to all eligible beneficiaries during November.

Restoration of Terrace Retaining Rubble Walls

During the 2006 campaign there were a further 736 applications for an additional restoration area of 123,923.77m². Of these 736 applications, 134 had also applied in 2004 thus requesting additional aid to increase the area of rubble wall to be restored in 2006 while 29 had applied also in 2004 and 2005, and 66 applied in 2005 (and 2006). Thus, effectively new applicants amounted to 507 in 2006. Various administrative controls pertinent to ceilings and GIS overlaps were effected in close collaboration with IACS during 2006.

Conservation of Autochthonous Species - Holm Oak and Maltese Ox Species

During 2006, the Rural Development Department (RDD) also served as a front office in aiding farmers to apply for this scheme through the compilation of the Whole Farm Management Plan. RDD also collaborated with MITTS in the digitizing and inserting of these applicants in the application system. A further 14 applications were registered after RDD sent a notification letter to all potential beneficiaries falling within the stipulated buffer zone, thus increasing a further area of 8.43ha equivalent to an aid request of 3,793.5 Euros/Year for 5 years. Administrative controls were carried out by RD and IACS officials at the applications centre in December.

Maltese Ox – One new pure breed Ox was additionally registered in 2006.

Promotion of Organic Farming

Following the 2006 campaign, there were 8 new applicants. The total area under organic has increased to 21.95 ha for around 13,170 Euros/Year in grants for 5 years. Administrative controls were carried out at the IACS application system in December.

LFA

During the 2006 campaign there were 5986 applicants for aid for a total land area of 9,085 ha.

Ad Hoc Measure

In 2006, RDD effected Ad Hoc 2005 payments to 888 beneficiaries amounting to euros 2,374,429.28. The payments were distributed as follows:

- 519 beneficiaries received a total amount of euros 204,900.09 on 1205.29 Ha of dry land;
- 573 beneficiaries received euros 794,009.52 on 1295.28 Ha of irrigated land; and
- 306 animal breeders received Euros 1,375,519.65 on a total of 25472.58 Livestock Units.

The payments granted to animal breeders constituted 7 categories including:

- 54 swine breeders received euros 186,665.01;
- 93 bovine breeders received euros 424,174.09;
- 26 ovine breeders received euros 15,106.49;
- 23 layer breeders received euros 160,874.67;
- 26 broiler breeders received euros 94,959.74;
- 1 rabbit breeder received euros 4,494.96; and
- 83 animal breeders having mixed livestock received a total amount of euros 489,221.36.

There are some payments still pending due to controls that still need to be concluded.

The 2006 Ad Hoc land applications were opened between 1 March and 23 May 2006. There were a total of 776 applications for land on dry and/or irrigated parcels. Ad Hoc animal applications opened between 12 June and 14 July 2006. There were a total of 319 applications submitted by full-time animal breeders requesting a total amount of Euros 1,058,190.80 for 26454.77 Livestock Units.

Meeting Standards

Meeting Standards applications campaign remained open until 28 July 2006. In total there were 55 eligible applications. In mid-October, 55 full-time and part-time animal breeders were granted a total amount of Euros 384,716.33. These were distributed between 31 new beneficiaries being granted the first payment and 24 beneficiaries receiving their second payment under this measure. The 31 new beneficiaries were granted a total amount of euros 224,532.61 whereas the payment to the other 24 beneficiaries amounted to euros 160,183.72.

Producer Organisations

For the Pre-accession Rural Business Scheme for Producer Groups, the two participating producer groups, *Ghaqda Ghawdxija Produtturi tat-Tadam* and *Ghaqda Produtturi tat-Tadam* Maltin submitted their interim and final reports. The necessary Administrative and Spot Controls together with the analysis of the reports submitted were carried out and the following payments were paid:

Producer	Interim Aid	Final Aid
Ghaqda Ghawdxija Produtturi tat-Tadam	€3,400	€27,160
Ghaqda Produtturi tat-Tadam Maltin	€4,200	€30,520

The Rural Development Department promoted producer groups by providing informative adverts on television, radio and specialised magazines such as ‘Biedja u Sajd’. The main emphasis was that farmers should group together to form Producer Organisations in order to benefit from economies of scale and increase the value added of their production thus increasing income. As a result, a potential Producer Organisation in the rabbit sector is in the process of being recognised.

LEADER

During these last months, the RDD carried out consultation meetings with foreign experts so as to adopt the best approach for LEADER. As from August the Department initiated an information campaign aimed to identify and inform potential stakeholders on the LEADER Program.

The Rural Development Department through the Ministry’s initiative has also been involved in the LEADERMED Project. The aim of the project is to assist in the dissemination of the LEADER program to Mediterranean regions.

IDEA.R.E

The aim of this project is to develop an innovative training method for the exchange of professional competences within the European Proposal Management for the Agricultural and Rural Areas.

During 2006 RDD was involved with the other partners in defining and elaborating the innovative training methodology for the development of vocational skills concerning European proposal management for the agriculture and rural sector. The training methodology was tested whereby 4 employees from MRAE were involved in a distance learning test phase. Further to this, in order to apply this course locally RDD tried to identify the best method of application of this course in the local context. This project was terminated in December 2006.

Service Contracts

RDD concluded a number of pre-accession funded service contracts in the following areas:

- Sub-Sector Studies on the poultry, rabbit, potatoes and fruit tree sectors costing 139,000 Euros;
- A Rural Development Public Awareness Campaign costing 128,620 Euros;
- A Voluntary Land Re-parcelling Feasibility Study costing 90,000 Euros.

Technical Assistance

RDD also financed a number of service tenders regarding provision of technical consultancy. Through such eligible expenditures it is being ensured that the RDD shall be assisted in having the necessary knowledge to implement and develop the necessary strategies and associated measures.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Annual Progress Report was submitted to the Commission at end of June 2006. This obligatory report covered all RD measures together with associated monitoring tables containing various indicators.

In preparation for the new programme, the RDD has:

- Started the background work for the Common Monitoring and Evaluation System that has to be implemented through the 2007-2013 programming period.
- Initiated the automated system (SFC) for data/documentation transmission that has to be in use across MS as from 2007.

National Strategy Plan (NSP) and Rural Development Plan (RDP) 2007- 2013

The following preparatory work was carried out for both NSP and RD:

- The organisation of workshops and seminars for NSP and RDP and sectorial meetings with stakeholders regarding forward strategy for rural development. Compilation and analyses of all information gathered from workshops and meetings (stakeholders' responses, issues and opinions).
- Research of strategic documents on the economic, environmental and agricultural situation of the islands. Analysis of national statistics. Used for SWOT analysis of the local situation. Computation of Baseline Indicators to satisfy compulsory requirement. Action initiated to fill gaps through launching of joint tenders with two bodies, namely MEPA and MRA to carry out studies on HNMF and Nitrate Sourcing respectively.
- Analysis of measures. Determination of which measures target best the disparity areas that resulted from the SWOT analysis.

During November 2006, the final draft of the National Rural Development Strategy for 2007-2013 was completed for presentation to all involved authorities.

INTEGRATED ADMINISTRATION AND CONTROL SYSTEM

- *Land Parcels Identification System:* Lands Parcels Registered to date – 92,786; Farmers Registered - 13,376.
- *Applications received:* 6,066: Additional Aid for vines 1,819; Vine planting 216; Restructuring of vines 3; Arable aid 4,664; Autochthonous species (land-based) 14; Fruit and vegetables for production 5,218; Fruit and tomatoes for processing 481; Less favoured area 5,988; Organic 8; Potatoes (for human consumption) 1,935; Rubble walls 736; Other vegetation including herbs 184; Ad hoc 776.
- *Remote Sensing:* The EU (Joint Research Centre) is providing MRAE with free satellite images and other related technical assistance to assist in on-the-spot controls.
- *Cross Compliance:* In December 2004 the IACS Department was appointed as the co-ordinating body for the Cross-compliance directives. All farmers seeking aid under the EAGGF from 2005 are obliged to be compliant with directives regarding: the environment and identification and registration of animals mandatory as from 2005; public, animal and plant health mandatory as from 2006; and animal welfare mandatory as from 2007. 51 applicants were chosen on established criteria, and on-the-spot inspections on all their holdings were carried out regarding the Cross Compliance Directives. On-the-spot controls were also carried out on 9,158 parcels in connection with area-related measures.
- *Board of Disputes:* 9 cases of disputes were settled at Board meetings; 16 cases were settled prior to Board meetings and 14 cases are under consideration by the Board.

Livestock

- *Registration* was carried out of all farms in Malta and Gozo electronically. GPS location readings were taken of all farms, that is, dairy farms, poultry farms, pig farms and sheep and goat farms. Registration was carried out on newborn animals, deaths, slaughtered, movements from farm to farm and health records.
- *Animal Premium:*
 - Special Beef Premium (2,287 heads)
 - Slaughter Premium (5,236 heads)
 - Veal Premium (nil)
 - Sheep Premium (3,105 heads)

Deprived Persons Measure

Every year the EU makes provisions for agricultural products and foodstuffs, which are in intervention stocks, to be made available to the most deprived persons in the Community through designated charitable organisations.

These products may be supplied unprocessed or processed for the production of food. When products are temporarily unavailable in intervention stocks, the Community may provide grants for food supplies to be purchased on the local market by the member state (MS).

Malta submitted a request for participation in the 2006 Plan and was allocated funds as follows:

Year	Financial Allocation €	Cereals (tonnes)	Rice (tonnes)	Milk powder €	EC Reg Legal Basis
2006	401,030	1,877	600	101,734*	Commission Regulation (EC) 1819/2005

* Grant for products to be purchased on the local market

As it was deemed unfeasible to issue its respective tenders for the withdrawal of stocks from the warehouses abroad and the processing of the foodstuffs, Malta participated in the tender issued by the Italian Government for the cereals and rice stocks allocated to the Italians.

Malta was also allocated grants for the purchase of skimmed milk from the local market. In May a call for tenders was issued by the Contracts Department for the Supply of Fresh Pasteurised Skimmed Milk. The tender was awarded to the sole bidder, namely the Malta Dairy Products.

The amount of products distributed to the deprived persons of Malta and Gozo during 2006 were as follows:

Biscuits (kgs)	Pasta (kgs)	Rice (kgs)	Skimmed Milk (½ ltrs cartons)
88,200	182,400	265,000	192,149

The Moviment Azzjoni Soċjali managed the distribution campaign for Malta, whilst the Moviment Arka managed the campaign in Gozo. These two organisations were in contact with parish priests and other non-governmental organisations (such as Millenium Chapel, YMCA, Dar il-Providenza, Peace Lab, orphanages etc.) with the aim to reach all those who are most in need. The strata of the population most targeted are persons who receive social security benefits, those who have very low income, persons with social problems etc.

From feedback provided it transpires that this year there was an increase in the parishes participating in this programme, which brings the number of participants to approximately 98%.

ORGANIC FARMING UNIT

The main target of the Organic Farming Unit will remain to increase the amount of certified organic land in Malta and Gozo. The situation at present is that the supply is far less than the demand; therefore increasing certified organic land is a top priority.

Priorities

The Unit's main concern is to encourage farmers to convert to organic methods of production and teaching farmers the methods of organic production. The number of certified organic farmers during 2006 increased to 9, having in total 21.4563Ha of certified organic land. This year's figures register a growth of 60.12%

over the amount of certified organic land in 2005. There is also one processor who is also certified to process organic foodstuffs. Farmers have become more aware of the obligations they have to follow according to EEC Reg. 2092/91 after continuous inspections and meetings throughout the year. Advice was also given to farmers regarding the best ways how to market and sell their produce. This advice was based on market research commenced in 2005 where 5 different fruit vendors were selected so as to sell our produce. The organic Farming Unit have also worked together with the Malta Organic Farming Movement (MOAM) where the unit participated in several meetings targeted mainly for farmers which were organised by the same movement.

During 2006 several inspections were commenced to certified organic farmers to maintain continuous contact with them. Several other inspections were commenced also to farmers who were interested in converting into organic production. The organic farming unit dealt with several requests which were made by the RDD with regards to additional information requested on certified organic farmers to proceed with subsidy payments.

The Organic Unit's other objective is increasing public knowledge and awareness, in order to generate consumer demand, and thus create a healthy local market for Maltese organic farmers. To this effect the Unit participated in four principal fairs, namely:

- Green Week fair at the Trade Fair grounds, Naxxar in March;
- Echo Fest organised by the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment, Sliema in June;
- Annual Trade Fair at the Trade Fair grounds, Naxxar in July; and
- Epoka Fair at the Valletta Waterfront, in August.

For the first time farmers were given the opportunity to exhibit and sell their produce during the fairs held in March, June and July. The global sales for these fairs were Lm1,846.02. There was a lot of interest shown from the public and informative leaflets on organic farming were distributed.

In November 2006 an agreement was reached with Dee media, producers of programme *Bongu* on PBS to have a slot of ten minutes once a week with the aim to promote the local agricultural products. The programme is broadcast between 0700hrs and 0900hrs. The sectors identified to be promoted include cheeselets, potatoes, honey products, vegetables, olive oil etc.

The unit also participated in several interviews on the Department's weekly program *Frott Artna* as to both promote organic farming with farmers and also with consumers. Several queries on organic farming were received throughout 2006 from students, farmers and the general public.

Organic Production at the Government Farm

As in the two previous years, 36 Tumoli of land at the Government farm were certified under conversion to organic by the Malta Standards Authority. During 2006 the organic fertiliser store was organised by obtaining wooden pallets to avoid the direct contact of fertilisers from the floor and two second hand metal lockers were bought as storage for liquid and powder pesticides.

Several meetings were held with Gomriza Producer Organisation in order to negotiate the sale of the organic production of Ghammieri after interest shown by this producer organisation.

An application was filed at the Commerce Division to apply for Ta' l-Ghammieri trademark.

For the first time the Organic farming Unit and the Viticulture and Oenology Unit coordinated the harvest of olives in field 23 that are under conversion to organic farming and were taken to Gozo Cottage for pressing. A total of 118 bottles of 250ml were bottled and are being sold from the Government farm. Marmalade made from organic bitter oranges was also made and is also available from the Government farm. These products are also being sold under *Ta' l-Ghammieri* brand.

Overhaul of the Organic Farming EU Regulation and Comitology Meetings

At EU level, the Organic Farming Unit has participated in several comitology meetings in Brussels. The top item on the agenda was the overhaul of the Organic Farming Regulations in order to simplify the regulation and introduce new sectors into organic farming. The Unit submitted its comments on every proposal presented by the Presidency and the Commission. The discussions have not been concluded however the Commission is aiming to have the new regulation into force as from 2009.

The Organic Farming Unit participated in the Expert Group for the promotion of organic farming in all EU countries including the two accession countries. This expert group is planning a promotional campaign where a website on organic farming will be launched in all EU languages. Additional to the website the Commission is going to participate in a number of fairs in Europe to promote organic farming.

Promotion of Agricultural Products

A seminar followed by four-day training sessions for government officials and stakeholders on the promotion of agricultural products campaigns were organised jointly with the European Commission and Ms Nadine Mirochnikoff, French expert participated in the seminar held at Preluna, and answered queries raised by both government officials and stakeholders.

At EU level the officers in charge have attended for Management Committee meeting on regular basis.

School Arbor Committee

The School Arbor Committee organised the forest week walks from 16 to 20 January 2006. More than 500 students participated in this year's activities by the School Arbor Committee. As was done in 2005 one day was dedicated to Gozitan school children and again this activity was successful. A price-giving ceremony was held December to conclude the 2006 campaign.

Clearance for Uprooting Trees

The Organic Farming Unit was responsible for issuing of clearances for the uprooting of trees for the period of January and September 2006. The unit issued a total of 153 clearances: 109 in Malta and 44 in Gozo. Officers in the unit attended several court hearings regarding infringements of the Trees Protection Regulations both in Malta and Gozo. The responsibility was passed to the control unit as from September 2006.

VITICULTURE AND OENOLOGY UNIT

Wine Regulation Board

The Wine Regulation Board was officially established on the 10 of January 2006 as published in the Government Gazette. This board was set up in terms of article 16 of the Wine Act (Cap 436) with the aim of advising the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment in the management of the vine and wine sector through a holistic approach. In fact the members of the board represent both the grape growers and the wine producers. The Wine Regulation Board discusses issues pertaining to the local scene in respect of national and Community regulations.

Twinning Project

A Twinning project *Capacity Building in Malta – Oenology Unit* costing €500,000 and co-financed by the EU in which the staff of the Viticulture and Oenology Unit were trained with respect to oenology was concluded.

Legal Basis

Three legal notices under the Wine Act (2001) were published, namely LN No 188 of 2006 Classification of Vine Varieties (Production of Wine Grapes) Regulations, 2006; LN No 189 of 2006 Wine and Vitivincultural Products (Stocks Declaration) Regulations, 2006; and LN No 190 of 2006 Denomination of Origin and of Geographic Indications Regulations, 2006.

The process for the creation of an Olive Oil Act and the amendment of the Wine Act was initiated and various discussions were held with the stakeholders. The implementation of EU legislation is being considered together with the setting up of an administrative system to deal with fines and a fraud inspection body to monitor the market in wine, olive oil and honey.

With regard to fraud repression, the Unit participated in a two-day seminar on the WineDB software of the DG JRC (Joint Research Centre). The four samples for isotope analysis required by Commission Regulation (EC) 2729/2000 have been prepared and will be sent to the JRC laboratories by the end of 2007. Procedures to sub-contract the Isotope analysis that are required by EU law are under way.

The National Plan for the Restructuring and Conversion of Vineyards

The National Plan for the Restructuring and Conversion of Vineyards was revised and put on the internet. Applications under this scheme were received by the Viticulture and Oenology Unit, processed and paid through the Paying Agency. On-the-spot checks were carried out by the Control Unit. The funds made available by the EU for restructuring were assigned and paid through the paying agency system. These funds amounted to €110,365.20. For the campaign 2006/2007, Malta has been assigned €107,545 by the Commission. Measures under the SMPPMA were vetted and approved and a programme to view applications under the SMPPMA on vines was created to facilitate processing.

Management Committee Meetings

The Viticulture and Oenology Unit has participated in the Wine Management Committee Meetings and the Olive Oil Management Committee Meetings in Brussels. Working groups on wine organised by the Council on the Wine CMO reform were also attended.

MICROVINIFICATION UNIT

The setting up of a microvinification unit is underway. Part of the experimental vineyard amounting to about 1ha has been planted and the drip system set up. Poles and wires will be completed by next year. The other fields will be prepared for planting next year.

APICULTURE

The Apiculture section was involved in the production of queens and nuclei for beekeepers. Some nuclei were also leased for greenhouse pollination. Research in the use of alternative varroacides started early this year and is still in progress. On-site inspections were carried out for various reasons including the possibility of the introduction of new bee diseases.

In August the Apiculture section was transferred to Ghammieri. Works are in progress on the new premises and the new apiary site. New nuclei are being produced in order to raise the number of colonies from 40 to 100. The production of queens and nuclei will continue next year together with the production of honey and other hive products.

Applications for EU aid for the apiculture sector were received by the section and processed. Inspections were carried out and aid granted. The manual of procedures for granting this aid was also updated.

A new national legislation for Apiculture is also being drawn up. The legislation will cover bee diseases, certain aspects of honey and other critical areas.

CONTROL UNIT

Background

Following the restructuring of the Rural Affairs and the Paying Agency Division, the Control unit was set up by restructuring and strengthening of the former Land and Water Use Section, which had been performing inspections on behalf of the Ministry. Other work, which was previously performed by the National Soil Unit and the Organic Unit, was also delegated to the Unit.

The Control unit is a delegated body of the Paying Agency within the Rural Affairs and Paying Agency Division of the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment, responsible for co-ordinating and conducting on-the-spot checks, set up in accordance with Article 23(3) of Regulation (EC) No 1782/2003. Controls are performed to ensure effective verification of compliance with the terms under which aids are granted by the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment through the Paying Agency.

The most important milestone in setting up the new Control unit was the centralisation of management and authority for co-ordination and execution of on-the-spot checks within a single entity in order to maximise efficient use of resources and to minimise unnecessary disturbance caused when related inspections are carried out by different entities.

The Control unit has been designated as the Competent Control Authority and the Co-ordinating Body for Cross Compliance in accordance with Article 42 of Council Regulation 796/2004, in order to carry out the required checks and to co-ordinate the checks conducted by the specialised control bodies.

The unit is also responsible for maintaining, managing and extracting information from the recently established Malta Soil Information System (MALSIS), which incorporates a set of baseline and monitoring soil data. The Control unit operates a soil monitoring program, planned according to EU guidelines. The Control unit carries out assessments to quantify the financial damage incurred and to provide an estimate of the compensation due to farmers as a result of loss of crops during infrastructure works according to the land acquisition ordinance Cap. 88.

The unit is also responsible for issuing soil movement permits in accordance with the Preservation of Fertile Soil Act (1973) and clearances for pruning and uprooting of protected trees in accordance with LN 12 of 2001 and GN 328 of 1949. The unit provides technical support to MEPA on proposals for development applications in rural areas.

The control unit also encompasses field services support workers, whose duties are primarily related to the general upkeep and embellishment of the Ghammieri complex.

Controls

In 2006, the CU conducted approximately 22,615 on-the-spot inspections on agricultural land parcels and livestock farms and on 1,820 beneficiaries as follows:

Inspection	Total Farmers/Breeders	Number of parcels
Cross Compliance (Arable)	54	1,895
Cross Compliance (Livestock)	33	33
Measure 3.1 & 3.2	15	15
Ad Hoc (Land)	53	2,777
Ad Hoc Livestock	33	33
New Vine Planting (infrastructure)	43	82

Vine planting	211	381
Producers Group (members)	16	16
Producer Organisations	2	2
Rubble Walls (pre-accession)	51	153
Rubble walls	32	107
Dairy Premium	5	5
SMPPMA (Poultry)	7	7
Additional aid for vines	56	316
Arable aid	158	3,942
Autochthonous	1	12
Citrus & vegetable production	82	2,910
Tomatoes for processing	22	87
Tomatoes for processing	278	537
LFA	606	8,879
Organic	7	108
Potatoes	55	318
Total	1,820	22,615

Apart from the unannounced on-the-spot, the CU conducted second inspections in the presence of the farmer, following their convocation at the Ghammieri complex.

Inspections related to aid applications received during the application campaign March – June 2006 were subject to quality control. A sample of 2% was selected at random, and second inspections were carried out by officers who were not involved in the first inspections. An evaluation of the inspection reports was carried out in order to identify irregularities in the controls.

The CU met with the delegated services of the Paying Agency responsible for the authorisation of payments, and compiled a list of inspections that are required prior authorisation of payment. This task assisted in planning the controls and in the identification of the required resources.

The CU drafted several checklist and notes for inspectors, including those for viticulture schemes. The Unit also provided its input in the preparation of the Manual of Procedures for the School Milk scheme. The Manual of Procedures for On-the-Spot Controls was also revised and updated to reflect the changes effected in 2006.

Controls - Cross Compliance

As the Competent Control Authority for Cross compliance, the CU conducted inspections with regard to Council Directive 91/414/EEC concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market and Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions. The CU co-ordinated the controls farmed out to the delegated responsible bodies, being the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA), the Malta Resources Authority (MRA) and the Veterinary Affairs and Fisheries Division.

The CU took responsibility of the controls related to the Nitrate Directive and assisted MEPA in carrying out the Birds and Habitat Directives controls as MEPA being the delegated responsible body for the Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC), the Habitat Directive (92/43/EEC) and the Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) claimed that they do not have the technical expertise to conduct such checks in the stipulated time limit. In this respect and in accordance with article 42 of Regulation 796/2004, the CU designed the checklists and drafted the inspector's guideline notes and provided the training to the inspectors.

The MRA, the delegated responsible body for the Ground Water Directive (80/68/EEC), also declared that they were not in a position to conduct the 2006 controls due to lack of resources. In view of this, the CU carried out the controls related to the Ground Water Directive.

The CU also provided support to the VAFD in the controls related to the Identification and Registration of Animals.

Assessments

One hundred and twenty-eight requests for assessments, to compensate farmers for damages incurred during infrastructure works, were submitted by various government departments. Such works consisted of trenches, erection of electricity poles, road widening and other developments.

Permits

During 2006, a total of 34 permits were issued by the CU on behalf of the Director of Agriculture in connection with the Fertile Soil (Preservation) Act of 1973. An increasing number of enquiries (104) were dealt with during 2006. These range from enquiries made by the general public and various government agencies requesting information on the procedure of how to obtain the permit for the shifting of soil. A total number of 64 on-site inspections were made in order to verify that all those granted the permits are in fact in conformity with their obligations.

A total of 262 permits/clearance certificates to uproot or prune protected trees in connection with (LN 12 of 2001 – Trees and Woodlands, Protection Regulations) were issued during 2006.

Technical Support

A total of 377 new development applications were handled by the CU for the necessary consultations as envisaged by law. Another 30 applications were referred to the Animal Husbandry Unit and the Viticulture and Oenology Unit for their comments. In a number of cases, a joint inspection was adopted in order to minimise and accelerate the in-house procedures.

Field Services

Officers from the Field Services Section (former Land Reclamation Unit) were assigned work related to the upkeep of the Ghammieri, National Agricultural and Development Centre. The work included landscaping, transportation of material and manure and work with the shovel. The officers were also assigned for a short period of time with the PARC section, where they carried out works with the shovel and planted around 1,750 trees at the Ta' Qali National Park and Salina Park.

Participation in Conferences, Seminars, and Workshops

The following workshops were attended during 2006:

Type of meeting	Theme	Organisation	Date and location
Workshop	ENVASSO, WP2 meeting	INRA	3-4 April, Orleans (France)
Workshop	ENVASSO, WP2 meeting	INRA	22-23 April, Orleans (France)
Workshop	ENVASSO, WP2 meeting	INRA	25-26 September, Prague (Czech Republic)
Workshop	Cross Compliance	IEEP	26 October, Brussels
Workshop	EAGGF	TAIEX	20-24 November, Ireland

Projects

MEDCOASTLAND

MEDCOASTLAND - Mediterranean coordination and dissemination of land conservation management to combat land degradation for the sustainable use of natural resources in the Mediterranean coastal zones - was a thematic network project funded by the European Commission (EC), within the 5th framework

program for the international cooperation with Mediterranean countries (INCO-MED). The National Soil Unit was a decision making partner (P06) within this thematic network, and participates in all the activities of the project work packages.

The NSU has abstracted, codified and submitted approximately 40 documents for uploading on the project's website (www.medcoastland.iamb.it) as part of work package 1: retrieval of information.

The Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment through the National Soil Unit organised the 5th Medcoastland workshop between 13 and 17 January at the Dolmen Resort Hotel in Qawra. The objective of the workshop was to discuss in detail the draft Agreement prepared by the working group, to reach consensus on its content, and, approve it for signature in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding.

The members reach agreement on the establishment of the Regional Office for sustainable land and soil management in the Mediterranean (ROSOM). It was decided that IAM Bari should be in charge of establishing and making fully functional the ROSOM. The National Soil Unit represented by Mrs Sonya Sammut provided its input by reviewing the Memorandum of Understanding.

The last event of the project or the International Conference *Managing Natural Resources through Implementation of Sustainable Policies* was held in Beirut, Lebanon from 21 to 26 June 2006. During this conference, members and guests were invited to sign the Memorandum of Understanding. Following recommendations from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the NSU did not participate in the conference due to the bad security situation in Lebanon. A joint country report entitled *Policies for sustainable management of soil resources in Malta* was submitted to the project co-ordinator to be included in the conference programme.

ENVASSO

ENVASSO – ENVironmental ASsessment of Soil for MOnitoring project is intended to design and test a single, integrated, EU-wide and operational set of measurable criteria and indicators as a basis for a harmonised comprehensive European soil and land information system. The choice of criteria and indicators within ENVASSO will build on previous outputs from Technical Working Groups (TWGs). The project initiated in January 2006 and its activities will be spread over 24 months. The project is co-ordinated by the University of Cranfield with the participation of 46 institutions from European Member States.

The National Soil Unit submitted information on soil monitoring programmes in Malta and statistical information extracted from the National Soil Inventory, MALSIS. Two follow-up meeting were held in Orleans, France and Prague, in which the results of the WP were presented. The meeting in Prague was combined with the Consortium meeting held between 27 and 29 September. A training visit was organised in Latvia/Lithuania as part of WP4. The visit involved fieldwork practical on soil classification using the WRB 2006.

To further improve and safeguard hygiene within the Pitkali premises, visits by Health Inspectors were carried out in order to ensure that crates are being properly washed. Moreover rodent control was initiated at the Pitkali Markets.

Due to a lack of proper shelter for produce, maintenance and repairs to Pitkali shed roofs were accomplished successfully. It was agreed that the offices adjacent to the Administration Block which were for a long time under construction, were to be refurbished. They are presently used as storage space for the pitkali crates.

Two more security cameras were installed to enforce entry time regulations and also the proper use of skips. As a result, contents dumped in skips were only fruit and vegetable leftovers. Consequently skips were reduced from six to four, thus drastically minimising the Department's costs

As from March 2006, inspections were carried out on a regular basis on imported fruit and vegetables brought in by the Catamaran Virtu Ferries. Several boxes of mandarines/oranges were confiscated as these were imported with leaves, with the possibility of being sold as local fruit from the Pitkali Markets.

Several helpers employed by the Pitkala were stopped from doing said job due to conflict of interest as these were also in possession of a hawker's permit.

For the first time ever, the Pitkali Markets operated on a Public Holiday (29 June 2006 - I-Imnarja) at normal business hours. The outcome was such a success that this was repeated on other public holidays.

Statistics

Sales from the Pitkali Markets (2006)			
	<i>Pitkali</i>	<i>Co-op Stalls</i>	<i>Total</i>
Value (Lm)	5,847,208	2,088,800	7,936,008
Weights (Kg)	37,167,308	11,670,854	48,838,162

Sales from Pitkali Markets registered an increase of 9.37% (Lm680,080) over 2005, and an increase of 10.69% (4,716,368 Kgs) over 2005.

CROP HUSBANDRY UNIT

The Crop Husbandry Section is responsible for the setting up and execution of trials and experiments performed both in the open field and also under protected cultivation. These trials consist in the growing and demonstration of vegetables including herbs, flowers, fruit trees and forage crops. Various trials were carried out on tomato for processing variety trial, local onion and potato varieties. The trial results were collected and recorded. Trials were also carried out on methyl bromide alternatives and organic farming.

Outdoor Crops

Various crops were cultivated, some of which were in trials. The main crops were the processing tomato trial, potatoes, onions, onion seedlings and some brassicas. The field workers also carried out maintenance work such as the re-building of rubble walls, the clearing of weeds and rubbish dumped in the fields, maintaining the orchard of citrus trees and olive trees etc.

Olives were harvested from the farm trees and from some trees at the parks. Fodder, namely tic beans, wheat, oats, vetch, alfalfa, sorghum was grown for the Animal Husbandry Section. In summer, some of the fields were given the manure. Also, this year, the grafting of the sour oranges in field 17 was carried out.

Protected Cropping

The Protected Cropping workers grow greenhouse crops in winter where a comparative trial was carried out with tomatoes grown in the areas sterilised with chloropicrine and methyl bromide. Hibiscus and hydrangea were also produced with cuttings inside the greenhouses and a number of herbs were also produced too.

In summer, Greenhouse 14 was totally covered with a shading net instead of plastic in order to help the large shade plants to grow well even in summer. Other works carried in summer were the solarisation of the greenhouses and the maintenance of the greenhouses and the water reservoir.

Tomatoes for Processing Trial

Sowing, planting and the cultivation of 18 varieties were carried out from spring till summer.

Organic Farming

Spinach, kohlrabi, cauliflower, basil, peas, lettuce, runner beans, tomatoes and mint were grown organically by the Crop Husbandry in 2006. Some of these were sold from the farm, fairs, at the Pitkali or to the Gomriza Producer Organisation.

A total of 207 Kg of olives for oil were harvested from Ghammieri and pressed at the Gozo Cottage Products mill in Gozo. A total of 31 litres of organic olive oil was obtained, bottled and labelled.

Sale of Onion seedlings produced by the Crop Husbandry

The onion seedlings were sold from the Farm at Lm1 per bunch of 100 seedlings for a total value of Lm719.50. This year the demand was lower due to the high rainfall during the winter months.

Sale of conventionally grown vegetables at the Pitkali by the Crop Husbandry

<i>Product</i>		<i>Box/Bundle</i>	<i>Total Price (Lm)</i>
Onions		33	40.06
Beans		8	9.45
Kohlrabi		11	0.55
Basil			10.40
Lettuce	Organic	8	1.65
Herbs	Organic		21.90
Rosemary	Organic		1.00
Marjoram			26.50
Mint			25.45
Potatoes		279	99.85
Peas	Organic	1	2.80
Zucchini	Organic	2	1.50
Pumpkin		129	84.18
Spinach	Organic	6	3.80
Spring Onions		40	2.00
Tomatoes	Greenhouse	527	1,747.31
Garlic	Dry	9	4.50
Parsley		22	0.75
		Total	2,083.65

<i>Total sales</i>	
Sale of organically grown vegetables at the Pitkali	2,083.65
Sale of Onion Seedlings	719.50
Other Vegetables Sales	96.25
Total Lm	2,899.40

St Vincent de Paule Fruit Tree Nursery

The nursery embarked on a number of initiatives to improve the propagation and grafting of fruit trees. The main priority was to overcome the setbacks suffered during the previous two years due to the accidental introduction of the black root rot (*Thielaviopsis basicola*) with the rootstock obtained from Tal-Kmand. The following practices were introduced:

- a change in the form of grafting from dormant bud grafting to cleft grafting;
- the experimental use of a new form of grafting known as June budding employing bud-sticks obtained the previous winter and kept in cold storage;
- the fumigation of field number 6 prior to the planting of a new batch of rootstock;
- the use of sodium hypochloride to clean and disinfect farm machinery; and
- the final decision to import certified rootstock through CIHEAM.

Other initiatives were taken to improve the successful rate of olive grafting. The nursery workers erected a 250 sq metre greenhouse to house olive rootstock and grafted olives. The greenhouse was also equipped with an overhead sprinkler system, and a number of 20-foot metal tables. Sixteen tables are being manufactured by the nursery workers from salvaged galvanised 2-inch pipes.

Olives from trees in the demonstration orchard were harvested for the first time. A total of 626kg of olives were picked over a two-day period and transported to Gozo Cottage for pressing.

In preparation for a new season of olive grafting, a total of 4,000 olive rootstock were planted for the first time by the nursery. These have already been set on metal tables for grafting in March/April of 2007.

The nursery was also involved in a project launched in collaboration with Mr Sam Cremona, a private entrepreneur, and Bank of Valletta as sponsors. *Project Primo* aims at the widespread planting of an indigenous olive oil variety known as Tal-Bidni, and the subsequent setting up of a local olive oil industry. For this purpose 1,000 olive rootstocks were grafted with the Tal-Bidni variety.

The total sales of stone and pome fruit trees amounted to Lm14,742, over a two-week period in February. A large number of pyrus, GF677, M29c and vine rootstocks were sold.

In October a two-day sale of olives was held with sales amounting to Lm1,950.

After the sale of fruit trees, nursery workers started the preparations for another cycle of fruit tree propagation, to be sold in 2008. In field 6, a total of 5000 pyrus, 200 white mulberries, 300 MM106, 14,500 GF677 and 3500 M29c were planted. In another section of the nursery 1,000 cuttings of *farkizzan*, *bajtar ta' San Gwann*, and pomegranates were prepared and planted out. Field 31 was utilised for the planting of 15,000 vine rootstock cuttings. This year a totally new technique was employed in the preparation of the vine cuttings, resulting in almost a 100% success in rooting.

Of particular significance was the passage of SVDP nursery from under the responsibility of the Land and Water Use Section, to the Fruit Tree and Crop Husbandry Section, thereby bringing the whole gardening workforce under one leadership, to facilitate co-operation and flexibility.

San Anton Private Gardens, Verdala Palace, Buskett and the Palace Valletta

San Anton Private Gardens, Verdala Palace Buskett and The President's Palace, Valletta cover approximately 80 tumoli of arable land comprising 10 tumoli of citrus trees, stone fruit trees and vines, 6 tumoli for the cultivation of the kitchen garden, 5 tumoli for the cultivation of flowers and greenhouses with flowers and decorative plants and 3 tumoli with turf (Lawn Garden). The other 56 tumoli consist of decorative trees.

These gardens are maintained and cleaned by 12 gardeners and an Assistant Foreman. The soil is regularly rotovated. Weeding, pruning, spraying with pesticides and irrigation are carried out as required. Flower arrangements are regularly set up for San Anton Palace and The Palace Valletta. Preparations were also made for various occasions such as the visit by the President of Ireland and the August Moon Ball.

INFORMATION SECTION

Biedja u Sajd Magazine

The *Biedja u Sajd* was posted regularly to subscribers by the end of each month. Most of the articles shown on the magazine were written by RAPA Division Officials. Articles ranged from Viticulture & Oenology to Crop and Animal Husbandry, Rural Development to Organic Farming etc.

In February, an exercise was carried out to re-evaluate the subscriptions and delete subscribers who might no longer be interested in the magazine. This was done to eliminate returns and reduce useless postage costs. Over 2,100 subscribers receive the magazine.

Weekly Radio Programme

The weekly Radio Programme *Frott Artna* dealt mainly with in-depth explanations and discussions of the topics introduced in the articles of the Magazine *Biedja u Sajd*. RAPA Division officials contributed regularly towards this programme and offered useful advice to the farming community especially regarding current problems commonly encountered by farmers.

Primary School Visits

1,285 students from 25 primary schools visited the Farm. Evaluation sheets of the visits proved very positive and teachers offered worthy suggestions. Orientation visits were also organised to entice students to take up subjects related to agriculture. Most of the students expressed their wish to find out more about such possibilities of further education at an upper secondary level.

New booklets/worksheets have been printed in two levels in order to be more in line with students' educational requirements. Both Level 1 and 2 contain 15 and 17 pages of worksheets and information respectively. These worksheets were printed in colour, bound and formed into very attractive booklets for the teacher to use at school as a continuation of the visit at the farm. These booklets are divided into three sections namely Crop Husbandry, Food Origins and Choosing a Healthy Eating Lifestyle, and Animal Husbandry.

Eighty-five foreign students from France and Austria have been offered a guided visit around the Farm Complex.

An official from the Section was appointed member of the Multisectoral Committee which was set up following the Conference on Counteracting Obesity held in Turkey in mid-November.

A preliminary plan *Promoting the Consumption of Fruit and Vegetables as a Health Priority* was given to the Director General for comments and suggestions.

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND FORAGE CROPS

Dairy Restructuring and Upgrading

Local dairy producers were urged to submit an application with MEPA in order to upgrade and restructure their farms to be in line with all EU and local legislation. A MEPA fast-track system has been created to process these applications as fast as possible; however the objective has not been reached since most of the applications submitted are still pending.

Milk producers were offered substantial financial aid to help them restructure and upgrade their farms. A number of milk producers have applied to benefit from this aid. The Dairy Restructuring Board was thus set up to access and process these applications. Most of the applications were however submitted by farmers who do not have a MEPA permit to upgrade their farms, and are thus ineligible. They shall be given due consideration once a MEPA approval is granted to their proposed works.

Farms which are situated within the MEPA development scheme or in historical sites, and which will not be allowed by MEPA to upgrade, were given a 5-year moratorium after which they have to relocate. To this effect, a suitable site was identified for their relocation and a project description statement was submitted to MEPA.

MRAE submitted another application with MEPA to construct a communal manure clamp in order to cater for the manure generated by those farms which do not have enough space to construct their own manure clamp. This application is still being processed by MEPA.

Forage Production

This year, the number of arable land parcels within Ghammieri allocated to the Animal Husbandry Section was less than the previous year, since some fields were taken over by other sections for other purposes (vinification, herb cultivation, and for trials on prickly pear varieties). Another field was taken over for the development of the apiary.

