



ANNUAL REPORTS
OF
GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS
~
2007

**OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER
MALTA**

Annual Reports
Of
Government Departments
~
2007

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CONTENTS

| | Page |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| House of Representatives | 2 |
| Electoral Office | 27 |
| | |
| Office of the Prime Minister | |
| Management & Personnel Office | 31 |
| Planning & Priorities Co-ordination Division | 49 |
| Staff Development Organisation | 54 |
| Management Efficiency Unit | 65 |
| Armed Forces of Malta | 70 |
| Department of Information | 78 |
| Government Printing Press | 80 |
| Defence Matters Directorate | 83 |
| Corporate Services Directorate | 89 |
| Operations and Programme Implementation Directorate | 92 |
| | |
| Ministry of Finance | |
| Strategy and Operations Support Office | 97 |
| Financial Policy and Management Division | 100 |
| The Treasury | 102 |
| Economic Policy Division | 108 |
| Contracts Division | 116 |
| Inland Revenue Division | 121 |
| Customs Division | 134 |
| Value Added Tax Department | 148 |
| Tax Compliance Unit | 154 |
| Financial Management Monitoring Unit | 156 |
| EU Paying Authority Directorate | 166 |
| EU Affairs Directorate | 171 |
| Programme Implementation Directorate | 173 |
| | |
| Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs | |
| Attorney General's Agency | 175 |
| Police Department | 180 |
| Government Property Division: | |
| Directorate General | 224 |
| Estate Management Department | 228 |
| Land Department | 232 |
| Joint Office | 235 |
| Land & Public Registry Division: | |
| Land Registry | 238 |
| Public Registry | 241 |
| Department of Passport and Civil Registration | 245 |
| Courts of Justice Division | 249 |
| Office of the Notary to Government | 260 |
| Department of Citizenship & Expatriate Affairs | 262 |
| Department of Correctional Services | 268 |
| Department of Civil Protection | 275 |
| Department for Local Government | 278 |
| Airport Security | 284 |
| Detention Service | 287 |
| Office of Commissioner for Refugees | 291 |
| Corporate Services Directorate | 293 |
| EU Affairs Directorate | 297 |
| Policy Development Directorate | 298 |
| Programme Implementation Directorate | 299 |
| Information Management Unit | 304 |

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment | |
| Office of the Permanent Secretary | 307 |
| Education Division | 312 |
| Examinations Department | 375 |
| Department of Libraries | 382 |
| Department of Industrial and Employment Relations | 393 |
| Corporate Services Directorate | 399 |
| EU & International Affairs Directorate | 406 |
| Policy Development & Programme Implementation Directorate | 413 |
| Ministry for Tourism and Culture | |
| Tourism | 419 |
| Ministry for Competitiveness and Communications | |
| Department of Civil Aviation | 430 |
| Commerce Division | 435 |
| Consumer & Competition Division | 440 |
| Market Surveillance Directorate | 457 |
| Corporate Services Directorate | 459 |
| Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure | |
| Works Division: | |
| Office of the Director General | 461 |
| Building & Engineering Department | 463 |
| Construction & Maintenance Department | 473 |
| Financial Management Department | 476 |
| Services Division: | |
| Office of the Director General | 480 |
| Manufacturing & Services Department | 485 |
| Cleansing Services Department | 490 |
| Oil Exploration Department | 498 |
| EU Affairs, Policy Development & Programme Implementation Directorate | 499 |
| People Management & Support Services Directorate | 502 |
| Information Management Unit | 503 |
| Ministry for Gozo | |
| Directorate General Operations | 506 |
| Department for Projects & Development | 509 |
| Department of Customer Services | 519 |
| Corporate Services Directorate | 549 |
| EU Affairs, Policy Development and Programme Implementation Directorate | 553 |
| Ministry of Health, the Elderly and Community Care | |
| Office of the Permanent Secretary | 557 |
| Public Health Regulation Division | 569 |
| Health Care Services Division | 614 |
| Strategy and Sustainability Division | 648 |
| Ministry for Investment, Industry and Information Technology | |
| Ministry | 674 |
| Corporate Services Directorate | 682 |
| EU Affairs Directorate | 684 |
| Policy Development and Programme Implementation Directorate | 686 |
| Office of the Data Protection Commissioner | 688 |
| Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment | |
| Rural Affairs & Paying Agency Division | 691 |
| Veterinary Affairs & Fisheries Division | 722 |
| Parks, Afforestation and Rural Conservation Unit | 750 |
| Corporate Services Directorate | 753 |
| EU Affairs Directorate | 757 |
| Environment Policy and Initiatives Directorate | 759 |
| Information Management Unit | 765 |

Ministry for Urban Development and Roads

Urban Development and Roads 768

Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity

Social Security Division 778

Department for Social Welfare Standards 789

Department of Social Housing 800

Housing Construction & Maintenance Department 802

Corporate Services Directorate 806

Benefit Fraud & Investigation Directorate 808

Policy Development & Programme Implementation Directorate 810

EU & International Affairs Directorate 813

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Foreign Affairs 816



**House of
Representatives**

House of Representatives

HOUSE BUSINESS

Overview

During 2007, the House met 125 times with Parliament sitting an average of three sessions a week but sittings were more frequent during discussions on the 2008 budget allocations to the various ministries. This year, as in the previous years, the Budget was presented in Parliament in October.

Adjournment was availed of on 104 occasions, divided equally between Government and Opposition Members. On 26 November, the adjournment time was dedicated to the International Day Against Violence Against Women with the time being shared equally between Hon Dolores Cristina, Minister for the Family and Social Solidarity, and Hon Helena Dalli.

During 2007, there were 15 calls for quorum. The House was adjourned for the next sitting day with the same agenda on three occasions, while on the other occasions the sitting was resumed after the interval of five minutes as provided for in the Standing Orders.

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

In January, the House debated and approved the ratification of the agreement between Malta and the International Atomic Energy Agency with reference to the Convention on Nuclear Safety.

In March, the House debated and approved the transfer of government property in Ricasoli, limits of Kalkara, to SmartCity (Malta) Limited.

In July and September, the Constitution of Malta was amended twice. Both amendments required a two thirds majority of the House to pass through the Third Reading.

In October, the House approved the transfer of property to the MUSEUM society in Pembroke, the transfer of properties in Santa Venera, Cospicua and Rabat to the Scouts Association of Malta, and the transfer of property in Floriana to the Floriana Football Club. This motion was originally discussed in the National Audit Office Accounts Committee, which motion was unanimously approved.

In November, the House approved an amendment to the Schedule to the Disposal of Government Land Act (Cap. 268).

Visit of EU Commission President, HE Mr José Manuel Durão Barroso

The visit of HE Mr José Manuel Durão Barroso, President of the EU Commission, to the House of Representatives on 15 June 2007, represented one of the year's highlights.

Prior to his address to the House, Mr Barroso called on the Speaker. Both personalities exchanged views on how inter-parliamentary co-operation amongst EU national parliaments and also with EU parliamentary

institutions could be enhanced so that the parliamentary dimension could be further consolidated. Maltese parliamentarians had the opportunity to meet Mr Barroso following his address to the House.

Legislative Programme

During 2007, Parliament enacted 32 acts, 9 of which were principal acts and 23 were amendment acts.

A. Primary Legislation and Objectives Behind the Respective Bills

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| <i>Act IV of 2007 – The Budget Measures Implementation Act</i> |
| To implement various budget measures and other administrative measures. |
| <i>Act V of 2007 – The Administrative Justice Act</i> |
| To introduce uniform procedures for administrative tribunals and to introduce the concept of the Administrative Review Tribunal, with the relative functions thereof. |
| <i>Act XVI of 2007 – The Port Workers Ordinance</i> |
| To establish a Port Workers Appeals Board and a Port Workers Board and to further regulate the registration and deployment of port workers. |
| <i>Act XVII of 2007 – The Foster Care Act</i> |
| To make special provision for foster care, to establish the Fostering Board and the Central Authority, to provide for the rights and responsibilities of foster carers and to protect the best interests of children in foster care. |
| <i>Act XXII of 2007 – The Voluntary Organisations Act</i> |
| To regulate voluntary organisations, to establish the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations and to provide for privileges to be enjoyed by such enrolled organisations. |
| <i>Act XXIV of 2007 – The Malta-USA Ship-Boarding Agreements (Ratification) Act</i> |
| The ratification of two Agreements with the United States of America making provision for the boarding of ships in the circumstances laid down in the agreements. |
| <i>Act XXV of 2007 – The Appropriation (2008) Act</i> |
| The application of a sum not exceeding €1,596,053,093 for the service of the financial year 2008 to meet expenditure under the different Votes in the Schedule to this Bill. |
| <i>Act XXVI of 2007 – The Second (2007) Appropriation Act</i> |
| The application of a sum not exceeding Lm40,828,984 for the service of the financial year 2007 to meet expenditure under the Votes specified in the First Schedule to the Bill in addition to Lm693,045,027 appropriated by Act No XVII of 2006 and for the appropriation of a further sum of Lm16 for the service of the financial year 2007 to repay an equivalent amount withdrawn from the Contingencies Fund during the financial year 2007 under the Votes specified in the Second Schedule to the bill. |
| <i>Act XXXII of 2007 – The Budget Measures Implementation Act</i> |
| To implement various Budget measures and other administrative measures. |

B. Amendment Acts and Objectives Behind the Respective Bills

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| <i>Act I of 2007 – The Central Bank of Malta (Amendment) Act</i> |
| To amend the Central Bank of Malta Act (Cap. 204) and the External Transactions Act (Cap. 233) and to make consequential amendments. |
| <i>Act II of 2007 – The Various Laws (Amendment) Act</i> |
| To make various amendments to the Income Tax Acts. |
| <i>Act III of 2007 – The Code of Police (Amendment) Act</i> |
| To provide for penalties for any person who sells to, or purchases alcohol on behalf of, a minor or serves or supplies alcohol to a minor in any shop, street or public place. Likewise, a minor may not consume, procure or possess alcohol in any such places. The bill further provided for the introduction of a supervised working programme for an offender who is a minor consisting, among other provisions, in uncompensated community service work. |
| <i>Act VI of 2007 – The Criminal Code (Amendment) Act</i> |
| To effect amendments in the Criminal Code relating to the action which may be taken by the Attorney General when a person is discharged by the Court of Magistrates as a court of criminal inquiry, consequential to a recent judgement of the Constitutional Court. |
| <i>Act VII of 2007 – The Code of Organisation and Civil Procedure (Amendment) Act</i> |
| To introduce amendments to the Code of Organisation and Civil Procedure, as well as consequential amendments to other laws, in order to achieve a better and more expeditious administration of justice. |
| <i>Act VIII of 2007 – The Civil Code (Amendment) Act</i> |
| To introduce various amendments in the Civil Code. |

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| <p><i>Act IX of 2007 – The Income Tax (Amendment) Act</i> To apply the benefits and the exemptions referred to in sub articles (2) and (3) of article 9B of the Income Tax Act also to qualifying assets registered under the Currency and Bank Deposits Registration Scheme Regulations, 2007.</p> |
| <p><i>Act X of 2007 – The Maltese Citizenship (Amendment) Act</i> To grant Maltese citizenship by registration to second and subsequent generations of persons of Maltese descent born abroad; the Bill also grants Maltese citizenship by registration to persons born abroad before 21 September 1964, to mothers born in Malta who became citizens of Malta on the said date.</p> |
| <p><i>Act XI of 2007 – The Medicines (Amendment) Act</i> To amend the Medicines Act, 2003, which regulates medicinal products for human use and related pharmaceutical activities. This amendment was required in order to transpose the new EU requirements into national legislation, thus bringing it in line with EU legislation currently in force. Directive 2001/83/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 November 2001 on the Community code relating to medicinal products for human use, has been amended by Directives 2004/24/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 March 2004.</p> |
| <p><i>Act XII of 2007 – Malta Resources Authority (Amendment) Act</i> To amend the Malta Resources Authority Act.</p> |
| <p><i>Act XIII of 2007 – The Civil Code (Amendment) (No2) Act</i> To regulate legal persons, their registration, their administration as well as outline the relevant legal norms and to regulate foundations and associations in detail.</p> |
| <p><i>Act XIV of 2007 – The Constitution of Malta (Amendment) Act</i> To constitutionally establish the office of Ombudsman and to increase the compulsory retirement age of the Attorney General and Magistrates to sixty-five years.</p> |
| <p><i>Act XV of 2007 – The Companies (Amendment) Act</i> To make certain amendments to the Companies Act (Cap. 386) and a consequential amendment to the Duty on Documents and Transfers Act (Cap. 364).</p> |
| <p><i>Act XVIII of 2007 – The Housing (Decontrol) (Amendment) Act</i> To regulate the situation of a dwelling-house which is subject to an emphyteutical or sub-emphyteutical concession at the termination of a temporary emphyteusis or sub-emphyteusis.</p> |
| <p><i>Act XIX of 2007 – The Value Added Tax (Amendment) Act</i> To impose a duty for goods in transit to be supported by the necessary documents.</p> |
| <p><i>Act XX of 2007 – The Various Financial Services (Amendment) Act</i> To transpose the provisions of Directive 2004/39/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21st April 2004 on markets in financial instruments, the provisions of Directive 2006/48/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14th June 2006 relating to the taking up and pursuit of the business of credit institutions (recast), and the provisions of Directive 2006/49/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14th June 2006 on capital adequacy of investment firms and credit institutions (recast), as well as to affect some minor amendments to the Malta Financial Services Authority Act (Cap. 330), the Insurance Business Act (Cap. 403) and the Insurance Intermediaries Act (Cap. 487), and to further regulate regulated markets, central securities depositories and the status of the Malta Stock Exchange.</p> |
| <p><i>Act XXI of 2007 – The Constitution (Amendment) Act</i> To provide that the island of Gozo and the islands of the Maltese Archipelago other than Malta shall not be divided between two or more electoral districts.</p> |
| <p><i>Act XXIII of 2007 – The Malta Enterprise Corporation (Amendment) Act</i> To update the provisions of the Malta Enterprise Corporation Act, to encourage the establishment of new business undertakings and the expansion of existing business undertakings in Malta.</p> |
| <p><i>Act XXVII of 2007 – The Various Laws (Energy Resources) (Amendment) Act</i> To make various amendments to the Enemalta Act (Cap. 272), and the Water Services Corporation Act (Cap. 355).</p> |
| <p><i>Act XXVIII of 2007 – The Housing Authority (Amendment) Act</i> To amalgamate all government entities related to social housing into one entity and to transfer certain related powers from the Commissioner of Land to the Housing Authority.</p> |
| <p><i>Act XXIX of 2007 – The Malta Standards Authority and Various Laws (Amendment) Act</i> To amend the various laws so as to review the activities of authorities and entities involved in the field of free movement of goods in Malta and to rationalise such activities under the umbrella of the Malta Standards Authority.</p> |
| <p><i>Act XXX of 2007 – Communication Laws (Amendment) Act</i> To amend various laws relating to communications sectors enforced by the Malta Communications Authority including the Postal Services Act, Electronic Communications (Regulation) Act, and the Malta Communications Authority Act.</p> |
| <p><i>Act XXXI of 2007 – Criminal Matters (Amendment) Act</i> To amend the Criminal Code, the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance and the</p> |

Medical and Kindred Professions Ordinance. The Bill will incorporate the legislative enactments which will enable Malta to ratify and implement the Convention of the 29 May 2000 on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters between the Member States of the European Union, and the Protocol to it, the Council Framework Decision 2004/64/JHA of 22 December 2003 on Combating the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography, the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography; the Council of Europe Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism (CETS 198), and the Convention on the Protection of the European Communities' Financial Instruments and the Protocols to it and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (CETS No. 197).

Parliamentary Questions

During the year under review, 6,670 parliamentary questions were tabled, out of which 70 requested a written answer.

Ministerial Statements

During 2007, six ministerial statements were delivered to the House.

On 31 January, the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance delivered a statement on the resignation of the Director General of the National Statistics Office.

On 13 February, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice and Home Affairs made a statement on the proposed amendments to the Maltese Citizenship Act dealing mostly with persons born abroad to Maltese parents also born abroad. To date, Maltese citizenship had been limited to Maltese born abroad when at least one of their parents was born in Malta.

On 21 May, the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance delivered a statement on the publication of two convergence reports on Malta, one by the Group Committee and the other by the European Central Bank.

On 12 June, the Minister of Education, Youth and Employment delivered a statement on the proposed Public Administration Bill and also on contracts issued for works in connection with the Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools.

On 25 June, the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance made a statement on the conclusions of the European Council held a few days earlier in Brussels.

On 2 July, the Minister for Competitiveness and Communications delivered a statement on the agreement reached with licensed port workers.

Petitions

Six petitions were deposited in Parliament during 2007.

On 12 February, Hon Joe Mizzi presented a petition signed by residents of Triq Santa Domenica, Haż-Żabbar regarding the inconvenience caused to residents as a result of heavy traffic passing through this road.

On 13 February, Hon Silvio Parnis presented a petition signed by parents of school children attending Ġużeppi Agius Primary School in Paola which school was to be changed to a college resulting in their children having to attend another school outside Paola.

On 21 May, Hon José Herrera and Hon Chris Agius presented a petition signed by residents from Senglea regarding the warehouses in Maċina which were to be used by the Birzebuġa Regatta Club.

On 23 October, Hon Chris Cardona presented a petition signed by residents of Triq G Dimech Debono and Triq Parilja, Birkirkara regarding the use of a house in Triq G Dimech Debono as a refuge for ex drug addicts.

On 19 November, Hon Angelo Farrugia presented a petition from Naxxar residents referring to the issue of a permit by the Malta Environment and Planning Authority for the building of a lotto kiosk in 21st September Avenue.

On 3 December, four Members of Parliament, namely, Hon Michael Ascjak, Hon Angelo Farrugia, Hon Franco Galea and Hon José Herrera, presented a petition signed by numerous persons proposing the inclusion of the right to life of the unborn child in the Constitution.

Motions

During 2007, the Office of the Clerk of the House received 58 motions, out of which 30 were for First Reading of Bills and 4 were Private Members' motions.

The Office of the Clerk also received a motion from the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance on the financing of political parties.

The Private Members' motions were:

- a motion to amend Legal Notice No 4 of 2007 regarding the Euro Adoption (Dual display and Euro pricing) Regulations presented by Hon Charles Mangion, Hon Marie Louise Coleiro Preca and Hon Joe Mizzi, which motion was debated in February;
- a motion of no confidence in the Minister for Urban Development and Roads presented by the Leader of Opposition Hon Alfred Sant and debated in July;
- a motion submitted by Hon Joe Brincat calling for the government to ratify the United Nations Convention against Corruption; and
- a motion with a draft bill to amend the Criminal Code, also presented by Hon Joe Brincat.

Papers Laid

During the year, 1,881 documents were laid on the Table of the House, 431 of which were legal notices.

Mr Speaker laid a number of documents on the Table of the House, amongst them, court sentences, reports submitted by the National Audit Office, Annual Review of the House of Representatives for the year 2006, replies to parliamentary questions submitted by the Members of Parliament to Mr Speaker, and correspondence exchanged between the Ombudsman, the Prime Minister and Leader of Opposition regarding the current situation on the appointment of an Investigating Officer in the Audit Office of the Malta Environment and Planning Authority.

Mr Speaker also laid on the Table of the House a copy of a communication received from President Emeritus Dr Ugo Mifsud Bonnici on the revision of the Standing Orders.

The Deputy Speaker laid on the Table of the House a communication from the Secretary General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association with the message from Queen Elizabeth II, Head of the Commonwealth, on the occasion of Commonwealth Day on 12 March.

Divisions

Divisions called and taken during the year under review totalled 64.

Parliamentary Whips

Whips are Members of Parliament appointed by each party represented in the House of Representatives to organise their Party's contribution to parliamentary business. One of their responsibilities is making sure the maximum number of their Party members is in the House when a division is called. The Whips' job becomes more important when the majority of the Party to Government is small. Whips also manage the pairing system when a division is called.

The Hon Mario Galea is the Government Whip whilst the Hon Joe Mizzi is the Opposition Whip.

STANDING COMMITTEES

The Standing Committees of the House, established with the co-operation and approval of both sides of the House in 1995, are of particular relevance in the workings of the House of Representatives. The Standing Committees, which are an extension of the House itself, have provided that professional touch by which various issues are discussed in committee and recommendations may be submitted to the House for its consideration.

The Standing Committees have introduced an element of consultation with civil society. Technical experts and representatives from various organisations are invited to discuss and contribute through their expertise on particular subjects. More than that, meetings of the Standing Committees are open to the public and the media and are streamed on the Internet, thus facilitating an even closer relationship between the people and their elected representatives in Parliament.

The House has six Standing Committees, namely: Standing Committee on House Business, Standing Committee on Privileges, Standing Committee on Public Accounts, Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs, Standing Committee for Social Affairs, and Standing Committee for Consideration of Bills.

The Standing Committee on Development Planning and the National Audit Office Accounts Committee ensue from the Development Planning Act (1992) (Cap. 356) and from the Auditor General and National Audit Office Act (1997) (Cap. 396), respectively.

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts is chaired by a Member nominated by the Opposition. This follows the system adopted in the UK House of Commons.

Standing Committee on House Business

Chairperson: Hon Anton Tabone, Speaker of the House of Representatives

Members: Hon Tonio Borg, Leader of the House and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice and Home Affairs
Hon Mario Galea
Hon Frederick Azzopardi
Hon Charles Mangion
Hon Joe Mizzi

- “120C. (1) The Standing Committee on House Business shall have power to:
- (a) distribute Bills and other business among the Standing Committees appointed in accordance with the provisions of Standing Orders 96, 120A and 120B;
 - (b)
 - (i) determine the number of sittings to be allotted for the consideration of a Bill by a Standing Committee;
 - (ii) allocate business to each sitting of a Standing Committee; and
 - (iii) determine the time when any business, if not previously concluded, shall be concluded by a Standing Committee; and

- (c) consider all matters of procedure and business of the House, and report its opinion thereon to the House from time to time.
- (2) A report of all resolutions carried by the Standing Committee on House Business shall be made to the House at the next sitting after a resolution is carried, immediately after Question time, and shall be recorded in the Minutes of the proceedings of the House.
- (3) (a) The Standing Committee on House Business shall be constituted of the Leader of the House, two members nominated by the Prime Minister and two members nominated by the Leader of the Opposition.
(b) Three members in attendance shall constitute a quorum.
- (4) Alternate members shall also be appointed for each member of the Standing Committee on House Business and the provisions of paragraph (4) of Standing Order 120B shall also apply.
- (5) The Standing Committee on House Business shall be chaired by the Speaker who shall not vote unless on any question the votes are equally divided, in which case he shall have and exercise a casting vote.”
- The **House Business Committee** held eight meetings during which it planned business and schedules of work in the House. The Committee discussed and approved the Ombudsplan for 2007 in January and the Ombudsplan for 2008 in November. The Committee also discussed arrangements regarding the address of the European Commission President, HE Mr José Manuel Durão Barroso to the House on 15 June. It discussed the *Notte Bianca, Lejl Imdawwal* activity which saw the opening of Parliament on 6 October 2007. The Committee agreed that Parliament be included in the list of official buildings open to the public during the second edition of *Notte Bianca, Lejl Imdawwal*, a night of art and culture in Malta’s capital city.

Standing Committee on Privileges

Chairperson: Hon Anton Tabone, Speaker of the House of Representatives

Members: Hon Tonio Borg, Leader of the House and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice and Home Affairs
Hon Jason Azzopardi
Hon Mario de Marco
Hon Angelo Farrugia
Hon Joseph Sammut

- “120D. (1) The Standing Committee on Privileges shall have power to consider cases referred to it by the Speaker or by the House and to take such decisions and to make such recommendations as provided in the Standing Orders and in the House of Representatives (Privileges and Powers) Ordinance or in any law from time to time substituting the said Ordinance.
- (2) The Standing Committee shall be constituted of the Leader of the House, two Members nominated by the Prime Minister and two members nominated by the Leader of the Opposition.
- (3) The provisions of paragraphs (3), (4), and (5) of Standing Order 120C shall *mutatis mutandis* apply to the Standing Committee on Privileges.
- (4) The Standing Committee on Privileges shall, without prejudice to the provision of the Standing Order 164, have power and authority to summon witnesses and order the production of documents before it. The Standing Committee on Privileges may request

the attendance of the Attorney General or of his representative, who may also be authorised to participate in the proceedings, but he shall in no case have a vote thereat.”

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Chairperson: Hon Charles Mangion

Members: Hon Austin Gatt, Minister for Investment, Industry and Information Technology
Hon Tonio Fenech, Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Finance
Hon Chris Agius
Hon Robert Arrigo
Hon Helena Dalli
Hon Mario de Marco

- “120E. (1) The Standing Committee on Public Accounts shall have the power to:
- (a) inquire into matters relating to public accounts referred to it by the House, a Minister or the Director of Audit;
 - (b) inquire into expenditure as is referred to in subsection (3) of section 103 and section 104 of the Constitution;
 - (c) examine the accounts of statutory authorities, including parastatal organisations, whose accounts are presented to Parliament;
 - (d) request the Director of Audit to submit memoranda on any matter where a request for such submission is made by at least three members of the Standing Committee;
 - (e) consider memoranda submitted by the Director of Audit, made upon a request made to him in virtue of paragraph (d) hereof, or on his own initiative;
 - (f) examine reports, and related documents, made by the Director of Audit;
 - (g) report to the House on any accounts, reports or documents referred in the previous paragraphs hereof;
 - (h) report to the House on any change that it considers desirable in the form of the accounts, on the manner in which they are kept, on revenue or expenditure or the control of money; and
 - (i) discuss Malta’s monetary policy and receive reports thereon from the Governor of the Central Bank of Malta.
- (2) The Public Accounts Committee shall consist of not more than seven members of whom four shall constitute a quorum. The members shall be chosen so as to fairly represent the House in general and the proportion of Government and Opposition members in particular.
- (3) The provisions of paragraphs (3) and (4) of Standing Order 120B shall apply to the Public Accounts Committee.
- (4) One of the members nominated by the Leader of the Opposition and so designated by him after consultation with the Leader of the House shall be appointed Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee. The Chairman shall have an original vote but shall not have a casting vote.”

- The **Public Accounts Committee** met 10 times, wherein it discussed: the annual report of the Auditor General for the year 2005; funds from the Italian Protocol for the building of roads, which funds were administered by the Malta Transport Authority; the monetary policy of the Central Bank of Malta; the audited accounts of the Malta Tourism Authority for the year 2006 and financial estimates for the year 2007; the performance audit report on the Employment and Training Corporation’s Job Matching Service; and the Water Services Corporation.

Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs (SCFEA)

Chairperson: Hon Jason Azzopardi

Members: Hon Michael Frendo, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Hon Michael Asciaq

Hon Evarist Bartolo

Hon Leo Brincat

Hon Mario de Marco

Hon José Herrera

Hon Clyde Puli

Hon George Vella

“120F. (1) The Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs shall consist of not more than nine members of whom five shall constitute a quorum. The members shall be chosen so as fairly to represent the House in general and the proportion of Government and Opposition members in particular:

Provided that the Government members appointed on the Standing Committee shall include the Minister for Foreign Affairs who shall have the right to participate and to vote:

Provided further that members of the European Parliament elected from Malta shall have the right to participate in the work of the Standing Committee but shall not have the right to vote or to move motions and amendments.

(2) The Chairperson of the Committee shall be nominated by the Leader of the House from amongst the members representing the Government side, provided that any member of the Committee may, at any time, be appointed by the Leader of the House to act as Chairperson in case of the unavoidable absence of the Chairperson.

(3) The Standing Committee shall have the power to appoint select sub-committees and to delegate any of its functions to such sub-committees.

Provided that the composition of any sub-committee appointed by the Standing Committee shall be determined by the Standing Committee so as fairly to represent the House in general and the proportion of Government and Opposition members in particular.

(4) Subject to what is stated in this Standing Order, the provisions of paragraphs (3) and (4) of Standing Order 120B shall *mutatis mutandis* apply to the Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs.

(5) The Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs shall have the following functions:

(i) to deal with matters relating to foreign and European Union affairs which may be referred to it by the House or by the Standing Committee on House Business.

(ii) in the context of European Union issues and measures to be taken by the Council of Ministers of the European Union, to scrutinise on its own initiative:

(a) any proposals under the Community treaties for legislation by the Council or the Council acting jointly with the European Parliament;

(b) any document which is published for submission to the European Council, the Council or the European Central Bank;

(c) any proposal for a common strategy, a joint action or a common position under Title V of the Treaty on European Union which is prepared for submission to the Council or to the European Council;

- (d) any proposal for a common position, framework, decision or a convention under Title VI of the Treaty on European Union which is prepared for submission to the Council;
 - (e) any document (not falling within (b), (c) or (d) above) which is published by one Union institution and which does not relate exclusively to the consideration of any proposal for legislation; and
 - (f) any other document relating to European Union matters placed on the Table of the House by any Minister; and
- (iii) to represent the House of Representatives of Malta at the Conference of European Affairs Committees (COSAC).”

Apart from the tasks listed above, the committee scrutinises on its own initiative legislative proposals or documents that emanate from European Union institutions dealing with EU issues and measures to be taken by the Council of Ministers.

The Plenary SCFEA scrutinises topics in relation to constitutional affairs, enlargement, development, external relations and trade, enterprise and information society, and competition.

Working Group 1

Chairperson: Hon Jason Azzopardi
Members: Hon Leo Brincat
 Hon Michael Gonzi
 Hon Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando
 Hon George Vella

The objective of this Working Group is to analyse the EU pipeline *acquis* in preliminary scrutiny, that is, to determine those documents of political or legal importance and to reach a decision on whether a particular document should be cleared without reserve or referred for debate at the plenary SCFEA, Working Group 2, Working Group 3 or the Social Affairs Committee.

In 2007, Working Group 1 met nine times and scrutinised a total of 350 new EU legislative and non-legislative proposals. The documents comprised EU Commission communications, reports, staff working documents, White Papers, Green Papers as well as Proposals for Council Decisions, Directives and Regulations and Draft Framework Decisions, amongst others.

Working Group 2

Chairperson: Hon Michael Gonzi
Members: Minister responsible for the *acquis*
 Hon Robert Arrigo
 Hon Leo Brincat
 Hon Charles Mangion

Working Group 2 addresses issues related to economic and monetary affairs, taxation, research, employment, education and culture, transport and energy, budget, regional policy, internal market and customs union.

Working Group 3

Chairperson: Hon Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando
Members: Minister responsible for the *acquis*
 Hon Joseph Abela
 Hon Joseph Falzon
 Hon George Vella

The areas of competence discussed within Working Group 3 include health and consumer protection, development and humanitarian aid, rural development, fisheries, justice and home affairs and the environment.

- The **Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs** was convened 22 times. The topics discussed during these meetings dealt with foreign as well as European affairs. The exchanges with foreign counterparts, both during visits abroad of the committee and in the meetings held with incoming delegations, underlined the importance of parliamentary diplomacy.

As in previous years, the Committee held meetings with Ambassadors accredited to Malta whose countries held the 2007 EU Presidencies, namely HE Dr Karl Andreas von Stenglin, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany and HE Mr Antonio Russo Dias, Ambassador of Portugal to Malta. The Work Programme of their respective EU Presidency was discussed.

The personalities invited to address the Committee included amongst others, Mr Jacques Barrot, Vice President of the European Commission and Commissioner for Transport; Dr Joe Borg, EU Commissioner for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs; Mr Richard Cachia Caruana, Malta's Permanent Representative to the EU; Ambassadors accredited to Malta; HE President Emeritus Dr Ugo Mifsud Bonnici; Mr Jo Leinen, Chairman of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs of the European Parliament; and Maltese Members of Parliament who reported on their participation in international parliamentary fora.

Furthermore, the Standing Committee met with foreign parliamentary delegations visiting Malta namely those from Slovenia, Lithuania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Australia, St Petersburg and Saudi Arabia.

The Committee held a video conference with Dr Javier Solana, High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and Secretary General of the Council of the European Union.

Standing Committee on Social Affairs

Chairperson: Hon Clyde Puli
Members: Hon Frederick Azzopardi
 Hon Karl Chircop
 Hon Marie Louise Coleiro Preca
 Hon Michael Farrugia
 Hon Franco Galea
 Hon Michael Gonzi

“120G. (1) The Committee for Social Affairs shall deal with all matters relating to social policy, including social assistance and family matters, which may be referred to it by the House or by the Standing Committee on House Business.

(2) The provisions of paragraphs (2) and (3) of Standing Order 120E shall *mutatis mutandis* apply to the Social Affairs Committee.”

- The **Standing Committee for Social Affairs** met 19 times. It concluded its debate on research, development and innovation within the context of the knowledge economy. Amongst the persons who addressed the Committee on this subject was Prof Edward de Bono, an internationally renowned lateral thinker. Consequently, the Social Affairs Committee visited the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology, ST Microelectronics and the Malta Council for Science and Technology to exchange ideas with people knowledgeable in the field.

The Committee met with the Chairperson of the Justice and Peace Commission wherein it reflected on social justice, in particular on housing and related matters.

The Committee held two meetings *in camera* where it was consulted on the appointment of the Commissioner for Children and the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations as provided for in the Commissioner for Children Act and the Voluntary Organisations Act, respectively. Later during the year, the Committee discussed the Commissioner for Children Annual Report for the year 2006.

The Committee met with the Executive Director of the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality and debated the promotion of equal opportunities through empowerment.

The Committee received a delegation from the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality. Discussions focused on the situation of women in Malta and around the European Union and the transposition of EU legislation pertinent to the issue in Malta and its implementation in daily life. They also discussed childcare facilities and the situation of part-time workers in Malta.

The Committee met with Ms Meglena Kuneva, EU Commissioner responsible for Consumers. The meeting focused on proposals for legislation to safeguard the rights of consumers.

Voluntary organisations were invited to meet the Committee as part of the debate on the Voluntary Organisations Bill following which the Bill was referred to the Standing Committee for the Consideration of Bills for discussion in committee stage.

The research analyst with the Social Affairs Committee informed the Committee on a conference organised by the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity in February entitled *Enhancing Social Inclusion – Moving Forward Together*.

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. Five documents were scrutinised during the year under review. These documents dealt with:

- youth participation and information;
- the establishment of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund;
- the 2006 Consolidated Maritime Labour Convention of the International Labour Organisation;
- the demographic future of Europe – from challenge to opportunity; and
- the mid term review of the strategy on Life Sciences and Biotechnology.

Standing Committee for the Consideration of Bills

Chairperson: Hon David Agius

Members: Seven Members, four Government Members including the Chairperson, and three Opposition Members appointed according to the Bill under discussion

- 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 20 bills were discussed, approved and referred back to the House for Third Reading.

Standing Committee on Development Planning

Chairperson: Hon George Pullicino, Minister for Rural Affairs and the Environment

Members: Hon Helen D'Amato, Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry for Health, Elderly and Community Care
Hon Tonio Fenech, Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Finance
Hon Joe Brincat
Hon Charles Buhagiar

- **The Development Planning Committee** met once wherein it was consulted on the appointment of an Audit Officer with the Malta Environment and Planning Authority as provided for in the Development Planning Act.

National Audit Office Accounts Committee

Chairperson: Hon Tonio Borg, Leader of the House and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice and Home Affairs

Members: Hon Tonio Fenech, Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Finance
Hon Carmelo Mifsud Bonnici, Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs
Hon Charles Mangion
Hon Joseph Sammut

- **The National Audit Office Accounts Committee** met four times during the year under review wherein it discussed the 2005 Annual Report of the National Audit Office and the estimates of the same office for the year 2007. It also discussed a resolution on the transfer of property in Ricasoli, limits of Kalkara, to SmartCity (Malta) Ltd. The motion was not unanimously agreed and was therefore referred to the House for discussion.

In October, the Committee also discussed a motion regarding the transfer of property to the MUSEUM society in Pembroke, the transfer of properties to the Scouts Association in Santa Venera, Bormla and Rabat in Malta and the transfer of property to the Floriana Football Club. The motion was unanimously agreed.

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Mr Speaker

In March, the Hon Anton Tabone, Speaker of the House of Representatives, together with Hon Jason Azzopardi, Chairman of the Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs, participated in the activities marking the 50th Anniversary of the Treaties of Rome held in Florence and Rome. The programme of events included a seminar at the European University at Fiesole as well as a ceremonial event at the Italian Senate in Rome. Participants discussed the role of a political Europe in the world and the role of parliaments at the heart of the European construction. Another subject discussed was the new era of renewable energies, that is, the green hydrogen economy. The establishment of a European-wide renewable energy policy was seen as leading towards the third industrial revolution whereby the production and distribution of energy is offered in the most efficient and sustainable way.

In May, Mr Speaker, participated in the European Conference of Speakers of European Union Parliaments held in Bratislava, Slovak Republic. The focus of this annual meeting was the future of Europe, inter-parliamentary co-operation, assistance to parliaments of new and emerging democracies and raising national European awareness.

In June, Hon Anton Tabone participated at the canonisation of Dun Ġoġ Preca at the Vatican. Mr Speaker formed part of the Maltese official delegation that included the President, the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition.

At the bilateral level, Mr Speaker, accompanied by Hon Mario de Marco and Hon Roderick Galdes, paid an official visit to Lisbon in September. Apart from holding direct talks with HE Mr Jaime Gama, President of the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal, Mr Speaker addressed the Parliamentary Committee on International and European Relations.

Apart from meeting resident and non-resident Ambassadors accredited to Malta and also representatives from Maltese civil society, Mr Speaker received other foreign dignitaries including Mr Lucien Weiler, Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of Luxembourg; Mr Paul Calvert, President of the Senate of Australia; Mr Noel Kinsella, Speaker of the Senate of Canada; Mr Tijani Haddad, Minister of Tourism of Tunisia; Mr Anton Kokalj, Chairman of the European Affairs Committee of the Parliament of Slovenia; Mr Noel Davern, Chairman of the Committee on Members' Interest of Dail Eireann, Ireland; and Prof Dan Drosu Şaguna, President of the Romanian Court of Accounts.

Deputy Speaker

In November, Hon Carmelo Abela, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, participated in the Second Small European States' Conference of Presidents of Parliament held in San Marino. The 2008 meeting will be held in Monaco.

Conferences Hosted by the House of Representatives

The Second Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean was held in Malta from 22 to 24 November 2007.

The Second Plenary Session in Malta was a historic occasion for the Parliamentary Assembly as it marked the finalisation of several important aspects relating to the functioning of the Assembly. The Headquarters Agreement, officially recognising Spinola Palace as the seat of the Secretariat of the Assembly, was signed by the Hon Tonio Borg, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Justice and Home Affairs, and Mr Abdelwahed Radi, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean. Spinola Palace was officially inaugurated by HE Dr Edward Fenech Adami, President of Malta.

The Parliamentary Assembly was inaugurated on 22 November 2007 by Hon Anton Tabone, Speaker of the House of Representatives, who extended a warm welcome to all parliamentarians attending the meeting. Hon Tabone mentioned Malta's past and ongoing commitment to achieving unity in the Mediterranean. He referred to the important mission of the Assembly, and underlined its forthcoming role in promoting peace and stability as well as economic prosperity for the Mediterranean people. Hon Tabone highlighted the unique character of the Assembly as the only forum to unite all the Mediterranean littoral states. He stated that the Assembly should not be seen as a competing organisation but as a complement to the existing bodies dealing with Mediterranean issues.

The Strategy Paper entitled *Building on our Common Mediterranean Heritage* was discussed at length during the Assembly's proceedings. It was agreed that this document will be complemented by a Mediterranean Charter, the content of which is to be elaborated by the members of the Assembly in 2008.

The Assembly was also addressed by Ambassador Alain Le Roy who had been invited to present President Sarkozy's Mediterranean Union project.

The Maltese parliamentary delegation participated actively in the proceedings of the Assembly. Hon George Vella presented the resolution of the First Standing Committee on Regional Issues in the Middle East. The resolution was unanimously adopted by the Assembly.

Monaco will host the next Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly in 2008.

Outgoing Visits of Maltese Parliamentary Delegations

Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs

The active participation of the Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs (SCFEA) at the international level continued with the Committee paying official visits to Italy, the Gulf States and India.

Such visits had the objective of strengthening further relations at the parliamentary level and enhancing contacts with the Foreign and European Affairs committees in the respective countries. Maltese members of the Committee had the opportunity to exchange views on parliamentary work in general and discuss issues of common interest relating to our region and beyond.

In January, a delegation led by Hon Jason Azzopardi and comprising Hon Michael Ascjak, Hon Leo Brincat, Hon Mario de Marco, Hon José Herrera and Hon George Vella visited Italy where they discussed areas of co-operation between Italy and Malta such as the financial and cultural protocols, the problem of illegal immigration faced by Malta and the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty.

In February, a delegation led by Hon Jason Azzopardi and comprising Hon Evarist Bartolo, Hon Leo Brincat, Hon Mario de Marco and Hon José Herrera visited the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. During its meetings in the Gulf, the Maltese delegation augured towards a stronger relationship between Malta and these countries, particularly at the parliamentary level.

In March, a delegation led by Hon Jason Azzopardi and comprising Hon Evarist Bartolo, Hon Clyde Puli and Hon Angelo Farrugia visited India. During its meetings, the Maltese delegation spoke of possible benefits to India because of Malta's strategic position as a new EU member state and its proximity to North Africa as well as being the only EU member state with a double taxation agreement with Libya.

The Chairman and designated Members of the SCFEA participated in the Conference of European Affairs Committees (COSAC) meetings. COSAC meetings, held biannually, are held in the capital of the country holding the EU Presidency. COSAC was created in May 1989 where the Speakers of the Parliaments of the EU Member States agreed to strengthen the role of national parliaments in relation to the Community process by bringing together the committees dealing with EU affairs.

The XXXVII COSAC meeting held in Berlin in May was attended by Hon Clyde Puli and Hon George Vella while the COSAC Chairpersons meeting held at the beginning of the German Presidency in Berlin, in February, and at the beginning of the Portuguese Presidency in July, were both attended by Hon Clyde Puli.

Standing Committee on Social Affairs

For the first time ever, the Social Affairs Committee was invited by the OECD to attend a High Level Parliamentary Seminar on Innovation and Equity held in Paris in October. The meeting was an integral part of the Social Affairs Committee's discussion on knowledge economy and was attended by Hon Carmelo Abela.

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

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| <i>Members:</i> | Hon Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando, Leader of the delegation Hon Robert Arrigo Hon Joe Debono Grech |
| <i>Alternate Members:</i> | Hon Leo Brincat Hon Helen D'Amato Hon Joseph Falzon |

The Maltese parliamentary delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) attended the four part sessions of the PACE held in Strasbourg in January, April, June and October.

In March, Hon Joe Debono Grech attended the meeting of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee held in Berlin, Germany while in December he attended the meeting of the same committee held in Florence, Italy.

European Parliament

On the invitation of the European Parliament, Maltese parliamentarians had the opportunity to participate at various parliamentary meetings in Brussels as follows:

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| February | Hon Michael Asciak Hon George Vella | 3rd parliamentary meeting on the Lisbon Strategy attended by representatives of the European Parliament and national parliaments |
| February | Hon John Dalli Hon Charles Mangion | Inter-parliamentary debate with national parliaments of the EU Member States on <i>Eurozone – converging or drifting apart</i> |
| February | Hon Charles Buhagiar Hon Franco Galea | Parliamentary meeting on transport policy attended by representatives of the European Parliament and national parliaments |
| May | Hon Jason Azzopardi | Meeting of chairpersons of EU Member States' committees on foreign affairs |
| June | Hon George Vella | Inter-parliamentary meeting on the future of Europe with national parliaments of the EU Member States |
| September | Hon Angelo Farrugia | Meeting of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs of the European Parliament |
| October | Hon Roderick Galdes | Parliamentary meeting on Climate Change: <i>Rising to the Challenge with national parliaments of the EU Member States</i> |
| October | Hon Gavin Gulia | Meeting of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs of the European Parliament |
| December | Hon David Agius | 4 th parliamentary meeting on the future of Europe with national parliaments of the EU Member States |
| December | Hon Carmelo Abela | Meeting of the Committee on Education and Culture of the European Parliament |

European Union

Maltese parliamentarians participated in meetings hosted by the German Presidency and the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union as follows:

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| February | Hon Jason Azzopardi | Meeting of the Chairpersons of the Foreign Affairs Committee |
| March | Hon Joseph Sammut | Conference of Chairpersons of the Committees on Economic Co-operation and Development |
| May | Hon Gavin Gulia | Conference of Chairpersons of Home Affairs Committees |

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)

Maltese parliamentarians attended various meetings organised by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association:

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| February | Hon Franco Galea Hon Silvio Parnis | CPA UK Branch seminar on restoring trust in the political process at Westminster in London |
| March | Hon Joseph Cuschieri | CPA UK Branch 56 th Seminar on Parliamentary Practice and Procedure held at Westminster in London |
| May | Hon Mario Galea Hon Chris Agius Hon Frederick Azzopardi Hon Stefan Buontempo | 38 th CPA British Islands and Mediterranean Regional Conference held in Belfast, Ireland |
| September | Hon Mario Galea Hon Joe Mizzi Hon Frederick Azzopardi | CPA 53 rd Conference and 27 th CPA Conference for Small Countries held in Delhi, India |
| November | Hon Joseph Brincat Hon Franco Galea | CPA UK Branch International Conference on climate change – tackling causes and managing impacts, held in London |

Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA)

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| <i>Members:</i> | Hon Mario Galea, Leader of the delegation Hon Michael Asciaik Hon George Vella |
| <i>Alternate Members:</i> | Hon Joseph Cassar Hon Helena Dalli Hon Joseph Falzon |

The Maltese parliamentary delegation to EMPA attended various meetings of the three Committees of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly, namely, the Committee on Improving Quality of Life, Exchanges between Civil Societies and Culture, the Committee on Economic and Financial Affairs, Social Affairs and Education, and the Committee on Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights.

In January, March, July and November, Hon George Vella attended the meetings of the Committee on Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights held in Brussels.

Hon Michael Asciaik and Hon George Vella participated in the Third Ordinary Session of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly held in Tunis in March.

Inter-Parliamentary Union

Executive Committee of the National Group

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| <i>President:</i> | Hon Anton Tabone, Speaker of the House of Representatives |
| <i>Vice Presidents:</i> | Hon Lawrence Gonzi, Prime Minister Hon Alfred Sant, Leader of the Opposition |
| <i>Members:</i> | Hon Michael Gonzi Hon George Vella |
| <i>Alternate Members:</i> | Hon Mario Galea Hon Joe Mizzi |

The 116th Assembly of the Inter Parliamentary Union held in Bali, Indonesia, in April, was attended by Hon Michael Gonzi and Hon Joe Mizzi.

Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE PA)

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| <i>Members:</i> | Hon Jason Azzopardi, Leader of the delegation Hon Frederick Azzopardi Hon Angelo Farrugia |
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The Maltese parliamentary delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE attended the meetings organised by the Assembly as follows:

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| February | Hon Jason Azzopardi Hon Frederick Azzopardi Hon Angelo Farrugia | Winter Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly held in Vienna, Austria |
| July | Hon Jason Azzopardi Hon Frederick Azzopardi Hon Angelo Farrugia | 16 th Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly held in Kiev, Ukraine |
| September | Hon Jason Azzopardi Hon Angelo Farrugia | Fall Meetings of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly held in Slovenia |

Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM)

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| <i>Members:</i> | Hon Michael Gonzi, Leader of the delegation Hon Michael Asciak Hon Mario Galea Hon Joe Mizzi Hon George Vella |
| <i>Alternate Members:</i> | Hon Joseph Cassar Hon Justyne Caruana |

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| February | Hon Michael Gonzi Hon Joe Mizzi | Meeting of the Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean held in Geneva, Switzerland |
| March | Hon Michael Gonzi Hon Justyne Caruana Hon Joseph Cassar Hon Joe Mizzi Hon George Vella | Meetings of the Standing Committees of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean held in Geneva, Switzerland |
| September | Hon George Vella | Meeting of the Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean held in Rabat, Morocco |
| November | Maltese Parliamentary delegation | Second Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean held in Malta |

Others

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| January | Hon Leo Brincat Hon Franco Galea | Fifth General Assembly of the International Parliamentarians Association for Information Technology held in Helsinki, Finland |
| June | Hon Jason Azzopardi Hon Michael Asciak Hon Joseph Abela Hon Stefan Buontempo Hon Joseph Cuschieri Hon Angelo Farrugia Hon Roderick Galdes Hon Gavin Gulia Hon Silvio Parnis Hon Anton Refalo Hon Joseph Sammut Hon George Vella | Visit to the European Commission |
| October | Hon Joe Mizzi Hon Clyde Puli | EUFORES, 7 th Inter-Parliamentary Meeting on Renewable Energy held in Berlin, Germany |

Incoming Visits of Parliamentary Delegations

In April, the House of Representatives hosted an Australian parliamentary delegation led by the President of the Senate, Hon Paul Calvert. During its visit, the delegation referred to relations between Malta and Australia which have always been strong and positive and are underpinned by migration, community and Commonwealth links. In the 2001 Australian census, nearly 137,000 people claimed Maltese descent. During its meetings, the Australian delegation expressed interest in strengthening the commercial links between the two countries.

The House of Representatives hosted the Chairman of the Committee on EU Affairs of the National Parliament of the Republic of Slovenia. Slovenia, one of the ten European countries that joined the EU in 2004, is to assume the EU Presidency in January 2008.

In May, the House of Representatives received a delegation from the Foreign and European Affairs Committee of the Parliament of Lithuania. Topics discussed during meetings included the resettlement of

six asylum seekers from Malta which process started as a result of the visit to Lithuania by a delegation from the Foreign and European Affairs Committee in June 2006.

In September, the House of Representatives hosted the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of Luxembourg, Hon Lucien Weiler, who was reciprocating the visit paid to Luxembourg by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon Anton Tabone, in November 2005. During Speaker Weiler's visit, issues of common concern and the identification of areas of co-operation between the two countries were discussed.

In October, the House of Representatives also assisted Mr Ostergaard, rapporteur of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population of the Council of Europe, during his two day visit to Malta. As part of the preparatory work on his report on large scale arrival of migrants and asylum seekers, Mr Ostergaard visited the Canary Islands, Greece, Lampedusa and Malta. When in Malta, Mr Ostergaard met with Maltese authorities including Ministers, the Armed Forces of Malta, non-governmental organisations and international organisations represented in Malta. He also visited the detention centres where he expressed concern at the prevailing conditions and the length of detention of asylum seekers.

In November, the House of Representatives hosted a high-level delegation from the Consultative Council of Saudi Arabia. This was a return visit to the Maltese Foreign and European Affairs Committee's visit to Saudi Arabia earlier in the year. The delegation acknowledged the close co-operation that existed between the two countries, especially the financial assistance given to Malta during the 1970s and 1980s. Areas of co-operation were identified in various sectors, namely, higher education, medical services, tourism, financial services and the teaching of English.

The House of Representatives hosted a parliamentary delegation from the parliament of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia led by the chairperson of the Committee on Foreign Policy. The aim of the visit was to develop co-operation at the level of foreign affairs committees as well as to develop overall relations between the two countries.

Parliamentary Friendship Groups

In addition to official international activities, international links are also maintained by the Parliamentary Friendship Groups. A delegation from the Malta-Germany Parliamentary friendship group, namely Hon Michael Asciani, Hon Clyde Puli, Hon Carmelo Abela and Hon Joseph Cuschieri, visited Germany in September with the aim of further enhancing the existing good bilateral relations between the two countries as well as to promote other areas of co-operation. When in Germany, the Maltese delegation discussed topics of particular relevance to both sides, including illegal immigration, tourism, education, research, information and communication technology, bioethics, the current situation in the Middle East as well as European Union affairs.

ASSOCIATION OF FORMER MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

During 2007, the Association of Former Members of Parliament held several meetings at the House of Representatives. The Association is a member of the European Association of Former Members of Parliament of the Member States of the Council of Europe or the European Union.

Dr George Bonello du Puis and Mr Lino Debono participated in the meetings of the Bureau of the European Association of Former Members of Parliament of the Member States of the Council of Europe or the European Union held in Paris in February and in Vienna in November, whilst Mr Lino Debono and Mr Alfred Portelli participated in the meeting held in Brussels in June.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Sette Giugno

In his annual address, the Hon Anton Tabone, Speaker of the House of Representatives, underlined the importance of the *Sette Giugno* as a national day that commemorates the death of four Maltese who died on 7 June 1919 and augured that future generations will continue to remember these activities that singled out Malta's road to freedom and democracy.

As the tenth legislature nears its end, the Speaker reiterated his eagerness to set up an efficient and professional parliamentary service that will facilitate the demanding work expected from Maltese parliamentarians. Hon Tabone stated that Malta's role within European and international parliamentary fora demand a better equipped Maltese Parliament to be able to face the challenges ahead.

Mr Speaker augured that Members of the House show greater respect to one another and urged them to demonstrate greater commitment to their parliamentary duties.

National Student Travel Foundation (NSTF) Mini European Assembly

The NSTF Mini European Assembly was launched in 1989 with its main objective being "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 teamwork, research, presentations, public speaking and mutual respect".

The chosen topic for this year's session held in the Parliamentary Chamber on 29 March concerned a provocative question as to whether the EU should reconsider its ratification of the Kyoto Protocol that it had ratified on 31 May 2002 when it was made up of only fifteen members. The Kyoto Protocol is an agreement made under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change which commits countries to legally-binding targets to limit or reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

Conference on the External Dimension of the Bologna Process

In April, a number of university students from various European countries assembled in Malta for a conference on the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area and the External Dimensions of the Bologna Process, which conference was held in the Parliamentary Chamber on 13 April.

The parliamentary meeting organised by the *Kunsill Studenti Universitarji* together with the European Students' Union (ESU) was the closing symposium in a series of conferences dealing with the Bologna Process and the Lisbon Agenda as we move closer to 2010. During the meeting, students discussed the problems international students faced with regard to tuition fees, integration and social needs and the mobility of students.

The Conference, part-financed by the European Commission, aimed to deliver a number of tools to participating members, amongst them the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the debate surrounding the external dimensions and the commodification of Higher Education through globalisation. They also learnt how these issues tie in with the Bologna Process and the Lisbon Agenda.

Parliamentary Session to Commemorate Europe Day

On 9 May, the House of Representatives Parliamentary Chamber provided the setting for a number of students to commemorate Europe Day and the closure of the activities marking the 50th Anniversary from the signing of the Treaties of Rome. The theme selected for this year's activity, *If I were an EU Commissioner* was organised by the European Commission Representation in Malta in collaboration with the European Parliamentary Information Office (Malta) and the Ministry of Education.

Students from different schools presented their vision as European Commissioners of the future and received feedback from distinguished guests, notably Members of Parliament. Since the historic signing in Rome on 25 March 1957, Europe witnessed a profound change that was brought about through the support of the people and the governments. The establishment of European institutions, the entrenchment of democratic values coupled with other major gains that included the free movement of labour, goods and services, and the single currency, all led to an enhanced integration of Europe's civil and cultural values that contributed in no small way to people's lives.

EkoSkola Parliament

The third Ekoskola Parliament Session, an annual event that brings together students participating in the EkoSkola programme face to face with the country's official policy makers, was held in the Parliamentary Chamber on 6 June.

Amongst the recommendations put forward by the young participants, was the discontinuation of disposable utensils during the members' political meetings, the encouragement to clean up any waste left behind during the event and that separate bins for waste separation are used during these events.

The EkoSkola programme is an international environmental education programme. Around five million boys and girls from more than 13,000 schools in 33 different countries participate in the programme. Through Ekoskola, children take an active part in the decisions, planning and the implementation of environmental activities with the aim of improving the quality of life in their schools and the surrounding communities. Schools that have successfully achieved this goal are awarded a Green Flag – a prestigious eco-label testifying the school's commitment to fostering sustainable lifestyles.

National Youth Parliament

On 12 and 13 September, the National Youth Council organised the fourth edition of the National Youth Parliament in the Parliamentary Chamber, an event focusing on active participation and aimed at familiarising youths with politics and introducing them to parliamentary procedures. During the opening session, the Speaker of the House of Representatives said that despite the impression that some people have, the Maltese Parliament remains an example of how the principles of democracy are put into practice.

The students debated various issues, amongst them, issues pertaining to sustainable development, education, diversity and human rights, youth policy and cultural heritage.

Debate on the Millennium Development Goals

On 19 October, SOS Malta, with the support of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, organised a parliamentary debate on the Millennium Development Goals and Development Co-operation.

In 2000, 189 nations signed the UN Millennium Declaration which led to the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to eradicate poverty, fight hunger and disease, promote gender equality and access to education, stimulate investments in basic infrastructure, and combat environmental degradation. These eight MDGs are to be achieved by 2015.

The European Union plays a significant role in efforts towards reaching these MDGs and the ten countries, including Malta, that joined the European Union in 2004, as new and emerging donors forming part of the European Union, are committed to expanding their development co-operation and increasing the volume and the quality of the aid that they provide to developing countries.

This event that brought together decision-makers, Members of Parliament, Members of the European Parliament, representatives of the European Commission and of UNDP, Ambassadors, non-governmental

organisations, academia, as well as journalists and youth organisations, discussed national, European and global development policies.

Youth Ocean Parliament

On 7 November, the first ever Youth Ocean Parliament met in the parliamentary committee room. This parliamentary session was an integral part of the activities of the 32nd *Pacem in Maribus* Conference marking the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of Ambassador Arvid Pardo's Speech at the United Nations General Assembly where the ocean was proclaimed a common heritage of humankind.

Pardo's historic speech at the United Nations eventually led to the New Law of the Seas that formed the new ocean regime. As the future generation, youths need to start looking ahead at the world which they are to inherit and eventually pass on.

The Youth Ocean Parliament helped kick off a mechanism for future co-operation with a view to assist governments and international organisations in a decision making process on the issues of ocean research, management and protection.

Disabled People's Parliament

On 3 December the parliamentary committee room was again the venue of the annual Disabled People's Parliament. People with a disability and their relatives had the chance to voice their concerns and aspirations during this special parliamentary session.

An appeal for better post-secondary education, the need for more teachers for students with hearing impairment, the importance of access to free medicines by people with certain conditions and for more respect towards people with a disability were amongst the issues discussed at this session.

The *Kummissjoni Persuni b'Dizabilità* (National Commission Persons with Disability) established in 1987, was marking its 20th anniversary. 2007 was also declared European Year of Equal Opportunities for All.

Notte Bianca Activity

The House of Representatives participated in the 2007 *Notte Bianca* activity. Parliament was included in the list of official buildings open to the public during the activity held on 6 October 2007. The staff at the House guided around the large crowds of people that visited the Parliament's building.

ICT IN PARLIAMENT

Information and communication technologies (ICT) have become essential in supporting the work of our legislative institution. As these technologies have become more sophisticated, they have acquired the necessary flexibility and capabilities to assist our national parliament in its most important responsibilities: enacting laws that guide the nation, conducting oversight of the Executive as it carries out its mandate, and communicating with the citizens, who ultimately determine who shall represent them. In today's "wired world" our Parliament must capitalise on the benefits of ICT in order to function effectively, to interact with the public and to collaborate with other parliaments around the world.

ICT improved the efficiency of a number of administrative tasks such as managing payroll and maintaining human resources information. Computers have also become indispensable in editing and printing operations, leading to the more rapid and efficient publication and distribution of agendas, minutes and debates of Parliamentary sittings and committee meetings. To this effect, our computer network has been extended to cover all Ministerial, Members of Parliament (MPs) and staff offices in the precincts of the House as well as in the actual Parliamentary Chamber and Committee Rooms. MPs are also provided with Internet/mail connectivity at their private residences, the use of which facility, in combination with the

Parliament's official website, extends their access to parliamentary documents and services. Documents such as proposed legislation - both national and European - amendments, plenary and committee reports, motions, parliamentary questions and papers laid on the Table of the House are the core records of our legislature. Therefore, it follows that in order for the Malta Parliament to function more efficiently these documents must be prepared quickly and accurately, and distributed, amended, revised and redistributed just as smoothly. Although there is much room for improvement, ICT is enabling this to occur in a way that provides MPs and committees more time and flexibility to consider and to draft their proposals and reports.

Legislative bodies around the world are increasingly turning to modern technologies to make their deliberations available in real time. In this respect our Parliament has embarked on an audio streaming facility via our website of all the Parliamentary sittings and Committee meetings. Moreover we have been able to maintain an electronic archive that allows on-demand access after the adjournment of each session. Apart from providing a record of parliamentary activities other than in printed or textual format, the above services give MPs the ability to observe plenary and committees at work without their actual presence in the Chamber, either because of unavoidable absence or because committee meetings are held concurrently. Given the ever increasing number of parliamentary meetings, the Parliament's website is becoming a necessary resource also for citizens, civil society groups, the press, government agencies and others who have an interest in being better informed.

The staff at the House of Representatives is also responsible for the updating of the Inter-Parliamentary EU Information Exchange (IPEX) website. The site is an inter-parliamentary co-operation exercise and is maintained by the national parliaments of the European Union and the European Parliament. Proposals and Communications from the European Commission are posted on the site and then, national parliaments add scrutiny information to each Commission document thus indicating their parliament's position about each EU proposal.

ICT is allowing legislators to be more mobile. SMS software utilities, cell phones, lightweight portable PCs, small hand held computers and e-mail devices, coupled with the increasing ubiquity of the Web, enables MPs to conduct their work from many locations and with their constituents. While this kind of mobility may create certain challenges to traditional legislative processes, it opens a wide range of possibilities for Members to be in touch with citizens and therefore to conduct their work more effectively.

LIBRARY

During the year under review, the Parliament's Library was enhanced with donations of books from foreign governments.

The books were presented by the Ambassadors of Italy, the United States of America, Austria and the High Commissioner of Australia on behalf of their respective Governments. The Italian Government donated no less than 137 diplomatic documents for the period between 1860 and 2003. These books contain information such as exchanges, *notes verbales*, and historical books dating back to the period of the Unification of Italy.

The books donated by the American Government included biographies of American past and present statesmen as well as books on international relations and diplomacy in general.

The Austrian Ambassador and the High Commissioner of Australia presented a collection of parliamentary journals. All these publications will be of interest to researchers in the field of diplomacy and international relations.

OBITUARIES

On 29 January, the House observed a minute's silence to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust following the United Nations resolution of the 21 November 2005 designating the 27 January as annual international day of commemoration to honour Holocaust victims.

On 24 September, the House expressed its grief for the loss of Mrs Antonia Zammit, the mother of Minister Dolores Cristina, who died on 18 September.

On 3 December, the House expressed its grief for the loss of Mr John Farrugia, an employee at the House of Representatives who died on 30 November.

RICHARD J CAUCHI

Clerk of the House

Electoral Office

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, change of status or other particulars and prints the 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.

From 1 May 2004 onwards, 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 and consequently the Maltese ID card had to conform to these regulations and to undergo significant changes. Discussions on the matter were held at local and international level, a request for proposals was issued during early 2007 and the matter was to be concluded by the end of the year. However, in view of the forthcoming general election, it was decided to finalise the matter after this event. A legal notice was published in January whereby expired ID cards were to remain valid up to 31 December 2007. This measure avoided waste of resources and duplication of work until the competent authorities took the appropriate decisions on the matter. Naturally, persons who decided to use the ID card as a travel document had perforce to call at the Electoral Office and renew their ID card to have the appropriate expiry date printed on the ID Card.

COMPILATION AND PUBLICATION 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. The information collected in connection with the ID card was also used as the basis for the compilation of the Electoral Registers. 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 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 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 printing of identity cards, compilation and updating of electoral registers, printing of voting documents, lists of persons entitled to vote, and other documentation as well as for other electoral processes. Regular consolidation exercises are carried out to ensure that the data is correct and proper back-up facilities are in place to protect the data.

HOLDING OF ELECTIONS

The main task of the Electoral Office during 2007 was the holding of elections in 22 local councils on 10 March. Preparations for these elections began in late 2006 and personnel from other departments were deployed at various stages to assist the staff of the Electoral Office. The counting complex at Ta' Qali that had been used as a counting hall since 1992 was demolished so that the site could be used for other purposes. The Electoral Commission, after studying various options, decided that the Mediterranean Conference Centre was the best alternative site for the counting of votes. Using this Centre meant a radical change to the counting hall layout, additional work and transport of heavy items 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 Wied il-Kbir, Qormi. For these elections, 184 polling booths were set up in government schools and other premises, and instruction booklets, forms and other publications used during elections were reviewed and printed again where necessary. The Electoral Commission received nominations from 242 prospective candidates, as well as 2,610 applications for Assistant Commissioners to supervise the poll and 2,023 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 during the electoral process, payment to suppliers for services rendered during elections, compilation of statistical information, reports and other work.

During the year, a casual election was held in the Local Council of Sannat to fill the vacancy created after the resignation of a Councillor. 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 during 2007 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. During the year under review the Commission met regularly each week and more frequently during election periods, and discussed matters covering different topics, and also 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.

During the middle part of the year, the Electoral Commission took on lease the ex Trade Fair Grounds at Naxxar to serve as a counting complex for the forthcoming general election. This move meant planning and building afresh the counting complex including the counting hall, offices for the political parties, and quarters for the Police, AFM and the Media. The Commission decided that the complex was to be ready by October for any eventuality and consequently, a lot of work had to be done after office hours and during weekends to have the counting complex finished by the due date.

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.

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 2007, about 70 streets in various localities were either re-named or given an official name and about 1,200 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 changes and corrections 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 outnumber 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. Following the positive outcome of discussions held towards the end of 2006 to introduce new opening hours at the Electoral Office, new office hours were introduced in January 2007. This measure was welcomed very well by the public because it provided an even better and more convenient service.

The Electoral Office has had its own website since 2004 and this was regularly updated with relevant information which proved very useful particularly during the local councils elections.

EDWARD R GATT
Chief Electoral Commissioner

**Office of the
Prime Minister**

Management and Personnel Office

Mission Statement

To formulate, develop and promote in close collaboration with line ministries and departments, progressive human resource policies, strategies and management systems in support of the business of Government and to assist and support line ministries/departments to achieve government plans and programmes and to render an efficient service to the public.

INTRODUCTION

The Management & Personnel Office (MPO) is constantly endeavouring to find innovative ways by which this Office will be able to respond more efficiently to public service requirements.

Established in the early 1990s, the Management & Personnel Office forms part of the Office of the Prime Minister and is composed of the Resourcing Department, the Employee Relations Department and the HR Systems & Data Management Department.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

During the year under review, the Management & Personnel Office undertook various initiatives, namely the continuous improvement of family-friendly measures, the redeployment process of Maltapost employees returning to the Public Service, the transfer of Gozitan employees to Gozo, and the official launching of the first phase of the Public Service Recruitment Portal. The MPO initiated and implemented a series of new policies; the latest being the implementation of the Legal Notice 51/2007 entitled *Contracts of Service for a Fixed Term Regulations 2007*.

RESOURCING DEPARTMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Resourcing Department is of this year responsible for resourcing functions both within the Public Service as well as across the wider public sector.

The year 2007 saw the continuation of initiatives to enhance the competence of the Public Service in taking a proactive stance in view of the constant changes the Service is undergoing as a result of new legislation and challenges: the exercise for the selection of Senior Principals is planned again for early 2008, in fact the relative call for applications was issued last November. At middle management level, a call for applications for the recruitment of Principals was issued in December. The selection exercises for the recruitment of Clerks as well as for the promotion of Clerks to the grade of Executive Officer have also been planned, which will enable the Service to enhance the support staff structure across the board.

Other important recruitment processes were effected within particular sectors: various posts were filled, and contractual positions created, to increase the complement of medical, nursing and paramedical staff in view of the opening of the new hospital in June; other positions were created in connection with Malta's entry into the Schengen; the horizontal positions of EU Fund Officer and EU Fund Support Officer were created to further enhance the effective management of EU funds; and new positions at headship/senior

management level were designed in line with the Education Reform. Various other contractual positions were created at middle/senior management level within different ministries to enable the efficient and effective administration of tasks and projects linked to the achievement of set goals within each sector.

An additional role entrusted to the Department following the coming into force of Legal Notice 51/2007 entitled *Contracts of Service for a Fixed Term Regulations 2007*, on 15 June 2007, was its involvement in the scrutinisation and evaluation of individual contractual agreements, as well as the analysis of the impact of such regulations, as facilitator in ministries' concordance with this new legislation.

SECTORAL ANALYSIS – PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES

Rationalisation of Human Resources

The Resourcing Department, in conjunction with the Ministry of Finance, continued to promote and implement the rationalisation and cost-effective utilisation of human resources within the various sectors with regard to recruitment in ministries/departments in line with standing OPM/Finance directives. This was carried out particularly through: (i) the capacity-building exercises, held every six months; and (ii) the meetings of the Recruitment and Redeployment Advisory Group (RRAG), in respect of recruitment within public sector entities.

Recruitment and Redeployment Advisory Group (RRAG)

The Director (Resourcing) and the Assistant Director (Public Sector) continued to take an active part in the proceedings of the RRAG as Member and Secretary respectively. Four meetings of the RRAG were held in 2007, during which recruitment and redeployment issues were discussed. The main topic throughout the year was the effect of the Fixed Term Regulations in terms of LN 51/2007 on contractees with the Public Service as well as the public sector.

Public Sector Recruitment

During the year in question, 406 (225 in 2006) requests from 60 (49 in 2006) different government-funded entities were processed. 204 requests were for new positions which created 538 new vacancies, whilst a further 202 requests were for replacement of staff which involved 401 employees who resigned or retired from service. In four instances recruitment was made service-wide. The other requests were granted approval by the RRAG for the entities concerned to commence recruitment procedures with the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC).

Following the opening of the Mater Dei Hospital, various requests for recruitment and redeployment of additional staff for the Zammit Clapp Hospital were processed. Twelve new requests for various positions for additional staff were presented which involved 106 vacancies. These requests were given high priority and fast tracked for recruitment through the ETC.

Requests received from the Malta Shipyards Ltd, for the engagement on temporary basis of foreign skilled labour, continued to be fast-tracked to enable this entity to fulfil its contractual obligations.

The Directorate, in liaison with the ETC, also approved 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 2007 the public sector, that is all government funded entities being either independent statutory bodies or companies with public majority shareholding, totalled 12,385. By the end of September, according to the latest available figures from ETC, the figures declined to 11,546. The total

privatisation of Crowne Plaza (Holiday Inn), Airport Services Co Ltd, Tug Malta and Maltapost accounted for the reduction of the figures by over 800. Also at the end of September the public sector had 1,828 public officers on its books who were either detailed/attached on grounds of public policy or on contract.

Redeployment

Following the enactment in June 2006 of Act No VII of 2006 to amend the Employment and Training Services Act, five requests were processed for the redeployment of employees within the public sector.

EU Recruitment

In 2007, the Resourcing Department was also entrusted with the responsibility of processing of applications for EU-related employment opportunities: the recruitment of Technical Attachés, the Secondment of National Experts, and the engagement of Temporary Agents with diverse EU institutions.

EU Fund Management Related Recruitment

Following the deployment of EU Fund Managers who were appointed as a result of the centrally-operated recruitment process initiated during the latter part of 2006 through a public call for applications, two positions were created to complement the above-mentioned position: EU Fund Officers (Scale 10 maximum) and EU Fund Support Officers (Scale 11). The selection process was again centrally-operated. Since a number of vacancies in these two positions remained vacant, the calls were re-issued in late 2007 with an enhanced remuneration: Scale 9 (maximum) and Scale 11 (maximum) respectively. Incumbents recruited through the earlier calls are also to start receiving the enhanced salary.

Meanwhile, a number of other positions related to EU Fund management were created during 2007. These include: Systems Administrator (Managing Authority) (maximum Scale 5) and Projects Manager (Managing Authority) (maximum Scale 5) at the Planning and Priorities Co-ordination Division and Senior Manager (EU Paying Authority) in the Ministry of Finance (maximum Scale 5).

Migration of Services to Mater Dei Hospital

The Department continued to give its support to bolster the human resource capacity at Mater Dei Hospital, both before and after its opening in July. To this effect, and as a result of a number of periodical meetings involving the Department, the Ministry of Finance and Health authorities, a number of posts/positions were created and subsequently filled through calls for applications.

Posting of Calls on the Public Sector Online Recruitment Portal

The front end of the online Recruitment Portal was launched by MIIIT in June and the Support Section of the Departmental Grades Branch undertook new duties in posting calls for applications online thereby enabling the general public to apply from the comfort of their homes at any time of the day. This new task was preceded by training organised by the Data Management and HR Systems Department within MPO for the personnel concerned.

Participation in Capacity Building Meetings

The promotion and implementation of the rationalisation and cost-effective utilisation of human resources with regard to recruitment in ministries, departments and public entities through its participation in capacity-building exercises held amongst MPO, the Ministry of Finance and the line ministry, continued.

Diplomatic Class

A 'notional' letter of appointment was originated to be applicable in cases of appointees in the Diplomatic Class attached in the Cabinet of EU Commissioners in view of the three-year period requirement to serve intra-Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on appointment.

Consultant/Associate Consultant (e-Government Services Implementation) at MIIT

The call for Consultant (e-Government Services Implementation) in the ICT in Government Unit was twice issued during the course of 2007. After failure to fill the vacancies through the first call, a second attempt was made with less stringent eligibility requisites and through the creation of a sub-position of Associate Consultant to cater for candidates who do not fully satisfy the parameters for the position of Consultant.

VAT Inspectors

In order not to lose the experience/training of serving VAT Inspectors even when the Scale 10 ceiling is exceeded and in view of the added burdens which the Division is shouldering, this Department agreed that the ceiling be raised to Scale 8 maximum. A recommendation to this effect by the Department was approved by higher authorities.

Calls Issued Following the Signing of the Agreement on the Education Reform

Following the agreement on the Education Reform signed in 2007 between the Government and the Malta Union of Teachers, a number of calls for applications for filling of posts/positions in the Ministry for Education, Youth and Employment were issued.

In anticipation of the above calls for applications, and in reflection of the thinking behind the creation of the top positions emanating from the said agreement (such as Directors General, Directors and College Principals) this Department had, in conjunction with Chairman, Public Service Commission (PSC), compiled a draft rudimentary call providing for initial appointment of the substantive grade of *Officer in Grade 5* in terms of the Constitution (Art 110) in anticipation of the 3-year contractual appointment to the position of Director General.

Moreover, following the conclusion of the first selection processes, the Department advised MEYE on the drafting of the resulting letters of appointment for Directors General and College Principals.

Officer in Charge Minor Staff Examination

The fifteen candidates who were successful in the examination for the post of Officer-in-Charge Minor Staff held in 2006 were deployed according to priority requests and the letters of appointment issued.

Executive Officer Examination

In liaison with the Director of Examinations and the PSC, an internal call for applications (MPO Circular) for the post of Executive Officer was issued on 27 March. The written examination was held on 12 and 13 June, with a validity period of two years from the date of publication of the final result. Out of 1,096 candidates who sat for the exam, 307 were successful. Marks were also allotted through a Service Credit exercise. The second part of the examination – the interviews - commenced on 18 September and was completed by the first week of November. The official result was issued by the PSC on 20 December.

Clerk Entrance Examination

A call for applications for the recruitment of Clerks in the Public Service was published in the Government Gazette of 3 April 2007. The examination was held under the auspices of the Board of Local Examinations. A total of 970 candidates sat for Part I, held on 27 and 28 June, out of which 382 candidates were successful. Part II – the interview – commenced on 8 October. Out of the 382 candidates interviewed, 344 were successful. The results were published on 26 November.

Senior Principal Selection Exercise – 2007

Following a comparative analysis of middle management officers available in the Public Service, and a 48% reduction in the Senior Principal complement over the last 12 months, a draft call for applications has been prepared and members of the Selection Board nominated for the PSC's approval. For the first time, the Commission directed that all written components should be run under the auspices of the Board of Local Examinations, and that such should be the procedure henceforth. A PSC interviewing Board will then assess successful candidates following a group discussion and individual interview. The examination is set for the second week of February 2008.

Principal Entrance Examination

A public call for applications advertising the competitive examination for entry into the grade of Principal was issued in the Government Gazette of 26 October 2007. The written part of the examination is scheduled for the first week of February 2008.

Changes to Performance Agreement and to Pensions Ordinance

Following the issue of OPM Circular No 7/2007 regarding Amendments to the Pensions Ordinance (Cap 93), proposals devised in conjunction with Director, Policy Development (OPM) were submitted for:

- alterations to the proposed amendment to the Pensions Ordinance in respect of pensionable officers in headship positions (article 8E), in order to address perceived lacunae; and
- changes to the performance agreement of incumbents in headship positions, clarifying that entitlement to a pension under the 1937 Pensions Ordinance based on the salary of the headship position occupied immediately prior to leaving office, is on condition that the last full year of creditable service is performed in this position, or completion of any three-year continuous term in a parallel or higher designation, whichever the higher.

Legal Notice 51/2007 entitled Contracts of Service for a Fixed Term Regulations, 2007

Following the coming into force of LN 51/2007 concerning Fixed-Term Contracts, the Resourcing Department assumed a central role in addition to its existing remit: that of assisting in the implementation of said LN by ministries. Hence:

- The terms, conditions and duties attached to the employment contract of each contractee within the Public Service and wider public sector were scrutinised and evaluated, to determine the applicability of LN 51/2007 in each case, in preparation for the formulation of individual letters for presentation to each contractee informing them of such applicability, to be issued by the relative Permanent Secretary.
- The Director (Resourcing) and Assistant Director (Special Issues, Resourcing) participated in individual meetings between the Principal Permanent Secretary and the Permanent Secretary/Director Corporate Services of each ministry, during which PSs were briefed on the way forward and particular difficulties addressed.
- As part of the Committee set up to address representations related to the above-mentioned letters, comprising the PPS, PS (OPM), Director (DIER), Director (Resourcing), Assistant Director (Special

Issues, Resourcing) and the Union Haddiema Maghqudin, the Department was involved in the process of scrutinising and evaluating such submissions.