The production of whole wheat crop in 2006 totalled to 112 round bales from the Ghammieri grounds, 52 rectangular bales from the Saint Vincent de Paul hospital grounds and 11 round bales from tal-Kmand nursery Lija. Each round bale weighs approximately 175 kgs. The rectangular bales from SVPH weigh approximately 20 kg each and consisted of treshed wheat crop.

Management Committee Meetings in Brussels

The Management Committee Meetings for milk and milk products, for poultry, and for pig meat during 2006 were regularly attended by officers from the Animal Husbandry and Forage Crops Section. Several issues were discussed during these meetings, particularly the situation regarding the Avian Influenza threat in the various Member States.

Maltese Goat

A selection programme has been initiated at Ghammieri goats section in order to improve the local Maltese goat. Male breeding stock was transferred in from third parties to enhance the Ghammieri breed.

Ten pure breed male Maltese bucks were selected to be exported to Tunisia as part of the Maltese-Tunisian co-operation programme on Maltese goat.

Dairy Extension Service and the Milk Upgrading project

A project with the aim of effecting the necessary improvements in order to render the dairy sector competitive and compliant with EU obligations was launched. The project mainly involves milk recording and production monitoring on a number of farms, and establishing a number of policies which should give a direction to milk producers, namely nutrition, waste management, breeding, etc.

Milk recording on farms (Interherd project) was carried out by three extension service officers, two of them working on a flexi-hour basis. Their work is co-ordinated by Dr Wolf Pflug. Milk production data and milk analysis data (obtained from MDP) are entered monthly into the 'interherd' computer program for further evaluation by Dr Wolf. It has been observed that the farms taking part in this project and which follow the advice given have increased their efficiency and improved the quality of milk produced (decrease in total bacterial count and somatic cell count levels). A total of 54 farms are involved in this project.

Dairy Premium and Additional Payments

Applications by dairy producers to benefit from the dairy premium and additional payments were received by the Animal Husbandry Section and processed for payment. Payments for the Dairy Premium and Additional Payments allotted for Maltese dairy producers according to Council Regulation EC 1782/03 were effected for the first time. These payments amounted to Lm99,735 for Dairy Premium and Lm45,978 for Additional Payments.

PAYING AGENCY

In view of the fact that the Paying Agency is responsible, amongst other things, for the administration of the 'Guarantee part' of the EAGGF (European Agricultural Guarantee and Guidance Fund), during 2006 representatives participated in various meetings in Brussels held every fortnight/month, namely, Group of Experts, EAGGF Management Committee and Agricultural Funds Committee.

The Paying Agency replied to a number of official communications by the Commission through the office of its Competent Authority in connection with audit missions carried out in 2005.

During 2006 the PA asked its internal auditors (in line with the One-Year Plan) to carry out an audit of each and every EU measure, as well as an IT Audit (including audits of the IACS/LPIS/INTERTRACE) so as to obtain a broader picture as to whether the Delegated Services were fulfilling their obligations (as per Memorandum of Understanding dated 2 March 2004 (Art. 5 (2)).

Moreover, the Paying Agency also hired the services of a private audit firm so as to improve on the authorisations performed by the Delegated Services/Authorisation Units and to ensure their compliance with the relevant regulations. This exercise is over and above the Pre-Accreditation audit in line with the EC Regulation 885/2006.

The PA took measures to reinforce the effective capability of the Control Unit. With effect from the current financial year, the Control Unit will submit the 'Controls Checklist', which is a mandatory authorisation document, directly to the Head - Paying Agency and it will fall within the latter's discretion whether to accept the current authorisation or else ask further re-performance of the controls.

The Control Unit has also taken on responsibility of the 'Cross-Compliance controls' so that better controls performance can be attained through centralisation. In this respect the MOU is to be revised to cater for the new work structures of MRAE, new regulations and any additional measures being implemented.

The Appeals Board structure has been revised through an amendment to current PA legislation so as to better deal with current and future appeals lodged by third parties.

The Paying Agency has also effected a number of payments through the direct credit system amounting to some Lm3,421,779.

The 'Clearance of Accounts' procedure in order to validate the transactions effected during 2006 has also been performed in line with its EU obligations. The PA is awaiting the final communication, through the office of its Competent Authority, from the DG AGRI as to whether the Maltese Paying Agency has been granted full 'Accreditation' status.

PLANT HEALTH DEPARTMENT

During 2006, the Plant Health Department was significantly restructured. As from August 2006, all the laboratories under the Rural Affairs and Paying agency Division (RAPA) were incorporated within Plant Health. Furthermore, the Seeds and Other Propagation Material Unit that formerly formed part of the Agricultural Services Laboratories was also transferred to the Plant Health Department.

PLANT HEALTH LABORATORIES

As from August 2006, the Plant Health Department was restructured such that all the laboratories within the RAPA Division were incorporated within this Department. Laboratories that fall within the Plant Health remit include Diagnostic and Identification Laboratories; Tissue Culture (*In vitro*) Laboratories and Chemistry Laboratories (including Oenology and Viticulture Laboratory).

During the second half of 2006, a detailed document which defines all obligations that fall under the remit of the Plant Health Laboratories, as specified by EU regulations under the respective EU and local regulations, has been collated. This document denotes in detail all the specifics listed in the regulations, which are the responsibility of the mentioned laboratories.

Diagnostic and Identification Laboratories

The overall responsibilities of the Plant Pathology Laboratory of the Plant Health Section, Department of Agriculture, consist of the detection of plant diseases caused by plant pests and pathogens in respect of Council Directive 2000/29/EC and Plant Quarantine Act 2001 (ACT No XVIII OF 2001), honouring all entailed obligations thereof.

Work to set up a unique harmonised system to record samples tested within these laboratories started during 2006. A database was formulated in which each sample submitted or collected through the diagnostic laboratories is recorded. As from 1 January 2007, all records are kept on this database.

Plant Pathology (Mycology) Laboratory

In 2006 the number of samples examined totalled 380, the number of tests amounted to 565, while 170 inspections were made.

Monitoring of quarantine fungal diseases

Visual inspections were performed at various public gardens and road-side embellishment sites for white rust disease. This was in fact identified upon chrysanthemum at various sites in St Julians and Sliema. Identification using microscopy was used in both cases confirming the disease agent *Puccinia horiana*, while pathogenicity tests were used by inoculating 12 healthy chrysanthemum plants with diseased material originating from the three inspected areas. Pathogenicity tests resulted positively confirming the rapid diffusion of the disease and possibly indicating a disease outbreak of *P. horiana* which may result in severe economic losses to local growers of cut flowers.

Annual Surveys

- *Survey in conjunction with Council Directive 2000/29/EC*: The annual *Survey for Phytophthora ramorum* for 2006 as specified by Council Directive 2000/29/EC and Commission Decisions 2002/757/EC and 2004/426/EC was carried out and forwarded to the Commission. The report included forty locations including public gardens, public green areas, parks of national importance, woodland pockets and garigue-type areas and 12 plant species (e.g. *Quercus ilex*, *Lonicera sp.*, *Laurus nobilis*, *Arbutus unedo*) inspected. All visual inspections and laboratory tests on suspect samples were negative for *P. ramorum*, confirming the absence of the pathogen upon Maltese territory.
- *Surveys in conjunction with local exigency and Plant Quarantine Act (Act No XVIII OF 2001)*: A survey performed for Malta on the presence of Plant Diseases upon Spontaneous Flora was conducted throughout the months of March, April and May. Amongst various new cases of rust diseases noted on various hosts, in Dwejra, Gozo a case of *Melampsora euphorbiae* on tree spurge (*Euphorbia dendroides*) was identified. This is a new record for Malta. Considering that an endemic spurge variety grows upon Malta, commonly known as Maltese spurge (*Euphorbia melitensis*) and that poinsettia production is also important, pathogenicity tests were performed on both these possible hosts of the disease, as well as on tree spurge. *M. euphorbiae* is an aggressive rust disease known to kill its hosts and is used as a biological control agent of various weeds belonging to the *Euphorbia* genus. If proven pathogenic on poinsettia and/or Maltese spurge an outbreak of this disease would have severe implications on local biodiversity and endemism and poinsettia production.

- An ongoing *Survey for Verticillium spp. in Malta* was performed for 2006. Various localities throughout the entire Maltese archipelago were inspected for the presence of fungal agents pertaining to the *Verticillium* genus. Various cases of *Verticillium dahliae* on olive were identified while *V. albo-atrum* were identified on potato. *Verticillium* species are mostly synonymous with wilt disease and *V. dahliae*, is an important quarantine disease on olive resulting in tracheo-mycosis and sudden death symptoms. Relevant analysis performed on olives believed to be aged in excess of 2000 years in the locality of Bidnija indicates that these trees are free from *V. dahliae* infection. Further analysis is to be carried out during 2007 prior to the completion of this survey.

Outbreaks of fungal diseases

- *Powdery scab on potato*: A case of extremely severe potato powdery scab was first observed in Qrendi on tubers of cv Derby in 2005. Throughout 2006 ten further cases of potato powdery scab were intercepted during an exercise performed during the months of February to November to identify major diseases affecting the Maltese Potato industry. A case of *Fusarium* dry rot was also observed in Rabat on a lot of potatoes kept in storage.
- *Further outbreak of Forl on greenhouse tomatoes*: In 2004, a new pathogen attacking greenhouse tomatoes, *Fusarium oxysporum oxysporum* f. sp. *radicis-lycopersici* (FORL) was recorded in the Northern localities of Malta. This disease was once again identified in November 2006 in the localities of Ta' Qali and Rabat. Inducing typical symptoms of root and crown rot, FORL can incur severe damages to tomato crops. Its frequent incidence in Malta confirms that this disease is widespread in Malta and poses a threat to the local tomato industry.
- *SVDP Government Nursery monitoring*: *Cladosporium carpophyllum*, a fungal agent resulting in leaf spot and shot hole symptoms, was identified on a large number GF 677 plants at the SVDP government nurseries. A large number of plants of GF 677 and Myrabolan produced in vitro at PBC were found infected with *Thielaviopsis basicola*. Following a detailed survey performed at each stage of production at the PBC and SVDP government nurseries, a large number of both GF 677 and Myrabolan seedlings were found to be suffering from severe root rot caused by *T. basicola*. *T. basicola* is in fact a pathogen of relatively minor importance that however can induce severe symptoms in high stress environments. *Verticillium dahliae*, a severe wilt disease, was also identified with great frequency on various olives at the SVDP government nurseries.

VIROLOGY AND VIRUS-LIKE LABORATORY

In 2006 the number of samples examined totalled to 1,356, the number of tests amounted to 1,672, while 104 inspections were made.

- *Monitoring of Quarantine Viral Diseases*: The national Citrus Tristeza Virus Monitoring for Protected Zones survey for 2006 was carried out in accordance with Council Directive 2000/29. Sampling of citrus was performed during the months of January and February, April and June as well as in November and December. In all, 40 inspections of citrus trees were carried out at private gardens, commercial orchards in various localities and also at commercial nurseries.
- *Pepino Mosaic Virus (PepMV) Survey*: This survey was run in accordance with Commission Decision 2004/200/EC. The PepMV survey was carried out during the periods January-March and October-November. Inspections were made on field and protected tomato crops, during which a total of 395 compound samples corresponding to 1975 tomato plants were sampled. Crops were inspected for viral symptoms and data on each tomato crop visited was collected. The samples were tested by ELISA testing. During the inspections a plant quarantine officer was present. Results were sent to the growers involved in this survey.
- *Tomato Spotted Wilt Virus (TSWV) Survey*: In continuation with the survey performed during 2005 for the presence of Tomato Spotted Wilt Virus on protected tomato crops in Malta and Gozo, a total of 105 tomato

leaf compound samples (corresponding to 525 plants) were tested for this virus. These tests were performed in conjunction with the PepMV survey.

- *Flavescence Doree Survey*: During November planning for the setup for the survey for *Flavescence doree* and its vector *Scaphoideus titanus* to be commenced in April/May 2007 was made. The survey is to be performed in preparation for applying for protected zone status for both the phytoplasma and vector. Collection of quotations for chemicals and reagents required during the survey and issuing of request forms was made. Necessary information and scientific publications are being collected.
- *SVDP Government Nursery Monitoring*: Inspections at the SVDP Stone Fruit Government Nursery mother plots were performed during September. A total number of 415 trees from Plots 29, 30, and Plots 8, 9 (demonstration plot) were sampled and tested for the presence of Plum-Pox Virus (PPV). During these visits the trees were inspected for viral symptoms. Three shoots from different areas of each tree were sampled for testing. The samples collected were tested with ELISA for each virus at the Virology Laboratory, Plant Biotechnology Centre, Lija.

Mechanical transmission tests were carried out for trees suspected of infection by quality viruses. Tests were run on *Chenopodium quinoa*, *C. amaranticolor*, *Cucumis sativus*, *N. occidentalis*, and *N. benthamiana* indicator plants.

- *Bidnija Olive Testing*: During March, October and November molecular tests were performed for the presence of dsRNA (Double Stranded Ribonucleic acids) in olive samples from Bidnija. Presence of DS RNA in plants signifies viral infection by one or more viruses. Total nucleic acids were extracted from each olive sample using phenol/ chloroform extraction, and purification by enzymatic digestion. DS RNAs were analysed on TAE poly-acrylamide gel electrophoresis.

Bacteriology Laboratory

- *Monitoring of Quarantine Bacterial Diseases - Potato Ring Rot (*Clavibacter michiganensis ssp sepedonicus*) and Potato Brown Rot (*Ralstonia solanacearum*) Surveys*: Visual inspections of plants and cut tubers were carried out from March till May on potato plantations for ring rot and brown rot diseases of potato in terms of Council Directives 98/57/EC and 93/85/EEC. A total of 18 inspections were carried out. Plantations were observed for symptoms of ring rot and brown rot on foliage and for bacterial wilt. When available, samples of 10 tubers per field were cut and observed for symptoms of ring rot or brown rot. Suspect plants/tubers were cultured onto SMSA media. Suspect colonies were tested by immunofluorescence.
- *Tomato Field Surveys*: In June and July, surveys on open field tomatoes were performed at 32 sites. The tomato plants were inspected for bacterial wilt. Compound samples made of 200 leaf base cuttings were sampled from each field and tested by culturing on semi selective media SMSA. Suspect colonies were tested by Immunofluorescence.

Entomology and Nematology Laboratory

Over 230 laboratory tests/diagnoses were carried out on entomological material and about 25 laboratory tests were carried out on nematode identifications. In total more than 80 inspections were carried out. These tests/diagnoses came mainly from part-time and full-time growers, private gardens and nurseries and from interceptions or material collected by plant quarantine personnel.

Monitoring Surveys

Between November and December, more than 500 *Pinus halepensis* trees (including nursery stock) were observed and examined for the possible presence of *Bursaphelenchus xylophilus*, the pine wood nematode. Thirteen locations where pine trees are present were examined. This was part of an obligatory survey which all Member States have to carry out for this pest nematode. In all suspected cases, laboratory tests were carried out but all resulted negative for this pest.

Other obligatory surveys such as that for *Dryocosmus kuriphilus*, the oriental chestnut gall wasp and that for *Diabrotica virgifera* were not carried due to the almost complete lack of the host plants of these pests in Malta, i.e. chestnut trees and maize.

Participation in EU and other funded projects

Sub-sector studies CT2463/2005

During March till May, the Diagnostic Section was involved in five missions with Italian experts from CIHEAM (Bari) as follows:

The first mission took place from 21 to 23 March with fruit tree expert Dr Arben Myrta. This mission aimed at continuing the clonal and sanitary selection for local varieties of stone fruits, and on starting the local pome fruit clonal selection.

Dr Luigi Catalano, expert on fruit tree certification visited Malta between 5 and 7 April during which period meetings were held on the certification schemes of fruit trees at Żebbug, San Blas and Salib ta' l-Għolja to assess commercial fruit tree cultivation in Malta.

Citrus pathologist Dr Annamaria D'Onghia visited between 10 and 13 April, and between 16 and 19 May. During both her visits, work on the clonal and sanitary selection for citrus was revised. Agricultural holdings, from where the selected clones were chosen, were revisited.

Dr Michele di Giaro, vine and olive pathologist, visited Malta from 26 to 28 April. During this mission, meetings were performed on clonal and sanitary selection of local grapevine and olive varieties together with the Virology section at PBC, and the Viticulture section of Għammieri.

Other Projects

In February 2006, Dr David Mifsud and Mr Timothy Pace-Lupi applied for a Leonardo Mobility Project under the Leonardo da Vinci Programme entitled *Plant Pests and Diseases of the Maltese Islands*. This project was approved and was rated first from all submitted projects. A total financial contribution of €13,280 was approved for mobility studies.

In December 2006, Dr David Mifsud, Mr Timothy Pace-Lupi and Dr Inga Zazada submitted a project proposal for possible financial award under the John and Ann Niederhauser Endowment Award. The project consists of the combination of soil solarisation and nitrogen-containing animal manure for soil-borne pest management, particularly towards the response for *Phytophthora* spp. and *Meloidogyne* spp. If the project is approved, a total of US\$8,760 will be devoted entirely for this work.

Publications

Various publications related to plant health were published in 2006. They represent new records of plant diseases found in the Maltese Islands. A review of all plant pathogens was also published in which more than 300 different diseases found in the Maltese Islands are included.

Tissue Culture Lab (In-Vitro Laboratory)

The main mission of the Tissue Culture Lab until recently was the production of virus-free rootstocks to be used for the grafting of stone fruit trees in Malta. The plant material used for micro-propagation belongs to the almond species and was purchased virus-free from the Centro di Ricerca e Sperimentazione in Agricoltura located in Locorotonda (Italy). The varieties GF677 and Myrobalan 29C were propagated. In October 2006, MRAE decided that the activity of the Plant Tissue Culture Lab be diversified to the conservation and sustainable use of local varieties of fruit tree species which are in danger of genetic

erosion. Therefore, no more virus-free rootstocks shall be micro-propagated but imported by the government-owned St Vincent de Paule nursery from abroad already rooted and acclimatised.

Micro-propagation

- *Production of Myrobalan 29C plants:* Clone number 3 (MYR003) of the variety Myrobalan 29C which was conserved in the cold room from the previous year has been used for the production of plants. The propagation process yielded a satisfactory multiplication rate and a total of 13,260 plantlets were transferred for rooting purposes. The plantlets transferred onto rooting media were then acclimatised and satisfactory results were achieved as regards the survival rate of such plants.
- *Production of GF677 plants:* During the year 2006, three GF677 clones (GF008, GF009 and GF010) were micro-propagated. A total of 19,820 plantlets of GF008 and 1,960 plantlets of GF009 clone were transferred for rooting purposes with the total quantity of GF677 plantlets obtained from these two clones being 21,780.

Two jars containing the new GF677 (Clone GF010) plantlets were purchased from Italy and delivered to the Plant Tissue Culture Lab. These were opened in September 2006 for the first sub-culture to be performed. Following this sub-culture, one of the jars was found to be contaminated with fungi. Control tests on the nutrient agar which were carried out prior to sub-culturing confirmed that the jar with the plantlets was already contaminated prior to its delivery to Malta. The Plant Health Section communicated with the supplier on this matter. It was also noted that the remaining plantlets of the new GF677 clone did not respond well to micro-propagation techniques.

- *Production of ornamental plants:* During 2006, a batch of around 360 Boston ferns of the genus and species *Nephrolepis bostoniensis* were rooted using *in vitro* techniques and were then acclimatised in the glasshouse in pots. Another batch of about 130 plants has also been transferred to rooting media during the last three months of 2006 and such plants will be acclimatised during the first 6 weeks of next year 2007.
- *Research Works:* Research work was carried out under the supervision of Dr Elena Yasnetskaya (Adviser at the Plant Tissue Culture Lab). This included propagation of rootstocks; micro-propagation of orchids and tulips; and sanitation of local varieties of stone fruit trees.

Chemistry Laboratory

The Chemistry Laboratories as from August 2006 became part of the Plant Health Section. These labs were formerly known as the Agricultural Services Laboratories. The duties consisting mainly of analysis of soil and irrigation water were retained.

Lab analysis

A summary of the number of samples received and the laboratory tests performed in 2006 at the Chemistry Laboratories is shown below:

Type of agricultural material	No of samples received	No of tests performed
Soil:		
routine	396	1,980
projects (MALSIS)	200	400
Irrigation water (routine)	141	705
Liquid extracts	103	249
Plant matter	10	60
Total	850	3,394

Furthermore, analyses of 103 extracts for metallic contamination were carried out during 2006. A total of 249 tests were performed during which iron, nickel, zinc, lead, copper and chromium was determined. Tests were performed using the flame atomic absorption spectrophotometer (FAAS).

Oenology and Viticulture Laboratory

During 2006 five wine samples were processed through the Oenology and Viticulture Laboratory namely: Chardonnay, Syrah, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon (Malta) and Cabernet Sauvignon (Gozo). The grapes were broken and fermented, then filled in demijohns till fermentation stops. These samples were sent for official analysis to the Joint Research Centre in Bari, Italy.

It is envisaged that in the future, wine sampling in supermarkets will take place to conduct analysis for official use. The checking of labels is also a task which will be started in 2007.

Seeds and other Propagation Material

Fruit trees and vines

From September, the SPMU started gathering information from competent MRAE entities regarding the varieties of fruit trees and vines being cultivated and marketed in Malta. This data shall be used to formulate the official registers of fruit trees and vines as requested under the Legal Notices 271 of 2004, 470 of 2004 and 310 of 2006. A database of fruit tree and vine varieties was compiled and the data obtained already from other MRAE entities was inserted.

Work was done in October on the conservation and production of the local varieties of citrus species. Information on the rootstocks that can be utilised to graft such varieties was gathered by the SPMU and forwarded to interested parties. The conservation and production of local varieties is being given importance by MRAE as there is the intention of setting up a genebank of local varieties of citrus species and also due to the fact that a quarantine pest (citrus tristeza virus) has been detected by the Plant Health Section on imported material.

Protocols for the certification of propagating material and plants of various species of stone fruits, citrus, vines and olives were formulated. The standards of the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation (EPPO) were being followed. After the final evaluation by the Plant Health Department, these documents shall be subjected to the approval by the Scientific & Technical Committee on certification and implemented by MRAE.

GMOs

Consultations were held among MRAE entities on the proposal for the establishment of a national technical committee which would act as the focal point on issues related to GMOs in agriculture and to draft the national coexistence measures which are an obligation of Malta. It was then decided that MEPA should remain as the national competent authority. Emphasis is being made on the report drafted by the European Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the implementation of national coexistence measures.

Sub-sector Studies

A sub-sector study (key sector CT 2463/2005) on the cultivation of fruit trees commenced in March 2006 between MRAE and IAMB (International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies) and the first visit by a foreign expert was held in the same month. During these periods, the main issues tackled were the identification of new local ecotypes, the evaluation of the local ecotypes collected in previous years and the clonal and sanitary selection of local germplasm. Certification and pomological

characterisation of propagation material was also discussed. Farmers in various localities in Malta and Gozo cultivating local varieties of stone fruits and citrus were visited including the government nursery. During the field visits, samples of plant parts of various species have been collected and morphological characterisation was commenced in accordance with the protocols for the distinctness, uniformity and stability testing established by the CPVO and IPGRI (International Plant Genetic Resources Institute). This characterisation shall lead to the formulation of a description of such varieties.

A seminar was held in September during which the main achievements and future activities of the sub-sector studies were presented.

ECP/GR networks and EURISCO

The data that is being collected for the local varieties of various species as described in the IPGRI technical protocol of plant descriptors will be included in the national inventory of Malta on plant genetic resources.

The replies for two surveys on the status of national inventories of *ex situ* plant genetic resources in Europe and on the status of the European Plant Genetic Resources Search Catalogue (EURISCO) were sent to IPGRI.

Field Trials

Trials have been carried out during 2006 in conjunction with the Fruit Tree and Crop Husbandry Section within the Rural Development Department. These include trials on onions and garlic.

PESTICIDES UNIT

Product Registration

During the year, 99 new applications for Plant Protection Products (PPPs) were received.

EU Active Substance Dossiers were received from companies, of which 56 were in relation to Biocides and 210 in relation to PPPs and Draft Assessment Reports from other European authorities regarding centrally authorised procedure of Biocides and PPPs across all EU Member States. As from September 2006, a new filing system was set up to catalogue the dossiers sent by manufacturers for the registration of PPPs. Each product was catalogued and a reference number given to every dossier received. These were then registered in an appropriate database.

Applications for the temporary authorisation of PPP's on the Maltese market had to be halted until the Pesticides Control Board was set up in December.

Several meetings were held with foreign companies interested in registering their products locally.

Registered Products to be Placed on the Maltese Market

Twenty-nine PPPs and 10 Biocides have been authorised and placed on the market. Dossiers were being reviewed on a 'first come first reviewed' basis and eventually permanent market authorisation will be issued to these products.

Pesticides Control Board

The composition of the Pesticides Control Board was published in the Government Gazette number 18,004 on 1 December 2006. The first meeting was held on 23 December 2006.

Inspections and Sampling

During 2006, eight inspections were carried out for the purpose of checking compliance with MRLS; 46 samples were collected covering 10 types of commodities of vegetable origin.

Visits to growers were paid to advise them on the correct use of PPPs and the exceeding of Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs). Advice was also given to growers regarding the use of specific PPPs against particular disease, methods of mixing, calculation of the dose to be used on particular field or crop, and equipment and its maintenance.

Inspection of retail outlets selling Biocides and PPP were made to check for non-authorised products on the market and to ensure that the proper label was affixed to the product.

PLANT QUARANTINE UNIT

- *Phytosanitary Inspections of Commodities originating from Third Countries*: 282 full inspections were carried out on commodities subject to inspection in terms of Legal Notice 97/2004.
- *Inspections were carried out on wood packaging material (WPM) originating from third countries* – all consignments were according to ISPM 15. Inspectors were also involved in the stamping of WPM for Comtec Ltd. During the year there were 268 heat treatments consisting of 2,838 pallets, 108 boxes and 50 dunnage.
- *Plant Passport System*: The plant passport system started to be implemented in November by visiting various nurserymen and explaining how the systems work. During the year as well, the plant quarantine inspectors inspected open markets in different villages of Malta to check for any presence of leaves with imported citrus from Italy since the latter is not recognised as protected zone for CTV. There were no interceptions on citrus coming from Italy.
- *Phytosanitary Certificates for export/re-export*: 52 certificates were issued during 2006 (49 export certificates, of which 36 were for succulent seeds; 2 re-export certificates [bananas, yellow corn]; 1 Russian export certificate for succulent seeds.
- *Revenue* collected in 2006 amounted to Lm5,141.
- *Registration*: There were 22 new entries in the Traders Registration. During the year there was a grand total of 337 imports of various agricultural products and timber from third countries which were duly registered in the database.
- *Eurepgap*: From February till May 2006 most of the plant quarantine staff was involved in the Eurepgap certification scheme of potatoes for export. Furthermore during the months of January to March Quarantine staff reported to the Pitkali Markets on Mondays and Thursdays to solicit growers to improve the quality and advise how to pack better their produce.

PLANT BIOTECHNOLOGY CENTRE MANAGEMENT

Acclimatisation Glasshouse

During the year, a total number of 11,900 Mirabella plants and 13,680 plants were transferred *ex vitro* for acclimatisation. In October, the production of GF 677 was halted.

New compost was used for acclimatisation and several experiments were done in the glasshouse so as to improve the survival rate and better the quality of plants.

A number of ornamental plants were propagated as well. Ferns were propagated *in vitro* and acclimatised as well. Other plants like Yuccas, Cremonophyton, Helicrysum, Myrtus and spider plants were propagated by cuttings. Regular caring of such plants was carried out.

Diagnostic Glasshouse

A continuous production of herbaceous indicator and indexing plants for virus diagnosis was carried out throughout the whole year. Such work includes regular sowing, transplanting, repotting, irrigation and spraying. Old material was discarded. Hygiene such as cleaning of benches and floors was carried out. A stock of mother plants for the collection of seeds was kept as well.

Sale/Donation of Plants

During 2006 the following rootstocks were forwarded to SVDP; 8,556 Myrabolan and 13,505 GF 677. From these rootstocks, 1,000 Myrabolan and 1,000 GF 677 were forwarded directly to the Gozo farm. Therefore the total number of rootstocks forwarded to SVDP this year was 22,061.

The following plants were donated to various entities including Parcs Department, Nature Trust and MRAE - 146 carobs, 4 Myrtus, 1 Helicrysum, 1 Lavander, 94 Crataegus, 1 Cremnophyton, 70 Yuccas, 90 ferns, 158 spider plants and 1 Fiddle wood. A further 16 baskets with plants were donated to MRAE upon request.

The following plants were sold during the Green week, Trade fair and Eco-fest - spider plants 15, Yucca 18 Carob 88, Ferns 93 and Philodendron 4. The total amount was Lm373.

PLANT HEALTH – TECHNICAL AND OPERATIONAL

EU Related Affairs

- Various *EU related meetings* were attended. Instruction notes and reports were prepared by the respective officials for such meetings and the former have also been prepared for meetings for which no Maltese representative was present. All the documents to be used in the meetings were reviewed thoroughly and comments were sent to the European Commission and the Presidencies when needed.
- *MERTENS/COPEPER/AGRIFISH/SCA/Environmental Council and other EU matters:* Comments, speaking and briefing notes were prepared by the officer in charge upon request by the EU Affairs Directorate (MRAE) and the OPM EU Secretariat to be used in the meetings in caption that were held during this year. The main issues tackled during such meetings were Seeds and other Propagation material, Plant Protection Products and Harmful Organisms.
- *GMOs:* Draft Council Decisions were received by the Plant Health Section from the EU Affairs Directorate (MRAE) for comments on the placing of the market of genetically-modified propagation material or parts of plants in accordance with Directive 2001/18/EC. The SPMU provided information when issues were related in some way or another to its field of work. Also, information on the current situation of the marketing of genetically-modified varieties of seeds for sowing and their inclusion in the Common Catalogues was forwarded from time to time.
- *Communications to the EU:* A Council document on the halting of the loss of biodiversity by 2010 and beyond was forwarded in November for comments. It focused on the main areas which shall be covered by this initiative, key policy areas and priority objectives for 2007 to 2013. The objectives relate also to plant genetic resources and the conservation and availability for use of genetic diversity of crops and commercial tree species within the EU and the promotion of their *in situ* conservation. Reference to the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture was made. MRAE had already taken the initiative years ago to carry out activities related to the conservation and use of plant genetic resources especially in the case of fruit trees.

National Legislation - New Legal Notices Adopted

Six legal notices under the Pesticides Control Act 2001 and four legal notices under the Plant Quarantine Act 2001 were published in the Government Gazette.

Appointment of Boards

The Scientific and Technical Committee on certification of propagation and plants of vegetables, fruit trees, vines and ornamentals was appointed during 2006 and met for the first time in October. This Committee was set up in terms of regulation 5 of Legal Notice 138 of 2005 – Plant Quarantine (National Certification Scheme) Regulations, 2005.

MAINTENANCE SECTION

The Maintenance Section carried out the normal day-to-day maintenance and repairs at the various departments within the Ministry, namely: National Agricultural Research and Development Centre – Ghammieri, Ministry, Head Office, Plant Biotechnology Centre, Civil Abattoir, Extension Service Offices, Pitkali Markets, EU Offices at Lija, National Park Ta' Qali, and Salina Park.

Besides these works the section carried out the following works:

- Embellishment of the departmental stands for the Echofest and the Malta International Fair;
- Implementation of a major programme of works at the Agricultural Research and Development Centre, involving dismantling and reconstruction of a gate situated within the Centre, reconstruction of a 78 metre stretch boundary wall complete with galvanised metal security fencing, demolition of a dangerous building and laying of foundations for new buildings, refurbishment of four offices, with new lighting and water systems, housing the Apiculture Offices; construction of a new apiary and fencing of the area with a metal structure to support a netted tunnel for visitors; refurbishment of office space to house the EU Affairs Directorate;
- Construction of 26 pieces of furniture for the Ministry;
- Erection of new chain link fencing and gate at the Grading Station Area, upgrading works on security lights; and repairs and maintenance to hawkers' stalls roofs at the Pitkali Markets;
- Fitting of new electrical installations and overall general maintenance to walkway lights at Ta' Qali parks;
- New installations of a Security Room and security lights at Salina Park;
- General overhaul and upgrading at pump room area at San Luċjan, involving replacement of a catwalk, construction of two galvanized metal doors, and cleaning of the ditch area.

MARTIN BUGELLI

Director General (Rural Affairs and Paying Agency)

Veterinary Affairs and Fisheries Division

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Throughout 2006 the Veterinary Affairs and Fisheries Division (VAFD) continued with its activities to safeguard Veterinary Public Health. The Division is responsible for the development of programmes for the veterinary and fisheries affairs and establishment inspections, examinations, testing, and controls, as may be determined by law or by policy and in respect of the food chain, pet shops or other commercial establishments in which the safety of the food chain, the health of animals and fish or the presence of animal or contaminants are concerned.

This report provides detailed analysis with regard to the three Departments within VAFD, which are Food Health & Diagnostic, Fisheries and Aquaculture, and International & Legal Coordination.

FOOD HEALTH AND DIAGNOSTICS DEPARTMENT

INTRODUCTION

This segment of the Report referring to the Food Health and Diagnostics Department is laid out into different sections. The details of testing activities carried out during the twelve months covered by the report are given for each analytical section of the department accordingly.

SEROLOGY SECTION

Rubella Testing

Results for 2006					
RBT Results	Total RBT	Total CFT	RBT + / CFT -	RBT + / CFT +	RBT - / CFT +
Total	22,586	192	6 bovine, 8 sheep, 1 goat	2 bovine, 3 sheep, 1 goat	Nil

Disease Surveillance Plan

Aujeszky's Disease

The VAFD continued with the disease surveillance programme on Aujeszky's disease through serological testing of all sows and boars slaughtered locally. Samples were tested by IDEXX ELISA kits. The testing is part of the co-financing programmes approved by the Commission.

The objectives of the disease surveillance programme are to achieve harmonisation with other EU countries in veterinary controls and surveillance programmes; to strengthen veterinary epidemiological surveillance measures, in accordance to EU legislation (64/432/EC, 93/24/EC); and to confirm a disease-free status. The total number of samples tested during 2006 was 276.

Blue Tongue

56 serum samples were tested for Blue tongue using the ELISA technique during November 2006.

Avian Influenza

During the surveillance for Avian Influenza Virus in 2006, poultry farms were screened for Avian Influenza virus by IDEXX ELISA kits. A total of 1,239 poultry serological tests were performed during 2006 while the following samples were referred to the Avian Virology of the Veterinary Laboratories Agency in UK:

	Samples Sent to VLA (UK)	
	Sera	Swabs
January	22 wild ducks	1 wild duck
February	5 poultry	47 wild ducks, 3 wild birds
March	3 poultry	9 ducks, 8 wild birds, 2 poultry
April	Nil	nil
May	Nil	1 wild duck
June	2 poultry	nil
July	Nil	nil
August	Nil	nil
September	Nil	6 wild birds
October	4 poultry	7 wild birds
November	Nil	8 wild birds
December	Nil	nil
Total	36	92

PARASITOLOGY

Faecal Parasites Tests

Total	Species				Findings					
	Pigeons	Rabbit	Song Birds	Others	Cocci +	Cocci ++	Cocci +++	Worms	Mites	Neg.
47	28	8	-	11	16	10	10	13	2	9

Note: Discrepancies in numbers arise in cases where different species of parasites are observed in the same sample and in cases where there is just a trace of coccidiosis.

Trichinella and Trichomonas

	Trichinella		Trichomonas (in pigeons)		
	Equine	Swine	Total	Positive	Negative
Total	173	4,861		9	15

CHEMISTRY/RESIDUE ANALYSIS SECTION

The national residue testing programme in bovine, swine, equine, fish, rabbit and poultry tissues, bovine/ovine/caprine milk, eggs and honey was prepared according to EU Council Directive 96/23/EC (transposed by LN 80 of 2005, Veterinary Services Act Cap. 437). Following the remarks and recommendations made by the FVO mission team in April 2005, new substances were included in the 2006 plan and some of the matrices were also modified. The 2006 residue programme was submitted to the EU Commission, together with the results for residue analysis 2005, using the IT application developed by the Commission.

A sample allocation plan was drawn up and provided to VAFD personnel for sampling of animal tissues and products for residue analyses. Sampling was carried out according to a sampling standard operating

procedure (SOP) and all samples received at the Residues Laboratory were logged into a sample management database. The following table indicates the number of samples collected during the period January-December 2006, as part of the 2006 national residue programme:

Species/Matrix	Samples collected (National plan 2006)
Bovine (slaughterhouse)	49
Swine (slaughterhouse)	66
Equine (slaughterhouse)	8
Bovine (on-farm)	8
Swine (on-farm)	2
Poultry (on-farm - broilers)	0
Poultry (slaughterhouses)	181
Rabbit	0
Fish (aquaculture)	10
Fish (wild fish)	11
Bovine milk	245
Ovine/Caprine milk	5
Eggs	188
Honey	12

Analysis of Sulfonamides (using Thin-Layer Chromatography)

During 2006, the following samples were screened for sulfonamide residues:

- National plan: 153 samples (including 18 poultry muscle, 3 rabbit muscle, 2 swine muscle, 52 eggs, 77 bovine milk and 1 ovine/caprine milk)
- Imported products: 3 samples (including 1 corned beef, 1 poultry muscle and 1 lamb muscle)

All samples were found to be compliant and hence did not require confirmatory testing.

Training Courses, Workshops and Meetings

Staff from the Residues Laboratory attended the following training courses, workshops and meetings during 2006:

- CRL Workshop: Analytical and Statistical Issues – Berlin, Germany, 25-28 April 2006
- Meeting of the Working Group of Residues of Veterinary Medicinal Products - Brussels, 5 October 2006
- FAO/IAEA 4th Research Co-ordination Meeting of the Co-ordinated Research Project on *Development of Strategies for the Effective Monitoring of Veterinary Drug Residues in Livestock and Livestock Products in Developing Countries* - Freising, Germany, 27 November – 1 December 2006.

Residue Analysis by Contracted Laboratories

During 2005-6, two tenders were issued for testing services covering the analysis of veterinary drug residues and contaminants in imported products and samples collected under the national residue programme over a two-year period (2006-2007). Following the adjudication process, the tenders were awarded to five foreign laboratories – three in Italy and two in the UK.

Samples of bovine, swine, equine, fish, poultry, rabbit, milk, eggs and honey collected during 2006 were sent to the contracted laboratories for residue tests which cannot, at present, be carried out locally. These included a total of 549 tests (515 national plan samples and 34 imported products) for the following residues and contaminants:

- **Group A substances:** stilbenes, steroids, antithyroid agents, zeranol, beta-agonists, nitrofurans (including metabolites), chloramphenicol, nitroimidazoles (including metabolites).

- **Group B substances:** sulfonamides, tetracyclines, macrolides and aminoglycosides (in honey), anthelmintics, coccidiostats, carbamates, pyrethroids, tranquillisers and beta-blockers, glucocorticoids, NSAIDs, amitraz, organochlorine pesticides, organophosphorus pesticides, hydrocarbons (PCBs, PAHs), dioxins, heavy metals, mycotoxins, malachite green, histamine.

Furthermore, 37 national plan samples screened positive for antibiotic residues at the VAFD laboratory were sent to a laboratory in Italy for confirmatory testing.

Analysis of veterinary drug residues and contaminants at the VAFD (Chemistry) Laboratory - 2006			
<i>Substances analysed</i>	<i>Number of samples analysed</i>		
	<i>National Plan 2005⁽¹⁾</i>	<i>National Plan 2006</i>	<i>Imported Products 2006</i>
Sulphonamides (screening by TLC)	2 poultry muscle 1 bovine muscle 6 eggs	16 poultry muscle 2 bovine muscle 2 swine muscle 46 eggs 77 bovine milk 1 ovine/caprine milk	1 corned beef 1 poultry muscle 1 lamb muscle

⁽¹⁾ National plan 2005: indicates samples collected during 2005 and analysed during the first months of 2006.

All samples analysed for the above-mentioned substances contained residues below the respective maximum residue limits (MRLs).