- The Department participated in discussions, with the PPS, PS (OPM) and Director (Employee Relations), on new policies and practices and concerning the PSC's involvement, following the Fixed Term LN and following the issue of the pre-15 December letters.
- In the light of Regulation 4 of LN 51/2007, following a meeting with DG (Social Security), payment of Social Security contributions by incumbents of contractual positions is now based on basic pay, that is, the salary of the position, irrespective of whether or not the incumbent has a substantive grade. This, since prior to this LN, the difference between the salary of the higher contractual position occupied by an officer who has a substantive grade, and the salary of his/her grade, was treated as a non-pensionable allowance. Instead, the concept of a non-pensionable allowance is now limited to pension entitlements under the 1937 Pensions Ordinance.

Implementation of New Policies Following PSC Concurrence

- the upgrading of the position of Secretary to the Presidency;
- the issue of appointments as Officer in Grade 5 to officers who have served as Private Secretaries for six years;
- officers on a performance agreement in a Category A position who utilise unpaid leave relating to family-friendly measures, such as parental or responsibility leave, shall henceforth retain their substantive grade of 'Officer in Grade 5' or higher, subject to creditable performance;
- tenure in a comparable grade on completion of six years in the position of Director General or above.

Proposed New Policies Submitted to the PSC

- a system of Succession Planning across the Service;
- the extension of eligibility for Headship positions to include all public officers who hold a substantive grade in Salary Scale 7.

EPSO Questionnaire

An EPSO Questionnaire was compiled on the role played by the PSC and the MPO in selection procedures and interviewing techniques.

Capacity Building of Information Management Units – Steering Committee

A Steering Committee composed of representatives from MPO, MEU, MITTS, MIIIT and CITAC was set up with the brief to address the HR support needs of CIOs following their appointment in February. To this end, Resourcing gathered the necessary data regarding public officers performing ICT-related duties but not officially appointed an ICT position, for analysis by MEU, to identify HR needs which may be sourced in-house. The first four designations, at senior management level - ICT Governance Officer, ICT Applications Officer, ICT Contracts and Services Officer, and Management Information Systems Officer – were agreed upon and a service-wide call for applications was issued. Concurrently, discussions with the Staff Development Organisation are underway with a view to supplementing existing skills with further training.

Salary of Casual Substitutes

Resourcing submitted recommendations for the amendment of the salary clause in the Public Service Management Code specimen contract issued to Casual Substitutes, so that Casual Substitutes may be paid in accordance with an incremental salary scale as appearing in the Estimates of each year (inclusive of COLA and any applicable Collective increases) instead of a fixed minimum point.

'Bridging' of Service of Resigned Nurses on Re-entry

Resourcing participated in the creation of a scheme to attract nurses who had resigned, to rejoin the Public Service, in view of the shortage of nurses in the Service. The scheme centres around the principle of recognition of previous service for salary computation purposes, subject to Classification Agreements thresholds.

Freedom of Information Act

The Resourcing Department submitted its comments and suggestions vis-à-vis the proposed Freedom of Information Act.

MPO Seminar

The Department prepared a presentation on the provisions of LN 51/2007 regarding Fixed-Term Contracts, for discussion during a seminar held by the PPS for Directors, Assistant Directors and Senior Principals within MPO. The presentation linked the provisions of LN 51/2007 to those of the EU Council Directive 1990/70/EC as well as those of the EIRA.

Deployment of Public Officers with Public Entities

During 2007, 25 public officers were detailed with public entities whereas 28 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 2007, were deployed, attached or detailed with public entities:

| | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|--------------|
| Public Entities and Parastatal Organisations | Various | 94 |
| Water Services Corporation | Detailed | 946 |
| Malta Transport Authority | Detailed | 56 |
| Occupational Health and Safety Authority | Detailed | 5 |
| Malta Environment and Planning Authority | Detailed | 100 |
| Malta Maritime Authority | Detailed | 14 |
| Malta Resources Authority | Detailed | 5 |
| Malta Standards Authority | Detailed | 3 |
| Malta Statistics Authority | Detailed | 64 |
| Lotteries and Gaming Authority | Detailed | 5 |
| Superintendence Cultural Heritage | Detailed | 10 |
| Malta Communications Authority | Detailed | 8 |
| Heritage Malta | Detailed | 183 |
| Kunsill Malti għall-Isport | Detailed | 38 |
| Malta Council for Culture and the Arts | Detailed | 27 |
| Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni b' Dizabilità | Detailed | 5 |
| Office of the Attorney General | Detailed | 37 |
| National Commission for the Promotion of Equality for Men & Women | Detailed | 4 |
| Medicines Authority | Detailed | 14 |
| National Archives for Malta | Detailed | 10 |
| European Union Programmes Agency | Detailed | 7 |
| Maltco Lotteries | Deployed | 1 |
| MATS Ltd (includes ex-AFM personnel) | Attached | 152 |
| Foundation for Medical Services | Deployed | 9 |
| MCAST | Deployed | 88 |
| WasteServ | Deployed | 14 |
| St John Co-Cathedral Foundation | Deployed | 2 |
| Barriera Tax Warehouses Ltd | Deployed | 3 |
| Foundation for Social Welfare Services | Deployed | 9 |
| IPSL | Deployed | 1 |
| Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools | Deployed | 1 |
| Total | | 1,915 |

ONGOING ANCILLARY ACTIVITIES

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

| General Service progressions from one salary scale to a higher one with the same grade subject to satisfactory performance | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <i>Position</i> | <i>No</i> |
| Senior Principal (Scale 7 to 6) | 1 |
| Principal (Scale 8 to 7) | 22 |
| (Scale 9 to 8) | 12 |
| (Scale 10 to 9) | 19 |
| Assistant Principal (Scale 11 to 10) | 134 |
| Executive Officer (Scale 14 to 13) | 6 |
| Clerk (Scale 16 to 15) | 40 |
| Messenger (Scale 17 to 16) | 1 |

| Engagement of Consultants/Advisers on contract processed | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| New Contracts | 27 |
| Renewals | 104 |
| Terminations | 17 |

| Movement of Staff to & from Private Secretariats | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| General Service Grades | 12 |
| Departmental Grades | 10 |
| Technical Grades | 3 |
| Industrial Grades | 3 |
| Others | 2 |

| Departmental, Technical & Industrial Grades Appointments | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <i>Position</i> | <i>No</i> |
| Following public calls for application | 1,401 |
| Following selection from service-wide calls | 384 |
| Following selection from departmental calls | 154 |
| After a number of years service in the grade | 45 |
| Renewal of contracts | 204 |
| Others | 47 |

| Movement of Staff approved by MPO | |
|------------------------------------------|----|
| General Service Grades | 39 |
| Departmental Grades | 9 |
| Technical Grades | 25 |
| Industrial Grades | - |
| Others (Maltapost Employees) | 16 |

| Category 'A' Appointments | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| <i>Position</i> | <i>No</i> |
| Principal Permanent Secretary | - |
| Permanent Secretary | - |
| Permanent Secretary - Designate | - |
| Director General | 14 |
| Director General - Designate | 3 |
| Director | 27 |
| Director - Designate | 3 |
| Others | - |
| In an Acting Capacity | 21 |
| Assistant Director | 37 |

| General Service Appointments | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| <i>Grade</i> | <i>No</i> |
| Senior Principal | - |
| Principal | 197 |
| Assistant Principal | 36 |
| Executive Officer | 9 |
| Senior Clerk | 36 |
| Clerk | - |

| Calls for applications issued for Departmental, Technical & Industrial Grades | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <i>Type of advert</i> | <i>No</i> |
| Government Gazette | 210 |
| Service-wide MPO Circular | 159 |
| Department Circular | 20 |

| Recommendations to PSC in respect of Departmental/Technical/Industrial Grades | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Local Personnel | 496 |
| Expatriate Personnel | 66 |

| Movement of Staff within same Ministry approved by respective Permanent Secretary | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| General Service Grades | 6 |
| Departmental Grades | 1 |
| Technical Grades | 4 |
| Industrial Grades | 13 |

| Pension Files processed by the Department | |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Departmental, Tech & Industrial Grades | 337 |
| General Service Grades | 85 |

Public Sector Database

A comprehensive database of all vacancy forms for recruitment in the public sector received since May 2005 from the various entities, and the related RRAG decisions taken for each particular case, is being compiled. It is envisaged that by early 2008, the database will be finalised and up-to-date.

The database will serve to facilitate the retrieval of data for each entity and ministry concerned. It will also be useful in the drawing up of statistics, mainly for the National Statistics Office.

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

The prime objective of the Employee Relations Department is to advise 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 8th edition of the PSMC was published in electronic format. This edition incorporated all the regulations and policies in the sphere of employee relations and resourcing which came into effect up to 31 May 2007. Apart from the updates, this edition displayed all the monetary values in euro as well as in Maltese Liri. This edition was also enhanced by the inclusion of a table of contents at the beginning of the Code and at the beginning of each chapter with direct link to the main text.

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

A notice was published in the Government Gazette inviting NGOs to request the release of public officers to work with them, 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 in 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 project to which the requested officer would be assigned. The NGOs were required to define the benefits originating from the project and the target deadlines for its completion. The public officers who may be released to work with NGOs may not be higher than Salary Scale 5 and they will be released on special leave with pay, on grounds of public policy for the duration of the project or one year whichever is less with the possibility of renewal.

Following the publication of this notice, 22 applications from NGOs requesting the release of a total of 26 public officers to work with NGOs were received. After evaluating these applications in accordance with the established criteria, 22 public officers were released. Thirteen of these public officers were already released last year.

Overseas Development Assistance (ODA)

Government is committed to fostering an inclusive society, not only locally but also in a global capacity. To promote this aim further and also to conform to our commitments as an EU member state, a policy was introduced which provides that full-time public officers on a substantive appointment may be granted special paid leave on grounds of public policy for one year, renewable yearly to perform overseas development work in countries that are recipients of ODA. The paid leave is granted on the basis of assignments. The number of officers posted on paid leave depends on Malta's ODA budget.

During 2007, a total of 15 public officers were released on this scheme, with an outlay of Lm21,433. The officers served in the following countries: Brazil, Albania, Guatemala, Ethiopia, and Kenya.

Discipline

An audit on the application of the Disciplinary Regulations by line Departments during 2006 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 2006*. This

report, apart from giving a statistical digest of disciplinary cases initiated in 2006, identifies trends and also compares the 2006 figures with the 2005 figures.

The Employee Relations Department also continued to extend 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;
- regularly monitored the application of the Disciplinary Regulations in departments and the necessary corrective action was taken accordingly;
- participated in a seminar on the Disciplinary Regulations organised by the Customer Services Department for officers in top and middle management positions of the Gozo General Hospital;
- consulted with the Public Service Commission on the interpretation of a number of provisions of the Disciplinary Regulations.

The Department produced a policy document entitled *Guidelines for Commander, Armed Forces of Malta regarding the suspension of AFM personnel involved in criminal cases*. This policy outlined the procedure that the Commander, AFM should follow when a soldier is arraigned in Court charged with a criminal offence and when the soldier is convicted or acquitted of a criminal charge. This document also outlines the rights and obligations of the soldier whilst he is on suspension and it lists the offences which warrant the suspension of the soldier.

Re-Integration in the Public Service

The Public Service Commission approved a policy document drawn up by the Employee Relations Department entitled *Policy on the Re-integration of public officers*. This policy outlines new parameters for the re-instatement of public officers who had retired on medical grounds and the re-employment of public officers who either resigned or were dismissed on disciplinary grounds.

This policy provides for the setting up of a Board known as the *Re-integration Board*, which will have the function to recommend to the PSC the re-instatement or the re-engagement of ex-public officers, according to the new parameters.

Privatisation of Maltapost

Following consultations held with the *Union Haddiema Magħqudin*, an agreement was signed on the *Absorption of Maltapost public officers within the Public Service structures*. This agreement granted to the public officers who (i) reverted to the Public Service in 2003, the right to be absorbed within the public service structures; (ii) reverted to the Public Service after the full privatisation of Maltapost, the right to continue to benefit from the salary that they are earning from Maltapost and also the right to be absorbed within the public service structures; and (iii) reverted to the Public Service after the dissolution of Posta Ltd the right to be granted the salary which they earned with Posta Ltd. A side letter was also submitted to UHM outlining the methodology that MPO will follow in the absorption of these public officers.

Treasury Pension Rights

Two separate legal notices were published declaring MITTS Ltd and the Lotteries and Gaming Authority as public entities falling under Article 8A of the Pensions Ordinance. By virtue of these legal notices, service with these two public entities will be reckoned as service with Government. Thus, the pensionable public officers who are deployed with MITTS Ltd and also those pensionable officers detailed with the Lotteries and Gaming Authority will, on retirement, be entitled to a Treasury pension based on the analogous public service grade, capped at Salary Scale 3, if they take up permanent employment with these two entities.

The Department participated in two Classification Boards set up by the Ministry of Finance in terms of Article 8B of the Pensions Ordinance, to carry out the classification exercise necessary to establish the analogous grade upon which the Treasury pension of the public officers who had taken up permanent employment with the Malta Statistics Authority and the Lotteries and Gaming Authority, should be based.

Conditions of Service

The following conditions of service were introduced:

- part-time employees whose engagement with Government is their principal employment were granted all the rights and duties of whole-time employees; all the conditions of service applicable to whole-time public officers were extended also to part-time public officers. This implies that part-time public officers are now entitled to all the leave benefits and allowances, including Sunday pay on a *pro-rata* basis but not to the payment of overtime, unless they work longer hours than the stipulated 40 hour week. Certain benefits however, may not be applicable to them for objective reasons. These employees have also the right to apply for vacancies as long as they satisfy the relevant criteria;
- all government employees may avail themselves of 14 weeks paid maternity leave instead of the 13 weeks paid and one week unpaid leave, if at least one week of the maternity leave extends beyond 1 January 2008;
- the starting salary of officers who progress from one scale to another within the same grade on the basis of years of satisfactory service should not be less than the third step of the new scale. In the case of serving officers who enter a higher scale as a result of academic achievement or on obtaining a warrant, these will be placed on the minimum of the new scale tied to the level of the qualification/warrant obtained.

Other Measures

During the period under review, the following action was taken by the Employee Relations Department:

- notified all employees in the Public Service and public sector, by means of an OPM Circular, that they may, on voluntary basis, donate to the Eden Foundation, 10c per week which will be deducted directly from their salaries;
- invited employees, by means of an OPM Circular, to contribute on a voluntary and once only basis the sum of Lm2 from their salary towards the 34U Campaign to help replace the 3,000 trees which were vandalised;
- issued a number of advertisements in the local newspapers and distributed posters about the family-friendly measures available in the Public Service which were published in a brochure that was produced with co-funding from the European Social Fund;
- drew the attention of Heads of Department, by means of an MPO Circular, that the Private Guards and Local Wardens Act precludes public officers above scale 6 from holding a licence as a Security/Private Guard.

Surveys

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

- the salaries which are to be paid to AFM personnel and to police officers in 2008;
- the remuneration payable to the chairpersons and members of government boards and committees and the number of sittings held by these Boards during 2006;
- the number of officers who are on unpaid leave and on study leave; and
- the number of employees who availed themselves of the various family-friendly measures as on 1 November 2006.

Industrial Relations

As part of the restructuring taking place at MPO, the Industrial Relations Unit has been placed within the Employee Relations Department.

The Industrial Relations Unit continued to cultivate the good relations that exist between Government as an employer and the various unions representing the employees of the Public Service.

In order to maintain this relationship, the Unit maintained a pro-active approach in the management of industrial relations. To facilitate this pro-active approach, various meetings were carried out on a regular basis with the unions which meetings proved to be fruitful in curtailing unwarranted escalation of industrial disputes.

During the period under review, the Industrial Relations Unit was involved in the negotiation and successful conclusion of the following:

- Addendum with MUMN regarding the Nursing and Midwifery class
- Memorandum of Understanding with UHM regarding the Paramedics class
- Agreement with UHM regarding the Pharmacist class
- Agreement with UHM regarding the Scientific class
- Agreement with UHM regarding the Medical class
- Agreement with GWU regarding the Assistant Veterinary Support Officers
- Agreement with UHM regarding Judicial Assistants
- Addendum with GWU and UHM regarding the Messengerial class
- Agreement with UHM regarding Care Workers
- Agreement with MUT regarding the Education class
- Addendum with GWU and UHM on the Industrial and Supervisory class
- Agreement with MAM on the Medical class
- Memorandum of Understanding with UHM on the School Secretaries
- Amendment to the Classification and Grading of Legal class.

Clause 5.2 of the Collective Agreement for Employees in the Public Service established a conciliatory structure with a view to encourage the prompt and amicable resolution of any potential difference between the Government and the unions. During the period under review both this Unit and the unions made case of this structure which proved beneficial in maintaining and fostering harmonious industrial relations.

In this respect, the conciliatory structure facilitated mutual agreement between Government and the unions on the following issues: (i) agreement on the paramedic class; (ii) working hours of Ambulance Drivers in Gozo; and (iii) attendance registration of Nursing Aides.

The Industrial Relations Unit embarked on the design and creation of a database as regards all the 65 sectoral agreements presently in force in the Public Service. The availability of reliable information which is retrievable in a timely manner is a critical tool in the bargaining process. This database is also being utilised as a management tool to ensure a holistic approach in the wider ambit of human resource management.

Statistics

The following tables show the number of cases handled by the Employee Relations Department during 2007.

| Cases handled by Employee Relations Dept | |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Conditions of Service | 1,509 |
| Discipline & Staff Welfare | 416 |
| Pensions | 76 |
| Total | 2,001 |

| Disciplinary cases initiated in 2006 under the 1999 Disciplinary Regulations by line departments | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Description of Punishments | No |
| Regulation 18 Admonishment | 129 |
| Regulation 19 Summary Warning | 307 |
| Regulation 20 Minor | 165 |
| Regulation 20 Serious | 104 |
| Total | 705 |

| Cases of Conditions of Service handled | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Unpaid Leave | 301 |
| New/Review of Allowances | 30 |
| Cultural Leave | 39 |
| Medical Boards | 221 |
| Re-instatements/Re-employment | 12 |
| Union Activities | 274 |
| Deputising Allowance | 74 |
| Qualification Allowance | 35 |
| Boards and Committees | 20 |
| Release of Officers to NGOs | 22 |
| Gender Issues | 67 |
| Release of Officers to work with EU Institutions | 46 |
| Overseas Development Aid | 15 |
| Others | 353 |
| Total | 1,509 |

HR DATA & SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

In May 2007, the *Directorate of Policy & Planning* was renamed *HR Systems & Data Management* assuming such functions as the strategic management of Human Resources data.

This Department aims to further develop and maintain a service-wide comprehensive human resource system with a view to providing regular, accurate, timely and qualitative information for optimal planning. It also aims at implementing and developing further the Performance Management Programme (PMP) whilst improving employee performance against approved output and predetermined quality standards. This Department organises and maintains fora for Human Resources Managers, aimed at keeping them abreast with new developments and policies. Systems for the effective implementation of teleworking across the Public Service, the introduction of modern mechanical and/or electronic systems for the purpose of recording attendance, the introduction of flexible working hours across the Public Service, and the control of the abuse of sick leave, all fall under the administrative remit of this Department.

The HR Systems & Data Management Department undertakes research with a view to keeping abreast with new developments in the field of HR. For this purpose an adequate library is maintained. The Department is also responsible for the development and maintenance of the MPO website/s and the Online Recruitment Portal.

Activities undergone by HR Systems & Data Management during 2007

For the year under review, the functions of the HR Systems and Data Management Department included the following:

- offered support to line departments who are using the Human Resource Information Management System (HRIMS);
- finalised the preparatory work for the new HR/Payroll system which will replace the present systems;
- implemented the Performance Management Programme (PMP) to improve employee performance against approved output and pre-determined quality standards, while striving to improve the Programme as a whole;
- the final preparations and launching of the Public Service Recruitment Portal;
- improved the competence of Human Resource Management through regular fora for Human Resource Managers and the resumption of fora for Directors Corporate Services;
- provided continuous support to line departments on matters concerning organisational structure, staff complimenting and other HR functions; and

- the dissemination of information to public officers and the general public on recruitment opportunities within the EU institutions and agencies.

Performance Management Programme

During the first quarter of the year, the Department introduced a new initiative, whereby annual PMP compliance audits were carried out by HR Managers within their respective ministries. This exercise proved fruitful (with results roughly comparable to those produced by the previous system in use) and also provided important insights on fine tuning to address the delays experienced in completing this exercise.

A PMP quality audit for General Service Grades within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was carried out during the year. Owing to the ongoing restructuring of the Ministry, several of the PMP documents were not finalised. PMP documents submitted by the Resourcing Department were also regularly reviewed for their quality content. For promotion/progression purposes, a total of 440 documents pertaining to General Service Class employees were audited. The attention of 149 supervisors was drawn in view that PMP assessments were found weak. Areas for improvement were suggested. This implies that roughly 34% of documents were deemed unsatisfactory in one area or another; marking a slight increase over the previous year.

During December, this Office undertook a review of the effectiveness of the current Performance Management Programme. To extend its reach and effectiveness, several proposals regarding both the structure of the document and the process of the Programme as a whole were put forward.

Fora for Directors (Corporate Services) and Human Resources Managers

In November, the HR Systems and Data Management Department held one Forum for Directors (Corporate Services). The session treated the proposed developments in the Public Administration Bill. It was agreed that further sessions of the Forum would be held on an *ad hoc* basis.

Eight Human Resources Managers Fora were held throughout the year. The following topics were discussed: Setting the agenda; Improvements to the Performance Management Programme; Euro Changeover and its implications; Getting to know FHRD and its services; Issues related to SDO courses; Public Administration Bill; and Creative thinking for the Public Service.

Human Resources Information Management System (HRIMS)

The current system continued to be maintained and updated since the installation of a new HR System is still pending. Various users were added to the system, and several bug-fixing exercises were undertaken by MITTS personnel. The system was also updated for euro compliance.

Various data entry exercises were undertaken by this Department, mainly the keying in into HRIMS of the employment history of all public service employees. Data were retrieved from updated Personal Record Sheets (PRSs) obtained from line departments.

Several high-level meetings were held to establish the way forward for a new HR/Payroll System for the Public Service. This led to a submission for the procurement and implementation of a fully integrated HR system to the Core ICT Advisory Committee (CITAC). The document that was submitted in October included the investment plans, inflows and outflows, costings and an implementation schedule for this project. The Department of HR Systems & Data Management will focus on the formulation of the tender document, once clearance from CITAC is obtained.

MPO Website

The MPO website, mpo.gov.mt registered a total of 33,506 hits during 2007; 15,316 were one-time users, 10,377 were first-time users while 7,706 were repeat users. 90% of these hits were of local origin, while 9% were from European Union countries and 1% from the United States.

The most popular pages according to the number of page loads were:

www.mpo.gov.mt

www.mpo.gov.mt/employeerelations.html

www.mpo.gov.mt/resourcing.html

www.mpo.gov.mt/hranddatamgt.html

Statistics showed the following duration periods on the website: 11% exceeded one hour; 14% lasted from five minutes to an hour; and the remainder spent less than five minutes.

174 MPO Circulars were published on the website's *Internal Calls* section.

Human Resources

Director HR Systems & Data Management participated in two HR Working Group meetings (HRWG) on 17-18 September and 20 November, held in Lisbon and Brussels respectively. The topic under discussion was performance and competency review. Several questionnaires were distributed to selected personnel within the Public Service. A final report on the findings was presented at the end of the Portuguese Presidency.

Other Matters/Activities

- Director HR Systems & Data Management participated regularly in the Re-Employment Board.
- In December, Director HR Systems & Data Management participated in the OPM/MPO Organisational Strategic Review undertaken by the Management Efficiency Unit. This exercise was meant to prepare OPM and MPO to meet the challenges which would eventually be brought about by changes in legislation.
- The ongoing work on the Recruitment Portal for the Public Service finally gave results half way through the year. Final trials and adjustments to the Portal were made during the first quarter of the year. At the same time, it was presented to the Public Service Commission whose consequent recommendations were immediately implemented by this Department. About 70 employees from across the Public Service were given hands-on training on the Portal by Assistant Director (HR Systems & Data Management). Training was held at the Staff Development Organisation. Following these preparations, the Portal was officially launched on 4 June at a press conference attended by Minister Austin Gatt during which Assistant Director (HRSDM) gave an extensive overview of the advantages of the system. Initial response to the Portal was good.

EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

Appendices A to C show:

- A Public Service Workforce (inc. govt employees seconded/detailed to public entities) December 2006/2007
- B Distribution of public service employees by category and gender as on December 2007
Average age by grade and gender in the General Service Class as on December 2007
- C Employees who terminated their employment from the Public Service January-December 2007
PMP compliance by Ministry during 2007

ANTHONY J VELLA

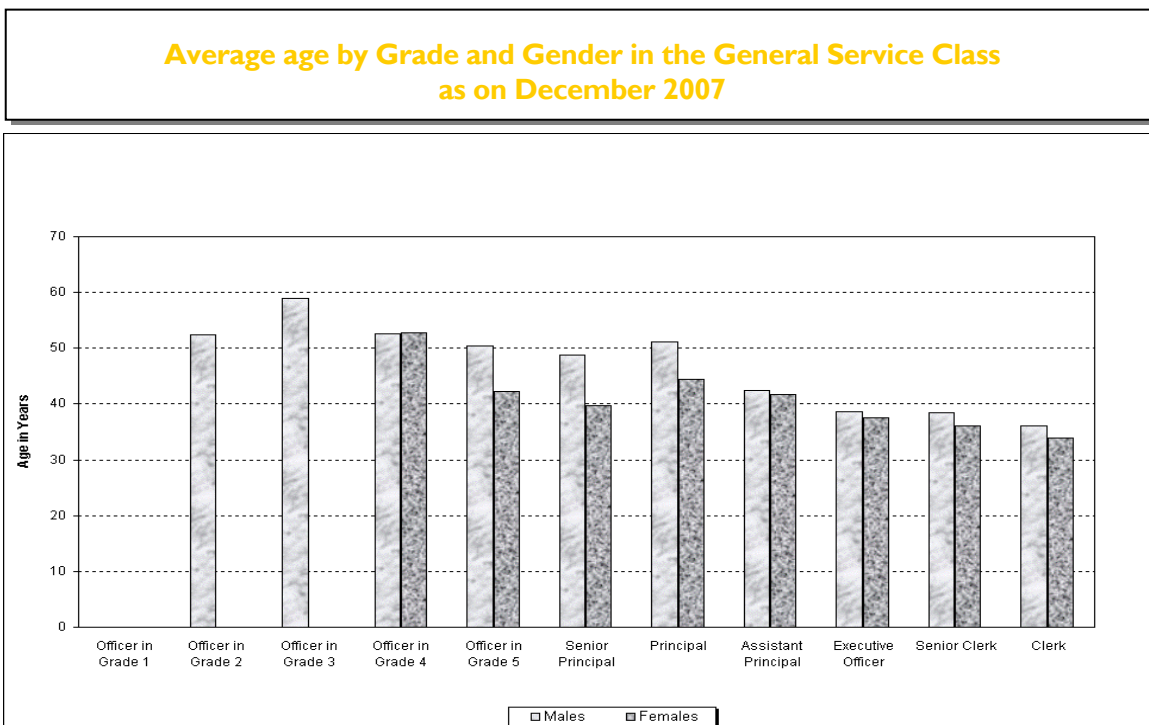
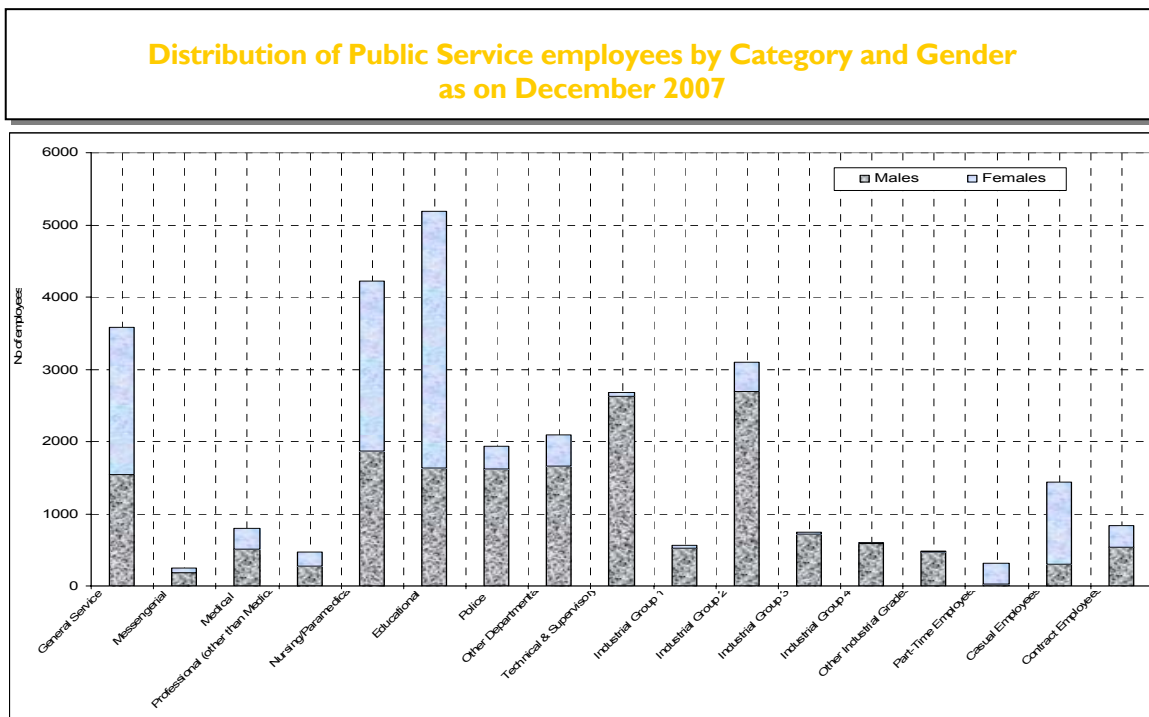
Acting Director General, MPO

APPENDIX A

Public Service Workforce
(including government employees seconded/detailed to public entities)
December 2006/2007

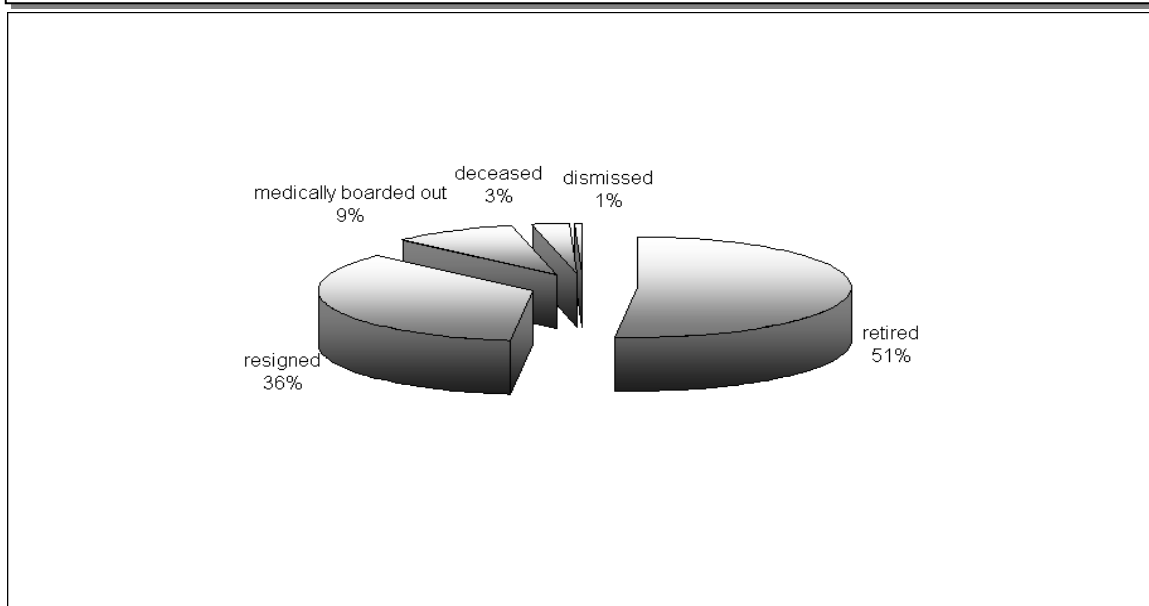
| Category | Dec 2006 | Dec 2007 | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Full-time Employees in Government Departments | | | | |
| Administrative & Clerical | 3,529 | 3,427 | | |
| Messengerial | 261 | 227 | | |
| Police Force | 1,759 | 1,937 | | |
| Technical | 2,155 | 2,105 | | |
| Professional (Other than Medical) | 446 | 423 | | |
| Nursing/Paramedical | 4,045 | 4,217 | | |
| Medical | 775 | 781 | | |
| Educational | 5,222 | 5,186 | | |
| Other Departmental Grades | 1,886 | 1,785 | | |
| Industrial | <u>5,145</u> | <u>25,223</u> | <u>4,826</u> | <u>24,914</u> |
| Armed Forces (Uniformed) | | | | |
| Regular Force | 1,454 | 1,495 | | |
| Revenue Security Corps | 133 | 132 | | |
| Reserve Force | 54 | 47 | | |
| Volunteer Force | <u>38</u> | <u>1,679</u> | <u>31</u> | <u>1,705</u> |
| Temporary Employees | | | | |
| Part-Time | 317 | 315 | | |
| Casual | 1,217 | 1,432 | | |
| On contract (Local and Foreign) | <u>757</u> | <u>2,291</u> | <u>823</u> | <u>2,570</u> |
| Public Officers with Authorities/Public Entities | | 1,778 | 1,783 | |
| GRAND TOTAL | <u>30,971</u> | | <u>30,972</u> | |

APPENDIX B

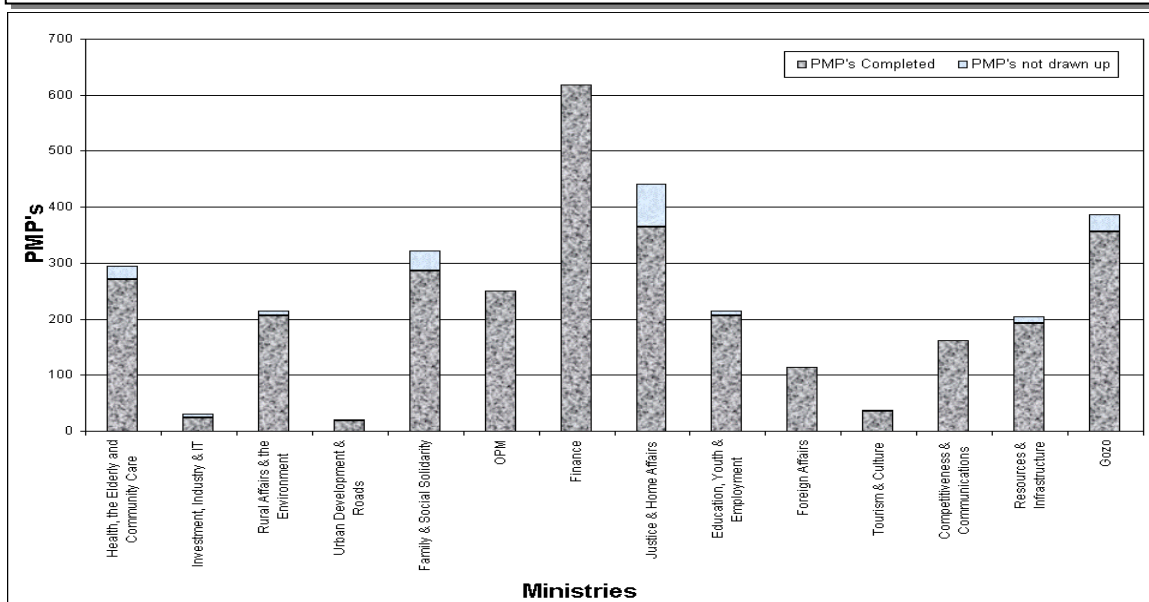


APPENDIX C

**Employees who terminated their employment from the Public Service
January - December 2007**



PMP Compliance by Ministry during 2007



Planning and Priorities Co-ordination Division

INTRODUCTION

In 2007 the main functions of the Planning and Priorities Co-ordination Division (PPCD) were:

- 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 act as co-ordinating body of the EU Solidarity Fund;
- to act as Managing Authority for the European Globalisation Fund;
- to act as Managing Authority for the Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund 2007 – 2013;
- to finalise the Operational Programmes for the 2007 – 2013 programming period;
- to manage the fifth Italo-Maltese Financial Protocol (final year);
- to act as the National Focal Point (NFP) for the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms;
- to act as the National Co-ordination Unit (NCU) for the Swiss-Maltese Co-operation Programme.

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

EU Pre-Accession Funds

Originally the Pre-Accession Funds implementation period was to end by 30 November 2006 but in October 2006, the European Commission extended the disbursement deadline until 30 September 2007 in respect of the project to construct the Gozo Urban Waste Water Treatment Plant. This extension enabled the Pre-Accession Funds allocated to this project to continue to be utilised during 2007.

The plant went into operation in November 2007.

Transition Facility

Projects under the 2004 programme (total value €12.8 million [Malta €1 million, EU €11.8 million]) continued to be progressively implemented through to their conclusion. The contract execution deadline expired on 15 December 2007 and by that date 94.66% of EU Funds contracted had been disbursed.

Meanwhile, projects under the 2005 programme (total value €6,217,125 [Malta €317,125, EU €5.90 million]) continued to be progressively implemented. The contracting deadline expired on 15 December 2007.

The EU contribution to the 2006 programme amounts to €3,315,000. The Environment Twinning Contract was granted approval by the Twinning Steering Committee on 19 November 2007. Meanwhile, the identified Twinning ‘light’ Project Fiches were also finalised and released by the Contracts Department for circulation.

Individual projects are given publicity – mostly in the form of press conferences or newspaper articles – during the course of their implementation.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Pre-accession and Transition Facility Programmes

The first round of Monitoring Sub-Committee (MSC) for the year was held in March 2007. At the MSC the implementation progress of each project was reviewed and discussed. The 9th Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) which is chaired by PPCD was held on 22 May 2007 and included the European Commission together with a number of Maltese officials. The second round of MSC for the year took place in October 2007 and this was followed by the 10th JMC which was held on 27 November 2007.

For each JMC a detailed Implementation Status Report was drawn up by PPCD. Independent evaluation (co-ordinated by PPCD) of the projects being monitored was carried out and reports were presented to the authorities in April 2007 and November 2007 in time for the two JMCs mentioned above.

Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund 2004 - 2006

Structural Funds

A third call for projects under the ESF was launched in April 2007. The call closed on 4 May 2007, and 14 projects were received under Measures 2.1 and 2.2 of Priority 2 of the Single Programming Document. Following a selection process, five new projects were chosen. A further five projects were put on the reserve list but two of these projects were withdrawn by the applicants. The Monitoring Committees on Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund were convened on 16 February, 25 May and 3 October 2007. Annual reports were presented to the Monitoring Committees in May and submitted formally to the European Commission in June.

Various enhancements were made to the 2004-2006 Structural Funds Database (SFD). Concurrently a new version of the SFD was developed to manage both current and new programmes and projects. It is anticipated that the new version will change to a new web-based environment in early 2008.

During 2007, the Managing Authority co-ordinated the Commission audit mission on the ERDF and Cohesion Fund as well as a Commission audit mission for ESF. In addition, the Managing Authority also liaised with the National Audit Office on an audit exercise NAO undertook on ERDF projects implemented under Measure 1.1 of Priority 1 of the Single Programming Document (SPD).

Seven payment requests for reimbursement were made to the Commission: in March, July, October, November and December 2007 for Structural Funds and in June and October 2007 for Cohesion Fund. In 2007 Malta reached all its N+2 targets in real interim payments on all Funds. In 2007 alone, a total of €22,072,172.14 were verified as part of the reimbursement process.

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 total of 63 on-the-spot checks were carried out in 2007 by the Managing Authority on Final Beneficiaries. The Managing Authority also accompanied Final Beneficiaries administering aid schemes to 74 checks on Final Recipients. At end 2007, a total of 26 projects were completed (15 ESF and 11 ERDF).

The ESF 50th anniversary celebrations were organised in August 2007. The celebrations took place over three days in Freedom Square, Valletta and an evening in Marsalforn, Gozo.

Cohesion Fund

Road works on two of the three stretches of road under the Cohesion Fund transport project were completed by end December 2007 with a small stretch remaining on the third road. In 2007 Malta submitted a total of €6,515,796.39 for reimbursement to the Commission for the TEN-T project under the Cohesion Fund thus exceeding 80% of the funds allocated to the project.

During the period under review detailed design works for both the Anaerobic Digestion Plant and the Material Recycling Facility at the Sant'Antnin Waste Treatment Plant were completed and equipment was ordered and delivered on site during the last quarter of 2007. Electrical installations were also able to start as the equipment was delivered. PPCD initiated the process for submission of a request to modify the Commission Decision. In 2007 Malta verified and submitted a total of €1,821,384.67 for reimbursement to the Commission for the Sant'Antnin Project under this Cohesion Fund.

In terms of the technical assistance project (which included both solid waste and storm water), designs and technical evaluations for a Conceptual design for Mechanical Biological Treatment Plants with Anaerobic Digestion were carried out. A first draft of the Interim Report (Storm Waster Master Plan) was submitted to the competent authority in the first quarter of 2007. The preparation of a Strategic Environment Assessment on the Master Plan also became mandatory as a result of Malta's transposition of the SEA Directive. PPCD initiated the process for submission of a request to modify the Commission Decision regulating these two Technical Assistance sub-projects under the Cohesion Fund. In 2007 Malta had verified and submitted a total of €418,868.73 for reimbursement to the Commission for the Technical Assistance Project under the Cohesion Fund.

Community Initiatives

Interreg III

In 2007, Malta pursued its participation in the four ongoing Interreg programmes, under which 54 projects with Maltese partners were selected for ERDF funding. During the year, €1,500,705 (ERDF) worth of claims was verified by PPCD. This was achieved through regular monitoring and constant liaison with Maltese partners. Furthermore, 11 on-the-spot checks were carried out on projects being funded under the 2004-2006 Interreg programmes.

Territorial Co-operation 2007 - 2013

PPCD, as the National Co-ordinator for the new Territorial Co-Operation objective, contributed to the drafting of six new programmes in which Malta is eligible to participate during the period 2007-2013. To this end, PPCD reviewed and provided feedback with regard to the draft Operational Programmes (OPs), implementation guides and other relative documents to the respective responsible bodies. Furthermore, as the National Contact Point for these programmes, the PPCD provided relevant information to potential Maltese partners. With specific reference to the IV C programme, PPCD co-ordinated the launch of the first calls for project proposals under this programme in Malta.

PPCD was involved in setting up the necessary framework required for the implementation of the European Grouping of Territorial Co-operation (EGTC), which is a new instrument aimed at harmonising national procedures and facilitating joint participation in territorial co-operation projects.

EQUAL

All five EQUAL projects continued being implemented. The Monitoring Committee (MC) for EQUAL met twice – in May and October 2007. The 2006 annual report and the Third Interim Evaluation Report of the ongoing evaluation of the Equal Programme were approved by the MC in May and subsequently submitted to the European Commission. The N+2 for EQUAL was reached in October 2007.

EU Solidarity Fund

In the second quarter of 2007 the European Commission asked the MA to confirm whether, in the course of the implementation of the EUSF Grant, new elements could have resulted in a downward adjustment of the original estimate of the total damage sustained as a result of the storms (given at the time of the application

of the grant). The MA responded on 28 June 2007 confirming the original estimate of the total damage. On the same date, the European Commission endorsed the Implementation Report.

During 2007, PPCD continued to monitor developments on the proposed new Solidarity Fund Regulation.

Bilateral Assistance

UK-Malta Action Plan (2006/2007)

The Division is responsible for co-ordinating the accession-related bilateral technical assistance made available to Malta. Following a call for proposals in 2006, nine projects were selected for implementation, the main sectors of intervention being finance, agriculture and environment, education, public health, competitiveness and social policy. Most of these projects were implemented during 2007. By the end of the financial year (March 2007), £26,161.98 was spent.

European Economic Area (EEA) and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms

Grant Offer Letters in respect of four projects were received from the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO), while Grant Agreements were signed between the PPCD as the National Focal Point (NFP) and the FMO for seven of the eight projects. The projects target conservation of European cultural heritage (3), implementing Schengen/strengthening the judiciary (2), promotion of sustainable development (1), protection of the environment (1) and technical assistance (1).

The Annual Meeting was held between EFTA states representatives, FMO staff and the NFP in October. This was preceded by a Monitoring Committee which was convened in September 2007.

Most of the projects have started implementation and one project, MT0006 Implementation of Schengen *Acquis* Requirements at Malta International Airport has been successfully concluded.

Swiss-Maltese Co-operation Programme

The Bilateral Framework Agreement concerning the Swiss-Maltese Co-operation Programme was signed on 20 December 2007, enabling implementation to commence. The agreement has a commitment period of 5 years.

The allocation committed by Switzerland for Malta is CHF 2.994 million. Health will be the thematic focus of the Swiss-Maltese Co-operation Programme, with an indicative financial allocation of CHF 2.794 million. Up to CHF 0.15 million shall be retained by Switzerland to cover its administration costs of the Programme. The remaining CHF 0.05 million shall be allocated to technical assistance and Maltese administration of the Programme including preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

An individual project approach shall be applied in which stand-alone projects shall be implemented. In terms of the Bilateral Framework Agreement, the Swiss contribution may not exceed 60% of the total eligible costs of a project, except in the case of projects receiving additional financing in the form of budget allocations from national or local authorities, in which case the Swiss contribution may not exceed 85% of the total eligible costs.

V Italian Protocol

As at end of 2007, 11 projects had reached completion. All reimbursement procedures in connection with the relevant projects being financed under the fifth Italo-Maltese Financial Protocol were finalised by PPCD. In this regard, ten payment requests amounting to €8,974,389 were submitted to the Italian authorities during 2007.

EU Cohesion Policy 2007 - 2013

In 2007, the Division was responsible for the finalisation of the 2007-2013 programming documents. Negotiations were held with the European Commission in the first half of the year.

OP I and OP II were formally approved by the EC through Commission Decisions of 26 June 2007 and 22 June 2007 respectively. Following the adoptions, an event launching the OPs was held on 18 July.

During this year, two Monitoring Committee meetings were held, in July and December 2007. The first meeting approved the eligibility and selection criteria for projects while the second one approved the eligibility and selection criteria for aid schemes and the Communication Plan.

The first call for project proposals under the OP I was launched in July under Priority Axis 1 (Enterprise Infrastructure and Investment in RTDi and RTDi-related Infrastructure and ICT), Priority Axis 2 (Product Development and Niche Market Development and Branding) and Priority Axis 6 (Internal Mobility, Education, Social and Health-related Infrastructure). 74 project proposals were received.

The first calls for project proposals under the OP II were launched in July for Priority Axis 2 (Continuous Education and Training) and in August for Priority Axis 1 (ICT). 21 project proposals were received.

A Project Selection Committee was set up in 2007.

EU Globalisation Fund

In 2007, as a result of the closure of the manufacturing plants of the VF (Malta) Ltd and Bortex Clothing Ind Co Ltd in Malta and the subsequent redundancies that this brought about, PPCD worked in close collaboration with ETC concerning an application to the European Commission for funding under the European Globalisation Fund (EGF). Malta's application has been approved by the European Commission.

EU Affairs Directorate

During 2007, 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 for issues relating to the Services Directive, and also sat on the CIP (Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme) *ad hoc* expert group. The Directorate continued its work on 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, by co-ordinating the publication of the Re-Use of Public Sector Information Order, 2007, which was issued in February 2007 as Legal Notice 20 of 2007, under the European Union Act (Cap. 460).

Administrative Capacity

The continuing growth of PPCD meant that during 2007 additional office space was required. Accordingly, the ground floor of 13, St Paul Street, Valletta was made available to the Division. During 2007, action was also taken to strengthen the administrative capacity of the Division, with the staff complement increasing considerably, from 28 to 41. Efforts also continued to be undertaken to strengthen the capacity of PPCD and of Government as a whole, particularly with a view to the 2007-2013 programming period.

MARLENE BONNICI

Director General (Planning & Priorities Co-ordination)

Staff Development Organisation

INTRODUCTION

4,064 participants were trained from January to December this year. Notwithstanding this influx of participants, SDO managed to meet its targets including those tied with new initiatives. 2007 was another step in training innovation for SDO with a number of new initiatives such as e-learning, online booking, and a draft proposal for a mentoring programme for clerks, among others. The international dimension was not neglected with a number of opportunities for training abroad being offered, as well as foreign expertise being invited to deliver programmes. A highly successful familiarisation visit for EU officials as well as a SCEPSTA Conference were held with participants from various parts of the world. A good number of employees also benefited from SDO's Masters Degree sponsorship scheme.

TRAINING

Management Development

Management programmes included *Developing Your Management Style*, which is aimed at helping management develop their own managerial skills and build up collaborative working relationships, *Facilitating Participative Learning*, *Team Building*, *Practical Benchmarking* and *Project Management*. Most of these programmes were aimed at middle managers since this was the main focus of this year's management training.

Continuous Development

Other programmes, most of which were targeted at various grades ranging from minor staff to senior managers, featured *Data Protection* courses which included a large number of participants from School Clerks, staff working at Sir Paul Boffa Hospital, and social workers from the Education Division; *Using Emotional Intelligence for Senior Managers*; *Using Emotional Intelligence at Work – A Basic Course*; and *Communication Skills*.

With this year's focus on minor staff, Director, (Customer Services), Ministry for Gozo requested SDO to organise a training programme for Cleaning Staff at Gozo General Hospital. The main focus of this training was on health and hygiene, cleaning techniques, and the proper use of cleaning materials. Reference to safety precautions, environmental awareness and measures to be considered prior to the use and disposal of cleaning agents were also addressed.

The *Pre-Retirement Training Programme* was once again taken up by a number of employees nearing retirement age. This programme helps applicants prepare and plan for the time when they will retire from their place of work. The emphasis is on starting a new exciting period in one's life and how one can plan the future well to get the best out of it.

Departmental and Finance

This year training for minor staff also entered its second phase with three programmes held in Gozo. The objective of these programmes entitled *Improving Customer Care* was to enable participants to

communicate an attitude of ‘quality service’ and to provide the skills necessary to create the right impression and show customers that they really matter. This was followed by *Receptionist Skills* which once again, was targeted apart from other relevant grades, at minor staff carrying out receptionist duties. Topics covered included using empathy, listening to and understanding customer needs, internal and external customers, helping customers on the phone, and dealing with difficult customers.

Financial matters were not neglected with courses in *Accrual Accounting* leading to ‘O’ level and ‘A’ level standards (spread over two years) as well as a short course on *Fundamentals of Cost & Management Accounting*.

SDO was also involved in the training of National Euro Changeover staff including Lead Trainers whose role is to train others in the various aspects involved in the euro changeover project. Apart from informative sessions, this training also included a module on presentation skills to help these would-be trainers develop the necessary skills to deliver their material effectively.

Languages

Language training also resumed with its courses in German, Spanish and French in collaboration with the respective institutions.

This year, the e-learning pilot project also provided employees with the possibility of following a language course in one’s own time by booking the e-learning facilities at SDO. Spanish, German and French were the languages offered.

Training on the European Union

A section whose role sometimes faces rapid changes is the EU training section. It has the task of keeping public officers *au courant* with what is going on within the EU and is now deeply involved in giving the necessary training to stakeholders taking part in the implementation of ESF projects. A strategy based on a scientific TNA commissioned by the Planning & Priorities Co-ordination Division is being implemented over a set timeframe to make sure that all are equipped with the necessary tools to make the wisest use of these funds.

Other ongoing EU programmes include *An Introductory programme on the EU*; *The Four Freedoms of the EU* which is an introduction to the four basic freedoms that constitute the European common market; *The Structure and Functions of European Institutions*; *Towards a Political Union* which provides an overview of the European Union’s common foreign and security policy; a basic programme on *Tendering Procedures*; and *A short basic course on Procurement*.

IT Training

IT Training also definitely had its fair share of participants especially with the new e-mail software (MS Outlook) migration. Other courses included *Touch Typing*, *Designing Effective Presentations using MS PowerPoint*, *Basic Computer Skills* which looks at the different hardware components of a computer and their functions, *MS Excel for Senior Managers*, *Adobe Photoshop* for public officers whose duties include web or print design, and *MS Office Applications* amongst others.

Another specialised programme concerned the new Public Service Recruitment Portal for which 64 public officers working in HR Branches attended. Participants were introduced to all the functionalities of the new portal.

NEW INITIATIVES

Addressing the Public Service-to-Public Interface

As part of SDO's training strategy to improve the interface between the Public Service and the public, minor staff, who very often find themselves at the forefront of their ministry/department carrying out various duties ranging from reception duties to serving refreshments to dignitaries and senior officials, were given further training, thus building on the 2006 introductory programme. Customer Care and Receptionist Skills courses were delivered to the first group of minor staff. Moreover, in order to better reflect the specific requirements of different ministries it was decided to change the methodology of the training as well as some of the course content. Training became even more hands-on and based on experiential methods in order to maximise its effect.

HR Managers were presented with proposals for staff to be grouped by ministry and trained together, possibly at their own place of work. Each programme will be designed and facilitated specifically according to the needs of each respective ministry and/or department, so as to maximise the benefits derived from such courses with HR managers carrying the onus of the training.

These proposals were well received and a number of meetings held at the various ministries and departments to work on customised training programmes.

Evaluation

One of the targets for 2007 involved another important step towards more effective evaluation. Taking Kirkpatrick's four stages (Reaction, Learning, Transfer and Results), SDO is currently implementing the learning stage and in some cases the transfer stage as well, that is, how much of what has been learned has actually been transferred to the place of work. Mechanisms to evaluate the latter stage will be further improved during 2008.

Currently participants are being assessed during the sessions in a number of training programmes by means of simple 'tests', projects, live presentations etc.

Line Manager Involvement

At the end of last year, 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. Given the size of the organisation this is no mean feat, but from feedback gathered, it results that line managers are becoming accustomed to the new form and are getting more involved in their staff training which should pave the way for further evaluation in the future.

Management Training Meetings

A strategy is being developed in targeting senior management training. As part of SDO's continuous commitment to find the most effective training and deliver it by the most effective means, a preliminary Training Needs Analysis was carried out amongst senior managers. A series of one-to-one meetings were held with a sample population of around 50 directors. The sample took into consideration the variations in ministries so as to provide an accurate result in the findings. The findings helped identify the areas and proper methodology to address when organising Senior Management Training Programmes during 2008.

eLearning

The eLearning pilot project commenced in January 2007 at the SDO Resource Centre, offering electronic training in the French, German and Spanish Languages. During the second quarter of 2007, a meeting was

held with MIIT to discuss Government's implementation of the eLearning strategy. In the meantime, SDO is researching the feasibility of introducing an online eLearning service to public officers. An opinion survey, based on Icek Ajzen's *Theory of Planned Behaviour*, was designed to determine the readiness and willingness of public officers to participate in online eLearning programmes.

The survey showed that overall, public officers had a positive attitude towards following an eLearning programme (scoring a mean of 5.67 on a 7-point scale) and that the public officers' intention to participate in an eLearning programme was also quite favourable (scoring a mean of 5.20 on a 7-point scale). A full report will be published in the first quarter of 2008.

External Training Initiatives

In order to acquire an overview of the training taking place throughout the Public Service by individual ministries and departments, a list of initiatives was collated from returns provided by each ministry. Apart from the usual compulsory six-month return, as required in terms of OPM Circular 32/99, a new more detailed return has been requested from each ministry showing all the training which has been delivered in the last two years which was not organised by SDO.

Peer Training

A pilot session based on the concept of peer training was held in February, 2007. The objective of this session was to enhance knowledge as well as motivate and self-develop participants in their place of work through this relatively new concept based on the premise that people learn most when they teach others. Participants were asked to come up with work-related subjects and areas which they considered a priority. After carrying out some research in groups or individually, they gave a presentation on the theme chosen which was followed by a discussion.

Extensive Training for Telephone Operators at St Luke's Hospital

During the year the SDO, in collaboration with the Health authorities, organised a series of training programmes as part of a strategy to improve customer service at St Luke's Hospital. Training continued this year and the participants were given extensive experiential training and coaching which in some cases was required to enable attitude changes.

Mystery calls were made to gauge the level of learning and it resulted that a number of trainees are implementing what they have learnt, meaning that a better service is being delivered. Further similar training is being planned for the future.

Online Course Booking Form

An online course booking form for each training section was introduced to the SDO website. Public officers may now apply for SDO courses by filling in this form, which, on submission, automatically sends an e-mail to the officer's line manager for recommendation. Booking forms are only processed once the line manager's recommendation is received.

Apart from the obvious fact that online booking is much more efficient, the system designed by SDO ensures line manager involvement.

Revision of the Manual on Staff Development in the Public Service

The second edition of the *Manual on Staff Development in the Public Service* has been finalised and will be launched shortly. This will be uploaded on the SDO website and has been revised to include the latest developments in training and related aspects.

A set of training guidelines are being prepared to consolidate and support the *Manual on Staff Development*. This will be in the form of a short presentation which should help training managers in the various departments and ministries implement the training function effectively.

Mentoring/Coaching Programme for New Clerks

Further to the Induction Programme, a mentoring programme is being designed for clerks to be recruited in the Public Service. Based on the premise that new clerks should be imparted the ‘espoused’ culture of the organisation, some public officers will be identified as mentors for small groups or individuals who will be starting their clerical duties with the Public Service.

Public-Private HR Fora in Collaboration with FHRD

Meetings between HR managers from the private and public sectors have started taking place. The first was held in November in order to find common ground and agree on a meetings plan for 2008. A set of topics were agreed upon which will set the agenda for the coming months. The meetings are held once every two months at FHRD and a select number of HR managers from the private and public sector participate.

SPONSORSHIPS

Masters Degrees

As in past years SDO issued a call for application to all public officers interested in reading for a Masters degree related to their work. There were 55 applicants out of which eight have been sponsored. The areas include, amongst others, Business Administration, Human Resource Management, Performance Management, HR Development, and e-Business.

DPA

The current SDO-sponsored DPA students have been successful in their examinations and have started their second year. More than 20 employees are reading this course.

THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

Standing Conference for European Public Service Training Agencies – General Conference 2007

The Staff Development Organisation in the Office of the Prime Minister recently organised this year’s International Annual SCEPSTA Conference in Malta.

This conference brings together practitioners involved in public sector training from a number of European countries and is run by an executive committee that is currently chaired by Director, SDO who hosted this year’s conference, which is held in a different country every year. The participants, who were from eight different European countries, had the opportunity to share cross-cultural backgrounds and all deemed the conference a success, adding that they were taking back with them interesting information and a broadened outlook.

The conference theme was: “Mobility Age Diversity: *Is the workforce driving you MAD? Co-create solutions with SCEPSTA*” and the topics of *Mobility, Migration, and Diversity*, with particular emphasis on *Gender and Age*, were delved into.

Participants were also exposed to Malta's rich cultural heritage as part of the activities in the conference programme.

Study Visit by Group of EU Commission Officials

For the fourth year running the SDO co-ordinated a familiarisation visit for a group of 13 EU Commission officials coming from various Directorates-General. These visits are organised by the Directorate in charge of Staff and Careers – Learning and Development which fall under the Directorate-General Personnel and Administration. This year SDO redesigned the programme to make it more participative. Three or more speakers were invited to give a 10-minute presentation each, followed by a panel discussion and questions from the floor. The objective of these visits is to facilitate these officials' understanding of the islands of Malta and Gozo, their people and culture, the political, economic and administrative set-ups, cultural and linguistic heritage, industry and traditional craft, and the challenges being faced upon accession to the EU, and the strategies being adopted. The last day was dedicated to meetings at participants' request with their various counterparts/contacts in Malta.

OVERSEAS TRAINING

Training Programmes Funded by the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs

For the seventh 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. Twelve Maltese public officers, four for each programme, participated in a one-week programmes on *EU Skills*; *Financial Management and Control of Structural Funds*; and *Management and Monitoring of EU-Funded Operational Programmes*. All these training events were held in Dublin.

Participation in Seminars Organised by the European Institute of Public Administration, Maastricht

During the year senior government officials participated in each of the following seminars, one participant per programme, organised by EIPA in Maastricht: *What Rewards for Attracting and Retaining Highly Competent Staff*; *Measuring Customer Satisfaction – the Customer in the context of TQM and CAF*; *The common Assessment Framework in Action*; and *The Practice of HRM after a decade of reform*; whilst two participants followed the programme titled *Remodelling the Public Sector*.

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 fully-funded five-day programme entitled *Critical Negotiation Strategies for Senior ICT Managers*. Seven Maltese public officials participated in this training event.

Five other senior officials participated in training programmes organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs as follows: one in the programme titled *Training Programme on Better Governance and Managing Corruption*; and two in each of the programmes on *Advanced Seminar for Chief Executives and Public Enterprises*; and *SME and Cluster Development*. Another Maltese nominee participated in the programme *Processing Re-Engineering Through ICTs for Improved PSD* organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat in collaboration with the Portfolio of the Civil Service of the Government of the Cayman Islands.

UK/Malta Bilateral Exchange Scheme

As in the past couple of years, a number of Maltese nationals visited the UK for a two-week experience attached to a department relevant to their work. Since this is an exchange scheme, UK officials do their

stint here in whichever department they choose. The aim of this initiative is to help officials from both countries gain insights and experiences from each other's work practices.

During the year, the two Maltese nominees were posted at the HMRC (Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs).

One of the two UK nominees followed a two-week programme at the Law Courts in Malta whilst the other one was posted at the Food Safety Commission in the Ministry of Health, the Elderly and Community Care.

CHARTER SUPPORT UNIT (CSU)

INTRODUCTION

During 2007, the Charter Support Unit (CSU) continued the development process of a number of Quality Service Charters within the Public Service and planned the maintenance of all QSCs according to a compliance audit strategy plan. CSU also managed and maintained Service Standards across the Public Service and co-ordinated the annual self-assessment exercise for 2007 in liaison with Programme Implementation Directorates within all ministries. CSU also managed and maintained the Customer Care System while planning the system's eventual divestment and re-writing on a web-based platform.

Functions and Responsibilities

Quality Service Charters

During the year, CSU continued with the development process of three Quality Service Charters, namely for the EU Paying Authority; the Department for Social Welfare Standards and St Benedict College, the latter incorporating 13 A, B and C schools. Following introductory meetings with all EU Paying Authority members of staff, the EUPA decided to put hold on the QSC development due to a heavy workload. With regard to the Department for Social Welfare Standards and St Benedict College QSCs, CSU conducted all consultation with staff and customers. It is being planned that both QSCs will be launched in the first half of 2008.

Service Standards Follow-up

As per OPM Circular 2/2006 and OPM Circular 7/2006, line managers are responsible for the implementation of Service Standards within their respective office. The circulars also establish that the maintenance of the same standards fall under the jurisdiction of Programme Implementation Directorates.

In this respect, CSU managed and maintained Service Standards, mainly in liaison with Programme Implementation Directorates within all ministries. CSU also conducted a self-assessment exercise during which templates and corresponding checklists were sent to all Programme Implementation Directorates within the Service. A consolidated report was escalated.

Customer Care System

CSU manages the Customer Care System (www.servizz.gov.mt) and thus is responsible for seeing that all requests submitted via www.servizz.gov.mt are duly investigated by the relative ministry/department/authority/local council. During 2007, requests were submitted at an average rate of 120 a day. CSU also organised relative training for CCS staff (a total of 180 members) within the Public Service and Public Sector. Such training enables CCS staff to resolve requests more efficiently.

During 2007, in liaison with MITTS and MIIT, CSU was involved in the divestment process of the Customer Care System and its development on a web-enabled platform. This development would highly increase CCS efficiency. In this respect, CSU prepared a business plan and consulted with a sample of CCS users to ensure that eventual development adheres to good practice and addresses user needs.

Statistics of CCS requests registered during 2007 are found in Appendix B.

Monitoring and Audit

CSU has assumed responsibility for the audit function within government departments with regards to Service Standards and Quality Service Charters. In this respect CSU has employed two Programme Managers, who were also provided with practical training at the Management Efficiency Unit and IAID.

Communication and Training

Seminars abroad

A member of CSU staff participated at the EIPA seminar ‘Measuring Customer Satisfaction - The Customer in the Context of TQM and the CAF’ held at the EIPA Institute, Maastricht on 18-19 September 2007. The seminar focused on the aspect of measuring customer satisfaction. The aim of the seminar was to better prepare participants to organise customer satisfaction measurements in their organisations.

A member of CSU staff attended a seminar entitled ‘CAF Training Event – The Common Assessment Framework in Action’ held at the EIPA Institute in Maastricht between the 22 and the 23 November 2007. The aim of the seminar was to better prepare participants to organise customer satisfaction measurements through the concept of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), a framework aimed at continuous improvement within an organisation. This framework was recently updated and is now referred to as ‘CAF 2006’. Throughout the seminar, a number of presentations were aimed at outlining the impact of CAF and the changes brought about by the 2006 version of this model.

JOANNA GENOVESE

Director (Staff Development)

APPENDIX A (i)

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS PER COURSE BY MONTH – 2007

| AREA / SUBJECT | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | M | F | Total | Trainee Days |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|--------------|------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Continuous Development Training | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pre-Retirement Programme | 18 | | 19 | | | 18 | | | | | 15 | | 46 | 24 | 70 | 166.0 |
| Using Emotional Intelligence at Work-Module 1 | | 15 | 15 | 15 | | | | | | | 15 | 29 | 14 | 75 | 89 | 119.5 |
| Data Protection Awareness | 71 | 56 | 78 | 84 | 35 | 55 | 82 | 54 | | 53 | | | 185 | 383 | 568 | 284.0 |
| Using Emotional Intelligence at Work-Module 2 | | | | | 14 | 9 | 16 | | | | | | 5 | 34 | 39 | 58.5 |
| Smells Like Team Spirit | | | | | | | | | 13 | | | | 3 | 10 | 13 | 13.0 |
| Communication Skills | 13 | | | | | 11 | | | | 35 | | | 19 | 40 | 59 | 59.0 |
| Using Emotional Intelligence - Senior Managers | | | | | 33 | | | | 17 | 32 | | | 35 | 47 | 82 | 82.0 |
| Peer Training Session | | 8 | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | 6 | 8 | 4.0 |
| Training Programme for staff at GGH | | | | | | | | | 58 | | | | 40 | 18 | 58 | 58.0 |
| Sub-total | 102 | 79 | 112 | 99 | 82 | 93 | 98 | 54 | 88 | 120 | 30 | 29 | 349 | 637 | 986 | 844.00 |
| Departmental and Finance Training | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Improving Customer Relations | | 15 | | | 30 | 15 | 14 | | 13 | | | | 46 | 41 | 87 | 94.5 |
| Reception Skills | | | | | | 28 | 9 | | | 36 | 17 | 14 | 55 | 49 | 104 | 202.0 |
| Fundamentals of Cost and Management Accounting | | | | 10 | | | | | | | 15 | | 12 | 13 | 25 | 55.0 |
| Improving Customer Relations – Ad Hoc Prog. Appoðg | | | 12 | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 11 | 12 | 24.0 |
| Euro Changeover | | 29 | 54 | | | | | | | | | | 56 | 27 | 83 | 41.5 |
| Euro Changeover Part 3 | | | | | | | | | 97 | | | | 62 | 35 | 97 | 48.5 |
| Sub-total | 0 | 44 | 66 | 10 | 30 | 43 | 23 | 0 | 110 | 36 | 32 | 14 | 232 | 176 | 408 | 465.50 |
| Information Technology Training | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| MS Windows XP | | 30 | | 16 | 8 | 11 | 7 | | 8 | 12 | | | 58 | 34 | 92 | 184.0 |
| The Internet | | | | | 13 | 20 | 7 | | 8 | | 8 | | 34 | 22 | 56 | 28.0 |
| The Intranet | | | | 7 | 10 | | | | | | | | 3 | 14 | 17 | 8.5 |
| Concepts of Information Technology (IT) | | | | 11 | 8 | 6 | | | | 18 | | | 34 | 9 | 43 | 43.0 |
| Manage and Maintain Your PC | 7 | | | | | | 10 | | | | | | 13 | 4 | 17 | 34.0 |
| Desk-Top Publishing | | | | | 8 | | | | | | | 5 | 6 | 7 | 13 | 26.0 |
| MS Project | | | | | 5 | | | | | 6 | | | 8 | 3 | 11 | 24.5 |
| Email (MS Outlook) | 18 | 111 | 180 | 140 | 163 | 95 | 15 | | 25 | 32 | 32 | | 375 | 436 | 811 | 762.0 |
| Basic Computer Skills | | | 21 | | 14 | 18 | 8 | | | 8 | 8 | | 35 | 42 | 77 | 115.5 |
| MS Power Point Advanced | | | 7 | | 5 | | | | | | 4 | | 8 | 8 | 16 | 24.0 |
| Word Processing | | 14 | | 9 | 7 | 7 | 12 | | | 17 | | 9 | 48 | 27 | 75 | 150.0 |
| Spreadsheets | 10 | | 16 | 13 | 16 | 10 | 11 | | 10 | 10 | 7 | | 59 | 44 | 103 | 257.5 |
| Database | | 25 | 6 | 8 | 15 | 23 | 22 | | 5 | 15 | 6 | | 71 | 54 | 125 | 312.5 |
| Presentation | | 8 | 14 | | 13 | 12 | 6 | | | 7 | 7 | | 36 | 31 | 67 | 134.0 |
| MS Word Advanced | | 6 | | | 10 | 7 | 8 | | | 16 | 9 | | 23 | 33 | 56 | 84.0 |
| MS Excel Advanced | | 7 | | | 6 | 19 | 6 | 16 | 7 | 31 | 9 | 10 | 64 | 47 | 111 | 266.5 |
| Designing & Maintaining Websites using Frontpage | 6 | | | | 3 | | | | | 10 | | | 17 | 2 | 19 | 38.0 |
| Touch Typing | | 8 | 8 | | 9 | 4 | | | | 8 | | | 22 | 15 | 37 | 51.5 |
| MS Word Workshop | | | | | | | | | | | 10 | | 3 | 7 | 10 | 5.0 |
| MS Excel Workshop | | | | 6 | | | | | | 11 | | | 7 | 10 | 17 | 8.5 |
| MS Access Workshop | | | | 3 | | | | | | 8 | | | 5 | 6 | 11 | 5.5 |
| MS Access Advanced | | 8 | | | 4 | | | | | 18 | | 5 | 23 | 12 | 35 | 52.5 |
| E Learning Spanish | 1 | 2 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | 0 | 4 | 4 | 3.0 |
| E Learning French | 1 | 6 | 3 | | | | | | | | | | 6 | 4 | 10 | 9.5 |
| E Learning German | 1 | 2 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | 3 | 1 | 4 | 3.0 |
| TMS Workshop | | 13 | | | | | | | | | | | 5 | 8 | 13 | 6.5 |
| MS Excel for Senior Management | | | | 9 | | | | | | | | | 8 | 1 | 9 | 9.0 |
| Adobe Photoshop Introduction | | | | 12 | 10 | | | | | | | | 13 | 9 | 22 | 33.0 |
| Adobe Photoshop Advanced | | | | | | | 14 | | | | | | 9 | 5 | 14 | 21.0 |
| Public Service Recruitment Portal | | | 64 | | | | | | | | | | 31 | 33 | 64 | 32.0 |
| Train the Trainers | | | | | 5 | | | | | | | | 2 | 3 | 5 | 2.5 |
| Email (MS Outlook) session 2 | | | | | | 81 | | | | | | | 45 | 36 | 81 | 40.5 |
| MS Power Point for Senior Management | | | | | | | | | 32 | 12 | | | 39 | 5 | 44 | 44.0 |
| SPSS workshop | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0.5 |
| Sub-total | 44 | 240 | 330 | 225 | 332 | 313 | 126 | 16 | 95 | 239 | 101 | 29 | 1,113 | 977 | 2,090 | 2,819.50 |

APPENDIX A (ii)

| AREA / SUBJECT | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | M | F | Total | Trainee Days |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| European Union Training | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Introductory Course on the European Union | | | | 23 | 18 | | | | | 13 | | | 23 | 31 | 54 | 54.0 |
| Structure and Functions of European Institutions | | | | | 32 | | 17 | | | | | | 21 | 28 | 49 | 49.0 |
| Towards a Political Union | | | | | | | 15 | | | | | | 7 | 8 | 15 | 15.0 |
| The Four Freedoms | | | | | 26 | | | | | | 13 | | 23 | 16 | 39 | 39.0 |
| European Studies - Tenders | | | | | | | 13 | 73 | | 30 | | | 71 | 45 | 116 | 58.0 |
| Programme on European Structural Funds | | 15 | | | | | | | | | | | 6 | 9 | 15 | 7.5 |
| PPCD – Induction Training Programme | | | | 25 | | | | | | | | | 17 | 8 | 25 | 1,037.5 |
| Appraisal, Audit and Controls | | | | | 26 | | | | | | | | 16 | 10 | 26 | 52.0 |
| Funding Opportunities apart from ESF/ERDF | | | | | | | | | | 14 | | | 9 | 5 | 14 | 4.2 |
| Sub-total | 0 | 15 | 0 | 48 | 102 | 0 | 45 | 73 | 0 | 57 | 13 | 0 | 193 | 160 | 353 | 1,316.20 |
| Management Development Training | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Effective Presentation | | | | 84 | | | | | | | | | 56 | 28 | 84 | 84.0 |
| The Team Challenge | | | | | 17 | 19 | | | | | | | 18 | 18 | 36 | 54.0 |
| Practical Benchmarking | | | | | | | | 9 | 15 | 8 | | | 14 | 18 | 32 | 32.0 |
| Facilitating Participative Learning | | | | | | 10 | | | | | | | 5 | 5 | 10 | 20.0 |
| Developing your Management Style | | | | 14 | 10 | 11 | | | | 18 | | | 30 | 23 | 53 | 79.5 |
| Project Management | | | | | 6 | | | | | 6 | | | 8 | 4 | 12 | 12.0 |
| Sub-total | 0 | 0 | 0 | 98 | 33 | 40 | 0 | 9 | 15 | 32 | 0 | 0 | 131 | 96 | 227 | 281.50 |
| GRAND TOTAL | 146 | 378 | 508 | 480 | 579 | 489 | 292 | 152 | 308 | 484 | 176 | 72 | 2,018 | 2,046 | 4,064 | 5,726.70 |

APPENDIX B

| CCS Statistics | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Ministries by Theme | Count | Local Council (cont.) | Count |
| Agriculture & Fisheries | 124 | Kunsill Lokali Kerċem | 32 |
| Competitiveness & Communication | 835 | Kunsill Lokali Kirkop | 103 |
| Consumer Affairs | 217 | Kunsill Lokali Lija | 216 |
| Culture, Youth & Sports | 62 | Kunsill Lokali Luqa | 174 |
| Department of Information | 10 | Kunsill Lokali Marsa | 182 |
| Education | 22 | Kunsill Lokali Marsascalea | 623 |
| Elderly & Special Needs | 1 | Kunsill Lokali Marsaxlokk | 246 |
| Environment | 5,058 | Kunsill Lokali Mdina | 13 |
| Family and Social Solidarity | 25 | Kunsill Lokali Mellieha | 537 |
| Finance | 192 | Kunsill Lokali Mgarr | 542 |
| Foreign Affairs | 3 | Kunsill Lokali Mosta | 441 |
| Government Information | 153 | Kunsill Lokali Mqabba | 503 |
| Health, Elderly & Community Care | 1,786 | Kunsill Lokali Msida | 347 |
| Housing & Property | 686 | Kunsill Lokali Mtarfa | 23 |
| Investment, Industry and IT | 11 | Kunsill Lokali Munxar | 39 |
| Law & Order | 1,206 | Kunsill Lokali Nadur | 258 |
| Power and Energy | 6,760 | Kunsill Lokali Naxxar | 1,310 |
| Requests for Gozo | 252 | Kunsill Lokali Paola | 98 |
| Rescue and Security | 4 | Kunsill Lokali Pembroke | 169 |
| Resources and Infrastructure | 35 | Kunsill Lokali Pieta' | 91 |
| Status and Registration | 34 | Kunsill Lokali Qala | 222 |
| Tourism | 24 | Kunsill Lokali Qormi | 608 |
| Trade and Industry | 24 | Kunsill Lokali Qrendi | 468 |
| Transport | 7,743 | Kunsill Lokali Rabat (Gozo) | 213 |
| Water & Sewerage | 4,832 | Kunsill Lokali Rabat (Malta) | 678 |
| Total | 30,099 | Kunsill Lokali San Pawl il-Bahar | 3,120 |
| Local Council | Count | Kunsill Lokali Safi | 78 |
| Kunsill Lokali Attard | 560 | Kunsill Lokali San Ġiljan | 234 |
| Kunsill Lokali Balzan | 825 | Kunsill Lokali San Ġwann | 558 |
| Kunsill Lokali Birgu | 53 | Kunsill Lokali San Lawrenz | 12 |
| Kunsill Lokali Birkirkara | 466 | Kunsill Lokali Sannat | 89 |
| Kunsill Lokali Birżebbuġia | 271 | Kunsill Lokali Santa Luċija | 268 |
| Kunsill Lokali Bormla | 208 | Kunsill Lokali Santa Venera | 703 |
| Kunsill Lokali Dingli | 162 | Kunsill Lokali Siġġiewi | 621 |
| Kunsill Lokali Fgura | 4,736 | Kunsill Lokali Sliema | 279 |
| Kunsill Lokali Floriana | 142 | Kunsill Lokali Swieqi | 127 |
| Kunsill Lokali Fontana | 12 | Kunsill Lokali Ta' Xbiex | 53 |
| Kunsill Lokali Ghajnsielem | 53 | Kunsill Lokali Tarxien | 172 |
| Kunsill Lokali Gharb | 30 | Kunsill Lokali Valletta | 263 |
| Kunsill Lokali Gharghur | 234 | Kunsill Lokali Xagħra | 263 |
| Kunsill Lokali Għasri | 25 | Kunsill Lokali Xewkija | 144 |
| Kunsill Lokali Għaxaq | 75 | Kunsill Lokali Xgħajra | 101 |
| Kunsill Lokali Gudja | 280 | Kunsill Lokali Żabbar | 1,569 |
| Kunsill Lokali Gzira | 104 | Kunsill Lokali Żebbuġ | 135 |
| Kunsill Lokali Hamrun | 151 | Kunsill Lokali Żebbuġ (Gozo) | 196 |
| Kunsill Lokali Iklin | 318 | Kunsill Lokali Żejtun | 482 |
| Kunsill Lokali Isla | 79 | Kunsill Lokali Żurrieq | 1,108 |
| Kunsill Lokali Kalkara | 87 | Total | 27,582 |

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 2007 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 Principal Permanent Secretary and Permanent Secretary (Policy) within 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 2007

As a central agency within the Office of the Prime Minister, MEU was pivotal in the implementation of a number of Government-wide initiatives, securing better co-ordination and consultation and to further Malta's involvement in EU decision-making and international affairs. The key programmes were:

- Euro Changeover in the wider Public Sector including local councils
- Lisbon Strategy and the National Reform Programme 2005-2008
- Schengen
- Action Plan for Simplification (Better Regulation).

Joined-up Government

The Unit's major achievements in 2007 include the delivery of national and major projects such as the:

- **Euro changeover in the wider Public Sector:** The Chief Executive Officer MEU chaired the Public Sector Sectoral Committee responsible for bringing about the necessary Euro Changeover within the wider Public Sector. This programme has made great strides forward and was indeed considered by the National Euro Changeover Committee, the most advanced and prepared sector in its changeover preparations, requiring minimum supervision and intervention.

The Public Sector Sectoral Committee (within the National Euro Changeover Committee) headed by MEU has issued its four updates to its Strategic Plan for the Public Sector. More than a hundred public service and government entities have euro changeover plans in place. The Dual Display roll out was achieved ahead of schedule without any particular hassle. In addition, the Unit organised a conference on Euro Changeover Planning. MEU actively participated in the NECC meetings and decisions. During the euro changeover journey, MEU:

- Mobilised the necessary 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.
- Completed successful euro awareness and euro assessment phases - a detailed analysis on the impact of the euro changeover has been carried out by all departments/entities.

- Reviewed euro changeover plans in the 50 high/medium-impact departments and government entities every six months - more than 100 departments/entities and all the ministries have adopted a euro changeover plan which deals with all aspects of the euro changeover.
 - Developed a strategic changeover plan for the entire public sector – four versions have been issued in all.
 - Published an electronic newsletter on euro changeover within the public sector which is being disseminated to all public officers.
 - Drew up implementation plans for the rolling-out of dual display within the public service and public sector so as to ensure a consolidated and co-ordinated launch.
 - Adopted an operational framework for amendments to legislation due to the introduction of the euro.
 - Carried out training needs analysis within the wider public sector – some 2,500 officers have been identified for training through a train-the-trainer programme run by 100 identified trainers from within departments and other government entities.
 - Actively participated in the development of the national agenda and ongoing collaboration with the NECC and its sectoral committees and task forces.
 - Resolved in a timely and prompt manner all queries and complaints which arose during the actual changeover period. MEU also brokered problem-solving meetings to address issues when necessary.
 - Liaised proactively with other public-sector-related committees on finance, information technology, law, training, and local councils.
- **Lisbon Strategy and the National Reform Programme 2005-2008:** MEU was tasked with the executive co-ordination of the formulation and monitoring the implementation of the National Reform Programme and to report to the Commission on Malta's progress. The Commission in its second assessment has confirmed that Malta's governance model is commendable. It regards Malta's governance structure as a key strength in its process of reform.

Apart from the Second Annual Progress Report and the usual support provided throughout the Lisbon governance cycle, there were two Commission visits in 2007. Moreover, MEU was closely involved in consultation meetings with social partners and MCESD, internal stakeholder consultation practically with every line ministry's Permanent Secretary on the NRP's 55 measures. Within this context, the Unit also supported the Cabinet Secretary on the Cabinet Committee for Competitiveness. The Unit regularly and frequently inputs and validates Lisbon-related Malta positions in Council formations.

- **Schengen:** MEU was asked by the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs (MJHA) to assist in preparing the necessary systems and institutions to meet the Schengen requirements. The Schengen National Project Manager (NPM) on Schengen was a Senior Associate Consultant within MEU. The Unit was therefore instrumental in meeting such an important target for Malta.

The evaluation reports for the SIS-SIRENE evaluation, Sea and Air Borders Revisit, Tripoli Consulate Evaluation, and Compendium and Summary were all approved by the Commission. The Draft Council conclusions on the state of preparedness to implement all provisions of the Schengen Acquis and the Draft Council decision on the lifting of Internal Border Controls were also approved with very favourable opinions on Malta. The European Parliament gave its opinion in mid-November. The sea border was lifted on the 21/12/2007 and the air border is expected to be lifted on the 30/03/2008. MEU's role was therefore to project manage Malta's preparations to enter Schengen.

- **Action Plan for Simplification (Better Regulation):** MEU was involved in formulating Better Regulation strategy, the Simplification Action Plan and now, in monitoring the implementation of its measures, where some 40% of which have been fully completed and some 50% are at various stages of development. 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 therefore being implemented. It contains more than 100 measures under five strategic thrusts (simplification of processes; forms; revocation of obsolete legislation; consolidation of entities and setting up of one-stop-shops; eGovernment/ICT). The plan includes a timetable and clear lines of responsibility.

MEU has secured the Unit's first Twinning Light Project on Capacity Building (Better Regulation). This project will be completed in 2008. Moreover, the Unit is seeking to further its inputs into simplification through consultation meetings with the main constituted bodies representing the business community.

MEU also contributes to this programme by vetting BR positions, representing Malta when necessary in meetings with the European Commission on Better Regulation during the multilateral surveillance processes and keeping abreast with EU developments in this area.

Better Management of the Public Administration's Human Resource

- **Gozo back-office functions:** MEU is also working to improve HRM within the public administration. MEU was effective in implementing the Budget Measure relating to developing Gozo's back-office potential through the migration of such functions within the public administration, such as: MFIN Treasury Salaries, MFIN Treasury Payroll, MHEC Salaries, MJHA Data Entry, MCMP Consumer Affairs, MFIN Inland Revenue Call Centre, and MFSS Energy-Benefit Scheme. Other opportunities are currently being explored within a structured framework involving all relevant stakeholders. Some 70 Gozitans have been migrated to Gozo to bring up the island's back office capacity to some 200 employees.
- **Contribution to Capacity building within the Public Service:** During 2007, MEU also completed two capacity building needs analyses for MIIT and MTAC. Another key project in this field was the Capacity Building of Information Management Units within line ministries.
- **Skills profiling:** The Unit completed a study on skills profiling in the public sector which could be the basis of future RRAG-based assignments and in evaluating the competencies of the surplus pool.
- **Review of core Government functions:** The capacity building process continues. Recently the Unit has embarked on a strategic review of the MPO, the central agency responsible for HRM; the EU Affairs, Policy Development and Programme Implementation functions in line ministries and OPM Directorates. These reviews are all essentially aimed to improve long-term capacity in the core functions of the public administration.

Improvement of Online and Traditional Public Services

- **Online public services:** MEU also contributed to fiscal consolidation measures and the realisation of efficiency gains, both within the Unit and in the Unit's projects with and for line ministries. These include a new Memorandum of Understanding with MIIT on e-Government policy and programme delivery. The Memorandum stipulates the roles and responsibilities while it provides MEU with other funding to recruit the required human resource to further build e-Government capacity. The first two projects have been recently delivered, one related to e-forms (some 300 forms) and the other on an agent-based e-Government policy.

Other

- **Representation:** The Chief Executive Officer MEU represented the Maltese Public Administration in the Regional Forum of Public Administrations in Rome in May 2007 and accompanied the Principal Permanent Secretary to the United Nation's Summit on Building Trust in Governments in Vienna Austria in July 2007.
- **Supporting line ministry and central agencies to make the case for funding:** Apart from having secured its first Twinning Light project using EU funds in the area of Better Regulation, MEU has also put forward concrete proposals with other line ministries for RDP-funding (e.g. Marsascala Family Park)

and ESF-funding (e.g., Information Management Units Capacity Building). In addition, MEU has prepared 15 outline proposals of potential ESF Institutional Capacity Building Projects.

Improving Reputation of the Unit

- **Strategic Boards and Committees:** MEU is present on strategic boards/committees, e.g. the Cabinet Committee on Competitiveness, the National Euro Changeover Committee, the Recruitment and Redeployment Advisory Group, MITTS Ltd Board of Directors, the Core Information Technology Advisory Committee, the National Commission on Sustainable Development representing OPM, the Project Selection Committee for ERDF Funding 2007-2013, and various adjudication committees such as NIDMS, Mater Dei Hospital Information Systems, etc.
- **CAPAM:** MEU also contributed towards the preparation of a draft Strategic Framework for the Commonwealth Association of Public Administration and Management. This draft was well received by members of the CAPAM Board.

Organisational Development

- **Training:** MEU staff was given opportunities for training in line with the Unit's needs, utilising as appropriate the programmes offered by SDO, local conferences and events. A member of staff was granted a one-year paid study leave to pursue post-graduate studies in the UK. Another member of staff was granted a secondment as national expert with the Commission. Staff was trained in project management, EU funding opportunities, law, and HR issues. One member of staff was trained in Six Sigma as a result of an opportunity from NECC. Two members of staff are being supported in their post-graduate part-time studies. Some six members of staff have taken active part on Twinning projects.
- **Organisational flexibility:** During 2007, MEU complied with OPM directives to retain flexibility in work schedules and arrangements to balance work with personal life. Being a project-based organisation, MEU is capable of being flexible in its work schedules, particularly when balancing the personal lives of those MEU employees who are either parents or currently pursuing University post-graduate studies without affecting project delivery or quality. Flexibility arrangements such as pro-rated hours of work, flexible working schedules, working from home and job sharing (in the support ranks) have been satisfactorily utilised.
- **Environmental actions:** MEU continues in improving its green initiatives whenever possible. Measures pursued include: reusable envelopes; using MITTS Ltd shuttle bus service; direct credit; teleworking (reduced vehicle use); reusable water dispensers; paper waste separation; battery disposal; control on colour laser printer use and consumables; quasi-non use of fax machine; double page printing; 100% degradable garbage bags; and housekeeping rules through green leader.

JOHN W AQUILINA
Chief Executive Officer, MEU

Armed Forces of Malta

GENERAL

The period under review was particularly challenging for the Armed Forces of Malta (AFM) but once again they have strived to accomplish the mission and tasks assigned. Accomplishments have been varied and various and in particular one must mention that this is the first year ever of AFM participation in joint FRONTEX operations, the enhanced efforts in the field of training in preparation of a possible deployment abroad and the deployment of an officer with the United Nations Mission in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the latter in advance of his deployment to the EU Military Staff in the first quarter of 2009. Also worth highlighting are the various infrastructural works which the AFM has undertaken throughout the year - in particular those carried out at Hay Wharf's Maritime Base where the berthing and administrative facilities have been completely reconstructed, the reorganisation of pay scales – a significant improvement in financial terms for all ranks, the completion of the Vessel Traffic Management System Project funded by the EU, and the talks carried out with Libya in connection with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the two countries on Search and Rescue matters. All this over and above their routine duties and in line with operations, the roles assigned to them are outlined below.

AFM 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.

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

Primary Defence Role

- 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 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.

PROGRESS AGAINST OBJECTIVES

Operations

Operations focused on Border Control and Maritime Security. These were conducted both by the AFM on its own and under the auspice of FRONTEX and were aimed at curbing illegal human trafficking towards the European coasts.

FRONTEX operation NAUTILUS, divided in two phases, was conducted just south of the Maltese Search and Rescue Region (SRR). The first phase of this AFM-led effort took place in June-July and the second in September. Both phases lasted five weeks and saw the employment of Maritime and Air assets from Greece, Germany, Spain, France, Portugal and Italy.

Troops from 'C' (Special Duties) Company also participated in a FRONTEX operation for the first time: Operation POSEIDON I, II and III in the Aegean Islands off the coast of Greece. Operating in conjunction with the Greek Coast Guard, the AFM soldiers mounted observation posts throughout the night along the Greek coast. The three operations took place between June and September. Each time, 18 men were deployed for a period of two weeks.

In November, the AFM's only Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) P-61 was dispatched to the South of Spain as Malta's contribution towards operation INDALO. This operation lasted three weeks and saw the Maltese OPV operate jointly with vessels of other European nations in an effort to intercept the trafficking of migrants from the Africa to Europe. Both in the case of POSEIDON and INDALO, European authorities had words of praise for the professionalism demonstrated by the Maltese soldiers. Above all, the participation of the AFM in these operations demonstrated Malta's ability to contribute towards European security notwithstanding its limited resources.

The AFM was significantly involved in the preparations leading to the adoption of the euro as Malta's currency. 2007 saw the conclusion of works on the Central Bank's Coin Depot which is intended to store the euro coins until their issue in circulation and store the Maltese Lira coins once they are retrieved. This building is situated at Luqa Barracks and was officially handed over by the contractor to the Central Bank authorities in June. A few days later, the first euro coins arrived and the AFM's security commitment with this Depot initiated. This commitment is still ongoing and is envisaged to last until all Lira coins are disposed of.

The AFM also assisted the Police in providing security during the arrival of the euro banknotes. This was done by means of increased security arrangements at MIA and the provision of helicopters detailed to escort the convoys from the air. The hold-up on the Balzan HSBC branch in November resulted in the AFM being asked to provide round-the-clock fixed point security with certain HSBC branches in Malta and Gozo and the patrolling of others. The AFM continued to provide security at the Malta International Airport and at other sensitive locations around the Islands.

Vehicle check-points aimed mainly at curbing the trafficking of illegal substances and weapons continued to be performed both in Malta and in Gozo. The impressive results of these Vehicle Check Points confirmed not only their continued validity but also the commitment of the AFM toward the fight against drugs and crime in general. Statistics for the period under review are as follows:

| | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|-------|
| Number of Mobile VCP's | 205 | Number of Vehicles checked | 1,144 |
| Persons handed over to Police for further investigations | 49 | Minor Contraventions reported | 19 |
| Number of drug abuse cases | 39 | Others | 2 |

Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Search and Rescue services continued to be provided throughout the year. Statistics highlighting the invaluable contribution that the AFM provides are as follows:

Explosive Ordnance Disposal

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----------------------------|-----|
| Bomb threats (all negative) | 37 | Explosions | 4 |
| Suspected improvised explosive devices (all negative) | 19 | Security searches | 608 |
| Recovery of petards (various sizes) | 1,457 | Diving details | 116 |
| Recovery of explosive ordnance | 13 | Explosive ordnance disposal | 9 |

Search and Rescue Operations

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|
| Distress Signals | 140 | Medical evacuations | 63 |
| Towing of vessels | 26 | Irregular migration cases | 291 |
| Miscellaneous (inc. investigation of reports of flares, overdue vessels, persons in water/divers in difficulty and cases of a similar nature) | 37 | | |

Training

During 2007, the AFM conducted a number of field exercises for its land components. A number of live fire practices – land based, sea and air borne – were also carried out with the scope of keeping the required standard in the use of weapons on the ground, at sea or in the air. Furthermore, live firing exercises with the ZPU-40 Anti-Aircraft Guns were held for the Air Defence element.

A total of 31 courses were organised locally for AFM personnel either by the AFM alone or in collaboration with other entities. The Italian Military Mission stationed in Malta provided an additional 11 courses. Three Mobile Training Teams (MTTs), who offered specialised training in various areas to AFM Officers and personnel, were also brought to Malta.

The AFM continued to send its personnel on training abroad. 62 personnel attended 37 different courses, practically covering all aspects of AFM operations. In addition, a 30-strong platoon from C (Special Duties) Company was attached for one month with the Alpine *Julia* Brigade of the Italian Army to train in cold weather conditions.

AFM Infantry and Engineer troops participated in TERRA FERMA, the yearly bilateral (Italy/Malta) Exercise. This exercise aims at enhancing the capabilities of both countries to operate jointly in a Crisis-Management scenario. This year's edition was split in two phases; the first phase took place in Malta in September and the second phase took place in Italy in October.

Exercise CANALE 2007, the joint maritime exercise aimed at enhancing interoperability between Malta and Italy in the maritime aspect, again focused on Search and Rescue. For the first time an invitation to participate with observers was extended to the 5+5 Initiative Countries. Then invitation was taken up by all countries, with the exception of Libya and Mauritania.

In August, the AFM's Offshore Patrol Vessel P-61 conducted a navigational exercise and a subsequent port call to Tripoli, Libya, the first after many years. This provided an opportunity to conduct discussions with the Libyan authorities and explore the possibilities of enhancing co-operation between the two countries in the area of Search and Rescue operations. Successful discussions paved the way for a Memorandum of Understanding covering all aspects of Search and Rescue. The trip also allowed the AFM to inform the Libyan authorities of its increasingly popular Search and Rescue Training Centre and offer placements for Libyan personnel at this centre. The offer was very welcomed by the Libyan side.

The Air Wing has continued to train its pilots in order to enhance their capabilities in long-range flying and Search and Rescue. Worth mentioning is the invaluable assistance provided by the Italian Military Mission.

During 2007, seven navigational exercises were carried out by AFM pilots to various airports in Italy onboard Italian AB 212 helicopters stationed in Malta, three of which were carried out at night.

International Relations

For obvious reasons, the AFM continues to avail itself of foreign assistance for the provision of specialised training. Malta's EU, OSCE UN memberships demand an enhanced commitment at an international level. It was for this reason that during 2007, what was the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) Branch within HQ AFM was modified to incorporate International Relations. The ESDP & International Relations Branch is now responsible for all international matters that affect the AFM.

The AFM continued to play an active role in EU activities related to defence and security. In addition to the AFM's participation in the European Union Military Committee (EUMC), various other meetings organised by the EU have been covered. No less than 56 meetings were attended by AFM officers during the past twelve months.

Efforts to qualify and train the officer who will be filling Malta's post in the EU Military Staff in March 2008 continue. Towards the end of the year, the officer in question was sent to Lebanon as part of the UN's UNIFIL Mission to gain experience in the area he will be covering once in Brussels. To note is that the posting of a Maltese officer to the EU's Military Staff, part of the Council Secretariat, will be a first.

The AFM's participation in the FRONTEX Operations and Legal Instruments working group, currently defining a set of guidelines for Search and Rescue and Interception Operations for the Masters and Commanding Officers of vessels involved in FRONTEX Operations is noteworthy. Given Malta's particular situation, it is felt that influencing EU guidelines upstream is of key importance. The AFM also participated in the working group on European Border Surveillance (EUROSUR) which aims at the integration of border surveillance systems.

The AFM has continued to honour its commitment towards the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) by sending officers to the Balkans to assist in inspections carried out in accordance with the Dayton Agreement. Moreover, an expert team was brought over from the Italian Centro Istruzione Verifica Armi (CIVA) to train a new batch of Maltese officers in the conduct of Article IV and Dayton Agreement inspections.

During this year, Euro Corps invited all EU members to contribute personnel towards the Euro Corps Staff. After thorough consideration by both HQ AFM and OPM, this invitation was declined.

Two Chiefs of Defence (CHOD) visited Malta in 2007. The Luxembourg CHOD briefed on the benefits of Finabel – the European Heads of Army Staff organisation. This proposal is currently under consideration. In November, the Austrian CHOD reciprocated the visit by Commander AFM in April 2006. The military co-operation between the Malta and Austria, both on a bilateral basis and within the European framework, and the scope of future co-operation between the two Armed Forces were thoroughly discussed.

The Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) Agreement was ratified in 2007. This agreement provides a legal framework between Malta and the United States that facilitates the boarding of vessels carrying the flag of the two States. In order to assess the procedures of activation, a paper exercise is planned for the beginning of 2008 and PSI operations will also be included in Exercise PHOENIX EXPRESS 08.

Projects and Procurement

Considerable effort has also been put into the improvement of infrastructure within AFM premises with a number of infrastructure projects completed and others initiated. The Pistol Range at Safi, now being used also by civilian shooting clubs, has been refurbished to upgrade its safety. Other initiatives saw the upgrading of drainage and rain-water retention systems at Lyster Barracks and the creation of adequate parking at Luqa Barracks. AFM personnel will also benefit from a fully equipped weights gym. Accommodation and office space were also improved.

The construction of an administration block and the upgrading of berthing facilities at Hay Wharf Maritime Base is progressing as scheduled. The first floor of the block has been constructed and the works on the second floor have commenced. All works on this block are due to be completed in May 2008 and the final cost of the whole project (including the berthing facilities) is estimated at Lm1,448,515. The AFM is currently seeking clarification in view of a government report concerning a project proposed for Marsamxetto Harbour which might affect the Maritime Base thereat.

2007 has seen the completion of the Vessel Traffic Management & Information System (VTMIS) project which was financed under European Regional Development Funding (ERDF). The integration of a further two radars from the Malta Maritime Authority Ports VTS has stalled and some issues are being clarified with the MMA. This system provides the AFM with an integrated, real-time picture of all maritime activity taking place around the Maltese Islands and is of great assistance in tracking and monitoring vessels transiting the area.

Two projects have been submitted and approved under the 2007 External Borders Fund (EBF) financing line. The first sees €3.37 million allocated to a project designed to provide a minimum of four long-range thermal imagers in selected coastal outposts which will enhance the AFM's visual sighting capabilities both during the day and at night and which will complement the electronic sighting capabilities already in place. This project will also upgrade the microwave transmission infrastructure by expanding the bandwidth, and thus allow the transmission of a larger quantity of data from the remote sensors (visual and electronic) installed at the outposts to the operations centre – both those present and future. The second project allocated €2.36 million towards the implementation of the core of a modern Integrated Communications System (ICS). This will support the AFM's role in maritime border control as it will permit communication (both voice and data) at greater distances giving AFM assets a greater range of action. This system will integrate all AFM communication systems (land, air and maritime) into one, thus giving the AFM greater flexibility.

The Framework Programme 7 (FP7) project led by Carl Zeiss Optronics GmbH, in which the AFM is a partner, has continued to progress. This project, which is being undertaken at no cost to the AFM, is aimed at evaluating technology designed to provide passive surveillance buoys using infrared sensors to support maritime border control and will include a technology demonstration period in Malta of approximately three months.

During 2007, the AFM managed to conclude a number of agreements regarding procurement of equipment and supplies. Of particular interest is acquisition of six second-hand surplus trucks from the UK which are being shipped to Malta with the help of the British High Commission onboard HMS Illustrious due to visit Malta in early 2008. These trucks will alleviate AFM's transportation problem.

The much needed AFM PABX upgrade was completed in 2007. A completely new telephone system was installed which included the replacement and upgrading of the internal cable network, the provision of five new PABX units (one for each Regiment) and the programming of the system and supervision of the new extension number system. The AFM has now eliminated a number of direct landlines, something that will lead to substantial savings.

Administration and Personnel

Compulsory retirement upon reaching the age of 55 years will come into effect on 8 January 2008. In view of this, the AFM in conjunction with the Employment & Training Corporation (ETC) organised a number of seminars in order to prepare affected AFM personnel to integrate in civilian life. In addition, talks were held with the Ministry to explore the possibility of keeping in employment those soldiers who have reached the age of 55 but who have less than 25 years of service. The end result is that these individuals may now opt to join the Illegal Immigration Detention Services (IIDS) and keep their current salary package until they retire on reaching 61 years of age or 25 years of service whichever comes first.

As regards recruitment, the aim to shorten the selection process, to ensure a higher standard of competence of the men and women joining the AFM and to widen the recruitment pool has been achieved. The age limit for Officer Cadets was raised from 23 to 25 years for those in possession of a University degree. For those enlisting as regular soldiers, two systems were devised. Potential recruits in possession of academic qualifications (Ordinary level certificates) are now exempted from the recruitment written exams. This shortens considerably the selection period and puts these individuals on a faster track. Those who do not possess these qualifications will sit for exams co-ordinated by the Examinations Department. This will ensure that all those enlisted possess the required standard of education. The recruitment of Bandsmen will follow the same pattern but auditions are included as part of the selection process.

During 2007, authority was given by Government to conduct a promotion exercise in line with the policy of granting promotions on a yearly basis. This year, there were over 200 promotions in the other ranks and a number of promotions in the AFM's Officers Corps. In addition, a slight adjustment to the personnel establishment was carried out throughout the year which saw the overall established strength going down to 1,950 from 2,034. The new establishment is endorsed by the Ministry.

A major achievement in 2007 was the acceptance of the proposal made to the Ministry to carry out a review of the AFM's current pay and allowances. The process started in January and came to conclusion with its announcement by the Prime Minister during the 2008 Budget Speech. The final package sees Gunners up to Bombardiers going up two salary scales whilst Sergeants to Colonels going up one salary scale. In addition, all personnel up to the rank of Major will start enjoying extra allowances for work performed on public holidays. A flying allowance to rescuers and an "on-call" allowance will be paid to Maritime Squadron personnel and Search and Rescue co-ordinators. In addition, a bounty will also be paid to C (Special Duties) Company personnel who opt to renew their engagement at the end of their three-year engagement.

The ceremony for the award of the Long and Efficient Service Medal was this year held on AFM day, that is, 1 October. A thorough scrutiny to ensure eligibility was conducted on all eligible personnel to ensure uniformity across the ranks. In addition, for the first time in AFM history, one of its members was awarded the *Medalja għall-Qlubija* for the courage demonstrated during a rescue operation at Ġnejna Bay. This decoration was awarded to SSgt Roger Mulvaney by HE the President of Malta during an investiture ceremony at the Palace on Republic day.

A number of health and safety inspections were carried out to ensure that our soldiers are working in a safe environment and in line with current legislation. The inspections have been very fruitful and action was taken where deficiencies were identified.

The AFM now has its own Sexual Harassment Policy in line with national legislation. The policy was finalised after consulting the NCPE. NCPE chairman also had the possibility to visit the AFM to conduct a talk to AFM officers. Plans are in hand to extend the training session to lower ranks in the AFM in the future.

An external training policy to guide members of the AFM attending training outside the force was also finalised during the year. This policy will also serve as guidelines to HQ AFM when selecting and approving requests for external training. Another task accomplished was the finalising and publishing of a Data Protection Policy for the AFM. This was done in conjunction with the Office of the Prime Minister and the Office of the Commissioner for Data Protection. Following the publication, all units and sub units appointed their own data protection officers at respective levels. The Office of the Commissioner was invited to deliver a one-day training seminar to all nominated DPOs.

Following the initiative taken by OPM to reduce the consumption of energy, during 2007 two PV units were installed at the AFM. These units are designed to reduce the consumption of electricity by transforming solar energy and, thus, reducing emissions. The AFM was a pioneer in the installation of such units and this experiment seems to be a success.

ONGOING MATTERS

As regards operations, the AFM continues to maintain a 24-hour surveillance of the Maltese territory, including its territorial waters, at the Malta International Airport, and at other sensitive locations around the Islands. This includes the current commitment the AFM has with certain HSBC Branches – a commitment which is envisioned to come to an end by the first months of 2008. Explosive Ordnance Disposal is also an ongoing task for the AFM with personnel always on-call to intervene when necessary. The AFM operations centre continues to monitor and co-ordinate all operations. Of particular mention in this regard is the continued surveillance by means of radar of the Maltese territorial waters and the surrounding seas. This is made possible by the installation of the Vessel Traffic Management System currently operated by the AFM in conjunction with the Malta Maritime Authority. Maritime Squadron is taking advantage of the relatively calm period to carry out the necessary maintenance on its vessels. In order to guarantee the minimum operational capability even throughout the winter season, maintenance is scheduled so that all vessels will be docked in sequence and not at one go.

As for training, the AFM is currently carrying out a number of courses on its own steam. These range from Assistant Drill Instructors Course to BIII Infantry Trade Course, from training for Officer Cadets to a course for aircraft ground crew. In addition, the AFM is availing itself of the expertise offered by the Italian Military Mission to conduct certain specialised training such as training on explosives and plant operation which are currently underway. As stated above, the AFM always seeks to take advantage of the opportunities of training abroad. At the moment, two junior officers are following the Commissioning Course at the Royal Military Academy of Sandhurst in the UK, one officer and one NCO from Maritime Squadron are conducting an attachment with the Royal Navy onboard HMS *Illustrious* and another officer is preparing to attend a UN Military Observers Course in Germany. Also, one NCO is currently on mine training in Italy, two NCOs will be following a Peace Support Operations Course in the Czech Republic and nine soldiers will be conducting Combat Medic training in Italy. Moreover, the AFM is continuing the planning and preparation of major joint exercises it will be participating in during 2008 which include CANALE 08, TERRA FERMA 08 and exercise PHEONIX EXPRESS 08.

In the area of international relations, the AFM is in the process of initiating talks with the Italian Ministry of Defence with regard to a possible agreement on the provision of vehicles and supplies from the Italian Armed Forces. Also, the ratification of the Technical Agreement between Malta and Italy on the deployment of Maltese troops within an Italian Unit on missions abroad is being sought. The preparation of the Maltese officer who will be taking up the Malta Quota on the EU Military Staff is in its final phases with the officer concerned being deployed with the Italian contingent in Lebanon on the UN's UNIFIL mission. On a European level, the AFM is currently attending all relevant meetings – especially those in connection with FRONTEX operations due to be held in summer 2008.

There are a number of projects that are currently underway. The construction of the Administrative Block at the Maritime Squadron Base and the upgrading of berthing facilities thereat are nearing completion and should be completed by mid 2008. Other projects underway include the connection of the cesspit at Lyster Barracks with the Hal Far Drainage System, the works at Mosta Fort and the refurbishment of the Boiler House at Luqa Barracks which will be housing four Regiment's maintenance workshops. As for procurement, ongoing matters include the arrival of six trucks bought from the UK and due to arrive in Malta onboard HMS *Illustrious* when it arrives in Malta and the delivery of eight staff cars.

On the Administrative side, the AFM is in the process of selecting recruits for the course which will be starting in spring 2008. It is also in the process of running a number of trade and education courses. The implementation of the pay and allowance reform announced in the Budget speech is in full swing as is the process of implementing the compulsory retirement of personnel who have reached the age of 55. Apart from this, the review of the Appointments and Conditions of Service Regulations is underway and will be given high priority in the coming period.

OBJECTIVES FOR THE NEXT PERIOD

- Continue to maintain the surveillance of Maltese territory, security of sensitive locations and the provision of essential services such as Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Search and Rescue.
- Take advantage of the training opportunities offered by friendly countries (both locally and abroad), organise training in order to enhance the abilities of its soldiers and participate in exercises on both bi-lateral and multi-lateral basis.
- Enhance the relationships that already exist with other countries and seek a friendly relationship with others. This includes the finalisation of the Technical Agreement with Italy on the joint deployment of troops on Crisis Management Operations abroad and the signing of the Search and Rescue Memorandum of Understanding with Libya.
- Continue to monitor the progress of projects currently underway with particular emphasis on the completion on time of the project at Maritime Squadron Base and the handing over of military vehicles by the Italian Armed Forces.
- The recruitment of soldiers with the aim of reaching full establishment and the issue of promotions.
- Finalising the review of the Appointments and Conditions of Service Regulations.

BRIGADIER CARMEL VASSALLO
Commander AFM

Department of Information

INTRODUCTION OF A PAYMENT GATEWAY ON THE DOI WEBSITE

As part of the e-Government services programme, a tender for the implementation of three online services on the DOI website, namely: (a) online payment of Government Gazette and publications; (b) online application of Press Cards; and (c) online order of photographic reprints, was issued early in the current year. After the tender was awarded, discussions were held with the contractor on the technical services entrusted for development. Constant liaison was kept between the contractor, the OPM Chief Information Officer (CIO) and MIIT to clarify technical issues during the development stage.

DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW DOI WEBSITE

Following a number of meetings with CIO (OPM), to determine the features to be included in the new DOI website, as well as to obtain a general standard layout in line with the other government sites, a specimen page was designed and referred to the Department for the required feedback. Analyses were then made on the contents of the DOI front-page, with the full support of the CIO. The required modifications were agreed upon and forwarded to the contractor for the necessary implementation. Presently, the contractor is developing the second-level pages of the website which amount to around one thousand.

DUAL DISPLAY OF MONETARY AMOUNTS IN LM AND €

Dual display was implemented between 19 and 28 February 2007. The main areas which were modified are related to the invoicing system used for the sale of publications and photographic material, the contents of the Malta Government Gazette, Press Releases and other notices, the DOI website which includes price lists and subscription forms, and the database used by the Government Information Service which incorporates Freephone 153. An internal circular was circulated amongst all staff with clear instructions regarding the implementation of dual display, so as to ensure uniformity and consistency. Communications Co-ordinators, ministries, departments and public sector entities were also informed about the importance of including dual display in press releases and other notices.

MALTA PAVILION AT THE INTERNATIONAL FAIR OF MALTA

Following the engagement of a consultant/project manager to assist in the adjudication process, as well as the set-up of the Malta Pavilion, a tender was issued inviting firms to bid for the design and build-up of the stand. Only one tender was received by the closing date. An assessment was made on one of the options proposed, and it was confirmed that the bid was within the budget allocation and standard required. The theme of this year's edition of the Malta Pavilion was *Għalik u l-Familja*. The Pavilion was inaugurated by the Prime Minister on 26 June 2007. A competition was organised during the Fair encouraging participation in the consultation process to the Budget document.

TRANSFER AND CATALOGUING OF ARCHIVED FILMS

During the year under review, the Film Archive project gathered momentum and was more concrete with the majority of archive 16mm films held at Sa Maison being transferred to a newly set-up Film Vault, within the Department's premises. The task was undertaken exclusively by DOI staff to ensure a stringent

control over what is considered to be a unique collection of Malta's past historical, social and folkloristic heritage. Relative data was input in the Archive film database. More than 700 films were registered in the database. Each individual film registered was duly transferred to specially-ordered plastic film cans in order to ensure a longer longevity where conservation is concerned. In future, work on the identification process of a large number of unidentified films will be undertaken.

FILM DIGITISATION PROJECT

During the year, the Department acquired the proper tools to start the digitisation process. Towards the end of 2006, after obtaining relative opinions and recommendations from local and foreign based experts, the Department embarked on obtaining tailor-made electronic equipment which can be described to be a hybrid between a 16mm film projector and the back-end of a digital camera. The equipment will be able to transfer films from their traditional 16mm format to a digital format which can be enhanced by computer means. The digitisation project, believed to be one of a kind in the country, will entail that the film archive is rendered into a modern day format so as to ensure that the original format will always be stored and conserved in the Film Vault while the "cloned" version can be accessed by one and all. In the meantime, the Department is liaising with the National Archives to determine the ways and means of giving the general public access to view such films. The Department is also actively evaluating the possibility of rendering the end-result into a revenue-earning source although it is also aware about the need to move carefully in this pristine territory. Subsequently, the Department started the process of digitisation by embarking on a project consisting of the transfer of a unique film on DVD depicting the last farewell given to Saint Ġorġ Preca in July 1962. The film is a historical documentary which had been produced by DOI for broadcasting on the national television station. This footage is the very first to be digitised from a 16mm film, as part of the project embarked by DOI to conserve and transfer to digital format its archived films which date back to the pre-sixties. Retail sales of the DVD (sold in conjunction with the MUSEUM) proved to be a huge success.

EMANUEL ABELA
Director (Information)

Government Printing Press

During 2007, the Government 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 AND SUPPLEMENTS

The following table shows the number of issues of Government Gazette and supplements printed in 2007:

| | Issues | Pages | | Issues | Pages |
|--------------------|--------|--------|-----------------|--------|-------|
| Government Gazette | 155 | 11,468 | Legal Notices | 448 | 7,584 |
| Bills | 26 | 1,084 | KLBL (Bye Laws) | 5 | 22 |
| Acts | 32 | 1,446 | | | |

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. Towards the end of 2007, the Government Press printed a substantial number of legal notices in connection with the euro adoption which reflects in an increase of more than 3,000 pages of legislation than in 2006.

Other major jobs undertaken during the year included:

- Electoral Register for General, local councils and European Parliament Elections (April & October 2007);
- Ballot papers and other related material for March 2007 Local Council Elections;
- Annual Reports of various departments including Parliamentary Standing Committee, Ombudsman, House of Representatives etc;
- Printing in connection with the Euro Changeover process;
- Printing of mail shots for the Ministry of Finance and the Office of the Prime Minister;
- NSO Statistical publications and questionnaires;
- Education Department Books for Primary and Secondary Schools, past papers for Junior Lyceum Exams etc;
- Budget Publications, Financial Reports and Pre Budget Document.

LOCAL COUNCILS ELECTIONS MARCH (2007)

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 needed by the Electoral Office and counting Hall, 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 2008

The usual publications in connection with the presentation of the Budget, that is, the Financial Estimates, Economic Survey, Budget Speech and *Diskors tal-Budget*, were delivered on time with very tight schedules. The Pre Budget Document was printed during the month of June.

ADMINISTRATION

- Retiring officers are not being replaced, thus considerably reducing our staff complement. Existing personnel are being trained and redeployed when and where necessary.
- Arrears of Revenue due to the GPP by other government departments and entities were significantly reduced during 2007.
- A new Management Information System was installed which streamlines various processes, increases efficiency and enables user departments to order printing jobs online.

ADDITIONAL MACHINERY

Tenders for the purchase of a new folding machine for the Finishing Section were issued through the Contracts Department and awarded during 2007.

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.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- During 2007 the majority of the stackers and palatizers used in the shop floor were replaced with electric ones hence avoiding the lifting of heavy objects and reducing the risk of back injuries.
- A clinic in the shop floor is always kept fully equipped by two members of staff who undertook first aid courses to deal with any emergency.

STATISTICS

| Production Report by Category - 2007 | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|------------|--|---------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Category | Jobs Delivered | Total (Lm) | | Category | Jobs Delivered | Total (Lm) |
| Letterheads A4 | 67 | 5,147 | | Cards approx. A5 | 6 | 327 |
| Letterheads A5 | 15 | 849 | | Cards approx. A6 | 17 | 629 |
| Letterheads A6 | 2 | 104 | | Multiple sets | 104 | 21,601 |
| Complimentary Slips | 34 | 973 | | Magazines | 3 | 2,798 |
| Business Cards | 216 | 5,531 | | Leaflets/Brochures | 35 | 10,460 |
| File Covers | 91 | 11,440 | | Posters | 14 | 1,437 |
| Form A3 - Front only | 37 | 2,849 | | Booklets (-16pp) | 101 | 49,933 |
| Form A4 - Front only | 183 | 19,037 | | Labels | 2 | 172 |
| Form A5 - Front only | 58 | 11,998 | | Enumerated Forms | 3 | 268 |
| Form A6 - Front only | 14 | 971 | | Government Gazette | 155 | 193,083 |
| Form A3 - Two sided | 50 | 7,970 | | Act | 26 | 24,083 |
| Form A4 - Two sided | 129 | 21,825 | | Legal Notices | 448 | 99,872 |
| Form A5 - Two sided | 29 | 4,067 | | Bill | 22 | 18,998 |
| Form A6 - Two sided | 11 | 2,233 | | Miscellaneous – 18% | 191 | 34,072 |
| Envelopes | 46 | 2,124 | | General Forms | 8 | 385 |
| Invitations | 79 | 2,006 | | Miscellaneous – 5% | 39 | 4,392 |
| Books (16pp +) | 182 | 88,733 | | Xmas Card/Calendar | 11 | 805 |
| Cards approx. A4 | 3 | 139 | | Total | 2,431 | 651,311 |

The listed jobs were ordered by 160 different departments, schools and other entities.

| Tenders Awarded in 2007 | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Description</i> | <i>Supplier</i> |
| Hire of skips & collection of waste | Maria Cassar |
| Offset cartridge paper 80gsm | Fortuna Enterprises Ltd |
| Imagesetter films | Attard & Co Imaging Ltd |
| Art paper | Kasco Trading Ltd |
| Offset cartridge paper 70gsm | Kasco Trading Ltd |
| Offset cartridge paper 80gsm | Fortuna Enterprises Ltd |
| Artboard | Papyrus Trading Co Ltd |
| Offset plates & developer | All tenders rejected |
| Bristol board | Arrowswift Contacts Ltd |
| Folding machine | Beck Graphics |

CARMEL R SAMMUT
Director (Printing Press)

Defence Matters Directorate

GENERAL

The 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.

EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

Ongoing Monitoring of Development 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 staffed during 2007 were 15 documents per working day.

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;
- the debate on the stocktaking of NATO – EU Permanent liaison arrangements;
- meetings of the Headline Goal Taskforce (HTF) plus NATO meetings;
- co-operation between the EU civilian missions in Afghanistan and Kosovo and NATO;
- Malta's position on the European Defence Agency (EDA) proposal that all Member States agree to put forward their top five programmes for co-operative procurement;
- Malta's position on the European Defence Agency (EDA) proposals: in particular a proposal to allow Unmanned Aerial Vehicles to fly in the regulated airspace (including a meeting with the Civil Aviation Directorate and Malta Air Traffic Services); and an EDA proposal concerning spectrum management (including a meeting with the Malta Communications Authority); the EDA Work programme for 2008 including EDA Budget and financial framework for 2008-2010;
- to discuss pending bilateral agreements between Malta and Italy.

Preparation for Malta's Participation in the EU Defence Ministers Meeting

Director Defence Matters represented Malta at the meetings of EU Defence Policy Directors held in January 2007 in Berlin in preparation for the informal meeting of the EU Ministers of Defence held in early March and in July 2007 in Lisbon in preparation for the informal meeting of EU Ministers of Defence, itself held in September in Evora, Portugal. Items discussed included the EU operations in the Western Balkans (in particular the forthcoming ESDP operation in Kosovo) and Afghanistan as well as the lessons learned from the EU operation held in Congo during 2006. Other items were the possible EU mission in Chad and the Central African Republic (then still a proposal, now entering its actuation phase). Directors also discussed the EU's relationship with the UN and NATO, and the development of capabilities, in particular the Progress Catalogue 2007, the lessons learnt from EUFOR Congo on 'Planning Capability Assessment', work being undertaken by the EDA concerning the Capability Development Plan. They also discussed the '5+5' Defence initiative as a model for Euro-Mediterranean Co-operation.

At the informal meeting of the EU Ministers of Defence in March in Wiesbaden (Germany), Malta was represented by a delegation headed by the Parliamentary Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister Hon Notary Dr Anthony Abela. Also forming part of the delegation was the Director Defence Matters. The agenda included the ongoing/forthcoming ESDP operations in Bosnia Herzegovina, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Sudan (Darfur), the Lessons learned from EUFOR RD Congo, EU-UN Military Co-operation, and the progress on the development of capabilities to reach the Headline Goal 2010.

At the informal meeting of EU Ministers of Defence, Malta was represented by a delegation headed by the Parliamentary Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister Hon Not Dr Anthony Abela. The agenda included the ongoing/forthcoming ESDP operations in Bosnia Herzegovina, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Chad/Central African Republic as well as the situation in RD Congo, the EU-NATO and EU-UN Strategic Partnerships as well as the EU-Africa Dialogue, the importance of Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR).

The Director also held several meetings with Ambassadors, resident and visiting Defence Attachés to discuss bilateral defence matters and to enhance the AFM's international co-operation as well as to seek military assistance and training opportunities for the AFM. Of particular note, in January, Director Defence Matters participated in a meeting between the Parliamentary Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister and the Portuguese Defence Secretary of State.

In February 2007, the AFM Liaison Officer at the Defence Matters Directorate attended the OSCE Workshop on Chapter X of the Vienna Document held in Berlin.

Other meetings included:

- EDA Conference on the European Defence Technological and Industrial – EDTIB, Brussels held in February 2007 attended by Director (Defence);
- An EDA Seminar on Defence Research and Technology held in February 2007, attended by Director (Defence);
- An EDA meeting for Points of Contact on National Armament Directors' issues, held in February 2007 in Brussels attended by the Senior Principal;
- A European Security Policy Director meeting, held in March 2007 in Munster, attended by the Senior Principal;
- EDA PrepCom in preparation of the Steering Board in National Armament Directors' formation held in March 2007 in Brussels, attended by the Senior Principal;
- EDA Steering Board in National Armament Directors' formation held in March – Brussels, attended by Director (Defence).

In March 2007, Director Defence Matters briefed the newly appointed Maltese ambassador to Washington, Mark Miceli Farrugia, on defence-related bilateral issues with the US in preparation for taking up his duties in Washington.

Participation in the 5+5 Defence Initiative

Director Defence Matters headed a Maltese delegation for the 5+5 Defence Initiative Steering Committee meeting held in Rome between 14 and 16 March 2007. Malta actively participated in the discussions, particularly concerning the Initiative's Action Plan for 2007.

EDA Steering Boards and PrepComs

In July 2007, the Senior Principal in the Directorate participated in a Special Preparatory Committee meeting which discussed a number of sensitive issues for Malta. In September 2007, he represented Director Defence Matters in the EDA Steering Board in National Armaments Directors' formation. The agenda included the endorsement of the 2006 Accounts and audit report, an amendment to the EDA Financial Rules, the establishment of the EDA Finance Experts Group, and the review of the implementation of the Joint Action establishing the Agency. Other issues discussed included the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) Strategy, the Implementation of the regime on Defence Procurement, the progress on pan-European consolidation of the Defence Testing and Evaluation Base (DTEB), Standardisation, Software Defined Radio (SDR) Certification and the proposal to have Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) flying in the unregulated airspace by 2012.

CDR Defence and Naval Attaché from the US Embassy paid a courtesy visit to the Director Defence Matters in November to introduce CDR Shaun Schenk, US Coast Guard who has been recently appointed as Coast Guard attaché at the US Embassy.

Bilateral Visits

On 12-13 June the Defence Director hosted her Finnish counterpart to a visit to Malta. Mr Paul Jarvenpaa visited the AFM HQ, the AFM's Search and Rescue Centre, and the Defence Matters Directorate. Discussions were held on Finland's security environment, Finnish Battle groups, Finnish defence strategy and possible collaboration between Malta and Finland on defence issues.

The Austrian Chief of Defence visited Malta in early November, paid a courtesy call on Hon Dr A Abela and was hosted to lunch at the Officers' Mess on the same day. Director Defence attended both the occasions.

During the same month, Director Defence attended a dinner in honour of the Deputy Commander of the US Sixth Fleet, who was visiting Malta at the time.

In December, Director Defence was also introduced to the newly appointed Spanish Defence Attaché. An informal visit to Malta was made by the Chief of Defence of Luxembourg during the same month. During this informal visit, he briefed the AFM about FINABEL and explained why the AFM should join the organisation. Director Defence met with Col Reis at a lunch held in his honour at the Officers' Mess at HQFM on 14 December.

Contributions to EU Agencies

In the first quarter of 2007, Malta paid its share of common costs of EU being the first share of the Satellite Centre Operational Budget for 2007 amounting to €2,288.49 and the annual contribution to the Satellite Centre's €294.84. In November, during the 45th Board Meeting of the EUSC Annual Budget 2008

Version II, the budget for SATCHEN was increased and Malta agreed to contribute 0.03999% in 2008, that amounts to €4,654.52, which is €57.54 more than was paid in 2007.

ESDP Related Expenses

During the third quarter of 2007, through the OPM, Malta paid its annual contribution to the ATHENA budget, for a total of €3,774.86. Through the AFM, it also paid the third and final instalment towards the EDA budget, for €1,129. In October 2007, the Council agreed to the launch of EUFOR/CHAD/RCA, upon which the ATHENA Administrator invited Malta to contribute the sum of €20,821.74 towards the common costs of the operation, with the option to effect the first payment of €12,236.94 by the end of the year. Defence Matters obtained necessary approvals for this sum to be paid and this was done on 23 October 2007.

Malta has agreed to contribute €10,190 to the 2008 Budget of the European Defence Agency. The EDA wrote to Defence Matters in November, requesting the first and second contributions, both being the sums of €3,397.00. Arrangements are being made to effect the first payment.

In November, the Council of the European Union informed PSC Ambassadors that a request for contributions to the Chad mission was being made. On the Prime Minister's approval, Malta agreed to contribute €15,000 over and above the Common Costs and arrangements for this payment to be effected by mid-January 2008 are under way.

The EDA, Intelligence Understanding of the Mission Environment (IUME) Pilot Course

Following Malta's 2006 decision to host a language module focusing on North Africa and the Middle East at the Department of Arabic and Near Eastern Studies at the University of Malta, the EDA pilot training course on Intelligence Understanding of the Mission Environment started on 7 May 2007, with participants from the Czech Republic, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Portugal, and Slovakia. The course ended in November 2007 with a certificate-awarding ceremony for the participants. The former Senior Principal in the Defence Matters, visited Perugia to attend the ceremony and sign the certificates given on behalf of the Defence Directorate. This was also an opportunity to discuss with the EDA and Italy the future of the course and the possibility of EU financing.

Familiarisation Visits by Director Defence Matters

The Director Defence Matters visited AFM units, the AFM Maritime Squadron, the Detention Service and two AFM units in the second quarter of her tenure. She also visited the Italian Military Mission in Malta (MIATM) in January. She first visited the Air Wing in February, the 1st Regiment in March and 3rd Regiment in May.

Search and Rescue Training Centre

In November, Director Defence attended the graduation ceremony of the AFM Search and Rescue Training Centre. The SARTC is modelled on the USCG SAR School and aims to enhance co-operation and interoperability in SAR. The Centre offers training to international students and since 2006, has successfully trained operatives from Algeria, Albania, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Kenya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia.

Policies relating to Irregular Immigration and the Detention Services

Director Defence Matters liaised between Detention Services and MJHA concerning the implementation of a number of projects and policies, including EU-funded projects.

AFM Personnel in FRONTEX Operations

The Defence Directorate provided policy direction and supported the AFM in participating in the maritime operation *Nautilus II* led by Malta which was carried out in July and September/October 2007. As part of an increased land and maritime border surveillance, AFM soldiers also took part in another FRONTEX Operation, operation *Poseidon* in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea area and on the Greek-Turkish land border during the period May/September 2007.

Use of AFM Assets for Filming Purposes

Defence Matters facilitated a request by a BBC Production Manager concerning the storage of explosives on AFM premises during the course of filming in conjunction with a production treating Napoleon's life. An exercise reviewing fees charged by the AFM for the use of their patrol boats or air assets to third parties for filming purposes was also initiated.

Work on Pending Agreements with Italy, Greece and the United States

Particularly in conjunction with AFM and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Defence Matters worked towards concluding bilateral discussions on the Technical Agreement between Malta and Italy on the possible participation of a Maltese platoon with an Italian contingent in EU-led operations.

Training of Defence Directorate Staff

The Defence Director participated in a National Security training course in the United States in July 2007, sponsored by the IMET programme.

The AFM Liaison Officer at the Directorate took part in two SDO training seminars namely Data Protection Act and Tendering Procedure in July. He also successfully completed the Arms Verification Course at Luqa Barracks conducted by a group of Italian armed forces' instructors from the Joint Arms Verification Centre. Other staff attended beginners' and advanced training sessions in MS Access 2003 organised by the SDO during the months of November and December.

OTHER AFM MATTERS

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. During December, the Annual Exchange of Military Information (AEMI) was compiled with the use of the Automated Data Systems (ADS) Software and forwarded to the MTOSCE Representative in Vienna. The information was compiled with the assistance of the OSCE Arms Control Information specialists.

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 90 requests of this nature per month were processed by the Defence Directorate.

OFFICE MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES

Throughout the year, this Directorate continued to emphasise the need to implement eco-related (as well as cost-saving) initiatives by:

- increasing the awareness of office staff about environmentally-friendly practices and policies. This included the circulation amongst staff of promotional material by WasteServ including posters/stickers, and information reports;
- separating waste (paper, plastic) at origin and disposing of it separately at the designated area in Castille for eventual collection by WasteServ;
- sending printer cartridges for refilling;
- re-using envelopes for internal and selected external mail (selection is based on the need for security of the outgoing correspondence);
- the use of degradable bags for disposal of waste;
- printing, whenever possible, 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%.

VANESSA FRAZIER

Director (Defence Matters)

Corporate Services Directorate

INTRODUCTION

The primary function of the Corporate Services Directorate is to provide direct support services to the secretariats, divisions, departments and entities at the Office of the Prime Minister, whilst also providing a service on a corporate level to the other departments and entities under this Ministry. These services are in areas related to human resources, finance, office management and registry. In order to provide these functions, the Directorate is made up of four branches, namely:

- Human Resources
- Finance and Administration
- Office Management
- Registry.

HUMAN RESOURCES

During 2007, the Human Resources Branch issued 45 letters of appointment, 20 letters of promotion and 21 letters of progression and processed 18 retirement papers.

During the year, six calls for application for the filling of the position of Assistant Director in the Office of the Prime Minister were issued for the following positions: (i) Office of the Permanent Secretary, Strategy and Operations; (ii) Human Resources – Corporate Services; (iii) Planning and Priorities Co-ordination Division; (iv) HR Systems – Management and Personnel Office; (v) General Service Grades – MPO; (vi) Public Service Commission.

The vacancies for the above-mentioned posts were filled. The two following calls were issued but the process was not finalised before the end of the year: (i) Support Services – Public Service Commission; (ii) Support Services – Planning and Priorities Co-ordination Division.

The Branch also administered the call for the appointment of Casual Substitute Clerks. The process was carried out after effecting the recruitment process through the Employment and Training Corporation.

As the ex-Computer Centre premises at Swatar also fall under the responsibility of OPM, the security/watchman service must be provided by this Directorate. A call for tenders to renew the service was issued but was not awarded before the end of the year.

The request for the service of a private medical firm continued during the year and this Directorate required the attendance of this firm to 43 employees who had reported sick.

The Branch also issued letters to all employees on a contract basis informing them about the status of their employment as a result of Legal Notice 51/2007.

The salaries of staff at this Office were issued after effecting the routine amendments as regards to overtime, increment payment, deductions and other issues related to salary payments. The Branch also closely worked with the Finance and Administration Branch within the Directorate regarding financial budgeting.

Other work carried out by the Branch included:

- matters related to Data Protection, Gender Issues and Health and Safety;
- updating the Ministry's Staff List for both industrial and non-industrial staff;
- administering the Performance Management Programmes;
- co-ordinating the quarterly approvals for the performance of overtime.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

During 2007, the Finance and Administration Branch continued to provide the necessary assistance in the related field to the offices within OPM.

The management of funds under Vote 5 – Office of the Prime Minister was given its utmost importance regarding the allocation and distribution of resources amongst the Cost Centres that make up the Vote. The carrying out of routine monthly revised estimates provided an important tool in order to keep on track financial commitments. In this regard the Directorate was also involved in the management of the revised estimates of the other departments and the issue of funds to entities under the Ministry. The Branch also had a major role in drafting the 2008 financial estimates of the Ministry.

The issue of travel Advances is also given high importance by the Branch. A total number of 202 Advances, the same number issued during 2006 were again issued during 2007.

The aim set by the Branch whereby commitments were raised not later than one day of having received a request for a service or supply of goods and the settling of invoices within one month of receipt was mostly achieved. The total number of transactions on the Departmental Accounting System amounted to 7,853, a decrease of 3.3% over the previous year.

The Branch also worked closely with other officials within the Directorate, the Chief Information Officer and Directors in order to discuss issues related to the procurement of IT equipment.

Other work carried out by the Branch during 2007 consisted of:

- raising information on a quarterly basis related to Accrual Accounting;
- keeping a daily record of commitments under the Vote's Capital items of expenditure;
- replying to Parliamentary Questions;
- raising of financial returns as requested by the Ministry of Finance and Treasury;
- recording items of an Inventory nature and informing departments in order to include in the Fixed Asset Inventory records;
- approving Advance payments;
- raising of returns of suppliers who do not provide the Directorate with a VAT fiscal receipt.

OFFICE MANAGEMENT

During 2007, one of the important issues managed by the Office Management Branch was the administration of the premises housing the Ministry, namely, Auberge de Castille, and the other offices used by the various Divisions and Directorates. Furthermore, the Branch also assisted in the maintenance of Girgenti Palace and Villa Francia. In carrying out such maintenance the Branch gave considerable importance to green issues such as replacing of electrical units to energy saving ones.

The Branch also administers a number of maintenance agreements that include air-conditioners, stand-by generators, glass doors and the front garden and trees inside Auberge de Castille.

Works of a capital nature that were effected were the replacement of the ceiling of one of the garages owned by this Office, the complete rehabilitation of the stoneworks at the front lawn at the Auberge de Castille and the issue and award of a tender for the replacement of two lifts at this building.

The Branch was also involved in organising the migration process of directorates and other units within this Office and the issue of a tender for the procurement of additional furniture.

Other services provided by the Branch included reception duties at the front desk at this Office, the assistance given when press conferences are given by the Prime Minister and the holding of the *Notte Magica* and *Notte Bianca* events at Auberge de Castille.

During the year, the Branch continued to administer the fleet of cars at this Office. A number of these unserviceable and uneconomical vehicles were disposed of and a tender was issued and awarded to procure one new vehicle. The Branch also administers the issue of fuel and matters regarding collisions of office cars with third parties.

The Branch also administers the inventory of the Corporate Services Directorate and also the appointment of boards in order to decide over unwanted assets in the departments within the Ministry.

REGISTRY

The year 2007 saw the completion of the much needed refurbishment project of the Registry at this Office. All files are now kept in modern and secure mobile shelving units and practically on the same floor as the Registry thereby reducing the time needed to retrieve and return files to their storage place.

During the year, the OPM Registry handled the following:

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|-------|
| Letters registered on the DOCREG system | 5,407 |
| New OPM files | 1,168 |
| New MPO files | 660 |
| New Personal files | 5,577 |
| New PQ files | 344 |
| Distribution of OPM/MPO Circulars | 204 |
| Insertion of letters in various files | 4,620 |

ALEXANDER MAGRO
Director (Corporate Services)

Operations and Programme Implementation Directorate

INTRODUCTION

The main responsibilities of the Operations and Programme Implementation Directorate (OPI) in 2007 were the following:

- to manage the implementation of corporate initiatives, among which the Public Service Data Protection Implementation Project;
- to monitor and report on the implementation of change initiatives within OPM;
- to perform the programme implementation and customer care functions within OPM; and
- to fulfil the role of Senior Programming Manager in respect of 2007-2013 Structural Funds projects undertaken by OPM departments and entities.

POLICY ISSUES

The Directorate 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 2007, these functions included the monitoring of the correct use of the National Coat of Arms and other state emblems, and the compilation of documented internal guidelines on their use and application. This Office was also involved in matters related to the national identity card and a national identity management strategy, amongst other issues.

Annual Reports of Government Departments

Another task of this Office entails the compilation, vetting, design and editing of reports submitted by government departments concerning their annual activities. The consolidated publication *2006 Annual Report of Government Departments* was finalised in May 2007 and issued on CD and posted on the Public Service Intranet for greater diffusion amongst 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, and regularly monitors the media and the government gazette to maintain its database of official boards current and updated.

Broadcasting

One of the responsibilities of the Office of the Prime Minister is the regulatory aspect of Broadcasting. During 2007, 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 (CAP 350).

The 42nd meeting of the Council of Europe Standing Committee on Trans-Frontier Television was held in Strasbourg, France on 8-9 October and was attended by the Assistant Director within the Directorate. This meeting dealt with information on the implementation of the Convention, an exchange of views with representatives of the Israeli and Moroccan Authorities, information by the Observer delegate of the European Commission on the Media Services Directive and examination of draft amendments to the Convention.

DATA PROTECTION

Data Protection compliance in the Public Service remains the primary corporate initiative under the responsibility of the Directorate. By means of this project, the OPM Data Protection Team (composed of OPI and MITTS personnel) offers advice and assistance to ministries and departments in the field of data protection. It also 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 data protection internal audits in a number of ministries. These audits delve into all aspects of a department's activities and conduct a review of the extent of compliance with the Data Protection Act. In the past year, 26 data protection full audits were conducted in six different ministries (one at the Ministry of Education, Youth & Employment; seven at the Ministry for Justice & Home Affairs; two at the Ministry for the Family & Social Solidarity; seven in the Ministry of Health, the Elderly & Community Care, three in the Ministry for Resources & Infrastructure; six at the Ministry for Competitiveness & Communications).

Data Protection Training

The OPM team facilitated 28 half-day sessions on the Data Protection Act organised by the SDO and attended by a total of 569 public officers. Another presentation was delivered – in conjunction with the Data Protection Commissioner – for Armed Forces of Malta personnel. One session of the Data Protection Officers Forum was held during 2007.

In July, the Director attended the Privacy Laws & Business 20th Annual International Conference held in Cambridge, UK, with the theme *Global Warning! Privacy Climate Changes Ahead*.

Data Protection Twinning Light Project

A project proposal for funds under the EU 2005 Transition Facility to provide assistance in the field of data protection was concluded and approved by the European Commission in 2007. The project fiche was launched in September and calls for submission of proposals closed in November 2007. A proposal from the German Federal Ministry of the Interior was selected and action was taken by this Office to prepare the twinning light contract for endorsement by the two project leaders. The relative contract document was finalised and the contract awarded by the Department of Contracts on 24 December 2007.

This is the second twinning light project on data protection, following the successful completion of a previous collaboration with German partners on data protection *acquis* implementation in 2005-2006. The overall objective of this proposal Data Protection Training in the Malta Public Service is to strengthen the data protection knowledge and skills of public service employees and thus build up the capacity of data protection structures in the Public Service.

The project is envisaged to provide data protection training at various levels, ranging from general awareness to sector-specific sessions for Data Protection Officers and officers handling personal data in specific sectors. The activities will run from February to July 2008.

European Data Protection Day

In preparation for the commemoration of the first European Data Protection Day in January 2007 this Office had in October 2006 launched an initiative aimed at raising public awareness on data protection and informing citizens of their rights.

The whole exercise, whereby each government department processing citizens' personal data would have a Data Protection Policy in place by the European Data Protection Day on 28 January 2007, was successfully completed in mid-January, with 95% of departments having sent in draft policies for review by the OPM DP Team by the closing date. A special session of the Data Protection Officers Forum was held on 26 January to mark the first European Data Protection Day. The Forum was addressed by the Principal Permanent Secretary and the Data Protection Commissioner. Departments were encouraged to render their departmental policies available to their clients and to place them on their websites to facilitate access by their public.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

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 the previous years to promote eco-friendly practices in the workplace were sustained and further extended in 2007 through the application of added initiatives such as:

- facilitating the organisation of five Waste Management talks by MedEcology Ltd on behalf of WasteServ for 134 OPM employees and liaising with Green Focal Points in other OPM entities to run a series of similar talks at their respective premises;
- arrangements to commission an energy audit in an OPM building in 2008 - quotations were sought from three operators selected to bid for energy audit consultancy services in ministries, in terms of a Framework Agreement awarded by Contracts; and
- compilation and maintenance of 'green' statistics and monitoring consumption of office stationery, cartridges and energy/water.

The OPI Directorate also managed the funds allocated for green initiatives within OPM in 2007, which were utilised for the following projects:

- procurement and installation of a 1.2kWp photovoltaic unit for AFM (in addition to a 2.1kWp unit installed in 2006);
- replacement of halogen floodlighting on Castille façade by energy-saving fittings;
- installation of energy-efficient lighting in Castille basement; and
- a partial energy audit to assess the efficiency of a power corrector factor unit already installed in the premises.

Euro Changeover

One of the programme implementation functions of the OPI Directorate in 2007 was co-ordinating and supporting OPM line departments and entities in the preparation and implementation of plans for the euro changeover process. In this respect assistance was extended to OPM Euro Project Managers (EPMs) in

the preparation of updates of their departmental/entity Euro Changeover Plan and the implementation of dual display of monetary amounts in publications and websites. This Office was also assigned the preparation of the six-monthly Ministry Euro Changeover Plans for submission to the Euro Changeover Public Sector Sectoral Committee (PSSC).

Throughout the year the Directorate continued to distribute to OPM EPMs euro-related information and documentation such as the electronic newsletter TARGET, FAQ leaflets and guidelines issued by the NECC, for dissemination within their respective offices. Moreover, the Directorate provided support to OPM Euro Project Managers in the submission of business cases to MFIN for the smoothing of identified amounts in view of the adoption of the euro.

Two OPI staff members were identified as lead trainers to attend euro training (euro awareness, a train-the-trainer workshop and specific training on euro handling) and in turn impart the knowledge to other officers in a cascading approach. Related training material was supplied by the NECC and training was delivered in two phases - general euro awareness attended by around 80 officers as well as specific training on the handling aspects of the new coinage (namely security features and handling of the actual notes and coins) aimed at staff who handle cash or who could benefit directly from such training. Besides the employees targeted for euro training within OPM entities, OPI was responsible for providing euro training to staff at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Offices of the Ombudsman and Auditor General; and the House of Representatives. These sessions were held in May and October respectively.

Bilateral meetings were organised between the MEU Euro Team and representatives of the Broadcasting Authority and the Department of Information, which were classified as 'medium' euro impact organisations, with the aim of assessing the level of euro preparedness within each entity, particularly in relation to training, communications and IT euro migration. Subsequently, the Directorate continued to provide monthly update status reports to the MEU Euro Team on euro-related actions effected by the OPM 'medium impact' entities as well as by Director OPI in her capacity as OPM Euro Ministry Co-ordinator.

Co-ordination of 2007-2013 Cohesion Funds

A relatively new role for the OPI Directorate is co-ordinating and monitoring the management, administration and implementation of projects undertaken by OPM departments and entities under 2007-2013 Structural Funds. In the course of the year, timely action was taken to ensure that information material and calls for applications were brought to the attention of appropriate OPM departments and to provide them with support and assistance on issues related to EU 2007-2013 funding. The Directorate was involved in the vetting and endorsement of a number of project proposals under the 2007-2013 Cohesion Funds. A series of one-to-one meetings was held with various line departments to discuss project outlines and provide support on the development and preparation of project documents. The staff complement of the Directorate was strengthened in order to meet these new functions.

Customer Care Function

A total of 277 customer care requests, representing 79 from foreigners and 198 from locals were processed by the OPM Customer Care Co-ordinator in 2007. Out of all these queries, 258 were received through the OPM website while 19 requests were received through the computerised Customer Care System.

This Office also co-ordinated a self-assessment on service standards conducted by OPM departments and compiled, and transmitted to the Charter Support Unit, a consolidated return on the implementation and maintenance of service standards within OPM during 2007.

MARIE-LOURDES GRECH

Director (Operations and Programme Implementation)

**Ministry of
Finance**

Strategy and Operations Support Office

BACKGROUND

The overall purpose of the Strategy and Operations Support Office is to maintain a dedicated capability for the planning and execution of long-term and strategic programmes; and projects arising from the Business and Financial Plans of the Ministry. These programmes and projects generally have a service-wide application but may also include initiatives limited to the Ministry of Finance. The major works undertaken by the Strategy and Operations Support Office in the year under review were related to five specific areas: (a) accounting practices; (b) organisational reforms; (c) procurement practices; (d) EU practices; and (e) international institution co-ordination.

ACCOUNTING PRACTICES

The changeover to the accrual accounting methodology is continuing. The Strategy and Operations Support Office works in close collaboration with the Treasury Department to implement best accounting practices. Over the past three years, the focus has been to increase the quality of the accrual accounting data being compiled by the various ministries and their respective departments. This has been possible through the strengthening of the Accrual Accounting Methodology Compliance Unit within the Treasury Department; continuing the accounting training programme; and revising the accounting standards and guidelines.

The practice of issuing Accrual Accounting Financial Statements has continued on a yearly basis since 2003. However, the quality of these statements has increased substantially over the past three years. The work carried out in the previous years regarding the various accounting guidelines and standards, and continuous training is bearing results. The long-term accounting training course leading to “A” standard, which commenced in 2006, has continued. About 150 participants are undertaking the training, with 10% sitting for the “O” Level Accounting examination. It is anticipated that a similar percentage will sit for the “A” Level exam in 2008. The major concern with the project is the need to replace the current Departmental Accounting System (DAS). The technical and business needs tender specifications have been completed. Once the new accounting system is procured, the accrual accounting methodology may take a more prominent role in the financial management of Government.

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.

ORGANISATIONAL REFORMS

A major organisational reform project undertaken is regarding the merger of the revenue earning departments. This consists of merging the Inland Revenue, Customs, Tax Compliance Unit and the VAT Department as a single united entity. An extensive implementation strategy has been defined to achieve

this ambitious objective. The formulated strategy is the result of close collaboration of the relevant departments involved and extensive research of a number of tax administrations in European and non-European countries. The defined strategy has been discussed internally and accepted in principle. However, the decision whether to proceed with the recommendations is still under consideration.

PROCUREMENT PRACTICES

This project is based on the EC Communication document, COM 2004/841/EC, entitled “Action plan for the implementation of the legal framework for electronic public procurement”. A comprehensive strategy has been defined for the Contracts Department in line with this eProcurement EU initiative. The strategy for the implementation of eProcurement in the public sector takes a corporate wide view of Government. The objective is to introduce eProcurement services that include ePublication, eTendering, eAuction, eCatalogues, eOrdering, eInvoicing, and ePayments. Hence, there is the possibility that most of the paperwork related to the procurement function may be eliminated reducing the cost and time required to process procurement transactions. This project has an impact on the public sector as the purchaser and the private sector as the prospective supplier. Special emphasis is being given to promoting the participation of SMEs in the procurement process. The cost-benefit analysis suggests that the Government may save in the vicinity of Lm8.2 million within a five-year period, with a direct saving of approximately Lm3 million per year thereafter. The saving will be the result of aggregating procurement across Government and through extensive business process reengineering.

EU PRACTICES

The Strategy and Operations Support Office co-ordinates all activities related to the EU Own Resources. A task force has been established chaired by the Director General (Strategy and Operations Support) to ensure that all queries and communication with the EU Commission related to Malta’s financial contribution to the EU are co-ordinated and any information given is consistent and timely. This task force consists of members from the VAT Department, Customs, Economic Planning Division, NSO, EU Paying Authority, and the Budget Office. Regular internal meetings are held to discuss issues and outstanding EU Commission matters. These internal meetings facilitate the preparatory work for three interrelated tasks:

- computation of financial forecasts regarding VAT and GNI to be provided to the EU Commission;
- consolidation of information in preparation for attending working group meetings, particularly those related to reforms in how EU Member States are to calculate their specific contribution;
- preparing for EU Audit Missions related to VAT, GNI and Traditional Own Resources (Customs).

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTION CO-ORDINATION

The Strategy and Operations Support Office co-ordinates all activities related to resolutions and meetings that need to be attended at the World Bank, IMF, Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, International Finance Corporation, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Investment Bank, and European Council Development Bank. Other international institutions that are actively monitored include the European Group for Public Policy (EGPA), and the UN Trade and Development workgroup on International Standards of Accounting and Reporting (ISAR). Over the past three years, the Director General (Strategy and Operations Support) presented five papers at international meetings, four of which were peer reviewed and published in international journals.

CONCLUSION

The Strategy and Operations Support Office will proactively seek participation in projects that are in line with the strategic directions of the Government in general and the Ministry of Finance in particular. The Strategy and Operations Support 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 (Strategy & Operations Support)

Financial Policy and Management Division

MAIN FUNCTIONS

The Financial Policy and Management Division was set up in November 2006 to contribute to enhanced economic and financial well-being by ensuring that professional standards of financial management apply across Government and by promoting tax, welfare and expenditure policies that improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of public service delivery and make for a tax and benefit system that is fair and equitable.

In the course of the year under review, the Division focused primarily on the following areas:

- recruiting adequate resources for the Division to enable it to embark upon the initiatives that have been entrusted to its remit;
- reviewing the regulatory framework underpinning financial management in the public service in order to promote efficient, effective and sustainable policies and procedures that reflect best practices;
- developing a tax policy research and analysis function that makes it possible to evaluate alternative taxation policies and strategies and to advise on their impacts on the national budget and the wider economy;
- drawing on the processes underpinning the implementation of the collective agreement for employees in the public service and collective bargaining initiatives generally to seek to maximise convergence in parameters throughout the whole public sector;
- appraising the financial implications of new conditions of employment in the public service and ensuring that existing conditions of service were being implemented in line with approved parameters;
- a number of ministry-specific initiatives, including several which had service-wide impact.

ASSIGNMENTS UNDERTAKEN

Throughout 2007, the Division 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;
- overseeing the gathering of economic and financial intelligence;
- restructuring of the vehicle registration tax system in conjunction with the Ministry for Urban Development and Roads;
- reviewing financial policy regulatory frameworks and working on the phased issue of a policy manual;
- evaluating the cost implications of pandemic preparedness;
- compiling and maintaining a consolidated database of taxation legislation;
- identifying priority areas from a national perspective for eventual input into the pre-budget process;
- evaluating alternative tax and social welfare policy options and making recommendations for inclusion of same in the pre-budget and budget process;
- 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 and bringing to a satisfactory conclusion the first pilot project – a Home for the Elderly in Mellieħa;
- co-ordinating the euro changeover process within the relative departments/entities falling under the Ministry of Finance, and overseeing the conversion of monetary values in legislation and other administrative instruments;
- 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 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, domestic appliances, 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; and
- 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)

The Treasury

GENERAL

Following the organisational restructuring undertaken during 2006, which saw the Treasury being reformed to focus exclusively on Treasury functions (namely Government Accounts and Debt Management), further work was undertaken in order to pave the way for the eventual hiving off of other non-related activities.

Migration of Salaries and Pensions Section to Back-Office, Gozo

In line with government policy to transfer back office functions to Gozo, the Treasury successfully migrated the Salaries and Pensions section to Gozo on 3 October 2007.

Intensive staff training started in Floriana in November 2006 and continued uninterrupted until the migration date. Given the highly technical functions involved, a very steep learning curve provided a tough challenge. Trainees took over the issuance of the payroll as from July 2007. During their training period, trainees were also involved in the euro testing of the Payroll and Pensions systems.

During the year under review, assistance and support continued to be given to the Gozitan staff by a very limited number of personnel from the offices in Floriana. It is planned that this will be discontinued once certain highly technical functions are completely taken over by Gozitan staff. Towards this end, further training will be undertaken during 2008.

DEBT MANAGEMENT DIRECTORATE

Main Functions

The Directorate was established in December 2006 within the Treasury Division to carry out the key objectives in debt management activity, focused primarily to ensure that:

- the funding requirements for the central government borrowing programme (short and long term) can be financed prudently and cost-effectively, and
- the annual debt servicing costs are met at the lowest possible cost.

With regard to securities, the policy of the Government has to date been of only issuing domestic currency dominated stocks in our domestic market and avoid raising funds on the international markets. Moreover, as part of its cash management activity to cover any short-term revenue shortfalls, Government conducts weekly auctions for the issue of Treasury bills, being temporary borrowing usually of 91 day tenor but issues also include a mix of the 28 day, 273 day and 364 day Treasury bills.

For its loans in foreign currency, the Government has to date only tapped international sources, mainly other foreign governments and international institutions.

The Directorate does not to date borrow for on-lending activities.

Treasury Bills

The issuance of Treasury bills has a dual role: primarily, to cover the temporary revenue shortfalls of Government and secondly to maintain the Bill market.

Treasury bills are offered by public auction on a weekly basis and are issued in denomination of Lm1,000 (€1,000 wef January 2008) with a range of tenors of 28 days, 91 days, 182 days, 273 days and 364 days.

Prior to 1 April 2007, Treasury bills were still in certificate form and were traded over-the-counter. As from 1 April 2007, Treasury bills were dematerialised and were admitted to listing and trading on the Malta Stock Exchange plc, while the Treasury bill yields started to be computed on Actual/360 days basis.

The maximum amount of outstanding Treasury bills is established by Parliamentary Resolution, when in 2002 the maximum amount was set at Lm300million (equivalent to €698.80 million).

The outstanding balance as at 31 December 2007 was Lm152,374,000, representing a reduction of Lm8,098,000 over the amount outstanding at end of 2006.

Interest rates ranged between a low of 3.8498% for 91 day Bills issued on 19 January 2007 and a high of 4.583% for 273 day Bills issued on 9 November 2007. Yet the weighted average rate of interest on Treasury bills issued during 2007, which amounted to Lm476,814,000 in nominal terms, reached 4.3797%.

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

| Tenor | Ratio of Volume | Amount (Lm) Nominal |
|----------|-----------------|------------------------|
| 28 days | 0.08 | 71,720,000 |
| 91 days | 0.49 | 240,435,000 |
| 182 days | 0.23 | 91,526,000 |
| 273 days | 0.15 | 71,209,000 |
| 364 days | 0.06 | 1,924,000 |

Such interest rates for temporary borrowing are determined by the money market which in turn is influenced by the repo market rates.