Results of tests carried out by contracted laboratories (national plan samples and confirmatory tests) are indicated in the following table:

National Plan 2006 Analysis of veterinary drug residues and contaminants (contracted laboratories) - 2006		
<i>Substance analysed</i>	<i>Samples analysed (till 26/01/2007)</i>	<i>No. of non-compliant results</i>
Stilbenes	10	0
Steroids	18	0
Antithyroid agents	7	1 poultry liver (phenyl thiouracil)
Zeranol	6	0
Beta-agonists	10	0
Nitrofurans metabolites	63	0
Chloramphenicol	59	0
Nitroimidazoles	60	0
Anthelmintics	23	0
Coccidiostats	25	0
Carbamates	4	0
Pyrethroids	5	0
Tranquillizers	1	0
Beta-blockers	2	0
Glucocorticoids	4	0
NSAIDs	15	0
Amitraz	1	0
Organochlorine pesticides	34	0
Organophosphorus pesticides	3	0
PCBs	12	0
PAHs	2	0
Dioxins	3	0
Heavy metals	27	1 horse kidney (cadmium) 1 bovine milk (lead)
Mycotoxins	17	0
Malachite green	1	0

Confirmatory Tests		
<i>Substance analysed</i>	<i>Samples analysed</i>	<i>No. of non-compliant results</i>
Tetracyclines	14	0
Aminglycosides	11	0
Macrolides	12	1 egg (tilmicosin)

BSE RAPID TESTING

Table BSE1

BSE Rapid Testing									
<i>BS</i>	<i>BE</i>	<i>BF</i>	<i>CS</i>	<i>CE</i>	<i>CF</i>	<i>OS</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>OF</i>	<i>Total</i>
2,469	316	217	-	9	315	34	92	633	4,085

B-bovine / O-ovine / C-caprine / S-Slaughter / E-Emergency / F-Fallen

Table BSE2 – Comparison on Bovine species

	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>
Health Slaughter	2,431	2,469
Emergency	209	316
Fallen	202	217

Table BSE3 – Comparison on Caprine species

	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>
Health Slaughter	-	-
Emergency	3	9
Fallen	60	315

Table BSE4 – Comparison on Ovine species

	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>
Health Slaughter	24	34
Emergency	12	92
Fallen	219	633

As can be seen from tables BSE03 and BSE04, in 2006 there has been a marked increase in the number caprine and ovine animals tested. This increase was as expected and predicted, and attributed to the new identification system implemented for the ovine/caprine animals in 2005, which has greatly facilitated traceability of small ruminants.

The TSE laboratory has for the third consecutive year successfully participated in Ring Tests organised by the European Community. This year two sets of samples were sent; one set covered BSE in Bovines, which was tested in October; and the other covering scrapie in ovines and caprines, which were tested in November.

A new test, namely the Western Blot was expected to be introduced in 2006. This test will complement the current rapid test both as a confirmatory test and also as an alternative test for autolysed specimens or those in an advanced state of decomposition. Due to the course of the tender period, the necessary equipment started reaching the Laboratory in January 2007. Thus, the introduction of this new method has been adjourned to 2007.

MEDICINALS/ANIMAL NUTRITION UNIT

Inspections of Veterinary Pharmacies and Feed Establishments

During 2006 the Veterinary Medicinals/Animal Nutrition Unit carried out a total of 30 inspections on various types of establishments including 6 inspections to veterinary pharmacies, 9 inspections to veterinary wholesalers, 12 inspections to feedmills (2 inspections for each feedmill), and 3 on-farm inspections as part of official investigations following infringements. Two major feed mills were approved in line with Regulation 183/2005 on feed hygiene.

Registration of Veterinary Medicinal Products / Vetting of Trade Entries

In total, 67 new Veterinary Medicinal Products were registered by the Veterinary Affairs and Fisheries Division in 2006.

The Veterinary Medicinals/Animal Nutrition Unit has scrutinised and approved the following trade entries:

- *Veterinary Medicinal Products*: 572 trade entries equivalent to a weight of 16,959,143 kg valued at Lm3,170,750
- *Preparations for Animal Feeds*: 143 trade entries equivalent to a weight of 57,285 kg valued at Lm101,783
- *Diagnostic Reagents/kits*: 105 trade entries equivalent to a weight of 32,116 Kg valued at Lm162,892.

Twinning Project - Capacity Building at VAFD

The Veterinary Medicinals/Animal Nutrition Unit was actively involved in a Twinning Project with the UK counterparts covering the areas of veterinary medicinal products and feedingstuffs. In total throughout the year, seven visits to Malta concerning veterinary medicinal products, medicated and compound feeds by short term experts from the UK feed were held. These spanned a total 8 weeks of training involving three short term experts. The twinning experts together with the Maltese experts scrutinised and identified the required human resources in order to adequately carry out the activities of the unit, the current operational procedures, and also set up medium-term operational objectives and long-term strategic objectives for the unit. The main objectives that were attained in 2006 by the twinning project were the amendment of the standard operational procedures at the VAFD. These were re-drafted in order to ensure the efficient, harmonised inspections are carried out in a transparent manner. Other operational procedures on the registration of veterinary medicinal products and pharmacovigilance were also amended.

Topics that were covered include registration procedures for veterinary medicinal products and medicated feed pre-mixtures, traceability and record keeping at retail and farm level including good distribution practice, pharmacovigilance and veterinary medicinal residues.

Official Meetings Abroad

Officers from the Veterinary Medicinals/Animal Nutrition Unit have regularly attended meetings concerning veterinary medicinal and animal nutrition in relation to regulatory issues. These included the Standing Committee for the Food Chain and Animal Health (Animal Nutrition) and the Committee for Veterinary Medicinal Products.

Food and Veterinary Office Inspections

The Veterinary Medicinals/Animal Nutrition Unit was also involved in a general review mission from DG SANCO that was held in Malta from 5 to 9 June 2006 with respect to official controls on veterinary medicinal products marketing and use, and official controls in the area of animal nutrition.

Planning for 2007

The Maltese and UK short term twinning experts have in 2006 devised the plans for future activities for the calendar year 2007. These plans include inspections on veterinary pharmacies, veterinary wholesalers, feedmills, home mixers, docks/stores of raw materials, intermediaries, and dealers of feedingstuffs. In addition to these plans, a detailed feed sampling programme in line with the provisions of Regulation No. 882/2006/EC has been formulated. This programme covers checks on all types of feed materials, additives, pre-mixtures, compound/medicated feeds, for the purpose of checking conformity with legally stipulated nutritional and zootechnical parameters and levels of undesirable substances, animal protein, and contaminants.

These include an exchange visit of two weeks in 2007 by Maltese experts in the UK for further training on feed sampling methods, registration and approval of feed establishments, and official inspections in the field of animal nutrition.

Information seminars have been scheduled for March and April 2007 concerning veterinary medicinal products and feedingstuffs. One seminar will specifically deal with prescription recording, traceability requirements, and pharmacovigilance aimed at veterinary practitioners and veterinary pharmacists. Another two seminars concerning animal nutrition have been scheduled for 2007 aimed at feedmillers and primary feed producers, farmers, and veterinarians.

In addition a set a new guidelines based on new scientific advice by Twinning Experts have been scheduled to be issued in 2007. The basis of these and the initial drafts have been set in 2006 and these will be finalised in 2007. These detailed guides will deal with specific aspects of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points for the stakeholders in the feed industry.

FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE BRANCH (FORMERLY KNOWN AS FISHERIES CONSERVATION AND CONTROL DIVISION)

INTRODUCTION

The Fisheries and Aquaculture Branch's (FAB) primary functions are to regulate and administer both the fisheries as well as the aquaculture industries in addition to all activities related to these sectors, and at the same time, to give all the technical and expert advice and help it can to whoever is interested in these two industries.

This Branch of the VAFD is actively participating and taking on a broader international dimension. It is still updating its existing subsidiary legislation. These regulations would reflect Malta's adherence to international laws, regulations and procedures, at the same time incorporating the local context.

ONGOING INITIATIVES

Fish Landings

The estimated total landings for 2006 were 1,296,389 kg valued at Lm2,409,368. The average wholesale price works out at Lm1.85,9 per kilo. Fish landed consisted mainly of Dolphin Fish, Swordfish and Blue Fin Tuna. Considerable quantities of trawled fish were also landed. The following table gives details of fish catches in 2005-2006.

Estimated Fish Landings 2005 - 2006							
Estimated Quantity (Kg)		Value				Average Retail Price per Kg (Lm)	
		Wholesale (Lm)		Retail (Lm)			
2005	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006
1,336,548	1,296,387	2,477,854	2,409,368	2,933,036	2,778,572	2.194	2.143

The actual landings recorded at the Wholesale Fish Market were 1,083,164 kg valued at Lm2,043,940.

Receipts from fish hawkers amounted to Lm1,436,056 whilst payments made to fishermen and *pitkala* were Lm1,467,975.

Export and Import of Fish

The Division endeavours to see that the fishermen's livelihood is safeguarded and at the same time ensures that the consumer is well provided with a supply and variety of species of fish throughout the whole year. 1,960,992 kilos of frozen fish worth Lm2,408,978, at an average price of Lm1.22,8 per kilo and 17,868 kilos of fresh fish valued Lm77,386, at an average price of Lm4.33,1 were imported during 2006.

Fish Imports 2005 - 2006							
Frozen Fish				Fresh Fish			
Quantity (Kg)		Value (Lm)		Quantity (Kg)		Value (Lm)	
2005	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006
1,785,958	1,960,992	2,202,275	2,408,978	16,939	17,868	71,297	77,386

263,400 kg in round weight of Blue Fin Tuna were caught by Malta fishermen. 238,716 kg of captured Blue Fin Tuna and Swordfish valued at Lm675,457, at an average price of Lm2.83, were exported to Japan and Italy, as shown in the following table:

Captured Fish Exports 2005 -2006				
Fish	Weight (Kg)		Value (Lm)	
	2005	2006	2005	2006
Blue Fin Tuna	211,886	180,537	521,678	485,482
Swordfish	143,176	58,179	402,204	189,975
Albacore	-	190	-	155
Dott	1,823	551	5,468	1,949
Pilot Fish	-	2,579	-	1,779
Dolphin Fish	-	23,823	-	17,989
Others	-	86	-	293
Total	356,885	265,945	929,350	697,622

23,823 kg of Dolphin Fish worth Lm17,989 and limited quantities of other species of fish were also exported during 2006.

Fishing Vessels and Registered Fishermen

The fishing vessels registered in the Maltese Fishing Vessel Register as at end December 2006 were 2,379, of which 18% were commercial full-time and 42% commercial part-time vessels. The recreational category was made up of 967 vessels.

The total gross tonnage and power (main engine only) for the full-time and part-time commercial vessels were 151,99.06 GT and 98,476.58 kW respectively.

Kannizzati

106 applicants were allotted a site. The laying of the first float of each site was carried out by the Fisheries Officers on 11 August for the Maltese sites, as well as the Gozo ones. The first floats were laid out by two separate contractors at a total cost of Lm1,320.

Maintenance to Cold Storage Facilities, Fish Market and Slipways

The sum of Lm4,065 was spent on works related to slipways whilst Lm4,420 was spent on works related to the Fish Market and Cold Stores.

Aquaculture Operational Farms

Three farms were operational in 2006:

P2M Co Ltd
Malta Fish Farming
Fish and Fish Co Ltd.

Aquaculture Production

The total production of sea bass and sea bream was 1,076 tons in 2006. Sea bream production was 894 tons, of which 808 tons were exported; while that of sea bass was 153 tons, of which 133 tons were exported. The total production for export and local sales had an estimated monetary value of Lm2.56 million.

Fingerling Importation

A total of 3.3 million fingerlings were imported throughout the year from French and Italian approved hatcheries. The following table shows the total annual importation figures for fingerlings:

Importation of Fingerlings 2006			
	Meagre Fingerlings	Sea Bream Fingerlings	Sea Bass Fingerlings
Total 2006	16,800	3,491,000	150,000

Capture Based Aquaculture –Bluefin Tuna

Four farms were operational in 2006:

AJD Tuna Ltd I + II - offshore
Fish and Fish Ltd - offshore
Malta Fish Farming – offshore
Mare Blu Tuna Farm Ltd – offshore

Total Bluefin tuna Input during 2006 according to country of origin	
<i>Country of Origin</i>	<i>Weight / Kg *</i>
France	3,654,800
Libya	120,000
Italy	1,289,321

* 312,000 kg were carried forward from 2005

EU-RELATED ACTIVITIES

Catch Assessment Scheme

The Catch and Effort Assessment Survey (CAS) was carried out throughout the whole year and involved the analyses of the activity by the small-scale fleet according to Malta Stat Fishing Vessel Register.

Out of the 1,011 registered small-scale fishing vessels, present in the six sampling ports, the actual number of operational vessels during February was around 531 or 52.5 %. The number of vessels which went out fishing was much less (about 254 or 25.1%). During April, the actual number of operational vessels during the month was around 490 or 48.5 % - only about 171 or 16.9 % of the vessels went out for fishing. In June the actual number of operational vessels was around 616 or 61 % - about 198 or 19.6 % were observed fishing. In July, the actual number of operational vessels was around 578 or 57.2 % (3.8 % less than in June). The number of observed vessels which went out for fishing in July was 304. During October, the actual number of operational vessels was around 638 or 63.1 per cent. The number of observed fishing vessels which went out for fishing during the month was 216.

The Catch and Effort Assessment Survey was carried out again between 1 and 29 November 2006. The actual number of operational vessels for this month was around 648 or 64.1 percent. This was a 1% increase over the previous month. The number of observed fishing vessels which went out fishing during the month was 169. This Survey was repeated between 1 and 29 December 2006. It must be observed that during this month CAS was not carried out in Gozo stratum. This was mainly due to lack of personnel. Out of the 698 registered small-scale fishing vessels, present in three sampling ports in Malta the actual number of operational vessels for this month was around 550 or 78.8 percent. On the other hand the number of observed fishing vessels which went out for fishing during the month was 140.

Catch Logbooks

After the daily sorting and checking of the Catch logbooks that were received at the Fisheries Protection Inspectorate during 2006, the related data was entered in the Logbook Database during each particular month. Fishermen not filling up their Catch Logbooks properly were contacted and assisted accordingly. Communications with personnel from FAO on the updating of the Catch Logbook Database were taken in hand by the same Inspectorate since April 2006.

In November a meeting was held with this Ministry's legal officer regarding the drafting of a letter concerning administrative fines which would eventually be forwarded to defaulters.

Committee for Fisheries and Aquaculture

- A Fisheries Protection Officer attended meetings in Brussels held between 18 and 19 January wherein the following topics were covered: VMS, Electronic Recording, Reporting and Presentation, First Exchange Views on the Methodology, Priorities of the 2006-2008 and the Action Plan for the Simplification and the Improvement of the CFP Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).
- Another Fisheries Protection Officer from this Inspectorate attended a meeting of the Committee for Fisheries and Aquaculture - the Expert Group in Fisheries Control in Brussels between 22 and 23 February.
- Other meetings of the Committee for Fisheries and Aquaculture were held in Brussels on 26 April, 4 July and 24-25 October 2006.

Coreper

- Attendance at Coreper meetings of the Committee for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Brussels held on 7 April, 19 July and 26 July 2006.

- Attendance at a seminar in connection with a *Discussion Paper on the Draft Commission Regulation laying down detailed rules for the application of Council Regulation on Coreper Fisheries Fund Version 2* which was held in Brussels between 23 and 25 July 2006.

EU Green Paper

- Work started in October 2006 on the preparation of the comments of the Aquaculture Section of this Branch to the EU Green Paper on Maritime Affairs. During November 2006, the same Section started the overview of this Paper.

EU Inspections

- Co-ordination and assistance was given to the EU Inspectors who visited the blue fin tuna activities between 17 and 21 July 2006.
- The EU inspectors were accompanied by the Fisheries Protection Officers on their visit which lasted from 12 to 15 September 2006.

Exchange Training Programme

The organisation of an Exchange Training Programme was taken up with Mr Gary Owen from the Marine Fisheries Agency-UK in May 2006.

Between 16 and 25 July 2006, two Fisheries Protection Officers attended an exchange programme in the UK. In September two different Fisheries Protection Officers attended the same exchange training programme, which involved training given by different fisheries offices in London, Plymouth and Brixham. Furthermore the officers boarded the HMS Mersey for two days during which several boarding inspections were carried out and *ad hoc* explanations of the procedures used were given.

Fides – Front

The 1st March Snapshot was uploaded into FIDES – FRONT in accordance with EC Reg No. 26/2004, which deals with the Community fishing fleet register. A 0 % error result was obtained.

An officer from the Licensing Section attended the Fleet Register meeting which was held in Brussels on 4 April 2006. During this meeting the following items were discussed: the overall snapshot results for 2005; the evaluation of data quality in the Member States' snapshots; the necessary changes in the Business Rules; the procedures of the Interim transmissions; the monitoring of the Member States' entry-exit ceiling; and the latest developments in the FRONT.

In accordance with the same EC Regulation, a number of Test Snapshots were taken from the FIDES – FRONT for the final upload of 1 June 2006.

Fisheries Protection Inspectorate

The Fisheries Control Programme for 2006 was submitted to the EU by the end of January 2006, whilst an Intermediate Assessment Report on the 2005 Control Programme was drawn up in March 2006. Fisheries Protection Officers attended a meeting with AFM on 15 February to discuss the 2004-2006 Control Programmes and Finances. The Annual report on the 2005 Fisheries Control Programme was sent to EU in April 2006. The 2004-2006 Control Programme Document and the 2007 Programme were finalised in December 2006.

A meeting was held on 2 March at MEPA to discuss the 'Observer on Board Scheme' and to draft appropriate forms.

A Report on serious infringements that occurred during 2005 was sent to Brussels in April 2006. These infringements included harpoon fishing at Filfla; illegal laying of FADS; and fishing without the necessary permits.

Members of the Fisheries Protection Inspectorate also prepared documents on a number of issues:

- comments in connection with a meeting of the Expert Group on Fisheries Control held on 31 May regarding the simplification of serious infringement report;
- an Explanatory Note on the evaluation report on the implementation by Member States of the EU grading marketing standard and traceability provisions, August 2006;
- a reply to an EU Questionnaire *The proposed convention and recommendation on work in the fishing sector*, prepared in August;
- extensive research on EU legislation concerning special fishing permits licensing for foreign vessels and oil fish, undertaken during October 2006 to formulate an ‘ad hoc’ report;
- correspondence taken up with EU inspectors on the procedures in use regarding the clearance of tuna bait containers, October.

General

- Information on large pelagics was compiled and sent to the EU Commission and to ICCAT on July 2006.
- In September a reply was forwarded to EC on the *Formal request for data 2006* regarding discards and economic data collected during 2005 exercise.
- A questionnaire on the Electronic Reporting System (ERS) was verified by this Branch on 8 February 2006.
- A report regarding EuroMed – Trade in Fish – was prepared in February 2006.

Instruction Notes, Memos etc.

- Memos on EC proposed legislation related to Fisheries were drafted and forwarded to the EU Affairs Directorate of MRAE.
- Instruction Notes were prepared for Weekly Working Parties, Coreper, Bilateral and other meetings and sent to the Ministry’s EU Directorate.
- Replies regarding Biodiversity, the Clearance of Council Minutes 13642/05 and 15308/05 and for COREPER of 17/2/06 were sent to EU Affairs Directorate of the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment in February.
- A Briefing Note for Agri Fish of 23 February and the January Report for EU Section were sent to EU Affairs Directorate on 15 February.
- In November, Memos and Restricted Documents were compiled in connection with the Commission’s proposals as requested by the EU Secretariat for their presentation during the IMC.

Lampuki Fisheries

- Attendance by the Fisheries Protection Officers at a meeting in which the sites (*poloz*) for the *lampuki* fisheries were allocated. Data on *lampuki* was gathered and processed during July 2006. The First Fishing Aggregating Device for the *lampuki* season for 2006 was laid on 11 August 2006.

Licensing Section

- A draft report regarding Member States’ efforts during 2005 was investigated to confirm or otherwise the new figures concerning GT and kW of the Maltese fishing fleet in accordance with the Management Committee Report of 4 July 2006.

Life – Natura 2000 Programme

- On 31 October a meeting was held with a representative of Heritage Malta wherein the role that the Malta Centre for Fisheries Sciences could have in the LIFE-Natura 2000 Programme *Garnija Maltija* was discussed. This project was in collaboration with Birdlife Malta, Heritage Malta and other partners. The main topics discussed were the identification of fishing grounds; the impact of longliners on seabirds; and the impact of trawlers on seabirds.

Malta Stat

- The number of modifications, which included transfers and replacements of vessels, carried out to records in the MaltaStat Fishing Vessel Register were 1,436 in January, 338 in February, 245 in March, 128 in April, 138 in May and 63 in July. Various other modifications were carried out in August, September and October. 462 modifications were made to the records in this database in November whilst the number of modifications carried out in December was 553.

Meditis

- The checking and validation of the data collected during the Medits survey of 2005 was taken in hand in February 2006. Data was inserted into the Seatrim database. This data was checked and validated during a one-day workshop which was held in Mazara del Vallo, Sicily on 13 March. The extracted data was used for the completion of the Medits report. The finalisation and validation of the Seatrim database were carried out during April 2006 and the outputs were produced for the first time in July 2006. The revision of Seatrim manual and glossary were also taken in hand during the same month. The data from the survey, including weather, vessel and biological data continued to be entered into the Seatrim database during the months of November and December.
- Contracts for the undertaking of the Medits surveys and the age readings were renewed in May 2006.
- The processing of the Medits 2006 samples started on 2 August. Samples were transported from the Fish Market and processed during the same day at the laboratories of the Centre. The sample processing, totalling 223 boxes, continued during August, September and October and were completed in November 2006.
- On 25 November attendance at the Annual Biology Symposium organised by the Biology department of the University of Malta. A student, who conducted his dissertation at the MCFS on samples collected during the Medits trawl surveys, made a presentation of his work at this symposium.
- Research was initiated in November and continued during December 2006 using the data collected during the Medits surveys in 2003 – 2006. This sideline project was entitled *Ecological characteristics of deep water trawling grounds on the Maltese, continental shelf: Management implications*.

MedStat

- During April various sessions of debugging and checking of the new MedStat System – Fishing Vessel Register, were carried out with Dott Fabio Maurizio Mirone, an IT Consultant.

Medsudmed

- The final report of the benthos research within the Pilot study on the Maltese islands was completed in August and was entitled: Dimech M, and Schembri P J, (2006). Benthos research within the Malta FCA – a collaborative research programme between the Malta Centre for Fisheries Sciences (MCFS) and the Marine Ecology Research Group (MERG) of the Department of Biology, University of Malta; Report on the 2005 Research cruise - unpublished report; 13pp.
- A chapter was also written for the final report of the MEDSUDMED project entitled: Dimech M, and Schembri P J, (2006). Sediment characteristics in the GSA 15. Pilot study on the distribution of demersal resources and environment characteristics in the Maltese Islands GSA 15, 78pp. This report is still in draft form.

- The 4th FAO MedSudMed Co-ordination meeting was held at the Corinthia Marina, St George's Bay from 15 to 16 February 2006.

Meetings - Local

- Attended a seminar on the Marketing of Fishery Products (eco-labelling) held in Malta on 17 February.
- Attended a meeting of the FIFG Sectoral Monitoring Sub-Committee held at MRAE in May.
- In October a meeting was held with MEPA representatives regarding the EU Regulation on alien species for Aquaculture. Instruction Notes for this Regulation were prepared in September and November.

Meetings/Seminars Abroad

- Agrifish meetings were held on 25 April and 18 July 2006.
- Attendance at PGCCDBS Plenary meeting held in Rostock, Germany (28 February – 2 March). An ad-hoc report was prepared and presented at this meeting which was entitled *Planning Group on Commercial Catches, Discards, Biological Sampling*
- On 20 April 2006, a Fisheries Protection Officer attended a meeting in Brussels entitled *Technical aspects of the use of acoustics deterrents*.
- Attendance at the STECF-SGRN meeting on the Ecosystem approach held in Brussels, 19-23 June.
- Attendance at an EU related workshop on *How to Develop Priority Access IV within the Operational Programme* held in Portugal on 24-29 June.
- Attendance at two Expert meetings held in Brussels on 20 April and 10 July 2006.
- Attendance at the two meetings of the Working Group regarding the review of statistical documents held in Palma de Majorca on 19-21 April and 24-26 April.
- Participation in the Working Party on Internal and External Fisheries Policy held in Brussels on 6 July.
- Attendance at the 41st European Marine Biology Symposium held in the University College of Cork, Ireland from 4 to 8 September.
- Attendance at a four-day working meeting from 26 to 29 September with Dr Vanessa Stelzenmuller, on the spatial analysis of the Maltese fishing fleet producing a report titled *Fishing effort analyses –Malta*.

National Data Collection Programme

- Attendance at the National Co-ordination meetings held during February 2006: the Preparation of EU Fisheries Data Collection Programme (23 February) and the Dialogue meeting on the review of the Data Collection Framework concerning the inputting and analysis of biodata on tuna, swordfish and dolphin fish held on 24 February.
- A Technical Report on the Bilateral Meeting on the EU Fisheries Data Collection Programme was drafted in March. Another Report on the Dialogue meeting on the review of the Data Collection Framework was also prepared in March. The organisation and co-ordination of the work dealing with the Technical Report of the EU Fisheries Data Collection Programme were undertaken during April.
- Final preparations for the organisation and holding of a meeting entitled Planning group on Tuna tagging in the East Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea were taken in hand in March 2006. This was held within the framework of the National Data Collection Programme at the Waterfront Hotel between 28 and 30 March.
- The analysis of the data for Malta's Scientific Fisheries Data Collection Programme 2005 was undertaken during April 2006.
- The following activities were carried out during May 2006:
 - Inspections and data collection were undertaken during the tuna season commencing in May 2006;
 - Co-ordination of work done by different sections regarding the Technical report for 2005;
 - Preparation of the 'ad hoc' text on sections H and I (sampling of biological parameters) and section G (scientific surveys) for the Technical Report;
 - Drawing up and finalising of the National Programme Proposal for 2007; and

- Preparation of compliance tables for 2005 Technical report and standard tables for 2007 National programme proposal.
- Attendance at a dialogue meeting on the Review of the Data Collection Framework held in Brussels on 14 July.
- A report on the Ecosystems Approach meeting was prepared in July 2006.
- A visit by Slovenian experts requesting advice regarding the Data Collection Programme for Fisheries was carried out from 6 to 7 September 2006. Guidance on all aspects of the programme was given to these experts by officers from this Branch.
- A document was prepared in reply to the Technical evaluation of 2005 Final Report on data collection Malta. This document gave insight on the EC comments regarding the 2005 programme. Malta's report and programme were pointed out as an example for other Member State.
- 4 Pilot studies reports, within the framework of the Data Collection Programme were sent to EC by 31 October. The reports were entitled: An assessment of the Discards of the fishery industry in Malta 2005; An assessment of the Recreational Fishing activities in Malta 2005; An Economic assessment of the fisheries industry in Malta 2005 and An Evaluation of the Maltese Fish Processing Industry in 2005.
- On 8 November an interview was carried out by a freelance journalist Ms Josian Facchetti on the activities conducted by the Fisheries section of the MCFS especially the activities involved in the National Data Collection Programme.

National Strategic Plan

- A power point presentation of the National Strategic Plan was prepared in January 2006.
- The Scientific section in the Forecast for 2007-2013 of activities and financing of the National Data Collection Programme was inputted in the National Strategic Plan in August 2006.
- Preparations were taken in hand in March 2006 in connection with the National Strategic Plan for Aquaculture.

Recreational Craft Directive

- In September a representative from the Licensing Section attended various meetings with representatives from MMA, the Market Surveillance Directorate and the Standards Authority regarding the Recreational Craft Directive (RCD).

Regional Co-ordination Meeting (RCM)

- The 'Regional Co-Ordination Meeting (RCM) for the Mediterranean', which was held within the framework of the National Data Collection Programme at the Waterfront Hotel between the 25 to 27 April, 2006. A representative from this Division was chosen to act as rapporteur. The report on this RCM was finalised in May 2006.

Research

- Research on Maltese traditional fishing vessels was undertaken and an ad hoc report was submitted in September 2006.

Trawl Surveys

- Preparations were undertaken in June to get the necessary permits for the Research Vessels (R/V) which were to enter Maltese waters for specific scientific trawls.
- Participation in the Ancheva Acoustic Survey which took place around Maltese waters on-board of the R/V Dalla Porta from 27 June to 3 July 2006.

The Vessels Monitoring System (VMS)

- A report regarding the Vessel Traffic Monitoring System (VMS) was prepared on February 2006.
- Attended a course on the use of satellite images for vessels detection. The Course was organised by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission in Italy from 22 to 24 March.
- During March and April 2006 VMS monitoring, installations and fault findings were undertaken by the Fisheries Protection Inspectorate together with personnel from the local provider. This included inspections on foreign vessels which were berthed in the Grand Harbour.
- Attended a meeting at Gnidia, Poland between 18 and 20 May regarding the phasing out of X 25 (a VMS programme).
- A document was prepared in May for reimbursement of funds from the EU in connection with the upgrading of the voice recording system and monitoring systems held at the Fisheries and Aquaculture Branch.
- VMS boxes were installed on fishing vessels during August and September 2006.

EDUCATION

- Meetings were held in January, March and April between representatives from the Aquaculture Section of the Malta Centre for Fisheries Sciences and Architecture students regarding their project an Aquaculture Park.
- The official opening of the Marine Aquaria, Exhibition tanks and Audio–visual Facility at the Malta Centre for Fisheries Sciences took place on 11 February. Up to the end of March about 1,000 visitors visited this exhibition. Guided tours for students were held on Tuesdays and Thursdays, whilst it was open to the general public on Wednesday mornings. The visitors by category were: primary school students (508); secondary (159); sixth form (60); foreign (56); general public (200) – total 983. All groups commented that they found the visits both educational and enjoyable. The octopus and the turtles seem to be the favourite exhibits.
- There was a great demand for visits to the Interactive Exhibition in the months April to June 2006. The total number of visitors who visited the Interactive Exhibition during this period was 2,171 - primary school students (1,157); secondary (444); foreign (135); general public (300); special groups (135).
- Apart from this, an aquarium was set up at the Ministry of Rural Affairs and the Environment, whilst another one was set up during the Green Week. Furthermore a tank with a marine turtle was set up in Ġnien Indipendenza at Sliema for the Environment Week.
- A Polish student Slovka Mysiak was hosted within the marine hatchery at Fort San Luċjan during July 2006.
- Contact was established with the Head of Department of Biology at the University of Malta regarding a Maltese female student who was interested in doing her dissertation on Aquaculture.
- Co-ordination of students' thesis work on *Coryphaena hippurus* (general aspects) was carried out in July 2006.
- Apart from the general processing of MEDITS samples, two students, an undergraduate and a postgraduate worked on sideline projects for their dissertation during August, September and October 2006.
- As school had their summer holidays the demand for visits during the 3rd quarter (July – September 2006) was on the decline. Seven mixed groups (220 persons) visited the centre by appointment. Apart from these, it is estimated that approximately 325 other visitors (general public) turned up for Wednesday morning opening hours.
- During this period the staff took the opportunity to carry out general maintenance and refurbishment of the facilities. Re-stocking of specimens was carried out from the MEDITS trawl survey and the ongoing fishing/collecting expeditions.
- A meeting was carried out in September with an Aquaculture student from Palermo.

- Meetings were held during October 2006 with two First Year Diploma students in Public Administration regarding Aquaculture in Malta.
- A film about the Aquaculture Section and the Marine Hatchery at the Centre were produced for Education TV programme Channel 22 during December 2006.
- On 28 December an officer from this Centre was interviewed about the Fisheries Section on the Education TV programme Channel 22.
- During the last quarter of 2006 personnel from this Section carried out various trips to collect specimens from the wild to restock the aquaria/tanks. With the commencement of the scholastic year visits by school children began to pick up but eased off in December on account of the Christmas holidays. The total number of visitors during this period was just over one thousand - primary school students (340); secondary (268); foreign (80); general public (approx. 240); special groups (75).
- An undergraduate student was supervised during November and December in the MEDITS sideline project for her dissertation entitled *Feeding Ecology of Galeus melastomus Scyliorhinus canicula and Raja clavata*.
- A postgraduate student was also supervised during November and December in the same project for her dissertation, entitled - *Aspects of the fisheries biology of cephalopod species in deep waters*.
- A postgraduate student was supervised in November and December in the Lampuki Data Collection programme side - project for her dissertation entitled *Population ecology of Coryphaena hippurus (Lampuki)*.

EVENTS IN MALTA

General

- During 2006 correspondence was taken up with MRAE regarding the social aspect chapter in the Aquaculture Zone EIS.
- In January an article was prepared on Aquaculture Research in Malta.
- The biological data of farmed Blue Fin Tuna which was collected in January 2006 was submitted to the National Statistics Office during the same month.
- During July a stand was set up and manned at the Malta Trade Fair. Another stand was set up for the Festa tat-Tonn in Marsaxlokk.
- In February, attendance at an internal meeting with Dr Coppola on the proposed set up of a central database system and the computerisation of the Malta Fish Market manual system.
- In January correspondence was taken up with National Statistics Office regarding the Annual Report for aquaculture production during 2005.
- Discussions were carried out with the Malta National Laboratories regarding the testing and analysis of ambient and borehole water. Samples were collected from borehole and ambient water for 'ad hoc' analysis in March 2006.
- Correspondence was taken up during August 2006 with Dive-Med Ltd. regarding the cleaning of underwater filters for sea pumps.

Fisheries Protection Directorate

- Throughout the whole of 2006, inspections by the Fisheries Protection Inspectors were carried out on fishing vessels and various slipways. Any illegally parked vessels were cleared from slipways and the related reports were compiled and submitted to higher authorities.
- An inspection was carried out on 16 January 2006 in connection with the electrical meter near the slipway at Tal-Veccja.
- Damages in slipways, hauling facilities and storage places were assessed by the Fisheries Protection Inspectorate during April 2006. This included inspections at three slipways located in Mellieħa.

- Fisheries Protection Officers attended a meeting at MCAST on 15 February regarding the possible funding of courses for fishermen.
- An inspection of Customs House at Mellieha was carried out on 23 February 2006. The building had sustained damages by inclement weather. An ad hoc report was prepared. Another inspection was carried out in the presence of the Ministry's architect on March 2006. Preparations were started on the tender for the restoration of said Customs House at Mellieha.
- Fisheries Protection Officers had two meetings on 15 February and 2 March with the Mellieha Council and local fishermen to discuss the situation at Dawret it-Tunnara and to discuss the drafting of a legal notice to regulate the hard-standing and slipways facilities at the same site. A number of visits were carried during March at Dawret it-Tunnara to measure vessels and trailers so as to draw a site plan for future organisation of area in question. On 16 May a meeting was again held with the same Council to decide on the 'no parking area' at the same venue.
- An inspection was undertaken on 15 March at Xlendi regarding MEPA permit for change of use from boat house to bar. A report was presented on the situation and this Branch's suggestions were sent to MEPA. Briefs on the hard-standing and the slipway at Xlendi Bay were written and submitted to the Ministry on 23 March. An inspection was carried out on 8 May at Hotel Serena Beach Club at Xlendi Gozo, with reference to a MEPA Permit. A follow-up inspection on the Xlendi slipway and the hard-standing area was carried out in August 2006.
- General inspections and recordings of engines and dimensions of boats were undertaken in April prior to transfers of ownership.
- Surprise inspections were carried out on 10 and 11 May 2006 on Italian and French purseiners moored at Barriera Wharf, Valletta. An inspection was carried out on the fishing vessel Chiyo Maru in June to seal its fishing gear and hold.
- Communications were taken in hand with a representative from Malta Tourism Authority regarding Spinola Bay.
- From June to October several boats were registered in the Malta Fisheries Vessel Register under 'C' Category or Recreational (MFC) which meant the transference of MMA registered boats to the already mentioned register (FVR). In September the Fisheries Protection Officers attended meetings at the Consumer and Competitive Division, the Malta Maritime Authority and the Veterinary Affairs and Fisheries Division with regard to the MFBs and MFCs categories. Applications by various owners of fishing vessels who wanted to register their boats in the MFC Category of the Fishing Vessel Register were processed by this Inspectorate during November and December 2006.
- An on-site inspection was carried out at Triq il-Lanca Marsamxett on 12 June 2006. A report on the construction works that have been carried out in front of Al Mare Restaurant was prepared in August 2006.
- In June an inspection was carried out at Msida to check the condition of the slipway which was found to have some missing sleepers.
- On 28 August 2006 an inspection was carried out on board fishing vessel 'Sea Princess' MFA 393.
- A report was prepared in connection with a request for sleepers at Balluta Bay, St Julians.
- Inspections on the winches at Marsaxlokk were carried out in August 2006.
- An inspection was carried onboard on the 'Ave Maria' and the ad hoc reports were drawn up during August and October 2006.
- On 1 September 2006 an inspection was carried out at Gnejna Mgarr in connection with the construction of the boat house for a part-time fisherman.
- During October 2006 inspections were carried out on slipways in Kalkara, St Julian's Bay and M'Xlokk. The related reports were duly prepared and forwarded to higher authorities.
- Clearances to various tuna bait containers were given during September and October whilst clearance to a transshipment of shrimp larvae was also given during October 2006.

- During October 2006, inspectors boarded the Houta Maru, the Suruga 1 and the Regina Cristina and took photos to compile the necessary reports.
- A report on Mare Blu Co Ltd was compiled during October 2006.
- An inspection was carried out on a slipway at Msida on 1 November 2006 and on 24 November 2006 an inspection on slipway at St Julian's was carried out.
- Inspections were carried out on slipways in Kalkara, St Julian's Bay and M'Xlokk. Reports for these inspections were duly prepared and forwarded to higher authorities during November 2006.
- An investigation on the possible evidence of illegal registrations of Gozitan vessels was undertaken in November 2006. The issue regarding Illegal Vessel Registrations in Xlendi Gozo was tackled in December 2006.
- During November boardings and inspections were carried out on the Houta Maru, the 'Suruga 1' and the 'Astraea 102' to retrieve important documentations and for clearance purposes. In December Fisheries Protection Officers re boarded the Astraea 102 to collect its Fishing Logbook, its Stowage Plan, took photos and carried out a biological sampling of its hold.
- Several fishing vessels were boarded by Fisheries Inspectors at Lab Wharf and Deep Water Quay for the carrying out of ad hoc inspections in connection with the approval of duty free diesel allocations. Clearances for duty free fuel allocations to various foreign vessels were given during November and December 2006.
- A report concerning the importation of shrimp larvae was undertaken in November 2006.
- Research was undertaken during November on vessel construction methods.
- During December inspections were carried out by the Fisheries Protection Officers on various slipped vessels. Letters were collected from respective fishers indicating the reasons for their temporarily stopping from fishing.
- On 1 December, an inspection was carried out at Mgarr, Gozo regarding the re-opening of a restaurant in front of a slipway at iż-Żewwieqa.
- On 6 December, an inspection was carried out at Marsa regarding the cleaning up of a slipway.

Meetings (Local)

- Attendance at a one day seminar entitled Alternative Products in Agriculture and Fisheries which was organised by APS Bank on 17 February. On 28 February attendance at a training seminar on the same topic organised by the Department of Contracts regarding tender dossiers.
- In May a meeting was held with an engineer from the Water Services Corporation to discuss the possibilities of reducing the running costs of the borehole pump in use.
- In June 2006 a Tunisian delegation visited the marine hatchery and toured the other facilities in Fort San Luċjan.
- In September attendance at a meeting on the National Research and Innovation Programme (R&I) organised by Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST). A research proposal was submitted to the National R&I entitled Deep-water cephalopod species: distribution, population dynamics and sustainable management in the central Mediterranean.
- Attendance at a two-day Offshore Mariculture International Conference held at Corinthia San Ġorġ Hotel, St Julians in October 2006.
- On 2 November a meeting was held with the University of Malta on the possibility of starting a sideline project on the population biology of selected shark species especially those collected during trawl surveys.
- Attendance at a full day seminar at the Westin Dragonara regarding the Euro Changeover.
- On 23 November an officer from the Fisheries and Aquaculture Branch held a meeting with representatives from the NGO group, Nature Trust, on possible collaboration between the two entities.