Government Bonds

In accordance with the 2007 Budget Measures Implementation Act (Act IV of 2007), the Government issuance programme of MGS was set at Lm100 million. The issues of such stocks are normally applied for the purpose of partly financing the budgetary deficit and partly to redeem MGS which are due to mature during the year.

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

During 2007 the Directorate arranged to redeem three MGS issues which matured during the year, representing the sum of Lm70 million, and issued new stocks amounting to Lm54 million.

The Directorate continued with the current issuance programme whereby it based its issues of fungible MGS with a view to continuing to top up the existing larger MGS issues so as to contribute to a further deepening in the liquidity of current benchmark issues.

Towards the October offer of Lm50 million, which was spread over two MGS issues, Treasury introduced a new development whereby it did not specify the respective amount for each tranche with a view to afford greater flexibility in the way such offer would be taken up.

Foreign Loans

These loans are specifically issued to finance capital projects. A total of Lm2.41 million was repaid according to the Repayment Schedule resulting in an end-of-year balance of Lm52.42 million.

Redenomination and Conversion of Government Securities

The changeover process for the introduction of the euro as from January 2008, had involved the Directorate in meetings with the Malta Stock Exchange to ensure that the conversion was carried out smoothly and that the methodologies applied were in line with the “Guidelines on the redenomination and renominatisation of Maltese lira denominated listed financial instruments converted into euro” compiled by the Malta Stock Exchange and endorsed by the National Euro Changeover Committee (NECC).

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTS DIRECTORATE

Accounting Methodology and Compliance Unit

The Accounting Methodology and Compliance Unit is primarily responsible for collecting and checking accrual accounting returns submitted by government departments on a quarterly basis. During the past year the Unit continued with its endeavours to increase the level of accuracy of the information submitted by organising one-to-one meetings with various officers responsible for providing accruals returns. The main objective is to obtain an accurate picture of the financial situation of each department when compiling the financial statements under the accrual accounting methodology.

A series of workshops, organised by the Unit in collaboration with MITTS, have been delivered. These workshops were conducted during November in Malta and Gozo and addressed topics such as Accruals (including cash flow and capital commitments); Asset Management; and Stock Control. The primary objective was to obtain feedback from officers who provided accruals information and to discuss difficulties encountered when compiling the returns. These sessions were also instrumental in clarifying treatment/recording of certain transactions/events under the accrual accounting methodology. A report on the findings, including recommendations, was compiled by MITTS intended to provide a basis on how to best address the issues raised.

As part of the preparations for the introduction of the euro, the Unit was involved in the upgrading of the Stock Control Software from the ‘Lm’ to the ‘euro’ version. The software was developed by MITTS and available to departments from January 2008.

Other Initiatives

As part of the preparations for the implementation of the Accrual Accounting Methodology, a training programme in Accrual Accounting was offered to public officers involved in the accounting function. Participants taking part in the training programme which commenced in November 2006 have finalised module one, Financial Management Accounting, during the past year. A number of these participants also sat for the ‘O’ level Matsec Accounting examination and obtained very good results. The second module on Cost and Management Accounting commenced in October 2007. Some of the participants have opted to sit for the ‘A’ Level Matsec Accounting examination scheduled for April 2008.

Cash Office

During 2007 the Cash Office was, as in previous years, responsible for ensuring that departments submit the required cash flow projections on time. Such projections provide the Treasury with the necessary means to plan and better manage cash requirements.

A total of 675 stop payments and 610 Garnishee Orders were handled.

In 2007 the Cash Office was involved in the process leading to the preparation of cheques incorporating the euro symbol. The cheques were available in November in time for the introduction of the euro in 2008.

As in previous years, bank reconciliation was undertaken by the Cash Office and the manual process for outstanding transactions from 2002 to 2006 was 99% complete. Manual reconciliation for 2007 is 95% complete. Liaison with departments and co-ordination with MITTS have ensured that the process progressed smoothly. Testing of the new Bank Reconciliation System to cater for the introduction of the euro was carried out at MITTS to ensure the successful implementation of the new system in January 2008.

Cash Office personnel were trained in the handling of the euro and steps taken to ensure that the office was well prepared for the new currency. The required cash float was made available on time for use at the office. All data handling systems in use at the Cash Office were modified as required to display information in euro.

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 effected by the Unit:

| Transaction Type | Number | Value (Lm) |
|------------------------|--------|-------------|
| Debit Advice (Local) | 2,629 | 521,409,807 |
| Debit Advice (Foreign) | 22 | 349,727 |
| Telegraphic Transfers | 1,815 | 38,125,205 |
| Draft | 1,044 | 3,478,888 |
| Letter of Credit | 8 | 965,471 |
| Travel | 4,022 | 1,589,951 |

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 2005/2006/2007 travel databases and the verification of documents following overseas travel effected in 2007.

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.

With the publication of Legal Notice 185/2007 in the Government Gazette of 13 July 2007, the responsibility of the Accounting Officer, as defined in the amended financial legislation, is further strengthened. The processing and Vote accounting of transactions effected by ministries and departments continued to be the main routine function of the Section. These transactions involved accounts belonging to the Consolidated Fund, the Treasury Clearance Fund and other funds and accounts held by Government.

During the year, the Accounts Section processed local payments which were made up as follows:

| | |
|---------|---------------|
| Batches | 11,266 |
| Cheques | 137,363 |
| Value | Lm120,159,415 |

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 organised various Train the Trainer courses during the month of October to Accounting Officers in departments regarding the enhancements effected to the DAS application. During these courses the departments were also informed about the latest developments regarding the changeover which would have impacted on their operations.

EU Funds Management Unit

The role of the EU Funds Management Unit is to ensure the efficient management and control of Transition, Cohesion, Structural, and Equal Funds allocations. It is the responsibility of the unit to:

- ensure that sound accounting procedures relating to requests for payment are being applied at all administrative levels;
- effect payment after careful verification of the compliance of the invoice with national and European rules;
- record all payment transactions in *ad hoc* accounts;
- reconcile accounts; and
- provide substantiating documents to all the relevant stakeholders involved in the above-mentioned funds.

During the period under review, the Unit processed 2,374 payments, an average of 198 payments per month. The table below summarises the payments made throughout the year by their respective fund.

| | National Lm | Community Lm | Total Value Lm | No. of Payments |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Transition Funds | 200,872 | 1,941,531 | 2,142,403 | 116 |
| Cohesion Funds | 944,136 | 2,929,539 | 3,873,675 | 30 |
| Structural Funds | 4,493,045 | 8,538,667 | 13,031,712 | 2,012 |
| Equal | 65,283 | 157,118 | 222,401 | 216 |
| Total | 5,703,336 | 13,566,855 | 19,270,191 | 2,374 |

In preparation for the new programming period 2007-2013, progressive meetings were held with the Planning and Priorities Co-ordination Division and MITTS Ltd. with the scope of integrating the Unit's Financial Information System with the new Structural Funds Database that would be operational in 2008. The integration of these systems will generate a common database for all transactions relating to EU Funds.

Enhancements were also effected in the Unit's internal application to ensure familiarisation with the dual display of monetary amounts during 2007 and Euro compliance in 2008.

Corporate

The Government Accounts Directorate also issued Circulars outlining Factoring Arrangements and the implementation of the SEPA.

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 and low inflation. Within this context, attention is devoted towards the achievement of a stable macroeconomic framework, also by attaining an appropriate fiscal policy. Furthermore, efforts are being made to improve the incentive to work and to continue to attract foreign direct investment, to develop the tourism industry, to improve the educational system and the environment, 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.

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

Furthermore, the Division assists Government by providing economic analysis of policy issues emanating from Malta's participation in a host of international, regional, bilateral and multilateral institutions. The Division also provides support to other government entities whose area of activity may be affected by EU initiatives with third countries in the area of international trade and investment.

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 contributes to the budgetary process by analysing the economic and fiscal impact of proposed budgetary measures.

Throughout the year, the Division also provided an important input to the analysis of the fiscal situation and projections within the context of the process of the abrogation of Malta's excessive deficit situation as well as the obligations of the Stability and Growth Pact.

Furthermore, during 2007, the Division provided input for the macroeconomic section of the 2008 Pre-Budget Document (Families Growing Stronger).

EU Economic Policy Co-ordination

The Division continued to participate actively in the EU economic policy co-ordination processes. In particular, the Division participates in the Economic and Financial Committee (alternates) and the Economic Policy Committee. In addition, the Division also provided support for the preparations for the

Economic and Financial Committee meetings. The Division also participated in a number of working groups attached to the EPC. In particular, the Division is actively involved in the Working Group on Ageing Populations (AWG) which examines the economic and budgetary consequences of ageing. Moreover, it participates in other working groups of the EPC namely the Output Gaps Working Group, the Working Group on Energy and Climate Change and the Lisbon Methodology Working Group. It also monitors closely developments in the Labour Market Working Group and the Quality of Public Finances Working Group. Furthermore, as from August 2007, the Division attended the EFC (Alternates) Eurogroup Working Group and the EPC Working Group on Eurogroup Issues as observer.

The Economic Policy Division is also engaged in the preparation of briefings for the ECOFIN meetings as well as for meetings of other Council formations and for the European Council meetings, as requested.

During 2007, the Division provided direct input to the preparation of Malta's first *Stability Programme 2007-2010*. A Member State joining the Euro Area is required to submit a Stability Programme within six months of the Council Decision on its participation in the single currency. This Stability Programme constitutes an update of the *December 2006 Update of Convergence Programme*. The Stability and Convergence Programmes are important documents within the framework of the EU's multilateral surveillance of budgetary positions and the surveillance and co-ordination of economic policies.

The Stability Programme 2007-2010 includes macroeconomic forecasts, budgetary projections, 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. The document was compiled in collaboration with the Budget Affairs Division of the Ministry of Finance and the Treasury, and with important inputs being received from the National Statistics Office as well as various ministries and entities.

The Economic Policy Division participated in the assessment of Malta's Update of Convergence Programme 2006-2009. In particular, it presented Malta's position in the Economic and Financial Committee (alternates) and contributed towards the preparation for the relevant Economic and Financial Committee and ECOFIN meetings.

Furthermore, during the first half of 2007, the Division co-ordinated closely with Commission officials from DG ECFIN and provided the requested information during the process of the abrogation of the excessive deficit procedure for Malta. Close collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and the National Statistics Office was maintained during this process. This was a crucial decision in the context of the process leading to the Council decision on Malta's adoption of the euro.

In January 2007, the Division participated in the country examinations meeting held by the EPC. The aim of this meeting was primarily to draft the updated country-specific conclusions, following the submission by Member States of their 2006 Annual Progress Reports on their National Reform Programmes (NRP). In July, the Division participated in a meeting with officials from the European Commission on their mission on the Implementation of the Growth and Jobs Agenda. The Division provided input to the drafting of the NRP Annual Progress Report 2007 which was submitted to the European Commission in October 2007. In November 2007, the Division participated in the country examinations meeting held by the EPC, which reviewed the 2007 Progress Reports on the NRPs of the Member States. The Economic Policy Division also participates 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.

During 2007, 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 ECFIN. Bilateral meetings were held both in Malta as well as in Brussels with Commission officials from DG ECFIN. In September 2007, the Division also met Commission officials from DG ECFIN who visited Malta to present the 2007 Public Finances in EMU Report.

Euro Adoption

During the first half of 2007, the Division was actively involved in work related to the euro adoption process, starting from Malta's request for the preparation of a Convergence Report in February 2007 to the final Council decision on Malta's participation in the single currency in July 2007. The Division participated in meetings during the missions made by both the European Central Bank and the Commission (DG ECFIN) as part of their preparations for their respective Convergence Reports. Throughout the process, the Division co-ordinated closely with DG ECFIN and collaborated with the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank of Malta. The Division provided the necessary inputs throughout the process and prepared the respective briefings for the relevant Ecofin and European Council meetings.

The Division was also represented in sub-committees of the National Euro Changeover Committee. Furthermore, officers from the Economic Policy Division assisted the NECC on a 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 2007 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 2008 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 2007, 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 for 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 ECFIN. Such forecasts were also used for the preparations for the Budget and the Stability Programme 2007-2010.

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.

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 Economic Policy Division contributed during 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.

In addition, during 2007, the Economic Policy Division was an important focal point in the extensive discussions held with representatives from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) who visited Malta in May for the Article IV consultation. Such visits are followed by published reports on the local economic scenario. As part of the preparations for the mission, the Economic Policy Division prepared a series of analysis covering various aspects of the domestic economy.

Pension Modelling

Following the technical work carried out in the context of the preparations for the pension reform which were enacted by Parliament in December 2006, during 2007 the Division provided support in the preparation of a number of scenarios/simulations in the context of additional refinements to the pension system. A number of measures were subsequently announced in the Budget for 2008. These simulations were carried out using the World Bank's PROST (Pensions Reform Simulation Toolkit) model.

The Division also carried out work on the proposed EU Directive on the portability of supplementary pension rights, specifically to estimate the impact on government expenditure.

During the course of 2007, officers from the Division provided technical support to the Ministry for Family and Social Solidarity for the purposes of a pension modelling effort co-ordinated by the OECD aimed at calculating pension adequacy indicators.

Financial Perspectives 2007-2013

During 2007, the Division continued to provide support and input for the monitoring of developments regarding the Financial Perspectives 2007-2013. This included estimates for the Preliminary Draft Budget for 2008 with respect to Malta's net budgetary position and technical input on the EU Budget Review.

The Division is also involved in the Task Force on Own Resources which carries out work related to the Advisory Committee on Own Resources (ACOR). It provides technical input in line with its expertise related to the financial perspectives. In addition, an officer from the Division also participated in the 139th ACOR forecast meeting held in Brussels and was involved in the forecasts of GNI and VAT base estimates for 2007 and forecasts for 2008.

Research and Publications

The professional staff at the Division carries out research work on various issues. During the year, the work carried out on competitiveness indicators by the technical working group chaired by the Division was updated. The Division also continued to collaborate with the VAT Division regarding the macroeconomic impact of EU proposals aimed to combat tax fraud.

Economic input was also provided in the context of the preparations of Malta's application for a contribution from the European Globalisation adjustment Fund (EGF). The Division also provided the requested input to the Planning and Priorities Co-ordination Division, OPM.

The Division also contributed to work regarding Malta's National Action Plan for the Community emissions trading scheme, as well as the preparation of the Malta position on the EU aviation emissions trading scheme, through the provision of macroeconomic data and other technical economic input.

The Division is also participating in the public debt management strategy committee and in the interdepartmental working group on car taxation.

As from 2007, the Economic Policy Division has been actively involved, in partnership with the Ministry for Family and Social Solidarity and with the help of the National Statistics Office, in the development of a micro-modelling strategy. The development of a micro-model for Malta will allow Government to

simulate the effect of various policy measures in the area of taxation and social benefits, thus allowing a better socio-economic and financial analysis of the impact of government policy. The development of this strategy is being undertaken in collaboration with the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research in Vienna (ECV) as part of the Improving the Capacity and Usability of EUROMOD (I-CUE) project.

The aim of I-CUE is to re-design and upgrade EUROMOD, a tax-benefit microsimulation model presently covering 15 (pre-May 2004) Member States of the EU. The model will now be extended to the ten new Member States of the EU, including Malta. EUROMOD was developed to enable research on the effects of policies and policy reforms that have an impact on incomes, poverty, inequality and social inclusion. During 2007, the Division was involved in the formulation of the Feasibility Study for the application of EUROMOD to Malta, providing technical input on the tax structure of the Maltese economy and how this can be simulated.

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

The Division published the Economic Bulletin March 2007 and July 2007. These documents review the recent economic developments, and also include analysis of selected specific economic themes in line with internal economic research carried out by the Division.

Moreover, the Division published the Economic Survey October 2007. 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 2007, 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.

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS DIRECTORATE

The Common Commercial Policy

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 and the Permanent Representation in Brussels, is constantly monitoring and analysing developments that take place during the various 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.

The Division monitored and analysed the ongoing developments on Anti-Dumping, Anti-Subsidy and Safeguard mechanisms. Advice was provided on a number of anti-dumping issues to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, based on an economic analysis and bearing in mind the objectives, interests and priorities of the various government entities and stakeholders. The necessary consultations with local and Community stakeholders have been maintained.

Multilateral Trade: The WTO Doha Development Agenda Negotiations

The Division, in consultation 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. The year 2007 should have been a crucial year for the Round; however, a definitive agreement has not been reached in 2007. Thus, negotiations will extend to the first quarter of 2008. The Division is also closely monitoring the developments that are taking place within the Rules Negotiating Group in the realm of the Doha Development Agenda.

Bilateral and Regional Trade Relations

The Division consulted and co-ordinated with the competent authorities across Government in order to provide advice and economic analysis to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in its policy formulation vis-à-vis a number of trade agreements with third countries that were negotiated in 2007 or are currently under negotiation:

- *Economic Partnership Agreements*: In view of the 2007 deadline for the trade agreement on goods between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) had to be negotiated and finalised by not later than the end of 2007. The Division co-ordinated Malta's position on EPAs with other government entities and stakeholders. Malta supported the European Commission's proposal to conclude an interim agreement on goods and subsequently to continue negotiations on other sectors, thus avoiding trade disruption. Furthermore, the inclusion of reformed Rules of Origin for EPAs was also supported.
- *EU-Euromed Free Trade Area*: Negotiations with Euromed countries continued in an effort to conclude an FTA by 2010. Discussions included progress on negotiations with respect to the liberalisation of agricultural, processed agricultural and fisheries products with Egypt, Israel and Morocco; the text for the liberalisation of trade in services and establishment; and for the conclusion of the dispute settlement agreement.
- *FTA Agreements with ASEAN, India and South Korea*: In April 2007, EU Member States agreed on a mandate granted to the Commission to negotiate an FTA with ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), India and South Korea. Following this mandate, the Commission is currently negotiating with these countries/regions on an FTA in close collaboration with EU Member States. The Division continued to follow-up developments related to these negotiations.
- *Association Agreements with Andean Community and Central America*: Similar to the FTA agreements mentioned above, a negotiating mandate was also granted to the Commission in April 2007 to negotiate Association Agreements with the Andean Community and Central America. Negotiations are currently underway on the three main elements of association agreements with these countries, namely political dialogue, broad co-operation (including human rights and migration) and trade.
- *EU-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Free Trade Area*: During 2007, the EU continued negotiations with the GCC region, including the exchange of documents in the areas of services, investment and public procurement. The Division followed developments, including discussions on possible flexibilities to GCC countries.
- *EU-China Framework Agreement of Partnership and Co-operation*: The Division, in co-ordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, monitored further developments in EU-China relations, aimed to enhance trade and investment.
- *EU-Russia relations*: The Division continued to analyse developments in connection with Russia's bid for accession to the WTO.
- *EU-US Partnership*: The Division, together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other pertinent authorities, reviewed developments in transatlantic relations, with a view to deepen transatlantic economic integration and further regulatory convergence.
- *EU-Canada Regulatory Co-operation*: The EU's efforts to establish and implement bilateral co-operation arrangements to facilitate the achievement of regulatory objectives as formulated in the EC-Canada Regulatory Co-operation Roadmap 2007/2008 were followed and analysed by the Division.

Thematic Issues

Aid for Trade

The Division submitted the respective economic/trade feedback to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with respect to the EU Strategy on Aid for Trade.

Market Access Strategy

The Commission, following consultations with Member States and other interested parties, renewed the Market Access Strategy. The Market Access Advisory Committee has been activated as the relevant body to discuss market access issues. In addition, the Commission revamped the market access database and established a complaint register and specific working groups which operate under the Market Access Advisory Committee. The aim of these groups is to tackle specific barriers to trade in third countries. The Division, in co-ordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other pertinent authorities, submitted its views with respect to the review of the market access strategy.

GATS Commitments on Gambling and Betting Services

Further to the withdrawal in the WTO of GATS commitments on gambling and betting services by the US, including online gambling, bilateral negotiations were conducted in order to obtain the best possible compensation for such a withdrawal. In liaison with several competent entities, the Division conducted negotiations with stakeholders and intervened in the Article 133 Services meetings on the issue. A Final agreement with the US was signed in Geneva in December 2007.

Global Europe Agenda

In view of the informal meeting of the Heads of State and Government meeting that took place in Lisbon on 18-19 October 2007, the Division continued to give its feedback on the external dimensions of competitiveness. Issues addressed included the Doha Round, the renewed market access strategy, the review of the Trade Defence Instruments, Free Trade Agreements, trade relations with China and the US, Intellectual Property Rights and Public Procurement.

Reflection Process on Trade Defence Instruments

The Reflection Process on Trade Defence Instruments continued throughout this year. In March 2007, the Division, together with the Ministry of Finance and *Forum Malta fl-Ewropa*, organised an information seminar for stakeholders on the Green Paper. A Commission officer was invited to address this seminar. The Division continued to follow up developments in this area.

WTO Subsidy Notifications

The Division co-ordinated the compilation of the WTO subsidies notifications for the years 2005-2006 with the respective government entities and advised accordingly. These notifications serve as a transparency instrument and as a source of information on government intervention in international trade.

Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA)

During 2007, the 133 Committee discussed a mandate to be granted to the Commission to negotiate a plurilateral Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) on behalf of the Member States. The aim of a plurilateral agreement is to increase the level of co-operation between enforcement authorities and to harmonise high standards of IPR enforcement. In steering this discussion, the 133 Committee worked in close collaboration with other relevant Council committees.

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, and research and economic analysis on specific requests as the need arose.

Investment Guarantee Agreements

The Division, in consultation and co-ordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other pertinent authorities, continued negotiations on a number of bilateral Investment and Promotion Agreements. Other negotiations on draft Investment Guarantee Agreements have also been initiated.

Furthermore, the Division in liaison with other pertinent authorities compiled a preliminary study on Intra-EU bilateral Investment Guarantee Agreements.

OECD

The Division continued to provide technical support/briefings with respect to Malta's application to join the OECD.

Human Resource Development

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

During 2007, the Library and Information Unit of the Division was strengthened through the appointment of an Assistant Librarian.

Training of professional staff constitutes a priority to the Division. 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. In particular, during 2007, officers from the Division participated in specialised training courses abroad focusing on pension issues and econometrics, whilst an officer participated in a training course on Financial Programming and Policy at the IMF Institute. Furthermore, one officer completed a course leading to a post-graduate degree in Economics, whilst another officer started a course leading to a post-graduate degree in Economics and Finance, both of which in UK universities.

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 vacancies of the post of Assistant Director (EU Related Procurement) and that of Assistant Director (Post-Contracts).

During the latter part of 2007 the process was initiated for the appointment of a number of Procurement Managers who will cater for the new allocated EU budget obtained by Malta under the Structural Funds 2007-2013 as well as to fill in a number of vacancies which will cater for locally-funded procurement.

REFURBISHMENT WORKS

The Department has continued in its efforts to utilise all the possible office space available within the existing building premises. A refurbishment programme at the basement level was drawn up and all the necessary tender documentation of the works to be undertaken has been completed. Despite extensive consultations with institutions such as Heritage Malta and the National Commission Persons with Disability and obtaining their approval, these works have not yet been sanctioned by MEPA.

Another project initiated in 2007 is the transfer of the existing archives at Wied il-Kbir stores in Qormi to the recently acquired premises previously owned by the ex-Lotto Department which is situated very close to Notre Dame Ravelin. This transfer will result in the saving of time, fuel consumption and a reduction in the watchman complement, leading to increased efficiency in the use of documentation.

Other premises have been taken over which are envisaged to cater for the Appeals Board.

PUBLIC CONTRACTS REGULATIONS

Training, in collaboration with the Staff Development Organisation, on local legislation ie 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, was sustained throughout 2007.

The Department, acting proactively, 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. Common templates used for both local and EU tendering were revised in an effort to better distinguish between the roles and responsibilities of the Department and those of implementing agencies.

A senior official 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. In this way the Department contributes to the development of public procurement methodologies adopted in the EU as well as advising Government on proposed new legislation. In fact, the Commission has proposed a new Directive on Defence and Security related procurement.

EUROPEAN UNION MATTERS

The EU Unit is responsible for the administration of all tenders which are fully or partially funded through EU funds and Norwegian 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. The Head of the EU Unit is also in charge of all Twinning and Twinning Light projects carried out under Malta's Transition Facility Programme.

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, and the Transition Facility Programme 2005 was concluded on 15 December 2007, whereas the Transition Facility Programme 2006 is at an advanced stage of completion. The Structural Funds Programmes for Malta of 2004-2006 are at an advanced stage of implementation and the Structural Funds Programmes for Malta 2007-2013 are at their initial stages.

The Assistant Director of the EU Unit also delivered two training seminars during 2007 - Training on Public Procurement Regulations - EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2004-2009 Seminar (Malta) on 5 June; and Transition Facility Training Seminar on 21 June.

EXTENDED DECENTRALISED IMPLEMENTATION SYSTEM

Following the granting by the EU Commission, in 2004, of the Extended Decentralised Implementation System (EDIS) to Malta, the Department took on board several 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 checklists (which were further enhanced later on) and other tools was recommended and effectively carried out.

AUDIT VISITS

A systems audit was carried out on the EU Unit in June, and another administrative audit was carried out in November. These visits brought along with them further recommendations by the Commission, which the Department is considering, in order to further enhance its operating efficiency.

TRAINING

A number of officials were afforded the opportunity of training abroad in public procurement. Two officials attended a *Regional Workshop on Critical Negotiation Strategies for Senior ICT Managers and Professionals in the Public Sector in Cyprus and Malta*, organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat/Cyprus Academy of Public Administration in Paphos, Cyprus, in March, while another two officers attended a training course *Tender Evaluation – Getting It Right! Seminar for the Public Sector* organised by ETC London, UK, in December 2007.

Training on information technology 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 continued by another leading to 'Advanced Level' status in Accounts. Training on social issues such as green initiatives show the wide range of training made available to all employees.

GENERAL CONTRACTS COMMITTEE

The General Contracts Committee held 102 sittings during which 1,310 contractual issues were considered. These issues ranged from pre-contractual matters, such as approval of clarifications to prospective bidders, to post-contractual ones involving approval of extra works/variations. Amongst these cases the Committee evaluated reports and recommendations submitted by Contracting Authorities resulting in the issue of 333 Letters of Acceptance/Contracts signed by the Department. The Committee deliberated on 14 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 2007, the Public Contracts Appeals Board held various sittings that dealt with 18 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. During 2007 the Department issued and awarded a contract for the development of a Procurement Management System, partially financed through EU funds, to enhance the existing web based information system. 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. Hence, the new system will offer clients the ability to view, download and effect payment for tender documents. The 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 as well as the ability to receive SMS alerts on decisions taken or on new tenders immediately they are published. The system will also have a management system capable of report generating facilities enabling the Department to fully adapt to EU statistical requirements.

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 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 prepared the appropriate implementation project plan for approval.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

During 2007 a senior member of the Department was appointed member of a 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. Together with the Malta Council for Science and Technology, representatives of the Department delivered presentations to approximately 170 participants during the Introducing Innovative Procurement Workshop.

BETTER REGULATION

The Department proposed and initiated three projects focusing on the harmonisation of tender documentation, bid bonds and facilitating the payment of fees. Three measures aimed at reducing burdens on the private sector were implemented. These involved the synchronisation of tender documentation through common templates, the harmonisation of bid bonds through standard thresholds and facilitating the payment of fees through the introduction of an Electronic Point of Sale (EPOS) system.

STATISTICS

Projects Fully or Partially Funded through European Union Funds

The following is the contracting activity carried out in relation to projects fully or partially funded through international funds (the various EU Programmes, as well as the EAA Financial Mechanism & Norwegian Financial Mechanism). These were related to the procurement of Supplies, Services and/or Works.

| Contracts Awarded | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>Transition Facility Programme 2005 for Malta</i> | | | | |
| | Published | Estimated Cost (€) | Contracts Signed | Value of Contracts Signed |
| Commercial Tenders (Supplies, Services and Works) | 6 ¹ | 1,835,882 | 10 ² | 1,321,015 |
| Twinning Light Contracts | 8 | 1,009,950 | 8 | 1,009,637 |
| <i>Transition Facility Programme 2006 for Malta</i> | | | | |
| | Published | Estimated Cost (€) | Contracts Signed | Value of Contracts Signed |
| Commercial Tenders (Supplies, Services and Works) | 1 | 300,000 | Nil | Nil |
| <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) | 12 | 1,444,751 | 9 ³ | 3,308,224 |
| <i>Structural and Cohesion Funds 2007-2013 for Malta</i> | | | | |
| | Published | Estimated Cost (€) | Contracts Signed | Value of Contracts Signed |
| Commercial Tenders (Supplies, Services and Works) | 15 | 74,126,837 | 1 | 1,106,452 |
| <i>Other Funds (EAGGF, European Commission, DG-Employment, EEA/Norway Funds)</i> | | | | |
| | Published | Estimated Cost (€) | Contracts Signed | Value of Contracts Signed |
| Commercial Tenders (Supplies, Services and Works) | 5 | 961,052 | 6 ⁴ | 802,857 |

¹ Including one departmental tender

² Three tenders were awarded in different lots (of two, three and three respectively)

³ Including two published in 2006

⁴ Including one tender which was awarded in three distinct lots

Locally Funded Projects

Commercial Tenders (Supplies, Services and Works)

The Department published 413 calls for tenders, resulting in over 1,600 offers being submitted. The total value of contracts awarded by the Department in 2007 reached Lm28,805,000. The following is a breakdown of the contracts awarded (according to category and item of expenditure):

| Categories | No. of Contracts Awarded | Totals (Lm) |
|--------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Supplies | 259 | 17,808,800 |
| Works | 52 | 9,441,200 |
| Services | 21 | 1,555,000 |
| Total | 332 | 28,805,000 |

| Item of expenditure | Total (Lm) |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Purchase of pharmaceuticals | 13,355,000 |
| Maintenance on schools | 6,449,900 |
| Supply of miscellaneous Items | 1,677,800 |
| Housing construction | 791,700 |
| Various services | 1,022,000 |
| Various works | 107,800 |
| Purchase of foodstuffs | 258,000 |
| Construction of roads | 322,700 |
| Various construction works | 1,769,000 |
| Period contracts | 1,035,260 |
| Hire of vehicles | 107,900 |
| Cleaning services | 201,800 |
| Various school supplies | 331,500 |
| IT equipment and software | 926,600 |
| Purchase of various equipment | 224,700 |
| Consulting services | 223,300 |
| Total | 28,804,960 |

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 Division 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

During 2007, the Inland Revenue Division achieved the revenue targets as set in the financial estimates. This was the result of continued enforcement on compliance and collection of tax arrears and social security contributions.

Various initiatives were taken to have the project-brief on the euro changeover finalised by the end of year and that computer systems and relative data were ready for implementation.

The year 2007 also brought about the setting up of a Call Centre in Gozo. This will by far improve the image of the Division as taxpayers can receive immediate replies to their queries over the phone by well trained IRD personnel.

The Cash Office was fully refurbished and equipped for a better service to the general public while the Inland Revenue Division continued to promote and encourage taxpayers to make use of the various online services being offered through our website.

INCOME TAX

Legislation

The Income Tax Acts were amended a number of times during the year to introduce various measures. The main changes were the following:

- new tax rates, new deductions (including deductions for childcare fees) and a minimal tax of 5% on rental income received from the Housing Authority, as announced in the budget speech for 2007;
- a new system of credits available to company shareholders;
- the implementation of the tax side of the CBM Scheme for conversion of currency to the euro;
- new tax rates and new deductions in respect of residents in homes for the elderly, sports fees and kindergartens, as announced in the budget speech for 2008.

A number of legal notices (subsidiary legislation) were also enacted during the year. The most noteworthy implemented were the following:

- a new deduction in respect of euro changeover related expenditure;
- exemption from fringe benefits of child-minding facilities;
- amendment of the Fringe Benefit Rules to reduce the tax on share options to 15%;
- extension of the exemption to women returning to employment also as self-employed;
- amendments to the schedules filed on transfers of shares (capital gains);

- amendments to the Electronic Communications Rules (notaries forms etc);
- new double tax treaty with Morocco;
- extension of the Savings Directive to new EU Member States Bulgaria and Romania;
- extension of the tax index of financial data rules to banks and trusts.

The full list of Acts and Legal Notices issued during the year concerning income tax are the following:

| | |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Act II of 2007 | Various Laws (Amendment) Act <i>implements extensive amendments to the ITA re credits to non-residents</i> |
| Act IV of 2007 | Budget Measures Implementation Act <i>various amendments, especially re new deductions, to the ITA and ITMA</i> |
| Act IX of 2007 | Income Tax (Amendment) Act <i>CBM registration scheme under 9B, R&D amendment, amendment of ITMA</i> |
| Act 32/2007 | 2008 Budget Measures Implementation Act <i>amends tax rates and provides deductions for "elderly" homes, kindergartens, sports</i> |
| GN 64/2007 | First and Second Boards of Special Commissioners <i>appointment of both boards</i> |
| LN 37/2007 | Capital Gains (Amendment) Rules <i>amendment of schedules re share transfers</i> |
| LN 60/2007 | European Union Directives (Amendment) Regs <i>extends the Savings directive to Bulgaria and Romania</i> |
| LN 61/2007 | Income Tax Exemption (Philanthropic Work) Notice <i>exempts the Federation of persons with disability and the Pedron legacy</i> |
| LN 84/2007 | Tax Index of Financial Data (Amendment) Rules <i>adds applicability of TIFD to banks and trusts</i> |
| LN 93/2007 | Deductions (Euro Related Expenditure) Rules <i>deduction for cash registers etc ivo euro changeover</i> |
| LN 100/2007 | Income Tax (Deductions) (Amendment) Rules <i>deduction for wages when a spouse is employed by the other spouse</i> |
| LN 101/2007 | Fringe Benefits (Amendment) Rules <i>exempts the provision of child-minding facilities by employers</i> |
| LN 130/2007 | Tax Credit (Women Returning to Employment) (Amendment) Rules <i>women may now also return as self-employed</i> |
| LN 138/2007 | Electronic Communications (Income Tax) (Amendment) Regulations <i>extension of electronic filing of forms: notaries, trusts, shipping lawyers</i> |
| LN 147/2007 | Fringe Benefit (Amendment) (No 2) Rules <i>taxes the FB on the exercise of share options on 42.85% of the benefit</i> |
| LN 158/2007 | Convention on the elimination of double taxation in connection with the adjustment of profits of associated enterprises Order, 2007 <i>as per Malta's commitment to the EU</i> |
| LN 166/2007 | Income Tax (Form of Returns) (Amendment) Rules <i>amends return for individuals and prescribes various attachments</i> |
| LN 174/2007 | Deductions and Tax Credits (General & Specific Qualifications) (Amendment) Rules <i>Deductions and Tax Credits (General & Specific Qualifications) (Amendment) Rules</i> |
| LN 189/2007 | Double Taxation Relief (Taxes on Income) (Kingdom of Morocco) Order, 2007 <i>treaty with Morocco</i> |
| LN 305/2007 | Income Tax Exemption (Philanthropic Work) (No 2) Notice <i>exempts the Dementia Society and the Noah's Ark Animal Sanctuary</i> |
| LN 344/2007 | Final Settlement System (Amendment) Rules <i>substitutes form FS4</i> |
| LN 409/2007 | Adaptation of Laws (Chap. 101-150) Order [Euro Adoption Act] <i>translation into euro of ITA and its subsidiary legislation</i> |
| LN 425/2007 | Adaptation of Laws (Chap. 101-150) Order [Euro Adoption Act] <i>translation into euro of ITMA and its subsidiary legislation</i> |

FSS Tax

During 2007 employers submitted the following FSS annual reconciliation documents for:

| | | | |
|-------|-------|------------|--------|
| 2006: | 8,044 | Employees: | 37,095 |
| 2005: | 41 | Employees: | 616 |
| 2004: | 18 | Employees: | 370 |
| 2003: | 14 | Employees: | 191 |
| 2002: | 4 | Employees: | 137 |
| 2001: | 6 | Employees: | 107 |

The FSS section captured and reconciled data. Total documents processed were 8,127 FS7s and 38,516 FS3s. The FSS section processed 7,384 Adjustment forms during 2007. The FSS division also batched the following amounts of documents: 8,127 FS7s and 38,516 FS3s. FSS web correct submissions: Total processed 539. Total electronic errors solved: 16,681.

Archiving for 2006 has been completed. The Agriculture product scheme documents were also processed and finalised. New registration of taxpayers during 2007 amounted to 653.

Enforcement

During 2007 the Section embarked on an intensive enforcement programme, as a result of which the number of defaulters has been decreased to 584 from 4,237. A total of 6,790 notices had been issued from 26 February to 8 October. Compliance has increased to 95.4%.

In June, 4,094 default notices re FSS and SSC for current year, that is from January to April 2007 were sent to taxpayers. All queries regarding these notices were dealt with by the FSS Section.

FSS enforcement resulted in Lm1,508,350 in FSS tax and Lm2,693,619.13 in SSC as well as Lm69,643 in additional taxes being collected over and above the normal monthly tax revenue through employers' payroll.

Ledgers Section

Journal Adjustments: 88 files – 142 years.

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 98,163 assessments for past years prior to year of assessment 1999 were served on taxpayers.

Self-assessment Returns for Y/A 2007

A total of 98,026 self-assessment returns for year of assessment 2007 were processed up to 31 December 2007 apart from 135,624 tax declarations. These resulted in 233,650 statements for the year being issued to taxpayers up to the end of December 2007.

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 restructuring 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 Y/A 1998 as on 31 December 2007 was Lm113,651,116. 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 Lm113.6 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 2007 the book balance Y/A 1999 to 2007 stood as shown in the following table:

| Book Balance for Y/A 1999 to Y/A 2007 | | |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Y/A</i> | <i>No of Taxpayers</i> | <i>Amount Due (Lm)</i> |
| 1999 | 14,084 | 28,879,106 |
| 2000 | 13,458 | 9,012,218 |
| 2001 | 15,867 | 11,605,932 |
| 2002 | 17,993 | 12,681,849 |
| 2003 | 18,800 | 13,608,602 |
| 2004 | 20,952 | 15,168,610 |
| 2005 | 22,369 | 17,757,057 |
| 2006 | 27,313 | 23,873,977 |
| 2007 | 37,368 | 30,099,152 |

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 2007 and the estimated tax charged. The following table shows the Estimated Tax:

| Estimated Tax for Y/A 1999 to Y/A 2007 | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Y/A</i> | <i>No of Taxpayers</i> | <i>Estimated Tax (Lm)</i> |
| 1999 | 9,457 | 16,776,991 |
| 2000 | 9,447 | 6,739,436 |
| 2001 | 10,526 | 8,342,579 |
| 2002 | 11,777 | 9,701,621 |
| 2003 | 12,676 | 10,680,453 |
| 2004 | 14,621 | 12,519,618 |
| 2005 | 15,389 | 14,744,078 |
| 2006 | 19,540 | 20,958,175 |
| 2007 | 26,945 | 26,904,761 |

Tax in Dispute for Years of Assessment 1999-2006

A number of assessments have been issued against which the taxpayer has filed an objection. Details of the Tax in Dispute for Y/A 1999 to 2006 are given in the table below:

| Tax in Dispute for Y/A 1999 to Y/A 2006 | | |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Y/A</i> | <i>No of Taxpayers</i> | <i>Estimated Tax (Lm)</i> |
| 1999 | 58 | 852,194 |
| 2000 | 62 | 1,674,402 |
| 2001 | 74 | 1,547,126 |
| 2002 | 69 | 1,180,055 |
| 2003 | 61 | 1,451,620 |
| 2004 | 49 | 1,088,356 |
| 2005 | 31 | 513,197 |
| 2006 | 7 | 81,021 |

The book balance in Foreign Currency for Y/A 1999 to 2007 as on 30 December 2007 stood at Lm37,563,477 of which Lm400,957 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 Division continued to conduct tax audit enquiries. A total of 398 new cases were opened while 485 cases were concluded, resulting in an increase in income brought to charge of Lm13,683,358. Cases in hand at the beginning of 2007 were 283, while at the end of the year the cases in hand were 196.

During the year a total of 198 new objections were received by the Division against assessments raised under the self-assessment system. A total of 189 objections were concluded, resulting in an increase in income brought to charge of Lm3,538,088. At the beginning of the year the objections in hand were 360, while at the end of the year the objections in hand were 369.

Computerisation

The Information Systems deliverables that were implemented during 2007 were:

- Euro conversion for all IRD and Capital Transfer Duty systems.
- In its endeavour to increase the number of Non-Filers, more initiatives were taken to remove taxpayers from the Tax Return filing cycle.
- Changes to the Tax Return for Individuals both on-line and back office, with regards to format, structure and capture of attachments.
- Creation of a Refund sub-system to cater for the issue of letters and refund instalments to taxpayers with a credit due to them for years prior to 1998.
- Online filing of the Property Transfer Forms.
- Enhancement to the Capital Transfer Duty system due to Budget changes.
- Technical upgrade of Infrastructure, Operating System, Database Management System for Back End Systems.
- Technical upgrade of Development platform for Internet e-commerce applications.
- Support to and the creation of statistics, data models for Budget 2008, EU, Central Bank of Malta, NSO etc.
- A new sub-system is ready for implementation that interfaces the Taxpayer Services System with the Internet, where authenticated taxpayers (or their representatives) can submit enquires that will be directed to an Inland Revenue User automatically and response from Taxpayer Services module is also directed to the taxpayer automatically.
- Creation of a new online sub-system, which is also ready for implementation, to merge ETC and IRD engagement and termination forms with automated registration for expatriates who are given work permits.

Take Up Statistics

Corporate Tax Return Filing (Year of Assessment 2007)

Returns filed electronically:

| | |
|----------|--------|
| Internet | 12,544 |
| Manual | 2,963 |

% of total return filed electronically

| | |
|----------|----|
| Internet | 81 |
| Manual | 19 |

Individual Tax Return Filing (Year of Assessment 2007)

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|-----|
| Returns filed electronically | 620 |
| % of total returns filed electronically | 1 |

FSS Services for Employers (due in 2007)**Employers filing electronically (diskette):**

| | |
|------------------|-----------|
| No of Forms FS 7 | 630 (35%) |
| No of Forms FS 3 | 44,135 |

Employers filing through the Internet:

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| No of Forms FS 7 | 1,184 (65%) |
| No of Forms FS 3 | 78,789 |

The figures above shows the total potential internet users. Government and Pension data, which is also processed electronically, is not included in the above figures.

Payments (Year 2007)

| | |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| e-PG Payment (Credit & Direct Debit Cards) | 4,922 (Lm957,493.64) |
| Internet banking | 10,567 (Lm20,925,082.18) |

Workflow Management System

The Workflow Management System was introduced to manage and control the work flow devolving on the various units of the Division. For the year 2007, 84,640 work items were received and forwarded for processing while 80,857 cases have been closed.

Objections**Companies**

The Companies Section is primarily engaged in determining pre-1999 objections which, at the start of 2007, stood at 4,042 years of assessment. During the year, new objections were filed against 275 years of assessment. 866 years were cleared, leaving a balance of 3,451 years of assessment under objection, as at 31 December 2007.

The Section examines applications and processes approvals for changes in accounting dates. It also issues different certificates including clearance and residence certificates. All public relations relative to corporate taxpayers are carried out in the Section.

Company tax returns filed manually are processed by the Data Processing Unit. About 85 % of company return filers for the Y/A 2007 submitted the return electronically.

Individuals

The number of pending objections of individual taxpayers against one or more assessments on 1 January 2007 stood at 8,777. There were 1,042 new objections registered during the year whilst objections settled by the Division for the year were 5,359, leaving 4,460 objections outstanding as on 31 December 2007.

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. In terms of the Bill regarding Provision of Administrative Justice, which has been processed in Parliament, the above-mentioned provisions may be expected to undergo certain changes in the future.

During the whole of 2007, all the workload in respect of appeals fell on Board No 2 in view of the total non-operation of Board No 1, despite the fact that the appointment of the latter had been duly gazetted.

Despite this situation, the number of cases concluded during 2007 was, at 51, still the highest in any year since 2000, with the number of still unconcluded cases at end 2007 being 104.

Cases before the Court of Appeal

The number of cases involving the Court of Appeal during 2007 was as follows:

| Cases before the Court of Appeal | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| Cases pending as on 01.01.07 | 11 |
| New cases for 2007 | 12 |
| Concluded cases | 10 |
| Total cases pending 31.12.07 | 13 |

| Cases before the Constitutional Court | |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| Cases pending as on 01.01.07 | 1 |
| New cases for 2007 | 1 |
| Concluded cases | 0 |
| Total cases pending 31.12.07 | 2 |

| Cases before Civil Court | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Cases pending as on 01.01.07 | 1 |
| New cases for 2007 | 2 |
| Concluded cases | 0 |
| Total cases pending 31.12.07 | 3 |

| Law Court Sittings | |
|----------------------|----|
| Court of Appeal | 53 |
| Constitutional Court | 7 |
| Civil Court | 6 |

Revenue

Revenue from Income Tax collected during 2007 amounted to Lm284.8 million.

Furthermore the Division also collected Lm205.5 million in Social Security contributions. As from January 2007, by Act III, which amended the Social Security Act, the Inland Revenue Division 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 | 122,313,789 |
| Class II | 14,614,133 |
| Further Contribution | 70,449 |
| State Contribution | 68,463,961 |
| Total | 205,462,332 |

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 | % |
| 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 |
| 2007 | 284.8 | 28.3 | + 9.9 |

The following table gives a breakdown of the revenue collected in 2007:

| I INCOME TAX | | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| | Settlement Tax Lm | PAYE/FSS Lm | Provisional Tax Lm | Self-Assessment Lm | Total Lm |
| Government/Parastatal Employees | 1,029,126 | 20,781,422 | 1,906,759 | 1,636,536 | 25,353,843 |
| Dockyard Employees | 75,252 | 651,835 | 66,658 | 50,626 | 844,371 |
| Private Employees | 1,235,502 | 55,038,700 | 2,866,675 | 2,588,938 | 61,729,815 |
| Shareholders | 44,851 | 0 | 133,132 | 190,200 | 368,183 |
| Expatriates | 399,102 | 0 | 2,395,253 | 1,387,001 | 4,181,356 |
| Business, Trade, Profession & Ecclesiastic Entities, Clubs | 966,050 | 0 | 6,974,424 | 3,595,066 | 11,535,540 |
| Rentiers | 506,508 | 0 | 849,293 | 681,541 | 2,037,342 |
| Companies (local) | 2,793,555 | 0 | 74,022,305 | 16,878,046 | 93,693,906 |
| Companies (foreign) | 9,191 | 0 | 834,734 | 784,150 | 1,628,075 |
| Other Categories | 49,967 | 0 | 14,555,739 | 128,704 | 14,734,410 |
| Capital Gains | 0 | 0 | 45,805,481 | 0 | 45,805,481 |
| Tax at Source | 0 | 0 | 640,407 | 0 | 640,407 |
| 15% Withholding Tax | 0 | 0 | 20,944,817 | 0 | 20,944,817 |
| Others | 1,312,854 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,312,854 |
| Total | 8,421,958 | 76,471,957 | 171,995,677 | 27,920,808 | 284,810,400 |
| II SOCIAL SECURITY CONTRIBUTIONS | | | | | |
| Class I | | | | | 122,784,426 |
| Class II | | | | | 14,614,133 |
| Further Contribution | | | | | 70,449 |
| State Contribution | | | | | 68,699,280 |
| Total | | | | | 206,168,288 |

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 | 270,209 | Lm 231,786,978.89 |
| Social Security Contributions | 154,985 | Lm 100,630,856.70 |

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 for settlement.

| Pre Y/A 1999 - Individuals | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| <i>Type of Enforcement</i> | <i>No</i> | <i>Value (Lm)</i> |
| Demand Notices issued | 1,049 | 6,143,040 |
| Judicial letters created | 1,005 | 10,281,791 |
| Agreements | 271 | 562,514 |

| Pre Y/A 1999 - Companies | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| <i>Type of Enforcement</i> | <i>No</i> | <i>Value (Lm)</i> |
| Demand Notices issued | 601 | 10,515,870 |
| Judicial Letters created | 314 | 6,570,641 |
| Agreements | 24 | 223,482 |

| PAYE/FSS Pre-2006 | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| <i>Type of Enforcement</i> | <i>No</i> | <i>Value (Lm)</i> |
| Demand Notices issued | 769 | 7,259,517 |
| Judicial Letters created | 351 | 4,027,840 |
| Agreements | 131 | 2,707,589 |

| Year by Year – Individuals | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| <i>Type of Enforcement</i> | <i>No</i> |
| Default Notices issued | 3,445 |

| PAYE/FSS 2006 | |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| <i>Type of Enforcement</i> | <i>No</i> |
| Default Notices issued | 4,094 |

During 2007 the Section had 75 Court Cases and attended to 236 court sittings. Out of these 75 cases, 17 have been concluded and 22 new cases commenced during 2007. There were also 38 cases of *subbasta* and 24 Garnishees were issued.

Receipts Adjustments – Renewals of Permits

This responsibility also devolved on the Collection Section in 2007. The tasks performed during 2007 were:

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Adjustments of receipts (individuals and employers) | 3,221 |
| Journal adjustments | 101 |
| Work permit renewals re-Expatriates | 2,609 |

Mutual Recovery of Tax

During 2007 collection section commenced to take enforcement action and precautionary measures for the recovery of claims from EU Member States as per directive 76/308 EEC and amended directive 2001/44/EC. The number of cases initiated in 2007 was 24.

Outdoor Inspections

The services of the Revenue Security Corps were regularly availed of to help the Division 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 2007 were:

| | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Cash Escorts | 645 |
| FSS/SSC | 884 |
| Investigation | 65 |
| Capital Transfer Duty Branch | 504 |
| PAYE | 237 |
| Objections | 62 |

Taxpayer Service

The Division operates a one-stop-shop taxpayer service to address the needs of taxpayers, especially pensioners and individuals.

During 2007 the Taxpayer Service Office (Help Desk):

- dealt with 29,840 personal encounters;
- registered 1,503 new taxpayers;
- reached 462 direct agreements for programmed tax payments by individuals;
- reached 369 agreements with employers on behalf of taxpayers for programmed payments of tax;
- amended 3,326 addresses;
- issued 15,114 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 Lm1.98 million.

Thus, the cost per Lm1 of income tax collected during 2007 works out at 7 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 4 mils.

Refunds

A total of 3,745 refunds of overpaid tax amounting to Lm853,810 was issued for Y/A prior to 1999. Up to 31 December 2007, the total of refunds issued for Y/A 2007, which also in some cases included Y/A 2006 and Y/A 2005, was 59,705, amounting to Lm24,551,180.

Capital Gains Tax

The Section deals with queries from professionals and taxpayers as regards Capital Gains Tax. During the year, 1,081 requests for a permit in terms of Clauses 10(2) and 10(4) of LN 5/2005 were received while 994 permits were issued. As regards permits in terms of Article 43(3), a total of 202 requests was processed, out of which 161 were authorised for a reduced rate while 41 applications were refused.

Social Security Contributions

During 2007 the Social Security Section moved to the Collection Section and continued with the verification and enforcement of social security contributions. Class two payers continued to be informed of their Social Security payment through the issue of the form PT1 every four months. Enforcement notices for defaulted payers for years 2002 to 2006 were issued.

The major tasks carried out during 2007 were the following:

- 4,765 personal encounters;
- 158 agreements;
- 346 determination of class one contributions for persons working abroad;
- 1,025 adjustments of SS receipts;
- 84 refunds issued, amounting to Lm37,467.88.

INTERNATIONAL TAX UNIT

Double Taxation Agreements

- The double taxation agreements with Morocco entered into force and the related legal notice was published.
- The double taxation agreement with Bosnia and Herzegovina was negotiated and initialled.
- Negotiations were held with Libya for the possible amendment of certain provisions of the existing double taxation agreement but have not been concluded.
- Negotiations at the technical level were held with 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 2007 the International Tax Unit processed:

- 735 requests for certification of exemption from duty under the provisions of the Duty on Documents and Transfers Act;
- 630 claims for refunds;
- 316 applications for new Advance Revenue Rulings;
- 23 applications for renewals of Advance Revenue Rulings;
- 65 exchanges of information with foreign tax authorities.

Revenue

During the year, Lm18,200,000 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 24 meetings in connection with EU/OECD related matters abroad.

Tax Law Amendments

Members 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 in discussions relating to the fiscal regime concerning securitisation.

CAPITAL TRANSFER DUTY

Duty on Documents

During 2007 the Capital Transfer Duty Department examined 14,614 notarial deeds, out of which 7,412 cases were inspected by the Department's engineers. As a result, 5,388 original assessments were raised. During the same period 1,577 objections were filed and 571 revised claims were issued.

During this period, 82 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 Lm44,021,966 (Duty on Documents) whilst outstanding balance of assessed duty, including disputed duty up to and including 31 December 2007, amounted to Lm13,621,148. This included revenue in respect of *causa mortis* transmissions. The figure of arrears of revenue under the Duty on Documents and Transfers is around Lm1,500,000.

Since its inception, late in 1992, the *Causa Mortis* Section received 32,551 declarations of *causa mortis* transfers, mainly consisting of multiple transferees or beneficiaries in respect of Malta and Gozo.

During the year, 2,879 *causa mortis* returns were processed and 223 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 - 1,736 claims were issued and 31 revised assessments were raised.

During the same period 25 objections were filed by transferees against the said *causa mortis* claims, while 24 objections have been concluded; appeals to eventual refusals will have to be finally considered by the above-mentioned Board.

The Department offers 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 129 - all were processed and no outstanding returns remained unassessed.

Duty claimed was Lm6,658. Revenue collected, including prepayments on account and from arrears, totalled Lm72,200. Outstanding balances of assessed duty, including disputed duty up to 31 December 2007, amounted to Lm2,222,463.

Acquisition of Immovable Property by Non-Residents

New provisions were enacted under Chapter 246 of the Laws of Malta to bring legislation related to the acquisition of immovable property in Malta by non-residents in line with the *acquis communautaire* of the European Union, as agreed in pre-accession negotiations. During 2007, the Department received 589 applications for the acquisition of immovable property and issued 477 permits.

Revenue

The total revenue collected in Malta and Gozo during the year was:

| | Lm |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Death and Donation Duty | 72,200 |
| Duty on Documents and Transfers | 44,021,966 |
| Fines and Late Fees | 5,621 |
| Fees on AIP Permits | 111,277 |
| Total | 44,211,064 |

Computerisation

In collaboration with MITTS, 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 2007, the Department registered a total of 10,067 Promise of Sale Agreements, of which 953 were registered in Gozo.

Il-Monti

Il-Monti advances money on pledges of precious metal. Below is a record of its activities during 2007:

| | |
|---------------------|-----------|
| Pledges accepted | 2,508 |
| Pledges redeemed | 3,269 |
| Money loaned | Lm108,806 |
| Money received back | Lm145,164 |
| Interest received | Lm12,816 |

The number of pledges remaining on hand at end 2007 was 7,802 against which Lm331,453 had been advanced. Besides advancing money on pledges, *Il-Monti* also holds regular Court deposits lodged for safe keeping. At end 2007 a total of 695 deposits were still held.

Expenditure in running *Il-Monti* during the period was Lm200, excluding Lm16,764 for Wages and Bonus.

Moreover, a sum of Lm34,031 was spent for Contractual Services in connection with watch duties of the *Monti* and Consul's Offices. Such watch duties were terminated in June 2007 as the security of the Monte di Pieta' Building has been changed over from the night watchmen system onto a remote camera and alarm set up.

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 2007 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 | 939 | 17,047 | 17,986 |
| Assays | 371 | 320 | 691 |
| Articles weighed and valued | 246 | 0 | 246 |
| Articles broken up on being found to be made of an inferior standard | 0 | 295 | 295 |
| Articles marked at a lower standard than the declared standard | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| No of Inspections | 76 | | |

Revenue from fees on assays, hallmarking, valuing and manufacturers/sponsors registrations was Lm4,414.

Expenditure incurred in running the Consul's Office was Lm58,690 including salaries, overtime, bonuses and expenses.

ADRIAN CHETCUTI
Director General (Inland Revenue)

Customs Division

MANAGEMENT

Customs worldwide operates in a constantly changing environment. In the face of this challenge, the Division continued to adapt and refine its procedures to meet the expectations of the trading community and prepare for emerging threats and opportunities. During 2007 the Maltese Customs administration continued to:

- improve service to clients particularly the trading community;
- enhance control on inward and outward movement of goods, people and vessels;
- enforce legislation more effectively;
- improve revenue collection and fraud prevention;
- protect the country from illicit drugs and other prohibited goods; and
- deliver assistance to industry more effectively.

Control and processing functions continued to be streamlined in line with Government's commitment to the Lisbon Agenda, thus reducing administrative burdens on economic operators and citizens in general. However there is also growing pressure for Customs to provide greater security and safety in the face of an increasing number of global threats. Finding a balance between conflicting demands of trade facilitation and security is not always easy.

Customs has implemented a series of initiatives aimed at strengthening co-operation with the Commission and the Customs administrations of other Member States. Our efforts to prevent imports of prohibited and restricted goods, fraud and international crime have continued to yield good results. In fact our administration was ranked third amongst 171 members of the World Customs Organisation for its efforts in the fight against counterfeit goods. During 2007 a record amount of illicit drugs was confiscated, and the intuition of our officers led to the greatest seizure of heroin ever recorded in Malta in passenger luggage (11.5 kg).

Twenty-five members of staff terminated their employment during the year under review, thus bringing the number of employees down to 480 by the end of December 2007 (20% less than in December 2004). Experienced senior Customs officials made up most of the departures. This high rate of retirement without replacement with new intake is creating a generation gap in our human resources. Procedures are underway to fill two headship positions and to recruit the services of a Senior Legal Officer and a Principal Scientific Officer replacing our Senior Customs Analyst. In line with the Customs Class staff collective agreement, vacancies at the senior level have been filled and process has also been initiated to fill other vacancies at all levels.

The training unit continued to provide a variety of training courses aimed at providing officers with the skills required to carry out their duties effectively. The unit also organised training for economic operators and co-ordinated the delivery of training courses produced by other training organisations. During 2007 Customs received two awards from the Foundation for Human Resources: one for Excellence in Training and Development and another for Excellent Training and Development. The University of Leicester (UK) also presented a certificate for Excellence in Training to the Customs Division.

All these changes are taking place against a background of budgetary constraint and amidst increasing calls for the provision of more extensive and client-focused services. Consultation with the business community continued prior to the introduction of changes in procedures to the mutual benefit of the Customs Division and of the trading community.

CUSTOMS EU SPECIALIST

The function of the Customs EU Specialist is to support the Division's senior management in all areas where Community legislation or relations with EU institutions are significant. The role has three major aspects: co-ordination within the Department, liaison with outside entities and the creation of substantive EU-related input.

Issues requiring the intervention of the Customs EU Specialist range from the everyday (e.g. compilation of routine returns required by the Commission) to policy (e.g. the draft Modernised Customs Code, evolution of regulations such as 1875/06 and 918/83, preparation of documents required in relation to our requests for derogations or to our replies to infringement proceedings), with most tasks falling somewhere in-between, for example vetting of translations produced by the EU Institutions.

Customs EU Specialist is also a member of the committee set up by the Division to administer the AEO system. In this capacity he contributed to information seminars organised by traders' associations.

During the year Customs EU Specialist represented the Division at several meetings convened by the Commission and the Council in Brussels and elsewhere. The Customs Union Working Party on Legislation and Policy was attended regularly while the Modernised Customs Code was being discussed (up to June). This Working Party is now being attended by our Technical Attaché in Brussels but Customs EU Specialist co-ordinates the Division's input and drafts the relevant Instruction Notes, in co-operation with EU Secretariat MFIN. Discussions on the Modernised Customs Code also required Customs EU Specialist's presence at two sessions of COREPER.

ADMINISTRATION

Finance

The major project undertaken by the Finance Branch was the preparation for the changeover from Maltese lira to the euro at the beginning of 2008. A Euro Changeover Implementation Team was set up for this purpose. In association with MITTS the team prepared a number of electronic simulation modules for the hands-on training of officials involved in the handling of monies and the Customs Electronic System (C.E.S.). Various channels of communication were used to keep the trade informed of all changes.

The Finance & EU Economic Procedures Unit was subject to audits both locally and from the EU Commission.

Accounts Section

During 2007 the Accounts Section continued to clear debts owing to Customs, particularly arrears arising from the attendance of Customs officials at traders' premises. This was done with the collaboration of the Enforcement Unit.

The Section also maintains detailed records about issues connected with transport matters, chiefly fuel and maintenance costs. A computerised system intended to monitor the issue of fuel to the Customs fleet of vehicles started to be operated during the year under review.

Customs Debt Unit (CDU)

The total sum of import duties (Traditional Own Resources) collected by the Division for the period December 2006 to November 2007 was Lm6,542,643. 75% was transferred to the EU and the remaining 25% was retained by the Division as administration fee. The CDU also continued to chase outstanding dues to Customs as established by the CES, to effect refunds, monitor the deferred payment facility extended to certain importers and manage bank guarantees.

The Cash Office

The main Cash Office was responsible for the collection of sums totalling Lm101,336,909 in import duties, excise duties, VAT and other charges such as fees, fines, store rent, proceeds from sales etc.

Procurement/Stores Unit

The Unit supported the various sections of the Customs Division in replacing/providing new furniture and equipment as required. Seven departmental tenders, including one for the procurement of an X-Ray machine for the Parcel Post Office, were issued. Uniform issues were catered for and all health and safety items procured. Obsolete forms and registers were destroyed.

EU Procedures Unit

During 2007 the Unit continued to approve import declarations subject to an agricultural licence (AGRIM) at the processing stage. The Unit also controlled intra-community sugar on behalf of another government agency which pays subsidies to traders bringing EU sugar into Malta. At the request of other Member State administrations, the Unit controlled the movement of certain agricultural goods under the transit procedure so that these could benefit from export refunds. It also endorsed and maintained records relating to the importation of wine as required by EU regulations.

Several quota requests were processed. With the assistance of the Computer Section, the Unit started to operate the Surveillance 2 system to collect data for the monitoring of trade with third countries. Monthly anti-dumping reports were sent to the EU Commission.

The members of the Unit participated in various meetings with other local agencies, namely the Paying Agency within the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment, the Internal Audit and Investigations Department and the Malta National Laboratory. They also participated in a number of meetings on the Common Agricultural Policy in Brussels. The Unit participated in two Economic Tariff Questions Group (Quota and Surveillance) meetings, a one-day seminar on the Surveillance 2 project, and the Anti-Dumping Duty meeting, all of which were held in Brussels.

Human Resources

The complement targets in the Customs class grades set in the Memorandum of Understanding and Agreement between the Government and the Union Haddiema Maghqudin, were reached. Calls for applications for the filling of posts of Customs Senior Inspectors, Customs Inspectors, Customs Officers and Managers were issued during 2007. Calls for applications for the filling of vacancies in the grade of Assistant Technical Officer (Electrical) and two Senior Operatives (Plasterers and Painters) were also issued and finalised accordingly.

During the year under review 21 members of the staff retired from the Service on attaining pensionable age, three were medically boarded out, two resigned, three were transferred to other departments and one passed away while still in service.

Constant monitoring of personal emoluments, particularly of allowances and overtime, was maintained throughout the year. The new OMERA System, which computes the overtime pay and allowances earned by Customs staff, was launched in December 2007.

Training Unit

During 2007 the Training Unit organised a total of 293 hours of in-house training of which 168 hours were delivered to staff and 125 hours to the private sector, namely traders, shipping agents and *burdnara*. Courses totalled 58 and required a total of 94 sessions. A total number of 979 persons were invited, of whom 857 were staff and 122 from the private sector. Rates of attendances were 79% and 93.4% respectively. Courses to the private sector are against payment.

Overall, 18 in-house facilitators/trainers and 19 external trainers (of whom 4 from local and 15 from foreign organisations) worked on the above courses. Co-operation was received from nine external training entities.

During the last quarter of 2007 all frontline, operational and processing Heads of Section were given access to four WCO e-learning training modules. There are now 50 members of staff who have access to these modules. Discussions are underway between the Training Unit and the Computer Section to host all four EU e-learning modules on the Customs Intranet.

Health and Safety Unit

During 2007 the Health and Safety Unit continued with the projects launched during the previous year. These included the continuation of various risk assessments for the Customs Division's work places and work practices, the provision of assistance to the Procurement Section in the procurement of Personal Health and Safety Equipment, meetings regarding the Pandemic Influenza and risk assessments at head office. The Unit also assisted the Non-Proliferation Unit in the finalisation of the Vehicle and Container Inspection System (VACIS) evaluation report and carried out radiation test at the new warehouse location for VACIS at the Freeport.

The Unit also participated in the Training Contact Persons meetings in collaboration with the Officer i/c Training Unit.

EU Programmes

The EU Programmes Unit catered for all travel by the Division's staff. The Unit was responsible for the compilation of statistics on travel and for the maintenance of records for audit purposes. Visits processed totalled 257 for 347 participants (respectively an increase of 40% and 173% over 2005, the first full year of EU membership).

Eight incoming and 17 outgoing working/study visits were organised under the Customs 2007 Programme, and eight exchange visits from/to other EU Member States.

Legal Services

A total of 44 Letters to Prosecute and 118 Seizure Notes were compiled by the Legal Section and duly signed by the Comptroller. As per standard procedure, the former were sent to the Commissioner of Police for further necessary action, whilst the latter were sent directly to offenders.

Customs had representations in 313 court sittings regarding civil cases and 553 court sittings concerning criminal cases. Personnel from the Customs Legal Section were required to testify and/or assist Prosecution in practically all the cases.

Twelve civil cases were decided, resulting in fines amounting to Lm92,127. Also decided were 41 criminal cases in the Court of Magistrates. In 16 of these cases the offenders were found guilty and given a suspended sentence.

Cases settled administratively in full or in part amounted to 77, apart from another three cases regarding civil debt which were settled after court sentences in their regard had been issued. Fines issued by Customs in relation to infringements of excise tax, import duty and VAT regulations amounted to a total of Lm29,154.

EXCISE AND SYSTEM CONTROL

Computer Section

2007 was a very busy year with preparations for the euro changeover and for the new MASP initiatives in full swing. In view of the euro conversion all the main Customs systems had to be either adapted or replaced. A new Customs Declaration Processing System retaining historical data in Maltese lira was implemented to segregate euro from MTL transactions. Similarly a completely new OMERA (traders' billing and staff emoluments) application also had to be implemented as the old one, apart from being technologically and functionally outdated, was not euro-compliant.

Applications for Surveillance, Export Control, and the Authorised Economic Operator program were developed and implemented. Work on the other MASP and EMCS requirements continued apace. In parallel with discussions on the legal and administrative measures, user and functional requirements for ICS, ECS Phase II, ECIP, SEAP, and SASP were being developed. It was decided that the acquisition of EMCS would be made by open tender. Many important MASP developments have an implementation deadline of July 2009 but actual system development is still to be initiated. All these systems enable the application of Customs regulations, hence project teams need to be fully familiar with the legislative, administrative and business requirements in order for the systems to be developed. This can only be gained from very frequent and intensive technical and functional meetings with colleagues from the Commission services and other Member States, as well as the continual reading and reviewing of all relevant documents.

Nowadays all customs related procedures are IT-dependent, and will become even more so over the coming few years when all transactions and relative documentation will have to be electronic. The E-Customs Decision which has been signed into law provides a road-map and rapidly-approaching deadlines for all future developments. The Division's IT capability is therefore critical to its success in all fields and deserves to be considered as a core function, with all that this entails in terms of staffing and remuneration. It is crucial that the Computer Section be maintained and strengthened to face this challenge.

IT Section

This section deals with all hardware issues, including networks, PC-related software and customs user support and services. In 2007 the major items were the migration from the Teamware application MS Outlook, which had to be done manually following the failure of the automated batch process, and the repair of several dozen PCs.

Transit

In the area of transit, use of the New Computerised Transit System (NCTS) has led to a definite consolidation of operations. There have been corresponding decreases in the number of open transit movements, the average time taken to close transit movements and the number of enquiry procedures resulting from open movements. Traders have been informally guided towards a more efficient use of the transit procedure and this has diminished the need to resort to definitive claims of customs debt. During

October a technical liaison mission was conducted in Malta by a representative of the European Commission and a very positive report was subsequently presented.

On the technical side of NCTS, the European Commission proceeded with its plans to discontinue support for the Minimal Core Application (MCC) transit handling application. Malta has chosen to co-operate on this issue with a number of other Member State administrations which had been also using MCC. A common call for tenders was published and has reached the evaluation stage.

Customs Warehousing

This section is mainly concerned with the warehousing of goods subject to Import Duty and/or VAT, and their eventual release/export from respective approved Customs warehouses. Three new Customs warehouses were approved during 2007, one existing warehouse ceased to operate and another was changed to Type A (public) from Type C (private). The major activity for this section is the warehousing of new motor vehicles. During 2007 a total of 2,799 new non-EU vehicles were imported and warehoused.

In February the Auction Sales Section was amalgamated with the Warehousing Unit. The total income derived from the three auction sales held during 2007 amounted to Lm42,354.

EXCISE

Tax Warehouses Unit

The Excise Monitoring Unit controls tax warehouses situated at Barriera Tax Warehouse and on private premises. There are 33 tax warehouses at BTW and 28 on private premises.

Seven new tax warehouse keepers started operations during 2007, five of them from Barriera Tax Warehouse. One private tax warehouse keeper moved its operations to BTW.

All movements of goods into or out of tax warehouses must be declared electronically in the Customs warehousing system as well as on the paper movement control document (IAAD). New tax warehouse keepers are being encouraged to work from BTW.

Excise Section (Local Producers and Traders)

This section controls those authorized tax warehouse keepers who produce (or who until lately used to produce) excise products, as well as those excise warehouse keepers who sell duty-free goods and those traders that are not tax warehouse keepers. The section is also responsible for the issue of excise control stamps to importers and manufacturers.

All excise movements under duty suspension are monitored via the Administrative Accompanying Document (AAD) or the Internal AAD and should also be entered in the electronic customs database. All traders are required to submit regular stock reports to Customs. Despite this, late in 2007 a very large discrepancy was found in the accounts of one particular warehouse keeper. The quantities of cigarettes on the IAADs issued by its cigarette suppliers exceeded massively those declared for consumption by the company, leading to a very large shortfall in payments of duty and VAT, estimated in the region of Lm2.2 million. The case is being investigated by both the Customs Division and the Police.

Fuel Section

The Fuel Section monitors and records all fuel moved under duty suspension and ensures the proper payment of taxes and duty due on fuel released for consumption. Monitoring involves both physical checks and satellite tracking as well as keeping a full record of the quantities of fuels imported, blended or

moved. Data is submitted to the Malta Resources Authority on all imports and exports and on all the internal transfers and movements carried out between tax warehouses.

All importations are physically controlled while internal movements between tax warehouses are controlled via the IAAD and entry into the electronic database. Frequent inspections of tax warehouses and bunkering barges are made and fuel analysed to deter and detect illicit traffic.

COMPLIANCE

Processing Services

The main events impacting on the workings of the Processing Services were the introduction of the Electronic Export System and the EU-wide establishment of the Export Control System. During the year under review the former Verification Unit was merged with the Valuation section, except for the risk analysis function, which was moved to a newly formed Risk Management Unit. The aim was to separate the responsibility for targeting from that for control.

The year 2007 witnessed a marked increase in the use of the Onward Supply Relief Regime. Under this procedure, import duty on goods destined for other EU Member States is collected by Maltese Customs while any VAT due is deferred and paid in the Member State of consumption. The control of status documents in respect of intra-community goods was further simplified resulting in greater facilitation and the elimination of bottlenecks.

Verification/Valuation Unit

The Unit's main duties are post-clearance verification and controls. About 45,000 import declarations were accepted by the system, of which 20% were scrutinised for fiscal and non-fiscal offences/irregularities. The number of post entries totalled 123, resulting in the collection of Lm32,124. The section is also responsible for the verification of documents in respect of Intra-Community shipments despatched from the Freeport. Said documents added up to 15,222. The Unit liaises closely with the Post Clearance Audit section, to which 29 cases were referred for further investigation.

The Unit continued to be a reference point on values to Management, heads of sections in other Customs areas, members of the business community and to private individuals. An exchange visit by the head of the section to the Agenzia delle Dogane offices in Genova offered possibilities of closer co-operation with our Italian counterparts and allowed the appraisal of new concepts in addressing the issue of undervaluation of imported goods.

Binding Tariff Information Unit

The BTIU issues binding classifications of goods at the request of traders, Customs Clearance Agents and Customs Officers effecting documentary or physical controls. Samples are also referred to this section for further analysis and guidance, and queries are received from other Member States requesting classification opinions on various products.

Following the CN 2007 transposition, holders of affected BTIs were informed about the invalidation of their BTI and requested to report back to the BTIU. A new BTI was processed and published in the EU EBTI-3 database while another BTI was reissued.

Throughout the year the BTIU also contributed to the verification of the Maltese-language versions of a number of documents prior to their publication by the European Commission.

Sample Management Unit

In the absence of a permanent Customs Analyst, the Unit is serving as a reference point where all samples for analysis are submitted by other sections of the Customs Division. A total of 187 such samples were referred to the Unit. Many of these were then referred to the Malta National Laboratory, with which Customs has an agreement in this regard. In-house analysis of fuel is performed by the Unit utilising the 'High Pressure Liquid Chromatography' apparatus installed at the Unit. A 'high quality' wheat sample was submitted to a laboratory in the United Kingdom for analysis by the CCFRA since no local laboratory was adequately resourced to perform this analysis.

Customs Economic Procedures Unit (CEPU)

The year 2007 saw the transition from a manual processing of export documents to an electronic system based on risk analysis. The majority of traders opted to have a remote link facility enabling them to input declarations directly into the electronic system through the internet. At the same time a number of exporters are still making use of the inputting service offered at the Unit and have their manually filled declaration entered by Customs data imputers.

During 2007 the Export Control System (ECS) was introduced throughout the EU. This system tracks exported goods which exit the EU from a different Member State from that in which the exports were effected. Maltese exports entered in the ECS totalled 60, while other Member States' exports exiting from Maltese ports were monitored and settled in the system.

The section deals with export documentation, particularly the issue of T2L, EUR1, ATR and Form A certificates. Documents processed and issued during 2007 by the section amounted to 21,743. A total of 336 authorisations covering a number of Preferential Customs Procedure Codes were entered and monitored in the Business Registry. There were 93 claims for refund of import duty paid under the Drawback system.

Binding Origin Information Unit

In the past year, 37 certificates of origin, covering imports from sixteen countries having trade agreements with the EU, were submitted for verification. On two occasions certificates were determined to be incorrect, preference rates revoked and duty amounting to Lm3,160 and Lm355 collected in respect of goods originating from Tanzania and India respectively. Difficulties encountered with Tunisian Customs in respect of five cases of document verification are being addressed through the Tunisian Embassy in Malta.

During 2007 two requests for verification of preference documents issued by Maltese Customs were received from Morocco and Croatia.

Customer Services

This office processes documents in respect of importation of personal effects and vehicles by persons transferring their residence from third countries. Transshipments and shipping bills are also processed at this section and EU TARIC Database queries dealt with. The Section processes also claims for refund of overpaid duties.

In addition the Customer Service section is responsible for the compilation of the daily booking list for containers selected for control, as well as for the processing of garnishee orders and counter warrants.

The Data Input section, which forms part of the Customs Services, enters manually prepared import declarations presented by the traders into the Customs electronic system and also inputs statistical data on intra-community trade as per the 'intrastat' forms presented by traders.

The registration of new importers and administration of user accounts on the CES forms part of the sections duties. The Office is also responsible for the sale of Customs forms to the public.

Archives/Records Office

This office was responsible for the storage and retrieval of all archived files, referred to and requested by the Registry Section. Insertions in respect of archived files were also referred to this office from Customs stations. The Section was also responsible for the storing of export documents submitted from other Customs stations.

Risk Management Unit

The Risk Analysis module in the Customs Electronic System (CES) is monitored by two trained officers who target consignments either for a Documentary Control, a Physical Inspection or a Scanner Check. This process led to the detection of 120 fiscal and 132 non-fiscal infractions and the recovery of Lm146,130 in revenue.

This Unit is responsible for the drafting and updates of risk profiles in the Risk Analysis System. The total number of active risk profiles created during 2007 tallied to 114. The profiles are mainly drafted on the basis of Mutual Assistance Alerts disseminated by the European Antifraud Office (OLAF), Risk Information Forms (RIF) issued by Risk Management at DG TAXUD and alerts submitted by local and foreign Intelligence Services.

The Unit also performs manual selection and targeting of export consignments. A feedback reporting system has been put in place and a database is being formulated for future reference and data analysis on exports.

Landing and Releasing

The chief duty of this branch is to ensure that Customs controls on imports and exports are fully compliant with national and EU legislation and adequately protect national and EU finances. With the help of a risk-based approach these sections offer the best facilitation possible to economic operators and at the same time ensure that all taxes are collected. Section Heads responsible for the management of units making up the Landing and Releasing branch met regularly throughout the year to co-ordinate their operations and to harmonise procedures. Stakeholders were consulted whenever changes in work practices were introduced.

Deep Water Quay

During 2007 a total of 152 vessels discharged and/or loaded the under-mentioned cargo at the Deep Water Quay:

| Discharged | Loaded |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 5,343 full load containers/trailers | 105 full containers/trailers |
| 74,875 metric tons of conventional cargo | 860.2 metric tons of conventional cargo |
| 2,583 new vehicles | 185 cars |
| | |
| Containers Transferred from Freeport | Second-hand vehicles |
| 990 units containing second-hand vehicles were transferred by transit document | Released 3,626 commercial & passenger vehicles |

Close and regular liaison with VGT (Valletta Gateway Terminal) ensures the smooth running of the quays. New procedures for the clearance of second-hand vehicles started to be introduced at the beginning of December, as a result of which traders benefited from greater facilitation through a one-stop-shop facility. Valuation of vehicles is no longer carried out across the board but on prior scrutiny of documentation.