- On 2 December a meeting was held with Elizabeth Conrad on the requirements of the Fisheries Section for the Marine Research Council at Xrobb l-Għagin.

Turtle Rehabilitation

- Between 27 and 29 March, staff from this section undertook in-house training on Sea Turtle Husbandry, delivered by Prof Flegra Bentivenga, curator of Aquarium of Stazione Zoologica Anton Dohrn and Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre – Naples.
- During August, 2006 a member from the Turtle Rehabilitation Unit participated in an exercise on beach monitoring in relation to turtle egg laying held in Cyprus.
- In November staff from the Turtle Rehabilitation Unit organised the release of 11 marine turtles which had been nursed back to health by this Unit. This event received a good deal of coverage in the media.
- At the end of November, attendance at a one-week course on turtles Rehabilitation at the Stazione Zoologica Anton Dorm – Naples – Italy.

GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN (GFCM)

- Attendance at the 8th meeting of the SAC/Sub-Committees of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean held between 11 and 14 September in Rome. Attendance and active participation in sessions of the sub-committee on stock assessment and the sub-committees on marine environment and ecosystems. A 15-minute powerpoint presentation was also done in the sub-committee on marine environment and ecosystems, in connection with the pilot study of the project MedsudMed, entitled: *Structure of demersal assemblages and depth related trends in Maltese waters (GSA 15)*. Positive feedback was received from the partners in the meeting and the sub-committee recommended to use the research projects which were carried out in Malta, in Spain and in the Gulf of Gabès, as case studies for analysing potentials and imitations of the ecosystem approach to fishery during a transversal meeting of the SAC, in order to set a common framework and methodology.

ICCAT

- The co-ordination of the collection of the data for the Tuna Season 2006 was taken in hand in April by the Fisheries Protection Inspectorate. As the tuna season commenced in June, inspections and data collection were both carried out during the said period. Inspections of tuna transshipments were also carried out between June and September 2006. ICCAT Statistical Documents were issued and recorded during the same months.
- Work on the ICCAT database concerning the statistics on Blue Fin Tuna was taken in hand in April 2006. The organisation of the biological sampling of tuna at the market was also taken in hand during April and July 2006.
- Information on large pelagics was compiled and sent to the European Commission and to ICCAT in April and July as requested.
- The reporting of statistics on blue fin tuna and swordfish on the ICCAT database was finalised in May 2006. The co-ordination of the biological sampling of the same two species at the Valletta Fish Market was taken in hand during June and July 2006.
- Attendance at an ICCAT blue fin tuna stock assessment meeting held in Madrid on 12-18 June 2006.
- Co-ordination of the blue fin tuna farming activities for 2006 was taken in hand in July.
- The science and research part of the ICCAT Annual Statistical Report was prepared in August 2006. The Reports on the Maltese blue fin tuna fishery, which included the analysis of biological parameters and management measures, were finalised in August and September 2006.
- A report on the aerial inspection of tuna cages was prepared in August 2006.
- An inspection was carried on P2M farms in August 2006.
- Attendance at an EU Preparatory meeting for the ICCAT Annual Meeting, Brussels, 13 September.

- A scientific document was prepared for the ICCAT SCRS meeting regarding biological parameters of blue fin tuna. The aim of the meeting was to assess the state of the blue fin tuna stock from results of the stock assessment meeting of June.
- Attendance at ICCAT-SCRS (Scientific Committee for Research and Statistics) meeting, Madrid, 2-6 October.
- A paper entitled Biological characteristics of Maltese longinon bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) landings 2005 was finalised in October 2006 for the SCRS meeting.
- Attendance at the 2nd EU Preparatory meeting for the ICCAT Annual Meeting held on 19 October in Brussels.
- In October, inspections were carried out on tuna processing vessels Suruga 1, Tuna Queen, Graciella, Daniela and Reina Crisitina. The related reports were compiled and forwarded to higher authorities.
- During October and November attendance and inspections at several blue fin tuna transshipments and containers releases at the Deep Water Quay, Lab Wharf, MedServ Quay and Pinto Wharf. The ad hoc transshipment documents and ICCAT statistical documents were prepared during the same months.
- Data included in the ICCAT certificates issued during October 2006 for Maltese farmed blue fin tuna were inputted for further processing.
- Blue fin tuna local farms were assisted by this Branch with their activities and controlled their reporting during November and December. The same farms were contacted during same months to forward to this Branch the harvested biological sampling data.
- Attendance at a meeting on the blue fin tuna of the Control, Monitoring and Surveillance Group held on 7 November.
- Attendance at the 15th Special Meeting of the ICCAT Commission held in Dubrovnik, Croatia between 17 and 26 November 2006.
- The ICCAT database system was updated to an electronic version during November 2006. Transshipment and other tuna related data were filed in the system during November and December.
- During December tonnage certificates provided by the various farms were crossed checked by the Fisheries Protection Officers with the ICCAT certificates to verify authenticity.
- Various shipping and farming entities were contacted in connection with the payment for the enforcement services supplied by this Inspectorate.
- In December Fisheries Protection officers boarded The Tuna Queen for collection of documentations.

LICENSING

- Payments for 2006 Fishing Vessel licences were received by this Section from 4 to 31 January, 2006. Fishing vessel owners who had not paid the Fishing Vessel licence for 2006 were given another chance to pay their dues between 1 and 7 March 2006. Only 30 vessels out of a total of 2,250 fishing vessels did not pay the 2006 Fishing Vessel Licence.
- An intensive exercise was undertaken in May to finalise the re-measurement of the GT of all vessels over 15m. This exercise was carried out in accordance with the Certification of the Malta Registry of the Malta Maritime Authority.
- Registrations in the MFC and MFD categories in the Maltese Fishing Vessel Register were opened on 1 July 2006. The related applications were accepted at the Fisheries Offices at Valletta and at Fort San Luċjan in Marsaxlokk. Several boats were transferred from MMA and were registered in August under Category 'C' of the Malta Fishing Vessel Register.
- Various queries from fishing vessels owners, from the Fisheries Attaché in Brussels, from MMA and NSO and other entitles were handled by this Section during the whole year.
- 40 Fishing Vessel Licences were issued by this Section during November 2006 whilst 26 were issued in December.

- The personalised letters for the payment of fishing vessel licences for 2007 were issued in the last quarter. Payments of the 2007 licences were received at the Centre as from 20 November 2006. The exercise incorporating the payments of the fishing vessel licences was temporarily suspended on 15 December 2006 and was expected to resume in the second week of January 2007. Up to 15 December a total of 933 vessels owners paid their 2007 fishing vessel licence.

MEETINGS (ABROAD)

- Attendance at a COFI Sub-Committee Meeting on Fish Trade, held in Santiago De Compostela, Spain from 30 May to 2 June. A report was drafted and forwarded to the appropriate authorities.

PROGRAMMES

EU

EFF

- Drafting of an Instruction Note for the attendance at a meeting held in Brussels on 25-27 September on Implementing the EFF Regulation for 2007-2013.
- The European Fisheries Fund Implementing Proposed Regulation was evaluated and forwarded to higher authorities in October 2006.
- The proposed European Fisheries Fund Implementing Regulation was evaluated by this Branch during November 2006.
- Attendance at a meeting in Brussels held on 14-15 November regarding the EFF Implementing Regulation.

FIFG

- During the first quarter of 2006, meetings of the FIFG Project Selection Committees were co-ordinated to evaluate the FIFG Application Forms received from final recipients.
- Aid Scheme agreements were forwarded in January and February to the EU Affairs Directorate and the Permanent Secretary as well as the Managing Authority for their comments.
- In January, meetings were held with individual applicants in connection with Modernisation of Fleet, Adjustment of Fishing Effort and Financial Assistance.
- Attendance at a seminar organised by the PPCD on 6 February with regard to On-the-spot Checks. On-the-spot checks in connection with these FIFG projects were carried out on fishing vessels during August and November, 2006.
- On 17 February and 13 March, meetings were held with a representative from Heritage regarding the Adjustment of Fishing Effort Aid Scheme.
- On 20 February 2006, a meeting was held at EU Directorate of MRAE regarding FIFG 1.
- The Application form, Annex 1 and the clarification letter of the FIFG project *Small Scale Coastal Fishing* were redrafted and submitted to PPCD in March 2006.
- On 6 March 2006 the Fleet Modernisation results and the Acceptance letter were issued.
- Between 27 and 30 March 2006, attendance at a meeting on the Introduction of a Draft working paper on ex-ante evaluation and the indicator for monitoring and evaluation the European Fisheries Fund. The meeting turned into a discussion between Member States on Management of Blue Whiting, Application of (EC) 51/2006, introducing the annual report from the Commission to the Council, and also involved two votes.
- The FIFG Contracts were drafted during April.
- Attendance at a meeting of the FIFG Sectoral Monitoring Sub Committee at MRAE EU Affairs Directorate of Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment in May.

- The contracts under the Fleet Modernisation Scheme and the Adjustment of Fishing Effort Scheme were signed during May 2006.
- Acceptance letters in connection with the FIG Actions, that of Marketing and that of Processing, were issued during June 2006.
- FIG projects were implemented from June to December and payments under the FIG Schemes were effected from April to December 2006. The Statement of Expenditure connected with the FIG projects and Actions was referred to EU affairs Directorate in June 2006.
- FIG Irregularity Reports were drafted and sent to EU Affairs Directorate of the Ministry in July and November 2006.
- Attended, took footage and drew a report on the demolition of MFA 307 in Gozo in November 2006. Visited Gozo between 28 and 29 November in connection with funds made available under the Adjustment of Fishing Effort. The completed report on the demolition of vessel MFA 307 was presented in December 2006.
- In December an audit was carried out on the Adjustment of Fishing Effort Aid Scheme by IAID.

Hard Standing Facilities

- Co-ordination was continuously taken in hand during 2006 with the Department of Contracts regarding the Fishing Port Facilities Project Tender Dossiers.
- On 1, 6 and 8 February 2006 meetings were held with the project's architect regarding the Fishing Port Facilities.
- The opening session for the Procurement of Hoists Financial Bids was held on 23 March 2006 at the Department of Contract.
- The hoists financial evaluation report was drafted and submitted to Contracts Department during April 2006.
- Various meetings were held during August and October, 2006 with representatives from the Internal Audit, the Paying Agency and the various entities concerned with the hard-standing facilities at Marsaxlokk. Construction work is still underway on these facilities.

Structural Funds

- On 24-25 January 2006 an officer from the Control Division attended a meeting of the Structural Funds Committee (SFC) covering European Funds for period 2007-2013.
- The purpose of the meeting was to create a network of contacts between Member States. The meeting provided basic information on the new period (2007-2013), the new IT System and, the techniques to be used and the challenges for the system.
- The Structural Funds Committee will cover the European Funds for the period of 2007 – 2013 mainly Structural Funds, Cohesion Funds, European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Fisheries Fund. It was noted that the present technological system used to transfer data from a Member State to the Commission and vice-versa was not efficient. The purpose of the SFC is to exchange data electronically (E-Government) efficiently and avoid the use of paper. The SFC is going to be a common basic system for all the funds where the same technical interface will be applied.
- The Structural Funds Database was updated continuously during 2006.
- In June a spot check was organised and carried out at Valletta with one of final recipients of Structural Funds.

LOCAL

- *Duty Free Diesel Allocations:* During 2006 several meetings were held with both Fishermen's Cooperatives (KNS and GHKS) and with fishermen individually in order to solve several requests for duty

free diesel allocations and financial assistance. The ad hoc database was updated every month. A new Diesel Duty Free Allocation Agreement was drafted and forwarded to MRAE for approval.

- *Financial Assistance*: A Return of Arrears of Financial Assistance for 2005 was submitted Treasury in March.
- *State Aid*: The State Aid Annual Report was drafted and sent to EU Affairs Directorate in July.

PUBLICATIONS

- Five scientific publications were submitted to the Mediterranean Science Commission conference (CIESM <http://www.ciesm.org/>) titled:
 - Mark Dimech, Matthew Camilleri, Michel J Kaiser, Patrick J Schembri
Role of environmental variables in structuring demersal assemblages on trawled bottoms on the Maltese continental shelf (Central Mediterranean).
 - Mark Dimech, Matthew Camilleri, Michel J Kaiser, Patrick J Schembri
Demersal assemblages on deep water trawling grounds off the Maltese Islands: management implications.
 - Roberta Pace R, Mark Dimech, Matthew Camilleri, Patrick J Schembri
Anthropogenic litter as a substratum for epifaunal colonisation in deep water habitats around the Maltese islands (Central Mediterranean)
 - Roberta Pace R., Mark Dimech, Matthew Camilleri, Patrick J Schembri
Litter as a source of Habitat islands on deep water muddy bottoms
 - Colbert Balzan, Mark Dimech, Matthew Camilleri, Patrick J Schembri
A study of three species of commercial decapods from deep water muddy bottoms around the Maltese Islands

RESEARCH AND TRIALS

Amberjack Project

- The Amberjack Contract commenced whereby the VAFD and Malta Fish Farming Ltd reached a joint venture agreement to collaborate towards the development of spawning and rearing techniques of the amberjack *Seriola dumerilii*. In its first of five years, the project yielded positive results when broodstock were brought to full sexual maturity followed by induced spawning. The successful collection of good quality fertilised eggs from the broodstock held in cages in Marsaxlokk Bay, followed by their hatching and feeding during the larval stages showed a very promising future for more success in this project. The advances of 2006 are being followed by further investments so that the survival of larvae can be improved to a commercial scale.
- Within the amberjack project, the marine hatchery produced 293,000 sea bream fingerlings in two cycles during the first half of the year. From January to April various meetings were held with a local entrepreneur regarding the running of a marine hatchery.
- Correspondence was taken up in January and February 2006 with Aqua System of UK regarding a recycling system for the amberjack spawning tank. A representative from this company carried out a two day visit in connection with the design and the set up of an amberjack spawning tank in the Hydrofoil Unit in Marsaxlokk.
- From January 2006 feedings and observations of the amberjack broodstock in the cages were carried out every Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
- Exchange of correspondence was continued with MEPA in February regarding the permit process for the amberjack tanks.
- Amberjack broodstock data was inputted and analysed in April 2006.
- Correspondence was taken up in April with Dr Fernando dela Gandara regarding the amberjack parasite research.

- During 2006 collaboration was taken up with Dr Francisco Montero from the University of Valencia in Spain for studies of parasites on amberjack larvae, young fish and broodstock.
- Correspondence was taken in hand in April with Dr Costantenas Mylonas regarding the amberjack broodstock research.
- A Scientific paper follow up was done in April in the recent research on amberjack spawning in the Canary Islands.
- In April, canvas was ordered to surround the amberjack cage for egg collection.
- Each amberjack in the broodstock was weighed individually and checked for its sexual maturity stage. The first hormone induction was administered to the amberjack broodstock which were then transferred to the spawning cages during May 2006.
- In May correspondence was undertaken with IFREMER of France regarding possible collaborative research for sperm quality.
- During June 2006 an eggs collection system was set up in the spawning cages for amberjacks. Therefore daily checking for amberjack eggs in the spawning cages and observation of the behaviour of amberjack broodstock, as well as, checking of this environmental condition, were carried out during June and July 2006. The amberjack broodstock in the cages were weighed individually and checked for sexual maturity during the same months. The amberjack broodstock received hormonal inducement. Observation for spawning was also carried out at the cages during the same month. During June and July 2006 fertilised amberjack eggs were collected from the spawning cages and were then transferred to the incubation tanks at the marine hatchery within Fort San Luċjan.
- Literature research was carried out on amberjack broodstock and larval rearing in June 2006.
- Feeding trials and treatments for amberjack larvae started in July 2006. The amberjack broodstock was transferred from the spawning cages to a main cage in July 2006.
- In August, various meetings were held with technical staff from the Malta Fish Farming Ltd. The meetings were held in connection with the construction of concrete spawning facilities at the ex-Hydrofoils unit in Marsaxlokk.
- A sample weighing of the amberjack juveniles was undertaken in August 2006.
- Various meetings were during 2006 with local entrepreneur regarding the Amberjack Contract.
- In August 2006 correspondence was taken up with Aquasystems of UK regarding the re-circulation system for the broodstock concrete tanks required for the Amberjack Project. Meetings and site visits were carried out with the company representative and technical staff from Malta Fish Farming Ltd regarding the Amberjack spawning tank re-cycling system and filtration system required in the Marine hatchery at Fort San Luċjan. Arrangements were taken in hand in September for the visit of this consultant.
- Correspondence was taken up in September with Nisshin Products, Japan regarding possibility for collaboration in Amberjack project.
- The amberjack juveniles were transferred to tunnels for feeding trial during October, 2006.
- A meeting with technical staff from the Malta Fish Farming Ltd. regarding the construction of the amberjack spawning tank was held in October at Fort San Luċjan.
- Meetings were held in November 2006 with representatives from MFF regarding the hatchery plans, the contract for 2007 and the amberjack spawning tank construction.
- Correspondence was taken up with Aquatic Ecosystems Ltd regarding the purchase of UV filter under the amberjack contract.
- Samples of caged amberjack mortalities were sent in December to the University of Valencia for analysis.

Dolphin Fish

- Co-ordination of the extraction of otoliths from dolphin fish (*lampuki*) was undertaken at the laboratories of the Malta Centre for Fisheries Sciences in February and March 2006.

Enrichment Trial

- Collaboration was taken up in November 2006 with Nisshin Feed Co Ltd of Japan for trials on enrichment of live feed with the marine hatchery.

Fresh Water Crab Project

- Investigations were taken up during July 2006 into the possibilities of freshwater crab propagation for eventual release into the natural habitat. Correspondence was taken up with MEPA in July and continued during August in connection with application for handling of freshwater crab and for reproduction and its eventual release.

Hatchery Project

- Various meetings were held during May with a local entrepreneur regarding the running of the hatchery.
- Correspondence was taken up and continued with Department of Corporate Services of the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment regarding the financial aspect of hatchery contract during May and June 2006.
- Meetings were held during October with a Maltese entrepreneur regarding the hatchery plans for the end of 2006 and for 2007.
- Exchange of correspondence continued during October and November with Aquasystems Ltd regarding the orders for the hatchery UV filter and equipment for the broodstock re-cycling tanks. The setting up of the 1 micron and UV hatchery filtration system was taken in hand in December 2006.

Hatchery Trial Cycle

- In January correspondence was taken up with Acqua Azzurra Spa regarding hatchery collaboration and the development of new species. This exchange of correspondence continued during February and March regarding the purchase of sea bream eggs for a hatchery trial cycle at the Malta Centre for Fisheries Sciences.

Other Projects

- Correspondence was taken up in May 2006 with Ms Salja Kasmann regarding organic aquaculture proceedings.
- Data mining and processing together with data analysis for the WP 2 Fisheries effects of Marine protected areas were taken in hand during November and December 2006 – Empafish Project (<http://www.um.es/empafish/>)

Red Shrimps Project (<http://www.unica.it/animabiol/menutit.htm>)

- Sicilian experts visited Fort San Luċjan between 25 and 29 September 2006, to prepare an initial report on the Red Shrimps EU project. Collaborative work was undertaken with the experts to obtain a preliminary analysis on the data collected by all partners on this species.
- Attendance at a three-day working meeting on 25-27 September 2006 on the data compilation and preliminary analysis for the Red shrimp project.
- Preliminary analysis of the population biology of deep water red shrimps (*Aristeomorpha foliacea* and *Aristeus antennatus*) was undertaken in the strait of Sicily during December 2006.

Reprodott

- The EU 5th Framework REPRODOTT project Q5RS-2002-01355 (Reproduction of the Blue fin tuna in captivity – a feasibility study for the domestication of *Thunnus thynnus*) was concluded with success achieved in July 2005 when some viable tuna eggs were artificially fertilised. This was the first step at controlling the whole life cycle of this species in captivity.

- In April 2006 the Final Annual REPRODOTT Co-ordination meeting was organised in Malta over a three day period. All partners carried out presentations of their work and final report and manuscript preparations, shortcomings and conclusions were discussed. The partners discussed possible future project compilations within the EU 7th Framework Programme.
- Various exchanges of communication were taken in hand during February and May with the other Reprodott partners on issues such as the final meeting which was to be held in Israel and the Final Report for this project.
- The final meeting on the Reprodott project was held in Malta between 30 and 31 March.
- Correspondence was taken up with Reprodott partners regarding the Reprodott and future research and various issues for the Final Report.
- The cost statement of the REPRODOTT project was finalised in November 2006.

Scherring and Plough

- Correspondence was taken up in June 2006 with Scherring and Plough Aquaculture regarding the contract for the trials to be carried out at Fort San Luċjan in Marsaxlokk.
- The Aquaculture Section followed – up the Scherring Plough Contract and the Amberjack Contract with Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment during the last quarter of 2006.
- Vaccination trials were also held at the Fort San Luċjan experimental facility whereby the collaboration with Scherring Plough Aquaculture. Ten trials were carried out throughout the year where *Vibrio* and *Pasteurella* vaccines were tested by immersion or injection.

Seabass

- In January sea bass broodstock manipulation and sex maturity checks were carried out sea bream eggs were purchased from Sicily for a marine hatchery run.
- An ice recycling system was set up for sea bass spawning with the Malta Centre for Fisheries Sciences. Sea bass broodstock were checked and hormone injected in February 2006.
- The transfer to a separate tank of the remaining stock of sea bass was undertaken during August 2006.

Sea bream Project

- Sea bream fingerlings were graded, counted and x-rayed and were then transferred to cages later on in May. A second batch of fingerlings underwent the same procedure in the Nursery in June. Following this the cost calculations for the first cycle of sea breams for 2006 were finalised during June 2006.
- The sea bream fingerlings were transferred from the tanks to the sea cages during July.
- The selection of the sea bream for broodstock purposes was undertaken in August.
- In November correspondence was taken up with Acqua Azzurra Spa regarding the acquisition of sea bream eggs and the possibility of collaboration for hatchery rearing methods and pathology.

Tuna Project

- Correspondence was taken up with Dr Antonio Garcia, Dr Hiller Gordin and Prof Chris Bridges regarding tuna possibilities and projects.
- Comments were prepared in September 2006 for the MEPA application for tuna cages for diving.

Scientific Papers

- In December the correction and other comments on the scientific paper entitled 'Preparation and administration of gonadotropin releasing hormone agonist (GnRHA) implants for the artificial control of reproductive maturation in captive-reared Atlantic bluefin tuna' were submitted to 'Reviews in Fisheries Sciences'

SIPAM

- Correspondence was taken up in February with Mr. Valerio Crespi regarding the National Aquaculture Sector Overview (NASO) within SIPAM. This overview was corrected and referenced in March 2006.
- Correspondence was taken up in September and October with SIPAM co-ordinators at FAO regarding the Annual meeting which is to be held in Cyprus later on this year.
- Attendance at the SIPAM Annual meeting which was held in Cyprus (14 – 18 November 2006).

Water Quality

- From July 2006 onwards, in the field water samples were collected and in-situ measurements were recorded including temperature, dissolved oxygen, secchi disk depth. Lab analysis was performed for the salinity, nitrates, phosphates and ammonia, chlorophyll a, total bacterial count and faecal bacterial count.
- Apart from the usual analysis a water quality manual including standard operating procedures, maps and fieldwork procedures began compilation in August 2006 and was finalised in October 2006. It was sent to the aquaculture farms in the same month.
- In August new quality assurance procedures were introduced including good laboratory practice (GLP), new water analysis data sheets and certificates of analysis. In the future this will lead to certification of the laboratory (ISO 9001) etc.
- Meetings were held during October and November with local farms regarding changes in the methodology and the sampling design of the water quality monitoring programme in sampling design.

INTERNATIONAL AND LEGAL CO-ORDINATION

SLAUGHTERING OF LIVESTOCK

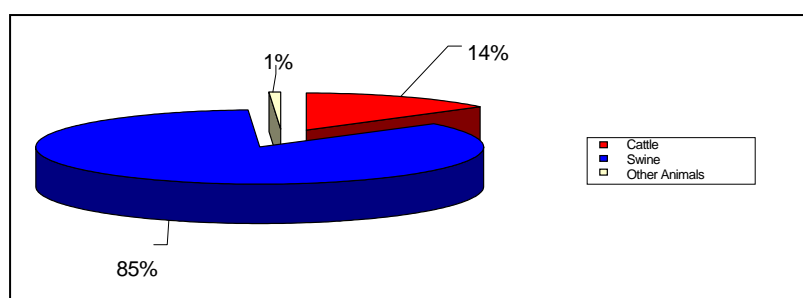
The number of livestock slaughtered in 2006 at the Civil Abattoir in both Malta and Gozo is as indicated hereunder:

Cattle	Swine	Sheep	Lamb	Goats	Kids	Equines
5,067	103,562	131	11	9	7	348

The total amount of kilograms of the respective livestock slaughtered at the Civil Abattoir in Malta and Gozo is as indicated hereunder:

Cattle	Swine	Sheep	Lamb	Goats	Kids	Equines
1,367,103	8,217,659	4,193	190	219	80	66,550

The total number of animals slaughtered this year was 108,498 heads weighing 9,655,994 kgs while for the same period last year there were 114,075 heads (10,409,821 kgs). In relation to 2005 figures, there was a reduction of 4.89% with respect to animals slaughtered and a decrease of 7.2% in heads weighing (Kg).



Distribution of Weight (kgs)

Swine Analysis

Tattooing during 2006 amounted to 122,201 (a 2.3% decrease over 2005). At present mortality stands at around 12.5%.

The market demand for this year shows a slight upward trend. Slaughter was 4.2% lower than that for 2005. The weight has also gone down from 8,889.4 M. tons to 8,217.6 M. tons. This downward trend was compensated with the importation of about 2,126 Metric tons of pork-meat for the period January to November. The amount imported was 70% higher than that of last year.

The average carcass weight is 79.3 kgs. Production is in the region of 8,217.7 M. tons which is equivalent to about Lm6.39 million.

The replacement of gilts during the year was decreased by about 10.33% over 2005.

Swine Slaughtering 2006						
	Malta		Gozo		Totals	
	Qty	Wt./Kg	Qty	Wt./Kg	Qty	Wt./Kg
Total	103,558	8,217,256	4	403	103,562	8,217,659

Pork Slaughter 2006												
Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
8,162	8,221	9,405	8,075	9,061	7,356	6,744	9,320	8,316	8,929	10,369	9,604	103,562

	Issue Gilts	Issue Boars	Piglets Tattooed	Trans of Fatt. *
Tattooing Malta	2,145	212	114,790	1,096
Tattooing Gozo	160	9	7,411	n.a
Total	2,305	221	122,201	1,096

* Sale of Weaners from Multiplier St/Kim to Breed. To Fatteners

The balance of Boars as at the end of 2006 was 463 whilst the balance of Sows was 6,687.

Tattooing Malta & Gozo 2006												
Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
9,280	8,604	11,906	9,474	12,640	9,882	9,808	11,306	10,313	11,269	9,725	7,994	122,201

Food Health Section

Annex III of EU Commission Regulation 853 of 2004 lays down the requirements in respect of Food Businesses Operators Handling Products:

Type of Establishments	Inspection Type	Total Inspections
Civil Abattoir	Daily	187 (approx)
Meat Processing Establishments	R/I/APP	61
Cold Stores	I/AU/APP	16
Poultry Establishments	R/I/APP	771
Fish Establishments (including Fishing Vessels)	R/I/APP	82
Feed Mills	APP/I	5
Malta Dairy Products	R	4

Au= Audit; App= Approval; I=Initial; R=Routine; S=Surprise Inspection

Poultry Section

The following work was carried out by the Poultry Section in 2006:

- registration of all hatching eggs, chicks, slaughtering of broilers and placement of pullets on farms;

- issuing of farm licences;
- poultry farm inspections;
- general upkeep of the National Livestock Database (poultry);
- collection of blood, eggs and faecal samples from poultry farms for routine health surveillance;
- poultry welfare inspections, in conjunction with the animal welfare section;
- poultry farm inspections, related to MEPA applications;
- assistance to farmers when applying for schemes related to EU subsidies;
- working of SMPPMA poultry subsidies, broilers and layers;
- attending internal meetings on poultry-related topics, according to necessity;
- an active role in the co-ordination of the surveillance plan of Avian Influenza for the Maltese islands.

Occupational Health & Safety

- Ongoing Occupational Risk Assessment update/s (and implementation) as per Act 27 of 2002, Legal Notices 36 of 2003 and other subsequent OH&S legislation
- Election of Health & Safety Representatives as per LN 36 of 2003
- Fixing at strategic places of OH&S signs as per LN 45 of 2002
- Training of a First Aider as per LN 11 of 2002
- Certification of equipment as per LN 52 of 1986
- OH&S training to employees
- OH&S ongoing advice to employees
- Co-ordinating amongst others the contingency plan for the eventuality of an Avian Influenza Outbreak
- Representing VAFD at the Pandemic Preparedness Committee
- Co-ordinating the implementation of Reg EC 1774/2002 (ABP).

Systematic and random walk-around inspections (including enforcing the use of Personal Protective Equipment) at various work stations are done on a daily basis within the VAFD.

The VAFD is no common workstation with a multitude and variety of occupations ranging from the high risk abattoirs, laboratory, maintenance people (boilers, hoists, electricians, fitters, etc) incinerators, farmers, field workers, 'middle-men', laboratory workers and office workers, so OH&S is an ongoing process.

To note that during these inspections OH&S shortcomings are discussed on site with the responsible personnel, and where possible, immediate and adequate control measures are taken. One example and a case in point is the removal of a Brick post block situated at the Pork Slaughter Line that prevented and obstructed escape routes.

Border Inspection Post

All live animals (excluding pet dogs, cats and ferrets, which follow the requisites of the Pet Travel Scheme), as well as products of animal origin (for human consumption, for animal consumption, for other purposes other than human or animal consumption) originating from Third Countries are subject to Veterinary Checks, which are carried out at a Border Inspection Post (BIP) approved by the European Union. The Border Inspection Posts fall under the direct responsibility of the Veterinary Affairs and Fisheries Division.

Malta has three Border Inspection Posts where Veterinary Checks may be carried out: (1) Malta International Freeport BIP, for products of animal origin; (2) Malta International Airport BIP, for products of animal origin and for live animals; (3) Malta Grand Harbour BIP, for live animals (the premises permit direct access to the facility from the ship unloading areas of the port).

The tables below indicate the figures related to the importation of live animals and products of animal origin at the Malta International Airport BIP, as well as those related to the importation of products of

animal origin at the Malta Freeport BIP during 2006. No consignments of live animals were received at the Grand Harbour BIP during this period.

Malta International Airport Border Inspection Post			
2006			
	<i>Total No. ⁽¹⁾</i>	<i>Rejected</i>	<i>Lab Tests</i>
HC-total	199	-	-
Ambient T ⁰	-	-	-
Chilled	199	-	-
Frozen	-	-	-
NHC-total	2	-	-
Ambient T ⁰	2	-	-
Chilled	-	-	-
Frozen	-	-	-
Total Products	201	-	-
U	-	-	-
E	-	-	-
O	137	-	-
Total Live Animals	^(*) 137	-	-

^(*) Tropical Fish.

⁽¹⁾ The number of consignments of products of animal origin fit for human consumption (HC), products of animal origin not fit for human consumption (NHC) with separation into the number of consignments without low temperature requirements and frozen/chilled consignments; the number of consignments of live animals for each category (ungulates, registered equidae and other animals).

Malta Freeport Border Inspection Post			
2006			
	<i>Total No. ⁽¹⁾</i>	<i>Rejected ⁽²⁾</i>	<i>Lab Tests ⁽³⁾</i>
HC-total	383	3	46
Ambient T ⁰	180	2	16
Chilled	14	-	5
Frozen	189	1	25
NHC-total	87	1	-
Ambient T ⁰	28	1	-
Chilled	-	-	-
Frozen	59	-	-
Total Products	470	4	46
U	-	-	-
E	-	-	-
O	-	-	-
Total Live Animals	-	-	-

⁽¹⁾ The number of consignments of products of animal origin fit for human consumption (HC), products of animal origin not fit for human consumption (NHC) with separation into the number of consignments without low temperature requirements and frozen/chilled consignments; the number of consignments of live animals for each category (ungulates, registered equidae and other animals).

⁽²⁾ For each category, the number of rejected consignments.

⁽³⁾ For each category, the number of laboratory tests carried out.

Animal Health – Ruminants Section

During 2006, the Ruminants Section carried out the ongoing Ruminant disease surveillance schemes for Tuberculosis and Brucellosis.

Census inspections were carried out on dairy and non-dairy ruminant farms in accordance with EU legislation regarding identification and registration and premium schemes.

The tagging and retagging of bovines and small ruminants is carried out by Veterinary Support Officers in this Department.

The National database was further upgraded and data is inputted on a daily basis. The database has been recognised as fully-operational and is utilised in the calculation of premium subsidies. The database is also necessary for the issuing of computerised movement permits for bovines.

Co-ordinates of all ruminant holdings have been taken throughout the year. These are being inputted into the National Livestock Database so as to be recognised as fully operational for sheep and goats. This will exempt Malta from using herd registers for small ruminants.

Dairy Farms

A total of 99 dairy premises in Malta and 45 dairy premises in Gozo were registered with the Veterinary Affairs and Fisheries Division during the year. 95 farms were tested for Tuberculosis and Brucellosis.

Testing on dairy farms (Malta) - 2006					
	Tuberculosis		Brucellosis		
	Bovines	Caprines	Bovines	Caprines	Ovines
Total	5,565	5	5,787	367	338

Tuberculosis reactors

Five bovines gave a dubious result to the intradermal comparative skin test for Tuberculosis. This bovine was re-tested after eight weeks and resulted negative.

Tuberculosis reactors on dairy farms (Malta)			
Species	Total Tested	Dubious Result	Positive Result
Bovine	5,565	5	-

Calf Identification Scheme

Tagging of bovines according to the relevant EU legislation continued during the year. All bovines are double ear-tagged using a unique identification number which has to accompany the animal throughout its entire lifetime thus ensuring the “farm to fork” traceability concept. All MDP Farms are visited on a fortnightly basis, or under request of the farmer, in order to double-tag all newborn calves. The number of animals tagged on bovine holdings (Dairy + Non-dairy) during the year was 6,093.

When a bovine or small ruminant loses one of its ear-tags, it must be re-tagged using the same ear-tag number, so as to ensure its traceability. Ear-tag losses are reported by farmers to this department and tags bearing the same numbers are reordered from the supplier. The number of bovine re-tags carried out on dairy and non-dairy holdings was respectively 1,562 (968 Malta; 594 Gozo) and 69 (66 Malta, 3 Gozo). Data in respect for re-tagging of small ruminants in the months of January to August are not available. The total number of re-tags of small ruminants carried out from September to December 2006 is 77 (6 caprines – 4 Malta; 2 Gozo); (71 ovines – 54 Malta; 17 Gozo).

Population

The animal population on dairy farms in Malta and Gozo during 2006 is as shown in the table below:

Bovine dairy farm population							
	M1	M2	M3	F1	F2	F3	Total
Malta	1,169	890	354	1,725	1,820	5,211	11,169
Gozo	831	580	114	955	932	2,732	6,144
Total	2,000	1,470	468	2,680	2,752	7,943	17,313

M1/F1 – Male/Female bovines under one year

M2/F2 – between one and two years

M3/F3 – over two years

Caprine dairy farm population				
	<i>Kids</i>	<i>Billy Goats</i>	<i>Goats</i>	<i>Total</i>
Malta	593	13	422	1,028
Gozo	11	2	80	93
Total	604	15	502	1,121
Ovine dairy farm population				
	<i>Lambs</i>	<i>Rams</i>	<i>Ewes</i>	<i>Total</i>
Malta	165	5	114	284
Gozo	1	2	12	15
Total	166	7	126	299

Non-dairy Farms

Non-dairy farms, which also include the Registered Cheeselet Producers, hold the majority of sheep and goats present on the Maltese islands. These holdings are registered on the National Database (InterTrace®) as Ruminant Farms. These holdings are subdivided into two categories, farms rearing only sheep and/or goats (RUM) and farms that rear also bovines (mostly bulls) for fattening and slaughter (RUM-B). A total of 2,066 non-dairy farms were active during 2006, subdivided as follows:

Number of non-dairy registered holdings			
	<i>RUM</i>	<i>RUM-B</i>	<i>Total</i>
Malta	1,211	247	1,458
Gozo	584	24	608
Total	1,795	271	2,066

Brucella reactors

Three sheep and one goat in Malta and one sheep in Gozo gave a positive reaction to the Rose Bengal Test (RBT). From these reactors, the goat and three sheep gave a positive reaction to the Complement Fixation test (CFT) and were slaughtered.

Brucella reactors on non-dairy farms		
<i>Species</i>	<i>RBT Reactors</i>	<i>CFT Reactors</i>
Bovine	-	-
Caprine	1	1
Ovine	4	3
Total	5	4

Population

An estimate of the animal population on non-dairy farms in Malta and Gozo during 2006 is shown below:

Bovine non-dairy farm population						
	M1	M2	M3	F1	F2	F3
Malta	850	726	193	194	193	189
Gozo	18	19	2	2	-	4
Caprine non-dairy farm population						
	<i>Kids</i>	<i>Billy Goats</i>	<i>Goats</i>	<i>Total</i>		
Malta	1,872	159	1,497	3,528		
Gozo	93	62	1,046	1,201		
Total	1,965	221	2,543	4,729		
Ovine non-dairy farm population						
	<i>Lambs</i>	<i>Rams</i>	<i>Ewes</i>	<i>Total</i>		
Malta	4,441	147	3,326	7,914		
Gozo	123	143	3,669	3,935		
Total	4,564	290	6,995	11,849		

Cheeselet producers

The Division is in the process of registering all farmers who are producing the Maltese traditional cheeselets (*ġbejniet*) and is distinguishing between those that intend selling over the farm wall or for their own personal use and those that sell wholesale (in shops). Only the latter fall under Legal Notice 130 of 2004. The FVRD is currently issuing temporary certificates for these producers based on the Brucellosis status of the farm.

Ovine and Caprine Identification Scheme

As from July 2005 a new system of tagging in sheep and goats has been implemented to be in line with EU Regulation No 21/2004 whereby sheep and goats must be identified by means of a pair of ear-tags bearing the MT code and a six digit number followed by a check digit. The identification numbers are being inputted into the livestock national database in order to maintain traceability of these animals.

Ear Tagging of ovines and caprines in Malta and Gozo (Dairy and Non-dairy)		
<i>Ovines</i>	<i>Caprines</i>	<i>Total</i>
7,325	3,158	10,483

SIMON SAMMUT

Director General (Veterinary Affairs and Fisheries)

Parks, Afforestation and Rural Conservation Department (PARC)

During this year, the Parks, Afforestation and Rural Conservation Department gained steady momentum. The whole department worked as a team and strived not only to *conserve* the Maltese landscape but also in further developing areas for afforestation. Once again thousands of trees, shrubs and plants, most of which were indigenous and endemic species, were planted. This was complemented by maintaining an extensive infrastructure, including ground preparation, maintenance of water reservoirs, water management and irrigation systems and the procurement of specialised equipment. More than 1,000m³ of rubble wall were built and tons of illegally dumped material were collected.

Mellieħa – Foresta 2000

The afforestation and rubble wall building in this area was continued. In fact 400 m³ of rubble wall was either rebuilt or newly constructed. Since access by machinery was limited, in certain areas transport and handling was done solely by hand. Regular maintenance was carried out including grass cutting, tree trimming, disposal of illegally dumped material and litter picking. Tree guards were fixed around all newly planted trees, to protect them against vandalism and strong winds. Appropriate signs and notices were installed. The following 1,004 trees and shrubs were planted: 1 *Ceratonia Siliqua* (Carob); 57 Aleppo Pine (*Znuber*); 95 *Quercus Coccifera* (Kermes Oak); 7 *Quercus Ilex* (Oak); 1 Gharghar; 25 Tamarisk; 560 *Pistaccia Lentiscus* (Deru); 4 *Rhamnus Alternus*; 20 *Arbutus Unedo* (Strawberry Tree); 5 Myrtle (Rihan); 24 *Crataegus monogyna* (Hawthorn); 76 *Lygeum Spartum* (Esparto Grass); 91 *Cistus Creticus* (Hoary Rockrose); and 38 *Thymbra Capita* (Mediterranean Thyme). Work also started on the planting of 3,000 trees and shrubs donated by the Italian Government.

Park Nazzjonali tas-Salini

Works at Salina continued by landscaping, levelling/forming of soil and tree planting. An impressive tree planting session under the 34U campaign took place on 12 and 13 November where 750 trees were sponsored and planted by *Club Italia*, the Italian Embassy, ST Microelectronics, InLingua School, Autobahn, St James Hospital, Down's syndrome Association, Artist and the general public.

Another tree planting session under the 34U campaign took place on 16 and 17 December. A total number of 1,500 trees were sponsored and planted by a number of government Ministries, *Club Italia*, the Italian Embassy, HSBC employees and the general public.

Tree staking, watering, grass-cutting and litter picking is done on a regular basis. A culvert was constructed beneath the existing pavement to collect and direct water to the adjacent reservoir. The water pump room was clad in rubble wall to blend better with the environment.

In May the Hon Minister G Pullicino inaugurated the upper area of the park during a short ceremony in which trees and shrubs sponsored by GoMobile were planted by the Chairman and staff members.

During 2006 the following were planted at Salina: 128 *Ceratonia Siliqua* (Carob); 301 *Olea Europea* (Olives); 515 Aleppo Pine (*Znuber*); 208 *Quercus Ilex* (Oak); 4 Pomegranate (Rummien); 101 Bay Laurel (Rand); 50 Cypressus; 178 Tamarisk; 10 Luq; 245 *Pistaccia Lentiscus* (Deru); 49 Bianca (*Atriplex*).

Ta' Qali

The Kite Area saw a massive tree planting programme under the 34U campaign. These were attended by the Prime Minister, the Minister for Rural Affairs and the Environment, Parliamentary Secretary Dr T Fenech and Heads of Department. Other sponsors under this campaign attended tree planting sessions on a regular basis.

The Oak Tree Circle continued to be regularly maintained and developed. An irrigation system was installed to increase water efficiency.

The Recreational Mall along the ex-runway was extensively maintained. Areas included traffic islands, roundabouts and pavements. These were all cleared of rubbish and litter, grass was cut/mowed, dead trees replaced and electrical poles maintained and replaced as necessary. 300 new trees were planted along the picnic area.

The Formal Garden continued to receive its much-needed attention and embellishment. Rubble wall building and top soil formation was finalised at the *East Berm* extension and planted with hundreds of trees, paved in *franka* stone slabs and lawn, transforming the area into a typical Mediterranean garden. New garden furniture was installed as well as an efficient drip irrigation system. A monument designed and built by artist Charles Sammut was erected at the Roots Circle. A timber gazebo was erected on a concrete platform depicting the EU flag and the area aptly named 'Europa Wing'. This project was inaugurated by the Minister Pullicino on 11 May.

Regular maintenance includes ploughing, tree trimming, grass cutting and servicing of the garden infrastructure. The old administration offices were also renovated and are now being used as stores, toilets, workshops and an office for security guards.

The following were planted at Ta' Qali: 53 *Ceratonia Siliqua* (Carob); 447 *Olea Europea* (Olives); 607 Aleppo Pine (*Žnuber*); 64 *Cercis Siliquastrum* (Judas); 19 *Quercus Ilex* (Oak); 1 Pomegranate (Rummien); 16 Bay Laurel (Rand); 6 *Prunus Dulcis* (Almond); 100 Gharghar; 43 *Cypressus*; 3 Jacaranda; 3 Magnolia; 6 Camelia; 97 *Widnet il-Bahar*; 54 *Sardinell*; and 5 *Hibiscus*.

Xrobb I-Għagin Nature Park

Work at Xrobb I-Għagin started early during the year by initially clearing up the area and bringing in truckloads of soil. 2,800 Tamarisk were planted, serving as a natural wind shield for the thousands of other trees and shrubs that followed: 250 *Olea Europea* (Olives); 320 *Ceratonia Siliqua* (Carob); 689 Aleppo Pine (*Žnuber*); 230 Dwarf Palm (*Ġummar*); 455 *Pistaccia Lentiscus* (*Deru*); and 354 Myrtle (*Riħan*).

A total of 5,098 trees were planted and staked accordingly to protect them against the harsh environment. An extensive irrigation system was installed and connected to a newly purchased diesel operated water pump. A room on site was refurbished and new steel apertures installed. The entire area is regularly maintained, watered, hoed and grass cut/mowed. A further number of around 400 trees were planted under the 34U campaign. HSBC Bank plc organised a whole day activity for its staff members and families.

Other Sites

Various other sites were regularly maintained. Works included rubble wall building/restoration, tree trimming, grass cutting/de-weeding, litter picking, manufacturing/installation of new garden furniture, cleaning of reservoirs, installation of drip irrigation systems and planting of trees, shrubs and plants.

Sites included *Žabbar*, Chadwick Lakes, Buskett, Torri San Luċjan – Marsaxlokk, Wied Mejxi – Swieqi, San Ġwann Primary School, Wied Ġhomor, Masġar Olimpiku – Xemxija, Pinetum – Pieta`, Sta Margerita

Lines – Birgu, Fawwara – including renovation of ex-school for CHEER Research Centre, Triq Valperga – Fgura, Mistra Bay, Siġġiewi – Near Dar tal-Providenza, Pembroke, Żebbug By-pass.

Green Week Fair – Naxxar

This year the PARC Department participated in this fair and constructed a stand consisting of rubble walls, *franka* pathways, a timber gazebo and a number of trees and plants.

Drum Collection

In 2006 the Department embarked on a vast programme of collecting and disposing of steel drums, white goods, derelict vehicles and other scrap metal that were either dumped illegally or used as dividing walls in the countryside – mainly concentrating on Bingemma, Dwejra and the Ta' Qali area. Most of the items had to be handled manually because of poor access to sites and to avoid damage to crops in sown fields. The Department was assisted by MEPA Enforcement Officers who traced the fields to their owners. 4,250 steel drums, 109 white goods and other scrap amounting to 70 tons of steel were collected.

HERMAN GALEA

O i/c PARC Department

Department of Corporate Services

Mission Statement

To facilitate, support and assist the Ministry to achieve its corporate goals.

FUNCTIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT

During the year under review, the Department of Corporate Services provided direct operational support to the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment, and its line directorates in order to attain the Ministry's goals and objectives.

Furthermore, the Department has actively monitored and controlled the financial activities of the divisions and departments that fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry. This would ensure compliance with financial rules and regulations leading to the attainment of better governance and value for money. The Department provided active support in the areas of human resources management thus developing and consolidating the human capital of the Ministry.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Staff Complement

The staff complement, which at the end of 2006 stood at 1,234, was kept under constant review. Vacancies were filled according to the requirements of the divisions/departments falling under the Ministry.

The HR section handled the following during the year:

Appointments	
Grade	No
Departmental Grades	17
Professional Grades	4
Technical and Supervisory Grade	1
Industrial Grades (Group 4)	2
General Service Grade	1
Total	25

Promotions	
Grade	No
Officer in Grade 4	1
Senior Clerks	7
Senior Tradesman	1
Legal Officers	2
Total	11

Recruitment – Public Officers	
Grade	No
Junior Veterinary Officer	1
Inspector (Health and Safety)	1
Junior Legal Officers	2
Principal Pharmacist	1
Architect and Civil Engineer	1
Agriculture Officers	3
Total	9

Recruitment of Officers on Contract	
Position	No
Senior Manager (Paying Agency)	1
Risk Analysis Co-ordinator	1
Manager (EU Funds Management Unit)	1
Advisers	2
Policy Officer	1
Expatriate Veterinarians	5
Casual Substitute Executive Officers	3
Resource Manager (Aquaculture)	1
Resource Manager (Capture Fisheries)	1
Policy Co-ordinator	1
Casual Substitute Principals	3
Executive Co-ordinator NCSD	1
FADN Compliance and Assurance Officer	1
Total	22

Termination of Employment	
Reason	No
Resignations	9
Medically boarded out	12
Retirement age	42
Passed away	1
Dismissal	1
Total	65

Termination of Contract	
Position	No
Consultants	2
Advisers	2
Policy Co-ordinator	1
Policy Officers	2
Trainee Butchers	2
TAS students	5
Expatriates	2
Casual Substitute EO	1
Assistant Manager (Accounts function)	1
Casual Substitute Principals	2
Casual Substitute Clerks	2
Total	22

Progressions	
Grade	No
Agriculture Officer	1
Butchers	19
Economics Officers	10
Executive Officer	1
Gardeners	16
Policy Officer	1
Principals	10
Scientific Officers	4
Security Guards	14
Security Officers	3
Senior Clerks	3
Senior Operative (Libraries)	1
Senior Principal	1
Senior Technical Officer	1
Statistician	1
Supervisor	1
Veterinary Support Officer	1
Total	88

CONTINUOUS PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

The following list shows training programmes attended by officials in the Ministry and line departments:

Course	Place	Grade	Department
Advanced Course on Intensive Horticulture and the Environment	Instituto Agronomico Mediterraneo de Zaragoza, Spain	Agricultural Officer	Rural Development (RAPA)
Advanced Course on Spatial Variability for Agriculture Planning and site-specific crop management in Mediterranean conditions	Instituto Agronomico Mediterraneo de Zaragoza, Spain	Scientific Officer	Agricultural Laboratory (RAPA)
EC, Joint Research Centre	Joint Research Centre at Ispra, Italy	Advisor	Fisheries
EC, Joint Research Centre	Joint Research Centre at Ispra, Italy	Senior Technical Officer	Fisheries
Study Programme – Protection of the Environment	Various organisations and Ministries, Germany	Policy Officer	Environment Policy and Initiatives
Irish Leader Support Unit	Tipperary Institute, Ireland	Senior Agricultural Officer	Rural Development (AS & RD)
Agri-Environmental and Development indicators as tools from sustainable Rural Management	Instituto Agronomico Mediterraneo de Zaragoza, Spain	Economics Officer	Rural Development
Decision Support Systems for the Development and Environmental Management of Rural Areas	Instituto Agronomico Mediterraneo de Zaragoza, Spain	Economics Officer	Rural Development
Post Graduate Research on Rural Development	University of Perugia, Italy	Scientific Officer	Rural Development
Post Graduate Diploma Programme in Residential Landscaping Architecture	Oxford Brookes University, UK	Senior Agricultural Officer	Rural Development
Master's Degree course in Public Policy	Sheffield University, UK	Senior Principal	Fisheries
Training Course on Aerobiological Monitoring	University of Naples, Italy	Economics Officer	EU Affairs

In addition, several officials attended local training courses organised by the Staff Development Organisation on Using Emotional Intelligence at Work, Basic Assertiveness, Communication Skills, Secretarial Skills & Personal Assistants Skills, Data Protection and IT courses, among others.

DISCIPLINARY CASES

Thirty-seven disciplinary procedures were undertaken in terms of the Public Service Commission (Disciplinary Procedure) Regulations, 1999 during 2006. These comprised:

- 26 cases were initiated in terms of Regulation 19, out of which three officers exculpated themselves and the remaining cases were administered with a written warning as per Regulation 19 of the PSC Regulations 1999;
- 11 cases were initiated in terms of Regulation 20(2), out of which two officers exculpated themselves, six cases were found not guilty, two were administered with a written warning and one was found guilty and dismissed on the recommendation of the Public Service Commission.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The Finance Section of the Department is responsible for the financial administration and control of the five Cost Centres that fall under the responsibility of the Ministry.

During 2006, this Section authorised over 11,600 commitments and processed over 20,000 payments. It also monitored the rate and level of expenditure of each line item for each Cost Centre and ensured the maximum use of available financial resources.

Besides providing guidance and advice on the observance of Financial Rules and Regulations, the Finance Unit ensured that all financial transactions were processed in as efficient a manner as possible and within short time-frames. This was carried out while at the same time maintaining full adherence to these regulations.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Delegations Abroad

Officers from the Ministry and line departments participated in conferences and seminars held abroad. Most of the meetings were held in Brussels and in Luxembourg and related to Malta's commitments as an EU member.

Officers attended Management Committee meetings held by the European Commission in various sectors related to their work such as cereals, sugar, fruit and vegetables, direct payments, wine, banana, milk and milk products, trade mechanisms and plant health. Other meetings dealt with EAGGF, the Safeguard Clause, Food Chain and Animal Health Identification, beef and poultry meat, eggs, organic farming and fertilisers, the promotion of agricultural products, fishery products, and fisheries and aquaculture. Other meetings attended were the STAR committee meetings.

The Minister for Rural Affairs and the Environment attended the Council of Ministers on Agriculture and Fisheries as well as Council Meetings on the Environment. Other delegations headed by the Minister visited Libya, Italy and Austria.

The Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture and Fisheries attended European Council Meetings and participated in other conferences concerning Agriculture and Fisheries.

Officers, depending on their different areas of expertise, proceeded abroad on study visits as part of the Twinning Project. They also attended meetings, conferences and workshops organised by the IDEARE, FAO, Medcoastland, GFCM, CIHEAM, the Joint Research Centre, WTO, COPEMED and ICCAT.

PROCUREMENT

Transport Services

During 2006, measures were taken to reduce the Transport recurrent expenditure by replacing a number of hired self-drive cars with the purchase of seven new vehicles. The payment of these vehicles is being paid from expenditure savings allocated for hired vehicles at no extra cost. The cost of each car is approximately equivalent to the amount that is usually paid for 25 months hire.

Furthermore, every effort has been made throughout the year to restrain the increase in hired vehicles. Though the Department of Corporate Services received various requests to hire more vehicles due to increasing commitments within the Ministry, pooling of transport facilities between sections/departments/divisions has been encouraged. In most cases, with the co-operation of all involved, pooling resulted to be adequate for all concerned.

In line with the Ministry's policy in favour of the environment, the newly-purchased vehicles run on bio-diesel, which is the fuel causing the least pollution. The same policy is being enforced whenever the need arises to procure any type of vehicle.

GREEN INITIATIVES

The Department of Corporate Services continued to promote the concept of green procurement. It increased the range of consumables that carried a green label and included energy-saving specifications when procuring IT equipment.

It continued to sustain the use of recycled cartridges and toners, whereby 361 recycled units were used during 2006. The Department replaced eleven 11 desk top printers by two multifunction printers, thus reducing the use of toners/cartridges and achieving cost-savings.

JOSEPH CARUANA
Director (Corporate Services)

EU Affairs Directorate

Mission Statement

To act as the Ministry's focal point and guide on EU policy, programmes and financial instruments.

The primary role of the EU Affairs Directorate is to be the Ministry's focal point for all EU related matters, co-ordinating both the development of EU policies in the local context and our attendance at meetings in EU fora, ensuring that a suitable consolidated National Position is propagated thereat. The Directorate also strives to ensure maximum participation in all EU funding programmes, as well as any similar programmes with individual Member States (such as the UK Malta Action Plan) and monitoring the implementation of all projects that are benefiting from such co-funding.

In this respect, the Directorate proactively followed through on its 2006 work plan placing particular emphasis on improving attendance at all EU related meetings, the compilation of Instruction Notes, assisting line departments and entities during EU audit missions, as well as the compilation of Explanatory Memoranda covering items of EU legislation in the pipeline, and handling of all infringement actions as quickly as possible. The work accomplished included:

Meetings at EU Fora

A total of 1,010 EU related meetings (Management Committee, working parties, COREPER, Council of Ministers, etc) were held during 2006. Wherever possible, Malta-based experts attended these meetings, otherwise Brussels-based Technical Attachés assisted as much as possible. All Instruction Notes used were compiled by the technical experts/focal points of each dossier, vetted and approved by this Directorate in time for use at these meetings.

Audit Missions

The Directorate assisted and participated in four EU Malta missions during 2006, two in the Veterinary Affairs and Fisheries Division, by the Food and Veterinary Office of DG SANCO, and two in the Rural Affairs and Paying Agency Division, covering such areas as food and feed safety, animal welfare, plant health as well as financial assistance given to rural development.

EU Legislation in the Pipeline

This relates to proposals for amendments to existing or new EU Directives, Regulations and/or Decisions, published by the Commission during 2006, and which fall within the remit of this Ministry (environment, agriculture, fisheries and veterinary affairs).

The proactive role on the part of the Policy Officers within the Directorate resulted in a significant improvement in the timely compilation and processing of detailed explanatory memoranda. These were then forwarded to central government for discussion and approval by the Inter-ministerial Committee (EU Affairs), Cabinet and the Parliamentary Standing Committee responsible for Foreign and EU Affairs. This ensured that our system for adopting new legislation mirrored the developments of EU proposed legislation as it progressed through the EU Parliamentary system, leading to its formal adoption as new legislation which would then have to be adopted as part of Malta's legislation.

Infringements

A number of environmental infringement actions have been initiated by the Commission against Malta all of which may lead to legal action being taken by the European Court of Justice. These infringement actions cover various sectors within the environment remit.

The EU Funds Unit

The new Funds Manager took up duties on 19 January 2006 and carried out the difficult task of settling in to her new duties as quickly as possible. One of her first tasks was to update the comprehensive database of all projects benefiting from EU co-funding. Concurrently with this, she also initiated a programme of continuous monitoring of the major projects and the verification and processing of all payments, as well as initiating a work programme of regular meetings with project leaders to ensure smooth implementation and quick identification of problems with the aim of resolving before undue delay is caused.

The unit monitors and provides active assistance and guidance to all the project leaders handling more than 50 projects falling under a comprehensive range of different sectors, including the Agriculture and Fisheries grant schemes and Community Initiatives (INTERREG, EQUAL, etc) as well as those projects being co-financed under the Structural and Cohesion funds.

Significant progress has been registered in most of these projects, with priority status assigned to those major projects funded under Structural Funds having 2004 as their N year, and to those projects being funded under the 2003 Pre-Accession Funding Programme, to ensure full utilisation of these funds.

The Directorate also assisted in the compilation of the core documents (National Strategic Reference Framework document and the Operational Programme) that identify national priorities falling within the Ministry's remit as well as the corresponding measures and actions that will be co-funded during next funding period starting in 2007.

The Directorate is also assisting in the setting up of the institutions required by the Ministry to assume the role of Managing Authority in respect of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Fisheries Fund during the 2007-2013 funding period.

Work Plan for 2007

The Directorate's work plan for 2007 will continue to address the strategic issues identified by the Ministry, as well as its core business tasks, to ensure greater effectiveness, and thus become more proactive. Priority tasks include:

- Timely circulation of working documents;
- Assisting in the compilation and vetting of instruction notes and explanatory memoranda;
- Ensuring maximum utilisation of funds (from the European Union, and other sources); and
- Ongoing staff development through appropriate training courses, seminars, etc and including attendance at working party meetings in Brussels.

The Director will continue to emphasise the importance of having a functioning Legal Unit to handle all infringements and other legal correspondence originating from European Union institutions. This proposed unit will also handle all work related to international conventions, especially those already ratified by the European Union.

JOSEPH DE GIORGIO
Director (EU Affairs)

Policy Development Directorate

OVERALL MISSION

The Directorate continued with its efforts to realise the goals of its institutional mission encompassing policy designs and support to the Permanent Secretary and his office staff.

Hence the policy development dimension has remained an overriding focus for the Directorate. This is predicated on a range of functions which, at a very high level of abstraction, for 2006 may be articulated as follows:

- to give support and policy advice to the Permanent Secretary;
- to elaborate policy issues and prepare document drafts;
- to advise and participate in the institutional development of the set-ups and departments in the Ministry as deriving from the regulatory regime in the EC *acquis*;
- to act as a focal point on the external relations of the Ministry as directed from time to time by the Permanent Secretary; and
- to represent the Permanent Secretary on inter-ministerial committees and other bodies.

In 2006 the Department continued with its efforts for the development of policy dissemination instruments featuring in *Fact Sheets* preparation. Alongside this exercise, work continued on an online research library classification system.

More than in earlier years, during the year under review, the administration and management of the Department took place in a more focused deference to the guidelines and performance targets as communicated from the office of the Principal Permanent Secretary (further elaborated in OPM Circular No 7/2006): in a nutshell these targets and performance guidelines highlight the corporate responsibility approach, efficiency goals, development of environmental concerns awareness, Better Regulation, a more proactive involvement in the EU decision-making process and international affairs, etc.

SUPPORT AND ADVICE TO THE OFFICE OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARY

Throughout the year, the Department continued with its timely support and policy formulation to the Permanent Secretary and his staff. As in previous years this covered a whole range of areas and policy themes.

The Department also provided the Ministry focal point role with the Management Efficiency Unit at the Office of the Prime Minister. Besides, it continued to extend its assistance by way of information, policy briefing and evaluation of notions and/or proposals to external consultants working on the Twinning Light project on CAP Reform. Alongside such ongoing office tasks, there has been regular attendance and participation in the periodic ministerial meetings.

There has also been regular participation on the Sugar Temporary State Aid Committee within the Ministry for Competitiveness and Communications, the National Commission for Sustainable Development, the Board of Co-operatives, etc.

Moreover, as in previous years, during 2006 the Department for Policy Development sustained its consultative function and continued to work with some other departments within the Ministry on a wide range of issues and policy areas.

INTERFACE WITH THE EU AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

EU affairs are necessarily central issues to Malta's policy development and hence a major thrust for the Department. This is all the more so for a Ministry that is accountable for the harmonisation and approximation of no less than 75 per cent of the EU *acquis*.

In this regard, the Department continued with its efforts to monitor EU matters that have an impact on the policy development of the Ministry from a number of angles. It spared no efforts to keep itself *au courant* with the events taking place in the European Union particularly those relating to agriculture (Chapter 7 in the EC *acquis*), fisheries (Chapter 6), regional policy and structural funds (Chapter 21), and external relations (Chapter 26). In the first place, it has continued to update itself in the Official Journal of the European Communities which is an essential means for the following up of developments taking place in these policy areas. There is also the EUobserver which merits continuous attention. In particular, with respect to the policy area of agriculture and rural development, the Department follows up most assiduously the EC Commission DG – Agriculture and Rural Development website: this website is a valuable spring board for a Policy Development Department with its diverse interfaces with other departments within the Ministry.

During the year under review, the Department continued to strengthen its work modalities with the EU Affairs Department. In this process it established its role as a reference and focal point for the preparation and drafting of Explanatory Memoranda on Commission and Council proposals in a number of subject matters particularly those that fall directly under Chapter 26 of the EC *acquis*. A weekly average of two to three Memos were drafted, completed and eventually forwarded to the EU Affairs Department. In addition, an online track reference system for such memos, first devised and initiated in June 2004 underwent certain refinements and thus made more user-friendly. It is felt that such an instrument is valuable for a number of goals.

The proper interface between the policy dimension and the evolution of EU Affairs remained a focus in the work relations between the two departments. In 2006, there emerged full conclusive discussion results between the two Departments (Policy Development and EU Affairs) that an effective and efficient approach for beneficial participation in the EU by the Ministry should encompass:

- establishing the best mode, modalities and arrangements for EU Policy Development and Co-ordination [a joint task for Policy and EU Affairs Departments];
- sensibilising officials and concerned entities on the important role and functions of the Management Committees, Working Groups, and the Special Committee on Agriculture (SCA) (and Council of Ministers);
- identifying the product-specific and policy area official/s: urging such official/s for self-induction and proper preparations as imperatives for effective and beneficial participation in activities in Brussels;
- establishing regular reporting under the proper format as direct input to the EU Affairs Directorate and subsequently to Policy Development; and
- evaluating such reports: these will in fact be a valuable basis for policy designs on the articulation of our national interest in the relative fora.

PAYING AGENCY (PA), INTEGRATED ADMINISTRATION AND CONTROL SYSTEM (IACS), AND CAP REFORM

During the year under review, contacts and discussions on various issues took place between the Department, the Paying Agency and the IACS Department.

In particular, with the IACS Department there were a number of meetings relating to the application of the CAP reform with its impacts on Maltese Agriculture as deriving from Council Regulation 1782/2003 and its consolidated Version. In this regard, meetings were also held with expatriate experts working on the IACS Twinning Light on the CAP Reform implementation.

Moreover, there was also a periodic exchange of views on the agenda, reports, and minutes of the Management Committees Meetings on Direct Payments (attended by IACS Officials) and of the Management Committee Meetings on Trade Mechanisms (attended by the Trade Mechanisms Section at the Paying Agency) in Brussels.

PROMOTION OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS UNIT

Till September 2006, the Director for Policy Development acted as the Deputy Chairman of the Maltese Competent Authority for the promotion of Agricultural products by virtue of the EC Council Regulation 1071/2005. Various meetings were held.

The main items have been:

- the evaluation of the proposal following the launching of an earlier call for proposals (November 2005) from interested entities;
- discussion of the Agenda Reports and Minutes on participation in meetings in the relating Management Committee in Brussels; and
- the programming of a TAIEX Seminar on the promotion of agricultural products held in the Preluna Hotel on 26 October 2006.

TEMPORARY STATE AID UNIT

The Development for Policy Development is also responsible for the administration and management of the Temporary State Aid Unit. In 2006, there were two Economic Officers working out the on-going, day by day implementation of the Temporary State Aid Scheme in terms of the provisions of the Malta-EU Treaty of Accession and the Cabinet approved implementing rules.

Very briefly, the Temporary State Aid Unit launches applications from operators on a six-month basis on the Ministry website. The application period normally involves the Unit in a lot of customer service. On the closing date of the call for applications there commences the management and administration process broadly encompassing the quotas, allocation, registration and recording as well as the monitoring of Bank Guarantees. There were around 50 operators during 2006.

There is the goal of making the execution of the scheme, with its implementing rules, more and more business and operator friendly. To that intent, there is the continuous monitoring and evaluation of received correspondence from the operators. On this basis there are some times meetings or contacts on phone with stakeholders. Such endeavours often call for follow up actions with other government departments primarily Customs. At a final stage, justified action will be reflected in the following publication of the Guidelines.

The Department oversees that the Temporary State Aid Unit under takes its executive function in full deference and compliance with the Data Protection principles as laid down in the Data Protection Act 2001.

For 2006 the Department was once more entrusted by the Permanent Secretary for the Annual State Aid Reporting for the agriculture and fisheries sections to the State Aid Monitoring Board (SAMB). In preparation for the proper compilation and completion of the relevant templates, the Department held discussions with departments within the Ministry responsible for the processing and implementation of measures under national State Aid.

CONFERENCES, SEMINARS & TRAINING PROGRAMMES

During the year under review, the Director and staff at the Department have attended and/or participated in a number of conferences and seminars for which the Department had received formal invitations. Staff has also attended a number of SDO training programmes especially those relating to Data Protection.

Two important seminars/conferences attended by the Director have been:

- Reconsidering the Co-operative - Lessons for Maltese Cooperatives organised by the APS Bank, 17 February, 2006;
- Launch of Corporate Strategy - (*Nagħmlu minn Pajjiżna l-aktar ekonomija dinamika u kompetittiva fid-dinja*) organised by the Ministry for Competitiveness and Communications, 14 December 2006.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)

The Department continued to execute its role as the Ministry desk on FAO affairs. During the year under review, very broadly this entailed following up its activity calendar and complying with FAO's periodic requests for the compilation of a number of quarterly and annual questionnaires on diverse areas.

In 2006 there has also been the finalisation of the major agenda item *the Follow-up to the World Food Summit: Report on the Progress in the Implementation of the Plan of Action*.

This task entailed a number of research activities whereby the Report, covering a whole range of diverse issues articulated in the World Food Summit Questionnaire, could be completed.

Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Programme (Euro Med)

The evolution of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Programme has been given its due attention. This is particularly so in so far as agricultural trade liberalisation is now a component of this project. The development of the Euro Med will in fact have a certain impact on Maltese agriculture.

In this regard, the Department continued to follow up the developments taking place incidental to the updating of the Agreements between the EU and a number of Mediterranean countries. This task has included as well the drafting of a number of Memoranda subsequently forwarded to the EU Affairs Directorate.

Foreign Missions and Expert Visits

The Department also fulfilled its function as the focal point for information enquiries from outside entities. It dealt with a considerable number of requests for information on various matters by foreign missions and other bodies, located in Malta and abroad.

There were also a number of meetings with experts working on the Twinning Light Project on the implementation of the CAP Reform as well as with officials of foreign missions accredited to Malta.

Besides, there took place regular participation by the Director and other officials in a number of meetings at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

DR NICHOLAS BONANNO
Director (Policy Development)

Programme Implementation Directorate

The Programme Implementation Directorate was established in 2004 following the appointment of the first Director, Programme Implementation with the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the environment. The Directorate was entrusted with the implementation of various projects during 2006.

PROJECTS BROUGHT FORWARD FROM 2005

Setting up of a Collection and Incineration Unit at the Civil Abattoir under the Vth Italian Protocol

Following the retirement of the Director General, Food and Veterinary Regulation Division, DPI was appointed as Project Leader on this project. Following the fulfilment of the works as defined under the Italian Protocol by the Italian contractors, a partial dry commissioning exercise of the plant was carried out. Consequently, Government has decided to upgrade the facility and DPI contributed, together with WasteServ Malta Limited, towards defining the specifications for the new operational requirements. WasteServ Malta Limited has been entrusted with the operational management of the facility. Discussions were carried out with the Italian contractors as well as independent consultants appointed by WasteServ to finalise this project. The Incineration unit should be operational in 2007. Concurrently, DPI concentrated on providing the required service connections to the plant in preparation of the commencement of operations as well as adequate facilities within the Civil Abattoir to be officially allocated and utilised by WasteServ within the physical compounds of the incinerator.

Refurbishment Works at the Luqa Quarantine

Due to the direct intervention of the Directorate, funds were allocated for refurbishment works to start at the Quarantine Section within the Food and Veterinary Regulation Division situated in Luqa. The refurbishment programme has been extended and the projected works will be finalised in 2007.

Hard-standing Facility in Marsaxlokk

DPI contributed in the initial stages of this EU-funded project which is due to be finalised and commissioned in 2007.

PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN DURING 2006

Financial and Administrative Duties at the Civil Abattoir

Since March 2005, DPI was entrusted with the financial and administrative responsibility of the Division. Following the appointment of a new Director General in 2006, DPI has adopted a more operational managerial role within the Civil Abattoir. A full programme of structural alterations as well as changes in operational procedures within the Civil Abattoir has been defined and should be completed within the third quarter of 2007. A delegation from the Civil Abattoir headed by Director, Programme Implementation, visited a number of slaughterhouses in Denmark in order to obtain the relevant exposure vis-à-vis current trends both in the equipment utilised and the procedural aspects adopted.

Some of the projected works taken in hand in 2006 and due to be finalised during 2007 include:

- refurbishing of the Tripery area;
- the implementation of a meat traceability system;
- the upgrading of the despatch docking system;
- upgrading works within the bovine/swine lairages and stunning facilities;
- purchase and commissioning of equipment for the bovine/swine slaughter lines;
- operation of the deboning facility;
- the provision of training by both local as well as foreign experts.

Farm Accountancy Data Network

In February 2005, DPI was entrusted with the responsibility of attending meetings of the EU FADN Committee. During 2006, DPI with the assistance of the National Statistics Office, submitted the required statistical data for 2004 as well as 2005 which deadline was 31 December 2006. While data for 2004 was compiled from administrative sources (following an agreement reached with DG AGRI), a full survey and statistical analysis was carried out in respect of 2005. The Department attended all FADN meetings in Brussels and Italy.

PAUL FENECH GONZI

Director (Programme Implementation)

Environment Policy and Initiatives Directorate

The year 2006 was the first full year of operation of the Environment Policy and Initiatives Directorate, it being set up in September 2005.

The Directorate immediately embarked on an extensive programme of works, emanating from its wide portfolio, whilst consolidating its resource base accordingly.

ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION

The Directorate is responsible for drafting environmental regulation or reviewing draft environmental regulations or amendments to existing regulations prior to necessary approval by the Permanent Secretary. Such regulations result from the transposition of the respective directives or as a result of national obligations to implement environmental policy. This work included regulations relating to Eco Contribution, WEEE, packaging, VOCs and similar other regulations.

EPID is coordinating the LN leading to the refund mechanism on eco-contribution paid. This Directorate works closely with MFIN and MEPA in the formulation of the refund mechanism.

During 2006, the EPID followed-up and provided support to queries arising from the adoption of Legal Notice 344 of 2005 (more commonly known as the Littering Regulation). The EPID analysed and issued statistical data in order to improve on the implementation of this Legal Notice. The EPID has also conducted an exercise for better administration and enforcement of the system. EPID facilitated the redeployment of a number of IPSL employees with MEPA to help enforce the regulations.

EPID also seeks interpretation on legal matters concerning the environment. This work includes the drafting and interpretation of laws, regulations and contracts related to the environment. EPID conducted a verification exercise to ensure that Environmental EU Directives have been transposed to form part of the Maltese legislation in their entirety. This exercise, which is being carried out with the co-operation of the Translation and Law drafting unit (MJHA), shall be continued during 2007.

Drafting of judicial acts relating to the environment has also been carried out. For this work, assistance from the Attorney General's office was sought.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

A working Group on the Treatment of Clinical Waste was jointly appointed by the Ministries for Rural Affairs and the Environment and that for Health Care for the Elderly and Community Care. The Working Group was entrusted with the responsibility to identify those options which are available for the management of clinical waste, as well as to determine the feasibility of utilising the civil abattoir's thermal facility for its treatment. The Ministry's representatives were from EPID.

The EPID held discussions with a number of consulting agencies in the process leading to the finalisation of the Agricultural Waste Management Plan. This plan shall be issued for public consultation shortly.

The EPID is also co-ordinating the process leading to the revision of the Solid Waste Management Strategy for the Maltese Islands. This plan shall also be issued for public consultation shortly.

In March 2006, a task force, composed of representatives of MEPA and WasteServ and coordinated by EPID, was set up to formulate the Waste Management Implementation Plans. A series of consultation meetings were conducted with various stakeholders including MMA, MIA, NSO amongst others. Two TAIEX missions were also secured to compile this plan.

EPID monitors, through continued liaison, the work carried out by WasteServ and MEPA on issues related to waste management.

ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

A pilot grid-connected PV system of 1300Wp was procured for the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment in March 2006 as part of the Green Leaders Initiative that EPID fosters. Following successful results, a period contract for the supply and installation of grid-connected PV systems for the Government of Malta was issued and awarded. Eleven Ministries procured twelve PV systems and a total capacity of 42,100Wp were installed during 2006.

Through the Green Leaders Initiative, the EPID commissioned also a period contract for the supply of waste separation banks for government offices to extend the responsibilities that Government has in relation to the environment. Through this contract, various Ministries introduced waste separation in their offices.

A 24-month Framework agreement for Energy Auditing Consultancy Services for government offices was formulated with three economic operators. Government Ministries shall be encouraged to utilise this agreement to perform energy audits for various buildings in order to assess and improve the efficiency of the use of energy within public buildings.

A Green Office Scheme for the Government was also developed. The scheme will enable different government entities to self-assess their environmental management performance.

EPID co-ordinated the formulation of a National Action Plan for the achievement of Green Public Procurement in Malta. This draft has been issued for public consultation during a conference organised by this Directorate entitled *Greening the Economy*. This event was held in October 2006. This National Action Plan (NAP) has been drawn up in order to promote Green Public procurement in Malta also in the light of Malta's environmental obligations and aspirations for sustainable development. The NAP aims at encouraging eco-innovation and enjoys potential win-win solutions from greening public procurement

TRAINING

In August 2006, the EPID initiated an EU funded Twinning Project entitled *Assistance to explore long-term projects to manage specific waste streams in a more sustainable manner*. This project was refused by WasteServ and taken up by EPID due to its relevance at the current moment.

The project is run between the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment and Umweltbundesamt GmbH – the Austrian Federal Environment Agency. The Resident Twinning Advisor (RTA), together with the Maltese Project Leader kicked off this eighteen month twinning project in September 2006.

The project, which will span over 2007 and 2008, is divided into three components, that is, Waste-to-Energy, Construction and Demolition Waste and the Public Awareness Campaign. The Waste-to-Energy component brought over various experts in the field to help in the training of Maltese personnel. Both MEPA and WasteServ have benefited greatly during the licensing processes of the Sant'Antnin and the abattoir facilities.

CONSULTANCY SERVICES

The EPID has commissioned a series of studies to maintain track on various environmental issues. One particular example is an on-going study on the feasibility of electrical transport systems for Malta. This study focuses on the infrastructure needed to implement electrical transportation in Malta.

Another on-going study relates to surveys associated with the implementation of eco contribution. These surveys focused on consumers and on businesses, both as consumers and producers.

Another study relates to assessing the current state of play as far as waste management compliance obligations are being met. This study was initiated with the intention to examine progress on the practical implementation of specific waste streams and how gaps, if relevant, may be addressed.

RELOCATION OF FARMS

A development planning application for the construction of a communal manure clamp with a capacity to take the solid waste generated within the 17 cattle farms on mainland Malta, currently situated within built-up areas, was submitted to MEPA.

The proposed location is Siggiewi. Discussions were held with MEPA to assess the suitability of the site.

An outline development application to relocate cattle farms on mainland Malta to Siggiewi was submitted to MEPA. Discussions were held with the respective cattle producers to identify their needs. Discussions with MEPA were also held.

A request to the EU Commission to amend the Maltese COGAP to allow for the possible management of cattle manure in communal waste management facilities was lodged.

Discussions were conducted with the Rural Development Department for possible utilisation of EU funding for the development of a manure clamp and the relocation of farms.

MANAGEMENT OF NATURE RESERVES

In line with Government's policy, the EPID continued with its financial and administrative support to NGOs for the management of sites of environmental relevance. Site visits to the Ghadira and Simar nature reserves were conducted early in 2006. Discussion for the enhancement of management objectives were conducted, and followed-up with the management.

Management board meetings for the Ghajn Tuffieħa and Ramla (Gozo) Special Area of Conservation (SAC) were held to identify issues and mitigate, as much as possible, any negative impacts on the environment, resulting from anthropogenic activities, in these very sensitive sites.

The Directorate, in collaboration with NGOs, has also started work on other similar projects which are considered to reap both social and environmental benefits. Such a project is being proposed for the south of Malta. This particular site shall provide for, besides the conservation and rehabilitation of flora and fauna, educational and recreational activities for the community.

Besides the working relationship emanating from the foregoing initiatives, the Environment Policy and Initiatives Directorate strives to keep environmental NGO's informed on matters of interest related to their respective area. Consequently, this Directorate acts as a point of reference on matters which require this Ministry's intervention and/or support with other government Ministries, departments and entities.

Moreover, the EPID acts also as the Government's focal point on the ongoing monitoring process related to EU funding of projects, whose beneficiaries are environmental NGOs.

During 2006, the EPID was also entrusted with administrative responsibilities of the Parks, Afforestazzjoni u Restawr tal-Kampanja Unit (PARK). Operational matters, requiring this Ministry's attention are channelled through the EPID, and are dealt with in collaboration with other line departments of the Ministry.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Since its inception in 2002, the National Commission for Sustainable Development has been legally entrusted with formulating and drafting a Strategy for Sustainable Development for the Maltese Islands.

Following a rather lengthy period of consultation, which period was rounded up during a national conference in April 2006 organised by EPID, a final draft of the Strategy was presented and adopted by the Commission on 13 November 2006. The whole process was co-ordinated by EPID.

EU FUNDING

During the period under review, this Directorate has also been responsible for the EU LIFE funding programme.

Under the LIFE phase III (extension), which came to an end in December 2006, Malta managed to secure funding under the Nature and Biodiversity strand, for a project entitled *SPA Site and Sea Actions Saving the Puffinus Yelkouan in Malta*. The project, undertaken by one of Malta's leading NGOs, aims primarily at reversing the decline of the *Garnija Maltija* at a specific nesting site (declared also as a Natura 2000 site) on the Maltese islands.