One of the sheds was leased to a private company to carry out transshipment operations of ship spares for vessels involved in the oil industry. The company is required to keep up-to-date stock records and officers from DWQ carry out regular audit checks.

Freeport

The main responsibility of this Section is to ensure that all units which exit the Free Zone area are accounted for and covered by necessary Customs documentation. A total of 1,928 *pratiques* were carried out, of which 1,279 were for vessels coming from non-EU countries.

33,820 containers were dispatched for local consumption, of which 12,756 were of non-EU status. This year, the Freeport Section experienced an increase of 3,161 (10%) units destined for local consumption or to be put in free circulation.

Malta Shipyards

Revenue generated by this Section amounted to Lm2,557 duty and Lm6,158 VAT. A total of Lm25,373 was raised as deposit on T1 documents. 81 full load containers were released at this station.

Luqa Airfreight

The Airfreight Section supervises the release of cargo from the sheds operated by Air Malta and by Globe Air services. During 2007 the Section handled a total of 7,078 aircraft manifests and received 10,847 import declarations, of which 3,206 were selected for control. Revenue collected during 2007 totalled Lm3,482,340, of which approximately 87% was VAT and 13% customs duty. Compared to 2006, revenue collected increased by 16%.

General Examination Shed

A total of 2,755 units were selected for control during 2007, of which 1,203 units were examined at the Examination Shed, 1,156 units at traders' premises and the remaining 396 units were selected for document control. Discrepancies noted amounted to an additional revenue of Lm56,404. A number of serious cases are pending that could lead to criminal proceedings, including one case of double invoicing and an attempt to avoid anti-dumping duties on outerwear.

Hal Far Groupage Complex

A total of 5,621 units entered the complex, of which 1,441 were non-EU. Tallying was carried out on 657 non-EU units and 86 EU. There were also 1,734 spot checks carried out by SIAT at the gate. There was a slight increase of 37 units in the number of units entering the Complex over 2006.

Revenue collected at the complex totalled Lm2,191,580, of which approximately 19% were customs duties, 79% VAT. The total includes additional revenue generated by this section on incorrect declarations amounting to Lm19,186 and Lm24,137 collected as rent (amount only covers rent paid at complex cash office).

A relocation exercise of warehouses was carried out due to the fact that some operators ceased to operate and others wanted to reduce space. The Customs Division now has two vacant full bonds and one half bond. Plans to relocate the Examination Shed to Hal Far and make better use of the vacant storage space are at an advanced stage.

Laboratory Wharf

This Section supervises goods landed at Laboratory Wharf, Coal Wharf and the Silo. The annual turnover of containers landed at Lab Wharf was similar to that of 2006. A total of 436 vessels landed goods at this station and the following operations were recorded:

| Discharges | Loading |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| 15,888 units of which 835 non-EU | 2,365 units of which 602 exports to non-EU countries |
| 12,720 new vehicles of which 3,798 non-EU | 2,832 vehicles of which 255 were exports to non-EU countries |
| 6,820 live stock and other live animals | 152 packages heavy machinery |
| 4,189 second-hand vehicles intended for transshipment | 6,832 second-hand vehicles |
| 12,299,102 metric tons bulk cargo cement, gypsum, gravel etc; | 29,933 metric tons maize and 14,928 metric tons wheat |
| 210,894 metric tons cereals etc. | |

A new service was introduced by VGT whereby containers can be transferred from Freeport to Lab Wharf for eventual transshipment on feeder vessels. A total 429 containers were transferred from Freeport terminal during the period under review

Parcel Post Office

The steady increase in postal traffic experienced in 2006 was maintained, as confirmed by the substantial increase in revenue collected by this section. During 2007 this amounted to Lm58,608, an increase of 25% over the previous year. Total revenue collected amounted to Lm229,259, of which 84% was VAT and the remainder import duty. The total includes Lm4,760 collected at the Gozo branch.

Work is in hand to purchase a new x-ray machine. A call for tenders has been issued and offers are currently being evaluated.

Courier Office

During 2007 this Section handled 62,452 bags and 40,487 cartons, of which 21,633 bags and 6,501 cartons were non-EU. Total revenue collected during 2007 reached Lm1,149,653. This was 15% higher than in 2006 and was broken down as follows: Customs duty Lm14,253, VAT Lm1,035,400. Additional revenue raised due to incorrect declarations amounted to Lm6,735.

Talks were held with an international courier company which intends to start operations from the Air Malta facility early in January 2008. One of the major courier companies has relocated to more spacious and modern facilities at the Cargo Village operated by MIA. An agreement was signed with DHL International binding the company to raise a bank guarantee and pay an annual fee of Lm1,000 for Customs services. New work practices were introduced at this facility, giving more responsibility to operator. An officer is detailed on a daily basis to supervise operations and effect releases. Regular X-ray scanning is carried out especially on bags declared as documents.

Customs Weighing Unit

The complement in this Section has depleted to one senior Customs weigher due to retirements from the service. According to EU regulations there is no need for the Customs Division to have full-time Customs weighers, but weighing equipment must be regularly calibrated by a competent standards authority. This has been done with the help of MSA (Malta Standards Authority). To meet the demand for weighing services a pool of senior clerks was set up and given the necessary training to act as official Customs weighers. Weighing fees collected during 2007 amounted to Lm1,175.

ENFORCEMENT

Frontier Control

Since joining the EU, roles and responsibilities have increased and become more complex particularly because Malta is situated at the southernmost border of Europe. These include safeguarding the safety and security of Maltese and EU citizens, protecting the environment (flora, fauna, etc) by enforcing national and EU legislation, safeguarding traders from unfair competition, for example by preventing the importation of counterfeit goods and by applying anti-dumping regulations.

The main operational duties of this Branch include: the clearance inwards and outwards of ships, yachts, aircraft and passengers; censorship of video tapes, DVDs and software; supervision and escorting uncustomed goods; patrols on land and sea in Customs areas, and supervising the landing and loading of all cargo imported/exported by air. Release of accompanied commercial goods is also carried out by this branch. Besides collecting the appropriate taxes (import & excise duties and VAT) this branch must also curb importation of restricted and prohibited goods. In achieving its goals, the Enforcement branch maintains constant liaison with all stakeholders and co-ordinates its resources as required to address particular issues which arise from time to time, such as avian flu.

Grand Harbour

This Section operates on a 24-hour shift system. During the year, 5,217 vessels arrived in Malta, including 2,437 arrivals from non-EU countries, while 5,195 vessels were cleared outwards. These figures include arrivals/departures at Marsamxetto, Marsaxlokk and Mgarr harbours. Rummages on arriving vessels amounted to 90. Passenger arrivals totalled 102,938 while departures amounted to 94,256. There were 466,395 transit passengers. A total of 9,467 accompanied vehicles arrived in Malta while 8,923 departed. This section processed 3,411 duty-free deliveries and 4,570 fuel stores authorisations. A total of 1,711 searches were carried out at the various customs areas seaport gates, and 242 currency checks at the port. The sum of Lm1,914 was collected in taxes (VAT and excise).

Airport

This Section operates on a 24-hour shift system. Aircraft arrivals from outside the EU totalled 2,591. Arrivals from non-EU countries amounted to 163,399 passengers; departures to 154,618 and transit passengers to 1,886. Freight landed was 5,400,055 kg whilst 5,877,283 kg were exported.

Import duty, excise duty and VAT amounted to Lm11,065, Lm694, and Lm32,169 respectively. The sum of Lm710 was collected as fines on dutiable goods undeclared by passengers passing through the Green Channel.

A total of 702 currency control checks were carried out on passengers, leading to the seizure of €27,000 and \$US144,300. Approximately 54 kg of meat and milk products were confiscated and destroyed as per EU Regulations.

Yacht Marina

A total of 2,486 yachts, 211 of which from non-EU countries, arrived at the Msida and Gozo Marinas and Grand Harbour during the year and there were 2,341 departures. 68 rummages were carried out on yachts while 71 currency checks were conducted, all yielding negative results.

This Section also plays a role in the collection of VAT on pleasure craft.

Prohibitions and Restrictions

A total of 60,751 software packages were submitted for censorship, 1,323 of which were viewed. From a total of 73 withheld items, 45 were appealed against and 23 were released by the Printed Matter Appeals Board. The total amount of import duty, VAT, excise duty and fines collected amounted to Lm12,753, Lm80,667, Lm24 and Lm70 respectively.

Investigations

Non-Proliferation Unit (NPU)

The NPU carried out 122 documentary checks on containers in transshipment, 36 on airfreight cargo, 6 on courier cargo and 12 on local export. Five containers were withheld as the items within were found to be controlled. Two of these shipments were denied export authorisations for onward shipping while the remaining three were granted export licences by the Trade Services Directorate.

The Unit co-operated with other agencies in their investigations on the Unit's behalf, notably the Malta Police, the Trade Services Directorate and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. The NPU continued with its industry outreach programme for the various external stakeholders as well as with its internal awareness initiative to Customs personnel.

Special Intervention Action Team (SIAT)

The contents of 86 containers were tallied by this Unit. Of the 72,073 passes issued, 66,827 concerned 'C' status goods. 1,734 searches were carried out on exiting vehicles leading to action regarding IPR, CE markings and Excise goods.

Post Clearance Audit (PCA) and Economic Procedures Enforcement Unit (EPEU)

PCA/EPEU officers carried out 260 on-site visits. PCA officers raised 21 post-entries which netted Lm11,515 duty, Lm13,621 VAT, Lm46,804 additional duty and Lm1,278 in fines. EPEU officers raised 12 post-entries bringing in Lm23,030 duty, Lm68,130 VAT and Lm116 in fines.

Customs Intelligence Services (CIS)

Of the 4,466 containers scanned after selection by CIS, 117 were referred for further investigation. 202 Passenger and 677 Cargo alerts were issued and 35 positive results, of which five for narcotics, were obtained. 433 Risk Information Sheets were received from EU Customs Services which were disseminated as appropriate. CIS issued 21 Risk Information Forms, 309 general alerts, 19 Yacht alerts and 104 Intelligence alerts. During 2007, CIS participated in three Joint Customs Operations with customs administrations of other EU Member States and the Commission.

As from 15 June 2007, CIS is keeping records of Cash Controls carried out at the border. Statistical information is sent quarterly to the EU Commission as stipulated by Reg. 1889/2005.

Container Monitoring Unit (CMU)

During 2007 a total of 9,156 containers were scanned by the VACIS. Of these, 4,015 were in transit and 5,141 for the domestic market. The contents of 49 containers were seized. In October the operations of the monitoring and scanning teams were moved to the newly-inaugurated Customs Warehouse within the Freeport. The move coincided with the delivery of a number of new high-tech tools and equipment including an AS&E Microdose X-Ray inspection System (pallet x-ray).

Enforcement Unit

Intra- and extra-EU flights targeted during the year numbered 2,529. Ensuing action included 101 personal searches and nearly 33,000 baggage scans with over 12,000 pieces being physically examined. Seizures included narcotics, weapons, cigarettes, bird skins, steroids, currency and IPR-infringing goods. The 11 positive drug cases resulted in a record haul, with one particular seizure yielding 11.6 kg heroin.

Searches in commercial outlets and open air markets for illegal excise goods totalled 406 instances, of which 157 resulted positive in the shape of 3,261 alcohol bottles, 542,079 cigarettes and 25,870 pouches hand rolling tobacco.

Over 340 containers/trailers entering the country were searched and various positive results were obtained. Three trailers and their contents were seized for non-compliance with excise regulations on alcoholic beverages. A domestic container loaded with 10.53 million cigarettes, of which six million were confirmed counterfeit, was seized as it was incorrectly declared. Investigations are still under way.

Enforcement officials assisted other Customs personnel in various outstations on 109 occasions.

In a joint exercise with ADT officials fuel samples were collected for analysis from a number of route buses. Another 60 samples were taken from various fuel pumps/private reservoirs.

47 vehicles were withdrawn/seized and a vehicle auction sale rendered Lm5,485. Another Lm3,675 was recouped on settling of the relevant files.

The Dog section carried out 759 covert searches and 199 overt searches for narcotics at MIA arrivals. Other searches were carried out at the Central Mail Room.

Other tasks included daily patrols of the Grand Harbour area, Yacht marinas and Freeport perimeter.

IPR Unit

The IPR unit tackled a total of 82 cases, 51 of which led to legal action (48 transshipment, 3 domestic). 11 domestic cases were settled out of court, while no action was taken by right holder in 20 cases (12 transshipment, 8 domestic). A total of 48 transshipment containers containing over 16.6 million items were detained. The above-mentioned six million counterfeit cigarettes and another 8,950 counterfeit goods intended for the domestic market were also detained, including outerwear, footwear, cigarettes, loud speakers, wrist-watches, mobile phone accessories, razor blades and Viagra/Cialis tablets.

PAUL SCERRI
Director General (Customs)

Value Added Tax Department

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 2007, the following legal notices were published under the VAT Act 1998 (Cap 406):

- 120 of 2007 - amendment to VAT (Capt.406) (Forms) Regulations 2004 – Government Gazette of 27/04/07
- 121 of 2007 - amendment to VAT (Capt. 406) (Fifth Schedule) – Regulations 2007 – Government Gazette 27/04/07
- 122 of 2007 - amendment of VAT (Capt. 406) (Sixth Schedule) – Regulations 2007 – Government Gazette 27/04/07
- 123 of 2007 - amendment to VAT (Capt. 406) (Eight Schedule) – Regulations 2007 – Government Gazette 27/04/07
- 124 of 2007 - amendment to VAT (Capt. 406) (Third Schedule) – Regulations 2007 – Government Gazette 27/04/07
- 443 of 2007 - amendment to VAT Act (Capt. 406) (Second Schedule) – Regulations 2007 – Government Gazette 28/12/07
- 444 of 2007 - amendment to VAT Act (Capt. 406) (Third Schedule) – Regulations 2007 – Government Gazette 28/12/07
- 445 of 2007 - amendment to VAT Act (Capt. 406) (Fifth Schedule) - Regulations 2007 – Government Gazette 28/12/07
- 446 of 2007 - amendment to VAT Act (Capt. 406) (Eight Schedule) – Regulations 2007 – Government Gazette 28/12/07
- 447 of 2007 - amendment to VAT Act (Capt. 406)(Tenth Schedule) – Regulations 2007 – Government Gazette 28/12/07
- 448 of 2007 - amendment to VAT Act (Capt. 406) (Twelfth Schedule) - Regulations 2007 – Government Gazette 28/12/07.

Other significant amendments to the Act concerned the following:

- Information from Inland Revenue Department may be obtained
- VAT data to be used for ECO Contribution enforcement
- Amendments regarding production of records during investigations
- Court of Appeal cases over Lm500,000 to be heard before 3 judges (Superior Court)
- Obligation to have transport document during carriage of goods and possibility to stop and inspect goods (fight against illicit trading).

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE

Compliance Rate

VAT returns continued to be issued regularly each month. The following table shows the returns issued and received during 2007. The overall compliance rate as on due date, expressed as the percentage of returns received over the number of returns issued, was 80.52%, increasing to 88.05% 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 | 113,372 | 91,290 | 80.52 % | 99,829 | 88.05 % |

Revenue

During 2007, gross revenue collected under the VAT Act 1998, the CET Act 1997 and the VAT Act 1994 was Lm225,197,531 compared to Lm205,109,571 in the previous year. Refund of excess credit paid out of revenue amounted to Lm44,152,250 resulting in a net revenue of Lm181,045,281 compared to Lm174,582,914 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 | 224,969,843 | 56,589 | 171,099 | 225,197,531 |
| Less Refunds | 43,933,142 | 55,173 | 163,935 | 44,152,250 |
| Total Net | 181,036,701 | 1,416 | 7,164 | 181,045,281 |

Outstanding Credits and Debits

As at end 2007, the Department had a net debit balance, after deducting outstanding taxpayers' credit, of Lm120,110,540. The amount of Lm113,789,050 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 Lm6,321,488 in the form of taxpayers' credit, as shown below:

| | VAT (1998) Lm | CET (1997) Lm | VAT (1994) Lm | Total Lm |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Debit Balance | 132,883,116 | 2,876,940 | 6,617,548 | 142,377,604 |
| Outstanding credits | 22,202,409* | 8,962 | 55,693 | 17,843,557 |
| Net Balance | <i>115,104,214</i> | <i>2,867,978</i> | <i>6,561,855</i> | 124,534,047 |
| Less Estimated Assessments | 77,132,155 | 282,578 | 696,350 | 78,111,083 |
| Less Interests | 25,821,083 | 2,278,023 | 7,578,861 | 35,677,967 |
| Realistic Net Balance | 12,150,975 | 307,376 | (1,713,356) | 10,744,995 |
| Accounts with a balance as at end 2007 | 19,095 | 2,583 | 3,298 | 24,976 |
| Accounts with a balance as at end 2006 | 17,237 | 2,897 | 3,680 | 23,814 |

* As a result of a sentence delivered by the Court of Appeal awarded in favour of Go plc, the Department will be refunding the amount of Lm4,423,507 that were issued in assessments. The Department is holding negotiations with the Chairman of Go plc for the amount to be repaid in instalments until 2010.

Cost-Effectiveness

Total recurrent expenditure during 2007, excluding the contribution to the Tax Compliance Unit amounted to Lm2,529,582. Net revenue from VAT 1994, CET 1997 and VAT 1998 amounted to Lm181,045,281. Revenue from ECO Contribution was Lm5,992,934. Net total Revenue collected amounted to Lm187,038,215. The cost effectiveness rate for 2007 was therefore 1c4 per Lm1 of revenue compared to 1c5 in 2006.

ENFORCEMENT

Inspections

During the year, 19,443 field inspections were carried out, consisting of 19,245 spot-check inspections and 198 surveillance visits. As a result, 625 cases were referred for Court action (vide following table):

| Number of Inspections | | | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|------------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| | Spot-Checks | Surveillance Visits | Total | Court Action | Hit-Rate |
| Total | 19,245 | 198 | 19,443 | 625 | 3.25 % |

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.

A task force consisting of members from the VAT Department, Customs Department and the Police has been set up to curb illicit trading in Malta. Persons have been arraigned in Court as a result of this measure.

Court Action

Legal action was taken against taxpayers wherever it resulted that the VAT and CET legislation was being abused. As a result, 280 cases involving failure to issue fiscal receipts were brought before the Court, of which 187 were decided. Of these, 143 cases were together fined a total of Lm37,900, whilst 44 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 the year, 430 taxpayers availed themselves of this option, paying a total of Lm50,800 in fines.

Another 1,577 new cases involved failure to submit tax returns. As a result, 309 cases were together fined Lm353,926 whilst 1,375 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 | 280 | 143 | 37,900 | 44 | 1,577 | 309 | 353,926 | 1,375 |

Manual Fiscal Receipt Booklets

The number of fiscal receipt booklets distributed during 2007 was 76,467, a decrease of 2.81% over 2006:

| | |
|----------------------|--------|
| Printed Booklets | 77,417 |
| Distributed Booklets | 76,467 |
| Returned Booklets | 51,961 |

Fiscal Receipts Lottery

The Fiscal Receipts Lottery continued to be run by the Public Lotteries Department. During 2007 an amount of Lm348,233 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 36. A total of 53 cases were concluded, resulting in Lm652,254 of under-declared tax. The number of cases pending investigation as at the end of 2007 was 66.

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 2007 was 943, of which 228 claims were deduced, amounting to Lm524,310.

| Type | Cases Assigned | Cases Concluded | Final Assessments | |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| | | | No | Lm |
| Validation | 153 | 92 | 1 | 82 |
| Correction | 521 | 576 | 119 | 33,765 |
| Credit Control | 859 | 943 | 228 | 524,310 |
| Investigations | 65 | 135 | 83 | 597,224 |
| Total | 1,598 | 1,746 | 431 | 1,155,381 |

Objections

During the year, a total of 828 objection letters were dealt with completely. As a result, the number of outstanding objections as at end-year was 93.

Appeals Boards

During 2007 the number of new appeals lodged with the VAT and CET Appeals Boards was 62. The Boards decided a total of 148 cases compared to 264 in the previous year.

COLLECTION OF TAX ARREARS

Civil Procedures

A total of 163 cases were settled through Civil Court action, resulting in the collection of Lm3,515,216 of tax in arrears, as shown in the following table:

| | Demand Notices | Judicial Letters | Garnishee Orders/ Warrants of Seizure | Civil Cases Settled | Tax Collected Lm |
|--------------|----------------|------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Total | 5,171 | 202 | 144 | 163 | 3,515,216 |

TAXPAYERS' REGISTRY

Registration and De-registration

During the year, 4,644 taxpayers were registered with the Department, bringing the total number of registered persons to 86,733. The current active registered taxpayers is 51,113, of which 32,702 are in 'Register A', 18,109 are in 'Register B' and 302 are in Register C. The number of outstanding applications as at the end of the year was nil. During the same year, 2,818 new applications were received for de-registration. A total of 3,066 applications were processed completely.

Maintenance of Taxpayers' Details

During 2007, a total of 11,055 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 has improved communication with registered persons by upgrading the Department's website and publishing information leaflets for registered persons informing them of changes in legislation. The Department has enhanced training to staff and upgraded its intranet. The Department is also analysing comments made by customers in order to improve the service.

e-Government

In September 2007, the VAT Department launched the electronic identification system for online services as part of e-Government project.

Updating of Internet Website

The Department's website was enhanced to become more user-friendly. The Department extended its online services. These now include the submission online of VAT returns by 'Register A' taxpayers and online payment of balances due. Throughout 2007, 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 continued to publish on its internet website, guidelines regarding the interpretation of issues relating to VAT. These guidelines assist traders and tax practitioners in areas which require clarification in interpretation. The guidelines published so far relate to Trusts, Onward Supply Relief, VAT Refunds to Overseas Trailers and VAT Treatment of Electronic Services.

Legal Committee

The Legal Committee set up in 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, Recovery Committee and other meetings.

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. Malta has succeeded to obtain an agreement on the place of supply of hiring of pleasure boats in the VAT Package.

ECO Contribution

The VAT Department is the competent authority for the administration and collection of ECO Contribution. During 2007 the amount collected from this contribution was Lm5,992,934.

e-Services

The Department collected €75,696 during 2007 from e-Services.

Meeting re Market Surveillance

During 2007, 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.

Euro Changeover Migration

The Department has successfully implemented the euro changeover migration process in its systems. The Department published leaflets for its registered persons to inform them about any change concerning this changeover.

Own Resources

The VAT Department completed the compilation of the VAT Statement on Own Resources in due time.

EU Related Matters

During 2007 the Department continued to compile questionnaires related to EU matters. Notwithstanding that these commitments are increasing from year to year, the Department complies with such obligations in the prescribed time.

Fiscalis Programme

The Vat Department continued to participate in the Fiscalis Programme which is targeted to update officials from all Member States on VAT issues. Nineteen officials from the Department participated in seminars, workshops, work visits and multilateral controls.

Training

Training to staff was held both in-house and outside the Department. Several sessions on legal amendments were delivered to inspectors at the Department. Other basic training sessions on the VAT Act were given to six new Inspector recruits. Other in-house training on Sage/Excel was given to 20 Inspectors while three Inspectors were trained in a course on Tax on Trust organised by the Institute on Financial Services. Two Inspectors are participating in a Diploma course on VAT compliance organised by the Malta Institute of Taxation and another three participated in a course on current issues on Risk Management organised by the Malta Financial Services Authority.

UK-Malta Twinning Project

This 15-month project which provided assistance by the UK Revenue and Customs to the Maltese VAT administration and the Tax Compliance Unit was successfully concluded. The main aim of the project 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. The experts made 86 recommendations with a view to improve the operations of the Department. Three recommendations could not be accepted, one of which being the removal of registration obligation of persons with an exempt threshold. 73 recommendations have been implemented. The remaining 10 require a period of time for implementation and are ongoing. Most of the recommendations either have been or are being implemented.

This project, which costs around €400,000, was 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 2007 was Lm525,000 under the item *Contributions to Government Entities* as part of the VAT vote. Pending recruitment drives and a conservative approach in terms of operational expenditure saw the Unit register significant savings of approximately Lm35,000. These savings were transferred to the VAT Department towards the end of 2007.

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Recruitment of Professional Staff

The Tax Compliance Unit's professional staff complement at the end of 2007 stood at 22. The Unit is presently seeking to recruit Accountants and Senior Accountants to raise its staff complement to more adequate levels.

Staff Training & Professional Development

Throughout 2007, the Unit embarked on an intensive in-house training programme for its Accountants and Senior Accountants with two main focal areas. The primary subject area was income tax and this aspect of the in-house training programme included seminars such as Tax on Property Transfers, Tax Avoidance and Evasion Schemes, and Income Tax Act Amendments involving ACIT amongst others. The secondary subject area of the in-house training programme focused on the TCU's Business Objects software program and was aimed at increasing awareness and use of this analytical tool.

Furthermore, the Tax Compliance Unit participated in a number of overseas meetings and training seminars under the Fiscalis Programme and the UK-Malta Bilateral Exchange Scheme.

IT SYSTEMS & DATA WAREHOUSE

Use of TCU Information by Other Departments

A total of 37,331 reports were generated from the TCU data bank and furnished to other government departments, mainly the VAT, Inland Revenue and Social Security Departments as well as the ETC.

The table below lists the reports furnished by the TCU to the mentioned entities during 2007:

| TCU Reports for other Government Departments/Entities | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | IRD | VAT | DSS | ETC | Total |
| No of reports | 207 | 13 | 24,396 | 12,715 | 37,331 |

COMPLIANCE TESTING

A number of compliance exercises were embarked upon during this year. Apart from serving as an alternative risk analysis tool, such exercises provided a thorough insight into popular tax evasion schemes being employed. As a result, a number of cases were eventually forwarded for necessary enquiries. It is also expected that upon conclusion of such exercises, a number of recommendations for legislative amendments will be put forward for the consideration of the respective tax authorities.

DATA WAREHOUSE

Following the migration to a Microsoft platform in 2006, a consolidation exercise was initiated throughout 2007 in order to maximise utility of the Unit's data warehouse. In fact, a number of reports were re-visited in order to meet the Unit's requirements in a more effective manner. In addition to this, 2007 saw a continued improvement in the Unit's liaison with other government entities regarding the provision of information from the data warehouse. Towards the end of the year, particular attention was paid to the implications of the euro changeover on the same data warehouse.

OPERATIONS

Tax Investigations

During 2007 the tax audit cases resulted in the following increases in income:

| | |
|--------------|---------------------|
| Income Tax | Lm 1,309,472 |
| VAT | Lm 2,677,730 |
| Total | Lm 3,987,202 |

CARMEL CONTI

Director General (Tax Compliance Unit)

Financial Management Monitoring Unit

STRATEGIC TASKS

Internal Control Framework for Public Sector Entities

In January 2007, FMMU submitted a report recommending the introduction of an internal control framework for the public sector. During the year this initiative developed in line with the reorganisation of FMMU into the PIFC Division, in turn forming an integral and central part of the Public Internal Financial Control strategy.

Public Internal Financial Control (PIFC) Reorganisation Report

During 2007, a new PIFC Division was created within the Ministry of Finance. This reorganisation brings together the FMMU and the IAID under the PIFC Division. The FMMU was in turn streamlined into three main units, namely the Central Harmonisation Unit, the Vertical Measures Unit and the Horizontal Measures Unit. The Unit's capacity was bolstered by the recruitment of three Programme Managers to replace the previous three Programme Managers who became Project Leaders in 2007. The recruitment process for a further three Programme Managers is still underway.

PIFC Twinning Light

In the latter part of 2007, the PIFC Division through FMMU applied for EU 2005 Transition Facility programme funds for a Twinning Light Project titled *Instituting a robust Public Internal Financial Control System for the Public Sector in Malta: Acquisition of technical assistance to implement EU standards and best practices*. The proposal was accepted and a call for proposals was issued. Four applications from EU Member States were received, and the UK National Audit Office was chosen as the contractor. The contract was signed in December 2007 and the project is planned to be implemented in the first six months of 2008.

Business Plan Directive including Business Plan Template and Performance Reward Schedule

Directive 02/2007 to public sector entities in line with 2006 Budget Speech provision was issued requiring public entities to submit their Business Plan for 2008. This Directive was sent to 71 entities that were requested to submit an annual business plan, a summary of the annual business plan and a performance reward schedule. In line with the exercise carried out in 2006, a template business plan and performance reward schedule were distributed to facilitate this exercise.

Review of Business Plans

Out of the 71 entities to which the business plan directive was sent, 51 entities replied (2006: 41 entities), three entities were exempted from the submission, while 17 entities (2006: 30 entities) did not send the information requested. The business plans received were analysed and FMMU issued advice regarding the appropriate level of subvention, which was forwarded to the Budget Office to aid in the budget setting process for 2008.

Financial Year Alignment

In line with the exercise started in 2006, this Unit identified 27 public entities whose financial year end was not the 31 December. Five entities were not included in the alignment exercise because their current financial year end took into account particular operating requirements. All the remaining 22 entities necessitated a financial year end change to the 31 December, with the exception of the University of Malta who expressed its preference for a change in financial year from the 31 December to the 30 September.

On 25 July 2007, a Directive was sent to limited liability companies and entities not regulated by a statutory law, enjoining them to take all necessary action to change the financial year end from 30 September to 31 December such that, with effect from 1 January 2008, the financial year of the organisation will read from 1 January to 31 December. This would facilitate data collection by the Ministry of Finance and the National Statistics Authority for ESA reporting purposes.

Meanwhile, FMMU, with the help of the Attorney General Agency, drafted an Act to amend the duration of the financial year as applicable in various laws relating to those entities that were regulated by a statutory law. On 27 September 2007, a Directive was sent to these public entities, informing them of the legal amendments and informing them that whilst during the current year, the books shall be closed on the 30 September 2007, the following financial year commencing on 1 October 2007 shall be for a period of fifteen months ending on 31 December 2008. Thereafter as from 1 January 2009 your financial year will end on 31 December of each year.

The legal amendments were enacted as part of the Budget Measures Implementation Act, 2008 and the provisions of the financial year end alignment shall be deemed to have come into force on 1 October 2007.

Human Resources Planning

Following the previous year's report on the Human Resources Planning for the Public Sector Initiative, another report was compiled by this office on the entire public service and public sector which tackled issues that are being faced by the public service, that is, the number of officers retiring and resigning from the public sector and also giving short-term, medium and long-term solutions on how to attract the right employees, retain the best employees through strategic human resource planning and other measures. This document was presented to RRAG for discussion.

Project Proposals Templates

The Ministry of Finance undertook an initiative whereby every entity, ministry or department planning to undertake a capital project in excess of Lm100,000 should formalise and document the process by completing project proposal and project definition templates. FMMU's contribution to this initiative includes the design of the project proposal and project definition templates and the subsequent review of the capital projects submitted. The Capital Projects Directive came into force on 1 August 2007 and by 31 December 2007 three capital project proposals were submitted.

Transfer of Assets and Liabilities Directive

In the light of the ongoing restructuring taking place within the public service, it is considered necessary to give clear policy direction in regard to the ownership of assets and liabilities that may be subject to transfer from government departments to newly set-up public organisations. This requirement is all the more essential in view of the increased relevance of balance sheet items within the context of the accruals accounting methodology, aspects of which are being increasingly resorted to. In June 2007, a directive was issued to public entities informing them on the procedure to be followed when assets and liabilities are transferred from government departments to newly set-up public organisations. A circular was also sent to government departments informing them of this procedure.

Public Entities' Accounting Treatment of Immovable Property

This Unit undertook an exercise that sought to determine the basis and extent of entities' recognition of immovable property and improvements thereto in their financial statements. The need for this exercise was felt following a number of cases involving entities' immovable property. Entities that were selected for investigation were those that are known to own, administer, and manage significant immovable property. However, FMMU's exercise was divided into two parts that were executed independently from each other. Entities whose financial statements already contained information about immovable property were included in the first stage of the exercise, while those entities that do not account for immovable property in their annual audited financial statements, were included in the second stage of the exercise. In 2007, this Unit started working on the first exercise.

Corporate Governance for Public Sector Entities

This Unit developed a Framework for Corporate Governance that is applicable to public sector entities. In 2007, this framework was discussed with the Office of the Prime Minister and updated in line with the Bill for the Public Administration Act. It has been presented to the Principal Permanent Secretary for eventual approval of Cabinet.

Code of Ethics for Board Directors in Public Sector Entities - Updating

This Unit updated the 1994 Code of Ethics for Board Directors of Public Sector Entities. In 2007, this framework was discussed with the Office of the Prime Minister and updated in line with the Bill for the Public Administration Act. It has been presented to the Principal Permanent Secretary for eventual approval of Cabinet.

National Anti Fraud and Corruption Strategy

A National Anti Fraud and Corruption Strategy was drafted and submitted to the Cabinet Secretary for consideration. The main aim of the strategy is to set up a normative, institutional and operational framework for the effective and efficient fight against irregularities, fraud and corruption in Malta, reflecting both the local requirements and its international obligations. The strategy has four main objectives, namely: capacity building, communications strategy, maximisation of national co-operation and the maximisation of international co-operation.

STRATEGIC AND FINANCIAL EVALUATIONS

Malta National Laboratory Co Ltd

On 23 May 2007, this Unit was asked by Budget Office to look into the financial situation of MNL Co Ltd. On 14 June, FMMU published a report entitled Malta National Laboratory Analysis, which in its conclusions deemed that the National Laboratory is not financially viable as it runs today. MNL has over the past years failed to generate sufficient cash to be able to run on its own steam, leading to a cash starvation that is only alleviated by its dependency on government handouts. This state of affairs is clearly unsustainable - the high cost structure of the Lab can never be recouped unless test volumes (and revenues) expand to a considerable degree. The conclusion is that, as envisaged from the outset, the future viability of the National Laboratory rests only on the full implementation of the consolidation process of government testing facilities.

Malta Industrial Parks Limited

During a routine enquiry into the accounts of Malta Industrial Parks Ltd (MIPL), this Unit noted that the company had last prepared audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2004. Upon

further inquiry with the accounting personnel of the company it transpired that the company had acted upon advice from its auditors and had not prepared audited financial statements pending the ratification of a Service Level Agreement between the company and Government. The ratification of the SLA would impact the way in which the company treats capital expenditure incurred on the properties that it manages. The company's management believe that the SLA would entitle the company to capitalise such improvements in its balance sheet. This Unit conducted an investigation into the affairs of the company with particular emphasis on the treatment of property related expenses, the SLA, its impact on the accounts of the company and its impact on Government.

OPERATIONAL EVALUATIONS

Malta Tourism Authority Office Space Leasing Request

FMMU received a request from MTAC for the lease of alternative premises for the Enforcement Directorate of the Malta Tourism Authority. The Directorate were required to vacate their present offices at Palazzo Spinola due to a decision by central Government since these offices were required to house an international agency. The request presented six alternative premises for the Directorate. FMMU analysed the needs of the Directorate and viewed options available and recommended the lease of office space in Msida.

Malta Air Traffic Services: Extension of Air Traffic Control Tower to Accommodate Office Space

FMMU reviewed the plans for the extension of office block to the Control Tower Building at the Malta International Airport. FMMU reviewed the needs of the Malta Air Traffic Services, its EU obligations, the estimates for the project, and the financial position of the organisation. FMMU concluded that the need for the extension existed, while Malta Air Traffic Services was in a position to finance the project from internally generated funds.

Malta Maritime Authority: Excess Office Space at the Maritime Trading Centre

In 2007, FMMU was represented on a Committee set up to make recommendations on the commercialisation of the Maritime Trade Centre. In July 2007, the Committee presented its report to the Malta Maritime Authority for its adoption.

Foundation for Social Welfare Service: Request for the Lease of Additional Premises for Agenzija Appogg and Relocation of Offices of Agenzija Sapport

During the year, a number of requests were received from the Foundation for Social Welfare Services for the leasing of additional premises and for the relocation of some offices. Due to the increase in the number of staff coupled with the increase in the number of services that is being demanded from Agenzija Appogg, a request was received to lease the adjacent flats which could be easily converted to offices and meeting rooms for clients. This request was considered as fair and reasonable by this office.

In its effort to consolidate the corporate services, the management of the Foundation for Social Welfare Services felt the need to relocate the offices of Agenzija Sapport from Mtarfa next to Head Office in St Venera. This office evaluated this request and approval was granted.

Malta Environment and Planning Authority: Request for the Purchase of Premises

MEPA, in May 2007 requested FMMU's authorisation to purchase office space in Marsa. FMMU analysed the request both from a requirements point of view and from a financing point of view. FMMU gave its go-ahead to MEPA, subject to the necessary requirements according to regulations in force.

Mater Dei Hospital/Foundation for Medical Services

The Accrual Accounting Task Force sought the assistance of this Unit in order to determine the reliability of Mater Dei Hospital fixed asset register. Preliminary investigation by this Unit indicated that such a register did not exist at the newly inaugurated Hospital. FMMU was engaged in various meetings both with Hospital's management team as well as with the Foundation for Medical Services that was responsible for procuring all of the Hospital's assets. This exercise is continuing in 2008.

FUNDING EVALUATIONS

Foundation for Social Welfare Services: Request for Additional Funding

FSWS submitted a request to FMMU for capital funds to make the additional improvements for office space to house Appogg at Guardamangia. After reviewing the needs of Appogg and the finances of the Foundation, FMMU submitted a Memo to Budget Office for consideration of the request.

Mount Carmel Hospital: Request for Additional Subvention

MCH requested a revision of the 2007 budget allocation since the subvention provided was less than that provided in 2006, at the same time that expenditure increased due to additional initiatives. FMMU reviewed MCH's request in line with the operational needs for the hospital and the funds available. FMMU recommended to Budget Office that the subvention to MCH be increased to cover the inevitable higher costs required to run the hospital.

Water Services Corporation: Request for Further Funding

In a letter dated 11 September 2007, WSC referred to the bleak financial position of the Corporation portrayed by the management accounts for the ten-month period ended 31 July 2007. According to the FC for WSC to continue operating as a going concern it must have adequate government support. This Unit conducted an investigation into the affairs of the Corporation and noted a number of factors that were contributing to the Corporation's financial difficulties, namely: the wages of some 149 employees that were surplus to requirements; decreases in own income and in government subvention; a net current liability position of Lm1 million, due to the fact the Corporation's debtors decreased from 2006 while short-term creditors increased. FMMU concluded that both the Corporation's lack of funds and the national issues of charging/subsidising/maximising resources needed to be dealt with as these impinge on the future results of WSC. Based on this Unit's recommendations, Budget Office approved an additional subvention of Lm500,000 as opposed to the requested Lm1 million.

Monitoring Function

As part of FMMU'S monitoring functions, the management as well as the audited financial statements of the following public entities were reviewed in 2007. The entities' selection was based upon this Unit's risk classification. Issues identified are included in a Management Letter and communicated to the entities' Management.

| Entity | Comment |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Enemalta Corporation | Reviewed management accounts for the eight-month period ended 31 August 2007. Currently this Unit is still awaiting a reply for the queries sent late December. |
| Malta Tourism Authority | Reviewed management accounts for six-month period ended 30 June 2007. |
| Air Malta plc | Reviewed management accounts for nine-month period ended 30 September 2007. Currently this Unit is still awaiting feedback from the entity. |
| Malta Shipyards Limited | Reviewed management accounts for six-month period ended 30 June 2007. This Unit is in the process of submitting queries to the entity's management. |
| Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools | Reviewed management accounts for nine-month period ended 30 September 2007. No exceptions were noted. |

| | |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Malta Environmental & Planning Authority | Reviewed the entity's estimates for 2008. This Unit will shortly be reviewing the audited financial statements for the year ended 30 September 2007. |
| National Orchestra Limited | Reviewed management accounts for six month period ended 30 June 2007. This Unit will be shortly issuing a Management Letter. |
| Malta Maritime Authority | Reviewed both management accounts and audited financial statements for the year ended 30 September 2007. Currently awaiting further information from management. |
| Water Services Corporation | Reviewed management accounts for the ten-month period ended 31 July 2007. Currently awaiting accounts for August and September 2007. |
| Malta Freeport Corporation Ltd | Reviewed management accounts for six-month period ended 30 June 2007. This entity will not be reviewed further because of the low risk assessed. |
| Malta Resources Authority | Reviewed management accounts for six-month period ended 30 June 2007. This Unit will be shortly issuing a Management Letter. |
| Lotteries and Gaming Authority | Reviewed audited accounts for the year ended 31 December 2006 as well as management accounts for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2007. This Unit will be shortly issuing a Management Letter. |
| Malta Air Traffic Services Ltd | Reviewed management accounts for nine-month period ended 30 September 2007. No exceptions were noted. |
| University of Malta | Reviewed management accounts for nine-month period ended 30 September 2007. Several exceptions were noted. However, these exceptions are being addressed by management and this Unit will continue to monitor this entity. |
| MCAST | Reviewed management accounts for six-month period ended 30 June 2007. This Unit is currently finalising its report and will shortly issue a management letter. |
| MIMCOL | Reviewed management accounts for six-month period ended 30 June 2007. Currently awaiting further information from management. |
| Foundation for Medical Services | Reviewed management accounts for nine-month period ended 30 September 2007. No exceptions were noted. |

CAPITAL PROJECTS EVALUATIONS

National Blood Transfusion Centre

On 9 October 2007, the MHEC submitted a Project Proposal Document for the construction of a new National Blood Transfusion Centre at Notabile Road, Attard. This Unit reviewed the document and presented its views to Budget Office on 26 October 2007. FMMU concluded that in the absence of alternative funding from the EU, the project must be funded from local funds or else Government would be facing infringement procedures. It was thus recommended that the necessary funds are made available for the project.

IT RELATED

Fleet Management System

During the year, implementation of the vehicle management system developed by FMMU and MITTS continued in earnest. During 2007 the software was fully implemented in the following ministries, departments and public entities: MCMP; MEYE; MFA; MFIN; MGOZ; MRAE; MFSS; House of Representatives; MJHA; MHEC; MIIIT; OPM; Office of the President; MEPA and the EU Paying Authority. Moreover various FMS enhancements necessary were carried out including fuel allocations by Lm/month and per year for Magistrates and Judges. In December 2007, this Unit commenced testing on the web based FMS application. So far FMS has 346 users, 1,231 registered vehicles and up to the end of December had processed 12,107 fuel issues. The system has been fully implemented in eight ministries and one entity, 75% implemented in three ministries and half completed in another ministry. The implementation of the FMS software to the other ministries, departments and public entities, together with the implementation of the web based application continues in 2008.

Pharmacy of Your Choice (POYC) Implementation

This Unit's involvement in this government initiative included contribution to the redesign of ideas as originally proposed especially related to security issues; setting the implementation schedule; attendance at meetings held at MITTS and at suppliers; establishing with MITTS the various communication requirements for POYC to be able to function; testing from different VPN connections. One Project Leader is also representing the Ministry of Finance on the Pharmacy of Your Choice Advisory Standing Committee.

ONGOING TASKS

RRAG Vetting of All Vacancies

During the year, this Unit continued to serve as a member of the Recruitment and Redeployment Advisory Group (RRAG). The aim of RRAG is to rationalise government expenditure, to increase control on recruitment and make better use of public service employees and to improve work practices. FMMU vetted all requests for recruitment received from the public sector in respect of the salary package including any allowances and perks, qualifications, availability of funds and the need for the vacancy to be filled whether it is a new post or a replacement. During the year, 1,024 posts were evaluated.

Vehicle Procurement Authorisations, Additional Cars, Leasing of Cars

In line with the directives issued during 2005 and 2006, this Unit continued to analyse and authorise vehicle procurement, leasing and hiring requests. Such requests were evaluated by making use of discounted cash flow techniques. During 2007 cases tackled amount to 280 vehicles. This office also evaluated other transport related expenses.

Restructuring Exercises and Changes in Organisational Charts

Throughout this year, FMMU assisted a number of entities with restructuring exercises such as Zammit Clapp Hospital where a thorough evaluation was carried out on the number of employees required due to the increase of operations from 60 beds to 180 beds. This office also carried out evaluations focusing on whether it is cost-effective to employ or outsource certain services related to health care services given by Mount Carmel Hospital. Emphasis was also being made on the replacements of staff due to internal promotions. It has been noticed that entities change the organisational charts to suit their needs. Since this unit looks at the public entities from a holistic point of view, it emerged that certain vacancies were being created through internal promotions and such posts were being considered as new posts and were thus referred to the capacity building meetings.

Capacity Building Meetings

This unit was invited to attend the capacity building sessions which are held twice a year at OPM, where each respective Permanent Secretary has to plan and bring forward a list of vacancies that need to be filled both at his/her ministry and at the entities under his/her portfolio during the following six months, together with the necessary justifications. This submission is made to Permanent Secretary, Strategy and Operations at the OPM and the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Finance and the meetings are also attended by various officers from both ministries. During these meetings, the vacancies are discussed and a decision is taken on whether these posts are to be approved or not, depending on the finances available. This office carries out preparatory work to be in a position to advise the Permanent Secretary MFIN on which posts are justified and a member of FMMU always attends these meetings.

General Queries re Public Procurement

Throughout the year, FMMU responded to a number of queries from the public sector regarding Government's Procurement System and policies and practices relating to expenditure.

Parliamentary Questions

This Unit is sometimes asked to provide more depth to the answers given to certain parliamentary questions. By performing a more detailed analysis, the Unit sought to provide further information supplementing the answers to these parliamentary questions.

National Reform Programme Contribution

Officials from FMMU, including the Director, are periodically requested to complete questionnaires sent by OPM regarding attainment of measures by FMMU regarding the NRP in the form of traffic reports.

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER DEPARTMENTS

IAID Investigation - Contract for Photovoltaic General Units

FMMU assisted the IAID in an investigation regarding the contract for Photovoltaic General Units.

IAID Investigation - MTA, MMA, Air Malta Fair Stands

FMMU assisted the IAID in an investigation into the awarding of contracts for exhibition stands at various fairs by the Malta Tourism Authority, Malta Maritime Authority, Department of Information and Air Malta, mainly with the Office of the Prime Minister and the Malta Tourism Authority over a period of three years starting in 2004. A total of 62 fair participations were investigated.

IAID - European Structural Fund Audit

An FMMU Programme Manager was involved in the audit of the Employment and Training Corporation's Training and Employment Exposure Scheme (TEES) as part of the Internal Audit Directorate's EU Funds Certifying Authority's functions.

CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

- *China Visit*: In August 2007, one Project Leader attended the Seminar on Macro-economy Management for Developing Countries, organised by the China Centre for Business Co-operation and Co-ordination, in China.
- *GRECO Meeting*: Between 22 and 23 March 2007, two Programme Managers attended the Start-up Training Workshop for GRECO's Third Evaluation Round on the theme of Party Funding, at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg.
- *OLAF Meeting*: Between 26 and 27 March, one Programme Manager together with an Audit Manager from the IAID) attended the Joint OLAF/EUROJUST Conference on Fraud and Corruption affecting European Communities' Financial Interests in Brussels.
- *Presentation to EU Commission Delegates*: In October 2007, FMMU on behalf of the PIFC Division participated in the activities organised for a Study Visit for EU Commission Officials through a presentation on Administering Malta module of the programme.

COLLATION OF DATA DIRECTIVE

In February 2007, a Ministry of Finance directive to the public sector was issued to gather data, which was subsequently used in various FMMU initiatives during the year. Data gathered includes the entities'

primary financial statement component information and motor vehicle data for easy uploading in the Fleet Management System.

OTHER AD HOC REPORTS

Non Compete Clause

In May 2007, FMMU submitted its recommendations to the Office of the Prime Minister on a Non Compete clause, affecting the renewal and or new Employment Contracts within the Public Service and Public Sector. These recommendations were considered within the context of the Bill on the Public Administration Act.

End of Life of Vehicles Initiative

In implementing the EU directive on the end of life of vehicles, the Ministry of Finance together with the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment, was looking into short term measures to start implementing this directive. A member from this unit was present in various meetings where possible solutions were discussed in order to establish the cost involved and possible ways of financing such expenditure, since the directive itself states that the end user should not be charged directly to dispose of the vehicles at the end of their life.

IAID - Public Entities' Accounting Treatment of EU Grants

In 2006, the European Commission issued Regulation No 1083/2006, which sets out implementing rules for the Structural and Cohesion Funds. This Regulation provides guidance for Member States to enable them to prepare well for the next programming period starting on 1 January 2007 and ending on 31 December 2013. This Unit analysed the financial statements for the year ended 2006 in a bid to determine the extent of accounting and disclosures made by public entities in respect of EU grants. The main issue was whether the current system, whereby control was exerted by the line ministries, was in breach of the EC Regulation. In a Memo dated 22 October 2007, this Unit expressed its opinion that the current system could be retained if beneficiaries are directed to account for the co-funded programme. To this effect, FMMU put forward two scenarios that are expected to apply (a) when the grant is intended to cover expenses in respect of services incurred by the beneficiary in the course of the programme; and (b) When the grant is intended for the purchase of assets or towards capital improvements. FMMU concluded that both scenarios will have the effect of accounting for EU grants in accordance with IFRSs and with Council Regulation 1083/2006, the current centralised system will be retained.

CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Members of this Unit have attended the following training courses during 2007:

| Organisation | Course Title | No of Staff | Hours | Total Hrs |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|
| Contracts | Procurement Management Systems | 3 | 2.5 | 7.5 |
| EIPA | Remodelling the Public sector – Recent Trends & Initiatives in European Public Administration | 1 | 16.5 | 16.5 |
| IAID | Twinning Light Project 2007, including the following sessions: Auditing of IT systems and on the use of Audit Interrogation Packages – 14.5 hrs; Identifying and reporting irregularities to the European Anti-Fraud Office – 9 hrs; Risk based auditing, sampling and audit trail – 7.5 hrs; Co-ordination and liaison in the management of EU Funds – 13 hrs; Proper management of data gathered during audit assignments – 1.25 hrs; Conducting financial investigations – 10.5 hrs | 3 | 55.7 5 | 167.25 |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|-----|---------------|
| Integrated Business Systems | Employment and Industrial Relations Act | 2 | 8.5 | 17 |
| MHEC | Health Labour Accounts | 2 | 4 | 8 |
| MIA | IFRS Refresher Course | 3 | 4 | 12 |
| MIA | HR Practices & Essential Labour Legislation Professional Competencies: Human Resource Management | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| MIA | Financial Instruments for the non-financial sector | 2 | 3.5 | 7 |
| MISCO | Using Emotional Intelligence | 4 | 8 | 32 |
| MITTS | Innovative Procurement | 6 | 3.5 | 21 |
| NAO | National Audit Office 10 th Anniversary Conference | 4 | 4 | 16 |
| Paragon Europe | Paragon National Conference | 1 | 9.5 | 9.5 |
| SDO | Practical Benchmarking | 4 | 12 | 48 |
| SDO | MS Projects | 2 | 7 | 14 |
| Chamber of Advocates | Fiduciary, Obligations, Trusts & Foundations | 2 | 6.5 | 13 |
| Treasury | DAS Euro changeover Training Session | 5 | 2 | 10 |
| | Total of CPE Hours financed by FMMU for its staff (5 in all because two new ones came late in the year) | | | 400.75 |

PARTICIPATION IN MINISTERIAL COMMITTEES

Recruitment and Redeployment Advisory Group (RRAG)

During the year, FMMU continued to work as a member in the RRAG where issues of a strategic nature regarding recruitment and redeployment are discussed. FMMU is one of eight members in this group which was set up in 2005. RRAG is chaired by the Principal Permanent Secretary, and the other members come from the OPM, MFIN and MEU.

Core ICT Advisory Committee (CITAC)

During 2007, FMMU participated as a member in the Core ICT Advisory Committee. During the year, various initiatives were discussed including the Opex and Capex programmes, capital projects and the National Plan for ICT, and various guidelines with regard to Government's ICT policy in Malta.

Accrual Accounting Task Force

FMMU is represented on the Accrual Accounting Task Force whose role is to facilitate and monitor the introduction of accrual accounting within government ministries and departments.

Pharmacy of Your Choice Advisory Standing Committee

Following the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between Government, the Chamber of Pharmacists and the GRTU, an advisory committee was set up in order to advise on the roll-out of the new POYC system. FMMU is represented on this group by one Project Leader and another member from the Ministry of Finance is also a member on this committee. The other committee members represent the Ministry for Health, Elderly and Community Care, the Chamber of Pharmacists, the GRTU, the UHM and shop stewards of Pharmacists working in the various health departments.

Government Finance Action Group

This Unit is a member of the Government Finance Action Group. Other members of the Group are Budget Office, NSO, Central Bank, Treasury and Economic Policy Division. This Group meets regularly to discuss statutory returns that are made to Eurostat.

RITA SCHEMBRI

Director General (Financial Management Monitoring)

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 act as the EU Paying/Certifying 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 perform the duties of the Paying/Certifying 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 other non-EU Member States, 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;
- to manage and process funds related to other EU Initiatives and Programmes.

Work Report for 2007

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. 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.

The NAO continued adopting, in liaison with the European Commission, the Extended Decentralised Implementation System (EDIS) in the management of EU Pre-Accession funds, including the Transition Facility. The NAO ensured as an ongoing exercise that the EDIS requirements were maintained.

During 2007, the Office of the NAO finalised the closure of the Pre-accession Programmes for 2001 and 2002 and submitted the closure documents in relation to the Pre-accession Programme for 2003. Moreover the NAO ensured that the deadlines of 15 December 2007 in relation to disbursement for the Transition Facility for 2004 and regarding commitment for the Transition Facility for 2005 were attained successfully.

The NAO was also involved in the following:

- chaired regular co-ordination meetings with the participation of all the horizontal stakeholders, including the National Aid Co-ordinator (PPCD), the Contracts and the Treasury Departments 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 Co-ordinator (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, 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 submission of Irregularity Reports;
- participated in a number of monitoring visits together with the European Commission on projects under the Pre-accession and Transition Facility Programmes at various Implementing Authorities;
- monitored the iPerseus System for the updating of financial data on the various projects;
- communicated its position on various issues including an Evaluation report by independent evaluators on the implementation of Projects under the Pre-accession and Transition Facility Programmes;
- organised a training seminar on the manual of procedures for all vertical stakeholders involved in project implementation under the Pre-Accession and Transition Facility Programmes.

The total amount of funds received from the Commission during 2007 to finance projects of the Programmes still open amounted to €10,793,949 (Lm4,633,842). Following authorisation of payments according to expenditure effected at project level, €9,552,537 (Lm4,100,904) were actually transferred to Government Revenue. Detailed information is included in the following table:

| Pre-Accession and Transition Facility Funds 2007 | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <i>Programme</i> | <i>Funds Transferred to Government Revenue</i> | | <i>Funds Received from Commission</i> | |
| | € | Lm | € | Lm |
| NP 2003 | 3,767,959.89 | 1,617,585.18 | 1,728,119.28 | 741,881.61 |
| TF 2004 & TF 2005 | 5,784,577.24 | 2,483,319.01 | 9,065,829.28 | 3,891,960.51 |
| Totals | 9,552,537.13 | 4,100,904.19 | 10,793,948.56 | 4,633,842.12 |

Structural and Cohesion Funds

The Directorate also had the role of Paying Authority (PA) for Structural and Cohesion Funds and during 2007 honoured Malta's commitments and obligations and fulfilled its functions and tasks emanating from EC Regulations 1260/1999 and 438/2001 for the Programming Period 2004-2006 and as Certifying Authority under EC Regulation 1083/2006 for the new Programming Period 2007-2013.

During 2007, 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 a total of 19 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. The said certifications carried out consisted of four certifications each for the ESF, ERDF and EQUAL Funds, three certifications for the EAGGF Fund and two certifications each for the FIGG and COHESION Funds. All the said certifications were accepted by the Commission and the relative funds transferred to Government Revenue.

The EU Paying Authority continued to establish and maintain 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.

During 2007 the PA participated as a permanent member in all the various Monitoring Committees for Structural and Cohesion Funds for the periods 2004-2006 and 2007-2013.

Furthermore, 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. In this process, 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 were communicated to the pertinent services in Brussels.

Throughout the year the Directorate was involved in various fora and communicated its position on various issues including comments on the interim evaluation of the implementation of projects under the Structural and Cohesion Funds for the period 2004 to 2006 and comments on the Implementing Provisions for the Structural and Cohesion Funds for the period 2007 to 2013.

The table below indicates the aggregated amounts of Structural and Cohesion Funds per fund received from the Commission totalling €32,423,907 (Lm13,919,583) together with the Certifications of Expenditure effected by the Directorate throughout 2007 which amounted to €31,656,478 (Lm13,590,126). Amounts reimbursed by the Commission following certifications and transferred to Government Revenue, during 2007 amounted to €32,043,345 (Lm13,756,208).

| Structural and Cohesion Funds during 2007 | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Fund</i> | <i>Funds Received from EU Commission during 2007</i> | <i>Expenditure Certified by the Directorate</i> | <i>Amounts form Certified Expenditure Transferred to Govt. Revenue</i> |
| | € | € | Lm |
| ERDF | 18,137,967.30 | 16,816,896.68 | 7,781,187.97 |
| ESF | 2,322,448.63 | 2,801,295.07 | 996,827.93 |
| EAGGF | 1,085,855.00 | 1,387,995.00 | 465,831.79 |
| FIFG | 1,034,252.26 | 1,034,252.26 | 443,694.22 |
| Equal | 726,318.40 | 549,797.59 | 311,619.89 |
| Interreg | 197,028.06 | 310,191.71 | 0 |
| Cohesion | 8,920,037.78 | 8,756,049.93 | 3,757,046.06 |
| Totals | 32,423,907.43 <i>(Lm13,919,583.46)</i> | 31,656,478.24 <i>(Lm13,590,126.11)</i> | 13,756,207.86 <i>(€32,043,344.65)</i> |

Own Resources

The EU Paying Authority Directorate also managed the bank account relating to EU Own Resources. During 2007, 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 Division 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 PA participated and gave its contribution as a permanent member of the Ministry's Task Force on Own Resources. 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 table below indicates the payments of Own Resources effected by the Directorate in favour of the Commission during 2007, amounting to €55,789,042 (Lm23,950,236). During the year the Commission refunded to Malta €3,273,936.20 (Lm1,405,500.81) as indicated by the negative amounts in the totals column per month.

| | TOR^(B) Lm | VAT-Based Lm | GNI-Based Lm | UK Correction Lm | Reserve Lm | Total Lm |
|--------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| January | 481,360.40 | 287,101.60 | 1,152,894.84 | 130,557.43 | | 2,051,914.27 |
| | | | -1,304,195.37 | | | -1,304,195.37 |
| February | 451,395.75 | 832,594.64 | 3,393,551.86 | 378,616.54 | | 5,056,158.79 |
| March | 404,015.25 | 172,260.96 | 699,453.34 | 78,334.46 | | 1,354,064.01 |
| April | 486,705.00 | 229,681.28 | 932,604.45 | 104,445.94 | | 1,753,436.67 |
| May | 407,294.42 | 172,260.96 | 699,453.34 | 78,334.46 | | 1,357,343.18 |
| June | 370,017.75 | 86,130.48 | 349,726.67 | 39,167.23 | | 845,042.13 |
| July | 405,564.00 | 229,681.28 | 742,122.19 | 104,445.94 | | 1,481,813.41 |
| August | 423,671.25 | 287,101.60 | 1,138,543.81 | 130,557.43 | | 1,979,874.09 |
| September | 441,891.00 | 287,101.60 | 1,138,543.81 | 130,557.43 | | 1,998,093.84 |
| October | 490,605.65 | 445,202.79 | 1,319,823.60 | 185,426.98 | | 2,441,059.02 |
| | | | | -84,421.20 | | -84,421.20 |
| November | 412,552.50 | 302,911.72 | 1,156,671.79 | 136,044.38 | | 2,008,180.39 |
| | | | | -8,442.12 | | -8,442.12 |
| December | | 302,911.72 | 1,156,671.79 | 136,044.38 | | 1,595,627.89 |
| | | | | -8,442.12 | | -8,442.12 |
| Opting out | | | | 889.67 | | 889.67 |
| Correction | | 290,909.91 | 1,141,329.41 | | | 1,432,239.32 |
| Total | 4,775,072.97 | 3,925,850.54 | 13,717,195.53 | 1,532,116.83 | 0.00 | 23,950,235.87 |
| | | | | | | €55,789,042.33 |

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;
- gave its contribution towards the issuing of a travel circular issued by the Ministry of Finance laying out the procedures to be followed by all government ministries, departments and entities for the reimbursement of travel expenses for participation in EU Council and Commission 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 €912,451 (Lm391,715). This included €610,305 (Lm262,004) for Council Meetings and €302,146 (Lm129,711) for Commission Meetings.

Other Work

The EU Paying Authority was also involved in other specific areas of work as follows:

- Involved in the successful implementation process for the euro changeover. The Directorate participated in meetings of the Public Finance Sectoral Committee, the Public Sector Sectoral Committee, the NECC Executive committee and also in the various National Euro Changeover Conferences organised by NECC throughout the year. The PA monitored and processed all funds under the PRINCE agreement with the European Commission to finance the euro changeover process and also worked in liaison with the CBM to convert all the accounts under the PA's responsibility.
- Entrusted with the responsibility to manage and process funds related to other EU Initiatives, Programmes and Funds, including JEREMIE, the European Globalisation Fund, the External Borders Fund, the European Returns Fund and the European Refugee Fund. Carried out various work and participated in various fora on the said Initiatives Programmes and Funds.
- Participated in the Monitoring Committee for the European Economic Area (EEA) and Norway Financial Mechanisms and was informed on the launching of the Financial Mechanism for Switzerland.
- Participated in activities organised by the Forum Malta fl-Ewropa and kept abreast with developments in the EU on various issues.
- Worked as National Co-ordinator and Representative of the Fiscalis Programme 2007 within the Ministry of Finance. As Account Holder, managed the Malta Fiscalis Account held at the Central Bank of Malta, regarding the transfer of funds from the EU to Government Revenue, through Treasury, and then to the respective departments (VAT, Inland Revenue, Customs and Tax Compliance Unit) and the Ministry of Finance. Co-ordinated and managed the participation of approximately 50 officials from the various stakeholders within the Ministry of Finance to participate in various activities offered by the Fiscalis Programme such as seminars, exchanges, multilateral controls, committees and workshops. Budgeted and requested funds from the EU to finance Malta's participation in the Fiscalis Programme and the financial administration of such funds. As National Co-ordinator, the Directorate 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. Contributed towards the launching of the new Fiscalis Programme for the period 2008 to 2013.

CLAUDE G CUSCHIERI
Director (EU Paying Authority)

EU Affairs Directorate

The EU Affairs Directorate at the Ministry of Finance continued to strengthen its co-ordinating role during 2007, especially with the appointment of a new Assistant Director responsible for EU Affairs and the recruitment of another official at the Directorate. Two technical attachés and a research officer were also appointed in order to strengthen the Economic and Financial Unit at the Permanent Representation in Brussels. This was felt necessary since the EU Affairs Directorate is becoming more and more involved in the preparation for meetings at the EU institutions. The Directorate is heavily 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 is also responsible for the compilation of Malta's position in consultation with the technical experts from both the public and the private sector.

During 2007, the Directorate continued to co-ordinate the consultation process on proposals published by the EU Commission. An e-consultation process was launched on the Ministry's website that enables the general public to participate in formulating Malta's position on issues that are of general interest, such as the Commission proposal on the VAT reduced rates. The EU Affairs Directorate is also responsible for 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 transmits the approved memoranda to the House of Representatives for clearance by the Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs. The Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs is composed of members from both sides of the House of Representatives. A number of meetings were held with the Standing Committee in order to elaborate on the technical issues in hand. By the end of 2007, a total of 105 memoranda were prepared for presentation at the Inter-Ministerial Committee.

The Directorate continued to co-ordinate the drawing up of the briefing notes for the Prime Minister, the Parliamentary Secretary at the Ministry of Finance and Maltese delegations participating in the Economic and Financial Committee meetings. During 2007 and in view of Malta's changeover to the euro, Malta also became a member of the Eurogroup. This required that the Directorate co-ordinates the preparation of briefing notes for this meeting. The preparation of briefing notes requires close collaboration with line departments and ministries. However, in order to facilitate lobbying, the briefing notes include not only Malta's position, but also that of other Member States. The Directorate organises pre-ECOFIN briefing meetings, engaging all resident member state diplomats, in order to communicate Malta's position on the agenda items. The Directorate is also in contact with Maltese resident 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.

During 2007, the Directorate also continued to monitor 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* and notifying the transposition to the EU Commission through the established official channels. The Directorate is also responsible for updating the EU Regulatory Database and regularly informs line departments of legislative requirements stemming from the EU legislation. As such, the Directorate is responsible for monitoring legislation from its inception (as a proposal) to its adoption as Maltese legislation.

Another function of the Directorate is the co-ordination, compilation and clearing of questionnaires prepared by the EU institutions. During 2007, the EU Directorate continued to address 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)

Programme Implementation Directorate

The Programme Implementation Directorate is responsible for the management of the Ministry's Change Management Programme, including facilitating the implementation of the Ministry's endorsed policies, strategies and change management programmes and monitoring the implementation of the required programs and activities, including Customer Care initiatives and Green Initiatives, to ensure the efficient delivery of the Ministry Business Plan.

Customer Care Queries

This Directorate handles the Customer Care issues that fall under the remit of the Ministry of Finance. Complaints are received both from the local general public and even from non-locals and these may also submit complaints, suggestions and queries through the Ministry's website, the Customer Care Local Councils Network, *servizz.gov*, in writing, by telephone or by calling personally at the Ministry. The following table reports on the number of cases which were received by this Department through the various channels available to the public.

| Customer Care Issues - 2007 | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|------------|-----------|------------|----------------|----------|------------|
| | Customer Care Network | | Website | | Tel | Personal Calls | Letters | Total |
| | Clearance House | Local Councils | Local | Foreign | | | | |
| Totals | 85 | 9 | 293 | 78 | 204 | 11 | 2 | 682 |

Green Initiatives

On 8 January 2007 this Directorate organised a half-day seminar at the Music Hall, St James Cavalier, Valletta on Green Initiatives. During this discussion group, each focal point within each department and entity falling under the Ministry of Finance's remit gave a presentation on the work being carried out in favour of green initiatives at their respective offices.

This Directorate invited speakers who work on green public procurement from the Contracts Division, speakers from the University of Malta addressed the seminar on alternative sources of energy for the office and speakers from the Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure spoke on the new regulations on the energy performance of buildings. The panel discussion that concluded this meeting raised several points on the relevance of green initiatives in all the Ministry's departments and entities.

The Ministry of Finance made a financial contribution towards the 34U Campaign to replace the trees which were previously vandalised in the limits of Torri l-Ahmar in Mellieha. In November 2007, several green focal points from the Ministry of Finance accompanied the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Finance and planted several trees in the site.

This Directorate continuously promoted waste recycling throughout the Ministry and its departments.

AUDREY-ANNE CALLUS RANDICH
Director (Programme Implementation)

**Ministry for Justice
and Home Affairs**

Attorney General's Agency

In the course of the third year since the setting up of the Attorney General's Office as a government agency, emphasis was made, mainly, on the strengthening of the legal staff complement. Whilst the Agency continued with its other wide-spread activities, Government provided the necessary finances to enable the Agency to carry out its functions and obligations as outlined in the Government/Agency Agreement of 31 May 2005.

The Agency continued to provide Government with all the legal services and representations, as necessary, both domestically and overseas.

The Agency succeeded to conclude successfully its first recruitment exercise as a result of which nine lawyers and two legal procurators were engaged on a three-year renewable contract. In the meantime, the Agency has already embarked on a new recruitment process whereby it is envisaged that at least six new legal officers would be engaged to strengthen further the legal staff complement of the Agency. Through this recruitment exercise, the Agency would be in a better position to cater for the ever-increasing demands of legal services expected from Government.

As a result of this first recruitment exercise, the legal staff complement at the Office of the Attorney General's Agency as at the end of 2007 reads as follows: the Attorney General, the Deputy Attorney General, one Head of Unit (Prosecutions), seven Senior Lawyers, three Lawyers, seven Junior Lawyers, and five Legal Procurators.

In the course of the year, three lawyers terminated their employment with the Agency to join the private sector. Although the ongoing process for the recruitment of legal personnel can somehow make up for the departure of these lawyers, the Agency is not yet in the desirable position to attract seasoned lawyers backed with years of experience in the legal practice, mainly due to more competitive financial packages offered in the private sector. This is resulting in senior lawyers leaving the Office and being substituted by inexperienced or less experienced lawyers. This can certainly have a significant impact on overall performance if this trend continues.

At the end of 2007, 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.

The total revenue accruing to the Office of the Attorney General during 2007 was as follows:

| | | |
|----------------|-----------|--------------|
| Affidavits | Lm | 20 |
| Legal Fees | Lm | 6,066 |
| Miscellaneous | Lm | 74 |
| Procès Verbaux | Lm | 3,326 |
| Total | Lm | 9,486 |

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 of the Attorney General has, over time, become too contained to accommodate the legal personnel and administrative staff, which has increased substantially over the years. A stop gap arrangement was made some years ago when the former Main Guard in St George's Square was patched up to accommodate the staff engaged on civil matters. Over time and, in particular, with Malta joining the European Union, new additional and specialist responsibilities have been devolved on the Office of the Attorney General which, as a result of the enactment of Act IV of 2004, has been turned into a Government Agency.

These events have resulted in overcrowding and lack of space for files, specialised literature and equipment, making it indispensable to renew the efforts to find alternative accommodation. After years of negotiations, Casa Viani and Casa Corogna in Strait Street Valletta were vacated from squatters and it is now possible to proceed with the project to turn these premises into suitable offices to house the Agency.

Arrangements have been made to revise the original plans and to secure Planning Authority permission to implement them. The project is expected to take two/three years to complete because of the complexities involved in the demolition of the internal structure of the two buildings while recovering and restoring the façade of both premises. These difficulties are further compounded by the narrowness of Strait Street which makes it extremely difficult to manoeuvre the heavy plant necessary.

An application is currently being processed by MEPA and the Cultural Heritage Unit of the Authority has carried out an on-site inspection with the Agency's architects. As a result it has been agreed to file a parallel application which would allow specialised personnel to enter and make the whole premises safe and secure for the subsequent phase of controlled demolition and initial construction works while retaining the façade of both buildings.

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 2007 is given in the following table:

| CIVIL AND CONSTITUTIONAL ACTS – 2007 | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| SUPERIOR COURTS | |
| Judicial Letters | 58 |
| Writs of Summons | 75 |
| Appeals | 71 |
| Warrants of Seizure | - |
| Garnishee Orders | 9 |
| Miscellaneous Judicial Acts (including applications, statement of defence, notes of submissions): | |
| First Hall | 1,112 |
| Second Hall/Family | 101 |
| Statements of Defence | 62 |

INFERIOR COURTS

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Judicial Letters | 188 |
| Writs of Summons | 8 |
| Warrants of Seizure | 4 |
| Garnishee Orders | 22 |
| Miscellaneous Judicial Acts (including applications, statement of defence, notes of submissions) | 393 |

GOZO COURTS

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Judicial Letters | 52 |
| Writs of Summons/Statement of Defence | 3 |
| Warrants | - |
| Miscellaneous Judicial Acts | 72 |

Between 1 January and 31 December 2007, the Attorney General's Office dealt with court cases on behalf of ministries and government departments; 217 cases have been decided.

The current cases are subdivided as follows:

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| Current Cases | 914 |
| New Cases | 205 |
| Sine Die | 35 |
| Waiting for hearing | 38 |

New cases are classified as follows:

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| Constitutional cases | 66 |
| Appeals | 50 |
| Civil | 81 |
| Inferior | 8 |

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 office 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 way 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 2007 is given in the following table:

| | Jan/Mar | Apr/Jun | Jul/Sep | Oct/Dec | Total |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------------|
| Bills of Indictment | 23 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 46 |
| Cases remitted to Magistrates' Court for Judgement including Counter Orders | 84 | 119 | 31 | 52 | 286 |
| Consent for Summary Proceedings in terms of section 370(4) of the Criminal Code | | | | | 1,139 |
| New preliminary Investigations referred to the Attorney General by the enquiring Magistrate | 66 | 91 | 76 | 80 | 313 |
| New cases remitted to the Attorney General as per Article 392A(1) after a <i>Guilty Plea</i> is registered | 24 | 40 | 37 | 43 | 144 |
| Drug cases examined under Chapters 31 and 101 for the Attorney General's order to proceed | | | | | 498 |
| Miscellaneous applications | 375 | 363 | 363 | 393 | 1,494 |
| Appeal applications from Court of Magistrates including appeals under Article 392A(1) | 52 | 32 | 12 | 35 | 131 |
| <i>Procès-Verbaux</i> | | | | | |
| Malta | | | | | 1,189 |
| Gozo | | | | | 21 |
| Total | | | | | 1,210 |

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.

However, since the setting up of the Office of the Attorney General as an Agency, an EU Unit has been established and lawyers with specific expertise in EU matters have been assigned duties within this unit.

The functions of the recently established EU Unit within the Office of the Attorney General's Agency are principally as follows:

- Conducting litigation on behalf of Malta before the European Court of Justice and the Court of First Instance and advising ministries and departments on matters related to such litigation;
- Providing advice and guidance to ministries, departments and the Permanent Representation of Malta to the EU on EU legal questions;
- Representing Malta in a number of Council working groups;
- Provision of advice on the drafting of EU-related national legislation and vetting of regulations transposing EU Directives.

In the course of 2007, the EU Unit drafted and submitted a number of statements of defence in connection with a number of infringement actions against Malta which the Commission decided to refer to the European Court of Justice.

The EU Unit has also provided advice and assistance on a variety of EU legal issues and held meetings in connection thereto with a number of ministries including the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs, the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment, the Ministry for Family and Social Solidarity, the Ministry for Competitiveness and Communications and the Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure. The EU Unit has also assisted and conducted research on EU legal questions as required following requests to that effect from the EU Secretariat, OPM and the Permanent Representation of Malta to the EU.

The EU Unit has furthermore provided advice with regard to, and attended, a number of informal package meetings with the European Commission for the purpose of discussing possible infringements of Malta's obligations under EU law. These meetings generally take place as part of the pre-infringement proceedings conducted by the Commission, before it decides whether or not to issue a formal statement of objections against the Member State concerned.

The EU Unit was also involved in the process of negotiations which led to agreement by the Heads of State and Government of the EU Member States on the text of the Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community which was signed by the Member States on 13 December 2007.

During the year under review, the Attorney General personally, as Agent of the Government, pleaded before the European Court of Justice and made the first ever oral submissions in the Maltese language before that Court.

Lawyers from the Agency also represent Government in meetings of the Council of Europe Committees and of various other bodies of international organisations.

Lawyers 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 lawyers 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 lawyers 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.

Lawyers from the Office of the Attorney General also advise Government on proposed legislation, draft Bills in question, and 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 engaged in the translation of laws.

All subsidiary legislation is cleared from the legal aspect, translated and published under the supervision of this Office.

During the year, 32 Acts were passed through Parliament and 448 Legal Notices were published in the Government Gazette.

Moreover, 28 Bills were also drafted or vetted and similarly published in the Gazette. Local Councils Bye-Laws, besides several other Bills and Legal Notices, were drafted or vetted without yet being published due to consultations being still in progress.

In conclusion, one can safely say now that the Office of the Attorney General has established itself as a Government Agency and, within the framework of the Agreement signed between the Government and the Attorney General in May 2005, the Agency is meeting all the necessities and demands expected of it, notwithstanding the difficulties and daily routine problems which the staff of the Agency, both legal and clerical, have to cope with.

It is envisaged that, with the new intake of legal officers in the course of 2008, the Agency would be in a better position to honour its commitments and obligations as defined in the Government/Agency Agreement.

DR SILVIO CAMILLERI
Attorney General

Police Department

ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

STRATEGY AND PLANNING OFFICE

New Training Programme

The new training programme which was introduced in March 2007 to all divisional police officers was followed by 750 officers. Training, based on eight hours attendance on a monthly basis, included firearms handling, unarmed combat, and physical education (core subjects), as well as other important policing subjects (non-core subjects), which greatly assist police officers to perform their routine duties more efficiently.

Preparations were also taken in hand so that as from February 2008, office personnel and officers posted in specialised branches be included in this training programme. This means that as from early next year, all non-gazetted officers of the Force will be receiving police training on a regular basis.

New Police Academy

Following the Prime Minister 2007 Budget speech regarding the allocation of government funds for the building of a new Police Academy at *Ta' Kandja*, an *ad hoc* working group under the chairmanship of Assistant Commissioner Administration, met on two occasions in connection with the drawing up of the blue print of this project. Two on-site inspections with architects from the Works Division were also held. Further necessary action will be taken during 2008.

CEPOL Meetings in Malta

Superintendent in charge of the local CEPOL office was also tasked to make the necessary arrangements for the organisation of two meetings which were to be held in Malta under the auspices of CEPOL – the European Police College.

In fact, between 17 and 19 April 2007, the first step seminar *Domestic Violence – International Aspects and Experience* was held at the Corinthia Marina Hotel, St Julians. Thirty participants from various EU Member States participated. Supporting Member States for this international seminar were Germany, Slovakia, Slovenia and Portugal. The second step seminar, which dealt also with the same subject, was held in November in Slovenia.

On 1 October 2007, CEPOL's External Working Relations Group met at the Suncrest Hotel, Qawra. Seventeen participants attended the meeting. The Malta Police Force hosted this meeting as a gesture of hospitality following an official request filed by the Chair of this Working Group. Malta participated as an observer country since it does not form part of this Working Group. Mr Ulf Goransson, Director of CEPOL, also attended this event.