To provide continuation to the LIFE programme after its end, the European Commission has submitted a proposal to the Council and the European Parliament entitled, *Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the Financial Instrument for the Environment (LIFE+)*. Negotiations between the Commission, Member States, the Council and the European Parliament have been ongoing since the summer of 2004. During 2006, following an agreement reached in the Environment Council of December 2005, a Common Position was reached, which was however rejected by the European Parliament. Conciliation procedures have been initiated by the new German Presidency. Throughout the whole negotiating process, the EPID has been supporting the technical attaché and COREPER in Brussels, in formulating Malta's position.

The EPID acts as the focal point on the EU Funding programme of 2004 – 2006 as well as on the new funding programme for 2007 – 2013. EPID acts as the environmental focal point between the beneficiary/proponent and the managing authority, in this case the European Commission. The EPID is also the directorate that monitors the drafting and consultation of the relevant programmes relating to environmental issues.

PR AND COMMUNICATIONS

EPID issues and supports the Ministry on all public relations and communication campaigns related to the environment. The EPID also supports fully the public activities that the Ministry organises for Environment Week.

Malta faces major environmental and development challenges including amongst others: land degradation, climate change, waste management, energy conservation, water scarcity and pollution. Communication, dialogue and collaboration have been identified as important management tools to address environmental issues.

The Environment Policy and Initiatives Directorate shall be launching their website in the second quarter of 2007, in order to make accessible environmental information. It is planned that a section with queries and

suggestion will be designed to act as a platform for information sharing and networking to improve policy-making, planning and management of natural resources to foster further sustainable development.

The website shall be designed to include all relevant publications and consultations in connection with the Maltese environmental scenario. Information on Environmental Initiatives undertaken by the EPID and environmental news shall be updated on regular basis. The website will also include environmental tips for households to improve their home energy consumption. The website shall also facilitate the application for subsidy on specific domestic environmental schemes including: solar water heater, energy efficient white goods, photovoltaic panels, etc. The EPID shall also strive to utilise the website to disseminate environmental information through a “test your environmental knowledge” approach.

DR ING CHRISTOPHER CIANTAR

Director (Environment Policy & Initiatives)

Information Management Unit

The Information Management Officer focused on the Ministry's ICT strategy aiming towards better service delivery and the conversion of data and information into a valuable resource and management tool. He was responsible for the provision of ICT services and the related infrastructure to assist the Ministry to function effectively and efficiently. The IMO consolidated the ICT planning within the Ministry and managed the overall ICT capital and operational budgets. The Ministry's IT allocation for 2006 was of Lm 133,000. While core services were funded centrally, the IMO administered and managed the contract with MITTS Ltd for the rest of the maintenance and support facilities and software applications. A considerable amount of cost saving in the ICT field was attained during the financial year 2006. As expected, the IMO worked closely under the direction of the Permanent Secretary and with the Director – Corporate Services. In the course of his activities, most of the time he liaised with the Ministry for Investments, Industry and Information Technology (MIIT), CITAC (Core IT Advisory Committee) and MITTS Ltd. The IMO has been actively exploring ways and means to obtain the necessary resources and expertise for the building of a proper Information Management Unit for MRAE.

BUSINESS AND BUDGETING PLAN

In the second quarter of 2006, work in connection with the drawing of an ICT Business Plan for 2007 was initiated. Several meetings and interviews with the relevant members of the staff were undertaken. The services of MITTS Ltd were utilised as consultants during the whole process. The assistance of the Director - Corporate Services MRAE proved invaluable all along. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform was bound to have a considerable impact on the whole ICT business of the Ministry. It was concluded that the Ministry should opt for "one information system with a holistic approach across the entire Ministry, sharing the same core functionality". This will provide better monitoring and control, improved segmentation of duties, global and consolidated reporting, and improved resource utilisation. Furthermore, this approach minimised on cost as it eliminated duplication or redundancy.

Following feedback gathered from the Directors and Heads of Sections, the ICT Capital and Operational Budgeting Plan for 2007 was drawn up and presented to CITAC.

BOARDS AND MEETINGS

The IMO represented the Ministry on the National Information Society Advisory Committee and sat regularly on the monthly CIO Council meetings. During 2006, the IMO was appointed to form part of the Core Services Contract Working Group that defined the structure and composition of MITTS Core Service Contract to cover maintenance and support facilities for all Ministries that was signed between MITTS Ltd and MIIT. During the course of the year, the IMO chaired or was a member in various adjudication boards relating to the acquisition/disposal of hardware and software by the Ministry and its departments. He was also a member on the Information Security Forum of the Ministry and of the Paying Agency Technical Board. He was continuously involved in the euro changeover preparations with particular relevance to the ICT element for the Ministry and its departments, and entities, namely the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA) and WasteServ (Malta) Ltd.

INFORMATION SECURITY

The IMO is also the Information Security Officer of the Ministry and as such had to oversee the adoption and compliance of corporate security policies, directives and standards. MITTS Ltd carried out an Information Security Organisation (Policy and Directive) Audit in mid 2006. The Ministry Information Security Forum met on a regular basis and reviewed various ICT security related issues.

NEW DOCUMENT REGISTRY

Early in 2006, the upgrading of the various installations of the Document Registry (DocReg) system throughout the Ministry was finalised. Users were organised in groups and attended several training sessions for the new DocReg system at MITTS.

MICROSOFT OUTLOOK

A rather heavy and time-consuming task was taken up and practically completed during 2006. This was the migration of Teamware accounts, including several generic ones, of all MRAE users (almost 400 accounts) to Microsoft Exchange (Outlook). The task was not easy and entailed a lot of preparation and meticulous planning. However, it was an overall success with the minimum of hitches and impact.

WEBSITES

In line with government policy and as a direct consequence of the various changes to the organisation structure of the Ministry, the IMO embarked on the task to renovate and revamp the various websites for the Ministry and its departments. Work has actively started on various fronts in this regard.

DATA CONSOLIDATION

Furthermore, in line with Government's policy to consolidate all services that should result in considerable savings in cost of ownership, all MRAE's office automation servers are now at MITTS Ltd consolidated environment. The IMO is now working to transfer to MITTS also the remaining data servers where this is deemed feasible. Work is in an advanced stage to tackle the NLB server currently at the Civil Abattoir. The IMO is also assessing what action should be taken in connection with the servers at PARK Unit and at the Pitkali Markets, both at Ta' Qali.

E-GOVERNMENT

In collaboration with the Ministry for Investments, Industry and Information Technology, after a detailed analysis of the Ministry's processes, four new projects were identified for e-government implementation. Actually, MEPA has already a number of e-government services deployed (map server, illegal development, building applications). A feasibility study carried out by PricewaterhouseCoopers on the four new proposals identified that only two of these proved to be cost effective, namely the Payment of Fishermen Licences and the Controlled Access to the National Livestock Database. Other options of e-government projects are being explored, particularly in the environment and the waste sectors.

TELECOMS

Investments were made in the upgrading and modernisation of PABX hardware in eight sections of the Ministry: Ministry HQ - Barriera Wharf, DCS – Valletta, Fisheries – San Lucjan, Veterinary Services – Civil Abattoir, PARK Unit – Ta' Qali, Pitkali – Ta' Qali, Rural Affairs – Government Farm, and Plant Health – Lija. Most of these installations made possible the setup of telephone systems on structured (network) cable and wall ports. This enabled the Ministry to consolidate a "call logging" service on one central computer. Much detailed planning was accorded to these installations and we are now in the final

stages of adopting VOIP among these eight stations. Actually we are awaiting the very last chores from MITTS Ltd and Maltacom. All this should result in huge savings amounting to several thousands liri in telephony bills to the Ministry. One must keep in mind that calls among these sections will now cost us nothing while the current Ministry's annual fixed telephony bills reach the Lm80,000 mark.

BIOMETRIC READERS AND CCTV

In the last quarter of 2006, a tender has been issued for the supply and installation of biometric readers and the necessary software for time and attendance purposes throughout MRAE. It is expected that these will be in place by mid 2007. A number of CCTV cameras functioning on internet protocol (IP) have also been installed for security purposes at strategic areas across the Ministry. The setup of a central CCTV control room is currently being considered. Solar photo-voltaic cells were installed on the Ministry's roof at Barriera Wharf. It is expected that very shortly we would be able to broadcast in real-time via one of our websites the amount of energy these cells will be producing.

GEORGE FALZON

Information Management Officer

Ministry for Urban Development and Roads

Urban Development and Roads

The portfolio of the Ministry for Urban Development and Roads includes the co-ordination of urban development projects (mainly consisting in capital projects) and the Malta Transport Authority (ADT).

THE OFFICE OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARY

The Office of the Permanent Secretary acts as a policy advisor to the Minister for Urban Development and Roads, and ensures implementation of the Ministry's policy. The Office provides leadership and general co-ordination to all departments within the Ministry for Urban Development and Roads, and participates in the collective management of the Public Service as a whole. The Office liaises on EU matters with the EU Directorate and on transport matters with the Malta Transport Authority, and is also responsible for major projects' development and co-ordination.

In 2006, the Office had an EU project approved, for which it had applied during the previous year. The project is entitled 'CY.RO.N.MED' (Cycle Route Network in the Mediterranean) and is co-financed by the European Union Community Initiative Interreg IIIB Archimed Programme, under the Structural Funds programme for Malta 2004 – 2006. Works on the project started in June 2006 and the project will end in December 2007. The project deals with the study of a Cycle Route Network in the South-Eastern Mediterranean countries and its final product is the elaboration and publication of a technical manual for the construction of a cycling network and a study on strategies for the enhancement of bicycle tourism in the Archimed area. The expected results of the project include the promotion of urban mobility and cycle tourism inside the Archimed area as well as fostering international co-operation, dialogue and experience-exchange among the participating authorities to harmonise standards in the cycling infrastructures.

Throughout 2006, the Green Leader Initiative continued to focus on collecting paper for recycling, recycling of batteries, recycling of printer toners and cartridges, and reusing envelopes. A photovoltaic panel was installed on the main ministerial building, meaning that a percentage of the electrical energy utilised in this building would henceforth be yielded from solar energy. A number of single waste separation bins for paper were placed in each office for the ease of collecting waste paper. Two four-element waste separation banks were also placed in main public areas. In order to celebrate World Environment Day in June, the MUDR and ADT employees collected money to plant trees in connection with the 34U initiative. The amount collected was doubled from the respective funds of the MUDR and ADT. Forty trees were subsequently planted in December at Kennedy Grove, Salini. A biannual newsletter, mainly containing information on energy saving tips and environmental news, was distributed to all employees.

Information Management

The Information Management Unit (IMU) within the Ministry for Urban Development and Roads is entrusted with the primary tasks of managing the ICT infrastructure, and procurement and funds management. The Unit also has a delegated role in order to represent the Ministry on such issues as Information Security, Information Asset Management, and Data Centre Management by attending working groups/boards/councils/committees (including the National Information Society Advisory Council).

An eEurope Awards for eGovernment - 2005 finalist, eVERA (Malta's Online Vehicle Licence Renewal system), was officially launched jointly by the Ministers for MIIT and MUDR on 25 April 2006 from the www.licenzji-vetturi.gov.mt website. eVERA is the largest Government e-Service in Malta due to its level of integration, complexity and the number of stakeholders involved. This achievement was also acknowledged by the EU as a best practice project.

During 2006, a lot of preparatory work for the 2007/8 Euro Dual Display and Changeover changes was carried out and this involved almost all the information systems, eServices and websites. Servers and e-mail and internet services within the MUDR and ADT were consolidated to comply with the ICT 2005 reform. Microsoft and Autodesk software licences were upgraded to increase compatibility and productivity. MUDR VoIP project Phase I was completed to maximise the use of the current MAGNET infrastructure and reduce internal long-term telecommunication costs between major sites. Additional enhancements were also necessary in core systems to interface or host all future systems and eServices envisaged to be launched in 2007 like, for example, the Controlled Vehicular Access (CVA) system in Valletta.

Support Services and Financial Management

The objective of the Support Services and Financial Management Directorate (SSFMD) is to provide advisory, support and implementation services right across the whole Ministry, at the same time ensuring economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the deliverables of the strategic objectives of the Ministry.

During 2006, the SSFMD was the focus of, for example, budget setting and financial control; the setting up of an internal contracting and procurement system; a reform of its internal resources structure, as well as designing and implementing systems to sustain good management of both recurrent and capital expenditure, thus resulting not only in better control, but also savings of expenditure.

In its role of maintaining good management systems and procedures, the SSFMD co-ordinated with the relevant centralised government services such as the Department of Treasury, the Contracts Division and the Ministry of Finance, including serving as catalyst and conduit for ADT activities involving the Ministry's financial resources. Moreover, through staff continuous development programmes in managing EU funds, the Directorate ensured that the procedures under the payment and ensuing claims of EU funds were made in a professional and expeditious manner.

In 2006, the SSFMD also provided training to all Ministry staff in Registry services, with particular emphasis on mastering the DOCREG system; implemented family-friendly and employee-social initiatives, and conducted research and analysis of an IT-based HR attendance system to enable better management of time resources.

Other responsibilities of the SSFMD include:

- compiling information from existing internal databases and drafting replies to parliamentary questions;
- co-ordination and provision of information in terms of current standing rules and regulations to Central Government agencies, including OPM and the Ministry;
- managing the system of travel on official business abroad.

The Directorate considers the self-development of its officers as its top priority and hence, on a regular basis, nominates relevant officers for focused training in various topics in areas such as Information and Communication Technologies, Health and Safety, Discipline, the Public Accounting Accruals system, Customer Care and the EU.

EU Affairs, Policy Development and Programme Implementation

EU Affairs Unit

The Transport Attaché continued to attend the meetings of the Council Working Groups and Commission Experts' Groups. Instruction Notes were transmitted to the Transport Attaché to negotiate various sensitive positions for Malta after consultations, both public and at ministries' level, had been concluded.

During the Austrian and Finnish Presidencies, contacts were established with this Directorate's counterparts in other Member States to facilitate a supportive role in various issues for Malta's position.

A number of legislative drafts were forwarded for publication after obtaining clearance from the Office of the Attorney General and the House of Representatives.

Board meetings were attended on several issues involving EU Programmes and an active role was exercised on the European Railway Agency role involving primarily trade connections.

Programme Implementation

Various projects under the Structural Funds, Cohesion Fund, Pre-Accession Funds and Urban Development were effectively monitored on the project management system delivery, and claims for payments were concluded with the Department of Treasury. No pending payments had been registered during 2006. By the end of 2006, the tender documents for the Cohesion Fund programming period 2007 – 2009 were being finalised.

Customer Care

Following the restructuring of the system at the ADT during 2005, a marked progress level was attained during 2006 resulting in the clearance of backlogs accumulated during previous years.

Policy Development

The issue involving the Critical Infrastructure Safety Management was given due consideration. A policy draft was discussed with the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs for eventual consolidation with other Ministries.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The Ministry for Urban Development and Roads is responsible for the co-ordination of various urban development projects. Apart from development policy, plans and guidelines, the Ministry continually monitors the capital projects it is responsible for and liaises with various departments and government agencies such as MEPA, the Department of Lands, Works Division, Water Services Corporation and Enemalta Corporation, to actuate and respect the benchmarks set. During 2006, the Ministry was responsible for the following urban development projects in partnership with the private sector.

Manoel Island and Tigné Project

This is the largest development underway in Malta and is bringing a new concept in planning to Malta. It is breathing new life into the relatively derelict yet central areas of the island. Once completed, the development will offer a unique concept in urban spaces, linked with international benchmarks in urban planning.

The project consists of two phases which include a masterplan on Tigné and a masterplan on Manoel Island. Works on the residential blocks at Tigné Point were continued and a substantial part of the

restoration works on Fort Tigné was carried out. Restoration works on Fort Manoel continued to be carried out.

Cruise Liner Passenger Terminal

The implementation of the Cruise Liner Passenger Terminal in Valletta was at an advanced stage during 2006 and 312 additional parking spaces would eventually be organised. The place has generated cultural and business activities.

Cottonera Waterfront Regeneration Project

The Cottonera Waterfront Regeneration Project was launched in 1999 with the aim of transforming the waterfront in a cultural, commercial and economic hub. The regeneration of Cottonera is taking place on a historical, social, cultural and local economic level.

Cottonera Waterfront Landscaping Project

The Cottonera Waterfront Landscaping Project was launched in 2005 to enhance the urban environment of the Birgu promenade as part of the wider framework of the Cottonera Regeneration Project.

The Projects and Development Office was responsible for the preparation of detailed landscaping designs during 2005 and the submission of an Application for a Full Development Permit to MEPA. After submission of the final revised design in early 2006, the permit was issued in April 2006 and works on the waterfront road build-up and drainage system were taken in hand and completed by summer. Paving works with imported hardstone were implemented and completed by mid-summer. The Projects and Development Office also prepared a series of tender documents for supply and installation of the Waterfront Promenade electrical installation and switchgear, architectural lighting, planters and benches. The various tenders were subsequently published and works on the electrical installation, lighting and planters were undertaken towards the end of the year. Works were still ongoing during the end of the year.

Development of the Dock No I Area in Cospicua

During 2006, negotiations were still underway between Government and Gruppo Romegas on their proposals – both from the planning and financial aspects. Gruppo Romegas submitted an Application for an Outline Development Permit to MEPA in December 2006. Consultation meetings with various bodies were also initiated.

Development of the Pace Grasso Football Ground Project

During 2006, several revisions of the original designs were prepared by the Projects and Development Office and were then submitted to MEPA under the Full Development Permit Application PA 00804/05 submitted in 2005. Meetings were held with representatives of the KNPD and close liaison with MEPA was maintained throughout the process. The project was undergoing final revisions in response to planning requirements. A Fire Safety and Ventilation Report, and a Factored Electrical Load Analysis were commissioned during December. Works were still ongoing towards the end of the year.

Valletta Vertical Link Project

The proposed lift from Lascaris Ditch would provide vertical access to Valletta and this would connect the Ditch to the cruise liner passenger terminal with a funicular railway. The Project would maximise parking in the Ditch and would also serve as an attraction.

A Conceptual and Schematic Design and Project Brief were prepared for this project during 2006 and an Application for an Outline Development Permit was submitted to MEPA. The Outline Permit was issued by MEPA in November 2006. An Invitation for Submission of Proposals for the project was prepared and published in late December 2006.

Ta' Qali Exhibition and Convention Centre

A detailed Invitation for Submission of Proposals was prepared by the Projects and Development Office for the Ta' Qali Exhibition and Convention Centre during the last quarter of 2006. The document was subsequently finalised and published during the last week in December.

Ta' Qali Crafts Village Project

This project was previously the subject of a joint effort between the Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure, the Ministry for Urban Development and Roads and the Parliamentary Secretariat for Small Business and the Self-Employed. Following the withdrawal of the participation of the Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure, the technical aspect and co-ordination of the project fell under the remit of the Ministry for Urban Development and Roads. The Projects and Development Office undertook, together with additional support from the ADT, to review the designs of the project and bring it to a stage of development where the project could be initiated. This included revision and modification of proposed designs, drawing up of specifications and preparation of tender documentation. Works were still ongoing towards the end of the year.

The Park and Ride Project

The Park and Ride project was launched in November 2006 and is being implemented together with the Committee for National Projects. The project mainly aims to increase the quality of life of Valletta and Floriana citizens as well as improve the environment and appearance of the capital city to reflect its World Heritage status. In particular, it aims to improve parking and accessibility for residents, tourists and the workforce in Valletta.

TRANSPORT AND ROADS

Network Infrastructure Directorate

The Network Infrastructure Directorate (NID) continued to construct, upgrade and improve the road network, as depicted below.

European Union Funded Projects

Civil Aviation Avenue, Luqa	This project included the reconstruction of 0.8km of dual carriageway road and one roundabout junction.
Hal Far Phase III	This project included the reconstruction of 3.2km of dual carriageway road, with a pedestrian and cycle path and two pedestrian crossings.
St Paul's Bay By-Pass	Works on this project are expected to be completed by May 2007 and consist of the reconstruction of 2.7km of dual carriageway.
Mġarr Road, Ghajnsielem	Road works along this 2.5km stretch of road include one roundabout junction and three priority junctions. Works began in July 2006 and are expected to be completed by August 2007.
Manwel Dimech Bridge	The works along Manuel Dimech Bridge involve the demolition of the superstructure, rehabilitation of piers and abutments, the reconstruction of the superstructure and the re-

alignment of adjoining roads. Works commenced in September 2006 and the first phase of traffic management was implemented in December 2006. Apart from the localised traffic management in the area around the bridge, an area-wide traffic management scheme was implemented with diversion routes. Three Variable Message Signs were also installed to inform motorists on the traffic situation on the bridge.

Domestic Roadworks

Other works by the Network Infrastructure Directorate included the upgrading of the junctions between Rue D'Argens and Triq Gerry Zammit in Gzira, between Triq San Ġorġ and Triq Ross in St Julians, Triq ta' L'Ibraġġ, San Ġwann/Swieqi and Triq il-Qasam, and Triq Swieqi, Swieqi; the resurfacing of the stretch of Rue D'Argens between St Albert and Triq Gerry Zammit; the continuation of the construction of the Imtarfa By-Pass and the construction of a number of new residential streets.

The Traffic Management Unit

The Traffic Management Unit implemented transport schemes for the improvement of the efficiency and safety of the transport network in towns and villages after assessing submissions and proposals forwarded by the local councils and the general public. The Unit also managed temporary traffic management during road works, and it was responsible for the service of reserved parking for persons with a disability. The Unit collected traffic and pedestrian data together with speed data; conducted workshops for road contractors and on road safety education for children; introduced cycle lanes and cycle racks across Malta; implemented a pilot project whereby the standard lamps of the pelican crossing at St Andrews Road, Swieqi, were substituted by light emitting diodes, and continued to monitor and maintain traffic light hardware installations.

Public Transport Directorate

The Scheduled Bus Service Sector introduced the following new trips and routes:

- Direct routes between the different towns and villages and the Junior College, Msida
- A new route to cater for Żokrija in Mosta
- Doubled the frequency of trips on the Kirkop - Safi to Valletta route
- Reintroduced Route No 61 from the Strand, Sliema to Valletta
- Rerouted the Route No 66 service
- Rescheduled Route 81
- Introduction of Route No 59 from Qawra to Valletta.

The Public Transport Directorate (PTD) held several meetings with the Red Minibus Service Operators to improve the market share of this sector.

Agreement was reached with the White Taxi Services Amalgamated to introduce a Code of Conduct to regulate all the taxi owners operating in Malta and Gozo. The taxi tariff rates were also changed.

Discussions were held with the Horse-Driven Cab Sector in order to introduce a Code of Conduct for the Horse Cab Owners.

A revised timetable for the Scheduled Bus Service in Gozo was established. An increase of 5.6% in rates for the transport of school children in Gozo was introduced. New taxi meters and new taxi drivers' identification tags were also introduced. A Theory Driving Test Centre in Gozo was set up and is being monitored by the PTD.

The enforcement unit of the PTD carried out roadside inspections relating to the "Weights, Dimensions and Equipment Regulations", inspections of dangerous goods vehicles, and emission testing.

There was also an increase in demand for the frequent presence of the *ADT* enforcement officers at the Sea Port Terminal. In addition, the Unit issued 1,106 charges relating to infringements by bus drivers/owners.

Licensing and Testing Directorate

An average of 32% of all licences is being renewed through the E-Vera, the online Vehicle Licence Renewal System. The introduction of this service, together with better queue management techniques, has resulted in faster vehicle licence renewal processing. The vehicle database system has also been upgraded.

Procedures for the registration and licensing of vehicles, transfers of vehicles, application for personalised plates, change of engines, conversions and scrapping of vehicles have all been streamlined. This has resulted in a more effective service to the client.

Online registration of vehicles will be provided to motor car dealers to input all vehicle details. A number of practical driving test routes have been identified and established.

Transport Strategy Directorate

As an EU Member State, Malta complies with the UNECE European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road which was adopted by the EU also for national road haulage operations. The Transport Strategy Directorate (TSD) was responsible for the issuing of the tender for the Operation of Passenger Transport Services using Open Top Buses. The Directorate has also set up a procedure for the application by the local councils to install speed cameras along stretches of the road network. A study was carried out correlating the location of speed cameras and the incidence of injury accidents at these locations. The study showed a reduction of 80% in injury accidents occurring at locations where speed cameras were installed.

The Transport Planning, Policy, Programming and Statistics Unit

This Unit participated in a number of EU funded projects like, for example, SUPREME, Pagus Interreg 3C Innotrans, CITUM and Cyromed. The Unit also administers the Statistics and Information database. The 2005 injury accident database was subsequently submitted to the European Commission. The Unit drafted the procedures and the legal requirements for the introduction of the Controlled Vehicular Access System in Valletta.

In collaboration with the Cabinet Committee on National Projects, the Unit has continued to work on the necessary tasks involved in the pedestrianisation of Merchants Street and its adjacent streets in Valletta.

The Project Implementation Unit

This Unit was set up during 2006 and was mostly responsible to oversee the implementation of the Park and Ride Project in Blata l-Bajda.

Directorate Corporate Services

This Directorate provides services to the Malta Transport Authority in the financial, information technology and administration areas.

VINCE CASSAR

Permanent Secretary (Urban Development and Roads)

Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity

Department of Social Security

The Department is responsible for the administration of Social Security legislation, which provides for the payment of benefits under the contributory and the non-contributory schemes.

These schemes cover the entire population which is in some way recipient of such benefits, and the Department is mainly involved in ensuring that financial support is given to those sections of the community which are mostly in need, namely those with a low income, the sick, the elderly and the unemployed.

The total expenditure on Social Security benefits in 2006 reached Lm223,467,163. This expenditure reflects an increase of Lm12,636,763 over the previous year.

The year 2006 also marked the 50th Anniversary of the institution of Social Insurance legislation in Malta. In fact during the month of May 2006 a number of activities were held to commemorate this occasion.

LEGISLATION

Increases in the rates of Social Security benefits and contributions as had previously been announced in the Budget Speech for 2006 were proportionately tied to the Lm2.25 (inclusive of 50c extra paid in advance of 2007 to make good for the extra expense for energy) cost of living increase rise in wages as awarded by Government.

There was no increase in the capital resources means test of persons applying for Non-Contributory Benefits. Thus the capital limit for the entitlement of Age Pension, Social Assistance and Sickness Assistance remained Lm6,000 in the case of a single or a widowed person, and Lm10,000 in the case of married persons. The Capital limit in the case of applications for Medical Aids Grant also remained the same, at Lm4,000 in the case of a single or a widowed person and Lm7,000 in the case of married persons.

The Social Security contribution rate payable by employers and employees remained at 10% of the basic weekly wage, and the Social Security contribution rate payable by a self-occupied and a self-employed person remained at 15% of the income declared by the payer in the previous year.

During the year two bills aimed at amending the Social Security Act (Cap 318) were presented in Parliament, namely:

- Proposals for changes to the invalidity scheme and the legal recognition and granting of certain powers to the Director (Benefit Fraud and Investigation);
- The bill to implement the Pensions Reform.

Both bills were enacted, namely Act VI of 2006 and Act XIX of 2006 respectively.

Legal notices were also published to increase the Maximum Pensionable Income, and to put into effect the various provisions of the enacted legislation mentioned above.

CONTRIBUTORY SCHEME

The Enforcement Section of the Department of Social Security ceased to exist since all its operations were taken over by the Inland Revenue Department. Case papers pertaining to all pending cases were handed over to the enforcement section of the IRD. This will enable the latter to investigate and enforce the collection of tax arrears and at the same time the unpaid social security contributions.

The Department continued with its duty to determine questions of cases of insurability. It also continued to issue exemptions from payments of the social security contributions to those expatriates who were insured in their home countries and were also paying their dues there.

The total revenue collected during 2006 in terms of the Social Security Act (Cap 318) amounted to Lm200,809,432. This reflects an increase of Lm5,222,576 over the previous year. These figures are broken down in detail in the following table:

Contributions and Enforcement			
Type of Contributions	2005 Lm	2006 Lm	+ or - Lm
Class I Contributions in respect of Private industry	86,864,583	90,113,367	(+) 3,248,784
Class I Contributions in respect of Government Employees	30,148,251	31,096,536	(+) 948,285
Class II Contributions by Self-Employed persons	13,288,794	13,625,399	(+) 336,605
Further Contributions	134,414	123,887	(-) 10,527
State Contribution	65,150,814	67,417,651	(+) 2,266,837
Total	195,586,856	202,376,840	(+) 6,789,984

Short-Term Benefits

There was a decrease in the number of claims for sickness, unemployment and special unemployment benefits, whilst an increase was registered in claims for injury benefit and marriage grants.

During 2006, the Short-Term Benefit Section in Gozo continued with the normal duties related to the issue of short-term benefits. Moreover staff at Stagers managed to input 55,302 contribution histories whilst they also verified another 40,503 ledger sheets. During the year, the Gozo Branch managed again to issue the annual reviews of Supplementary Allowance claims on time.

Claims for short-term benefits dealt with during 2006, as compared with 2005, are shown hereunder:

Type of Benefit	Number of Claims			Type of Medical Certificate	2005	2006	+ or -
	2005	2006	+ or -				
Sickness Benefit	130,294	123,316	(-) 6,978	First/Final (less than 4 days)	80,717	76,653	(-) 4,064
Unemployment Benefit	19,964	18,732	(-) 1,232	First/Final (4 to 6 days)	30,532	27,822	(-) 2,710
Special Unemployment Benefit	1,626	1,241	(-) 385	First (open)	19,045	18,841	(-) 204
Injury Benefit	3,441	4,249	808	Intermediate	91,388	92,561	1,173
Marriage Grant	3,211	3,311	100	Final	16,099	15,793	(-) 306
Total	158,536	150,849	(-) 7,687	Total	237,781	231,670	(-) 6,111

Children's Allowances and other Family Benefits

During 2006, the Department reviewed all cases of Child Allowance that were in payment up to end of June 2006, with a view to establish the new Child Allowance Benefit rates for the year starting July 2006. The number of households in receipt of children allowance benefit was 34,181 at 31 December 2006, as compared to 35,905 households on 31 December 2005.

The following tables show the load in payments by types of allowance at the end of 2006 compared to 2005 and the number of households in receipt of a Disabled Child Allowance and compare the number of accepted claims in respect of Maternity Benefit as at the end of 2005 and 2006.

Type of Benefit	Number of Families		
	2005	2006	+ or -
Child Allowance only:			
- One eligible child	17,662	17,265	(-) 397
- Two eligible children	13,704	12,871	(-) 833
- Three eligible children	3,613	3,364	(-) 249
- Four or more eligible children	926	854	(-) 72
Total	35,905	34,354	(-) 1,551

Type of Benefit	2005	2006	+ or -
Disabled Child Allowance	660	646	(-) 14
Maternity Benefit	2,671	2,497	(-) 174
Total	3,331	3,143	(-) 188

Contributory Pensions

The following table shows the number of persons in receipt of a Contributory Pension at the end of 2006. Here the upward trend in the number of pensioners, especially the new retirees, continued. An increase of almost 10.2% was recorded in the number of retirement pensioners. The contributory pensions section had to deal with double the amount of claims for retirement pensions.

The maximum pensionable income for Social Security purposes was again increased by the cost of living allowance to reach the amount of Lm6,958. Amendments to the Social Security Act were also carried so the same maximum pensionable income is increased automatically instead of issuing a legal notice annually.

Earlier during the year, amendments were carried out in the Social Security Act to enhance controls on the provisions for the award of Invalidity Pensions. One of the milestones of the reform to the Invalidity system was the introduction, for the first time in Malta, of Impairment Tables which provide for the assessment of work-related impairments.

Type of Benefit	Number of Claims		
	2005	2006	+ or -
Retirement Pension	8,143	8,844	701
Increased Retirement Pension	2,183	2,308	125
National Minimum Retirement Pension	7,657	8,688	1,031
Decreased National Minimum Pension	124	129	5
Increased National Minimum Ret. Pension	1,982	2,325	343
Two-Thirds Pension	20,125	22,642	2,517
Invalidity Pension	1,677	1,821	144
Increased Invalidity Pension	327	336	9
National Minimum Invalidity Pension	6,811	7,307	496
Decreased National Minimum Pension	22	27	5
Widow's Pension with Service Pension	1,029	1,061	32
National Minimum Widow's Pension	7,783	8,330	547
Early Survivor's Pension	1,816	1,894	78
Survivor's Pension	3,757	4,213	456
Disablement Pension	361	373	12
Orphan's Allowance	9	14	5
Total	63,806	70,312	6,506

During 2006 legislation was enacted which paved the way for a reform to the pension system in Malta. Amongst the new provisions one finds a gradual increase in pension age as follows:

- In the case of a person born on or before 31 December 1951, the pension age will remain as is currently, that is for men pension age shall be 61 years of age whilst for women pension age shall be 60 years of age; (Note: Women in such an age bracket have now been given the option to retire at 61 years of age and the employer will not be able to terminate her employment if such a women opts to work until 61 years of age);

- In the case of a person born during the calendar years 1952 to 1955, pension age shall be 62 years of age;
- In the case of a person born during the calendar years 1956 to 1958, pension age shall be 63 years of age;
- In the case of a person born during the calendar years 1959 to 1961, pension age shall be 64 years of age;
- In the case of a person born on or after the 1 of January 1962, pension age shall be 65 years of age.

Another new measure in the Pensions Reform provides for an early retirement opt-out clause. This opt-out clause allows for a person who has attained the age of 61 years, but has not yet attained the applicable pension age, to choose to retire after attaining 61 years of age on the condition that such person has accumulated since his/her 18th birthday, a total of:

- 2,080 paid or credited contributions if born on or after 1 January 1962; or
- 1,820 paid or credited contributions in the case of a person born during calendar years 1952 to 1961.

The full rate of the two-thirds pension will be equal to two-thirds of the pensionable income of a person who, following his or her 18th birthday has paid or been credited with a yearly average of 50 social security contributions over a period of: -

- Thirty years in the case of a person born on or before 31 December 1951;
- Thirty-five years for a person born during the calendar years 1952 to 1961;
- Forty years in the case of a person born on or after 1 January 1962.

Moreover further amendments were carried out to prepare for the introduction of second and third pension systems and also the award of contribution credits (under certain provisions) to parents who temporarily retire from work to look after their children.

NON-CONTRIBUTORY SCHEME

The number of persons in receipt of non-contributory Age, Visually Impaired, Mentally/Severely Disabled and Carer's Pension/Allowance paid under the Act increased by 2.22% over the previous year mainly in the Old Age pension beneficiaries, as shown in the table below.

Type of Pension/Allowance	Beneficiaries		
	end 2005	end 2006	+ or -
Old Age	4,710	4,818	108
Visually Impaired	146	153	7
Mentally/Severely Disabled	2,139	2,194	55
Carer's	260	251	(-) 9
Total	7,255	7,416	161

Assistances

The following table shows the number of households benefiting from non-contributory Assistance paid under the Act. Contrary to the previous year, there was a marginal deduction in benefits of 1.81% mainly in unemployment assistance.

During 2006, the Department carried out 8,201 financial investigations to determine the eligibility or otherwise to Free Medical Aid (another form of assistance in kind provided for under the Act), of which 8,035 were found to be eligible and were awarded Free Medical Aid accordingly. There were also 459 applications for the waiving off of the London/Matsec Examination Fees, of which 363 were accepted and there were 17 applications for Matric Waiving of fees which were all accepted. Furthermore there were 152 applications for exemption from the payment of Social Security Contributions.

Type of Assistance	Beneficiaries		
	end 2005	end 2006	+ or -
Unemployment assistance	6,581	6,074	(-) 507
Social assistance *	10,175	10,350	175
Sickness assistance	14,635	14,631	(-) 4
Milk Grant	162	133	(-) 29
Leprosy assistance	61	57	(-) 4
Tuberculosis assistance	23	24	1
Supplementary allowance	30,677	29,918	(-) 759
Total	62,314	61,187	(-) 1,127

* Social Assistance means SA/SAF/SUP/DAD

Electricity Rebates

Last year persons who qualified for electricity rebates also qualified for a 100% deduction of the surcharge on electricity bills. During 2005 the number of rebate applications was 1,773 and for 2006 there were 3,042 of which 140 are still pending.

Further to the above, the waiving of surcharge and rebate in water/electricity was extended on humanitarian grounds to families who had a member in household suffering from chronic disease which was causing an excessive consumption in electricity. 52 applications were submitted to the Department under this humanitarian concession, of which 24 were approved and awarded the electricity rebate. Of these cases only one application is still pending from 2006.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Apart from placing the necessary infrastructure within the DSS to fully meet its responsibilities during 2006, this Unit completed a number of important tasks, amongst which may be mentioned:

- started the second phase of the Twinning Light Project which covers the enhancement of the internal social security information system. This project is expected to finish in mid-2007, and is partly financed by the EU, with Malta's co-financing share standing at 25%;
- organised various seminars, including the trESS (training and reporting on European social security) Seminar, which was attended by both local and foreign experts in the field of social security. This seminar was conducted by the University of Ghent in Belgium, and is co-financed by the EU. Following this seminar, the Department was asked to make its contribution in the compiling of the trESS Annual Report 2006;
- the IRU took over the responsibility of the area of applicable legislation, that is the insurability and exemption of EU citizens working in Malta whilst remaining insured in their home Member State, or Maltese citizens who go to work in other Member States and remain insured in Malta. Close liaison in executing these responsibilities is maintained with the Inland Revenue Department, the Employment and Training Corporation and with the Ministry of Health, the Elderly and Community Care;
- prepared a full write-up on the Maltese social security system to be included in an EU publication entitled *Your social security rights when moving within the European Community* which is due to be published in the coming months;
- delivered various presentations on the international obligations of the Department, in particular to EURES advisors from other Member States who were present during a job fair organised by the Employment and Training Corporation, and Heritage Malta. A presentation was also delivered to the European Commission officials who visited Malta with the view of examining three completed Twinning Light Projects. The Department's project was one of the selected projects, and following the presentation, positive remarks and feedback were received;

- invited and organised a study visit by UK social security experts from the Department of Work and Pensions, as a follow-up to the Twinning Light Project and to discuss new issues arising in the social security field;

Received and assessed an increasing number of claims for social security benefits, mainly for contributory pensions from other EU Member States, partner countries with which the DSS has a bilateral agreement and other third countries. This year these claims exceeded 1,100 and can be categorised as shown in the following table.

	Incoming 2006	Outgoing 2006
EU:		
Retirement	126	27
Invalidity	13	30
Survivors	12	9
Australia:		
Retirement	386	102
Invalidity	67	50
Survivors	56	6
Canada:		
Retirement	51	47
Invalidity	2	10
Survivors	7	2
Others:		
Retirement	5	0
Invalidity	0	0
Survivors	0	0

APPEALS TO THE UMPIRE

The following table shows how the appeals that were up for one or more hearings during 2006 were dealt with, as compared with the same figures for 2005.

Appeals	2005	2006
A. No of Appeals for hearing:		
(i) Brought forward from previous year	362	216
(ii) Lodged during the year	<u>632</u> = <u> </u> 994	<u>831</u> = <u> </u> 1,047
B. No. of Appeals settled:		
(i) Decided against appellant	260	287
(ii) Decided in favour of appellant	35	73
(iii) Withdrawn by appellant	429	268
(iv) Cancelled	<u>54</u> = <u> </u> 778	<u>7</u> = <u> </u> 635
No. of Appeals still outstanding at end year	216	412

PAYMENTS

During 2006 the Department had to account for a total expenditure of Lm300,560,163. Apart from Administration and Capital expenses, this expenditure related mainly to Social Security Benefits and State Contributions.

The following table shows the expenditure on Social Security Benefits payable under the Social Security Act (Cap 318) during 2006. This table comprises the contributory and the non-contributory benefits issued by the Department.

Type of Benefit	2005	2006	+ or –
	Lm	Lm	Lm
Pensions in respect of Retirement	94,870,080	103,494,986	8,624,906
Pensions in respect of Invalidity	16,080,908	16,116,076	35,168
Pensions in respect of Widowhood	35,319,464	37,185,613	1,866,149
Pensions in respect of Industrial Injuries	754,024	738,687	(-) 15,337
Pensions in respect of unemployment	1,092,486	1,188,981	96,495
Children's Allowance	13,552,994	13,307,291	(-) 245,703
Maternity Benefit	664,493	714,163	49,670
Sickness Benefit	2,149,010	2,253,910	104,900
Orphan's Allowance	12,852	22,208	9,356
Marriage Grant	285,059	299,793	14,734
Re-Marriage Gratuity	14,724	9,796	(-) 4,928
Bonus	11,616,264	11,988,886	372,622
Total (i)	176,412,358	187,320,390	10,908,032
Pensions in respect of Age/Visually Impaired	6,816,254	7,293,529	477,275
Pensions in respect of Disability	3,581,940	3,684,097	102,157
Social Assistance	22,013,884	22,753,030	739,146
Medical Assistance	6,216,610	6,499,703	283,093
Handicapped Child Allowance	126,484	171,882	45,398
Bonus	3,188,924	3,288,761	99,837
Supplementary Assistance	2,473,947	2,462,030	(-) 11,917
Total (ii)	44,418,043	46,153,032	1,734,989
Grand Total (i) + (ii)	220,830,401	233,473,422	12,643,021

COMPUTERISATION PROGRAMS

During the year a number of meetings were held with MITTS Ltd in order to enhance the SABS (Sistema għal Benefiċċji Soċjali) which is the principal software used by the Department. During the year a number of software updates were released.

Software was also enhanced to facilitate all data entry, for the issue of the Supplementary Allowance. This inputting was in fact carried out by the keyer's section in Gozo. Also during the period in review, action was taken to work on the introduction of the Supplementary and Child allowance applications online and it is expected that this facility will come into force during 2007. Other initiatives in computer upgrades included the second and third phases of the Elderly Contribution Deduction System.

CUSTOMER CARE OFFICER

During 2006, the number of claimants who made use of this service at Head Office was 18,318. When compared to the previous year, the number of claimants calling at the Customer Care Office of the Department showed a decrease of 13.26%. The numbers of queries lodged according to the type of benefit are shown below:

	2005	2006	+ or -
Contributory Benefits	4,976	4,273	(-) 703
Children's Allowance	3,955	3,015	(-) 940
Non-Contributory Benefits	5,752	5,588	(-) 164
Contributory Pensions	6,024	5,442	(-) 582
Enforcement	411	-	(-) 411
Total	21,118	18,318	(-) 2,800

DISTRICT OFFICES

There are 24 district offices in Malta situated in the localities of Balzan, B'Kara, Vittoriosa, Fgura, Ħamrun, Luqa, Marsa, Mosta, Msida, Naxxar, Paola, Qormi, Rabat, Sliema, St Paul's Bay, San Ġwann,

Sigġiewi, Valletta, Żabbar, Żebbuġ, Żejtun, and Żurrieq. The two offices in Gozo are situated in Victoria and Nadur.

The district office in Vittoriosa still forms part of Access Complex. This is a family resource centre in the community, a one-stop shop comprising Appoġġ Agency, the Social Security Department, the Employment and Training Corporation, a resource centre for disabled persons and the Housing Authority.

Work carried out at district offices mainly comprises financial investigations, the raising of applications for contributory and non-contributory benefits and pensions, and the registration under the Social Security Act of newly-employed workers. Registration of unemployed persons is also done at district offices by means of the finger-reading machines introduced recently. In Mosta and Vittoriosa, this service is available at the ETC's premises within the same locality.

During the year, training was organised for all personnel at district offices in Customer Care, SABS system and IT. The aim of this training is to improve our services at district level. In addition personnel attended other training courses on various topics organised by the Staff Development Organisation.

During 2006, members of the Department (including a number of District Managers) participated on programmes aired on radio and television with the aim of promoting the services rendered by the Department in general and to make the general public more aware of the benefits/assistance emanating from the Social Security Act. Following the positive feedback being received from the public in general, it is envisaged that the Department's presence in this area is increased in the future.

Following a request from the Department of Works and Pensions of the UK, District Offices, during 2006, the Department has been supporting the UK Life Certificate exercise. Life certificates are being issued to residents in Malta being in receipt of a UK pension, whereby DSS officials assist such residents and also verify and endorse such certificates. In case of immobile persons our officers are carrying out home visits to these clients.

STAFF

During 2006 the staff complement of the Department of Social Security decreased by 20 when compared to the complement on 31 December, 2005, as shown in the following table.

	31.12.2005	31.12.2006
General Service Grades	258	242
Industrial/Messengerial	71	67
Total	329	309

The staff at the Administration Section, the Computer Section, and the Reconciliation Section is shown in the returns of the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity.

Of the staff referred to in the above table, 65 in the General Services Grade and four in the Industrial/Messengerial Grade, were performing duties at the Social Security Department in Gozo. Furthermore another 10 in the General Services Grade are casual employees.

JOSEPH CAMILLERI
Director (Social Security)

Department for Social Welfare Standards

INTRODUCTION

During 2006 the Department for Social Welfare Standards consolidated its role as a regulator and standard setter as was outlined in the Strategic Report for the Conversion of the Department into a Regulatory Body, as presented to the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity in 2004. The status of conversion was evaluated in March 2006 and the staff members mapped out how to proceed with the changeover process during 2006 and 2007.

Among the significant developments highlighted in this report, developments worthy of mention include the conclusion of the Standards for Child Day Care Facilities which were published and launched in July 2006, the launch of the Improvement Grant Scheme for Child Day Care Facilities and the start of the consultation process on the Code of Conduct and Practice for Social Service Workers and the Code of Conduct and Practice for Employers of Social Service Workers in September 2006.

Change of Directorship

On 15 March 2006, Mr Frank Mifsud, then Director (Social Welfare Standards) was appointed Permanent Secretary (Health, the Elderly and Community Care). Two most senior officers from within the department assumed the responsibility of Acting Director, until Dr Kenneth Grech was appointed Director (Social Welfare Standards) with effect from 17 October 2006.

RESTRUCTURING OF THE DEPARTMENT

Strategic Objectives

The strategic objectives of the Department for Social Welfare Standards for the years 2006-2007 were discussed at length during a one-day seminar held for staff members at the beginning of the year. During this seminar the Director and staff of the Department had the opportunity to discuss and review the progress achieved in the conversion of the Department into a regulatory body as well as plan ahead for the way forward.

A document with the Department's strategic objectives, as well as fourteen task-based objectives and the activities that are required for their achievement, was also drawn up. It is expected that with the achievement of its strategic objectives, the Department will ultimately improve the quality of life of people making use of social welfare services.

Capacity-Building of Staff

Continued Professional Education

The in-house training programme that had been developed and implemented in previous years continued during the first months of 2006. In January and February, two sessions about health and safety issues in a child day care context were delivered to departmental staff by an officer from the Health and Safety Unit of the Education Division, while two other highly informative sessions were delivered by the Chief Inspector of the Scottish Social Work Inspection Agency, Ms Alexis Jay, during a three day-visit to Malta. During

these sessions Ms Jay dealt with the procedures, techniques and tools used by the Scottish Agency to carry out inspections of social work service providers. She also provided insight into two special investigations that were carried out in two instances of alleged abuse in Scotland.

Following a two-year course at the University of Malta, one staff member graduated and obtained a Diploma in Social Studies (Gender and Development) in December 2006.

Leonardo da Vinci Project

Five beneficiaries from the Department for Social Welfare Standards conducted a two-week placement with the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care and the Scottish Social Work Inspection Agency. The Leonardo da Vinci project, *Introducing Regulation of Social Welfare Services*, which was expected to run from September 2005 to May 2006, was extended to the end of November, to ensure that all beneficiaries complete their placement.

Through this project, departmental staff members acquired valuable experience and useful resources that helped them to adapt to their new function as designate Welfare Assessors and the new role of the Department. Staff members also obtained a greater understanding of the issues involved and a more confident approach to the duties of assessment.

The project's final report was completed in December 2006 and will be submitted to the Leonardo da Vinci National Agency in January 2007.

Post-Graduate Course at the Anglia Ruskin University of Cambridge

In January 2006, four staff members commenced an online Post-Graduate Course in Regulation, Inspection and Improvement run by the Anglia Ruskin University of Cambridge. In June 2006 they all completed their first module successfully. The assignments for the second module were submitted in December, and the results are due to be issued in January 2007. Successful completion of the first year would earn staff members a Certificate in Regulation, Inspection and Improvement and would entitle them to proceed with their studies to obtain further qualifications in the field.

Although the course has been very challenging, the designate Welfare Assessors of the department have acquired new knowledge and learnt new concepts, principles and terminology used in the regulatory sector.

WELFARE SERVICES ASSESSMENT UNIT

Regulation of Welfare Services Act

Drafting of the Social Welfare Services Act continued throughout 2006, although priority was given to other legislative drafts, which were being prepared concurrently. This Act, which will provide a legal framework to the new function of the Department, is expected to reach fruition in 2007.

Child Day Care Facilities

National Standards

Following an active consultation process with various stakeholders, and the publication of a consultation document in July 2004, the Standards for Child Day Care Facilities were published and launched in July 2006. These standards are being used as a basis for the assessment of child care facilities and as a framework for the first ever provisional registration of these facilities. The Department for Social Welfare Standards will be responsible to promote, monitor and assess the implementation of these standards, which will ensure a better, safer and healthier environment for children attending Child Day Care Facilities.

Improvement Grant Scheme

An Improvement Grant Scheme for Child Day Care Facilities, as announced in the Budget Speech for 2006, was launched by the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity. The Department for Social Welfare Standards was entrusted to implement this scheme, and staff members embarked on the preparation of the necessary tools that would enable its successful implementation.

Following the official launch, which was held at the Ministry for Family and Social Solidarity, another meeting for service providers was organised at the premises of the Department to provide information and answer queries. A detailed Information Pack was also distributed to all service providers.

Meanwhile the Welfare Services Assessment Unit has sought to establish and maintain a relationship of ongoing dialogue and trust with service providers. It is believed that such a relationship would contribute towards both the grant scheme itself and most of all the implementation of the standards.

Child Day Care Facilities were required to submit their application for Provisional Registration and an Improvement Grant by 20 October 2006. By the closing date, 28 facilities had submitted their application, and until the end of November the Welfare Services Assessment Unit had carried out a first assessment visit to each of these 28 Child Day Care Facilities. An Improvement Action Plan was drafted for each facility and after receiving feedback on each report, the reports were amended and finalised. These were sent to the service providers towards the end of December.

The scheme will run until 31 December 2007 and, after being granted provisional registration, the facilities eligible to receive an improvement grant will enter into an agreement with the Department to carry out specific improvements in their facilities or service. These improvements will have to be carried out during 2007.

Suitability of Premises

Throughout the year the designate Welfare Assessors of the Department conducted various site visits to prospective Child Day Care Facilities to assess the suitability of premises. Through visiting premises earmarked to become Child Day Care Facilities, the designate Welfare Assessors ensure that the facility would have the potential to comply with the standards, and service providers are assisted in their quest to be in compliance with the national standards from the very initial stages of their operation.

National Campaign Promoting the Benefits of Quality Childcare

In collaboration with the Employment and Training Corporation, the Department for Social Welfare Standards is participating in a national campaign promoting the benefits of quality childcare. This is a project part financed by the European Social Fund of the European Union. The Department is providing expertise in the area of the provision of child care and is actively participating in the preparatory works being carried out in this publicity campaign. It will also be responsible to support a national helpline, intended to provide child care information to the general public.

Lectures and Training

The Manager and the Co-ordinator (Welfare Services Assessment) were invited to give two lectures to ETC Childcare students. These lectures were held at the General Workers Union in Valletta and the University Gozo Centre, and focused on Child Day Care Standards and the role of the Department as a regulatory body.

The Co-ordinator (Welfare Services Assessment) planned, organised and delivered a training programme to the staff of Church Homes. The lectures focused on Self Care, Rational Thinking, Fighting and

Assertion, and Self and Professional Development. A three-hour lecture on residential and day care was also delivered to University students.

Assessment of Host Families

Social Workers from the Department for Social Welfare Standards have also continued to conduct home visits to assess families who host Russian children brought to Malta by the International Charity Society. These visits are required in order to assess whether a family is suitable and in a position to host children, and subsequently to provide the Principal Immigration Officer with advice for the issue of visa on behalf of the children to be hosted.

RESEARCH AND STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT UNIT

Standards of Care for Children in Residential Child Care

A process of research and consultation was initiated to commence the drafting of Standards of Care for Children in Residential Child Care. A working group composed of former and existing service users, relatives and persons within the residential care sector was set up to develop the standards of care. This working group, which is chaired by the Research and Standards Development Officer met every fortnight. Informal meetings were also held separately with two age groups of service users, ensured their full participation and helped to build a relationship of trust and friendship between the chairperson and the service users represented in the working group. Furthermore, the Officer maintained close contact with the respective care workers and the social workers of the children concerned in order to monitor the effect of the meetings and to become more sensitive to the individual needs of the children.

By the end of 2006, the underlying principles, as well as the introduction to the standards, had been drafted, discussed and agreed upon. This introduction explains what standards are, how, why and for whom they were written, why they are important and how they will be used. The introduction also explains the functions and the role of the Department for Social Welfare Standards, the regulatory process, the underlying principles, a list of potential standards as well as other useful information. This process is expected to continue throughout the first half of 2007.

Policies and Procedures for Residential and Foster Care

The remit of this multiparty working group is to develop common policies and procedures for children in residential and foster care. During 2006 a good number of policies were completed and four of these policies were piloted in different residential homes. These include: Staff Selection and Recruitment Policy; Supervision Policy; Support Group for Residential Workers Policy; and Self Evaluation for Residential Homes Policy. Two meetings with the residential homes piloting the Staff Selection and Recruitment Policy and the Supervision Policy were held to receive feedback and adjust the policies accordingly. This process is set to continue throughout 2007 where the outputs of this working group would also provide input into the workings of the Committee for the development of national standards of care for children in residential child care.

Mapping of the Social Welfare Workforce

The Research and Standards Development Officer submitted a proposal for a potential ESF project concerning the Occupational and Functional Mapping of the Social Welfare Workforce and a Skills Analysis. This project will determine the size, nature, qualification and skill levels, and competence of the workforce in the various social welfare sectors in Malta.

Close collaboration with the Malta Qualifications Council was maintained with regard to the National Occupational Standards in the social service sector and the qualifications required for personnel working

within the care sector. After further research and discussion, it was decided that as an initial step towards the setting up of occupational standards and qualifications for personnel working within the care sector, the Department will map existing occupations in all Children's Homes including individual job descriptions, qualifications, informal and non-formal learning experiences, salaries and other benefits and a brief description of the specific context in which they work. This would apply to full-time employees as well as persons belonging to religious orders and volunteers.

A questionnaire that was drafted to collect the necessary data was piloted at St Patrick's after a series of consultation meetings. The collected data were entered into a database and work on the design of the data analysis was also carried out.

Codes of Conduct and Practice

Following thorough preparation, the consultation process on the Code of Conduct and Practice for Social Service Workers and the Code of Conduct and Practice for Employers of Social Service Workers was launched in September 2006. Two staff members of the Department delivered a presentation to explain the codes and the consultation process, with the latter being extended to persons who are either vulnerable or would find difficulty with communication.

Through a number of seminars and ongoing consultation, the Research and Standards Development Unit ensured the participation of the widest possible range of stakeholders. The codes themselves, as well as the consultation questionnaire were presented in a variety of versions to ensure access to all. All stakeholders were offered departmental assistance to obtain feedback from vulnerable sectors of service users.

Operational Review of High Support Services and the Young People's Unit

In July 2006, the Minister for the Family and Social Solidarity and the Minister for Health, the Elderly and Community Care requested that a designate Welfare Assessor from the Department for Social Welfare Standards together with two other representatives from the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Finance, carry out an operational and financial review of High Support Services provided by the Foundation for Social Welfare Services, and the Young People's Unit within Mount Carmel Hospital.

This working group met regularly during the months of July, August and September, and its main concern was to review the current services and make recommendations that would improve the quality of the service. The group consulted relevant research literature and engaged in an extensive consultation process with the professionals and people involved in these services. The final report, presented to both Ministers, recommended the way forward for these two services.

Childscope

As part of Childscope, which is a Daphne I project, the Department of Social Welfare Standards was requested to register its functions as a Central Authority. This registration process was handled by the Research and Standards Development Officer and a questionnaire was also completed. A Childscope roundtable seminar on sexually exploited and missing children was held in February 2006 and the Department's Junior Legal Officer gave a presentation on the role of the Central Authority for International Child Abduction.

Data Protection Issues

During the Childscope roundtable seminar the Data Protection Commissioner expressed his wish to create a joint working group on data protection issues for the social welfare sector. This idea was communicated to the key players attending the Childscope roundtable discussion, and several data protection issues were identified. A working group chaired by the Data Protection Commissioner was set up and the Director as well as the Research and Standards Development Officer attend meetings of this group on a monthly basis.

INTERNATIONAL CHILD ABDUCTION

Caseload

The Department for Social Welfare Standards is the designated Central Authority in Malta on matters of International Child Abduction, in terms of the Child Abduction and Custody Act (Ch. 410). During 2006 the Senior Social Worker in charge of International Child Abduction Cases, assisted by the Department's Junior Legal Officer where legal representation was required, dealt with the following caseload:

Child Abduction Cases

Cases brought forward from 2005	4
New cases	9
Cases decided and closed	4
Cases carried forward to 2007	9

INCADAT Database

During 2006, the Department, as the Maltese Central Authority, started a process of collaboration with the Editor of the Child Abduction Database, so that Maltese judgments on cases of International Child Abduction will be entered in the INCADAT database, which is a database of International Child Abduction cases.

Conferences and Training

In February 2006, the Department for Social Welfare Standards was represented in a training seminar for Central Authorities in Rome, on the implementation of the Brussels II *bis* Regulation (EC Regulation 2201/2003).

In March 2006 the Department participated in a conference hosted by the Maltese Government in collaboration with the Hague Conference. This conference, known as the *Second Maltese Judicial Conference* hosted a number of Hague Convention countries, as well as a number of Islamic countries, and its aim was to establish co-operation between these countries, especially in cases of International Child Abduction.

In June 2006 the Department's legal officer participated in a meeting of the contact points of the European Judicial Network, in Brussels, where an overview of the work of the Central Authority in promoting awareness of the Hague Convention on International Child Abduction and the Brussels II *bis* Regulation was provided. Other presentations about the role of the Central Authority on International Child Abduction, as well as on the functions of Regulation (EC) 2201/2003, were delivered by the Department's Junior Legal Officer at the Law Courts of Gozo and the Chamber of Advocates in Malta. These presentations were intended to make lawyers aware of the work of the Central authority and to give information to any lawyers who might come across cases of International Child Abduction. The second presentation was given in order to mark the European Day of Civil Justice.

A representative of the Department was also present at the Special Commission on the Practical Aspects of the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, which was held at The Hague. Following this conference, a presentation on the overall position of Malta with regard to cases of International Child Abduction was delivered during a EUROMED conference on the subject of dual nationality which was held in Malta.

International Collaboration

Throughout the year, the Department, as the local Central Authority, maintained close relations with various foreign Central Authorities. Thanks to this collaboration, the staff was offered the opportunity to undergo further in-depth training and enhance its expertise.

ADOPTION SERVICES

During 2006, 56 Maltese couples finalised the adoption process from overseas and adopted a total of 67 children. The latter were adopted as follows: 2 from Bulgaria, 1 from Cambodia, 19 from Ethiopia, 4 from Pakistan and 41 from the Russian Federation.

Status of Adoption Cases	
New Applicants	60
Applicants who have completed the preparatory course	42
Home Study Reports completed and recommended by the Adoption and Fostering Panel for approval	54
Total number of Prospective Adoptive Parents waiting for the matching of children	128
Home Study Reports put on hold by applicants	21
Applications yet to satisfy conditions of eligibility	18
New applicants yet to undergo the preparatory course and whose Home Study Report is yet to be initiated	38
Post Adoption Reports compiled	198
Search for Natural Family	1
Cases Completed	77

Other Matters

In January 2006, the Department's Junior Legal Officer attended a conference in Florence with regard to post-adoption matters.

By December 2006, amendments to the legislative framework on adoptions were also nearing finalisation and further progress on this matter is expected in 2007.

The process for the transfer of adoption services to *Aġenzija Appoġġ* commenced in December wherein the Director obtained approval for the recruitment of three to four additional social workers to be engaged by *Appoġġ*. This is expected to be completed in 2007 where training and handover of the caseload will occur. It is expected that the Department will retain its role as the Malta Central Authority for Intercountry Adoption.

NGO PROJECT SELECTION COMMITTEE AND NGO LIAISON UNIT

Through the NGO Liaison Unit, the Department provides executive support to the Ministerial NGO Project Selection Committee. Close contact was maintained with all voluntary organisations who submitted project proposals for funding in 2006. A specific agreement was reached with each organisation. This included the agreed outputs expected from each organisation as well as agreed verification methods.

Twenty-nine different projects shared a total of Lm730,000 after prioritisation was carried out according to the National Action Plan on Poverty and Social Exclusion.

With regard to the funding of Support Groups, the NGO Project Selection Committee started to discuss a definition of Support Groups as well as the parameters and criteria for funding.

In December 2006 a delegation from the Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs was hosted in Malta. This delegation was interested in how local voluntary organisations are funded and the mechanisms used for

funding and output verification. Several meetings were held between the Chinese delegation and representatives from the NGO Project Selection Committee.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Staff Issues

A selection process to fill the two positions of Co-ordinator and Manager (Welfare Services Assessment) was concluded in September as both results were published. The two officers appointed were previously employed with this Department as Social Workers.

Two Social Workers who had already been employed with the Department, but had been deployed elsewhere re-assumed their duties at the Department for Social Welfare Standards. One Social Worker was deployed within the Adoption Unit, while the other assumed research, and other duties related to Child Day Care Facilities. One labourer, performing driving duties, retired in May 2006, and was replaced by another driver-messenger, while a Senior Social Worker and a Social Worker started their pre-retirement leave in December 2006. Another Social Worker resigned from her employment with the Department to take up a new job with another government agency.

Euro Changeover

A Euro Changeover Plan for the Department for Social Welfare Standards was drafted and submitted to the Ministry's Euro Co-ordinator in January, as requested by the Public Sector Sectoral Committee. This report was also discussed during a bilateral meeting held with representatives of the PSSC – NECC. The first version of the report, which has received very positive feedback, will be kept constantly updated according to the developments taking place at both departmental and national levels.

Transport Resources

A detailed exercise to analyse the department's transport resources was carried out in the first months of 2006 and a comprehensive report was submitted to the Ministry of Finance. This report recommended the purchase of two general-use vehicles to substitute a total of three of vehicles that were either leased or pertained to retiring officers. One vehicle was purchased in December 2006 while the other will be purchased in 2007. Through this exercise of needs analysis and streamlining significant savings on public funds will be effected.

Refurbishment of Premises

Refurbishment work at the Bugeja Institute continued throughout 2006. Special attention was paid to maximise storage space and to improve the facilities for the storage of records. These works included a new electrical installation, painting and redecoration as well as maintenance to wooden doors and windows. Two offices and two staff toilets were also refurbished during the period under review. All works were carried out by the Department's workshop and maintenance team.

WAY FORWARD

The strategic objectives of the Department for Social Welfare Standards for the years 2006-2007 would be reviewed and revised in line with new exigencies and priorities.

In order to consolidate and strengthen its role as a Central Authority, a separate unit is to be established to carry out this function and new staff is to be engaged and trained in this important but sensitive function.

The Department requires additional internal expertise in various areas to widen its scope and functions. Hence capacity building will continue to be given priority in line with its revised strategic objectives.

Much research is required in the field of social welfare and this function needs to be considerably strengthened in order to keep up with the pace of change and new developments.

DR KENNETH GRECH

Director (Social Welfare Standards)

Department of Social Housing

The set-up of the Department was the following:

- Customer Care/Allocations Section
- Requisition Orders Section
- Administration
- Inspectorate/Investigations

This report concerns the activities of each section involved in contributing to the Department's main aim, namely the implementation of government policy in the allocation on lease of government-owned residential units to applicants on the Department's waiting list.

CUSTOMER CARE/ALLOCATIONS SECTION

During 2006 the need was felt to update the waiting list to exclude those applicants who for some reason were no longer interested in alternative accommodation, either because they found such accommodation on their own steam, because they had died or because they had emigrated. A questionnaire was thus sent to all applicants in summer to confirm whether they were still interested in their application. As a result of this questionnaire and to letters by registered post, the number of applications on the waiting list by the end of December 2006 was 2,447. During the period under review the Department provided alternative accommodation to 146 families. These were all accommodated in government-owned units. Out of these, 93 were accommodated in existing government units and 53 were accommodated in newly-built units financed by the Housing Authority (74 units were provided by the Authority during 2006).

REQUISITION ORDERS SECTION

During 2006 the Department continued with the policy of derequisitioning privately-owned requisitioned premises following an inspection by the Department's inspectorate. The policy of not reallocating vacant requisitioned property once the keys were returned to the Department was continued and, although the pace of derequisitioning slackened for some time, this was accelerated towards the end of the year and 609 requisition orders were removed from premises which had been under requisition for a number of years. The Department also derequisitioned 2,721 government properties as these requisition orders had no basis at law and as it planned that government residential properties will be transferred to the Housing Authority during 2007. In addition, the section carried out works on the biennial rent revision. This involved computation of rent subsidy to 1,276 tenants of government-owned premises.

ADMINISTRATION

The role of the Administration was to carry out the following functions:

- Procurement of supplies and services for operation and maintenance
- Registry duties
- Direct processing of wages and salaries to staff
- Accounts (Consolidated Fund)
- Rent ledger (receipts for rents of requisitioned premises paid by tenants directly to the Department).

INSPECTORATE / INVESTIGATIONS

Staff at the Department carried out 2,904 inspections during 2006. These inspections were mainly in connection with the process of the derequisitioning exercise but also in connection with the management of property in the allocation of units.

CONCLUSION

During the year in question, the Department geared itself for the formal amalgamation with the Housing Authority which is planned to take place in 2007. The Department had two acting heads within a period of nine months in 2006. During the latter half of the year the pace of amalgamation was accelerated and the Customer Care Section of the Department was moved to new premises in Triq Macerata, Floriana and within the same premises as the Customer Care of the Housing Authority. This was done to start the process of having a one-stop shop i.e. applicants for housing assistance would go to one source and not be referred from the Department to the Housing Authority or vice versa. The pace of the amalgamation is expected to accelerate even further during 2007 with all the remaining staff of the Department moving to the new premises in Triq Macerata.

ANTON CAMILLERI

A/Director (Social Housing)

Housing Construction and Maintenance Department

The set-up of the Department remained the same as the previous year:

- Capital Works Section
- Administration
- Tenements Repairs Unit
- Machinery & Manpower Unit
- Drawing Office

This report concerns the activities of each section involved in contributing to the Department's main aim, namely the implementation of government policy in the construction and maintenance of government housing.

CAPITAL WORKS SECTION

The Capital Works Section consisted of the Department's architects and was responsible for the following works:

- Urban Renewal programme
- Construction of housing units (flats and maisonettes)
- Replacement of dangerous roofs in Government Tenements
- Public Gardens Programme
- Pembroke project
- Installation of lifts programme
- External plastering programme
- Wooden balconies replacement

Urban Renewal Programme

Works on the Department's Urban Renewal projects were continued in 2006:

Cospicua (St John Str) Phase II	By end year, structural works were in an advanced stage of completion. Works are expected to be completed in their entirety by mid 2007.
Floriana (Argotti Str/Lion Str)	90% of structural works were completed. Finishing works are still being carried out and are expected to be completed by mid 2008.
Valletta (91 Merchants Str)	By end year, works on the rehabilitation into 4 units were practically complete. Finishing works are expected for completion in late 2008.

Construction of Housing Units (flats & maisonettes)

The following units were completed in 2006:

Qawra (N/S in Qawra Rd) Blks 1-6	40 units	Naxxar (Triq is-Soghda) Blk H, I	14 units
Mriehel (Ta' Calleja) Plots 5, 6	6 units	Żebbuġ (Triq l-Indipendenza) Blks 1, 2	12 units
Mġarr Maisonettes/Flats	67 units	Mriehel (Ta' Calleja) Plot 11	3 units
Kirkop (Valletta Road)	10 units	M'Scala (Tal-Ġebel l-Abjad)	20 units
Kalkara (Triq il-Kapuċċini)	20 units		

Replacement of Dangerous Roofs

During 2006 works were continued on the ongoing programme for the replacement of dangerous roofs in housing units in various localities. Tenders were issued for the following:

HT 2006/003

Blk 1, Flat 7, Triq Sciortino, Żebbuġ
Blk 4, No 15, Flat 2, Triq l-Inkurunazzjoni, Bormla
20 Blk 11, Triq John Pace, Bormla
Blk F, Flat 23, Triq il-Klin, Żabbar
10, Triq il-Haddiem, Marsa

Blk B, Flat 3, Triq il-Ġanfra, Mgarr
House 1, Trejjet il-Ġeranji, Santa Luċija
Blk 3, No 7, Flat 6, Mattia Preti Square, Valletta
Blk 5A, No 11, Flat 4, Triq is-Sur, Senglea

HT 2006/004

Blk A, Ent A, Flat 5, Triq id-Dawr, Mosta
House 7, Trejjet il-Ġizimin, Santa Luċija

18, Triq il-Mithna, Bormla

HT 2006/007

No 4, Sqaq Toni Bajada, Valletta
Blk 3, Flat 7, Triq San Duminku, Valletta
No 2, Triq San Kristofru, Valletta

188F, Flat 7, Triq Sant' Ursula, Valletta
House 2, Il-Merill, Vjal in-Naspli, San Ġwann
Blk 5, House 4, Triq il-Prof Walter Ganado, Pembroke

HT 2006/034

Blk 2, Scheme 2, Flat 15, Paola Hill, Paola
Blk 1, Flat 15, Fuq San Pawl, Bormla
Blk C, No 39, Flat 2, Triq il-Kuncizzjoni, Bormla
Blk 7, Dr 20, Flat 2, Triq Wiġi Rosato, Bormla

Blk 2, No 29, Fuq San Pawl, Bormla
No 5, Flat 1, Triq San Rokku, Bormla
Blk 16E, No 5, Triq il-Gendus, Bormla

HT 2006/035

Blk A, Flat 13, Triq Bertha Kilg, San Ġiljan
Blk 8, Flat 8, Ta' Paris HE, B'Kara
22, Triq il-Banjijiet Rumani, Mgarr

Blk 10, Flat 7, Triq il-Ġnien, Qormi
Blk 1, Flat 5, Żabbar HE, Żabbar
Blk B, Flat 7, Telghat Rahal Ġdid, Paola

HT 2006/036

150, Triq Manoel De Vilhena, Gzira
Blk 3, Flat 2, Misrah il-Papa Benedettu, Senglea
Blk 5A, Dr 3, Flat 11, Triq is-Sur, Senglea
122 Flat 4, Triq Żekka, Valletta
Blk 3, No 4, Flat 6, Triq il-Punent, Valletta

88, Flat 2, Triq il-Merkanti, Valletta
138, Triq San Pawl, Valletta
13 Flat 2, Misrah Filippo Sciberras, Floriana
29 (ex 50), Flat 3, Triq Sant' Anna, Floriana

HT 2006/037

Blk 10, Dr 10, Flat 7, Triq il-Gardenja, Santa Luċija
House 7, Trejjet il-Ġeranji, Santa Luċija
Blk 2, Flat 23, Fuq San Pawl, Bormla
Blk 1, No 7, Triq San Filippu, Birgu

No 9, Triq Żimelli, Hamrun
Blk D, Flat 12, Triq Bertha Kilg, Ta' Ġorni
Blk 5B, Dr 11, Flat 3, Triq is-Sur, Isla
Blk 1, Flat 9, St John Square, Valletta

Public Gardens Programme

During 2006, the Department continued to develop public gardens in co-ordination with various local councils. Works on the following projects were completed during the year:

Gudja (Ta' Xlejli)

Siggiewi (Wied Hesri)

Works were continued on the following projects:

Luqa (Hal-Farruġ)

Ta' Ġorni H.E.

Works were also taken in hand on the following projects:

Dingli (Phase 3)
Mellieha (Ta' Pennellu)
Kerċem (HOS)

M'Xlokk (HE)
Mosta (Ta' Mlit HE)

Pembroke Project

Works on Pembroke continued and the following projects were completed in 2006:

Pembroke Blk A1-A4	64 units	Pembroke Maisonettes D55-D62	8 units
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Installation of Lifts Programme

During 2006, installation of lifts was completed in the following:

Floriana (Triq il-Kapuċċini)	1 lift	Pembroke Blks A5-A6	2 lifts
Msida (Valley Rd) Ph IIIA	2 lifts	Burmarrad Blks 2-4	3 lifts
Tarxien (Triq Dun Karm Sant)	2 lifts	Naxxar (Sghajtar) Blks A-G	7 lifts
Senglea (17 St Philip Str)	1 lift	B'Bugia (Tal-Ġebel Rd)	5 lifts
Tarxien (Triq A De Medran) Blk C	1 lift	Qawra Blks D1-D2	2 lifts
St Paul's Bay Blks 1-4	4 lifts	Qawra Blks C1-C6	6 lifts
B'Kara (Tal-Ftieh) Blks A-B	2 lifts	Pembroke A7-A1	5 lifts
M'Xlokk (Triq Axtart)	5 lifts		

A tender was also prepared and issued for the following:

Msida (Valley Rd) Phase IIIB	5 lifts
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External Plastering Programme

In 2006 works were completed on the following sites:

Blocks B, C, Triq Notabile, B'Kara	Blocks H, J, K, L, N, O, Q, Triq ix-Xemxija, Marsa
Triq San Ġorġ, Birgu	Block B1, Triq id-Dawr, Mosta
Kwartieri San Nikola, Bormla	Blocks A2, A3, A4, A5, Triq il-Gzari, Mosta
Blocks X, Triq il-Ġdida, Bormla	Blocks C1, Triq il-Planeċ, Mosta
Block C, Triq il-Kunċizzjoni, Bormla	Block F1, F3, Triq in-Nasba, Mosta
Blocks A, C, Triq il-Pellegrinaġġ, Bormla	Blocks G4, K1, K2, Triq it-Trinċetta, Mosta
Triq John Pace XI, Bormla	Block B2, Triq l-Istiratur, Mosta
Blocks 2, 7, 13, Triq Wiġi Rosato, Bormla	Blocks D, F, G, Bini tal-Gvern, Paola
Blocks 1,3, Triq il-Mithna, Gudja	Block G, Triq Ġuże D'Amato, Paola
Blocks J, M, N, PA, Q, R, S, Tar-Rabbat, Hamrun	Block B, Triq l-Arkata, Paola
Block B, Triq Alessandru, Hamrun	Block 15, Triq il-Begonja, Santa Luċija
Block 3, Misrah il-Papa Benedettu, Isla	Block 12, Triq il-Gardenja, Santa Luċija
Block 6, Misrah l-Erbgha ta' Settembru, Isla	Block F1, Qasam Bini tal-Gvern, Ta' Xbiex
Block 5B, Triq D'Homedes, Isla	Block A3, Triq il-Watar, Ta' Xbiex
Triq l-Oratorju, Isla	Block C, Triq Santa Monica, Tarxien
Block R, Triq Azzopardi, Marsa	Triq il-Mithna, Valletta
Blocks F, G, V, W, X, Triq il-Jum, Marsa	Triq Marsamxett, Valletta
Block A, Triq is-Sebh, Marsa	Triq San Ġużepp, Valletta
Block A, Triq is-Sliem, Marsa	

In addition, tenders were issued for works on the following sites:

HT 2006/012

Block 1-14, Vjal de La Cruz, Qormi

HT 2006/013

Blocks 1-4, Ta' Farzina, Qormi

Block B, Ta' Pascarella, Qormi

HT 2006/014

Blocks A-J, Ghajn Kajjet, Rabat

HT 2006/015

Block 2, Qasam Bini tal-Gvern, Siġġiewi

Block 3, Qasam Bini tal-Gvern, Siġġiewi

Entrance D, Binja Hesri, Siġġiewi

Entrance G, Binja Hesri, Siġġiewi

HT 2006/016

Blocks A-K, Taċ-Ċawla, Rabat, Gozo

HT 2006/017

Blocks 1-6, No 214, Triq ix-Xatt, Gżira

HT 2006/018

Ent G, Flats Indipendenza, Binja Santa Venera
Ent H, Flats Indipendenza, Binja Santa Venera
Ent J, Flats Indipendenza, Binja Santa Venera
Block A, Triq il-Palazz l-Ahmar

Block D, Triq il-Palazz l-Ahmar
Block E, Triq il-Palazz l-Ahmar
Block F, Triq il-Palazz l-Ahmar
Block 2, Binja Binarju

HT 2006/019

Block A, Ta' Paris, B'Kara
Block B, Ta' Paris, B'Kara
Block C3, Ta' Paris, B'Kara
Block C4, Ta' Paris, B'Kara
Block C5, Ta' Paris, B'Kara

Ent F, Binja Vista, Triq Dun Mawru Inguanez, B'Kara
Ent G, Binja Vista, Triq Dun Mawru Inguanez, B'Kara
Ent H, Binja Vista, Triq Dun Mawru Inguanez, B'Kara
Ent I, Binja Vista, Triq Dun Mawru Inguanez, B'Kara
Block A, Binja tat-Torri, Tal-Qattus, B'Kara

Replacement of Wooden Balconies

In 2006 works were completed on the following sites:

37 Fl 4, Triq Felic, Bormla
21, Triq is-Suq, Floriana
Block 3, Flats 6, 7, 8, Triq l-Gherixem, Rabat
Ent A, B, D, Triq il-Ghajn, Valletta

186, Triq ir-Repubblika, Valletta
127, Triq San Kristoforu, Valletta
249, Triq Sant' Orsla, Valletta

In addition, tenders were also issued for the following:

HT 2006/047

56, Triq Nofs in-Nhar, Valletta
No 7, Triq Felic, Valletta
Flat 8, Binja San Filippu, Triq is-Sirena, Senglea
66 Flat 4, Sta Lucia Street, Valletta

110, Triq il-Lvant, Valletta
70, Triq il-Lvant, Valletta
111, St Joseph Street, Valletta
14, Triq il-Gdida, Valletta

HT 2006/048

No 1, Flat 6, Triq San Mikiel, Valletta
151, Flat 3, St Paul's Street, Valletta
95, Republic Street, Valletta

114/1, Triq San Duminku, Valletta
61, North Street, Valletta

ADMINISTRATION

The role of the Administration was to carry out the following functions:

- Correspondence and Information Management
- Maintenance of the Tenements Repairs Database
- Procurement of supplies and services for operation and maintenance
- Registry duties
- Procurement of works and services up to Lm20,000 (Departmental tenders)
- Direct processing of wages and salaries to staff
- Accounts (Consolidated Fund and Housing Authority financed projects)

TENEMENTS REPAIRS UNIT

As in the previous year, the role of this Unit was:

- *Inspections of Government Tenements following tenants' requests for repairs* - By the end of 2006 the total number of jobs in the Tenement Repairs Database was 40,042, of which 3,764 were entered in 2006 alone.
- *Co-ordination with the Capital Works Section in carrying out works* - As a result of the co-ordination with the Capital Works Section, a number of tenders were completed/taken in hand in 2006.
- *Co-ordination with the Machinery & Manpower Unit in carrying out works* - As a result of the certified requests, 1,787 jobs to be carried out by the Unit were approved in 2006.

- *Supervision of works on tenements repairs (excluding roofs replacement) by contract labour* – As a result of the certified requests, 959 jobs were carried out by contract labour in 2006 and 151 jobs were approved and still to be carried out.

MACHINERY AND MANPOWER UNIT

This unit, consisting of the Department's direct labour force, was responsible for the implementation of the Tenements Repairs Policy by direct labour. The total number of cases resolved by the unit in 2006 was 1,799. Works included in this total comprised repairs to spalling concrete roofs, repairs to damaged horizontal and vertical drains, pointing of parapet walls, and repairs to poorly-laid roof surfaces etc.