District of the Year Award

This year, the internal competition in connection with crime rate reduction held between all Police Districts in Malta and Gozo was won by Police District No. 8 (Birkirkara, Naxxar, Attard, Lija, Balzan, Għargħur, Bahar ic-Ċagħaq, l-Iklin, Madliena), which managed to reduce its crime rate by approximately 24%, which amounts to 377 less crimes when compared with the previous year (2006), as clearly illustrated in the table reproduced hereunder:

| District | Reported Crime by Districts | | | |
|--------------|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | 2006 | 2007 | Comparison | % Change |
| 1 | 1,089 | 1,204 | 115 | 10.56 |
| 2 | 925 | 862 | -63 | -6.81 |
| 3 | 1,154 | 1,133 | -21 | -1.82 |
| 4 | 1,264 | 1,174 | -90 | -7.12 |
| 5 | 1,331 | 1,122 | -209 | -15.70 |
| 6 | 2,061 | 1,773 | -288 | -13.97 |
| 6A | 2,642 | 2,533 | -109 | -4.13 |
| 7 | 1,567 | 1,337 | -230 | -14.68 |
| 8 | 1,502 | 1,145 | -357 | -23.77 |
| 9 | 2,064 | 2,016 | -48 | -2.33 |
| 10 | 690 | 600 | -90 | -13.04 |
| GHQ | 208 | 185 | -23 | -11.06 |
| Total | 16,497 | 14,039 | -2,458 | -14.90 |

Officer of the Year Award

This year, the award introduced in 2006 to identify that member of the Force who throughout the preceding twelve months had manifested exceptional commitment in service, thereby upholding the highest traditions of the Force was awarded to PC 1242 Geoffrey Gilson, posted at the Motor Transport Section. PC Gilson, whilst on off duty, was pivotal in managing to save the life of a disabled person who was trapped inside his car which caught fire at St Julians. The award will be presented to Police Constable 1242 Gilson during the Annual Reunion ceremony in 2008.

Certificates of Merit/Commendation

In 2007, the following certificates of merit/commendation were awarded by the Commissioner: Certificate of Merit for not availing of any sick leave for the past five years (25) and Certificate of Commendation/Merit for outstanding performance (33).

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. 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 presently manned by four officers, one police inspector and three 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

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, together with other counterparts from EU Member States, with new methods of policing as well as information gathering and thus enhancing efficiency and competency in the Malta Police Force.

On several occasions, the Malta Police Force has been requested by different organisations to host meetings in Malta. As a means of demonstrating our commitment, and with prior approval from the Commissioner, the EU office is often involved in the co-ordination and logistical requirements of such meetings and training courses.

The average number of invitations received for police officers to travel abroad during 2007 amounts to a total of 824 invitations. Average acceptance of participation to these invitations amounts to 43.4%. During the year more than 391 Police personnel attended a total of 358 EU Council and Commission meetings and other non-EU meetings abroad.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS UNIT

During 2007, the Internal Affairs Unit received and investigated 145 complaints against members of the Force. Besides, other investigations were initiated on the initiative of this unit such as those following inspections or on receipt of confidential information. Other investigations made by this Unit, which are not included in the under-mentioned list of complaints investigated, included breaches of discipline during supervisory patrols, failure to attend court sittings etc.

Eighty-nine of these complaints have been concluded whilst the remainder are still being investigated or pending. The outcome of those concluded ranged from action before a disciplinary board or internal disciplinary action to no further action as allegations did not result.

| Nature of Complaint | No. of cases |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Failure to enforce the law | 7 |
| Service not rendered | 46 |
| Breach of provisions of the Malta Police Act | 12 |
| Breach of provisions of the Laws of Malta | 26 |
| Others | 109 |
| Total | 200 |

Besides the above the Internal Affairs Unit also investigated and arraigned in court a police sergeant and a constable on breaches of the Criminal Code.

QUARTER MASTER STORES

During the current year various items were purchased and issued besides the usual uniform items and accoutrements. District officers, Mobile Squad, SAG and all other officers working on a shift basis were also issued with pepper spray plus the relative pouch after receiving the necessary training. The pepper spray complements the other items already issued on a personal issue basis such as handcuffs, flashlight and portable radio. A further 50 Glock 17 pistols plus their relative holsters were also purchased. This purchase forms part of other and future purchases aimed at modernising and standardising the weapons in use by the Force.

COMMUNITY & MEDIA RELATIONS UNIT

The following activities were carried out by the Community and Media Relations Unit throughout 2007:

Community Relations

- Processing of requests for information from government departments, students, NGOs and the general public;
- Handling of the Customer Care System and the OPRES (Online Police Reporting System) as regards requests for information;
- Co-ordination with different police units in relation to the Police Week programme of activities;
- Liaison with various NGOs who requested the services of police officers in order to conduct educational talks, performing of traffic safety activities, the services of the Police Band and Jazz Group as well as visits to the Police GHQ, Academy, Museum, Police Dog and Mounted Sections, etc;
- Co-ordination of the visit of the *Polizia di Stato* Band in connection with the Police Day Activities as well as the concert performed at the Mediterranean Conference Centre;
- Quarterly publication of the Police Magazine *il-Pulizija*, as well a preparation for an informative booklet about the Malta Police Force;
- Co-ordination of social activities organised for serving members and police pensioners, the Christmas Midnight Mass, Lent religious activities and also the various receptions held during the Police day and Christmas period;
- Preparation for the ceremony for the Officer and District of the Year, which also includes the Annual Reunion held on the first Sunday of the New Year;
- Publicity for and co-ordination of visitors to the annual Last Supper Display held at the Police GHQ.

| | Received | Settled | Pending |
|----------------------------------|----------|---------|---------|
| Customer Care Complaints | 779 | 550 | 229 |
| On-Line Reporting System (OPRES) | 465 | 409 | 56 |

Education on Crime Prevention

- Lectures in various schools as regards various educational issues which include traffic safety, child abuse, crime and drug prevention, cyber crime etc;
- Introduction of Crime Prevention material such as posters and book marks in relation to Crime – General Theft, Hold-Ups, Pick pocketing, Snatch and Grab, Theft of Vehicles and Theft from Vehicle. Said material was distributed to all local councils, at police stations and during talks in schools;
- TV clips.

Requests for Visits and Displays during 2007

| Visits by Schools, Local Councils, NGOs at Headquarters and other Sections | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|---------|------|---------|-------|------------|
| | Museum | Academy | Dogs | Mounted | Other | Total |
| Requests | 23 | 17 | 28 | 26 | 7 | 101 |

| Displays by Police at Schools, Local Councils, NGOs, etc | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------|---------|------|-----------|--------------|---------|------------|
| | Dogs | Mounted | Band | Jazz Band | Silent Drill | Traffic | Total |
| Requests | 49 | 20 | 34 | 14 | 10 | 17 | 144 |

| Other Requests | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Nature of Request | No. of Requests |
| Talks at Schools, Local Councils, NGO's, etc. | 103 |
| Interviews given to students, newspapers etc. | 30 |
| Participation/Interviews on TV and Radio Stations | 253 |
| Requests for information received by e-mail, fax and post from journalists, students and other persons | 149 |
| Requests for filming (borrowing of Police equipment) | 25 |
| Others (Mascot, Mobile Squad, SAG) | 21 |
| Total | 581 |

Media Relations

- Daily monitoring of news both visual and radio, newspapers and internet, publications of press releases and co-ordination of press conferences;
- Recording and monitoring of news bulletins and programmes concerning the Police;
- Arrangements for interviews of police personnel and processing of information for the Radio, TV and print media as requested;
- Liaison with producers from Net TV (Bongu NET), Super 1 (One Breakfast and Kalamita), Channel 22 (22AM and 22PM) and PBS (Bongu) 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;
- Participation on a weekly basis on Radio Malta regarding Crime Prevention Tips and other related subjects;
- Liaison with local producers as regards requests for filming for local programmes (requesting police assistance, uniforms and liaison with other police departments).

| Type of Activity | No. of Performances |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Issue of Press Releases | 626 |
| Editorial Meetings/Crime Conference/Press Briefings | 8 |
| Replies to articles published through the Media | 29 |
| Total | 663 |

HUMAN RESOURCES BRANCH

The Human Resources Office of the Police Department was once again committed during 2007 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 Branch also performed the following activities:

- *Retirements:* During 2007 the number of personnel who retired/resigned from the Police Force was 59 (2 Superintendent; 5 Inspector; 3 Sergeant Major; 10 Police Sergeant; 1 Women Police Sergeant; 29 Police Constable; 9 Women Police Constable).
- *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 two calls for applications to join the Police Force in the rank of constable. In the first call, a total of 346 applications (209 males; 137 females) were submitted, which were assessed and interviewed accordingly. In the second call, a total of 282 applications (114 females; 168 males) were submitted. 135 new members (103 males; 32 females) were recruited and underwent a four-month training course at the Police Academy from October 2006 and February 2007. The second recruitment consisting of 102 new members (67 males; 35 females) completed a three-month training course at the Police Academy between 13 September and 27 November. Another call for applications was issued on 7 September and a total of 118 applications were received at this office. Same were duly assessed and interviewed and will commence their training course in 2008.

- *Promotions*: During the year, 79 promotions were effected (Police Constables appointed to 3rd Class Police Sergeants).
- *Disciplinary Sitings*: This Office also issued disciplinary charges for offences against the Police Act. Fourteen summary procedure sittings were held, during which 334 cases were heard.
- *Meetings Office*: During the year, this Office received and processed a total of 56 applications for the holding of public activities - 5 meetings, 36 public discussions, 5 peace marches/rallies/walks, 4 demonstrations and 6 mass meetings.
- *Biometric Fingerprint Reader*: During the year, the biometric fingerprint reader introduced at the General Head Quarters and at the Mechanical Transport Garage was monitored on a daily basis. 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.

UPGRADING AND RENOVATION OF POLICE PREMISES

Efforts that succeeded during preceding years to upgrade police stations and other police premises as much as possible continued progressively during the year under review. Maintenance and upgrading works were initiated and completed in a number of police premises. Refurbishments are actively in progress in other police premises. Other everyday requirements in the respective police stations and branches, such as whitewashing, plumbing, electricity and other needs were taken in hand on a regular basis, in order to keep the best working environment in all police premises, for the best interest of the public in general and the staff working thereat.

IT SERVICES

ICT Infrastructure

Police Stations

A tender for the upgrading of five police stations was awarded during 2007. This project involved the upgrading of local area networks of the Valletta, Qormi, Paola, Hamrun, Birkirkara and Mosta Police Stations. Works in these stations have been completed.

Police GHQ - International Relations Unit

Part of the Schengen Integration Project required the extension of the Police network to the newly built International Relations Unit (IRU). The project was implemented during the first half of 2007, providing the IRU with access to all necessary services. Each section within the IRU (i.e., SIRENE Bureau, Europol and Interpol) was provided with a distinct service facilitating access to the different services as required by each unit. This project was an integral part of the SIS Evaluation process and was critical for the success of Malta's membership to Schengen.

Malta International Airport

Major infrastructural changes were carried out within the Malta International Airport in preparation for both the SIS 1 and SIS II project. A new network was laid, integrating the existing border control checkpoints together with the new Schengen channels.

Works have also started to establish a Backup Data Centre capable of housing police systems. This requires both ICT infrastructural changes and the strengthening of the locations perimeters in compliance with EU and Schengen standards. Works are expected to be completed in time for the migration to SIS II.

Seaport – Forni & Cruise Liner Terminals

Similar to the above, major infrastructural changes were carried out within Seaport in preparation for both the SIS I and SIS II project. A new network was laid, integrating the existing border control checkpoints together with the new Schengen channels.

Police GHQ

As part of a consolidation exercise, several connections pertaining to the internal Police Headquarters' network links were replaced in order to provide better service. These links were installed at the Quarter Master Stores, Forensic Department, Eurodac Office and the Special Branch. A direct dual fibre link was passed directly from the IT Services Block to Control Room to ensure that added resilience to this important office.

Police IT Section/NSIS BLock

Given that the IT Services were designated as the entity responsible to house and manage the National Schengen Information System (NSIS), major infrastructural works were completed. The IT Services computer room was enlarged to allow for the housing of both SIS and National Police Systems.

New security measures and policies were introduced that adequate protection was given to both international and national system operating from the IT Services. All measures implemented are according to international and national security standards. Offices within the complex were re-organised to ensure that proper segregation was introduced limiting access to the Police Computer Room.

All the changes implemented were the subject of an intense process necessary to establish whether Malta could become a member of the Schengen Group. The IT infrastructure and security measure introduced were approved by our Schengen peers and NSIS MT is now a fully operative member of Schengen.

Police Systems

False and Authentic Documents Online

New crypto boxes were replaced during the first quarter of 2007. These crypto boxes now permit the Forensic users of the above system to access information directly. This information is shared among all the EU Member States. Following the establishment of the afore-mentioned links, there are plans to extend this system to various police sections, particularly station and Border Control officers.

Europol

A video conference unit was installed at the Europol Office during October. This facility will permit Europol offices across the EU to communicate with each other visually without the need to travel.

SIRENE

The SIRENE office was issued with 11 workstations to be used by 24/7 operators, for the SIRENE, PIRS II, NSL and other systems. An additional two PISCES workstations were allocated to this unit.

In November, Malta officially joined the SIRPIT Group, thus a special unit complete with specific fingerprint software was installed. This system will permit the SIRENE office to exchange information on fingerprints.

Border Control - PISCES

The Border Control system, namely PISCES, was modified to ensure compliance with Schengen requirements. This included the creation of specific web services necessary to ensure that any passenger checks would interrogate both SIS and national stop list data. The PISCES system was also the subject of an evaluation process carried out in September 2007. PISCES was designated as compatible with Schengen requirements. These adjustments were performed through a joint effort between the PISCES development team, the IT Services and MITTS.

An additional six workstations were deployed at Seaport, so as to equip all the new booths for the Non/Schengen terminal.

Police Incident Reporting System II (PIRS II)

September 2007 saw the launching of the Police Incident Reporting System II. The new PIRS II integrates reports related to crime and non-crime incidents, lost and found property and missing persons. One main feature includes full integration with the SIS and NSL. This in effect means that a work flow system has been introduced, overseeing the process of creating, updating and deleting alerts related to wanted persons, vehicles, documents and firearms.

The system facilitates the process of tracing and securing wanted persons, vehicles, documents and firearms working in parallel with the national SIRENE Bureau. The workflow system is designed to provide a fully integrated solution. Additional developments are expected during 2008 to include additional features and to incorporate road accident reports.

PIRS II was the main focus of the Schengen Peer Evaluation carried out in September 2007 and received positive reviews by our Schengen partners. Works have already started to ensure that PIRS II is compatible with the new SISII system that is expected to be implemented during the last quarter of 2008.

By the end of 2008, PIRS II was made available to all police stations, Control Room and Border Control Units. The system will be made available to all specialised branches during the first half of 2008.

National Stop List (NSL)

The NSL was launched during August 2007, establishing an integrated stop list for all police systems. This is a first for the Police Force as traditionally the stop list was considered and limited to border control systems. This in effect means that if a person vehicle, document or firearms is listed as stolen or lost by any police officer, the item is immediately flagged as wanted throughout the Force. This is an important tool to identify and retrieve persons, vehicles, documents and firearms at a national level. The NSL is considered to be an important tool in relation to national security.

SIS II

Preparations for SIS II also continued during 2007. One of the major efforts was the management of Transition Facility Funds related to: a) the integration of SIS II with national applications and b) the supply of computer equipment necessary to achieve this goal.

An agreement was reached with the Italian Ministry for Home Affairs that secured the utilisation of the Italian SIS II and SIRENE II solutions. Various preparatory meetings have been carried out to ensure that SISII milestones are achieved. During the latter part of 2007, the first SIS II gateway was installed at the Police Computer Centre.

Office Automation

Computer Policies

A total of 242 computers were joined with the Police active directory (server) and now fall under security policies issued according to rank and location. All 300 users that use these computers were issued with their respective passwords in order to access these computers. Users have their own profiles with an additional benefit to store information on a central server as a secure backup source. This also provides additional control and uniformity for upgrades, patches and software distribution.

Computers at the Police Orderly areas were secured as stipulated with the Schengen Recommendations and Best Practice Manual. This in effect means that only authorised systems can be used from these work stations.

Small Database Development

A new database related to Solved Crimes was developed for the Criminal Investigation Department. This database forms part of a portfolio of 10 similar databases that were created by IT Service personnel. This new database is used by all CID officers and the Crime Intelligence Analysis Unit (CIAU).

Computer Systems – Deployment and Enhancements

As part of the yearly audit and because of the ever-expanding use of IT, during 2007, a total number of 47 computers and 28 laser printers were acquired and distributed across all the police stations and other police units. Fifteen other PCs were bought for a new classroom to provide training facilities to all police officers making use of police systems. This was crucial during the run-up towards Schengen integration. Thirty-five computers were upgraded by the Technicians Lab from Pentium III to Pentium IV.

E-mail

A total of e-mail accounts were created to ensure that communications is improved both internally within the department and externally.

NSIS Unit

Core to the Schengen Integration Project is the setting up of the National Schengen Information System (NSIS) Unit, which was established as a separate entity within the IT Services. The setting up of NSIS MT was also evaluated during the Schengen Peer Review exercise carried out in September 2007. Personnel were assigned to this unit with the specific objective of providing 24x7 supports for all computer communications between NSIS MT and C.SIS in Strasbourg.

NSIS MT is also responsible for the security and maintenance of Schengen data stored within the Police Computer Centre and for the monitoring of all police stations links. The primary objective of NSIS MT is to oversee the smooth operations, regular backups and monitoring of all Police and EU servers. Their responsibility extends also to all data centres, including MIA, Seaport and the IRU.

NSIS MT has also been assigned a dual role and acts as a 24x7 Help Desk for all police officers providing assistance on all police systems, first level support and troubleshooting, creation of accounts and resetting of passwords.

PIRS II Training

In the build-up to Schengen integration, the IT Services were entrusted with the training of police stations orderlies, sergeants and officers in the use of PIRS II, NSIS and NSL. This was a critical success factor in

Malta's integration with the SIS. Given the fact that training is an ongoing process, a resource was made available to ensure that PIRS II training will continue throughout 2008, guaranteeing that officers have adequate knowledge to make use of PIRS II and Schengen related applications.

CYBER CRIME UNIT

During July 2007, the Cyber Crime Unit facilitated a *Digital Forensics & Investigations Consultation* programme organised by the US Department of State under the ATA Programme. This event was made possible through the good relationship between the US Embassy and the Malta Police Force. Members of the Unit were accompanied by selected delegates from the Vice Squad and Economic Crimes Unit.

The Cyber Crime Unit was also actively involved in police co-operation initiatives. This included involvement in a series of international operations that involved Maltese nationals who were identified as being involved in the downloading of material related to child abuse. During the year the unit was also an active participant in international fora such as COSPOL – CRCAMP, Interpol, Europol and the G8 High-Tech Unit. The unit also hosted four exchangees (from Poland, Latvia, Romania and Sweden) under the CEPOL- AGIS exchange programme. During the exchange period, each individual student was given the opportunity to learn how the Malta Police investigates and manages cyber crime.

The Unit chaired the e-Security Working Group during 2007. Working mainly with the Malta Communications Authority, the Ministry for Industry, Investment & Information Technology, and MITTS, the main deliverable was a draft e-Security Strategy that will be presented during 2008 to be adopted at national level.

Members of the Cyber Crime Unit were also involved in a number of presentations including a meeting for Commonwealth Member States, MCAST, various schools, local councils and parents. Delegates from the Unit also attended a number of training courses including two AGIS funded courses related to *Wireless Technologies* and *Mobile Phone Investigations* and two courses organised locally related to *Digital Evidence* organised by QinetiC.

The Cyber Crime Unit continued to be actively involved, both on a national and international level, in the investigations of crimes involving technology during 2007. A total of 172 official reports were handled by the unit incorporating a wide range of incidents.

| Request for assistance – Type of Offence | |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Adult Pornography | 1 |
| Child Abuse - Child Pornography | 5 |
| Child Abuse - Child Pornography Trafficking | 2 |
| Child Abuse - Defilement of Minor | 6 |
| Computer Misuse - Alteration of Data/Software | 7 |
| Computer Misuse - Denial of Service | 6 |
| Computer Misuse - Disclosure of Data/Software | 2 |
| Computer Misuse - Disclosure of Password/Access Code | 1 |
| Computer Misuse - Output of Data/Software | 2 |
| Computer Misuse - Unauthorised Access | 12 |
| Computer Misuse - Unauthorised use of email | 15 |
| Copyright Infringement | 3 |
| Defamation | 19 |
| Email Tracing | 7 |
| Fraud | 46 |
| Illegal Gambling | 2 |
| Information Gathering | 16 |
| Prostitution | 1 |
| Threats | 19 |
| Total | 172 |

| Analysed Equipment | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| Computer systems | 68 |
| Hard disk (internal/external) | 77 |
| Compact discs/DVDs | 980 |
| 3.5 inch Floppy diskettes | 287 |
| Other media | 25 |
| Documents/logs/paper evidence/etc | 3 |
| Total | 1,440 |

STATISTICS OFFICE

During 2007 the Statistics Office produced a number of annual, bi-monthly and weekly reports covering a variation of subjects including crime, road accident and miscellaneous statistics. These reports were used in a number of areas particularly in response to parliamentary questions, police senior staff requirements, request from the general public and a number of institutions such as the National Statistics Office, the European Union, Interpol, Europol and the United Nations.

PROSECUTIONS UNIT

Since its inception in October 2000 and the parameters of its duties as set out in GHQ circular 83/2000, the Prosecutions Unit has sought to function as 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, especially with regard to the new requirements set out by EU legal instruments and the necessary academic training, there has been some comprehensive change in its active role and personnel complement.

For the past year, in continuance with its previous occupation, 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 increment in personnel, has taken over the prosecution of 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 it has also taken on the prosecution of Criminal cases.

Data Protection has been assigned to this office as an integral part of the Police system where the Head of the Prosecution Unit has been designated as the Police Data Protection Officer. Here the Unit deals with Data Protection issues being raised both within the Department and in its daily contact with other government entities and external requests.

In view of legislative changes occurring within the Criminal Law sphere, both substantive and procedural, this Unit has been ever 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 the Unit's limited resources, requiring attendance at meetings at EU level within the MDG (Multi Disciplinary Group), Police Co-operation WP, implementation of the Prüm Decision and Criminal Records (Expert Group and the Exchange of Information WP). This section has been deeply involved in the process of application of the Schengen Convention and has been heavily committed to the evaluation process being directed towards Malta as a whole and the Police Force in particular. We have in fact undergone specific evaluations, dealing with Data Protection, Police Co-operation, Sea and Air border evaluations as well as the Schengen Information System evaluation. In these evaluations, this office has been the prime mover, concerned not only with the expected presentations, but also with the organisation of the whole event and with the subsequent Scheval report corrections and discussions at EU level meetings wherein we were finally given the green light and Malta's application to join the Schengen area approved.

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 Division amongst others. A general and however most important involvement of this unit was therefore in the drafting and finalisation of diverse Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with differing entities on data sharing. These entities included the AFM, Customs, VISET, MIA, VGT, DCA, Freeport and OMAS. Underway are still MOUs and SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) with the Telephone and Internet Service Providers, the Health Division and the Employment and Training Corporation. There is a drive to upgrade old MOUs (Appogg e.g.) as a result of the experiences gained with the new MOUs and the inception of new MOUs in particular with Virtu Ferries and ADT.

Our commitment to the further education of members of the Force has resulted in 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. Our commitment to the Police Academy is still very strong and lectures were given in a number of fields, namely Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure, Subsidiary Criminal legislation, Code of Police Laws, Juvenile Law, Human Rights, Industrial Legislation and Data Protection to the two recruit courses and the Inspector Cadet course held in 2007.

SENIOR STAFF OFFICE

During the period under review, this Office carried out the following duties:

- *Parliamentary Questions*: 465 PQs were dealt with.
- *Mutual Help Association*: The amount of Lm13,400 was processed by the Mutual Help Association on behalf of the Commissioner of Police and distributed to 20 families of deceased ex-members of the Force; the sum of Lm5,778 was collected from 963 members (ex-servicemen).
- *International Police Association*: This office 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. 75 foreign IPA members and their families visited the Police GHQ while spending their holidays in Malta.
- *General Collection*: During 2007, this Office handled the sum of about Lm40,000 in respect of the quarterly contributions made by all members of the Force towards the Mutual Help Association and the Police Association. Reconciliation is made prior to depositing the funds at the Accounts Section.

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The main role of the Finance and Administration Section, within the Police Department, is to provide financial and administrative support services to the line operations of the Police Force. As an ongoing process, administrative and financial guidance 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.

Continuous monitoring and control was exercised on the expenditure of funds allocated in the budgetary estimates for the year under review, while the Ministry of Finance was provided with financial returns on a regular basis. Funds as approved in the Budget for 2007 were allocated under the five cost centres of the Police Department while the Department's estimates for 2008 were compiled and forwarded to the Director Corporate Services in the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs.

During 2007, the two major roles assigned directly to the Assistant Director (Finance and Administration) responsible for this Section, namely the Euro Changeover and the Better Regulation exercise, apart from the other normal responsibilities, were both still being managed. As for the Better Regulation exercise, meetings prepared by the BR Unit and the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs were attended and reports on the state of the measures proposed were duly submitted to the Unit through the Ministry. On the other hand, work on the euro changeover in the Police Department was intensified, especially nearing end of year, with the training of approximately 200 uniformed and civilian personnel during November/December

2007. Moreover preparations were made for the front loading of all the 33 cash points in the Police Department with euro cash in preparation for €-day, a task that was carried out efficiently and successfully.

Accounts/Procurement Section

During 2007, the Accounts and Procurement Section, other than being engaged in the normal day-to-day purchases and payments of items required for Police use, were also responsible for the preparation of tenders for major items of a capital nature. These included 20 new motor vehicles for the mobile squad, breath analysers and the new digital photographic laboratory which are all expected to be delivered early in 2008.

This section was also involved in the procurement and payment of items for the setting up of the new International Relations Unit (IRU) which has now been completed. This included the building, IT infrastructure and other finishing works.

During the year, the purchasing and payment of relative bills in connection with the ongoing refurbishing project of the Police General Headquarters pursued and now the GHQ internal yard is nearing completion.

Training programmes in connection with the euro changeover were also followed by the personnel at this section and all necessary preparations in this regard were carried out.

The following is a table showing expenditure during the years 2006 and 2007:

| Recurrent Expenditure | 2006 Lm | 2007 Lm |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Personal Emoluments | 14,861,883 | 15,603,964 |
| Operational and Maintenance Expenses | 1,836,757 | 1,550,178 |
| Special Expenditure | 3,989 | 3,843 |
| Total | 16,702,629 | 17,157,985 |
| Capital Expenditure | 227,806 | 290,000 |

Revenue Section

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 | 2007 Lm |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Sporting Licences | 420,766 |
| Traffic Offence Tickets paid at the Traffic Fines Office | * 625 |
| Miscellaneous Licences | 23,961 |
| Miscellaneous Fines | ** 15,373 |
| Permits/Certificates | 113,988 |
| Fees on Visas | 419,606 |
| Service to Third Parties | 156,076 |
| Road Accident Reports | 14,394 |
| Miscellaneous Reimbursements | 12 |
| Miscellaneous Receipts | *** 33,366 |
| Total | 1,198,167 |

* 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.

*** The sharp increase is due to payments of penalties effected by Police personnel who opted to resign from the Police Force prior to terminating a period of five years they were bound to serve in the Police force after pursuing a course sponsored by Government.

Salaries Section

During 2007 this Section effected adjustments for the processing of salaries, allowances, overtime, bonus and income supplement of about 2,142 uniformed and civilian staff. During the same year, returns pertaining to extra duty performed by Police personnel for third parties (e.g. banks, sports activities and private functions etc) have also been processed.

Human Resources (Civilian Staff) Section

In 2007 the Department's civilian staff complement stood at 142, of whom 65 were assigned duties of Immigration Officers at the Malta International Airport on a 7-day weekly shift roster. Up till 30 September, the Department sponsored three apprentices under the Trainee Apprenticeship Scheme and eight apprentices under the Extended Skills Training scheme. Presently two apprentices are being sponsored under the ESTS Scheme.

This 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 promotions and salary scale progressions including the submission of special reports and drawing up of letters of appointment/progression, manages the PSC Disciplinary Regulations and implements measures and benefits related to collective agreements. The Section also processes parliamentary questions and participates in tendering procedures.

Secretariat/Registry Services

This Section is responsible for 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 offices at the Police General Headquarters.

During 2007, this Section had to deal with about 15,000 letters received from government departments and authorities and from the general public. About 6,700 new files were opened and the correspondence received was logged in the corresponding files. It is estimated that approximately 14,000 letters and reports were typed. Some 3,000 government and 39,000 private letters were mailed from this section.

Other duties being part of the daily routine of this Section, such as tracking of Death Certificates, Judicial Acts, *Procès Verbaux*, and Tickets of Admission in respect of unpaid court fines were also carried out. Additional to the registry work assigned to this Section, the Secretariat is responsible for the forwarding of notifications to the Director of Information about the deviation of traffic on various occasions such as village feasts and any other outdoor public/political activities.

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.

COURSES/SEMINARS

| Course/Seminar | Frequency | Participants |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Criminal Code Amendments and Procedure | 12 | 457 |
| SIS Sirene Matters | 3 | 74 |
| SIS END Users | 2 | 43 |
| ATA Digital Forensics & Investigation (IDFI) Consultation by US Department of State (Antiterrorism) | 1 | 4 |
| PIRS 2 & SIS Issues | 1 | 52 |
| Bail Conditions | 1 | 46 |
| Journalism to Senior Police Officers-Tumas Fenech Foundation | 3 | 88 |
| Total No of Participants | | 764 |

DAY TRAINING

As from March 2007, a new training scheme was introduced and all divisional police (totalling 750 officers) were given eight hours training on a monthly basis. This training included both core subjects (firearm handling & shooting, physical education, unarmed combat) and non-core subjects (academic subjects related to police duties) which will help police officers perform their routine duties more efficiently and in a more professional way.

OTHER TRAINING

| Schengen and SIS Sirene Matters (Sergeant Majors/Sergeants/Constables) | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 17/10/2006 – 02/02/2007 | Continuation from 2006 of Police Schengen Border Control for MIA Police/Immigration Officers/Seaport and Security personnel | 103 |
| May | Seminar on SIS END Users | 61 |
| Total | | 164 |

| Police Personnel & Civilians attached to the Police Department | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| July 2007 | ATA Digital Forensics & Investigation (IDFI) Consultation by US Department of State (Antiterrorism) | 8 |
| November 2007 | Euro Changeover – Handling of cash | 95 |
| December 2007 | Euro Changeover – Handling of cash | 72 |
| Total | | 175 |

| Recruitments & Promotions Training Courses | | |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------|
| March – May 2007 | Promotion leading to the Rank of Sergeant | 120 |
| September 2006 – February 2007 | 27 th Recruits Basic Training Course | 135 |
| September – November 2007 | 28 th Recruits Basic Training Course | 102 |
| September – December 2007 | 7 th Officer Cadet Training Course | 27 |
| Total | | 384 |

EDUCATIONAL VISITS

During the year, 29 educational/cultural visits comprising a total of 1,583 visitors were welcomed at the Police Academy.

POLICE ACADEMY BOARD

During the year, the Police Academy Board met twice to discuss: the call for applications in the rank of Police Inspectors; police recruitment in the rank of Constable for the year 2007 and relative curriculum; the possible re-allocation of the Police Academy from its present seat at Fort St Elmo; the introduction of rules and regulations governing courses and examinations held at the Academy; and training for Gozitans in Gozo.

INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT

The investigation of serious criminal offences remains the primary role of the Criminal Investigation Department. Besides, it has always been the principle of this Department that reducing the risk and fear of crime is a task for the police and the community working together. Therefore, this Department took on board another equally important role of proactively addressing criminality in tandem with local councils and this with a view of preventing and reducing crime. For this purpose, a number of CID officers have been assigned to examine and identify new crime trends. Such analysis serves for the implementation of new strategies to prevent and/or detect crime and to promote crime prevention awareness with the community. As a result, meetings with local councils were held regularly throughout the year.

An additional task which was entrusted to this Department during 2007 was the security of the distribution of the euro. Officers from this Department were engaged in covert and overt operations during the preparation for the euro changeover.

During the same year, a total of 894 CID case files were originated for investigation. These investigations led to the arrest and interviewing of 1,441 persons, out of whom 629 were detained for more than 6 hours. As a result, 337 cases were solved, of which 294 cases were presented in court with a total of 191 arraignments that involved the prosecution of 252 persons. Of these, 23 persons were under the age of 18. Out of the 337 cases solved during the year, 45 cases resulting in 26 arraignments totalling to 70 offences and involving 29 persons are yet to be prosecuted in Court.

| Solved Arraignments of Offences - 2007 | Arraignments | Offences presented in Court | Persons Arraigned | Over 18 yrs | | Minors under 18yrs | |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------|-----------|--------------------|----------|
| | | | | Males | Females | Males | Females |
| Arraignments of offences solved in 2007 | 191 | 743 | 252 | 204 | 18 | 29 | 1 |
| Arraignments of offences prior to 2007 | 44 | 148 | 61 | 49 | 5 | 7 | 0 |
| Total | 235 | 891 | 313 | 253 | 23 | 36 | 1 |

| Solved Offences during 2007 | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Type of Offence | No |
| Possession and trafficking of heroin, cocaine and methadone (Govt. Notice 292-1939) | 4 |
| Reparation or production of false documents (Section 103 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Perjury in certain criminal trials (Section 104 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| False swearing (Section 108 Chapter 9) | 2 |
| Fabrication of false evidence (Section 110(1) Chapter 9) | 4 |
| Simulation of offence (Section 110(2) Chapter 9) | 3 |
| Transport or display of weapons (Section 13 Chapter 480) | 1 |
| Licence of dealer (Section 14 Chapter 480) | 1 |
| Driving vehicle without a driving licence (Section 14(11) Legal Notice 47 of 2004) | 1 |
| Driving vehicle without a driving licence (Section 15.1a(3) Chapter 65) | 9 |
| Prison breaking (Section 152 Chapter 9) | 2 |
| Damage to monuments, etc (Section 161 Chapter 9) | 2 |
| Forgery of documents (Section 167 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Use of forged debentures or documents (Section 169 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Forgery of public, commercial or private bank documents by person etc. (Section 183 Chapter 9) | 2 |
| Malicious use of false documents (Section 184 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| False declarations or information to a public authority (Section 188 Chapter 9) | 17 |
| Other kinds of forgery and use of false documents (Section 189 Chapter 9) | 5 |
| Transfer of firearms etc to unauthorized persons (Section 20 Chapter 480) | 1 |
| Wilful homicide (Section 211 Chapter 9) | 4 |
| Bodily harm (Section 214 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Grievous bodily harm (Section 216 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Other cases of grievous bodily harm (Section 218 Chapter 9) | 1 |

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Absolute or conditional discharge (Section 22 Chapter 446) | 9 |
| Slight bodily harm (Section 221 Chapter 9) | 10 |
| Traffic of a person of age for the purpose of exploitation etc. (Section 248A Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Threats by means of writings (Section 249 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Blackmail (Section 250 Chapter 9) | 2 |
| Private violence (Section 251 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Harassment (Section 251A Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Fear of violence (Section 251B Chapter 9) | 2 |
| Defamation (Section 252 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Aggravated theft (Section 261 Chapter 9) | 192 |
| Theft aggravated by violence (Section 262 Chapter 9) | 7 |
| Theft aggravated by means (Section 263 Chapter 9) | 24 |
| Theft aggravated by amount (Section 267 Chapter 9) | 31 |
| Theft aggravated by person (Section 268 Chapter 9) | 5 |
| Theft aggravated by place (Section 269 Chapter 9) | 5 |
| Theft aggravated by time (Section 270 Chapter 9) | 16 |
| Theft aggravated by the nature of the thing stolen (Section 271 Chapter 9) | 13 |
| Simple theft (Section 284 Chapter 9) | 14 |
| Possession of stolen articles by person previously convicted of theft etc. (Section 286 Chapter 9) | 6 |
| Unjustified possession of monies, articles, etc by person previously convicted (Section 287 Chapter 9) | 2 |
| Theft for mere use of thing stolen (Section 288 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Punishment in case of 2nd or subsequent conviction for theft (Section 289 Chapter 9) | 7 |
| Commission of an offence during the operational period of suspended sentence (Section 28B Chapter 9) | 9 |
| Misappropriation (Section 293 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Fraud relating to insurance Section 295 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Tampering, removal, etc of chassis or engine number (Section 298D Chapter 9) | 3 |
| Driving or permitting someone to drive vehicle without insurance policy (Section 3 Chapter 104) | 3 |
| General Prohibition (Section 3 Chapter 480) | 5 |
| Obtaining money or property by false pretences (Section 308 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Other cases of fraudulent gain (Section 309 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Arson to the common danger (Section 317 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Arson without danger of life (Section 318 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Spoil, damage or injury in general (wilful damage) (Section 325 Chapter 9) | 82 |
| Receiving stolen property (Section 334 Chapter 9) | 87 |
| Failure to inform, etc property (Section 334A Chapter 9) | 3 |
| Unlawful access to, or use of, information (Section 337C Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Contraventions affecting public order (Section 338 Chapter 9) | 2 |
| Contraventions against the person (Section 339 Chapter 9) | 3 |
| Attempted offence (Section 41(1) Chapter 9) | 21 |
| Accomplice in crime (Section 42 Chapter 9) | 3 |
| Custody of arms proper (Section 47 Chapter 480) | 2 |
| Conspiracy. (Section 48A Chapter 9) | 4 |
| Recidivist (Section 49 Chapter 9) | 90 |
| Licence to keep, possess, export or import firearms, weapons and ammo (Section 5 Chapter 480) | 9 |
| Effect of previous conviction for crime (Section 50 Chapter 9) | 8 |
| Wilful damage or destruction of cultural property (Section 53 Chapter 445) | 2 |
| Production of licence (Section 54 Chapter 480) | 1 |
| Possession of firearms during commission of a crime (Section 55 Chapter 480) | 12 |
| Breach of bail conditions (Section 579(2) Chapter 9) | 4 |
| Licence to carry knives (Section 6 Chapter 480) | 2 |
| Unlawful assembly (Section 68 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Probation order (Section 7 Chapter 446) | 11 |
| White slave traffic (Section 7(2) Chapter 63) | 1 |
| Cultivation of cannabis (Section 8(c) Chapter 101) | 1 |
| Possession of the plant of cannabis (Section 8(d) Chapter 101) | 1 |
| Trafficking of the plant of cannabis (Section 8(e) Chapter 101) | 1 |
| Spreading of false news (Section 82 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Unlawful exercise of public functions (Section 84 Chapter 9) | 1 |

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Illegal arrest, detention or confinement (Section 86 Chapter 9) | 13 |
| Reviling or threatening judge, attorney general, magistrate or juror (Section 93 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Vilification, threats or bodily harm against other public officers (Section 95 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Assault or resistance (Section 96 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Total | 813 |

| Offences committed prior to 2007 but presented in court in 2007 | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Possession and trafficking of heroin, cocaine and methadone (Government Notice 292-1939) | 2 |
| False swearing (Section 108 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Fabrication of false evidence (Section 110(1) Chapter 9) | 2 |
| Simulation of offence (Section 110(2) Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Driving vehicle without driving licence (Section 14(11) Legal Notice 47.2004) | 4 |
| Forgery of documents (Section 167 Chapter 9) | 2 |
| Use of forged debentures or documents (Section 169 Chapter 9) | 2 |
| Forgery of public, commercial or private bank documents by person etc. (Section 183 Chapter 9) | 2 |
| Malicious use of false documents (Section 184 Chapter 9) | 4 |
| False declarations or information to a public authority (Section 188 Chapter 9) | 3 |
| Other cases of grievous bodily harm (Section 218 Chapter 9) | 2 |
| Absolute or conditional discharge (Section 22 Chapter 446) | 2 |
| Slight bodily harm (Section 221 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Private violence (Section 251 Chapter 9) | 3 |
| Harassment (Section 251A Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Fear of violence (Section 251B Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Defamation (Section 252 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Aggravated theft (Section 261 Chapter 9) | 24 |
| Commission of an offence during the operational period of suspended sentence (Section 28B Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Misappropriation (Section 293 Chapter 9) | 2 |
| Fraud relating to insurance (Section 295 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| General Prohibition (Section 3 Chapter 480) | 2 |
| Obtaining money or property by false pretences (Section 308 Chapter 9) | 2 |
| Other cases of fraudulent gain (Section 309 Chapter 9) | 2 |
| Spoil, damage or injury in general (wilful damage) (Section 325 Chapter 9) | 11 |
| Receiving stolen property (Section 334 Chapter 9) | 23 |
| Failure to inform, etc property (Section 334A Chapter 9) | 3 |
| Contraventions affecting public order (Section 338 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Contraventions against the person (Section 339 Chapter 9) | 2 |
| Attempted offence (Section 41(1) Chapter 9) | 4 |
| Accomplice in crime (Section 42 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Conspiracy (Section 48A Chapter 9) | 3 |
| Recidivist (Section 49 Chapter 9) | 17 |
| Licence to keep, possess, export or import firearms, weapons and ammo (Section 5 Chapter 480) | 1 |
| Possession of firearms during commission of a crime (Section 55 Chapter 480) | 1 |
| Probation order (Section 7 Chapter 446) | 3 |
| Illegal arrest, detention or confinement (Section 86 Chapter 9) | 2 |
| Reviling or threatening judge, attorney general, magistrate or juror (Section 93 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| Assault or resistance (Section 96 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| VAT (Section 60 Chapter 37) | 1 |
| Bribery (Section 115 Chapter 9) | 2 |
| Embezzlement (Section 127 Chapter 9) | 1 |
| VAT (Section 62 Chapter 37) | 1 |
| Section 16 Act 16 of 1995 | 1 |
| Total | 148 |

Homicide Squad

The Homicide Squad has once again proved to be a very important unit within the Criminal Investigation Department in terms of serious crime investigations. Its primary function is to investigate homicide cases; this unit has investigated four cases of homicide that took place during 2007. Out of these, three were successfully solved. Throughout the same year, the Homicide Squad also reviewed six cold cases dating back to the 1970's and 80's and the review into these cases is still ongoing. The squad also assisted in various other investigations when its services were required, particularly in cases of missing persons and death investigations.

Cultural Property Crime Squad (CPCU)

During 2007, the CID Cultural Property Crime Unit (CPCU) investigated 26 cases which were related to cultural property crime that ranged from theft, receiving stolen goods, illicit trafficking and damage (vandal acts/involuntary damage) on archaeological, historic and cultural sites. During the period under review, this Unit managed to solve seven of these investigated cases. In other instances, assistance was provided in other investigations related to cultural property crime that were not investigated by the CPCU.

Crimes investigated fall under the following categories:

- *Theft/receiving*: items reported stolen included mostly to antique furniture, paintings, antique jewellery and other domestic objects, liturgical objects, medals, sculptures, coins, antique documents etc.
- *Illicit trafficking*: investigations included trafficking of archaeological items through the Malta International Airport, yacht marinas and Internet trafficking.
- *Vandal acts and/or involuntary damage*: most reported damages concerned vandal acts on archaeological and historic sites and monuments.
- *Plundering of archaeological sites and illegal excavations*: scuba divers were investigated in connection with looting of all kind of historical artefacts forming part of underwater archaeological sites.

Lectures about Cultural Property Crime Investigations are being given during police in-service courses and recruitment courses in the Police Academy. The Unit was also requested to inspect the security at Ħaġar Qim and Imnajdra Temples and following such inspection the unit submitted a report with its recommendations. The Unit is also nominated by the Ministry of Tourism to participate in a national project aiming to clamp down on illegal activities related to cultural property crime, being part of the National Tourism Plan for the Maltese Islands. Several tasks will be undertaken in connection with the National Tourism Plan till the year 2011.

Stolen Vehicles Squad (SVS)

During the year the Stolen Vehicles Squad carried out the following vehicle inspections:

- 3,776 – second-hand imported vehicles;
- 647 – second-hand imported engines;
- 847 other vehicles were inspected at MT garage;
- 346 vehicles or engines were punched with new Police VIN or EN Stamp at SVS MT;
- SVS/Technical Unit personnel were called 165 times to assist Customs Department and 22 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 6 times;
- 7 vehicles were seized pending investigations which were recovered by the SVS as these resulted to have been either reported stolen or having tempered/false identifications;
- 442 SVS query files were originated during the year;
- 459 vehicles and engines were photographed by SVS MT for investigation purposes whilst 8 other vehicles were photographed by the SVS CID pending investigations.

These investigations led to the prosecution of 27 persons who were charged with vehicle crime related offences consisting of 21 arraignments.

Criminal Records Office (CRO)

During 2007, the CRO issued 35,296 Conduct Certificates for a total revenue of Lm35,296. 5,159 persons were convicted, of whom 3,365 were convicted for crime while 1,794 were convicted for contraventions. The following is a breakdown showing the gender of persons convicted:

| Crimes | No. | Contraventions | No. |
|-------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Males | 2,883 | Males | 1,603 |
| Females | 166 | Females | 154 |
| Male Foreigners | 178 | Male Foreigners | 22 |
| Female Foreigners | 31 | Female Foreigners | - |
| Males Underage | 98 | Males Underage | 12 |
| Females Underage | 9 | Females Underage | 3 |
| Total | 3,365 | Total | 1,794 |

From the total number of persons convicted of crimes and contraventions, 277 were foreigners and 167 persons were under the age of 18 years.

The punishments meted out by the Courts were as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Imprisonment | 289 |
| 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 Firearms Licence | 8 |

During the same year, 3,381 criminal cases were decided, of which 1,994 were dealt with summarily, whilst the remaining 1,387 cases were dealt with through compilation of evidence.

Mobile Squad

The Mobile Squad is considered to be one of the work-horses of the police department. It has become well recognised for its rapid response on calls of different nature received both at the command centre as well as in various police districts. Its members are in constant contact with the general public and owners of business establishments, and on several occasions attend the needs called for by the public instantaneously and upon request, a custom that has given the squad a good reputation for performing effective community policing. It can safely be said that on most of the calls, the Mobile Squad members are the first to be found on the scene, thus making them the front-liners in all kinds of situations. During autumn 2007, the Squad was also engaged in escorting cash in transit in preparation for the euro changeover.

During 2007, the Mobile Squad effected the arrest of 520 persons in connection with suspicious activities, 35 of these persons were caught *in flagrante delicto* committing a serious criminal act. Throughout the same year this section carried out more than 10,500 vehicular patrols, and produced intensive patrolling in various localities. During Easter time and Christmas festivities, the patrols were intensified and were mainly focused on commercial outlets, lotto booths, exchange bureaux and commercial banks. These patrols were carried out efficiently and effectively during these festivities. Residential areas were likewise patrolled frequently.

The Mobile Squad was also dispatched to 223 bank alarms and responded to 166 alarms in related to commercial outlets and 121 residential alarms. Assistance to other police departments amounted to 1,281 instances.

Response to thefts in progress amounted to 121 cases, whilst there were 47 drug finds. Stolen items were recovered on 43 occasions while 263 body searches and 216 vehicular searches were carried out on suspicious persons and vehicles respectively; 170 residences and other premises were intensively searched for illegal property. The total number of 992 road checks were mounted during 2007 whilst static observation was staged 102 times by multiple or solo unit. During patrols the Squad managed to locate 22 stolen vehicles while fights which merited the response of the Squad, totalled 334 instances. The number of 51 escaped illegal immigrants, and overstaying foreigners were also arrested.

The Squad also intervened in 146 serious traffic accidents, where 143 persons were found to be intoxicated, after being roadside breathalyser tested on the spot. In addition, members of this section intervened in 48 attempted suicide cases. There were 114 occasions where the Squad gave first aid to injured persons.

| Type of Duty | No |
|----------------------------------------|-----|
| Alarms at residences | 121 |
| Alarms at factories and retail outlets | 166 |
| Alarms at commercial banks | 223 |
| Roadside breathalyser tests | 143 |
| Interventions in drug related offences | 47 |
| Road blocks | 992 |
| Interventions in cases of public order | 334 |
| Searches | 649 |
| Arrests | 520 |
| Illegal immigrants | 51 |
| Assisted in traffic accidents | 146 |

CID Lock-up

The CID lock-up also falls within the responsibilities of the Criminal Investigation Department and is located at the CID yard. Its primary function is to serve as a 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 investigative teams at specialised branches. However, it is also regularly used by the district police. In 2007 the total of 2,433 persons were registered at the CID lock-up. 1,641 of these detainees were Maltese and the remainder 792 of foreign nationality. 586 detainees were released on police bail conditions. The following list shows the number of detainees by nationality detained at the detention facility in 2007:

| Nationality | No |
|--------------------|----|
| Albanian | 2 |
| Algerian | 27 |
| Australian | 2 |
| Belarus | 1 |
| Bosnia Herzegovina | 2 |
| Brazilian | 1 |
| Bulgarian | 6 |
| Burkina Faso | 1 |
| Cameroon | 1 |
| Canadian | 1 |
| Chad | 4 |
| China | 6 |
| Cost d'Ivoire | 2 |
| Egyptian | 21 |
| English | 25 |
| Eritrean | 15 |

| Nationality | No |
|-------------|-------|
| Mali | 2 |
| Malawi | 1 |
| Maltese | 1,641 |
| Montenegro | 1 |
| Moldavian | 2 |
| Moroccan | 21 |
| Niger | 2 |
| Nigerian | 10 |
| Norwegian | 1 |
| Philippines | 5 |
| Palestinian | 22 |
| Panama | 4 |
| Polish | 3 |
| Romanian | 8 |
| Russian | 22 |
| Scottish | 2 |

| | |
|------------|-----|
| Ethiopian | 9 |
| French | 10 |
| Georgian | 17 |
| German | 4 |
| Ghana | 2 |
| Iceland | 1 |
| Indian | 1 |
| Iraqi | 4 |
| Irish | 2 |
| Israel | 3 |
| Italian | 26 |
| Jordanian | 6 |
| Kyrgyzstan | 1 |
| Lebanese | 1 |
| Liberian | 5 |
| Libyan | 278 |
| Macedonia | 1 |

| | |
|--------------|--------------|
| Serbian | 29 |
| Sierra Leon | 4 |
| Slovenian | 1 |
| Somali | 26 |
| South Africa | 1 |
| Spain | 3 |
| Sudanese | 9 |
| Swiss | 2 |
| Syrian | 57 |
| Togo | 1 |
| Tunisian | 17 |
| Turkish | 10 |
| Ukrainian | 19 |
| Uzbekistani | 11 |
| Wales | 1 |
| Yugoslav | 5 |
| Zimbabwe | 1 |
| Total | 2,432 |

472 of these persons were detained in connection with illegal immigration issues.

CRIME INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS UNIT

The Crime Intelligence Analysis Unit (CIAU) continued to gain workable status throughout 2007. The strategic and tactical reports issued to inform investigators and senior management alike gained further stability.

The processes of crime monitoring schemes based on intelligible practices continued to inform the crime linkage and detection practices at various levels both nationally and internationally. This practice took a major working and operational platform in the preparation phases of SIRENE and its ongoing day-to-day running.

The liaison between the CIAU and the various sections within the police - Special Branches, District police, International Relations Unit (IRU), European Nation Unit (ENU) - have extended and widened on numerous levels. This year the exchange of information and intelligence check between ENU and this office have become stronger and more resourceful. In this respect the CIAU generally proposes information in terms of intelligence, vetting and various security checks.

The Monthly Vehicle Crime Reports issued by this unit keeps contributing significantly to the work of the Criminal Investigations Department sections, particularly the Special Vehicle Squad and the Mobile Squad. This report acts as a reference and intelligence guide.

As in previous years, the CIAU has become the centre point for the police to disseminate and alert national and international bodies on new synthetic or psychoactive drugs detected in Malta. This function is part and parcel of the Early Warning System Network established in 2004. As part of this informative network the CIAU enjoys an active role in the anthology involved in the National Drug Report.

In preparing for the crime classification to be used in PIRS II, the CIAU was consulted and asked to contribute in the process by the Police Legal Office. Due consultation are in the pipe line for issues concerning Modus Operandi. From both a user as well as an analytical perspective, the unit has been contacted to give support as well as recommendation for improvement to the system in question.

Through the principle of 'service advancement' comprised by this unit, new projects and proposals have been set in motion in 2006 and continued to develop throughout 2007. One such project is the

improvement on the unit's various databases particularly the Criminal/suspect database which has been undergoing re-designing to accommodate the arising needs of law enforcement officers.

FORENSIC SCIENCE LABORATORY (FSL)

During 2007, the services of the Forensic Laboratory were requested in 2,523 cases – a drop of over 400 cases from the previous year. These varied from magisterial inquiries, specific court orders arising during the compilation of evidence, or other scientific work requested throughout police investigations. The evidential value of the Image Enhancement Section within the Photography Unit continued to improve with over 220 enhancements from CCTV recordings and 130 video surveillance activities. The increased use of private and public CCTV security cameras spread over the Island continued to capture images potentially useful to specific scenes of crime. Finally, the Fingerprints Division continued to give excellent results using the Automated Fingerprints Identification System (AFIS) with over 73 cases of thefts, murder and hold-ups being solved during the year in question.

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 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 | 1,316 | Processing of firearms licence applications | 920 |
| Inspections of imported firearms | 2,467 | Participation in the Weapons Advisory Board | 24 |
| Inspections re exporting of firearms/weapons | 32 | Inspection at firearms dealers | 8 |
| Inspections of firearms with incorrect serial no. | 550 | Court Nominations | 32 |
| Inspections of other firearms re transfers | 180 | Imported/exported firearms safe keeping | 58 |
| Firearms referred by the Customs Department | 10 | Meetings re new Weapons Act/MITTS | 3 |
| Firearms referred by Police for safe keeping | 95 | Interviews re Collector Licence A | 60 |
| Firearms referred for destruction | 47 | | |

These records show a 360% increase in the number of firearms serviced by the unit – from 361 in 2006 to 1,316 in 2007. 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.

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. A digitised minilab system is currently being evaluated for use at this Section. Digital camera systems are also being 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 | 103,420 |
| Photographic reproductions (black and white) | 3,742 |
| Video surveillance during sporting activities | 86 |
| Video/photographic surveillance during other activities | 40 |
| Police commitments and illegal immigrants | 191 |
| Enhancement of CCTV recordings | 222 |
| Other misc. work carried out at video section for other units e.g. SVS, MT Garage, Vice Squad, SB and others | 69 |

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 222 investigations in this field. The increase in the workload carried out by the Image & Video Enhancement Section reflects the increased use of CCTV surveillance cameras and their effective value in capturing images of events relevant to scenes of crime in their area.

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.

This section has once again been successful with 172 hits, resulting from searches performed on the AFIS, successfully resolving 73 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 processed 39,284 transactions ranging from introducing new records, scanning, searching, updating and verifying results on the AFIS.

The Fingerprints Unit has resolved 73 crimes, fingerprinted 1,500 illegal immigrants, scanned 633 ten-prints of suspects and tenants, updated the personal details of 1,389 ten-prints in the database, and a further 1,909 lifters were handed over by Scene of Crime Officers which were all scanned, inputted into the AFIS database and searched against the database. A total of 21,069 searches were performed. The Unit also examined 230 vehicles for fingerprint evidence related to theft from these vehicles.

Fingerprints Chemical Enhancement Unit

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 early during the year set up officially the Fingerprint Chemical Enhancement Section. This Unit processed various documents including the developing of fingerprints from various objects, carried out blood enhancing techniques, effected chemical preparations using techniques detailed below and photographed the evidence. Eighteen cases of anonymous letters were submitted to this Unit by the National Document Examination Unit for fingerprint analysis. A total of 133 cases were examined at this Enhancement Laboratory including documents handed over by Scene of Crime Officers, AFIS officers, Documents Officers, Police Inspectors and through Court Decrees.

The documents that were examined at the Laboratory included:

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Paper documents | 292 |
| Plastic including tape, bags, wrapper folders etc | 344 |
| Metal items including firearms, foils etc | 94 |
| Glass/material items | 5 |

Scene of Crime Unit

The scene of crime unit is called upon to investigate practically all reported crimes. Their duties include, lifting and preserving all types of forensic evidence which may be relevant to the case under investigation. The amount of work performed by this section is quite considerable and consequently very difficult to quantify. However, members of this section have attended on 1,879 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 644 cases. This represents a marked reduction, from previous years, in the number of serious crimes for which the FSL was requested to investigate. 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 two murders, one case of hit and run, 689 cases of theft, 51 hold-ups, 128 arsons/fires, 30 traffic accidents, 18 cases of vandalism, 10 cases of smearing of paint, 68 cases of sudden death, 97 drug related cases, 37 recoveries of vehicles, 22 suicide cases, 8 overdose cases, 13 shooting incidents, 4 stabbings, 13 rape cases, 421 fingerprint examinations and 13 ID parades.

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 FSL were summoned to give evidence in 1,767 Court of Magistrate sittings and 72 attendances in criminal trials. February and October had over 215 sittings each in the Magistrates Courts while February and December had over 14 sittings each in the Criminal Court.

Restoration of Obliterated Serial Numbers

Two scene of crime officers who have received specialised training in the restoration of obliterated serial numbers on firearms, vehicle engines and chassis numbers as well as tool marks. During the year these officers were involved in three investigations.

National Document Examination Unit

The National Document Examination Unit is recognised as the 3rd security level in security document examinations. The NDEU is involved in liaisons with foreign private and government agencies engaged in border control measures, printing and distribution of classified alerts and bulletins, providing training for immigration personnel and for other local entities (MIA, Central Bank, government agencies). This year the Unit seized the following documents:

| | |
|----------------------------------------------|----|
| Counterfeit Visas Applications and approvals | 7 |
| Counterfeit Foreign Identity Cards | 9 |
| Counterfeit Driving licence | 1 |
| Counterfeit Passports | 4 |
| Counterfeit Residence Permit | 1 |
| Forged Foreign Identity Cards | 3 |
| Forged Passports | 10 |
| Miscellaneous | 9 |

Apart from counterfeit and forged documents, the NDEU has documented and added 50 genuine documents and specimens to its document library for comparisons. This Unit now has over 1,100 genuine documents in its Library. During the year, the NDEU organised counterfeit and forgery detection courses varying from one day training to three day training sessions, and trained 183 personnel members from different entities both in Malta and abroad.

The Unit has also processed, examined and reported on 18 cases of anonymous letters during the year in question. Furthermore the Unit has carried out 286 examinations on documents presented by Improper Immigrants. The Unit has printed and distributed 240 alerts and bulletins to all immigration personnel.

This Unit actively participated in Frontiers False Documents working groups and also participated in other seminars related to biometrics. A staff member was also nominated member in the Document Specialist Board and appointed as a Sub-Project Leader by Frontex and entrusted with the task to update the advanced training tools and to develop a basic training tool package for EU Border Guards. The FSL was also mandated to provide consultancy on technical matters related to NIDMS and aspects of the PRUM treaty.

FADO System

In 2007, the FADO system (False and Authentic Documents Online System) was extended to two new platforms - Prado and iFado. These two platforms have two different access points. While the general public accesses the Prado, the iFado are an online service provided for law enforcement bodies. The NDEU was responsible for examining and uploading the Maltese documents for both platforms.

Forensic Registry

The Forensic Registry is responsible for back-office operations of the FSL. Their duties include the monitoring of file movements, opening and closing files, Court diaries and appointments and other related office duties.

EFIT

The Forensic Registry personnel perform standby duties to provide services related to the production of composite facial images through the use of computer aided software combined with specialised cognitive interviewing techniques (EFIT) of female and child victims. Throughout 2007 they were requested to perform 28 EFIT examinations. They also provided photographic services to the Courts of Law for female victims, normally involved in sexual offences.

DRUG SQUAD

During 2007, the Malta Police Drug Squad persisted with its continuous effort to determine, investigate, interrogate and prosecute in court the prime contributors to the smuggling and trafficking of dangerous drugs into the Maltese Islands.

The Drug Squad managed to successfully finalise important investigations, in particular an investigation into the drug activities (heroin) of an organised criminal group which investigation had been initiated way back in 2005. Other investigations which had been initiated during 2006 were actually finalised within months and these operations targeted mainly cocaine drug trafficking, which has increased in consumption year by year, particularly in the year 2000. Other minor operations targeting street level drug pushers were also positively concluded.

Special investigative techniques in the form of controlled-deliveries and the use of participating-informants were adopted in a number of successful operations.

The Drug Squad has also focused its investigations on the seizure of assets from drug traffickers, seizing cash in the region of €600,000 in addition to expensive vehicles and other immovable assets. Parallel money laundering investigations were also initiated in line with the drug investigations.

The table below highlights the most significant seizures recorded 2006, and most of them are the result of a number of operations targeting specific individual traffickers or criminal groups:

| | |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|
| February: | 963 grams of cocaine at San Ġwann; |
| March: | 700 grams of cocaine at the Airport; |
| April: | 28,823 ecstasy tablets at Qawra; |
| | 1.5 kilos of heroin at the Airport; |

June: 1.082 kilos of cocaine at St Andrew's;
476 grams of cannabis resin found at Marsascalea;
765 grams of heroin at the Airport;

July: 400 ecstasy tablets and 200 grams of cocaine found at Gharghur;

September: 250 grams of cannabis resin at Gzira;
400 ecstasy tablets at Gzira;
350 grams of cannabis resin at Kalkara;

October: 11.5 kilos of heroin at the Airport;
497 grams of heroin at the Airport;
414 grams of heroin at Swieqi;

November: 1.150 kilos of cocaine in Qormi;

December: 991 grams of cocaine at Gnejna Bay;
3 kilos of cocaine at the Airport;
400 grams of cocaine and 600 grams of heroin at Qawra;
501 grams of heroin at the Airport;
800 grams of cocaine at the Airport.

The total numbers of arrests, and searches during 2007 have increased by 14% over the previous 12 months whereas the number of sentences pronounced by the Law Courts has increased by 22% over the previous year.

| Arrests, Raids/Searches and Court sentences | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| | <i>Males</i> | <i>Females</i> | <i>Total</i> |
| Arrested Persons | 89 | 527 | 616 |
| Raids/Searches | | | 485 |
| Sentences Delivered | 29 | 310 | 339 |

| Arraignments of Offences liable to over 6 months imprisonment (in 2007) | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| Offence | <i>Males</i> | <i>Females</i> | <i>Total</i> |
| Possession | 313 | 23 | 336 |
| Trafficking | 99 | 9 | 108 |
| Other Crimes | 11 | 2 | 13 |
| Total | 423 | 34 | 457 |

Seizures

| Type of Drug | Quantity |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Cocaine | 9 kg 518.5 grms |
| Heroin | 16 kg 327.123 grms |
| Cannabis Resin | 2 kg 271.12 grms |
| Cannabis Grass | 48.55 grms |
| Cannabis Plants | 79 plants |
| Cannabis Seeds | 183 seeds |
| Ecstasy | 30,259 1/2 tbs |
| LSD | 8 Micro-dots |
| BZP in tablets | 62 tbs |
| Amphetamine | 0.4 grms |
| Methadone | 50 ml |
| Khat | 200 grms |

ECONOMIC CRIMES SQUAD

The Economic Crimes Squad is one of the specialised squads of the Police Force and is responsible to investigate all serious financial and fraudulent crimes, 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. A lot of dedication and investigative work was invested on cases of theft and skimming of debit cards, 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
- Contraband
- Breaches of the Financial Institutions Act
- Investigation of all Customs related offences
- Intellectual Property Rights violations
- General Fraud
- Misappropriation
- Extortion
- Corruption
- Forgery of Documents
- Embezzlement
- Plastic card fraud
- Currency counterfeiting
- Computer Crime.

The fight against Intellectual Property Rights infringements was intensified by the Economic Crimes Squad during 2007 and over 26,000 counterfeit pieces were seized by the Squad. For the first time ever, there was also the first sentence delivered by the courts where an accused for IPR infringements was sentenced to an effective term of imprisonment of six months. The counterfeited material seized varied from audio and visual to clothing to cigarettes. The seizures made were as shown hereunder:

IPR Enforcement seizures

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| Number of raids | 96 |
| Number of cases in court | 25 |
| Persons arraigned in court | 29 |

Items Seized

| | Quantity |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Music CDs | 3,189 |
| DVDs | 14,590 |
| Play station CDs | 1,690 |
| Souvenirs | 3,540 |
| Printed Material and Clothing | 400 |
| Toys & Others | 92 |
| Others | 1,107 |
| Total | 24,608 |

During 2007, the Economic Crimes Squad investigated the under-mentioned crimes:

| Offences Investigated | No of Cases |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Fraud | 116 |
| Misappropriation | 43 |
| Forgery | 27 |
| Cheques Bounced | 13 |
| Cheques Stolen/Forged | 12 |
| Plastic Card Fraud | 13 |
| Local Counterfeited Currency | 5 |
| Foreign Counterfeited Currency | 2 |
| Usury | 9 |
| Intellectual Property Rights Infringements | 38 |
| VAT Investigations | 4 |
| Customs Investigations | 17 |
| Contraband Related | 12 |

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Computer Crime | 5 |
| Corruption | 16 |
| Money Laundering (FIAU) | 24 |
| Money Laundering (Police) | 13 |
| Foreign Requests for Assistance in Investigations | 7 |
| Commission Rogatories | 7 |
| Others – Theft of Electricity | 557 |
| Total | 940 |

The following table shows statistics relating to court arraignments:

| Court Arraignments | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| | <i>Males</i> | <i>Females</i> | <i>Total</i> |
| Persons Arraigned | 662 | 47 | 709 |
| Cases (Arraignments) | - | - | 661 |
| Arrested | 710 | 54 | 764 |
| Persons Interrogated | 381 | 109 | 490 |
| Persons Interviewed | 287 | 78 | 365 |

Money Laundering Unit

The Money Laundering Unit, which is a small Unit within the Economic Crimes Squad, is responsible to investigate all cases of Money Laundering, but has to deal also with judicial requests for assistance and with other requests for assistance from our foreign counterparts concerning matters related to money laundering investigations that they will be carrying out in their country. This Unit investigates all suspicious transaction reports that are referred to this unit from the Financial Intelligence and Analysis Unit, together with other information received from other independent sources. Other investigations are initiated by the Unit itself or are referred to the unit from local police sources.

Money Laundering Activities

| | |
|--------------------------|----|
| Persons charged in court | 13 |
| STRs FIAU | 24 |
| STRs Police | 13 |
| Requests for Assistance | 7 |
| Rogatory Letters | 8 |

What is the most interesting from the work performed by this small but effective unit is the seizure of assets made during 2007. In 2007, the Unit seized almost Lm240,000 in cash. They also seized eight vehicles, together with a boat and various pieces of jewellery. The items that can be quantified amount in the region of Lm75,250 with the exception of the jewellery which have to be quantified. Therefore, this small Unit is moving fast towards its goal to investigate successfully money laundering offences, charge money launderers in court and deprive criminals from their illegally obtained assets.

VICE SQUAD

The Vice Squad is responsible to investigate all sexual offences, domestic violence, child abuse, child neglect, curbing of prostitution, missing persons, illegal gambling, clandestine lotto, paedophilia on the internet and trafficking in human beings amongst other criminal offences.

Priority was again given to the fight against trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation and curbing the loitering and soliciting for prostitution. Several persons were charged in court following successful raids, inspections and investigations concerning these serious offences. Two very important rings were arrested and dismantled. These concerned the organisation of the importation of east European women into Malta where they were put to practise prostitution and were not free to leave when they wanted.

Curbing loitering and soliciting for prostitution remained high on the Vice Squad's agenda during 2007. Special attention was given to those areas which are notoriously known for loitering by prostitutes. These

areas included the Gzira, Msida, Marsa and Ta' Xbiex and this year also Hal Far. A 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 various places in Malta.

The Vice Squad personnel are also directly concerned in domestic violence issues including child abuse, child neglect or family issues, as well as the tracing of missing persons.

The Vice Squad also responded to calls for assistance to social workers in the execution of Court Orders and to escort women who were housed in shelter homes and required police protection due to their violent spouses or partners.

The statistical data concerning the Vice Squad activities for 2007 is as follows:

| Vice Squad Investigations | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| Nature | Total |
| Absentees | 336 |
| Domestic Violence | 10 |
| Rape | 11 |
| Violent Indecent Assault | 2 |
| Defilement of Minors | 13 |
| Immoral Acts in Public | 1 |
| Suspected Foreign Prostitutes | 123 |
| Assistance to Social Workers | 8 |
| Child Pornography | 4 |
| Child Abuse | 5 |
| Bigamy | 1 |
| Raids for Prostitution | 351 |
| Raids for Illegal Lotto and Gambling | 64 |
| Abduction | 1 |
| Others | 4 |
| Total | 934 |

| Arraignments in Court | | | |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| Nature | Charges | Persons | Cases |
| Rape | 14 | 15 | 9 |
| Defilement of minor | 26 | 17 | 17 |
| Violent Indecent Assault | 20 | 3 | 3 |
| Immoral acts in public | 18 | - | - |
| Child pornography | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Pornography (Possession for circulation) | 1 | 1 | - |
| Loitering and soliciting for prostitution | 105 | 105 | 104 |
| Living off the earnings of prostitution | 8 | 4 | - |
| Keeping a brothel | 9 | - | - |
| Trafficking in human beings for prostitution | 6 | 3 | 2 |
| Conspiracy in trafficking in human beings | 3 | - | - |
| Illegal Arrest | 16 | - | - |
| Abduction | 1 | - | - |
| Child neglect | 7 | 5 | 3 |
| Bigamy | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Breach of Gaming Act | 12 | 12 | 4 |
| Illegal gambling | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| Slight injuries | 6 | 1 | 1 |
| Grievous injuries | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| Attempted grievous injuries | 2 | - | - |
| False report/simulation of offence | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Others | 46 | 15 | 12 |
| Total | 316 | 194 | 167 |

PROTECTIVE SERVICES

TRAFFIC SECTION

As in previous years, the Traffic Branch focused its attention on reducing traffic accidents, improving the traffic and assisting drivers, pedestrians and other road users alike. Traffic personnel devoted most of the time to proactive policing with a mixture of reactive policing.

Traffic motorcyclists were regularly deployed at strategic spots frequently used by motorists, particularly during the rush hours. They were also utilised along main and arterial roads where works were carried out. The objectives were twofold - maintaining the free flow of traffic particularly where deviations were necessary and to curb and control abuses by drivers. They also focused on reducing traffic accidents especially around known black spots.

During spot checks carried out by the Traffic Branch, 24,441 drivers were stopped and charges were issued where necessary. As distinct from normal road checks, specific spot checks were also carried out with the aim of enforcing seatbelts regulations, driving with mobile phones, excessive speed and drink and drive regulations.

There were instances where members of the Traffic Branch were involved in the apprehending of wanted criminals, recovery of stolen vehicles and stolen items found inside the culprits' vehicles. Traffic motorcyclists also contributed during bicycle and athletic events, by assisting participants during the course of these competitions.

512 charges and 27,968 Traffic Offence Tickets were issued to various drivers and occupants for a variety of breach of the Motor Vehicle Regulations.

Personnel from this Branch were also responsible for providing police escorts with internationally renowned political dignitaries visiting Malta on official functions. There were 29 such occasions, involving about 390 traffic motor cyclists, in which traffic personnel contributed during the year under review. Similar escort duties were provided with the President of Malta as well as with the Maltese Prime Minister on 200 occasions.

Traffic motor cyclists were continuously involved in delivering public talks to local councils, government and private schools. The Traffic Safety Education Campaign was given regular public awareness through continuous participation on the local media, both on TV and radio stations.

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT UNIT (ALE)

The ALE Section continued with its efforts to control and curb illegal activities in relation to environmental crime both on land and at sea. The following charges were issued during 2007:

| Nature of Charge | No. |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Illegal Bird Trapping | 62 |
| Illegal Hunting on Land | 132 |
| Illegal Hunting at Sea | 10 |
| Importation of Protected Species | 9 |
| Possession of Protected Species | 25 |
| Illegal taxidermist | 2 |
| Illegal selling of birds | 13 |
| Litter Act | 5 |
| Dumping | 5 |
| Infringements of Malta Maritime Authority Regulations | 146 |
| Traffic Offences Tickets/Traffic Charges | 192 |
| Cruelty to animals | 2 |
| Arms ordinance | 18 |

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Development without MEPA permit | 6 |
| Smoking in public places | 612 |
| Others | 66 |
| Total | 1,305 |

| | |
|--------------------|------------|
| Court Cases | No. |
| VAT New Cases | 1,800 |
| VAT Cases Decided | 2,371 |

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| ECO Tax New Cases | 166 |
| ECO Tax Cases Decided | 115 |

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| ALE New Cases | 457 |
| ALE Cases Decided | 464 |

| | |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Seizures | No. |
| Protected species seized | 258 |
| Weapons seized | 50 |

The section continued to assist various governmental entities such as the Lands Department, MMA, MEPA and the Veterinary Services in their operations. Collaboration was maintained with the MMA during the summer. Inspections were held over the weekends together with MMA officials. Several licensed and unlicensed drivers were brought to book over a variety of irregularities at sea.

During the same year, one sergeant and two constables attended MCAST courses to obtain their nautical driving licence. Other members of the ALE also attended half-day seminars, presented by foreign experts.

Between June and September, officers from the same section were also deployed to cover popular beaches as part of the summer patrols, during which a number of persons were brought to book after they were apprehended pilfering from beaches. Similar intervention was also carried out during the Christmas period where a number of the ALE members were temporarily posted to assist the Mobile Squad during patrol duties.

During the year, the Inspector responsible for the ALE on two separate occasions attended two seminars held in Italy and Slovakia, as well as a preparatory meeting during two other courses held in Bratislava.

CONTROL ROOM

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Emergency line 112 | No. of calls |
| Calls transferred to various Government Emergency Entities | 46,152 |
| Calls transferred to various Police Stations | 23,803 |
| Calls transferred to CPD | 6,082 |
| Calls transferred to AFM | 400 |
| Calls transferred to SLH | 10,111 |
| Calls transferred to Mater Dei Hospital | 4,205 |
| Calls transferred to Gozo Police Dept | 1,232 |
| Calls transferred to Gozo Health Dept | 319 |
| Total number of calls answered | 294,414* |

* includes calls which were either wrong numbers and/or hoax calls

The table above shows the number of telephone calls answered and/or transferred to various government entities as well as various station and branches within the Police Department. Due to a system erasure, records for the first half of the year are not available; the figures above cover only the period July to December 2007.

Principal Citations Office

The Principal Citations Office issued a large number of subpoenas and other relative court paperwork. The following table gives an overview of cases processed by personnel at this office:

| Nature of Sitting | No of sittings appointed | Cases appointed | Cases put off | Cases decided |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| Traffic | 77 | 5,737 | 3,002 | 2,735 |
| Collisions | 75 | 1,955 | 1,399 | 556 |
| Health | 33 | 2,161 | 1,900 | 261 |
| DLE | 22 | 575 | 444 | 134 |
| Health & Safety | 17 | 252 | 160 | 92 |
| Appeals | 116 | 1,303 | 857 | 449 |
| Juvenile | 4 | 124 | 40 | 84 |
| ETC | 9 | 518 | 335 | 183 |
| Evasion of duty | 19 | 332 | 306 | 26 |
| Family Court | 41 | 2,516 | 1,231 | 1,285 |
| National Employment Authority | 4 | 29 | 12 | 17 |
| Total | 417 | 15,502 | 9,686 | 5,822 |

Central Delivery Office

This Office, which was established in February 2007, handles citations, subpoenas and other court related papers, as indicated in the following table:

| Incoming papers | Outgoing papers | Undelivered | Working days | Percentage of deliverable/undeliverable |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 100,879 | 94,855 | 6,024 | 219 | 5.97% |

Special Assignment Group (SAG)

During the year the Special Assignment Group effected a total of 4,748 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 and additional patrols carried out at the Malta International Airport;
- close security protection duties with VIPS, including the President of Malta 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;
- 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 Girgenti on particular occasions;
- escorting illegal immigrants to their country of origin and escort duties with criminals;
- escort duties with valuable objects, which consisted of diamonds, gold bullion, filigree, passports, cash etc ;
- 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 or Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT).

| Type of Activity | No. of Performances |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Fixed Point Duties | 976 |
| Close Security Protection (VIPS) | 282 |
| General Patrols | 182 |
| Daily Patrols with Mobile Squad | 1,460 |
| Patrols in Paceville/others | 200 |
| Daily Patrols at the MIA | 30 |
| Assistance to other departments | 12 |
| Naval Battleships | 91 |
| Escorts abroad | 6 |
| Escorts with valuable objects | 88 |
| SWAT related matters | 15 |
| Anti-Riot related matters | 6 |

| | |
|------------------|--------------|
| Training Courses | 6 |
| Extra Duties | 1,385 |
| Displays | 9 |
| Total | 4,748 |

Dogs Section

The Dogs Section comprises various breeds of dogs, such as German Shepherds, Labradors, Rottweilers, Springer Spaniels and short-haired German Pointer, which are divided into three categories - narcotics sniffer dogs, explosives sniffer dogs and assault dogs. All dogs are trained to perform during displays which are often requested by philanthropic societies, schools, local councils and other institutions.

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.