DRAWING OFFICE

The Section was responsible for all drawings prepared by the Department during 2006:

- the preparation of proposals for new housing/slum clearance projects
- measured drawings of premises affected by Urban Renewal Projects
- measured drawings of plans and elevations as carried out of completed projects
- the preparation of proposals for new public gardens.

ANTON CAMILLERI

Director (Housing Construction & Maintenance)

Department of Corporate Services

The Department of Corporate Services of the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity provided support services in Financial Management and Planning to all the departments, organisations and entities within the Ministry. Its main task was to co-ordinate all the activities of a corporate nature and to ensure the proper implementation of all policies derived from the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity, the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Finance.

The Department monitored the management of funds of all the departments and entities and it submitted a regular monthly Financial Management Report to the Ministry of Finance. It was also responsible for the drawing up of budgetary proposals for 2007.

The Department's Contracts and Procurement Section provided its services to the Ministry, and departments/directorates within the Ministry and to the Refugee Open Centres/Homes with regard to the issuing of quotations and tenders for recurrent and capital items. This section was responsible for the Ministry's Green Initiative Policy by the regular distribution of green tips via e-mail, the separation and weekly disposal of separated waste including paper, plastic, glass, batteries and toners/cartridges, and the installation of photovoltaic panels at the Ministry's Head Office.

The Department of Corporate Services was also involved in:

- Replying to Parliamentary Questions;
- Drafting replies to queries made by the Auditor General;
- Submitting requests and returns to the OPM and the Treasury including quarterly Accrual Accounting reports;
- Recruiting casual substitute clerks on definite contract, granting of qualification allowances and implementing a common policy to officers on reduced hours;
- Following up of progressions and promotions of staff and the drawing up of the relative letters of progressions in accordance with the 1993 Agreement of the General Service Grades; and
- Preparation of more than 400 Performance Management Programmes for employees occupying the grade of clerk up to senior principal;
- Updating of employees' vacation leave records, sick leave records and personal files and the inputting of data on HRIMS;
- Liaising with the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) whenever employees commence or terminate their employment;
- Carrying out of a major overhaul with respect to the conversion of the manual records system to a computerised one;
- Processing, updating and administration of salaries of all employees;
- Drafting of the Data Protection Policy for the Ministry and the updating of records, procedures and policies to conform with the Data Protection Act;
- Preparation of all documents related to travel abroad; and
- Responsibility for the Health and Safety function of the Ministry.

During the year, the Department of Corporate Services continued to assume the responsibility for all the Adult Training Centres (ATCs). In this regard, the Department managed the human resources and administration of the ATCs including the transport of disabled clients and the procurement and provision of materials and supplies for the Centres. 29 new clients who formerly attended Special Schools within the

Education Department were admitted into ATCs and 13 new support workers were recruited to care for these new clients.

The Department's Projects and Maintenance Section provided refurbishment works and maintenance support to the Ministry and to the departments/directorates within the same Ministry and to the Refugee Open Centres/Homes for which this Ministry is responsible. This Section continued to be engaged in the conversion of a government school at Marsa into a house of residence for Irregular Immigrants by carrying out masonry, electrical and plumbing works, the paving of floors and the plastering and painting of walls. Other minor works were also carried out at the offices of the Ministry, departments and district offices of the Department of Social Security.

Regarding training, the Department of Corporate Services continued to organise training courses for all employees within the Ministry and departments/directorates of the Ministry. Training was carried out in-house, by SDO and by the private sector.

ANDRE` VASSALLO GRANT
Director (Corporate Services)

Benefit Fraud and Investigation Directorate

The Benefit Fraud and Investigation Directorate was established late in 2005. By the end of the year the Directorate had identified and set up a secure area from where to conduct its operations, which were also organised during this same period. Since then the Directorate has been focusing its resources on investigating all reports of alleged abuse in Social Security benefits.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

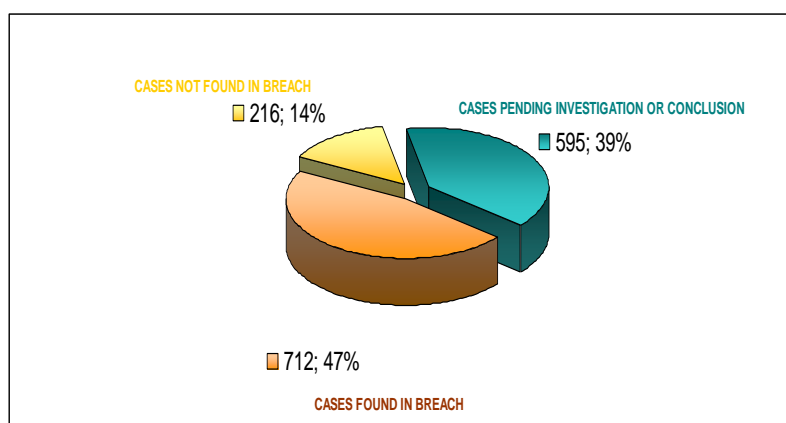
Reports, which in most cases are anonymous, reach the Directorate through various means; by phone including the free-phone (8007 2345), through e-mails, through letters and other documentation. Other requests for investigation are received from the Department of Social Security. The Directorate takes also the initiative to identify other sources/trends where benefit fraud is suspected. The Directorate regularly monitors closely all financial data that is uploaded on the SABS computer system operated by the Department of Social Security. This data which is obtained from the local financial institutions is used to investigate and make recommendations to the Department of Social Security to suspend the claims of those beneficiaries of non-contributory means tested benefits soon after their financial means exceed the applicable financial scales. Further investigations are then conducted in those cases where the claimants to such benefits register a sudden substantial increase in their financial assets.

CO-ORDINATION

The Directorate co-ordinates its operations with a number of government departments/entities and with the private sector in order to obtain information that is considered critical for the conclusion of its investigations. Apart from this, the Director (Benefit Fraud and Investigation) chairs two Committees that facilitate co-ordination with a number of government departments/entities.

OPERATIONS

During 2006, the Benefit Fraud and Investigation Directorate conducted, through its Inspectorate, 1,900 on-site inspections. From these inspections and from other investigations conducted by the Directorate, 928 cases were successfully concluded.



The Directorate recommended to the Department of Social Security that the 712 cases found to be in breach of the provisions of the Social Security Act be suspended and that resulting overpayments be collected. As some of the cases that were found in breach had more than one social benefit in payment, a total of 862 benefits were suspended as specified in the table below. The estimated annual savings that resulted from these investigations totalled Lm1,505,602.

Suspended Benefits	
Invalidity Pension	10
Supplementary Allowance	75
Child Allowance	69
Sickness Assistance	215
Social Assistance	194
Unemployment Assistance	183
Age Pension	50
Social Assistance – Single Unmarried Parent	36
Social Assistance – Female	7
Carer's Pension	10
Sickness Benefit	1
Injury Benefit	1
Milk Grant	1
Pension for the Visually Impaired	2
Special Unemployment Benefit	7
Two-Thirds Pension	1
Total	862

RAYMOND MUSCAT

Director (Benefit Fraud & Investigation)

Policy Development and Programme Implementation Directorate

In January 2006, the Policy Development Directorate within the Office of the Permanent Secretary was assigned the additional responsibility for Programme Implementation. As a result of this restructuring, during 2006 the Directorate was not only responsible for the development of policies but also for overseeing the implementation of measures and initiatives falling under the remit of the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity.

During 2006, the Directorate mainly focused upon the following key tasks:

- the drawing up of a National Drugs Policy;
- preliminary research and discussions for the development of a National Alcohol Policy;
- drawing up of the National Action Plan on Social Inclusion (2006-2008);
- overseeing the compilation of Malta's National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion (2006-2008) and the translation of the document into Maltese;
- the identification of burdensome procedures and co-ordination of Better Regulation Measures across the Ministry;
- monitoring the progress of the 2006 budgetary measures pertaining to the remit of the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity;
- the drawing up and/or updating of those sections relating to social policy and social welfare in such national documents as the National Reform Programme, the National Strategic Reference Framework and the Sustainable Development Programme.

Besides the tasks indicated above, which were all completed within the set time-frames, during 2006 the Directorate was also significantly involved in the development of a single means testing mechanism across Government, and an extensive overhaul exercise of the Social Security system.

In its commitment to promote collaboration and networking among all stakeholders in the area of social inclusion, in January 2006 the Directorate organised a national consultation seminar that brought together around 200 participants. This activity not only gave stakeholders the opportunity to share views and discuss concerns, but its outcomes also facilitated the drawing up of the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion for the period 2006-2008.

The Customer Care Management office that also falls within the remit of the Directorate and which is responsible for monitoring the Service Standards of all departments within the Ministry, dealt with a total of 1,623 cases (452 cases referred by the OPM Customer Care System and 1,171 contact forms and e-mails received through the Ministry's website and generic e-mail account). The five-day deadline for urgent cases and the 10-day time-frame for all other cases were observed in the majority of cases. In those instances involving complex issues that could not be addressed within the set time-frames, the client was always kept informed of developments.

During 2006, the Directorate ensured that it was always duly represented by a member of staff in both national and European meetings, seminars and conferences focusing on various social policy issues mainly those concerning social protection, social inclusion, equality and irregular immigration. The Directorate therefore continued to keep abreast with developments in various areas of social policy and social welfare.

DR MARISA SCERRI

Director (Policy Development & Programme Implementation)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Foreign Affairs

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR MALTA'S FOREIGN POLICY

With the publication of the Strategic Objectives for Malta's Foreign Policy, early in 2006, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs set out the framework for it to be more proactive internationally, while at the same time retaining a definite and clear focus. This document purports to be a framework document which sets out the general lines of the main objectives of Malta's foreign policy and serves as an action plan for structured planning for Head Office, Malta's Embassies and Consular networks.

Malta's perspective in foreign policy stems from our own realities - we are a country which wholly forms part of Europe and wholly forms part of the Mediterranean; we are on a cultural frontier between Europe and North Africa, speaking a language which fuses Semitic and Romance; we are necessarily foreign trade oriented. Our foreign policy must reflect our realities and our Maltese and European values. These values fashion our positions in the world today: solidarity; respect for democracy, the rule of law and human rights; a humanitarian approach; a propensity to giving.

This new context of EU Membership provided us with new challenges, which required new approaches. Membership has provided us with the tools to influence decision-making in European policies, including common foreign and security policy and therefore enabled us to strengthen our relevance and enhance our weight in international affairs in all contexts, regional, bilateral, multilateral and global. Strength and relevance in a multilateral and/or regional context feeds strength and relevance in bilateral relations and vice versa.

The formulation of Strategic Objectives of Malta's Foreign Policy must therefore be seen within the context of the new reality of membership of the European Union, as well as within the reality of a globalised world economy, increased competition, new emerging markets and industrial powerhouses, a defunct Cold War paradigm, a reform and review of the United Nations Organisation, the emergence of terrorism as a global threat, religious fundamentalism and the rise of illegal immigration.

CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTORATE

Human Resources

During the year under review, the Ministry finalised the restructuring exercise aimed at strengthening its top management structure, through the realignment of duties within its political directorates and the subsequent appointment of a number of officers to these key positions. Two new Directors General were appointed:

- Director General-Political, responsible for Global Issues and External Relations and Mediterranean Affairs
- Director General-European and European Affairs, responsible for General Affairs and International Trade and European Affairs.

Four new Directors were appointed to head the respective directorates:

- Director, Global Issues
- Director, External Relations and Mediterranean Affairs
- Director, General Affairs and International Trade
- Director, European Affairs.

A new Director, responsible for Consular and Protocol Services, was also appointed to fill the existing vacancy.

The Ministry also proceeded with strengthening the various directorates by filling existing vacant posts at lower levels, through a promotion exercise for serving personnel, as well as initiating the recruitment procedures for the engagement of new officers in the diplomatic service. A number of officers were in fact promoted to the rank of Counsellor, whilst calls were issued for the post of Second Secretaries and Information and Communications Technology officers.

After due consultations with the pertinent quarters, the necessary procedures were put in motion for the recruitment of a number of officers to serve within the *Forum Malta fl-Ewropa* (FME). Likewise, procedures for the recruitment of a number of officers to perform service within the Central Visa Unit were also initiated and followed up as necessary.

As part of the programme to implement a number of service-wide measures/reforms, as laid out in the Collective Agreement for Employees in the Public Service which came into effect in January 2005, ministry officials were offered the opportunity of working flexi-hours - a number of officers have in fact taken up this option. As in previous years, the Ministry sponsored a number of law students from the University of Malta as summer workers.

Training

Throughout 2006, ministry personnel participated in 46 different courses; a number were organised by the Ministry, others by the Staff Development Organisation. These included training in Languages; Information Technology; Accountancy; Management; and European Studies.

The Directorate Corporate Services will be implementing an Electronic Cash Management System in 2007 and, for this purpose, a number of meetings were held with MITTS personnel to design and implement this system. Once implemented, the departmental accounts system will be extended to the Missions Abroad, with the advantage of securing timely and accurate information about each Mission's financial status. Two information meetings were organised for officers currently serving abroad in an effort that they be informed/briefed on this new accounting system.

Refurbishing Works

During the course of the year, the Ministry continued with its refurbishing programme aimed at creating more and better office space for its staff. Refurbishing works in the premises occupied by the Ministry at the Old University Building in Valletta were completed, enabling the deployment of the Arab World Observatory to these premises. Extensive refurbishing works were also undertaken at the premises hosting the *Forum Malta fl-Ewropa* in Republic Street.

As part of the Ministry's contribution towards the realisation of Green Projects, the Ministry installed a number of solar panels in an effort to reduce power consumption; a number of paper-recycling bins have been procured.

Architect's plans for the complete rehabilitation of the basement at Palazzo Parisio were submitted to MEPA; the decision/approval from MEPA for these works is still awaited.

CHOGM

Full co-operation was afforded to the accounting firm engaged by Government to close off the CHOGM accounts; all matters were subsequently settled within the established time frames.

INFORMATION AND MANAGEMENT UNIT

International Connectivity Project

The International Connectivity project has now entered into its third year. The Information Management Unit continued to monitor the performance of all connections, now totalling 18. In 2006 the Unit secured upgrades in connections in the Malta Missions in Rome, London and Brussels while, at the same time, it has secured new connections namely in the Missions in The Hague, Copenhagen, Strasbourg, and Riyadh; work has also been carried out on the migration of the Cairo and Brussels Missions.

Visa Information System (VIS)

The first two pilot sites for VIS implementation in Moscow and Tunis were successfully completed. Works are ongoing in an effort to further implement the system in Cairo and Tripoli in the first half of 2007.

The IMO has been actively participating in the monthly VIS Working Group in Brussels - this working group deals with the EU VIS, a system to which Malta will, in due course be connected, in view of Schengen membership. The Unit has also been actively participating in Schengen Evaluations and in preparations in connection with Malta's Schengen membership.

Departmental Accounting System (DAS)

In 2005, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had embarked on a DAS module project, specifically designed for use within the Malta Missions and Consular posts abroad. This module will enable Missions to use the DAS, thus reducing the duplication of work that is currently being carried out by the Missions abroad and at Head Office.

The requirements analysis for this module has been concluded and the design stage of the project initiated. Meetings with various participants have taken place. Pilot implementation in at least three sites should be in place by mid-2007.

Information Security

The IMU has continued to monitor the handling of EU Classified Information by MFA staff in the light of EU security regulations. The IMO is a member of the EU Networks Sub-Committee, a committee which deals with all EU networks and other networks not EU related; she also represents the Government of Malta in the Working Group dealing with EU Networks (COTEL/COMLEC) – this meets in Brussels on a quarterly basis.

The Unit has played an active role in the implementation of Malta's twinning agreement on Security with the UK – this agreement envisages the enhancement and the establishment of security policies and regulations within Government, as well as the provision of security training and awareness, to which staff members of the IMU have been invited to participate. In this context the IMU participated in a training session held in collaboration with the Belfast Police Authorities.

The Unit has been a catalyst in the introduction of physical security measures within MFA and within Missions abroad. As part of the Schengen recommendations, the IMU has been actively involved in the security upgrades of a number of Missions namely Tunis, Moscow, Cairo and Tripoli.

CENTRAL VISA UNIT

In 2006 Malta benefited from EU funds, under Transition Facility 2004, for the upgrading of a number of its diplomatic Missions; additional EU funds were secured for a Twinning Light Project, between the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Agency for European Integration and Economic Development (AEI) of Austria, under the European Commission's Transitional Facility programme for 2004.

The project, entitled *Strengthening Malta's Capacity to Issue Visas* saw experts, drawn mainly from the Austrian and the German Ministries of Foreign Affairs, as well as from the International Centre for Migration, Policy Development in Vienna, contributing to a well-balanced set of activity modules, held between March and September 2006.

These activity modules lead to the achievement of a set of mandatory results, thereby strengthening Malta's administrative and operational capacity to issue visas in accordance with EU standards. Two of these modules included on-the-spot training and study visits in Tripoli and Tunis; during these visits, the Maltese delegates visited other EU consulates in the region in order to gain first-hand experience in the procedures being adopted in consulates of Schengen Member States.

Thanks to the Consular Co-operation Agreement with Austria, which came into force on 1 August 2006, a number of Austrian consulates (29 in all) may now issue visas to third country nationals who wish to visit Malta.

The Unit was also responsible for taking the necessary steps aimed at securing the new premises for the Unit, which should be set up in Floriana, as well as in securing the upgrading of this Unit, both in terms of human resources as well as in terms of operations.

DIRECTORATE GENERAL - POLITICAL

From a general perspective, the Directorate General focused its efforts on ensuring that Malta's foreign policy objectives on bilateral (non-EU), regional and global issues were pursued, not least through active participation in the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the United Nations and the Commonwealth.

Such efforts included the preparation of positions for interventions at the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC), Coreper, PSC and relevant working group meetings. Inputs were provided to the formulation of EU positions both on issues relating to Malta's immediate neighbourhood, including the Middle East Peace Process, and also in areas of primary international importance outside Malta's neighbourhood.

Briefing sessions were conducted in the run-up to GAERC to communicate Malta's positions on the various agenda items to the diplomatic representation of other Member States in Malta.

Global Issues Directorate

The Global Issues Directorate pursued objectives aimed at maintaining and enhancing Malta's relations with international organisations, as outlined in the Strategic Objectives of Malta's Foreign Policy, such as the United Nations and its Agencies, the Commonwealth, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Hague Conference on Private International Law.

The Directorate also co-ordinated the Minister's visit to New York, where he attended and participated at the 61st session of United Nations General Assembly; likewise, the Directorate gave all the necessary assistance and input with regard to the Deputy Prime Minister's participation in the United Nations High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, also held in New York.

The Directorate was also responsible for the preparations of the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers' Meeting, the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) and the Commonwealth Connects - all meetings were held in parallel with the United Nations General Assembly in September.

Six training programmes, dealing with various themes, were organised under the Malta/Commonwealth Third Country Programmes:

- Port Operations
- Coastal Recreational Tourism
- Insurance Management
- Banking and Financing for Small States
- Competitiveness Strategies for Small States
- Post Graduate Diploma in Contemporary Diplomacy with Special Focus on ICTs.

Special and particular focus was given to addressing the international aspects of illegal immigration, with the Directorate being actively involved in pursuing Malta's interests in this regard, particularly, although not exclusively, at the European Union level, where efforts aimed at securing an enhanced dialogue between the EU and the third countries were secured. Such action included the co-ordination and processes leading to the convening of the Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development held in Rabat, Morocco in July 2006 and, the EU/African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development held in Tripoli, Libya in November 2006. Officials from the Directorate participated actively in the appropriate EU Working Group, where the formulation of the Final Declarations for both conferences were discussed, agreed to and drafted. A preparatory meeting to the Tripoli conference was hosted by Malta in October 2006.

In line with one of the Ministry's strategic objectives, the Directorate was actively involved in the drafting of Malta's Development Policy, as well as in organising Malta's participation in the European Development Days organised by the EU Commission in Brussels on 15-16 September.

The Directorate was also instrumental in securing the necessary co-ordination with regard to the candidature of, and successful election of, Prof Ian Refalo as a member to the International Humanitarian Fact Finding Commission.

Officials from the Directorate regularly attended meetings of ten CFSP Working Group held in Brussels, apart from participating in various international meetings/conferences. The Working Groups attended by this Directorate – Global Issues are as follows: COJUR/ICC (Jurists Working group, dealing with international criminal court, CODUN (Disarmament), CONOP (Non proliferation), COMAR (Law of the Sea), CONUN (United Nations), COHOM (Human Rights), COTER (Terrorism), COARM (arms Exports), COAFR (Africa), HLWG on Migration and Development (High Level Working group).

The following Conventions, Agreements and Protocols were signed, acceded to or ratified by Malta during 2006:

Accessions	
22 September	Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects (Protocol V)
18 December	UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions
Agreements	
21 September	Between the Government of Malta and the International Atomic Energy Agency: Country Programme Framework 2007-2011
18 December	Co-operation Agreement between the Government of Malta and the International Organisation for Migration
Ratifications	
31 July	Convention on the Elimination of Double Taxation in connection with the adjustments of profits of associated enterprises (Arbitration Convention)
19 September	Convention on the law applicable to contractual obligations, first and second Protocols
1 December	Convention on Biological Diversity – Montreal Canada 29 January 2002

External Relations and Mediterranean Affairs Directorate

Following the Ministry's restructuring exercise, the Directorate assumed responsibility for Malta's relations with the rest of the world, with the exception of European countries, and for co-ordinating Malta's participation in regional Mediterranean fora, such as the Euro-Mediterranean Process, the Mediterranean Forum and the Western Mediterranean Dialogue (5+5).

Officials from the Directorate participated in the meetings of the following Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) working groups: COMAG (Mashrek/Maghreb), COMEM (Middle East Gulf), COMEP (Middle East Peace Process), COEST (eastern Europe), COASI (Asia), COTRA (Transatlantic i.e. USA and Canada) and COLAT (Latin America) that are held on a regular basis in Brussels. In addition, participation was ensured in meetings for senior officials of the Euro-Mediterranean Process, as well as of the Mediterranean Forum.

The Directorate was involved in the compilation of the necessary documentation for outgoing and incoming ministerial visits, with the Minister of Foreign Affairs visiting Egypt, Tunisia, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Libya and the Arab League. Additionally, the Minister of Foreign Affairs participated in the annual Ministerial Conferences of the Mediterranean Forum, held in Cairo, Egypt and Alicante, Spain, as well as the Euro-Mediterranean Process held in Tampere, Finland.

The Directorate was also involved in the preparation of the state visit undertaken by HE the President in Tunisia and also for the Prime Minister's participation in two summits, namely the EU-Latin America (EU-LAC) and the EU-Asia (ASEM) summits held in Vienna and Helsinki respectively.

In line with its objective to further strengthen the dialogue between the European Union and the Arab World, Malta has proposed the convening of a meeting, at Foreign Ministers' level, between the EU and the Arab League. The objective of the meeting is the political engagement between Foreign Ministers of the European Union and of the League of Arab States on issues which are of common interest to all concerned as well as being an important statement to further politics of moderation as opposed to the politics of extremism and divisiveness. The issue has been brought up at various levels with Malta's partners in the EU.

During the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York, the Minister of Foreign Affairs announced that Malta would be contributing Lm10,000 to alleviate the situation in the Palestinian Territories. The Directorate established the necessary contacts with the Office of the President of the Palestinian Authority, the Dutch representation in Ramallah and the Commission team responsible for the Temporary International Mechanism in order to conclude the necessary documentation for the transfer and eventual distribution to a number of so-called Low Income Cases in the Territories. The Ministry also pledged Lm10,000 to assist Lebanon in the aftermath of the war.

Having initiated discussions within the Inter-Parliamentary Union for the setting up of a Parliamentary Assembly for the Mediterranean, Malta subsequently offered to host the Executive Secretariat of the Process. During a meeting of the Assembly held in Amman, Jordan a decision was taken to locate the Secretariat in Malta and efforts are underway, led by the Office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to have the Secretariat established as soon as possible.

During the course of the year the Directorate co-ordinated the negotiation and conclusion of a number of bilateral agreements with countries falling under its responsibility:

State	Date	Agreement
Tunisia	February 2006	Agreement on Joint Oil Exploration and Exploitation
	July 2006	Agreement on Co-operation in the fields of Medical Services and Public Health
	July 2006	Co-operation Agreement in the field of Information and Communication Technologies

	July 2006	Co-operation Agreement on Handicrafts
	December 2006	Extradition Agreement
United Arab Emirates	March 2006	Double Taxation Agreement
Saudi Arabia	April 2006	General Agreement on Economic, Trade, Investments, Scientific, technical, Cultural, Youth and Sports Co-operation
America	May 2006	Extradition Agreement
	May 2006	Treaty on Certain Aspects of Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters
Arab League	September 2006	Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malta and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States
Singapore	March 2006	Double Taxation Agreement

DIRECTORATE GENERAL - EUROPEAN AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

One of the Directorate General's main focuses is to ensure active and effective participation in the EU decision-making processes in an effort to translate EU membership into a success, thus giving added value to Malta and its citizens. The Directorate General was horizontally responsible for the Consultative Meeting on European Affairs (COMEU) and the *Forum Malta fl-Ewropa*. The former is composed of the social and economic stakeholders, namely the constituted bodies members of the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD), as well as a number of experts in EU policy and/or legislation. It met a number of times to address and discuss issues that reflected the current European debates and issues of direct interest to Malta: Working Time Directive, passenger car taxes, cleaner air, consumer credit agreements and EU anti-dumping measures on footwear imported from China and Vietnam.

On a parallel front, the *Forum Malta fl-Ewropa* was set up to ensure and strengthen the contact between government entities and civil society. The Forum provided information on European affairs, held various consultation meetings with civil society on a variety of issues, ranging from pyrotechnics to market access strategy, and also supported the private sector and civil society in obtaining access to EU funds. By proactively engaging with civil society and the social and economic stakeholders, the Directorate General ensured that the specificities arising from Malta's island status, as well as the peculiarities of its economy, were duly taken into consideration when formulating positions for European Union fora.

Officials from within this Directorate General participated in several council formation meetings, as well as other EU co-ordination and working party meetings; the Director General accompanied the Minister to the monthly General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) meetings.

European Affairs Directorate

This Directorate's main focus is to maintain and promote bilateral relations between Malta and the Member States of the European Union, as well as with other European countries involved in the process of EU membership or integration; it is also responsible for overseeing Malta's participation in the European structures and processes, namely within the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

The Directorate's objectives seek to strengthen bilateral relations, thus seeking to maximise on the political and economic benefits for Malta. Within the European organisations of the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and specific Working Groups of the European Union, this Directorate sought to advance Malta's objectives with regard to promoting democratisation and the respect for the rule of law and human rights, as well as the prevention and promotion of peaceful settlement of conflicts.

During 2006, officers from within this Directorate participated in a number of meetings dealing with the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), Working Groups of COSCE (Council of Europe and OSCE) and COWEB (Western Balkans).

This Directorate was also responsible for compiling the necessary documentation for a number of Heads of Government and Ministerial visits; these included dignitaries from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy, Croatia, Bulgaria, Spain, Portugal, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Slovak Republic and Belgium. The Head of State of Ireland paid an official visit to Malta in October 2006. The Directorate also handled the establishment of diplomatic relations between Malta and Montenegro.

The necessary documentation was prepared and assistance afforded with regard to the preparation of official visits abroad by the Minister of Foreign Affairs; the Directorate also co-ordinated matters relating to the Prime Minister's official visits to Finland, France, Italy and Croatia.

Another important role related to the task of securing support for Ambassador Dr Joseph Licari's candidature for the post of Vice-Chairman of the Governing Board of the Council of Europe Development Bank.

With regard to Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Directorate was involved in the preparations for Malta's participation at the 13th OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting, held in Brussels on 4-5 December 2006. The Minister of Foreign Affairs participated at the Autumn session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, held in Malta on 19-21 November 2006, during which he made a key note intervention at the Mediterranean Forum of the Assembly on issues relating to the situation in the Middle East and had meetings with the OSCE Secretary General and the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

In its efforts to strengthen the bilateral juridical framework, during the period under consideration, the Directorate in co-ordination with other ministries concluded, signed and/or ratified 10 bilateral agreements in various areas of bilateral co-operation:

State	Agreement
Bulgaria	Co-operation Agreement on Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Substances and Organised Crime, Signed: 21 July 2006
Croatia	Protocol of Co-operation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malta and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Croatia, Signed: 6 March 2006
France	Protocol of Co-operation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malta and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France, Signed: 8 December 2006
Greece	Double Taxation Agreement, Signed: 13 October 2006
Ireland	Protocol of Co-operation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malta and the Department of Foreign Affairs of Ireland, 6 October 2006
Latvia	Protocol of Co-operation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malta and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, Signed: 21 September 2006
Montenegro	Agreement on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations, Signed: 20 July 2006
Spain	Exchange of Letters completing the ratification of the Double Taxation Agreement signed on 8 November 2005. Entered into force on: 12 September 2006.
Switzerland	Memorandum of Understanding between the Swiss Federation and the European Union through which Malta was allocated the sum of Lm826,000 as part of the Swiss Financial Contribution towards new EU Member States, Signed: 27 February 2006
United Kingdom	Memorandum regarding Scottish Criminal Cases Review, Signed: 6 June 2006

General Affairs and International Trade Directorate

The main objectives of this Directorate are to promote Malta's interests in international commerce; to formulate and promote Malta's positions on the various agenda items on the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC); and to promote Maltese culture and identity abroad.

In this context, this Directorate conducted briefing sessions for diplomatic representations of other Member States in the run-up to GAERC, in an effort to communicate and explain positions taken by Malta's on the various agenda items, as well as to seek support for any initiative that Malta may, from time to time, have taken.

During 2006, the General Affairs and International Trade Directorate was responsible for ensuring that Malta's positions and interests were safeguarded and pursued through active participation within the GAERC. This Council formation, apart from covering Common Foreign and Security Policy issues, also covers European affairs which include enlargement, the constitutional reform, the future of Europe, inter-institutional issues, external trade and general European policy questions.

The Directorate was also responsible for the legal transposition of those legislative instruments for which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is lead Ministry. In this capacity, the Directorate also monitored the pipeline *acquis* and subsequently drew up the necessary explanatory memoranda for eventual approval by the Minister and the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC). In this regard, the Directorate participated regularly in the said IMC.

The Directorate provided the necessary inputs for the monthly meetings of GAERC and for the half-yearly European Council meetings, as well as co-ordinated various inputs related to Green Papers, Directives and other EU-related issues.

Officials of the Directorate participated in meetings abroad, particularly in the Malta Twinning Light project, the on-site visits to the Malta Embassies in Tripoli and Tunis, as well as in meetings of the Working Party on Enlargement and Countries Negotiating Accession to the EU, held in Brussels.

Another main objective of this Directorate relates to the promotion of Malta's commercial and cultural interests abroad. In this regard, the Directorate organised various commercial delegations, which included business delegations that accompanied HE the President on his state visits to Latvia, Tunisia and Croatia, as well as the Minister of Foreign Affairs on his official visits to Croatia and Tunisia.

It is also pertinent to highlight the Directorate's involvement with regard to the visit to Malta of the Croatian Chamber for Small Scale Enterprises, as well as its involvement in the Malta Meeting of the Malta/China Economic Mixed Commission.

Throughout the year under review, the Directorate was in regular contact with the Ministry for Tourism and Culture, the Malta Council for Culture and the Arts, the Malta Tourism Authority, Air Malta and other local cultural organisations, in an ongoing effort to promote Maltese culture overseas. To this end, the Directorate was also of continuous service to the Malta Missions abroad and assisted in several initiatives.

A further objective of this Directorate relates to the workings of the Sanctions Monitoring Board, with the Director General assuming the responsibility of Chairman for this board. During 2006, the Directorate undertook to review the working modalities, as well as the composition of the Board, with additional members being included on the board in an effort to ensure that all the operative areas of sanctions' implementation were in fact being covered. The respective Legal Notice and Government Notice were published towards the end of 2006.

An important task related to the continual monitoring of any UN Security Council-imposed sanctions, as well as any restrictive measures imposed by the European Union. These included, in particular, the UN sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Directorate was also responsible for international trade and in this connection vetted the various Instruction Notes and Memoranda on all major Community trade decisions, prepared by the relevant ministries, prior to them being submitted for approval by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. In this regard, as required, the Directorate held consultation meetings with other ministries, as well as the constituted bodies.

The Directorate provided the necessary inputs by way of briefs and background papers on the current state of play at the World Trade Organisation/Doha Development Agenda negotiations and major European Union initiatives in view of the monthly GAERC meetings.

PROTOCOL AND CONSULAR DIRECTORATE

Protocol

Visits

During the year under review, the Directorate was responsible for assisting in the preparatory organisational work, as well as rendering assistance, to visiting dignitaries to Malta notably, HE Mary McAleese, President of Ireland; the official visits of HE Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Prime Minister of Denmark; the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Croatia, Germany, Latvia and other Ministers from Spain, France, Slovakia and Italy. The Directorate also assisted in the private visits of HRH Queen Margrethe II and Prince Henrik, Queen of Denmark and Royal Consort; The Hon Jens Stoltenberg Prime Minister of Norway; Mr Toshiaki Kaifu, former Prime Minister of Japan, as well as Dr Mario Soares, former President of Portugal and Patron of the International Ocean Institute conducted a working visit to Malta.

The Directorate also assisted in scheduling meetings for a number of delegations from China, the Balearic Parliamentary Group, the Committee of the Regional Development of the European Parliament, Belgium, Germany and Italy.

Furthermore, the Directorate set up a number of programmes for Honorary Consuls visiting Malta, and programmes for routine visits, first call and farewell calls by non-resident Ambassadors.

The Directorate also assisted the National Festivities Committee in state functions and National Day events organised during the year.

Accreditations

This Directorate sought and obtained the agreements of the following Maltese Ambassadors: Dr Richard Vella Laurenti non-resident Ambassador to the African Union, Mr Godwin Montanaro non-resident Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain, Dr Mario Costa non-resident Ambassador to Belarus, Mr George Mifsud non-resident Ambassador to Bulgaria, Mr Karl Xeureb resident Ambassador to the People's Republic of China, Dr John Vella non-resident Ambassador to the Czech Republic, Dr Richard Vella Laurenti non-resident Ambassador to Ethiopia, Mr Walter Balzan non-resident Ambassador to Hungary, Mr Eric Gerada Azzopardi non-resident Ambassador to Iceland, Mr Walter Balzan Ambassador to Italy, Dr Ivan Fsandi resident Ambassador to the Netherlands, Mr Godwin Montanaro non-resident Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman, Mr Salv Stellini resident Ambassador to Portugal, Mr Godwin Montanaro non-resident Ambassador to Qatar, Mr Alan Mangion non-resident Ambassador to Romania, Mr Norman Rossignaud non-resident Ambassador to Serbia and Montenegro, Dr Ricahrd Vella Laurenti non-resident Ambassador to Sudan, Mr Godwin Montanaro non-resident Ambassador to the united Arab Emirates and Mr Godwin Montanaro non-resident Ambassador to Yemen.

The Directorate also received and processed a total of 38 requests for foreign accreditation to Malta from the following countries: Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia, Cambodia, People's Republic of China, Colombia, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Mali, Norway, Panama, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia & Montenegro, Slovakia, Spain, Tunisia, Ukraine, Uruguay and Yemen, and Australia, Canada, Ghana and UK.

Credentials

Out of the above 38 accreditations the following Ambassadors and High Commissioners presented their Credentials to the President of Malta: Azerbaijan, Bosnia, Cambodia, Colombia, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Mali, Norway, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Spain, Ukraine, Yemen, Australia, Canada, Ghana and the United Kingdom.

Honorary Consuls

During the year a number of candidates for Hon Consular posts were considered, with Letters of Commission being issued to Mr Lanin Fernando, Honorary Consul in Sri Lanka, Mr Ronald J Andrews, Honorary Consul in South Africa, Mr Ferruccio Tomasi, Mr Augusto Cosulich, Ing Gabrio Renzacci and Dr Giuseppe Bilotta, Honorary Consuls in Italy, Mr John Conti, Honorary Consul in Isle of Man, Mr Raymond J Vassallo and Mr Sada Cumber as Honorary Consuls in the United States of America, Mr Pablio Tsolis, Honorary Consul in Argentina, Mr Andras Sugar, Honorary Consul in Hungary, Mr Janis Zelmenis, Honorary Consul in Latvia and Ms Christine Saidnawey, Honorary vice-Consul in the United States of America.

Diplomatic Clearances

Throughout 2006 the Directorate processed clearances for 67 naval vessels from, the United Kingdom, France, Spain, Germany, Canada, United States of America, Poland, Portugal, Sultanate of Oman, the Netherlands, Turkey, Italy, Greece, Denmark, Sweden, Morocco and India.

This Directorate processed diplomatic clearances for 426 military aircraft to overfly and/or land in Malta during the same period. The aircraft came from the following countries: Italy, United States of America, France, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, China, Serbia, Germany, Russian Federation, Macedonia, Turkmenistan, Greece, Mozambique, Spain, United Arab Emirates, Gabon, Oman, United Kingdom, Canada, Uruguay, Brazil, Ethiopia, the Netherlands, Croatia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Kazakhstan, Portugal, Botswana, Turkey, Bulgaria, Sudan, South Africa, Poland, Morocco, Sweden, United Nations, Egypt, Denmark, Philippines, Switzerland, Colombia, Syria, Venezuela, Mali, Ireland, Republic of Korea, Luxembourg, Angola, Romania, Chile, Belgium, Finland, Gambia.

This Directorate has also accredited the following Defence Attachés from the following countries: Poland, Germany, Russian Federation, Japan and the United Kingdom.

Protocol Service to the Diplomatic Corps Accredited to Malta

The Directorate continued to administer the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic relations of 1961 with respect to the diplomatic corps accredited to Malta by ensuring that the diplomatic privileges and immunities are being respected and implemented. In this context this Directorate processed 703 claims for VAT refund and referred them to the VAT department for reimbursement.

The Directorate also processed 245 requests for duty free entitlements on the purchase of cigarettes, spirits, alcohol and other specific purchases. Other processes included 111 requests for exempt person stamps (ER stamps), 92 requests for the issuance/renewal of road and driving licences, 71 requests for the issuance of CD/DMS/TF plates and 122 requests for the issuance/renewal of ID certificates to members of the diplomatic corps and technical staff.

Other Services

This Directorate processed a number of files concerning persons proposed to the Cabinet Office for Maltese decorations, processed a substantial number of requests for VIP facilities at the Malta International

Airport, as well as transmitted numerous greeting messages and National Day messages from The President of Malta to various Heads of State and vice versa.

This Directorate attended regularly the COPRO (Informal Meetings of Head of Protocol) meetings held in Brussels.

Consular

Authentications

The Office of Authentication was opened to the public on a daily basis. A total of 15,220 documents/certificates were authenticated during the year under review resulting in the collection of Lm97,424 in revenue.

Consular Services

The Directorate regularly assisted in consular cases involving Maltese nationals; the Crisis Unit was convoked to deal and assist in particular circumstances, such as the Lebanon crisis. The Directorate was also involved in other cases such as detentions and arrests, separation cases involving foreign nationals and custody of children and adoption cases. The Directorate has also represented the Ministry in court proceedings relating to the status of letters rogatory in cases involving foreign countries.

Consular service was also given to 636 Maltese nationals who were assisted in obtaining visas, through our diplomatic channels, to facilitate travel overseas.

This Directorate attended regularly the Consular Co-operation Meeting of the Consular Group (COCON) meetings held in Brussels.

Illegal Migration

This Directorate acted as an effective liaison between Immigration Police and foreign Embassies representing the nationalities of illegal immigrants. In cases where the country of nationality of the illegal immigrant has no diplomatic mission resident in Malta, this Directorate took charge of transmitting repatriation requests to the respective embassies overseas. During 2006, 316 requests for travel documents were processed through this Directorate. These requests concerned immigrants from the following countries: Algeria, Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Iraq, India, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan and Togo.

CECILIA ATTARD-PIROTTA
Permanent Secretary MFA