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.

| Type of Activity | No. of Performances |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| General Fixed Point Duties | 722 |
| Fixed Point Duties in Paceville | 134 |
| General Patrols | 661 |
| General Searches | 743 |
| Searches – Explosive related | 71 |
| Searches – Narcotics related | 3 |
| Reinforcement Duties | 41 |
| Police Band related duties | 93 |
| Displays – Malta & Gozo | 178 |
| Total | 2,646 |

Mounted Section

This Section participated in ceremonial duties in connection with the presentation of credentials by newly appointed Ambassadors to Malta to the President of Malta at the Palace. A minimum of five riders on horseback are detailed to perform such an escort.

Personnel from the Mounted Section were also deployed on patrols in certain strategic places. Further to this, personnel were also detailed on foot patrol along most of the main beaches during the summer period. In addition, riders and horses were deployed at the Ta' Qali National Football Stadium during international, Premiership football matches and horse races at the Marsa Racetrack. In the latter case, they were deployed regularly every week when horse races were held.

The following is a list of activities carried out by the Mounted Section during 2007:

| Type of Activity | No. of Performances |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Ceremonial duties | 71 |
| Presidential escorts | 53 |
| Football stadium | 2 |
| Marsa Race Track | 228 |
| Patrol on Horseback | 275 |
| Foot patrol | 265 |

| | |
|----------------------|--------------|
| Summer patrol | 78 |
| Gala duties | 44 |
| Displays | 10 |
| Reinforcement duties | 199 |
| Total | 1,225 |

MOTOR VEHICLE TRANSPORT SECTION

The Motor Vehicle Transport Section commonly referred to as the MT Floriana is designated to provide vehicular transport to the Police Department and to maintain same in the best condition as possible. This section also provides technical back-up to branches and districts during investigations involving motor vehicles. The MT is comprised 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. This section also caters for the transport of vehicles under investigations, derelict vehicles and damaged police vehicles, and provides bus transport for police needs, ranging from police reinforcements to the transportation of clandestine immigrants. The section also caters for the distribution of police-barriers and the conveyance of corpses undergoing magistrate's enquiries.

The Police Fuel Pump caters only for service vehicles and hired cars by special branches. The St Andrew's Police Compound houses vehicles under investigations both by the Police and by the duty magistrates.

The *MT Garage 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 as well as second-hand 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 2,929 job cards for repair works on police vehicles. These varied from routine maintenance, to major engine or body repairs. The amount of Lm120,230 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 Lm227,251.

SPECIAL BRANCH

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS UNIT

Interpol

The Special Branch has long been appointed as the National Central Bureau of Interpol and is the contact point for international co-operation matters. This office ensures the continued liaison with the General Secretariat of Interpol, with the National Central Bureaus (NCBs) in other countries and with the various branches and sections of the Force.

The main activities performed by this office during 2007 were:

- judicial assistance in relation to extradition issues;
- 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.

Various enquiries originating from the above law enforcement bodies were catered for in the year 2007, with positive and desired results.

Other International Relations

The Head of the NCB in Malta has also been appointed to deal with other issues relating to international co-operation, also on bilateral arrangements with other international law enforcement agencies.

This department is 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 various seminars and meetings were attended by the ELO and 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.

A number of European Arrest Warrants concerning various types of crimes have been executed by this office together with officers from other specialised branches of the Maltese Police with whom very close liaison and co-operation is ensured.

Europol Liaison Officer

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 associated with ensuring that Malta's interests are safeguarded in the different forums which convene at EPOL. The Europol Liaison Officer (ELO) is also a 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 related with the various crime areas dealt with at EPOL. In addition, the ELO also participates in EPOL's Strategic Committee, in the EPOL Council Working Party in Brussels and in various PCTF meetings. A total of 97 meetings were attended by the ELO during 2007.

The operational aspect of the work involves information exchanges between Malta, EPOL specialised units, AWFs and other MS, with a considerable amount of time spent in servicing requests from other Member States, EPOL specialised units and AWFs, whilst dealing with queries from responsible units in Malta. The ELO was also involved in the input and maintenance of data belonging to Malta in the EPOL's information system.

The administrative functions involve normal office administration, system back-up, filing, meeting document preparation, and also electronic drive administration. Apart from this, the ELO was also responsible for consolidating Malta Liaison Bureau's position at EPOL. This entailed the establishment and maintenance of contacts on an ongoing basis, since this may be deemed to be an essential part of liaison work in the field of law enforcement co-operation. The ELO also co-ordinated a visit of EPOL's Director to Malta in March 2007.

During the year under review, 25 cases in Info-Ex were initiated on behalf of Malta, a total of 1,199 Info-Ex Transactions (replies sent to other MS) were sent on behalf of Malta, and 1,221 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).

SIRENE Office

During 2007 the number of officers deployed at SIRENE Office (Supplementary Information Request at the National Entries) has increased to 18 officers, 12 of who operate on 24/7 shifts while six carry out their duties on day shift. During the year, study visits were attended in Rome, Vienna and Stockholm whilst a number of officers have attended meetings and seminars related to their duties in Berlin, Portugal and Poland. Support from SIRENE Italy has remained constant during the past year especially with the creation of alerts.

All officers deployed at the SIRENE office are now conversant with the various forms and searches within the Schengen Information System. Since becoming operational in September 2007, SIRENE staff has also supported District personnel with any problems they encounter while entering reports and alerts in the SIS. SIRENE Office has also processed a number of European Arrest Warrants regarding persons wanted by other Member States.

The pace that SIRENE Malta has gathered ensures our way forward within the Schengen Area and also guarantees full compliance with the country's international obligations.

Schengen

A considerable number of Schengen related issues were catered for by the Special Branch. As such, action was taken to build the administrative capacities in order to cater for such needs, including connectivity with the Schengen Information System (SISone4all). Officer involved in Schengen activities were actively involved in the evaluation process during the year. The Special Branch is constantly in contact with the Ministry in relation to activities related to Schengen and it is with great satisfaction to report that, following the success in the evaluation processes of the sea and air border, police co-operation, SIS and data protection, Malta has been accepted in the Schengen area as from 21 December 2007. Lifting of air border, which is the last step for full Schengen compliance, will be in March 2008.

Anti-Terrorism Unit

The Anti Terrorism Unit carries out investigations on terrorism. A number of contacts have been established with other foreign services involved in such activities during the year. Various seminars and other meetings were also attended by officers posted at this Unit during the same period. The anti-terrorism unit also represents the Malta Police Force in the Police Working Party on Terrorism. This unit is still developing.

IMMIGRATION BRANCH

The main task of the Immigration Branch is to control Malta'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 Mgarr, Gozo. Police and civilian personnel man entry points at the airport.

During 2007, the number of persons who arrived in, or left Malta by air, was as follows:

| | |
|-------------|-----------|
| Arrivals: | 1,487,405 |
| Departures: | 1,487,096 |
| Transit: | 5,756 |

Source: Malta International Airport

The number of ferry passengers, excluding cruise liner passengers, who were processed at the seaport was as follows.

| | |
|-------------|--------|
| Arrivals: | 96,909 |
| Departures: | 96,486 |

Source: *Sea 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. 225 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 52,716 applications for visas (50,375 were approved; 2,341 rejected). Several other transit and tranship visas for seamen were also received and processed.

A lot of changes have taken place at the Immigration Branch, especially in view of the requirements relating to the movement of persons by the European Union. 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 who have 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, 2,033 removal orders were issued by 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 68 incidents when boat people were traced and brought ashore or arrested after having landed illegally in Malta. These amounted to a total of 1,702 migrants who 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 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 results of these are communicated to the MFSS.

The nationality of the boat people was as follows: Somali 613; Eritrean 211; Ivory Coast 162; Nigeria 136; Mali 123; Others 457.

A number of them 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. 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. In the field of repatriation, a total of 338 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. Requests for documents continued to be 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 this year chartered flights were organised to escort illegal immigrants to Nigeria and Mali and again Malta participated as observers in joint flights with other EU Member States.

Eurodac Office

The Immigration Police also run the Eurodac Office, which is responsible to store and disseminate fingerprints of all asylum seekers and illegal immigrants to the central data bank which is shared by all EU 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; 1,705 entries were affected and 264 requests for information and take-back requests were received. Out of these, a total of 61 immigrants were effectively returned.

Duties at Open and Closed Accommodation Centres

Figures of foreigners in custody differ from one day to the other; at the end of 2007, there were 66 housed at Ta' Kandja reception centre, 774 at Safi Barracks and 685 housed at Lyster Barracks, totalling 1,525 immigrants. 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 entering Malta by boat.

The arrangements for the security at the closed centre at Ta' Kandja, where illegal immigrants are housed, is also the responsibility of the Police Special Branch. Immigration Police presence is also secured at the Open Centre run by the Immigrants Commission at Balzan. This activity generated massive duties during the same year, especially insofar as escort duties and other related activities are concerned.

This section is also responsible to ensure that all immigrants are released from custody according to government policy. During 2007, over 1,400 immigrants were brought over to GHQ for release, which obviously entails issuing them with an Immigration document.

PROTECTIVE SERVICE PLANNING AND CO-ORDINATION

The Special Branch is also the designated body to co-ordinate protective measures of visiting VIPs - 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 Special Assignment Group.

During the year, 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 and organise security at specific meetings. A considerable number of such visits have taken place during the year as in former years.

Protective duties are also carried out by officers within the Branch with certain VIPs, as required.

LIAISON DUTIES

The Special Branch is also entrusted with liaison duties with foreign diplomatic representations in Malta and as such has very close relations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a number of other government departments. Continued assistance is extended 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

Another duty entrusted to the Special Branch is 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 | 607 | 20 | 3 | 29 | 555 |
| Local Wardens | 19 | 1 | - | 3 | 15 |
| Private Guard Agencies | 2 | - | - | - | 2 |
| Local Warden Agencies | - | - | - | - | - |

WEAPONS AND EXPLOSIVES

The Special Branch is also responsible for issues relating to weapons and explosives. Insofar as weapons are concerned, it is responsible for approving import of weapons and the temporary approvals for import/export of weapons for sporting purposes. In view of this activity, action was taken to comply with EU requirements for the movement of firearms within the Union which requirements are also embodied in our laws. The Special Branch is the designated contact point with other European police services dealing with the movement of weapons.

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 carry knives | 1 | 5 |
| To carry harpoon guns | 481 | 1,027 |
| To carry firearms for sporting purposes on land | 353 | 11,608 |
| To carry firearms for hunting on board a sea-craft | 28 | 327 |
| To carry firearms for the hunting of wild rabbits | 253 | 1,215 |
| To take wild rabbits | 1 | 30 |
| To take birds | 12 | 4,387 |
| Bird ringers | - | 18 |
| Renewals to keep a firearm/s | n/a | 9,211 |
| Requests for purchase of firearms (new and second-hand) | 2,837 | n/a |
| Target shooter Licence A | 624 | n/a |
| Target shooter Licence B | 1,826 | n/a |
| Collector Licence A | 59 | n/a |

From the 2,837 requests for purchases of firearms during 2007 indicated above, a total of 1,934 were applications for purchases of firearms from dealers. The Weapons Office also processed 1,275 person-to-person transfer applications.

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 requirement 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 from the Police also met on several occasions to deal with issues of fireworks and blasting operations during the same period.

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, and 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.

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 figures relate to activities carried out by the Malta International Airport Police Station in 2007:

| MIA Police Station Activities - 2007 | | |
|---------------------------------------------|-----|--------------|
| | | Total |
| Traffic offence tickets | 115 | 115 |
| False documents detected | | |
| <i>Visas/stamps</i> | 6 | |
| <i>Passports</i> | 6 | |
| <i>Others</i> | 14 | 26 |
| Inspections | 450 | |
| Roadblocks | 195 | 645 |
| Damaged mail | 11 | 11 |
| Escorts of valuable cargo | 558 | 558 |

DISTRICT POLICING (REGIONS A & B)

The following are the results achieved by the District Police from both Regions during 2007, in their continuous effort to prevent crime and preserve law and order throughout our Islands:

| Summary Cases brought before the Court | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>District</i> | <i>No of Cases</i> | <i>No of Persons</i> | <i>Crimes (Under 6 months)</i> | <i>Contraventions</i> |
| 1 | 491 | 527 | 148 | 1,289 |
| 2 | 476 | 511 | 154 | 679 |
| 3 | 480 | 537 | 388 | 536 |
| 4 | 627 | 618 | 44 | 675 |
| 5 | 378 | 759 | 144 | 365 |
| 6 | 480 | 817 | 436 | 478 |
| 6A | 721 | 870 | 380 | 382 |
| 7 | 868 | 1,836 | 349 | 1,486 |
| 8 | 581 | 687 | 245 | 636 |
| 9 | 591 | 657 | 524 | 661 |
| 10 | 2,507 | 1,681 | 182 | 621 |
| Total | 8,200 | 9,500 | 2,994 | 7,808 |

| District | Traffic Offence Tickets | Vehicles Towed | Respite Warrants | | Articles | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| | | | No. | Amount (Lm) | Found | Lost | Restored |
| 1 | 2,838 | 39 | 65 | 4608 | 75 | 1,850 | 12 |
| 2 | 1,405 | 16 | 79 | 14,146 | 25 | 523 | 8 |
| 3 | 1,418 | - | 93 | 11,331 | 9 | 637 | 4 |
| 4 | 3,045 | 2 | 96 | 19,458 | 19 | 579 | 9 |
| 5 | 2,959 | 2 | 61 | 16,226 | 22 | 622 | 11 |
| 6 | 2,375 | 55 | 58 | 11,496 | 74 | 1,816 | 44 |
| 6A | 5,798 | 42 | 75 | 8,466 | 42 | 1,292 | 25 |
| 7 | 8,292 | 2 | 86 | 13,992 | 40 | 1,054 | 17 |
| 8 | 3,228 | 4 | 87 | 17,932 | 30 | 1,006 | 74 |
| 9 | 2,322 | 26 | 66 | 6,886 | 47 | 1,748 | 13 |
| 10 | 1,856 | 11 | 69 | 4820 | 161 | 722 | 37 |
| Total | 35,536 | 199 | 835 | 129,361 | 544 | 11,849 | 254 |

Officers from Districts and Specialised Units held a total of 791 meetings with local councils during 2007.

Crimes punishable with imprisonment over 6 months

General Performance Report - 2007

| Crimes/offences solved in 2007 | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Abandonment/Neglect – of child/children | 7 | Fraud: False declaration | 42 |
| Abduction | 14 | Fraud: Gaming Act | 12 |
| Abuse of telecommunication | 7 | Fraud: Copyright act | 29 |
| Abuse of Public Authority | 6 | Fraud: Customs Ord. VAT | 18 |
| Accomplice: Escape from Custody | 6 | Gambling: Football pools | 1 |
| Accomplice: In theft | 4 | Gambling: Clandestine Lotto | 3 |
| Arms Ordinance: Possession of Firearm w/o licence | 25 | Hold up | 6 |
| Arms Ordinance: Possession of ammunitions w/o permit | 16 | Hold up: Conspiracy | 4 |
| Arms Ordinance: Possession of Pointed Instrument w/o permit | 7 | Homicide: Attempted | 7 |
| Arms Ordinance: Discharge/use of firearm | 3 | Homicide: Wilful | 4 |
| Arrest: Illegal | 21 | Homicide: Involuntary through road accident | 2 |
| Arrest: Resist | 3 | Instigation: To commit crime | 4 |
| Arson | 6 | Misappropriation of Public Officer: Embezzlement | 2 |
| Association: In crime | 15 | Motor Vehicle Regs - Driving w/o driving licence | 13 |
| Blackmail | 3 | Motor Vehicle Regs - Driving w/o vehicle insurance | 5 |
| Breach of Employment Regulations: To employ foreigners | 7 | Motor Vehicle Regs - Driving Vehicle: False number plates | 2 |
| Breach of Employment Regulations: Keeping commercial activity w/o licence | 2 | Motor Vehicle Regulations - Driving Vehicle: Forgery of vehicle licence | 4 |
| Breach of Animal Rights Act: Cruelty | 3 | Misappropriation | 33 |
| Breaches of: Immigration Officer permit | 3 | Obstruction of public officers | 1 |
| Breaches of: Extradition Act | 1 | Perjury: False swearing | 13 |
| Breaches of: Entering Country w/o Authorisation | 2 | Pretended Rights | 1 |
| Breaches of: Portal Services Act | 4 | Private Violence | 10 |
| Breaches of: Bail Conditions | 36 | Prostitution: Soliciting and loitering | 105 |
| Breaches of: Suspended Sentence | 10 | Prostitution: Prostitution, living off | 12 |
| Breaches of: Conditional Order | 8 | Prostitution: Keeping a brothel | 9 |
| Breaches of: External Act | 2 | Racism | 1 |
| Breaches of: Guard and Local Wardens Act | 2 | Receiving stolen property | 114 |
| Breaches of: Probation Order | 1 | Recidivist | 97 |
| Breaches of: Maritime Regulations | 2 | Sexual Offences: Pornography - distribution | 2 |
| Breaches of: Money Laundering Regulations | 11 | Sexual Offences: Indecency/Against morals | 23 |
| Bodily Harm: Attempted unspecified | 15 | Sexual Offences: Sexual harassment | 1 |
| Bodily Harm: Attempted grievous | 8 | Sexual Offences: Defilement of minor | 43 |
| Bodily Harm: Grievous voluntary | 194 | Sexual Offences: Rape | 18 |
| Bodily Harm: Grievous involuntary | 3 | Sexual Offences: Attempted indecent assault | 1 |
| Bodily Harm: Grievous involuntary – MVA | 10 | Sexual Offences: Violent indecent assault | 31 |
| Bodily Harm: Slight involuntary | 6 | Simulation of offence | 3 |
| Bodily Harm: Slight voluntary | 50 | Theft: Aggravated | 300 |
| Bigamy | 3 | Theft: Attempted | 64 |
| Bribery | 13 | Theft: General | 100 |
| Crime against Public Peace: Disobeying lawful orders | 12 | Theft: Currency | 5 |
| Crime against Public Peace: Disturbance | 33 | Theft: From beaches | 10 |
| Cultural Property Act: Damages | 7 | Theft: Commercial premises | 3 |
| Damage: Involuntary | 10 | Theft: From residence | 5 |
| Damage: Voluntary | 203 | Theft: From retail outlet | 14 |
| Defamation | 1 | Theft: From vehicle | 10 |
| Drugs: Possession | 444 | Theft: Of vehicle | 12 |
| Drugs: Trafficking | 120 | Theft: Of electricity | 47 |
| Escape from custody | 7 | Theft: Of mobile phone | 2 |
| Evidence: Fabrication | 4 | Theft: Of fuel | 3 |
| Extortion: Money | 1 | Theft: Of sea craft | 1 |
| False Report | 10 | Theft: Pick pocketing | 10 |
| False Particulars | 3 | Theft: Snatch and grab | 10 |
| False accusations: Calumnious accusations | 1 | Theft: From bar | 3 |
| Falsification/Forgery: General | 25 | Trading in influence | 423 |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|----|--------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Falsification/Forgery: Passport | 1 | Trafficking: Illegal immigrants | 3 |
| Falsification/Forgery: Passport use of | 2 | Trafficking: Of persons – white slavery | 8 |
| Falsification/Forgery: Forgery of public documents | 36 | Trafficking: Conspiracy | 4 |
| Falsification/Forgery: Counterfeit money | 10 | Threats: Unspecified | 24 |
| Falsification/Forgery: Falsification of document – use of | 9 | Usury | 9 |
| Falsification/Forgery: Falsification of document | 20 | Unlawful acts: Unlawful exercise of profession | 1 |
| Fear of Harm/Violence: Bullying | 4 | Unlawful acts: Restricted/protected area | 2 |
| Failed to produce documents: Passport | 1 | Unauthorised sale of: DVD – child pornographic | 4 |
| Fraud: Unspecified | 84 | Violation: Of sacred places - Church | 11 |
| Fraud: Commercial | 3 | Violation: Of property | 7 |
| Fraud: Insurance | 3 | Violence: against public officer – bodily harm | 58 |
| Fraud: Computer Misuse | 7 | Violence against public officer – vilification/threats | 77 |
| Fraud: Credit Card | 8 | | |
| Total 3,514 | | | |

| Distribution of Solved Offences | | | | |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------|--|------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>District/Branch</i> | <i>No. of Offences</i> | | <i>District/Branch</i> | <i>No. of Offences</i> |
| District 1 | 58 | | District 9 | 166 |
| District 2 | 71 | | District 10 | 110 |
| District 3 | 78 | | ALE | 23 |
| District 4 | 58 | | Special Branch | 62 |
| District 5 | 68 | | Vice Squad | 313 |
| District 6 | 92 | | Economic Crime Unit | 709 |
| District 6A | 119 | | Money Laundering Unit | 11 |
| District 7 | 142 | | CID | 813 |
| District 8 | 80 | | Drug Squad | 541 |
| Total 3,514 | | | | |

| Solved Cases and Offenders | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>District/Branch</i> | <i>No of Cases</i> | <i>No. of Persons</i> |
| District 1 | 45 | 56 |
| District 2 | 52 | 68 |
| District 3 | 64 | 76 |
| District 4 | 42 | 53 |
| District 5 | 56 | 57 |
| District 6 | 76 | 87 |
| District 6A | 71 | 77 |
| District 7 | 92 | 108 |
| District 8 | 50 | 55 |
| District 9 | 61 | 80 |
| District 10 | 86 | 102 |
| Administrative Law Enforcement Unit | 7 | 7 |
| Special Branch | 39 | 52 |
| Vice Squad | 164 | 194 |
| Economic Crime Unit | 653 | 698 |
| Money Laundering Unit | 8 | 11 |
| Criminal Investigation Department | 294 | 252 |
| Drug Squad | 492 | 541 |
| Total | 2,352 | 2,574 |

| Arrestment of offences | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>District/Branch</i> | <i>No of Cases</i> | <i>No. of Persons</i> |
| District 1 | 29 | 43 |
| District 2 | 56 | 58 |
| District 3 | 56 | 65 |
| District 4 | 45 | 55 |
| District 5 | 27 | 35 |
| District 6 | 76 | 87 |
| District 6A | 71 | 77 |
| District 7 | 95 | 120 |
| District 8 | 53 | 79 |
| District 9 | 89 | 106 |
| District 10 | 86 | 102 |
| Criminal Investigation Department | 235 | 313 |
| Economic Crime Unit | 653 | 698 |
| Money Laundering Unit | 8 | 11 |
| Vice Squad | 167 | 194 |
| Special Branch | 39 | 52 |
| Administrative Law Enforcement Unit | 6 | 6 |
| Drug Squad | 438 | 457 |
| Total | 2,229 | 2,558 |

JOHN RIZZO
Commissioner of Police

Government Property Division Directorate General

INTRODUCTION

The Government Property Division (GPD) 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 public purpose.

The GPD incorporates the Land Department, the Estate Management Department and the Joint Office. Whereas each of the three departments has precise 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 support.

The proximity of the three offices has brought about better co-ordination and facilitated communication within the Division. In fact, plans to set up one Registry for all departments within the GPD portfolio have been executed and one Customer Care Unit for the whole Division has been running since November 2007, although due to lack of support staff, the running of the Units is proving to be very challenging. The setting up of one Revenue Unit for the collection of rent payments and other revenue due on government property has had to be postponed due to technical issues. The Enforcement Unit and the Legal Unit under the remit of the Land Department continue to cater for the requirements of all GPD departments.

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION – 2007 DEVELOPMENTS

Quality Service Charter

The GPD is continuously striving to further strengthen its commitment to provide the best possible service to its clients within the ambit of the relevant laws and policies. In this respect, the Quality Service Charter that was initially launched within the Division is being reviewed now that the Joint Office has moved to its new premises. The objective is to incorporate standards following the amalgamation of the Customer Care and the Registry for the whole of the Division. 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 is acting as a driving force for all staff members to further strengthen their commitment to carry out their responsibilities in a thorough and friendly manner. It is envisaged that the GPD Quality Service Charter will be officially launched in the first weeks of 2008.

Euro Changeover in the Public Sector

In line with Government's commitment to enter the euro zone, the GPD continued to participate in the preparation and implementation of the euro changeover process. The GPD Plan has been 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 was 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. A Training Plan was drafted and four sessions were organised with the participation of 50 GPD officers. Feedback was continuously provided through the updating of the Action Plan. Cash float requirements were

adequately catered for in both offices in Malta and Gozo. As a revenue-earning Division, it was ensured that the changeover process translates into a smooth transition in compliance with official guidelines.

The work of the GPD was recognised as an example of best practice and highlighted during an interview given by the Euro Project Manager, and published in Target Issue No 7, July/August 2007. Emphasis was made on the co-operation and collaboration of all officers concerned who made possible the smooth transition process.

Better Regulations

Following the evaluation exercise carried out by the GPD of all existing regulations, tariffs and fees within its portfolio, four of the submitted proposals that needed addressing were endorsed and have 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 Disposal of Government Land Act regulating the disposal of non-residential property has been reviewed to allow tenants to directly transfer commercial outlets to their descendants. However, work is still in hand with regard to the last proposal, i.e. the promotion and marketing of tenders for the acquisition of government-owned property to increase public awareness.

Rehabilitation Works at the Auberge de Bavière and the new Joint Office Premises

Tenders for flooring and some structural works have been adjudicated and awarded, and order to start works on the intermediate floor was subsequently issued. Clarification with air conditioning contractor and with Contracts Department was also finalised, and an on-site meeting with the contractor was envisaged to be held in the first weeks of 2008. All internal rooms have been cleaned and pointed and work continues on the pointing of the ground floor corridor. Timber doors and windows have been restored and are ready to be refitted. Tender for the construction of the electricity substation was issued twice without any contractors bidding. The tender conditions are being reviewed prior to a re-issue of the call.

Work on the new Joint Office premises was completed in October of 2007 with staff moving to new building at the end of the month.

Information Technology

The decision to adopt the euro from 1 January 2008, brought with it considerable work to migrate GPD applications to achieve euro compliance. The necessary changes were made to the Land Management System (LMS), the Land Cheque Printing System, the Agricultural Land Processing System (ALPS), the Joint Office Property Database (JOPD) and the E-Rent and Local Councils Rent Payment. The migrations took place in December 2007 and no problems were encountered during the euro changeover conversion process.

Enhancements on the Land Management System (LMS) were carried out to introduce a more upgraded and detailed rent invoice/receipt layout for clients. In view of this, new equipment including heavy duty laser printers and an inserting and mailing machine was purchased to facilitate the rent billing process.

Similarly, work on the Land Cheque Printing System was undertaken to upgrade the cheques' layout. This will provide an innovative layout and facilitate the printing process by using the same heavy duty printers being used for the LMS.

The Map Scanning Project, which consists of scanning images of various GPD maps, was kept on hold during 2007 pending developments on the LEMIS project and will continue during 2008.

As part of the amalgamation process of GPD services, the Joint Office Docreg System had to be merged with that at the GPD's head office at the Auberge de Bavière. After intensive analysis and testing, the amalgamation was completed in October 2007 and the few issues which cropped up were expected to be solved by end of January 2008.

All GPD's PCs were installed with Outlook 2003 client software as part of the Migration from Teamware to Microsoft Outlook. The actual migration took place in March 2007. In-house training was organised for all GPD staff with the collaboration of the SDO.

The GPD has decided to extend the rent billing service, the payment of rent at local councils service, as well as the e-rent service to ex-Church properties registered in the Joint Office Property Database (JOPD). Since the JOPD does not include a billing facility, migration of JOPD data to GPD's Land Management (LMS) is required. To facilitate data transfer, a number of interventions have been made on the JOPD. This project will continue in 2008.

During the year under review, new equipment including PCs and printers was purchased for newly appointed officers and to replace obsolete tools. A number of PCs, including their operating system software, were also upgraded to current versions.

Human Resources

In spite of the capacity building exercise that was undertaken in 2007, GPD staff complement continues to decrease from year to year. In fact, the total of 156 officers (December 2004) went down to 141 (December 2007), which include a number of employees on loan from other entities - 8 ex-Malta Post Office employees, 8 IPSL employees and 1 from the Local Government Department. Four officers are on parental leave, 15 work a reduced time table and one is on unpaid leave.

Gozo Branch

For the convenience of Gozo residents, the GPD continues 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 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.

In order to be in a position to manage more efficiently water and electricity bills of common parts of government-owned blocks of flats and other vacant government-owned premises, a database has been created with regard to blocks of flats. It is envisaged that work to include all premises will continue in the coming year.

Moreover, the GPD administers 221 burthens that are due to various entities. In order to get an overview and plan better their management, a database has been created that should help to facilitate the streamlining of this process.

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.

Green Initiative

The GPD continued 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 Ltd. Environment stickers to save water and electricity can be seen in prominent places and auto-spouts were purchased. Energy saving appliances are used whenever possible.

JOHN SCIBERRAS

Director General (Government Property)

Government Property Division Estate Management Department

DEPARTMENTAL OVERVIEW

The Estate Management Department'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 several property datasets including a textual database of government-owned property (excluding ex-church property records 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.

During 2007, EMD undertook a database maintenance exercise on the Joint Office Property Database during which more than 50,000 database updates were carried out to align database syntax with that used in the GPD's Land Management System.

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. The EMD handled over 3,700 such requests/reports, apart from another 3,055 instances of generic provision of property information. In addition, the EMD carried out some 600 property inspections, apart from giving assistance to the Land Department in 50 court cases. 240 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. The EMD put up a total of 1,020 property drawings in connection with leases, sales and permits over government-owned property. In addition 14,000 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 2007, progress on this project was slow 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 2007, about 1,200 such applications were checked and, where applicable, the necessary cautions (41) raised. The Department also investigated and resolved 92 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. Some 618 land registration plans were prepared, by virtue of which the EMD registered a total land area of 1,860,000 square metres.

Operational Streamlining

The EMD's efforts to ensure an effective public service delivery are ongoing. During the year, the Department streamlined a number of operational processes including the recording of property in the Division's property database. As a result the Department was able to redeploy one full-time officer to other duties within the Division.

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 2007 a number of properties were referred to the Land Department for sale through tenders or redemption. Total land sales from Government property during 2007 amounted to nearly Lm5.5 million (this includes c. Lm2.49 million 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. Typically this involves such properties as land, shops, garages, stores, mobile kiosks, filming, tables and chairs permits etc. The EMD processed 97 cases for temporary activities on government land, 640 permits for repairs/works and 87 tables and chairs permits. In addition the EMD also approved another 150 properties for leasing and emphyteutical grants. During 2007, new leases were finalised for a total yearly rent in excess of Lm139,523.

SUSTAINING GOVERNMENT PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

Devolution of Property to Local Councils

The EMD's contribution in this aspect is to assess the devolution proposal, draw up necessary plans and prepare *ad hoc* conditions before referring the matter to the Land Department for finalisation of the contract of transfer. The Government Property Division concluded the devolution/leasing agreements of three properties as approved by EMD, including shelter at Mosta, information kiosk at Xlendi and garden and store at Victoria, Gozo. Lease agreements were also entered into with the Mosta and Sliema Local Councils in relation to their respective administrative offices.

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, liaises 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. EMD's efforts enabled the Land Department to issue 77 new cases of expropriation.

In 2007 the EMD approved the release back to the original owners of nearly 44,000 square metres of land that had been expropriated but never made use of by Government.

Special Projects

The EMD continued to play an active role in special projects sponsored by central Government including the Valletta Vertical Connections, Schreiber Redevelopment, Property Securitisation and Enemalta land. The EMD also played a substantial role in the development of project proposals for the Grand Harbour Regeneration and the Marsamxetto Harbour Regeneration programmes by providing crucial research, status information and also plans for all government-owned property in the area.

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 Corradino.

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 460 properties for eventual sale to tenants.

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 2007 the EMD processed and approved for leasing 640 applications.

Green Initiatives

In its own small way 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. This is calculated to result

in a net saving of Lm4,722 per annum in terms of time saved, reduced fuel costs and decreased car rental costs.

Support Services

The EMD also provides support services by providing property related information to such government bodies as the Planning Authority, the Works Division, the Department of Social Housing, the Land Registry, MIMCOL, MIP, Malta Transport Authority, Malta Maritime Authority and the Housing Authority.

JOSEPH CARUANA

Director (Estate Management)

Government Property Division Land Department

INTRODUCTION

The Land Department's role within the Government Property Division 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 of a particular property, the issue is taken over by the Land Department for the actual disposal of the property under the procedures permitted in 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 split 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. As the names suggest, the former is responsible for all enforcement measures required to better manage government property, whilst the latter takes care of the formal requirements of leasing or selling/purchasing property and finalising related contracts.

ENFORCEMENT

The enforcement of contractual conditions is essential if property management is to be given any significance. Within this aspect, a very small number of Enforcement Officers carry 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, the 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 no abuse is made of government property.

The Enforcement Section incorporates 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 2007, over 23,000 payments, which represent 51% of the total payments of rent, were effected at local councils, while 1,000 payments, which represent 2.22% of the total payments, were made through the Government Property Division'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. As already indicated, 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 continuous 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 had 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. 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. Between 2002 and 2007 over Lm24.5 million have been paid for expropriated property.

In accordance with the provisions of amendments brought into force in 2003, the Department can take action to process past outstanding acquisitions and purchase property under certain conditions set out by law. These amendments are intended to not only minimise the expropriation debt but also to 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 147 bank accounts were opened in 2007 for a total deposit amounting to Lm3,047,664.

2007 HIGHLIGHTS

In 2007 the Schedule (Article 3) of the Disposal of Government Land Act (Chapter 268) which regulates the disposal of property through a 'direct allocation' in certain circumstances, without the need of going to tenders or an *ad hoc* Parliamentary Resolution, has been amended to allow:

- the transfer of leased commercial premises to children or grandchildren directly involved in the business by the tenant before reaching retirement age;
- the redemption of property held in perpetuity and subject to a revision of the ground rent prior to the date of revision of such ground rent.

The Land Department continued in its efforts to maximise the use and return on government property. The major efforts include the following.

Revenue Collection

During 2007, no less than 69,000 rent invoices, 230 judicial letters, and 56 lease termination warnings were issued to ensure timely recovery of rent dues. To these have to be added other efforts such as telephone contacts and on-site collections by the Department's enforcement officers. About 67 repayment agreements were also negotiated with defaulters, resulting in a total revenue in 2007 of Lm9,192,000 excluding sales.

Evictions

These constitute a strong deterrent against abuse of government property. A total of 157 evictions were carried out with the full co-operation and assistance of the Commissioner of Police and the Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure when demolition of property was involved.

Tenders, Leases and Sales

The Land Department advertised a total of 276 tenders for the lease of government property, resulting in 76 lease agreements and 100 contracts. A total of 395 lease agreements were concluded in terms of the Agricultural Scheme. 297 encroachment permits were issued, which included permits for mobile kiosks and permits for the placing of tables in public areas. The Land Department also completed the sale of government land/property resulting in a revenue for 2007 of Lm5,423,700.

Acquisition

The Department finalised a number of acquisition deeds paying a total of Lm5,715,000 to owners of expropriated property. 77 new President's Declarations for the expropriation of land, mainly for road formation being financed by the Italian Protocol, have been issued. 66 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.

Releases

A total of 43,518 square metres of land in various localities formerly acquired in virtue of the Land Acquisition (Public Purpose) Ordinance (Chapter 88) has been released back to the private owners.

Euro Changeover

As connection with the euro changeover, the Land Department in conjunction with the Estate Management Department and MITTS carried out the necessary conversion changes to the Revenue Collection System. A new invoice template was introduced and a machine for the folding and insertion of invoices in envelopes was purchased.

Free of Charge Services

The Land Department has continued to provide, free of charge, agency services to the Housing Authority. Within these services, the total sum collected on behalf of the Housing Authority was Lm140,300. The sum of Lm26,300 was collected as rent for sports facilities on behalf of the Sports Council.

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 in inducing 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 2008 the Department will continue to explore further avenues in order to extinguish payments 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 2007, the following properties were alienated:

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------|
| As per 1996 Scheme | 1 |
| As per 2002 Initiative or original deed | 383 |
| Through Tenders/Exchange/Direct Disposal/Conversion | 50 |
| Total | 434 |

Plots of land were transferred to Enemalta Corporation for the construction of substations and properties were transferred to the Housing Authority for social housing projects.

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 5,191 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 4,279 applications processed so far, 776 applications were invalid and a further 3,173 applicants were informed of the amount of redemption or of the selling price, as determined by established criteria and 330 applicants were given an interim reply. With a view to hastening the process, the Joint Office farms out the valuation of certain properties to architects in private practice.

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 the year, 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, 24,483 forms concerning properties listed in Annex 8 of the Church/State Agreement were forwarded to the Joint Office by the ecclesiastical entities.

However, 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 2007, the Control Committee approved 854 of the above-mentioned corrections. The Committee also signed 333 property forms, thus confirming the final amount due to the ecclesiastical entities in respect of the properties concerned.

During 2007, the Joint Office continued on the embarkation of the strategy to reconcile the values of properties previously owned by the 99 different ecclesiastical entities. In fact, during the year the Joint Office verified and determined the exact value of the properties transferred to the Government of another four such entities, bringing the total of reconciled entities to 51.

Registration of Properties

The Department continued with the registration of property with the Land Registry in terms of Cap 358. During the year, 567 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 2007 to 11,119. The following figures show the number of properties registered during the past three years:

| | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|-----------------------|------|------|------|
| Registered Properties | 731 | 877 | 567 |

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 revenue collected during the past three years:

| | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | <i>Lm</i> | <i>Lm</i> | <i>Lm</i> |
| Rent | 511,702 | 513,211 | 608,104 |
| Sales | 1,836,297 | 4,653,995 | 2,128,942 |
| Total | 2,347,999 | 5,167,206 | 2,737,046 |

56% of the amount of rent collected during 2007 consisted of arrears. This was the result of an ongoing 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 the promotion and monitoring of the correct and timely application of the provisions of the above-mentioned Agreement with particular reference to the approval of corrections to the Annexes; and the alienation of property and in particular to bonds that have to be issued to the Foundation for Church Schools.

By Legal Notice No 161/2007, Lm4,438,400 in Government Stock was issued to the Foundation for Church Schools in respect of property alienated in the previous year.

Co-ordination with the Estate Management Department and the Land Department

The amalgamation of the Joint Office within the Government Property Division continued to be strengthened when, on 6 November 2007, the Joint Office officially moved from Floriana to premises in Marsamxetto Road, Valletta near the Auberge de Bavière where the Land Department and the Estate Management Departments are situated. The co-ordination and related co-operation of the Joint Office with the latter two Departments falling under the same Division is essential for uniformity in adopting 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. This is due mainly to the fact that the Central Registry Act envisages the extension of the present compulsory registration areas 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 2007. The Act is expected to be put into force during 2008.

RESTRUCTURING EXERCISE

An assessment of human resources 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 continued during 2007. 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 workload resulting from the Central Registry Act. Besides, MITTS Ltd has also been requested to conduct an ICT impact analysis of the Central Registry Act on the Land and Public Registry Division, obviously including the LRCS. The impact analysis exercise is in hand. In the meantime, during 2007 staff attended training in various areas relating to departmental policy and administration. Courses attended include courses on data protection, improving customer service and euro changeover training. The Staff Development Organisation prospectus was periodically examined with a view to encouraging further training of staff.

LAND REGISTRY CERTIFICATION SYSTEM (LRCS)

Preparations for the implementation of enhancements to the LRCS were finalised during 2007 and will be put in place in 2008. The enhancements will allow the updating of the LRCS base map and will pave the way for subsequently making the LRCS accessible online, in line with Government's policy to develop and deploy online services to the general public. This access will obviously be subject to certain security and data protection safeguards and will ensure an enhanced service delivery to all Land Registry clients. Discussions with the relevant stakeholders, including MEPA, were held throughout 2007, with the main aim of providing this service as soon as possible.

The number of applications lodged at the Land Registry in 2007 was 6,438.

LAND REGISTRY QUALITY SERVICE

A reprint of the leaflet on 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, for example, 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.

DATA PROTECTION

The Land Registry continued to scrutinise and implement recommendations made during its data protection audit. One of the recommendations included the training of all staff on matters of data protection and in fact most staff has attended such courses during 2007. This exercise is still ongoing.

SEARCHES AND PREZENTATA SECTIONS

The *Prezentata* and Search Sections, which were transferred from the Public Registry to the Land Registry during 2002, in order to enhance the one-stop-shop concept insofar as property registration is concerned, now form an integral part of the Land Registry.

The Department is liaising with 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.

A proposal for an e-government service enabling the Registry's clients to *Request Searches on Wills* was made to the Ministry for Investment, Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) in 2006. The adjudication process of a call issued in 2006 for the provision of the service was concluded in the first quarter of 2007 and the exercise was finalised in the fourth quarter of 2007. The service can be accessed from www.searchonwills.gov.mt.

CONDOMINIUM ACT (CAP. 398)

In terms of this law, the Land Registrar is bound to register the administrators of *condominia* and the rules regulating such *condominia* and 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, and further enhanced in 2006. Efforts to make the program available online continued during 2007.

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.

The year 2007 saw further co-ordinated phased implementation of the Scheme. In fact, out of 2,060 applications received, 739 have been finalised and work on 1,321 applications is ongoing.

SMART CITY PROJECT

The Land Registry provided MIIT with the necessary service specific information required to support or facilitate the implementation of the Smart City project. The latest feedback was submitted in December 2007.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

In June 2007 the Land Registry's Occupational Health and Safety representative attended a course organised by the OHSA on OHS issues. Following the course, meetings were held with the representative to discuss ways of reducing Health and Safety hazards on the Department's premises. His recommendations are still being implemented.

EURO CHANGEOVER

During 2007, the Land Registry continued to participate in the preparation and implementation of the euro changeover process. The Registry regularly updated its plan and collaborated with MITTS to ensure euro compliance of the existing databases until 1 January 2008. All documents and brochures containing information on the Registry and making reference to currency were amended to include dual display as from 19 February 2007. Besides, the Registry saw to the amendment of the relevant legislation and to the necessary training of its staff.

GREEN INITIATIVES

The Land Registry actively supports and promotes green initiatives. The Land Registry's contact person regularly liaises with the Ministry's Green Leader. Paper, carton and plastic are collected for recycling in collaboration with WasteServ. Appropriate bins for this purpose were also procured. Spent batteries are collected for proper disposal. Staff is committed to save as much as possible on paper, envelopes, electricity and water and spent light bulbs are replaced with energy-saving ones. Touch-free auto-spouts for the Department's water taps and infrared motion sensors for lighting have also been procured.

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 and the tapping of EU funds, if possible. This necessitates ongoing active participation in activities and projects organised by the EU on land registration issues.

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 2007, a total of 649 such registrations were made which included 633 births, and 16 deaths. There were also 191 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 2007 and Civil Status Certificates issued, as compared with 2006:

| | Registrations | | Extracts Issued | |
|------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------|
| | 2006 | 2007 | 2006 | 2007 |
| <i>Births</i> | 4,103 | 4,229 | 47,916 | 48,578 |
| <i>Marriages</i> | 2,376 | 2,393 | 12,730 | 12,862 |
| <i>Deaths</i> | 3,042 | 2,949 | 15,920 | 15,916 |
| Total | 9,521 | 9,571 | 76,566 | 77,356 |

During 2007, a total of 6,664 *Full Copies* of Acts of Civil Status were issued against 6,000 copies issued in 2006. In the same year, 11.68% of the total of Civil Status certificates issued were ordered online.

The Department issues Free Status certificates which attest that no registration of an act of marriage exists in the Civil Status records against a particular individual. The number of these certificates issued in 2007 was 163 against 153 in 2006.

Amendment to the Civil Code

The amendments to the Civil Code whereby no mention is made as to the status of the mother in the birth certificate of a child, as indicated by Act XVIII of 2007, came into force by means of Legal Notice 215 of 2007. This ended any discriminatory feature that might have existed in certificates for children born out of wedlock.

Annotations

Any person, who may have an interest, can bring an action before a competent court in Malta for: (a) the correction of any registered Civil Status Act, (b) the legitimization *per subsequens matrimonium* of a person born out of wedlock and (c) 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.

Moreover divorces and nullities of marriage obtained abroad in a competent court 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 registers of Civil Status during 2007 compared with those of 2006 are listed in the table below:

| Types of Annotations | 2006 | 2007 |
|-------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Corrections | 70 | 85 |
| Legitimizations or Acknowledgements | 147 | 195 |
| Nullity of marriage and divorces | 230 | 158 |
| Total | 447 | 438 |

Adoptions

The number of adoptions entered in the Adopted Persons Register in terms of the Civil Code (Amendment) Ordinance 1962 during the year was 76 against 77 in the previous year.

MARRIAGE REGISTRY

The number of marriages in respect of which formalities were completed by the Marriage Registry during 2007, as compared to the preceding year, was as follows:

| Marriages in Malta | 2006 | 2007 |
|--------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Religious | 1,524 | 1,492 |
| Civil | 761 | 782 |
| Total | 2,285 | 2,274 |

The number of marriages (Religious and Civil) between foreign couples who in 2007 opted to contract their marriage in Malta amounted to 574. These couples hailed from a wide diversity of countries. During the year, 131 Maltese men and 124 Maltese women were married to foreigners.

The number of religious marriages between Maltese couples was 1,351 while 104 opted for a civil marriage. Civil marriages may be celebrated at the Department and also outside the Public Registry premises. The Department was allowed use of St James Chevalier in Valletta for the celebration of civil marriages during the period of time necessary for Merchant Street to be renovated.

LAND VALUATION SECTION

The computerisation of the Land Valuation Office initiated in 2005 as a teleworking project was finalised in November. The clerk participating in the project resumed normal duties at the Notification Section.

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. Applications for registration of decontrolled tenements and for the issue of certificates of decontrol processed during 2007 were one and seven respectively.

SEARCHES AND LEGAL SECTIONS

In anticipation of the introduction of the provisions found in the Central Registry Bill (Bill Number 16 of 2003), the day-to-day administration of these two Sections has been assumed by the Director, Land Registry. However, the Director, Public Registry is still legally responsible for the Sections 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 | | |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| | 2006 | 2007 |
| a) Registration of Notes of Hypothecation | 23,194 | 23,477 |
| b) Registration of Legal Hypothecation | 138 | 145 |
| c) Registration of Notes of References | 10,627 | 10,972 |
| d) Registration of Renewals of Hypothecation | 6 | 39 |
| Total | 33,965 | 34,633 |

| Notes of Enrolment (<i>Insinwa</i>) Registered | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|
| | 2006 | | 2007 | |
| | Number | Value Lm | Number | Value Lm |
| Sales | 10,252 | 361,203,250 | 10,078 | 302,445,800 |
| Exchanges | 56 | 1,742,500 | 93 | 2,390,000 |
| Donations | 172 | 4,845,060 | 167 | 3,220,100 |
| Partitions | 114 | 3,390,500 | 169 | 5,041,500 |
| Perpetual Emphyteusis | 109 | 18,180 | 143 | 39,122 |
| Temporary Emphyteusis | 63 | 4,753 | 27 | 1,476 |
| Causa Mortis | 4,144 | - | 4,148 | - |
| Marriage Settlements | 3 | - | - | - |
| Personal Separation | 334 | - | 468 | - |
| Wills | 5,645 | - | 5,076 | - |
| Other Acts | 2,381 | - | 3,289 | - |

The total amount of “debts” secured by a hypothecary or privileged guarantee registered during 2007 was Lm350,717,500 against Lm404,586,500 in 2006.

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*). During 2007, the number of Special Certificates issued amounted to 404.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Data Inputting and Verification Project in Gozo

During 2007, the capture in computerised format of all Civil Status records, dating back to 1863, continued to make progress and this had a positive effect on the issuance of certificates. In fact, applications for Full Civil Status Certificates in respect of persons born between 1941 and 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 four. In November, the number of staff inputting data at the Gozo Ministry was doubled and a verification project was initiated. Since its inception in 2004, a total of 364,412 Acts were inputted.

A number of Better Regulation measures were finalised during the year. Particularly, one can mention the inclusion of the surname of the child in the Act of Birth and the inclusion of the mother of the child as one of the persons responsible for the notification of birth. This resulted in less bureaucratic processes and the reduction of administrative burdens on citizens.

Staff Training

Various officers were detailed to attend courses organised by the Staff Development Organisation. Senior staff at the Accounts Section attended courses on accrual accounting while others in various sections, attended advanced IT courses. Moreover, all staff were prepared and informed about the euro changeover, while front office clerks handling cash received special training. A seminar was also organised on waste management as a green initiative project.

ANTHONY GERALDI
A/Director (Public Registry)

Land and Public Registry Division

Department of Passport and 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, acting as the Registration Authority for the e-ID 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, holding a valid Maltese identity card and are e-id registered, can apply online for a new passport. During 2007, 30 applicants made use of this facility.

Biometric Passports

Biometric passports have been on the agenda of the Passport Office for quite some time. A number of meetings were held with the Ministry for Investment, Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) for the integration of the project with the National Identity Management System. Every effort is being made so that biometric passports will be available for issuance in 2008. In the meantime, the Department considered the procurement of the present passport booklets to meet the ever increasing demand for Maltese passports.

Amendment to Passport Regulations

The endorsement of a recommender is no longer required in applications for renewals of adult passports. This change was brought into force with the publication of Legal Notice 141 of 2007 which amends the Passport Regulations. This measure made the process for the renewal of passports less complicated to citizens, without affecting the security of the system. The server verifies the application's data with the data stored from the previous passport.

Notice of Passport Expiry

Adults who applied for passports and filled in their mobile or e-mail address in their application forms started being notified with a text message that their passport reached its expiry date. This e-Government service facilitates the renewal of passports and spares citizens the cumbersome situation of finding out that their passport is expired a few hours prior to leaving the Island. The system added value to the service one expects from the Passport Office.

PASSPORT OFFICE, MALTA

Besides fulfilling its core function of issuing passports, the Passport Office, Malta, also provides full support to Maltese embassies, high commissions and consulates abroad. It also gives full support to the Gozo Passport Office.

During 2007, the Passport Office issued a total of 32,654 passports (32,591 ordinary passports and 63 diplomatic passports to Maltese diplomatic personnel).

Multiple Passports

The Passport Office accepts applications for the issuance of a second passport in special circumstances and when considered necessary. During the year, 157 such passports were authorised and issued.

Refugee Travel Documents

Convention Travel Documents are also issued by the Passport Office. A total of 719 Travel Documents were issued during 2007.

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 547 oaths and 1,567 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 – 50 such cases were processed in 2007. 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 its staff.

Urgent Passports

Requests to issue urgent passports, (issuance within 24 hours of application), are received against an additional payment. During 2007, a total of 1,637 such passports were issued.

Arabic Translations

The Passport Office also offers the services of an Arabic translation of passports of those persons who request this service. A total of 582 translations were carried out during 2007.

PASSPORT OFFICE, GOZO

The core function of the Gozo Passport Office is the issuing of passports. During the year, a total of 2,329 new passports were issued compared to the previous year's total of 2,174.

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 2006-2007 | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|---------------------|----------------|
| | Passports Issued | | Revenue (Lm) | |
| | 2006 | 2007 | 2006 | 2007 |
| Malta | 28,516 | 30,262 | 294,261 | 313,220 |
| Gozo | 2,174 | 2,329 | 21,803 | 23,204 |
| Missions | 2,649 | 2,472 | 43,062 | 40,144 |
| Diplomatic | 77 | 63 | 462 | 395 |
| Total | 33,416 | 35,126 | 359,588 | 376,963 |

BIRTH/DEATH NOTIFICATION SECTION

This Section, now housed in the Old Treasury building, has the advantage that it is interconnected to the Public Registry and situated close to the Civil Status Section of that Department. This is beneficial since problems from the notification stage to the registration stage of Acts of Birth and Acts of Deaths can be dealt with and solved in a very short time.

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 drawn up and checked before being delivered to the Public Registry for registration. This is an important process which must ensure that the details submitted by the notifier are correct.

| Total Number of Notifications received in 2006-2007 | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Births | | Deaths | |
| | 2006 | 2007 | 2006 | 2007 |
| Malta | 3,639 | 3,576 | 3,069 | 2,944 |
| Gozo | 280 | 283 | 251 | 273 |
| Total | 3,919 | 3,859 | 3,320 | 3,217 |

Notification of Death Online

In October a new e-Government service was launched by means of which citizens holding an e-ID notify the death of a relative or any other individual through the website www.notificationofdeath.gov.mt. The service requires the entry of relative data, both of the notifier and the deceased person. One can follow the registration and order the death certificate through the website: www.certifikati.gov.mt. However, the notifier still has to personally return the ID card of the deceased to the local council or the local police station.

e-ID

In July 2007, office space formerly used by the Notifications Section at the Passport Office was refurbished to accommodate the Registration Authority for the electronic card (e-ID). The new system for e-ID registrations is an improvement on the former registrations system. Through e-ID, citizens can have access to all e-Government services through the internet, with the added value of the electronic signature. This is a positive step forward in the realisation of a national identity management system. The e-ID office is open to the public on the same schedule as the Passport Office.

COMMON DATABASE SECTION (CdB)

The Common Database is one of the major pillars to achieve the information sharing policy of the 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. The Data Protection Act has put greater responsibility on the public service and public sector to ensure that the CdB is used appropriately and only when really needed to assist in the business process of a department. Thus the CdB integrates public domain information that is commonly used amongst government departments and which is available in computerised systems. Established security and audit procedures are in place to ensure proper use of the available data, particularly in conformity with the Data Protection Legislation.

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 this Department's Director, is to discuss data and policy issues concerning this information sharing initiative. A number of meetings were held throughout the year, during which related issues and progress were reviewed. Recently,

discussions with the steering committee of the National Identity Management System (NIDMS) focused on the role the CdB will play in the new system. The CdB is used extensively throughout Government. In fact, there were over 80 government departments and entities with 1,371 users up to the end of the year. Moreover, installations and re-installations amounted to 504 during 2007.

Others

The Director attended various meetings at the Ministry and across ministries, especially in conjunction with the National Identity Management System. He also participates in the Article 6 committee of the EU.

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 the Court of Appeal in its Civil Jurisdiction, there are three sections in the Civil Courts which are assigned the category of cases. These are the First Hall of the Civil Court, the Family Section and the Voluntary Jurisdiction Section.

There is also the Magistrates' Courts whereby the Magistrate takes cognisance of causes having claims exceeding Lm1,500 but not exceeding Lm5,000, in which case these causes 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.

2007 witnessed positive developments in the field of information technology and e-Government, the refurbishment 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

At the beginning of the year, a programme of enhancements and upgrading of information technology systems and programs was undertaken. A number of initiatives were planned and eventually implemented. This commitment was undertaken in synergy with the Malta Information Technology and Training Services Ltd (MITTS).

This Directorate continued monitoring the timely inputting of judgements and records of proceedings on the website. Judgements and the records of proceedings are generally available for viewing by the general public within three days of the respective court sitting.

Rights for access to certain data processing requirements by officers were regularly monitored and withdrawn if such rights were no longer required.

Further enhancements were made to the Acts Management Program which incorporates the computerisation of judicial letters filed under Sections 166A and 254 A of the Code of Organisation and Civil Procedure (COCP - Cap. 12 of the Laws of Malta). The disputed value is being inputted, thus enabling easier retrieval of statistics. The recent amendments to the law, whereby the value of judicial letters has been raised from Lm5,000 to Lm10,000, were also reflected in the IT program. Successful amendments in the data processing systems have been inserted, thus contributing to a better analysis of the amount under litigation and register them accordingly.

The notice of hearing of the first sitting in the Court of Appeal has been set up as a Word template. Even though this template is not yet linked with the database, it allows for a clear and cleaner presentation. It is envisaged that in early 2008 this template will form part of the Civil Case Management program.

In the Judicial Sales Section the bilingual notices for publication on the Government Gazette are now generated and referred for publication by the DOI electronically. All other ancillary acts are filed and their relative notification in the same application are linked so that anyone can follow the case history.

All notifications of all judicial acts are now entered in a database. This program gives information when the act was filed and served and who was the court official responsible for the service.

The Civil Case Management program has been strengthened to generate data in respect of applications for the enforcement of judgements and collection of taxes from persons residing in Malta when the decisions are delivered in one of the Member States' courts.

In preparation for the euro changeover, adequate changes were made in the computerised system to show the amount in both the Maltese and euro currencies.

Preparatory work was created for a computerised system which would generate a report within 21 days from the day of a judgement delivered by a court of first instance. This will help the Revenue section to identify *Res Judicata* cases, that is, those lawsuits in which there has been a final judgement and are no longer subject to appeal. In these cases a bill of costs can be issued to the plaintiff, claiming the amount due to the court.

Monthly statistical reports of introduced and decided cases in the Civil 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 proven to be an important analytical tool particularly for researchers, members of the Judiciary and the Courts' administration. Regular clean-up exercises were carried out to ensure that these statistics remain realistic.

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.

e-GOVERNMENT

The Ministry for Investment, Industry and Information Technology approved the financing of two programmes that will help the courts become more accessible electronically. The first is the scanning of all

acts and documents filed in the courts' registries. The other is to make possible the electronic data of costs and dues to the court whereby legal aid to the parties is automatically linked to the lawsuit.

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. Due to the ever increasing workload in the Family Court Section, an area was identified to serve as an archive. Shelving was procured and this will soon house the records of proceedings and other acts pertaining to terminated cases within the Family Court.

TRAINING

Training sessions were delivered by the Department's legal advisor on the amendments regarding the execution of warrants.

Orientation and introductory courses were organised for prospective and newly enrolled deputy registrars and casual substitute clerks.

A modern training room has been set up to train members of staff.

COURT CASES

A number of amendments to the COCP came into effect on 1 May. These brought along several changes such as the termination of the yearly renewal of the garnishee order (*mandat ta' sekwestru*), the amount of the judicial letter under Section 166A was raised to Lm10,000 and the inhibition orders have to be decided within 30 days from date of filing.

The table below represents the number of active court cases pending in Malta as at end December 2007 compared to the total number of cases pending the year before. There was an overall reduction of 2% in the total number of civil cases.

| Courts | Pending cases – December 2006 | Pending cases – December 2007 | Difference | % Increase/Reduction |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|----------------------|
| Constitutional | 31 | 34 | +3 | +10% |
| Court of Appeal (in its Superior Jurisdiction) | 830 | 715 | -115 | -14% |
| Court of Appeal (in its Inferior Jurisdiction) | 275 | 234 | -41 | -15% |
| First Hall of the Civil Courts | 4,712 | 4,849 | +137 | +3% |
| First Hall of the Civil Courts (Family Section) | 965 | 1,043 | +78 | +8% |
| Courts of Magistrates | 1,076 | 1,050 | -26 | -2% |
| Small Claims Tribunal | 1,160 | 901 | -259 | -22% |
| Land Arbitration Board | 233 | 263 | +30 | +13% |
| Rent Regulation Board | 362 | 398 | +36 | +10% |
| Rural Leases Control Board | 121 | 129 | +8 | +7% |
| Total for all Civil Courts/Tribunals/Boards | 9,765 | 9,616 | -149 | -2% |

CUSTOMER CARE INITIATIVES

A Customer Care desk was set up to provide assistance to clients, the general public and the legal profession. Upon request, this desk will provide copies of records of proceedings, judgements and other important information.

DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL COURTS AND TRIBUNALS

During the year under review the objectives of the Department of Criminal Courts and Criminal Tribunals were to assist and give advice to the Permanent Secretary and Director General, provide logistical support, motivate trained staff for the better administration of justice, as well as provide support to the members of the judiciary.

GENERAL

The Criminal Courts Department continued to hold regular staff meetings with all employees of the Department to keep the staff updated with the related legal amendments particularly to the Criminal Code, the Code of Organisation and Civil Procedure and a number of legal notices. Certain case law was also analysed and directives were issued to all concerned. Where necessary, reference was made to the Public Service Management Code and to the draft Public Administration Act.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Regular meetings were held with MITTS Ltd so that all IT programs 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 and its effect on the Criminal Courts and Criminal Tribunals Department. In collaboration with the Support Services Directorate, every officer handling cash was given adequate training.

The Directorate was involved in discussions held with effected parties aimed at replacing the existing server. The discussions addressed the security aspect as well as the protection of data.

A detailed report was submitted to the Ministry for Investment, Industry & Information Technology on the introduction of an audio and visual recording system in the Court halls based on a digital electronic recording system. The report was eventually approved and works should commence during 2008.

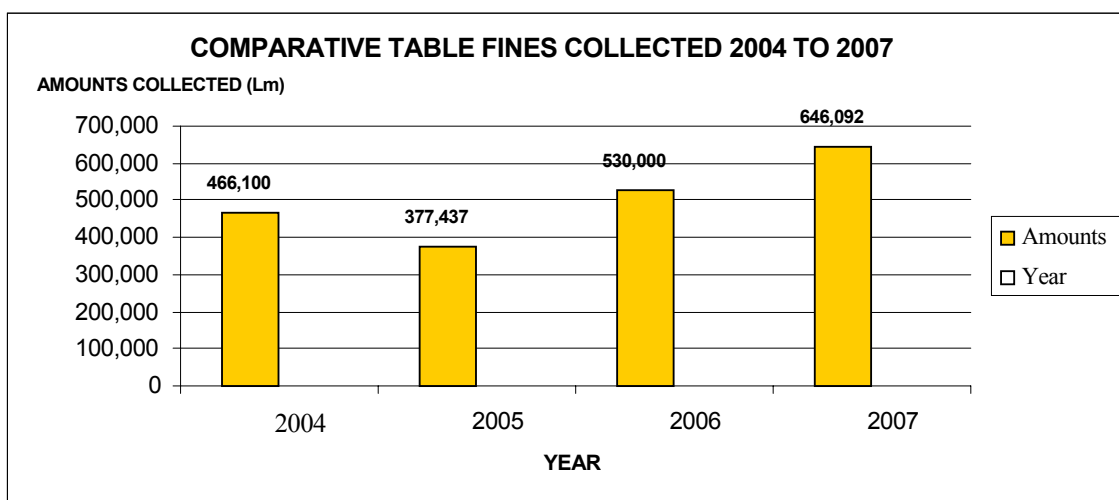
The video recording equipment in Hall 14 was modernised after obtaining professional advice. This was important to ensure that video conferencing facilities required by the judiciary was provided.

The "Shared Documents" concept was introduced at the Registry, its Annex and the Court Exhibits Section. Staff was authorised to share documents where mutual important information existed. Audited IT systems allow certain staff to create common folders on a computer, enter data, share amongst each other and as well as with other authorised users. This brought about more efficiency in the execution of several services thereby avoiding repetitions and errors.

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.

The following table indicates the increase in government revenue as a result of the concerted effort by this Directorate:



Sending regular monthly intimations to all fined persons, taking court action and liaison with the Commissioner of Police to execute conviction tickets yielded positive results. The Registrar filed more than 1,000 applications in court so that unpaid fines were converted into terms of imprisonment. 1,382 conviction tickets were issued and passed on to the Commissioner of Police for execution.

ARCHIVES AND COURT EXHIBITS

The process of disposing old court exhibits continued during the year under review. This exercise took place after the required verifications and legal provisions were looked into according to law. Thus more space was made available so that a reclassification exercise of court documents could continue. Modern shelving was procured and this created more space.

Court staff continued to categorise and properly document all drugs, drug-related material and valuable court exhibits. After carefully examining each court exhibit to be disposed of and ascertaining that the court case to which the exhibit appertained was definitely decided, the item was photographed. Where applicable, the destruction of drugs and drug-related material was undertaken. A report has to be prepared according to law and inserted in the records of the case. All necessary steps were taken so that two large confiscated power boats were handed over to the Commissioner of Police.

REGISTRY FOR THE COURTS OF CRIMINAL JURISDICTION

The re-location of the Annex to the Registry at ground floor level helped court staff who has to call frequently there to deposit and collect bulky files. Moreover, it provided space for proper and decent office space for the Director Criminal Courts and his assistants.

During the year under review the Registry and Annex to the Registry handled the following transactions:

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Prison Permits | 745 |
| Withdrawal of Schedule of Deposits | 226 |
| Police Reports | 994 |
| Additional Police Reports | 147 |
| Process Verbaux, Court Files, and Applications to the Attorney General | 6,603 |
| Process Verbaux, Court Files and Replies to Applications from the Attorney General | 5,501 |
| Suspended Sentences – Courts of Magistrates | 408 |
| Suspended Sentences – Superior Courts | 60 |
| Sentences over 1 year imprisonment – Courts of Magistrates | 109 |
| Sentences over 1 year imprisonment – Superior Courts | 84 |

Two deputy registrars at the Annex to the Registry continued with the complex task of assessing the fees and expenses incurred by and awarded to court experts. During the year under review, the total sum of Lm317,943.16 was assessed to various court experts.

GOZO COURTS AND TRIBUNALS

ORGANISATION OF THE GOZO COURTS AND TRIBUNALS

At the beginning of 2007, there were some significant changes to the judicial organisational structure. The previous set-up was comprised of two resident magistrates dealing respectively with two thirds and one third of the cases introduced during the year. These magistrates now work on a new roster of a week each and take cognisance 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 hold magisterial inquiries and carry out preliminary investigations. Court sittings are usually held from Tuesday to Friday, with an average of 40 cases per sitting.

The change in the workload of the said magistrates has made it necessary for this Department to introduce, up to a certain extent the judiciary team concept. Thus, when three additional clerks were transferred from Malta, these were deployed in such a manner that each deputy registrar could now have his/her own clerk. Marshals continue to work according to the exigencies of the different magistrates/judges.

REGISTRY

The single Registry at the Gozo Courts caters for both civil and criminal cases, as well as for appeals from the inferior courts.

The number of applications, including replies in lawsuits during 2007 totalled 2,818. Judicial letters amounted to 972, of which 221 relate to those falling under Section 166A of the Code of Organisation and Civil Procedure (COCP) and 11 regarding Section 253 of the COCP. There were 60 legal protests/counter-protests and 340 schedules of deposit.

COURT OF MAGISTRATES

During this period, 144 cases were introduced in the Superior Jurisdiction (money claims over Lm5,000 or concerning a point of law). 191 cases were decided and 60 were ceded, leaving 868 pending cases.

In the Court of Magistrates in its Inferior (Civil) Jurisdiction (money claims ranging from Lm1,500 to Lm5,000), there were 23 newly-introduced cases while 50 were decided, 13 ceded and one deserted/deducted.

There were 97 new applications before the Court of Magistrates in its Voluntary Jurisdiction, while 84 decrees were issued. The same Court still has 65 pending cases.

The Court of Magistrates as a Court of Criminal Judicature (*Kawzi Sommarji*) takes cognisance of all criminal offences and contraventions punishable with a maximum of six months imprisonment. During the year, 914 cases were introduced while 501 cases were decided, ending the year with 835 pending cases, 25 were put off *sine die*, 2 cases were re-appointed from *sine die* and 305 cases were withdrawn.

As a Court of Criminal Inquiry, 89 new preliminary inquiries (*kumpilazzjonijiet*) were introduced, 36 were decided while 140 remain pending. None were transmitted to the Attorney General for the issue of a bill of indictment.

The beginning of the year experienced a substitution of Magistrate in the above two court jurisdictions as well.

The Magistrate presiding as Revising Officer, in terms of Section 13 (3) of Chapter 354 (General Elections Act, 1991), decided 51 applications pending before him. During the same period, 24 new applications were introduced. There are no pending applications here.

FAMILY COURT

In the Family Court, there were 149 pending letters at mediation stage by the end of the year under review. There were 20 writs of summons introduced in the Family Court during 2007, with 19 being decided. Six cases were ceded, while another was deserted, leaving a balance of 33 pending cases.

SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL

This Tribunal deals with cases whose value does not exceed Lm1,500. There were 61 new cases introduced and nine were referred from the Tribunal in Malta. 52 cases were decided and 7 cases referred to the Tribunal in Malta, while 5 cases were ceded and 2 deserted. 73 cases remain pending.

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 continue to be heard at the NGO Centre in Xewkija.

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 23 newly-introduced cases, decided 28 and had 17 pending cases.

Appeals from judgements of the Court of Magistrates (Gozo) in its Civil Superior Jurisdiction are heard by the Court of Appeal in Malta.

The Court of Criminal Appeal (Inferior Jurisdiction) also holds sittings in Gozo and decided 24 cases, had 94 newly introduced ending with 80 pending cases. One case was deserted.

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.

BOARDS

The Rent Regulation Board and the Rural Leases Control Board deal with applications regarding matters between lessors and lessees of premises or land respectively. The former had four new applications introduced while the latter had six such applications. Each board decided three cases, the former ending with 17 pending cases, whilst the latter ending with 19.

During the year, two Gozitan lawyers served as Official Curators and Advocates for Legal Aid.

Our 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 2007, the Gozo Courts continued with its effort 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

Staff training continued to be an integral part of human resource development. Employees from all sectors of this Department were encouraged to undergo training in various fields especially those related to their responsibilities. Various employees also attended IT courses organised by the Staff Development Organisation in office automation programs such as Word, Access, and Internet use, as well as in Customer Care, Communication Skills and EU Affairs.

COLLECTION OF REVENUE

As regards the collection of Revenue, Lm38,181 were collected from fines (including arrears), an increase of Lm682 from last year and Lm114,783 by way of filing and registry fees, an increase of Lm4,659 from 2006, bringing the total revenue to Lm152,964 which amounts to a global increase in revenue of Lm5,341 over the previous year.

REFURBISHMENT OF PREMISES

At the start of 2007, Hall B started being used again after a complete overhaul consisting of the dismantling of the underlying floor. The public address system of the same hall was also upgraded.

The refurbishment works in the underlying Registry were finalised at the beginning of October. The Registry, with its new and more ample storage space/shelving, now caters better for the Courts' customers.

The Advocates' Chambers are also being refurbished.

New premises for bulky criminal court exhibits were identified at the Law Courts building and at a garage leased by Enemalta to increase storage capacity.

DEPARTMENT OF SUPPORT SERVICES

HUMAN RESOURCES

During 2007, the Human Resources (HR) section continued to draw up daily sick leave and vacation leave reports and weekly reports regarding employees who reported after normal working time. On the basis of this latter report, Heads of Department were able to institute disciplinary procedures against staff within their departments who reported after normal working hours. Sick leave and vacation leave were processed electronically by means of the Human Resources Information Management System (HRIMS) program. During the year, the Courts of Justice Division once again signed another contract with a medical agency in order to carry out, when and as required, sickness verification of court employees who report sick. Sickness verification proved fruitful.

The activities undertaken by the HR section in 2007 included:

- drawing up of 54 contracts, issue of 6 appointments and processing of 14 pension papers;
- processing of 43 staff progressions/staff promotions;
- carrying out of periodic staff complementing exercises to identify existing and future vacancies, on the basis of which requests for engagement/replacement were submitted to the Management and Personnel Office;

- 9 requests were submitted to OPM/PSC for the engagement/replacement in various posts/positions;
- processing recruitment of 19 persons and a number of resignations;
- monthly updating of HR organisation charts;
- opening of new personal files and updating personal files of all court employees;
- handling of over 300 Performance Management Programmes (PMP) and Performance Rating Reports (PRR);
- updating and submission to MPO of monthly employment returns and six-monthly discipline returns;
- distribution of OPM/MPO circulars to staff;
- handling of salary adjustments and payment of allowances to court staff;
- co-ordination of work before and after selection interviews;
- compilation of 8 parliamentary replies and 7 returns (including family-friendly measures, employees on fixed term contracts etc); and
- processing of requests for maternity leave/parental leave/career break/unpaid study leave.

FINANCE SECTION

The Finance section is responsible for the collection of fines, court fees and other revenue as directed by the Director, Civil Courts and Civil Tribunals and the Director, Criminal Courts and Criminal Tribunals. The Finance section is also responsible for the payment of fees to persons who provide other services like Court Experts, Commissioners of Justice and other Tribunals, apart from the payment of salaries to all courts personnel.

Expenditure

Every effort was made during 2007 to curb recurrent expenditure. Total actual expenditure for 2007 was Lm57,700 more than that for 2006. This increase was due to the increase in expenditure under the personal emoluments category as a result of the cost of living increase and the collective agreement. However, it must be noted that for the year 2007 a new item under the Programmes and Initiatives category was introduced, namely refunds of revenue, which resulted in an expense of Lm53,300.

With regard to the operational and maintenance expenditure, the Courts of Justice Division has managed to reduce expenditure under this category by Lm50,000 when compared to 2006. This was mainly due to the award of new contracts for the hiring of executive cars for the members of the Judiciary and for the hiring of photocopiers. Moreover, savings were also registered under the electricity bill. These savings were registered through the use of energy saving equipment and the replacement of a good number of old air-conditioning units and systems.

With regard to the programmes and initiatives category, a reduction in expenditure of Lm56,000 was made when compared to 2006. The bulk of the expenditure in this category was made in respect of the court experts item. However, it has to be stated 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.

Capital Projects

One of the main functions of the Support Services Directorate is that of capital projects. This year the completion of the structural works and building services project at the fourth floor was completed at a total cost of Lm190,600 (including professional services). The Courts of Justice now has a modern and appropriate administration floor which houses separate offices of the Director General, the Director Support Services, Assistant Directors, Accounts Section, Registry and Human Resources. Towards the end of 2007, a call for tenders was issued, through the Department of Contracts, for the structural reinforcement of the Courts' basement pillars. This tender is expected to be awarded and completed in 2008.

Revenue

Once again the Division increased the collection of revenue over the preceding year. During 2007, revenue was increased by Lm21,400 when compared to 2006. The total amount of revenue for 2007 was Lm3,651,551.99.

Euro Changeover

The Finance Section was responsible for the drawing up of the Euro Changeover Training Plan. After attending the necessary Train the Trainer courses organised by the National Euro Changeover Committee, the Division's trainer delivered 13 training sessions to 119 employees including 20 posted at the Gozo Courts. Those who attended the courses included management, deputy registrars, marshals and other general service grades. Special training was given to cashiers where, among other topics, simulations with specimen euro coins and notes were delivered.

OPERATIONAL AND MAINTENANCE WORKS

Maintenance

During the first six months of the year, the main project was the refurbishment of the fourth floor to house the administration offices. This project included the building of a new extension to house the Director General offices, the set-up of a new layout, tile-laying, the procurement of new furniture, and the installation of a fire alarm and a new electrical and water system. The Director General's office, the Accounts and the Human Resources section migrated from the second floor to the fourth floor thus providing additional office space to members of the judiciary.

While the fourth floor was being refurbished, other works were carried out on the roof such as the installation of new water tanks, new water pipes, laying of waterproof membrane and major cleaning.

Health and Safety

In order to address the health and safety risks at the Division, members of staff continued receiving training by attending courses at the Occupational Health and Safety premises. A number of court officials attended a two week intensive first aid training course organised by St John's Ambulance.

During summer, the Administration co-ordinated the Risk Assessment Report and after discussions with the Occupational Health and Safety Authority a number of safety measures were undertaken. These included the installation of a safety railing on the roof, the fixing of safety signs in various parts of the Law Courts, the removal of electrical health hazards such as broken wall plugs from toilets and the increase in number of fire extinguisher cabinets in various areas including Library, Archives, IT room and elevator motor rooms. A certification report on the electrical installation at the Law Courts was compiled by a private firm for the Occupational Health and Safety Authority.

Security

The contract for the engagement of security guards at the Division was again issued through a call for tenders and adjudicated. Additional security cameras were installed on the fourth floor in the Civil Courts Registry.

Entry access by members of the judiciary to the Courts building through a restricted area was organised with the introduction of a swipe card code entry system. A computerised system logs the details of the persons accessing the restricted area whereas a CCTV camera records all entry to such area.

Plans have been made to install other security cameras on the second floor near the Criminal Court, the Magistrate Halls on the ground floor and the Judicial Sales area during 2008.

Other Works

- In November, a Training Academy facility was inaugurated boasting the latest technology for video conferences and related equipment. A number of short courses were organised.
- Two-way radios have been bought and supplied to maintenance personnel, the Security Officer and the Chief Marshal thus making it easier to track staff in case of emergency.
- The Appeals/Constitutional Court was extensively refurbished. This included a new air-conditioning system, wood varnishing, new upholstery and new floor-laying.
- The Registry at the Family Court was extended to create additional space for the public. The Appeals Section at the Civil Registry was also extended, making more room for the staff.
- Extensive works have been carried out on the Main Courts drainage system and whitewashing of various parts of the Law Courts including main corridors and common areas.
- Six LCD visual units have been installed in common areas indicating to the public the number of the halls where sittings are taking place. A customer care area was also set up at the main entrance to deal with queries and give information to the general public.
- A number of air-conditioning units were installed in the Training Academy, Library, Judiciary Halls 10, 11, 18, 19, 20 and within a number of private chambers of members of the judiciary.
- The main supply stores at the Courts of Justice were organised with the introduction of a new shelving system.
- The carpenter's workshop and the garage in the basement were extensively organised.
- An application was filed with MEPA to carry out necessary roof structural works on the Law Courts Stores situated at Crown Ditch, Floriana. Another MEPA permit for the building of new chambers in Strait Street, Valletta for members of the judiciary is currently being processed.

THE TRAINING ACADEMY

All Twinning Light Activities pertaining to Project Fiche 2004/16762.03.04 entitled *Capacity Building in the Justice Sector* were successfully carried out and concluded by the end of the implementation period, 15 June 2006. A Twinning Light report and an audit certificate were subsequently issued on 12 September 2006.

In connection with the project and in accordance with the terms laid out in the agreement the year 2007 was highlighted by the delivery and the setting up of the video-conferencing and related equipment as well as by the design and the development of two websites, one for the Training Academy and the other for the Judicial Studies Committee. On advice received from the German Foundation for Legal Co-operation, which provided the expertise for the project, an archives management database called *Bookcat* was procured and installed at the Courts Library.

On the completion of the fourth floor at the Law Courts, in order to be able to conduct its activities better, the Training Academy was provided with a fully refurbished office and training room. In 2007, the Academy was instrumental in the running of a variety of courses, both on site and off site, to various court and non-court personnel. The total number of courses delivered during the year was 20 and the topics addressed included orientation courses, updates on new EU and local legislation, effects of the euro changeover, personnel duties, first aid and waste management.

KEVIN MAHONEY

Director General (Law Courts)

Office of the Notary to Government

ARCHIVES

In the Notarial Archives deeds *inter vivos* and *causa mortis* published by Notaries Public who have practised or are practising in Malta are deposited. 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 all deeds received by the notaries to Government. All these deeds are deposited for custody and safe-keeping.

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. Requests are also made by means of e-mail and this system has helped to improve the services. 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 were a deed of acquisition of Centre Point Buildings by the VAT Department, a declaratory deed involving the Malta Stock Exchange, contracts in connection with construction works in a number of schools and at St Vincent de Paule Residence for the Care of the Elderly as well as construction works carried out in a new complex for asylum seekers at Ta' Kandja and grants to fishermen published in Malta and Gozo.

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 Department acquired two new rooms adjoining these Archives from the Lands Department and shelving was installed in these rooms. Volumes have started to be placed in these rooms.

The Notarial Archives Resources Council (NARC) was instrumental in finding sponsors who donated an aluminium ladder, PVC sheeting to act as a protective barrier between volumes and damp walls, a digital camera, metal shelving as well as a sponsorship to repair another 10 volumes which are bound in illuminated manuscripts and the financing of an electrical engineer's report regarding the implementation of a security system.

Notarial Warrant Examination

A Notarial warrant examination was held and in March 2007 and the warrants were given in April 2007.

Family Friendly Measures

During this period, an officer opted to avail herself of one year responsibility leave.

Lists of Notaries

The Department also prepared the lists of deceased notaries and their keepers, both in Malta and Gozo, as well as the 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 St James Ditch, Floriana.

Statistics

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| <i>Notarial Archives</i> | |
| Volumes of deeds received in the Archives in terms of the Notarial Profession and Notarial Archives Act (Chap. 55) | 103 |
| Volumes of deeds received from the Special Commissioner for Notarial Acts in terms of Act X of 1999 | 57 |
| Copies of deeds issued | 10,384 |
| Volumes repaired | 80 |
| Volumes bound | 58 |
| <i>Notary to Government Office</i> | |
| Deeds were published in connection with: | |
| Works (tenders) contracts | 26 |
| Courses of study and scholarships | 10 |
| Sale of gravesites | 47 |
| Other transactions to which Government was a party | 34 |
| Notes of enrolment, hypothecs and references entered in the Public Registry | 125 |

Revenue and Expenditure

The revenue collected by the office during the year amounted to Lm52,801.48 and the expenditure during the same period totalled Lm139,099.71.

DR CORA VELLA
Chief Notary to Government

Department of Citizenship & Expatriate Affairs

As a result of the August amendments to the Maltese Citizenship Act (Cap 188), the year 2007 has become another landmark, together with the years 1989 and 2000, in the field of citizenship and for the Department. Also, during the year under review, the role of the Department in the legal migration process started to show more prominently by the newly acquired responsibilities in this field, bringing along new challenges.

CITIZENSHIP

In February, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Justice and Home Affairs announced in Parliament that Government would be introducing legislation to effect amendments to the Maltese Citizenship Act to make it possible, for persons born outside Malta of Maltese descent, to acquire Maltese citizenship by registration. The Department was consequently involved in the preparation of the relative legislation, which was enacted on 28 June 2007 by means of Act X of 2007.

The provisions of this Act continue to build on the citizenship reforms introduced in 1989 and 2000 which liberalised concepts regarding dual citizenship and the transmission of Maltese citizenship. As a result of the 2007 amendments:

- it is now possible for children, born outside Malta prior to Malta's Independence (21 September 1964) of mothers who became citizens of Malta on the said date, to acquire Maltese citizenship by registration (prior to these amendments only children born to Maltese mothers during the period 21 September 1964 and 31 July 2007 had the right to acquire Maltese citizenship by birth/registration through their mother); and
- second, third and subsequent generations born outside Malta, who are the descendants of an ascendant born in Malta of a parent also born here, may acquire Maltese citizenship by registration, as long as every person providing the link to the ascendant born in Malta, had, at any time, acquired or, if deceased, had become eligible to acquire, Maltese citizenship.

MIGRATION

Following the decision to migrate certain functions concerning the issue of residence documents from the Police Immigration authorities to the Department, the latter had embarked, in December 2006, on its new function regarding the issue of uniform residence permits to third country nationals. Enabled by related policies and legislation, the Department managed the relative tasks through a specifically developed IT system.

Throughout the year the Department continued to administer the provisions of Legal Notice 27 of 2007 regarding the status of third country nationals, who are long-term residents. Persons who qualify for such status acquire permanent residence and certain socio-economic rights; administratively they are being issued with a residence permit valid for five years or according to the validity of their passport.

In June, Legal Notice No 150 regarding Family Reunification Regulations was published, giving the right for family reunification to third country nationals residing in Malta, provided certain conditions are satisfied. Should they qualify for such right, the family members concerned are granted the relative residence permit. The issue of the said permits is also the responsibility of the Department.

In September, the Department was given also the responsibility for the issue of residence documents to EU nationals and their family members, following the coming into force of Legal Notice 191 – Free Movement of European Union Nationals and their Family Members Order 2007. This was another measure that formed part of the whole migration process of certain responsibilities which pertained, previously, to the Police Immigration authorities.

At the end of December 2007, in order to provide a one-stop-shop and, in the light of commitments related to the Schengen *acquis*, the task of the issue of residence documents to persons holding ‘exempt’ person status or ‘freedom of movement’ (spouses of Maltese citizens and children under 21 years of age of Maltese citizens or of persons who enjoy ‘freedom of movement’ or ‘exempt’ person status) became the responsibility of the Department. This function also migrated from the Police Immigration authorities.

In the light of the amendments to the Citizenship legislation, the Department had to deal with an increasing number of applications for registration for citizenship and with a lot of related enquiries, especially through e-mails. It is expected that, considering the huge number of potential applicants’, requests will continue to increase.

The role concerning migration has also brought along an immense workload. In view of the possibility of mobility through the Schengen area without a visa requirement by third country nationals in possession of a uniform residence permit, the Department is experiencing a larger number of exigent requests for applications to be processed.

The Department, together with the Director EU Affairs of the Ministry, has been working on draft legislation which deals with EU directives concerning residence requirements of students and researchers. It is expected that the relative legislation will be published in the near future and the Department would have to deal also with requests for residence documents from the said category of persons.

EU RELATED MATTERS

In view of its role in the process concerning legal migration, apart from its involvement in the implementation of EU legislation through the relative national legislation, the Department also provides feedback through its recommendations on EU proposals and by participating in working groups and committees held in Brussels. In this regard there are several proposals in the pipeline, following the publication of the Green Paper on legal migration, in order to deal with a piecemeal approach to the admission of Third Country Nationals into the European Union for the purpose of work. The examination of these proposals, conjointly with other ministries, has also become the responsibility of the Department.

During 2007, the Director participated in the following meetings held in Brussels:

- meetings of the Technical and Advisory Committees on the free movement of workers;
- contact Committee Meetings on Migration Directives; and
- meetings of the Asylum Working Group, which dealt mainly with the examination of the proposal for a directive to amend Directive 2003/109 regarding long term residence in order to extend such status also to persons enjoying international protection.

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, 460 persons were registered as citizens of Malta whilst 93 others were naturalised as citizens of Malta, as shown in 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: 19 applications for citizenship were refused in 2007.

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 the end of 2007 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 72 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 2007 was 103.

'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, 165 wives of citizens of Malta were informed that they enjoy *exempt person* status.

UNIFORM RESIDENCE PERMITS

During the year, 4,931 applications were received from third country nationals for the issue of a uniform residence permit. The number of such permits issued during the period under review was 2,966. The said number includes 211 permits issued to third country nationals enjoying long term residence status.

The Department received also 466 applications for residence documents in respect of EU citizens and their family members, who are third country nationals, for the necessary processing.

REVENUE

During 2007, the Department derived Lm78,374 from fees charged for various services.

JOSEPH MIZZI

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 | Minor Children of Maltese Descent | Persons of Maltese Descent | Total |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|------------|
| Albanian | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | 2 |
| Algerian | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Australian | 15 | 20 | 11 | 86 | 1 | 9 | 142 |
| Brazilian | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| British | 14 | 30 | 4 | 55 | 2 | 4 | 109 |
| Bulgarian | 1 | 3 | - | - | - | - | 4 |
| Canadian | 6 | 9 | 4 | 4 | - | 1 | 24 |
| Chinese | - | 3 | - | - | - | - | 3 |
| Croatian | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| Czech | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | 2 |
| Egyptian | 1 | - | - | 2 | - | - | 3 |
| Filipino | 1 | 3 | - | - | - | - | 4 |
| French | 1 | 2 | - | - | - | - | 3 |
| German | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | 2 |
| Ghanaian | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Greek | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| Indian | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | 2 |
| Iraqi | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Irish | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | 2 |
| Israeli | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Italian | 7 | 5 | - | 13 | 2 | - | 27 |
| Jamaican | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Libyan | 13 | 3 | - | 4 | - | - | 20 |
| Mexican | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 | 2 |
| Moldavian | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Moroccan | 1 | 6 | - | - | - | - | 7 |
| New Zealand | 1 | 2 | - | 1 | - | 4 | 8 |
| Nigerian | 5 | - | - | - | - | - | 5 |
| Polish | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Portuguese | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Romanian | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Russian | 2 | 20 | - | - | - | - | 22 |
| Serbian | 7 | 2 | - | - | - | - | 9 |
| South African | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Spanish | - | - | - | 1 | - | 3 | 4 |
| Sudanese | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Swedish | - | 1 | - | 2 | - | - | 3 |
| Swiss | 2 | - | - | 1 | - | 2 | 5 |
| Thai | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Tunisian | 2 | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | 4 |
| Turkish | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 |
| Ukrainian | - | 7 | - | - | - | - | 7 |
| United States of America | 3 | 3 | 2 | 7 | - | 2 | 17 |
| Uzbekistani | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Total | 93 | 135 | 21 | 179 | 5 | 27 | 460 |

APPENDIX B

FOREIGNERS NATURALISED AS CITIZENS OF MALTA UNDER THE MALTESE CITIZENSHIP ACT, CAP 188 - 2007

| Nationality | Males | Females | Total |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Argentinean | 1 | - | 1 |
| Australian | 5 | 2 | 7 |
| Belarus | - | 1 | 1 |
| Bosnian | 1 | - | 1 |
| British | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| Bulgarian | - | 2 | 2 |
| Canadian | 1 | - | 1 |
| Chinese | 1 | - | 1 |
| Egyptian | - | 1 | 1 |
| Ethiopian | - | 2 | 2 |
| Filipino | 1 | - | 1 |
| German | 1 | - | 1 |
| Greek | 1 | - | 1 |
| Indian | 1 | - | 1 |
| Iraqi | 1 | - | 1 |
| Irish | - | 1 | 1 |
| Italian | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| Jordanian | - | 2 | 2 |
| Lebanese | 2 | - | 2 |
| Libyan | 7 | 3 | 10 |
| Moldavian | - | 1 | 1 |
| Moroccan | - | 1 | 1 |
| Nigerian | 5 | - | 5 |
| Polish | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Romanian | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Russian | 11 | 4 | 15 |
| Serbian | - | 1 | 1 |
| Stateless | 5 | 4 | 9 |
| Thai | - | 1 | 1 |
| Tunisian | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| Ukrainian | - | 3 | 3 |
| United States of America | 1 | - | 1 |
| Total | 54 | 39 | 93 |

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 |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| 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 |
| 2007 | 2 | 48 | 17 | 5 | 72 |

* 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 - 2007

| Country | Confirmations Issued during | | | | Total |
|----------------|-----------------------------|--------------|------------|------------|---------------|
| | 1989-1999* | 2000- 2005** | 2006 | 2007 | |
| Algeria | - | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| Australia | 1,594 | 1,767 | 150 | 196 | 3,707 |
| Austria | 1 | 1 | - | - | 2 |
| Belgium | 4 | 1 | - | - | 5 |
| Brazil | 14 | 12 | - | - | 26 |
| Canada | 1,894 | 1,188 | 142 | 161 | 3,385 |
| Denmark | 1 | - | - | - | 1 |
| Egypt | - | 5 | - | - | 5 |
| Finland | 1 | - | - | - | 1 |
| France | 13 | 19 | 4 | 3 | 39 |
| Germany | 4 | 19 | - | 1 | 24 |
| Greece | 6 | 5 | - | - | 11 |
| Holland | 13 | 8 | 1 | - | 22 |
| India | - | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| Ireland | 3 | 10 | 2 | 2 | 17 |
| Israel | 1 | 1 | - | - | 2 |
| Italy | 271 | 190 | 7 | 5 | 473 |
| Jamaica | 1 | - | - | - | 1 |
| Jordan | - | - | 1 | - | 1 |
| Libya | - | 28 | 1 | 4 | 33 |
| Mexico | - | 3 | - | - | 3 |
| New Zealand | 21 | 10 | - | 1 | 32 |
| Nigeria | - | 2 | - | - | 2 |
| Norway | 2 | - | - | - | 2 |
| Pakistan | - | 4 | - | - | 4 |
| Poland | - | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| Sierra Leone | - | - | 1 | - | 1 |
| Singapore | - | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| South Africa | 7 | 17 | 5 | 4 | 33 |
| Spain | 1 | 1 | - | - | 2 |
| St Christopher | 1 | - | - | - | 1 |
| Sweden | - | 5 | 1 | - | 6 |
| Switzerland | 21 | 10 | - | 1 | 32 |
| Syria | - | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| Tunisia | 2 | 1 | - | - | 3 |
| United Kingdom | 906 | 1,557 | 74 | 99 | 2,636 |
| United States | 918 | 788 | 108 | 78 | 1,892 |
| Zimbabwe | - | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| Total | 5,700 | 5,658 | 497 | 555 | 12,410 |

* For year by year details, see Report for 2000

** For year by year details see Reports for 2005 and 2006

Department of Correctional Services

The Correctional Facility is considered to form part of the island's justice system and one of its objectives is to provide a means through which inmates can be kept securely in a humane manner. Security remains a key responsibility; while inmates are provided with assistance in rehabilitation, every effort is made to make the inmates' imprisonment a helpful and constructive experience to re-integrate back into society.

Within the main facility, programmes are being implemented with the main purpose of driving down levels of drug misuse and helping prisoners to stay 'clean' of drugs; this coupled with a growing work program and teaching/education courses aimed at reducing illiteracy and numeracy and providing skills for the outside world of work thus helping offenders gain a better future.

The aim of the Correctional Services Department is to maintain inmates in a secure environment while at the same time foster the inmates' re-education and rehabilitation, in the most humane and safe environment possible.

PROJECTS

During the year under review, the following works and initiatives were initiated, continued or completed:

- Improvements to Security;
- Set-up of the Vulnerable Inmates Unit (Div 8);
- The complete refurbishment and upgrading of Division 1;
- Refurbishment of an area in YOURS and the set-up of the Female B Division (Division 14);
- Installation and Commissioning of a number of environment-friendly systems;
- Reorganisation of officer operations.

IMPROVEMENTS TO SECURITY

Security is the Department's first priority. A number of improvements to the perimeter line were made; these included the removal of eyesores such as the razor wire on the façade and the replacement of the same with active alarm systems. Division 6 (main Security Division) was strengthened and a number of systems have been replaced, a complete upgrading of the division has commenced with the setting up of a new medical unit and adjoining high security yard. Other works included a CCTV system in Division 1 as well as in Division 8 and Division 14.

SETUP OF THE VULNERABLE INMATES UNIT (VIU)

A new unit has been set up on top of the old Debtors Section. This unit houses a maximum of 14 inmates in a family style environment where inmates and staff interact in a more relaxed manner. The Unit provides all necessary services including self-catering services, a classroom/library, a medical unit and a large day room. New technology has been used to substitute as much as possible the deployment of human resources. A state of the art nurse call system and CCTV surveillance were installed.

This Unit has a success story since inmates often request not to be transferred to other units, even when there were times of overcrowding. Furthermore it was observed that after 10 months of operation, no inmates were found positive to drug abuse in the same unit.

REFURBISHMENT AND UPGRADING OF DIVISION I

Division 1 had been closed down since the riot of July 2005. Initially a basic repair and repainting project had been considered, but in 2006 a decision was taken to completely refurbish and upgrade the same Division.

Most of the works in this division, including re-installation of electricity, water and drainage services, repainting of cells, pointing of the central atrium, and replacement of the old spiral staircase was carried out by inmates and CCF personnel, thus saving the Department a large amount of funds.

REFURBISHMENT OF AN AREA IN YOURS AND SETUP OF FEMALE B DIVISION (DIV 14)

During the year under review, the Correctional Facilities were faced with a very large influx of new female inmates and the Female Division that is designed to cater for 20 inmates saw its occupancy increase to 30 excluding female inmates held in other locations.

A decision was taken to set up a new division, aimed to be self-sufficient and offering a similar environment to that already adopted in Division 8 (VIU). After considering three different locations, an area at the YOURS section was considered as the most appropriate.

The new area includes two separate dormitories (one housing four inmates and the other six), a common room, a yard, an officers' room, a kitchen, a laundry, a medical unit and a visiting area. Space for further growth is also available.

The work was carried out in record time by CCF officers and inmates. The Division is being managed by just one officer with most of the daily operating tasks being carried out by inmates.

ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY SYSTEMS

A number of environment-friendly measures have been carried out. These included the installation of a number of solar water heaters to supply hot water to divisions.

Energy saving lights were installed in different locations including the YOURS, Divisions 1 and the Female B to replace standard lighting. Solar tubes that illuminate areas via the transfer of natural light from the exterior were also installed; this was done on a trial basis and if found efficient, will be installed in other areas thus saving on electrical power.

Other measures adopted include the installation of water press taps in all Division 1 and water control outlets in the administration block. In addition boilers are being converted to operate from diesel to gas.

REORGANISATION OF OFFICER OPERATIONS

During 2007, the ever growing problem of staff depletion continued to increase, hence the department took steps to review manpower usage and where possible improve operations.

The exercise was carried out by an ad hoc committee. A number of recommendations were made and classified under three categories of implementation; those that could be adopted in the short, medium and long term frames. The said recommendations are in the process of being implemented. In parallel, a second exercise to outsource non core operations to private contractors has been taken in hand.

INMATE ASSESSMENT UNIT

The Inmate Assessment Unit (IAU), has continued to serve its designated functions regularly, namely those of carrying out assessments of incoming inmates, developing Correctional Care Plans, reviewing inmates

on an individual basis for support in social, psychological and behavioural matters, and assisting inmates by directing them towards other services within CCF when necessary. The Unit has also carried out work in connection with social work through the assistance of a part-time social worker who is supervised and supported by the IAU. Supervision of the Trainee Forensic Psychologist by the resident Forensic Psychologist continued regularly. The Unit also serves as a liaison between inmates and various external agencies, which generally include agencies offering services of a social/welfare nature. The Unit utilised the services and was in contact with Probation Services, Aġenzija Appoġġ, Sedqa and Caritas, ETC and the Housing Department, amongst others.

The Unit handled 510 admissions and 617 assessments (EuropASI: 185 - GHQ 28: 432). A total of 432 correctional care plans were classified as follows: 74 low, 290 medium, and 68 high. Individual interventions carried out during the year reached a total of 1,707 involving 852 inmates. An average of 70 inmates was reviewed each month.

SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTIONS

The social worker from Appoġġ worked on 115 cases: 78 of these were closed leaving the current case load at 37.

EDUCATION UNIT

During the year, the Education Unit at CCF continued to provide educational courses for residents. An average of 55 residents attended courses on a regular basis. Educational provision was extended to cover Divisions 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 11 as well as the Young Offenders Rehabilitation Services (YOURS) and the Female Section. Educational facilities were provided on a daily basis, six days weekly. The courses provided were the following: Art, Beauty, Chess, Computer, Electrical, English, Italian, Life skills, Maltese, Masonry, Mathematics, Philosophy, Pottery, Spanish, Sports, and Thinking Skills. Facilities and assistance were also provided to three residents to attend University courses.

YOUNG OFFENDERS' UNIT OF REHABILITATION SERVICES

The Young Offenders' Unit of Rehabilitation Services houses residents aged up to 24 years. During 2007, YOURS registered 96 admissions, 77 of which were newly admitted cases whilst the remaining 19 were transferred either from another division or had split from a drug rehabilitation programme. The youngest admission during 2007 was a 14-year-old inmate who was sentenced on breach of probation for a period of less than a year. On the other hand, a total of 92 residents were released from the Division. The majority of the residents were Maltese but 18 residents residing at YOURS during 2007 were of foreign nationality.

During 2007, the educational provision within the Division continued to build on the belief that the main educational delivery should focus on the provision of practical courses which train and equip the residents with skills for employment. Apart from the basic courses provided, this year the residents continued to benefit from the delivery by the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) of the Food Handling License B certification. The collaboration between ETC and the Division continued to be strengthened as evidenced by the efforts of the Division and ETC to participate in an EU funded project applied for by the Institute of Tourism Studies.

On a similar note, 2007 also saw YOURS participating in another EU funded project as the secondary partner to the Institute of Forensic Studies. This project entitled *Phoenix: Preparing for and handling opportunities for employment: saying 'No' to xenophobia and isolation* sees Malta collaborating with three other countries in the preparation of a tuition programme which will help the beneficiaries overcome obstacles for employment based on bias and stereotypes, become computer literate and increase their prospects for gainful employment. This tuition will be provided to the YOURS residents in 2008.

PROBATION SERVICES

The main objective of the Probation Services is to help ensure social stability by contributing to minimise the frequency of crime and by ensuring the re-integration 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 both the pre-sentencing and the post-sentencing phase.

Probation Services Statistical Report

During 2007, the Probation services received a total of 359 new cases from the Courts of Justice in Malta and Gozo, a 10% 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 suspended sentence supervision orders. In December 2007, the Unit was handling a total of 561 active cases distributed among two Senior Probation Officers, carrying a reduced caseload due to other duties, and 12 Probation Officers. Although the number of community service orders and combination orders issued remained stable, these services are still under-utilised. This can be explained by the fact that, according to the law, only those cases referred to the Probation Services for the compilation of pre-sentencing reports can ultimately result in the issuing of community service orders or combination orders.

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 cases with violence, such as grievous bodily harm or assault and domestic violence. Drug possession cases remain stable when compared to 2006, whereas a marked decrease was registered in drug trafficking cases.

During the year under review, of those cases referred to the Probation Services, 57 instances concerned female offenders, whereas 302 cases concerned male offenders. This shows a staggering 90% increase in the number of female offenders in 2007 over the previous year. In cases concerning male offenders, a very slight increase was registered.

A high proportion of offenders who benefited from Probation Services fell in the 15 to 19 years of age bracket. This shows a marked increase in this age bracket over 2006. Other marked increases were also noticed in the 25 to 29 and the 30 to 34 age bracket. The youngest age bracket, the 10 to 14 age group, also continued with the upward trend noticed in the previous years. In general, the shift noted in recent years to more difficult, demanding, and younger offenders has become even more pronounced. Cospicua was the locality which yielded the highest percentage of cases with Qormi and Valletta trailing close behind.

| Breakdown of Cases | No |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Orders of Supervision | 43 |
| Pre-sentence/social inquiry reports | 79 |
| Probation Orders | 185 |
| Suspended Sentences | 50 |
| Community Service Orders | 1 |
| Combination Orders | 2 |
| Age Distribution (years) | |
| 10 to 14 | 17 |
| 15 to 19 | 92 |
| 20 to 24 | 72 |
| 25 to 29 | 74 |
| 30 to 34 | 55 |
| 35 to 39 | 19 |
| 40 to 44 | 11 |
| 45 to 49 | 8 |
| 50+ | 11 |
| Gender Distribution | No |
| Females | 57 |
| Males | 302 |

| Type of Offence | No |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Illegal substances | 29 |
| Drug trafficking | 24 |
| Sexual offence | 2 |
| Received stolen goods | 4 |
| Theft | 179 |
| Arson | 1 |
| Fraud | 15 |
| Assault/grievous body harm | 28 |
| Corruption of minor | 12 |
| Child pornography | 1 |
| Domestic violence | 9 |
| Threatening | 5 |
| Traffic offence | 7 |
| Lodged a false report | 7 |
| Loitering/prostitution | 13 |
| Voluntary damage | 3 |
| Other | 19 |

Trades and General Maintenance

The trades section has worked on a number of tasks that included general maintenance in cells and other areas as well as urgent repairs that come up from time to time.

Due to lack of personnel, the collaboration of inmates has become paramount. In Division 11, more than 30 cells have been painted and a number of common rooms repainted. The central hall has been redone and the Division 6 control room has been panelled.

Work has also been carried out using contractors; this included membrane work, major work in the YOURS boiler room and work on the electrical services.

Expenditure

The average cost of maintaining one prisoner for 2007 was Lm21.69. The total recurrent expenditure incurred by the Correctional Facility during 2007 was Lm2,848,823. Expenditure of a capital nature reached the sum of Lm171,611.

Inmate Population Statistics

The average daily population during 2007 was 387 persons. The highest number of prisoners on one day was 404 (on 31 March 2007).

During the year, out of the newly admitted persons at the facility, 170 were sentenced and 359 were to be kept under arrest.

SANDRO GATT
Director (Correctional Services)

APPENDIX A (i)

| Sentenced Prisoners (By Offence) | |
|-----------------------------------------|------------|
| <i>Type of Crime</i> | <i>No.</i> |
| Homicide and attempted homicide | 3 |
| Breach of Probation Order | 13 |
| Breach of Bail | 33 |
| Theft | 85 |
| Arson | 2 |
| Sexual offences | 6 |
| Drug Related | 77 |
| Immigration and human trafficking | 7 |
| Threats | 17 |
| Prostitution | 2 |
| Wilful damages | 15 |
| Escape | 4 |
| Grievous bodily harm | 9 |
| Slight bodily harm | 4 |
| Forgery | 4 |
| Fraud | 8 |
| Debtor | 1 |
| Conversion of <i>Multa</i> | 61 |
| Falsification | 2 |
| Illegal arrest | 1 |
| Other offences | 29 |
| Total | 383 |

| Release of Prisoners | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| On Bail | 229 |
| By Court Order | 8 |
| On Payment of Fine | 22 |
| On Termination of Sentence | 189 |
| On Probation | 2 |
| Presidential Warrant / Amnesty | 3 |
| Immigration Act | 9 |
| Acquitted | 11 |
| <i>Multa</i> | 21 |
| Suspended Sentence | 17 |

APPENDIX A (ii)

| Prisoners by Nationality | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Nationality</i> | <i>Sentenced</i> | <i>Detained</i> |
| Albanian | - | 1 |
| Algerian | 3 | 1 |
| British | 5 | 3 |
| Bulgarian | 1 | 1 |
| Chadian | - | 4 |
| Dutch | 1 | - |
| Egyptian | 3 | 1 |
| Ethiopian | - | 1 |
| French | - | 2 |
| Italian | 3 | 1 |
| Ivory Coast | - | 1 |
| Libyan | 12 | 29 |
| Maltese | 230 | 172 |
| Moroccan | 1 | - |
| Niger | - | 1 |
| Nigerian | 4 | 2 |
| Palestinian | - | 2 |
| Panamanian | - | 2 |
| Romanian | 2 | 2 |
| Russian | - | 3 |
| Sierra Leonine | - | 1 |
| Slovenian | 1 | 1 |
| Somali | 4 | 1 |
| Sudanese | 3 | 1 |
| Syrian | 1 | 2 |
| Tunisian | 3 | - |
| Turkish | 1 | - |
| Yugoslav | 3 | - |
| Total | 281 | 235 |

Note: A person may be shown both as detained and sentenced. This is due to the fact that whilst a person is being detained he is also sentenced and another referral ticket is issued with the new sentence.

Department of Civil Protection

INTERVENTIONS

During 2007, the Civil Protection Department responded to a total number of 4,925 calls, dealing mainly with fire incidents, oil spillages and assistance to persons in distress. These included 146 calls for animal rescue and 205 (over 4%) which resulted to be hoax calls.

| Incident | Total |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| Vehicles/Trucks | 204 |
| Rubbish/Skips | 431 |
| Grass/Trees | 1,141 |
| Gas Lkg/Gas Fire | 31 |
| Houses/Apartments | 198 |
| Shops/Restaurant | 38 |
| Hotels/Guesthouses | 18 |
| Factories | 36 |
| Electrical Fires | 32 |
| Industrial Stores | 19 |
| Oil Spills | 1,266 |
| RTA's | 112 |
| Farms | 9 |
| Ind Garages/House Garages | 39 |
| Sea craft Pmp/SC Fires | 25 |
| Floods/Flood Pumping | 66 |
| Collapsed Building | 24 |
| Rescue of Persons | 75 |
| Fireworks Factories | 6 |
| Historical Buildings | 1 |
| Animal Rescue | 146 |
| Assistance /PLO | 512 |
| Others | 291 |
| False Alarms/Hoax | 205 |
| Total | 4,925 |

MAJOR ACTIVITIES

During the year, 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 natural disaster in Peru.

Contingency Plans

Following directives issued by the EU in respect of the SEVESO Contingency Plans, the CPD has managed to finalise three such plans within the established time frames. The remaining two SEVESO plans will be drawn up by the end of April 2008.

Assistance from Foreign Countries

The Civil Protection Department, in collaboration with the Ambassador to France in Malta, established reciprocal assistance with the French Civil Protection. The immediate result of this collaboration was the

assistance given by two French experts who came to Malta to advise on the proper handling of emergency plans related to the SEVESO Directive. Further fields of assistance are being explored.

Education

The Department continued with its aims of providing educational activities mainly aimed at students. During 2007, there were a total of 33 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 continued featuring 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 aimed at educating the public in ways to prevent such occurrences.

The Department has also maintained one of its primary duties of delivering public information during morning breakfast shows on various TV and radio stations.

Marine Unit and Humanitarian Aid Unit

The CPD continued to provide lifeguard services in five popular beaches throughout the summer period. The Department employed a number of volunteers to run the major part of this duty.

As in preceding years, the Department has run these operations with the joint co-operation of three non-government organisations, namely the Malta Red Cross Society, the St John Ambulance Brigade and the St John's Rescue Corps.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

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.

Another major step forward for the CPD during 2007 was the acceptance by the EU Fire 4 Civil Protection Establishments composed of Italy, France, Portugal and Spain, for Malta to be included in a project called Civil Protection Pilot Project on Cross Border Co-operation to deal with natural disasters. Other countries which were included were Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovenia. Malta is already participating fully in workshops/training under this project.

An additional achievement was the recognition given to the Malta CP Volunteer Unit by the THW Volunteer Corps of Germany. This Corp has selected Malta as a Workshop Centre for all European Countries and the first such activity was held in December 2007. Further activities are being considered for 2008.

Civil Protection Volunteers

This is a special area where the CPD has excelled in its performance; no less than 75 volunteers have been trained in Civil Protection matters during 2007. Their services have been sought and obtained during public manifestations as well as during emergencies such as the recent flash floods. Volunteers themselves are assisting in the building of quarters for their use as well as in the upkeep and maintenance of vehicles.

EU MECHANISM FOR CIVIL PROTECTION

During the year, the Department participated in different meetings organised by the European Commission to establish greater co-operation between 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

The EU has presented another target to cope with. 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 Civil Protection Department is to deliver the 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 for regular personnel as well as volunteers within the same Department.

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.

REGULATORY/GUIDING SOURCES

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; EU legislation affecting public administration; other international conventions posing obligations regarding local government issues; policies regulating public administration, adopted at national level; and policies adopted by the ministry responsible for local government.

ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS

Organisational Set-up

The Department's staff complement during 2007 consisted of 45 employees (including Field Service officers working in Gozo). In addition, the Department is also responsible for 137 IPSL workers assigned with Malta local councils and 30 assigned with Gozo local councils, making a total of 212 employees.

During 2007, the Department's organisational set-up was strengthened with the engagement of an officer-in-charge and a clerk within the Registry, Petitions Board, and another official who was assigned with the Field Services Unit. The post of EU Desk Officer and IT Co-ordinator remained vacant.

In its stated objectives of sustaining the administrative set-up of key local government entities, two departmental officials carried out duties with the Local Councils Association and another official was assigned as EU Project Manager with the Valletta Local Council.

Personal Development

Personal development is one of the core departmental values. For this reason, both internal as well as external training is given from time to all staff, whereas individual employees are given the necessary training to strengthen their competences in their given field of work. EU training was given to all senior management, whereas other employees attended SDO courses on various subjects.

Three employees continued with their university studies after receiving sponsorship from the SDO and the Department. These officials are carrying out studies at Masters, BA (Hons) level and other certified courses from the University of Leicester and the University of Malta.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Financial Allocation to Local Councils

The Department was responsible to allocate funds made available by central government to all the 68 local councils in accordance with the funding formula in the Tenth Schedule to the Local Councils Act. For financial year 2006/2007 (ending 31 March 2007), the sum allocated to local councils for their functions and operations was of Lm10.25 million. The sum for financial year 2007/2008 (starting 1 April 2007), was increased to Lm10.27 million. In addition, as a result of the assignment of IPSL and former WSC workers, local councils in Malta and Gozo were saving around Lm1.2 million in terms of salaries paid for the said employees.

Departmental Operations and Maintenance Expenditure

In its efforts to curtail costs, for the fourth year running, by the end of the year the Department managed to make cost savings of Lm9,718.87 with respect to the operations and maintenance budget. This amounts to 9.3% of the voted budget. The overall cost savings made by the Department during 2007 amounted to Lm28,484.87.

DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES TO LOCAL COUNCILS

The Department gave support in the following areas:

- *Approval of Request for Bank Loans:* During 2007, the Department processed requests by three local councils for the approval of a bank loan. The requests were from the Msida and Pembroke Local Councils for the construction of their respective administrative offices, and the Santa Luċija Local Council to enable it to buy the premises serving as its administrative offices. The requests were evaluated by the Department and, after consultations with the Ministry of Finance, recommendations were made to the Minister responsible for local government and the Minister responsible for finance to grant approval for these loans.
- *Human Resources:* The Department is also responsible for the vetting of the procedure leading to the engagement of a Local Council Executive Secretary. This is done in order to advise the Minister responsible for local government whether to endorse or not such an engagement. In those instances where the engagement is not possible for some justifiable reason, an Acting Executive Secretary is appointed by the Minister on the advice of the Department.

During 2007, six new Executive Secretaries were engaged in the Ghaxaq, Mosta, Pieta', Siggiewi, Sliema and Żejtun Local Councils. In five other local councils a Deputy Executive Secretary was appointed to carry out duties whenever the Executive Secretary could not do so. In addition, an Acting Executive Secretary was appointed in the San Ġwann Local Council.

During 2007, the appointment of a new Executive Secretary for the Local Councils Association was approved.

The requests for redeployment of IPSL workers assigned with Malta local councils were evaluated and changes were implemented by the LeGA (Local e-Government Agency) Committee composed of the Director (Local Government), the President of the Local Councils Association and the Head, Human Resources Section of the Department. During the year, 135 IPSL employees were assigned with Malta local councils whereas 31 public officers formerly detailed with the Water Services Corporation Gozo were transferred on the Department's payroll and deployed with the 14 Gozo local councils.

- *Audit Matters:* In collaboration with the National Audit Office, the Local Councils Association (LCA) and the Association of Local Council Executive Secretaries (ASKLM), the Local Councils Audit Procedures were amended to reflect new audit practices and regulations. These new procedures were explained to Mayors, Executive Secretaries and Council Accounts staff during an *ad hoc* seminar organised by the Department in conjunction with the LCA and the ASKLM.
- *Training to Council Members and Staff:* In the second quarter of 2007, a training seminar was organised to all Local Council Executive Secretaries and Mayors on *Local Government Financial and Audit Legislation*. This seminar was a success in terms of course content, the attendance of Mayors and Executive Secretaries, participation and the interest shown.
- *Euro Changeover:* As Euro Changeover Project Leader for local government, the Department was actively involved over the past two years. During the year under review, the Department co-ordinated a number of meetings with key stakeholders in order to monitor progress. In addition, a number of circulars were issued to all local councils as guidance. A Euro Councillor was also appointed in the majority of local councils to serve as a catalyst in his/her locality for the dissemination of information to local citizens.

The Department was also responsible to identify existing local government legislation that includes currency as well as all electronic hardware and software that needed adjustments for the euro conversion. The Department also facilitated arrangements with the accounts software provider for the provision of services to all local councils with respect to the euro conversion.

In conjunction with the NECC Information Officers, the NECC Public Sector Sectoral Committee, the LCA and ASKLM, information seminars were organised to all Local Council Executive Secretaries. This training programme was phased in two parts, one held in April and one in October 2007. In addition, in March, in conjunction with the NECC, a seminar on good practices experienced in Austria was organised, aimed at Euro Councillors and Executive Secretaries, and another information seminar was held in April 2007.

DELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS TO LOCAL COUNCILS

Local Enforcement (LES)

The Department was responsible for the co-ordination and provision of secretarial duties to the Local Enforcement System Committee (LESC) which was set up in October 2006 to manage the whole system of local enforcement (LES). During 2007, the LES met an average of once a month. In addition, several meetings were held with the key local enforcement stakeholders, including the chairmen and authorised officers of the 10 Joint Committees (nine in Malta, one in Gozo), the Police, the ADT, the Licensing and Testing Department, the LES electronic system service provider, and the Local Warden Agencies.

The functions and operations of the LES included the evaluation and processing of applications by local councils for speed cameras and CCTVs, replies to queries by individuals and other entities, the issue of directives to LES Joint Committees, the preparation and publication of a Code of Ethics for Local Wardens, the formulation of a Code of Discipline for local wardens, and the review of the ETC modules for the local wardens training programme. With respect to local wardens the main objectives were: (a) to upgrade the status of the local warden position; and (b) to instil more discipline and ethical conduct in the performance of the functions and operations of local wardens.

Petitions Board

The Department manages the Registry, Board of Petitions. This Board was set up in January 2006 in terms of Legal Notice 414 of 2005, empowering the Board Member to determine a petition submitted by any person who is charged or about to be charged with a contravention. Until the end of 2007, the Petitions Board received *circa* 20,000 petitions, of which 12,000 were processed.

Following a call for applications, towards the end of 2007, an officer-in-charge Registry, Board of Petitions was engaged. During this period, restructuring was done to three offices to house the Registry, including the archives of files.

MONITORING OF LOCAL COUNCILS' FUNCTIONS AND OPERATIONS

One of the major roles of the Department is that of monitoring the functions and operations of local councils to ensure that these operate within the parameters of the law. During 2007, the monitoring function resulted in identifying irregular payments by local councils and meting out the necessary punitive measures. During 2007, the Department effected deductions amounting to Lm14,802 from several local councils for payments done not in accordance with the financial legislation, whereas 11 councils had a total amount of Lm4,892 withheld for non submission of statutory documents. The Department also referred four cases of alleged breaches of a criminal nature to the Police for further investigation.

FIELD SERVICES UNIT

During 2007, the Field Services Unit (FSU) of the Department carried out the following activities:

- *Data Update*: Data inventory update was carried out in 40 localities.
- *Efficiency Reports*: Inspections with respect to efficiency of services carried out by local councils were carried out in all the 68 local councils. These were compiled in reports that were tabled in the House of Representatives.
- *Other Services*: The FSU was also involved in the provision of additional services to government and other entities, through the provision of data (e.g. financial allocation, measurements, locality inventories) as well as the provision of locality maps.

NEW LEGISLATION

Subsidiary Legislation

The Department was involved in the publication of eleven subsidiary local government legislation. These included: Orders of Delegation of Administration of public property to Local Councils, regulations amending the Local Councils' Audit Procedures, the Local Councils' Financial Regulations and the Local Councils Human Resources Regulations, amendments to the First and Ninth Schedule to the Local Councils Act concerning respectively the change in the coat-of-arms of Mosta and a change in the locality boundaries of San Ġwann, amendment regulations adding more NGOs that can be given donations by local councils, regulations permitting the Department to charge fees for the provision of locality maps, and amendments to the Petitions Regulations enabling the suspension of all procedures before the Local Tribunal until a final decision on a petition is given by the board member.

Local Council Bye-Laws

During 2007, five bye-laws proposed by local councils were approved by the Minister responsible for local government. These were: the Msida and Sliema Local Councils Control of Pigeons Bye-Laws; the Mġarr Local Council Camps and Vehicles at Ġnejna Bay Bye-Laws; the Fgura Local Council Advertisements on Street Furniture Bye-Laws; and the Ta' Xbiex Loitering in Specific Streets in Ta' Xbiex Bye-Laws.

The Mġarr Bye-Laws are innovative bye-laws that prohibit the installation of tents or the parking or placement of any vehicle on the sand at Ġnejna Bay.

CONSULTATION MEETINGS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

The Department carried out consultation meetings with the key stakeholders, namely the Local Councils Association and the Association of Local Council Executive Secretaries.

Consultation meetings were also held with other ministries, government departments, non government organisations and other entities. These included the Parliamentary Secretary within the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs, the Office of the Ombudsman, the National Audit Office, the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment, the Ministry for Urban Development and Roads, Ministry for Gozo, the Office of the Attorney General, the Police, Management and Personnel Office, the Planning and Priorities Co-ordination Division, the Public Registry Department, the National Council for the Promotion of Equality between Men and Women, the National Euro Changeover Committee, the Malta Tourism Authority, MEPA, Enemalta Corporation, the Internal Audit and Investigations Directorate, the Local Enforcement System Joint Committees, the Management Efficiency Unit, MITTS, Datatrak Ltd, Kullegġ Nazzjonali għall-Ilsien Malti, Wasteserv Ltd, HSBC, the UHM and GWU, the Forum Malta fl-Ewropa, and the Protocol and Consular Services (Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS

Participation in International Seminars/Conferences/Meetings

During 2007, Department officials participated in international seminars and conferences as Malta representatives at the URBACT (EU Programme) Monitoring Committee and Council of Europe Steering Committee on Local and Regional Development and the Sub-Committee on Democratic Participation. In addition, the Director participated at a seminar held in The Hague on the EU Services Directive, the Forum on Local Democracy held in Sweden, and a High Level Meeting on Governance and the EU held in Portugal attended by senior state and local government officials responsible for regional and local government.

OTHER INITIATIVES / ACTIVITIES

The following initiatives were taken up:

- *Support for Youth Councils initiative by National Youth Council:* The Department actively supported and assisted the National Youth Council (KNŻ) in setting up youth local councils in several localities around Malta and Gozo. The Director attended several meetings with the KNŻ, including an *ad hoc* seminar that promoted the setting up of new youth local councils.
- *Participation as local partners in the EU EQUAL Project:* The Department participated as a local partner in the EQUAL Project. The objectives of this project are: to reach out to the inactive segment of the Maltese population, particularly women, and encourage them to be part of, remain and advance in the labour market by promoting the uptake of opportunities in different fields; and to effectively make use of role models that have improved their employment status after they underwent training and/or sought employment to develop their career.
- *Kumitat għall-Iżvilupp tal-Libreriji Pubbliċi (KILP):* The Director, as member of the Kumitat għall-Iżvilupp tal-Libreriji Pubbliċi (Committee for the Promotion of Local Public Libraries), facilitated the meetings and the activities of this committee, including meetings with several embassies and other entities. Through the work of the KILP, the American Embassy donated a number of books to several regional and local libraries.
- *National Conference on Public Risk Management in Local Government:* In conjunction with the LCA and the ASKLM, the Department organised a National Conference on Public Risk Management in Local

Government that was attended by senior officials in the Public Service, mayors, councillors and executive secretaries. Speakers included foreign and local experts in the field of risk management, the Auditor General, the President of PRIMO Europe, and representatives of the Occupational Health and Safety Authority.

- *Swearing-In Ceremony of Newly Elected Local Councillors:* On 15 March 2007, the Department organised the ceremony for the swearing-in of the 140 local councillors elected on 10 March. The newly elected councillors from 22 localities, namely: Birgu, Qormi, Siġġiewi, H'Attard, Birzebbuġa, Floriana, Gżira, Gharghur, Hamrun, Kerċem, Luqa, Marsaxlokk, Mosta, Munxar, Paola, Qala, Safi, San Lawrenz, Santa Luċija, Swieqi, Xagħra (Gozo) and Żebbuġ (Gozo) took their oath of office in a ceremony attended also by guests and held at the Mediterranean Conference Centre. The 2007 local elections were contested by 242 candidates, of which 201 (83%) were male and 41 (17%) were female. Of the 140 successful candidates, 116 (83%) were male, and 24 (17%) were female, thus retaining the same proportion of male and female candidates. It is also interesting to note that two female councillors were elected mayors, and 15 former mayors were reconfirmed as mayors by the electorate.

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 in Malta. The Office is responsible to develop, regulate and manage a secure civil aviation system, with the objective of ensuring a safe and secure environment for all passengers, airport employees, the general public and property.

During the year under review, the Office of the Manager Airport Security has carried out various reforms and implemented various procedures, with the aim of enhancing security, whilst keeping a balance between facilitation and security.

AVIATION SECURITY COMMITTEE

During 2007, the Aviation Security Committee met four times.

The members of the committee met on an ongoing basis throughout the year to prepare the groundwork for the committee. Meetings with other stakeholders were also held throughout the year so as to maintain the effective communication links and co-operation amongst the respective entities.

CIVIL AVIATION SECURITY PROGRAMME (CASP)

The Civil Aviation Security Programme provides the framework of regulations, standards and guidelines to be adopted and implemented by all entities, directly or indirectly, involved in security at Luqa Airport.

The purpose of this programme is to protect the security, regularity and efficiency of civil aviation in Malta. It has been designed to meet the requirements of ICAO Annex 17, European Commission Regulation EC 2320/2002 and ECAC Doc 30.

Relevant parts of the CASP are disseminated to aviation security stakeholders to enable these entities to develop security plans that are in line with national requirements. Moreover, the programme is continually reviewed throughout the year to reflect new directives and regulations issued by the international security organisations in which Malta is a member or a contracting state.

ICAO INSPECTION AT LUQA AIRPORT

Between 20 and 27 August 2007, a team of four inspectors were in Malta on behalf of the International Civil Aviation Organisation and the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) to assess whether Annex 17 Standards are being fully and properly implemented. During the audit, visits to selected aircraft operators, cargo agents, mail authorities, catering companies, cleaning companies and MIA screening points were effected.

Information was gathered through observation, interviews and the examination of documents. The audit was based on observation of the implementation of security measures at the airport with as much objectivity as possible.

Most security procedures were found to be in place and compliant (Category 1) with ICAO requirements. However, there were other areas in need of rectification. A rectification plan has been drawn up by this Office and sent to ICAO.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION INSPECTIONS AT FOREIGN AIRPORTS

The Manager Airport Security and one Assistant Manager were nominated by the European Commission to carry out two separate security inspections on their behalf. These inspections were held at Sofia Airport (Bulgaria) and Naples Airport (Italy) respectively.

PARTICIPATION AT WORKSHOPS/MEETINGS ABROAD

Upon the invitation of the EC Technical Assistance Informational Exchange (TAIEX), the Manager Airport Security chaired a workshop held in Antalya, Turkey between 30 January and 1 February 2007. The aim of this workshop was to discuss the requirements of hold baggage security and the relevant legislative requirements.

Between 29 and 30 March, one Assistant Manager attended the annual Inspectors' meeting in Brussels. This meeting, chaired by the Head of the Directorate General for Energy and Transport, is held annually with the aim of explaining the new methodologies to be adopted when carrying out inspections and current developments in the legislative framework. Present for this meeting were all security inspectors from the Member States.

European Commission AVSEC Meetings

During 2007, this Office participated regularly in the monthly obligatory EC AVSEC meetings in Brussels. Throughout these meetings, important decisions towards the implementation of AVSEC legislation are made. Malta, together with other Member States, has voiced its concerns about a number of issues.

SECURITY AUDITS, TESTS AND INSPECTIONS

During the year under review, the Office of the Manager Airport Security has carried out a number of tests and inspections.

Appendix 9 of the Civil Aviation Security Programme – the National Civil Aviation Security Quality Control Programme – requires that regular monitoring activities, based on a risk assessment, are carried out. These monitoring activities are carried out by qualified national auditors within the Office of the Manager Airport Security. The aim of these monitoring activities is to ensure that the security measures in place are in compliance with the requirements of the CASP.

Monitoring activities are carried out on the various airport activities including: access control; aircraft security; passenger screening; hold baggage security; cargo; air carrier catering stores and supplies; air carrier cleaning materials, stores and supplies; security equipment; and public areas.

Throughout the year, this Office re-validated 29 regulated air cargo agents for a period of five years. Additionally, as from the month of July, this Office also commenced validation inspections at the premises of known consignors. These known consignors consist of local entities which are the originators of consignments tendered as cargo for carriage by air. During these validations, qualified inspectors from this Office monitor the measures in place during production, processing and packaging of consignments tendered for carriage by air.

The following security audits, tests and inspections carried out by this Office during the year under review:

| | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Security Audit | 1 |
| Security Tests | 10 |
| Security Inspections | 50 (Airport) |
| Security Inspections | 65 (Off-airport) |

OMAS STAFF

Following a call for applications in December 2006, a new Assistant Manager was engaged in July 2007.

In March 2007, one Assistant Manager successfully completed a Cargo Inspectors Course, at the European Aviation Security Training Institute (EASTI) in Brussels. She is now a fully certified cargo inspector. This course was organised by the European Commission.

In October 2007, one Assistant Manager successfully completed an Aviation Security National Auditors Training Course in Brussels. He is now a fully certified EU aviation security inspector.

AVIATION SECURITY COURSES - AIRPORT EMPLOYEES

During the year, a number of courses were held with the aim of increasing the security awareness of airport employees and to ensure that they understand their responsibilities in the security chain.

The following courses were held: Aviation Security Awareness; Security Training for MIA Screeners (Initial); Security Training for MIA Screeners (Refresher); Security Training for Known Consignors; and Security Training for Concessionaires.

A total of 500 airport and off-airport employees have attended these training courses.

DATA PROTECTION AUDIT

A full data protection audit was held by the Office of the Prime Minister to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act. An overview of the findings was forwarded on 25 June 2007.

The audit recommended that employees who deal with personal information are better trained in data protection. This Office in due course applied for participation in data protection courses organised by the Staff Development Organisation.

OFFICIAL WEBSITE

In the last quarter of the year, the MIIT approved the development of a website, intended to serve as a two-way communication link between the aviation security regulator, the general public and the aviation stakeholders. By the end of the year, the development of the website was in an advanced stage.

SECURITY MEASURES

This Office has been strategically involved in the preparation and co-ordination of the security measures to be implemented during two major operations, namely the visit of Her Majesty the Queen Elizabeth II in November 2007, and the arrival of euro currency in December 2007.

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 proved to be another challenging year for the Detention Service. The number of immigrants arriving in Malta continued unabated during the summer months but did not end until early December.

Emergency measures were taken in order to ensure that every person accommodated in detention centres was registered, given a full medical check-up and allowed access to the asylum system. Notwithstanding the numbers, the accommodation available had to make room for the immigrants who arrived sometimes in their hundreds within a couple of days.

THE DETENTION SERVICE

The Detention Service, established on 18 August 2005, is made up of personnel seconded from the Police Force and from the Armed Forces of Malta under one Command.

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; one Police Inspector and 19 Policemen; four AFM officers and 114 soldiers; and 98 Casual Detention Service Officers (ex-Police, ex-AFM or other similarly disciplined corps). These are deployed between Headquarters and four Closed Accommodation Centres.

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, 8,880 irregular immigrants have passed through them.

At the end of the year, there were 1,514 irregular immigrants in detention centres accommodated as follows:

- Safi Barracks Closed Centre - 757 irregular immigrants in three compounds.
- Lyster Barracks Closed Centre - 690 irregular immigrants in two compounds.
- Ta' Kandja Closed Centre - 67 irregular immigrants.

ARRIVALS OF IRREGULAR IMMIGRANTS IN 2007

A slight decline in arrivals was observed in 2007 with 1,702 immigrants landing in Malta by early December, compared with 1,780 arrivals during 2006.

This year was yet again quite busy for the Detention Service as can be seen from the table below showing the number of arrivals up to and including 31 December 2007:

| | Arrivals |
|--------------|-----------------|
| January | nil |
| February | nil |
| March | nil |
| April | 28 |
| May | 237 |
| June | 504 |
| July | 243 |
| August | 367 |
| September | 286 |
| October | 29 |
| November | 4 |
| December | 4 |
| Total | 1,702 |

OUTSOURCING OF MEDICAL SERVICES AT DETENTION CENTRES

With effect from 23 April 2007, the medical services provided at Safi and Lyster detention centres were outsourced via a tender which was awarded to a private company. Two doctors and two nurses are provided under this contract to visit the above detention centres every day (except weekends) between 08:00 and 13:00. On a daily basis each doctor is now examining 40 patients a day, totalling 400 patients being examined every week. Clinics at each of the compounds within Safi and Lyster Detention centres have been refurbished and equipped with basic medical equipment including otoscopes, stethoscopes, haemoglucotest machines and sphygmomanometers.

The National Health Services are still providing a doctor who calls at Ta' Kandja three times a week. This will be extended to Hal Far Refugee Centre (HFRC) once this centre is refurbished. When the doctor is not present, immigrants are allowed unlimited visits to the nearest health centre. In the circumstances it is felt that the level of medical service in detention centres has been increased exponentially. The level of health care being given by Malta far exceeds the minimum standards as laid down by Council Directive 2001/55/EC and 2003/9/EC.

ENLISTMENT OF CASUAL DETENTION SERVICE OFFICERS

In view of the dearth in personnel which was adversely affecting daily operations, another group of Casual Detention Service Officers was enlisted in early March. Forty-three personnel were enlisted by the Detention Service and following an intensive three-week induction course they 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.

EU FUNDING – EUROPEAN REFUGEE FUND II (2007) PROGRAMME

Following the EU decision to provide 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 the year, notwithstanding the large influx of asylum seekers that landed in Malta during the spring/summer months.

The Detention Service submitted the expenses faced in terms of meals and drinking water provision with respect to the closed reception centres, where the situation was at times considered precarious. It must be noted that at the time the costs of maintaining the required standards of reception and the supply of basic needs were constantly increasing.

The project was accepted by the European Commission which co-financed 75% of the total costs (€252,000), which in real terms amounted to approximately €190,000.

CLOSURE OF DETENTION CENTRE AT POLICE GHQ

During late 2006, the detention centre at Police GHQ was closed down and the immigrants were relocated to Hal Far Refugee Centre which formerly served as an open accommodation centre.

REFURBISHMENT PROJECTS

Various refurbishment projects were undertaken during the current year. The HFRC is being currently refurbished - once it is ready it will accommodate 110 immigrants. A two-storey compound, B Block, at Safi was totally refurbished at a cost of Lm22,803 – it now accommodates 198 immigrants. Other refurbishment projects include:

- sanitary facilities at C Block Safi, at a cost of Lm9,000; and
- sanitary facilities at the Warehouses Compound Safi, at a cost of Lm3,000.

Construction work was also undertaken and includes the perimeter fence at C Block Safi which cost Lm33,765.

INTERVIEW FACILITIES AT SAFI AND ESTABLISHMENT OF OIWAS OFFICE AT LYSTER

In order to provide better facilities for interviews of immigrants by Refugee Commission (REFCOM) case-workers and legal aides, four rooms at Safi were totally refurbished and finished according to requirements. This enables REFCOM to interview up to four individual immigrants in separate rooms simultaneously.

At Lyster, an office was established by OIWAS (MFSS) to deal with vulnerable cases in the first instance. In fact, a pilot project was launched by OIWAS, starting at Lyster, to provide much needed social and welfare support in detention centres. This will be followed by an activities project named COPE which will involve the Ministry for Education, Youth and Employment and a number of NGOs. The aim of COPE is to provide the required activities, including skills training and sports, for immigrants in detention centres.

INSTALLATION OF EASYLINE PAYPHONES AND CABLE TV IN DETENTION CENTRES

The telephone facilities available to immigrants in detention centres were revamped with the installation of 20 Easyline payphone points. Immigrants are each given a Lm2 payphone card every two months. With the installation of these Easylines within all areas of accommodation in detention centres, immigrants have the opportunity of making and receiving calls at their leisure.

Cable television was introduced in detention centres following a period of deteriorating antenna-based TV reception. Twenty set-top boxes were acquired from GO Multiplus and an agreement was reached whereby cable TV reception services would be provided by GO Multiplus for a period of two years.

ACQUISITION OF VEHICLES FOR THE DETENTION SERVICE

The Detention Service this year acquired seven second-hand vehicles. First to arrive were three Land Rovers which were deployed for general use at Safi and Lyster detention centres. The three Land Rovers were purchased for Lm18,900. These were followed by four Toyota HIACE vans which are currently being fitted for purpose at DS workshop. These vans will be used to convey immigrants to different venues such as hospitals, REFCOM, Police Immigration Branch, etc. The four Toyota vans cost Lm19,506.

Another van was acquired from Customs. This vehicle, a Ford Transit mini-bus, was handed over to DS for a nominal fee of Lm100.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL BRIAN GATT

Head, Detention Services

Office of Commissioner for Refugees

GENERAL

The year 2007 has confirmed the trend of the previous years as regards the number of asylum seekers that reach our shores. In fact 1,702 irregular immigrants arrived in Malta on 67 different boats. The great majority of these have asked for protection.

During 2007, the Office of the Refugee Commissioner (ORC) processed 1,354 cases (involving 1,379 persons). This is the biggest number in one year so far.

Although, in the first few months of the year, the number of case workers had gone down to three, by March it had increased to seven and to thirteen by October.

On 28 June 2007, a new Refugee Commissioner was appointed after serving for two months as Refugee Commissioner Designate.

Another important development during the year under review was the creation of the grade of Case Officer. This will serve as an incentive to case workers who after some years in their grade can have the chance to move on to a higher grade.

During this year the post of Assistant Refugee Commissioner became vacant and action was immediately taken to appoint a new replacement.

This year the ORC has also been through some logistical and administrative improvements. More space was made available at the Office itself and at the closed centres. There was a substantial upgrade in IT and office equipment. The archives are in the process of being reorganised.

There were also some minor but important changes in the way that cases are processed. The creation of 'country desks' has ensured that the case workers become more familiar with the particular characteristics of the country in question, thus ensuring not only a more solid decision but also more efficiency when treating requests for asylum.

The work of the ORC is impossible without the direct input of trained and trustworthy interpreters and translators. The ORC has identified a core group of such persons, and whilst giving them ongoing training, is trying to ensure as much as possible their availability whenever their service is required. This is extremely important since unavailability of interpreters potentially leads to an enormous loss of time and setbacks in the asylum determination process.

ORC has also spared no efforts in ensuring that asylum seekers who *prima facie* would seem to benefit from protection are interviewed as soon as possible. This explains the higher than usual number of humanitarian protection cases decided during this year.

PROCESSED CASES

The total number of applications processed by the Office during 2007 was 1,354, as follows:

| Category | Number |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Persons recognised as refugees | 7 |
| Persons granted temporary humanitarian protection | 620 |
| Persons still waiting to be interviewed | 1,285 |
| Persons who withdrew their application | 23 |
| Rejected applications | 329 |
| Persons whose case is still under consideration * | 611 |

** These include 173 cases of unaccompanied minors. According to law, ORC has to wait for the appointment of a legal guardian before it is able to proceed with such cases.*

MARIO FRIGGIERI
Refugee Commissioner

Corporate Services Directorate

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.

CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTORATE

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. During the year under review the Human Resources section within this Directorate continued to provide support and assistance to the Ministry's departments/entities in the recruitment and deployment of human resources.

In its concerted 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 a number of vacant positions in the respective departments. The relative contracts of officers filling such positions were drawn up and submitted to the Management and Personnel Office (MPO) and the Treasury Department.

The HR Section was responsible for processing the progression of staff to the next higher scale provided for by the respective Classification and Re-grading Agreements of the different classes and grades. The Performance Management Programme (PMP) reports for the General Service Grades were also drawn up on quarterly, six-monthly and annual basis, thus ensuring that every officer is in fact covered by a PMP. Monthly employment returns were regularly drawn up and submitted to MPO and ETC as required by standing circulars. Requests for the payment of qualification allowances were processed in time and service and leave record sheets were drawn up when officers applied to fill vacant positions across government. Other duties performed efficiently by the HR Section within the Directorate involved the

recording of all changes in the personal record sheets, confirmation of appointments, increments and superannuations, and processing requests for vacation leave on a daily basis.

Personnel in the Human Resources Sections within the departments falling under the Ministry continued to receive the necessary training on the compilation of PMPs.

The Human Resources Branch co-ordinated the selection process and engagement of a number of casual substitute clerks through the ETC to be deployed in various departments falling under the Ministry to replace other officers who had benefited from family-friendly measures introduced by Government.

Application of the Fixed Term Regulations

With the coming into force of Legal Notice 51 of 2007 of the Employment and Industrial Relations Act (Cap. 452) regarding the Fixed Term Regulations, detailed lists of public service and public sector officers engaged on contract basis within the departments falling under the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs were drawn up. Following the receipt of policy guidelines from the Office of the Prime Minister, the Directorate issued individual letters to all those officers on contract, informing them of their positions in terms of the Fixed Term Directive. The Regulations provide that employees on a contract of service for a fixed term are not to be treated in a less favourable manner than comparable permanent employees solely because they have a contract of service for a fixed term.

Training and Staff Development

During the year staff development continued to be given a high priority by the Department. Personnel within the Accounts Section of the Ministry and other departments were nominated 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 on occupational health and safety matters.

Staff posted at the departments falling under the Ministry was also nominated to attend training courses in IT, data protection, health and safety and other seminars on the European Union.

As in previous years, the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs has 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.

Euro Changeover

During the year under review, the Directorate continued to participate in the preparation and implementation of the Euro Changeover process by regularly updating its plan and collaborating with MITTS and the National Euro Changeover Committee (NECC) to ensure euro compliance. Documents and forms containing information and making reference to currency were amended to include dual display as from 19 February 2007. After attending the necessary *Train the Trainer* courses organised by the NECC, the Directorate's Trainer delivered various training sessions to personnel, thus increasing awareness on changeover policies and procedures.

FINANCE AND OFFICE MANAGEMENT

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 financial estimates and the consolidating of the financial estimates of other units forming part of this Ministry.

The Ministry's votes of recurrent and capital expenditure for 2007 were continuously monitored for the best utilisation of financial resources and to take corrective action in cases where the amount allocated in the financial estimates appeared to be insufficient. Through this process, it was ensured that any excess expenditure was offset under other items of expenditure within the Ministry's votes. 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 2008.

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 132 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: 70 Attorney General's Office; 132 Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs; 330 Police; 40 Civil Protection Department; 36 Malta Security Services, 26 Courts of Justice Division, 4 Government Property Division.

Procurement of hardware for all line departments was made through the extensive use of the e-Procurement system.

Supervisory and Co-ordination Services

The Directorate performed supervisory and co-ordination services during the various rehabilitation and refurbishment projects within the Permanent Secretariat and other small units under the Ministry.

Following the acquisition of premises at 30 Old Treasury Street, Valletta, refurbishment works were carried out, to utilise the said premises as new offices to house the newly set up Justice Unit. The premises were inaugurated on 23 November 2007.

Other refurbishment works were held at the Office of the Commissioner for Refugees at Fort St Elmo due to the increase in the staff complement of case workers, and at the Permanent Secretariat Offices at House of Catalunya.

Green Initiative

During 2007, this Directorate continued to co-ordinate and extend 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; measures were taken to collect paper in garbage bags to be later collected by WasteServ Ltd for recycling purposes; collection and safe disposal of used batteries and ink cartridges/toners took place; and the Ministry participated in the Energy-Saving (Neon-Tube) Project. Action was taken so that whenever possible envelopes would be re-used for circulation of correspondence within departments under the Ministry. Funds allocated for such purpose were disbursed to purchase

energy saving equipment and for the purchase and installation of a photovoltaic (PV) panel at the Civil Protection Department at Ta' Kandja.

Boards and Committees

This Directorate is also responsible for all the boards and committees that fall under the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs. Frequent correspondence is exchanged with the Office of the Prime Minister for the appointment/re-appointment of members serving on these boards. A database is kept constantly updated and action taken to publish the necessary notices in the Government Gazette regarding the compositions of these boards and committees. Data is also submitted to the Department of Information for inclusion in the Government's official portal.

GEORGE ZERAFÀ

Director (Corporate Services)

EU Affairs Directorate

During 2007, 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 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 use at the working groups in Brussels, especially those relating to the most sensitive issues for Malta. 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 JHA 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 2007, the Directorate continued with the initiative whereby one or two days prior to the JH Council meetings, Member States, through their representations in Malta, were briefed about the positions that Malta would be taking in Council.

The Directorate co-ordinated the replies provided by Malta on various issues by means of questionnaires, written procedures and co-ordinated with the EU secretariat at the Office of the Prime Minister for the transmission of such replies to the EU institutions.

The Directorate formed part of the Minister's delegation on a number of occasions when foreign dignitaries visited Malta.

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.

During the year, the EU Affairs Directorate lost its Assistant Director and its Principal, through promotions in other directorates/departments. As a result, the staff complement was reduced to the minimum number of staff. In the course of the year, the responsibility for funds shifted from the EU Affairs Directorate to the Programme Implementation Directorate although the EU Affairs Directorate continued to be responsible for those projects that had already been commenced. Therefore throughout 2007, 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.

DR JOSETTE ZERAFA
Director (EU Affairs)

Policy Development Directorate

During 2007, the Policy Development Directorate co-ordinated the Ministry's efforts in relation to the Euro Changeover and the Better Regulation initiatives. The scheduled activities undertaken in relation to the Euro Changeover were completed within the stipulated timeframes. Furthermore, good progress was registered in respect of Better Regulation initiatives. The process whereby new Better Regulation measures would be identified has also commenced with the participation of the Policy Development Directorate and the OPM's Management Efficiency Unit.

During the year under review, the Policy Development Directorate contributed to the drafting of memoranda in relation to new EU Commission proposals, in co-operation with the EU Affairs Directorate. Local Policy measures were also initiated and followed up, particularly with respect to film classification, marriage registration and pensions for certain categories of officers. Moreover, the Directorate is taking part in meetings of the newly formed Forum for the Management of Legal Migration, in order to contribute to policy formation in this area along with the other ministries and departments involved.

The Policy Development Directorate also took part in the Ministry's Schengen information campaign, mainly by preparing material for publication and assisting in logistical matters.

JOSEPH ST JOHN
Director (Policy Development)

Programme Implementation Directorate

INTRODUCTION

During 2007, the Programme Implementation Directorate was re-structured and staff were assigned to four units dealing with International Affairs, Green Initiatives and Project Monitoring, Customer Care/Media Monitoring and EU co-funding. The latter Unit was transferred to the Programme Implementation Directorate from the EU Affairs Directorate, complementing the strategic decision taken during the previous year by the Office of the Prime Minister, by which Directors of Programme Implementation would take up the responsibilities of Senior Programming Officers for the Structural Fund Programme 2007-2013.

PROJECT MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Throughout the year the Project Monitoring Unit continued to closely monitor developments with regard to major projects pertaining to the Ministry. Particular emphasis was put on the development of National Identity Management Systems (NIDMS) and the implementation of the Schengen Acquis.

With regard to the NIDMS, the Directorate played a significant role in the process which will eventually lead to the procurement of a strategic partnership for NIDMS that is currently being developed by the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs with the assistance of the Ministry for Investment, Industry and Information Technology, in order to rectify the current fragmented nature of the present information systems. It is envisaged that the NIDMS will be used for core identity management processes including the issuance of electronic identity cards, e-Passports and biometric visas. It is also envisaged to form part of the border checkpoint control systems and the systems for the registration of third country nationals. Most importantly, however, it will be developing a national electronic register of persons which will be populated during the registration process for the e-ID Card. During 2006, the Directorate was actively involved in the tendering process which has (at the end of 2007) reached the final stages leading to adjudication. Furthermore, the Directorate formed part of an Inter-ministerial NIDMS Task Force which was set up to address related issues.

With regard to the implementation of the Schengen *acquis*, the Directorate provided constant support to the National Schengen Project Manager, particularly through the evaluation periods. As part of its monitoring function, the Directorate kept abreast with developments and assisted the Permanent Secretary in the identification of issues to be addressed. Other related functions carried out by the Directorate included the provision of assistance in the organisation of related Task Force Meetings and ensuring that adequate internal records are maintained.

In view of the shift of responsibilities of the EU Co-funding Unit, the Directorate is now also responsible for carrying out monitoring of EU co-funded projects. Accordingly the EU co-funding Unit periodically carried out inspections to ensure that projects are being carried out according to the original specifications.

The Directorate was also responsible for reviewing the system whereby EU (non-Maltese) lawyers can practise their profession in Malta. In this regard consultations were carried out with related stakeholders and a registration system was set up within the Ministry's Justice Unit.

Another initiative which was undertaken by the Directorate referred to the 112 emergency number system. Throughout the year various meetings were held with stakeholders (in particular the Police Force, the Civil Protection Department and the Malta Communications Authority) in order to identify related issues. Following such exercise, a Task Force, in which the Directorate is represented, was set up in order to ensure that any enhancements which are required in the system, both in view of EU obligations and also to take on board technological developments, are implemented in an effective and efficient manner.

GREEN INITIATIVES

The Ministry's Green Leader is deployed within the Programme Implementation Directorate. Throughout the year this official continued to maintain contact with the Green Focal persons deployed within the line departments, keeping them abreast with any developments, liaising with them on areas of related interest and issuing instructions accordingly. The Green Leader participated also in various meetings on energy awareness national campaign and workshops on clean development mechanisms.

The Green Leader was also tasked with assisting the Director in identifying possible environment-related expenditures. Indeed, during 2007 a total of Lm5,000 were allocated to each Ministry, including MJHA, to spend on green initiatives.

Similar to the previous year, line departments were invited to submit their proposals so that these could be taken into consideration during the procurement stage. Furthermore, the Directorate carried out an internal exercise in order to identify (through research and by obtaining quotations) green items of stationery which could be procured.

Accordingly the following expenditures were carried out during the year:

- Purchase and installation of a PV Panel at the Civil Protection Department at Ta' Kandja;
- Purchase of battery bins;
- Purchase of energy-saving lamps;
- Purchase of sensor-lighting equipment;
- Bring-in site at the Office of the Refugee Commissioner.

One of the main environment-related activities which took place throughout the year was the organisation by officials from the Directorate of a clean-up campaign which took place on Saturday 9 June 2007 at Wied il-Qlejgha in Rabat. The aim of the campaign, which was organised in collaboration with the Civil Protection Department, was to clean up the length of the valley. Following such activity, three truckloads of waste were collected and removed from the site.

Further initiatives were carried out at the House of Catalunya, (the premises which currently house the Office of the Permanent Secretary and the core directorates of the Ministry) as per Green Label Office requirements. Activities included the compilation of an environmental action plan, preparation and distribution of environmental-awareness material and carrying out a fortnightly water and energy audit in the premises. Staff was also provided with re-usable paper containers and was encouraged to make use of such receptacles in order to save on the use of paper.

CUSTOMER CARE

A total of 659 incoming requests were handled by the Customer Care Unit during 2007. This constitutes a significant increase of cases since 2005 (172 requests) and 2006 (418 requests) brought about by the decision to start handling requests received through the Ministry's website apart from those pertaining to the Customer Care System. The Unit also maintained the system whereby details of queries (including statistics) 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 regularly monitored line departments, particularly through following up complaints and issuing regular requests for feedback, in order to ascertain whether divisions and departments were compliant or otherwise.

During the year, the Customer Care Co-ordinator participated also in related customer care fora.

Media Items

Newspapers (including online versions) were monitored on a daily basis in order to identify articles which refer to areas falling within the remit of the Ministry. The collated data was forwarded on a daily basis to senior officials for their attention, recorded for future reference in an internal folder and, where necessary, forwarded to line departments requesting them to report back on the follow-up action being taken.

The Directorate monitored and recorded also press releases, acts and legal notices that were issued regularly.

Ministry's Website

During the year, the Directorate continued to act as the focal point as regards amendments required on the Ministry's website. In particular, the Directorate liaised with the Police Force, the Department of Local Government and the Department of Citizenship and Expatriate Affairs. In view of the euro changeover exercise, the Directorate vetted the various webpages within the website and carried out the necessary amendments in order to include the amounts in euros next to the amounts in Maltese lira.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

During 2007, the Directorate reinforced its International Affairs Unit with the appointment of an Assistant Director (International Affairs). Furthermore, the Unit is now availing itself of the services of a Senior Legal Officer, deployed within the Ministry, in order to vet proposed amendments to draft bilateral agreements.

The functions of the Unit thus include:

- liaising with line departments on invitations for participation in international events;
- taking care of logistical arrangements during visits by international senior officials/delegations;
- liaising with other countries (through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) on proposed bilateral agreements;
- ensuring that documentation submitted by local/international organisations, such as reports and questionnaires, are duly filled in and returned.

Invitations for participation in international events were received regularly from a number of international organisations, in particular the United Nations, the Council of Europe, OSCE, the Hague Programme and Euromed. In cases where the topic of the meetings was of relevance to this Ministry, the invitation was forwarded to the appropriate entity in order to verify whether they would be interested in attending.

With regard to bilateral agreements, the Unit actively liaised with various counterparts in other countries (either through exchanges of correspondence or even through the setting up of bilateral meetings) in order to discuss points to be included/excluded from draft agreements. Five agreements were finalised and signed during the year: Two agreements were signed in April: a Police Co-operation Agreement was signed with South Africa and a Co-operation Agreement in Judicial Matters, including Arbitration, was signed with Russia. In May an Administrative Co-operation Agreement in the field of Justice was signed with Tunisia. In June, a Co-operation Agreement against Organised Crime was signed with Romania. Finally, in October, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with Portugal on the reinstatement of Refugees.

The Directorate was actively involved in the process which will eventually lead to Malta being accepted in the US Visa Waiver Programme (VWP). Admission to the VWP allows the citizens of a beneficiary country to enter the United States without a visa, with leave to stay for a maximum of 90 days. The 15 “older” Member States, except Greece, are part of the programme. However, with the exception of Slovenia, the states that joined since 2004, including Malta, are not currently admitted into the programme. In all, 15 EU Member States are already part of the programme which has a total of 27 members. Officials from the Directorate participated in related meetings either with Maltese counterparts or with US officials, including staff from the US Embassy and also from the US Department of Homeland Security. In October, the Assistant Director within the Unit co-ordinated logistical arrangements so that Maltese senior officials could travel to Washington in order to discuss related pending issues.

Various visits by international dignitaries and organisations took place during 2007. Notable visits which were managed by the Directorate were those made by the British Deputy Prime Minister Hon John Prescott (in April), the Italian Minister of Justice Hon Clemente Mastella (in August) and the Luxembourgian Minister of Justice, the Interior and the Treasury, Hon Luc Frieden (in December). In July, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) visited Malta as a follow-up to a visit which took place in 2001. The Directorate was responsible for setting up and participating in meetings with various stakeholders including officials within the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs, the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity, the Ministry of Education, Youth & Employment, the Ombudsman, the Broadcasting Authority and a Parliamentary Committee.

One of the highlights of the year was the Schengen Ministerial Meeting which took place on 24 September. Related activities spanned over two days, with social events taking place on the eve (including a boat trip and official dinner) and after the meeting which took place on the morning of the 24th (during the afternoon the international guests were treated to an excursion to Mdina).

The aim of the meeting was to discuss the state of play (at that time) of the preparations being made by each applicant country in order to be accepted in the Schengen zone. Apart from Malta, the meeting was attended by Ministers and/or representatives from the European Commission, the Council, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia and Switzerland.

In order to satisfy the provisions of the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture (OPCAT), to which Malta is one of the signatories, the International Affairs Unit liaised with the Office of the Attorney General in order to have in place the necessary set-up which includes appropriate ‘National Preventive Mechanisms’. In this regard two legal notices were drafted (and eventually published) so that the present Prison Board of Visitors could take up such responsibility with regard to correctional facilities and in order to set up a Detention Board of Visitors (to deal with places of detention).

EU Co-FUNDING

As already indicated, during the year the EU co-funding Unit was transferred within the remit of the Programme Implementation Directorate. Formerly it formed part of the EU Affairs Directorate.

The EU co-funding Unit, made up of an EU Funds Manager and a Projects Officer is primarily responsible for the management of three of the four funds within the Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows Framework Programme. The framework aims to facilitate a fair share of responsibilities between Member States managing the external border and the implementation of common asylum and immigration policies. The Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs is responsible for the European Refugee Fund, the External Borders Fund and the Return Fund. The fourth fund, the Integration Fund, is administered by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment.

With regard to the three indicated funds, the Programme Implementation Directorate is assigned the role of Responsible Authority and liaises directly with the Internal Audit and Investigations Directorate (as the

Audit Authority) and the Paying Authority within the Ministry of Finance (as the Certifying Authority). In particular, the duties of the Directorate (vis-à-vis its role as Responsible Authority) include (but are not limited to):

- compiling and submitting to the Commission proposals for multiannual and annual programmes;
- issuing calls for proposals;
- organising selection and award procedures for co-financing actions; and
- monitoring the delivery of the co-financed products and services.

During 2007, the Unit continued to provide assistance, monitor and ensure the proper implementation of various EU co-funded projects that were approved in related calls which were issued in previous years. Furthermore, four new calls were issued during the year – the External Borders Fund 2007 (in August), the Return Fund 2008 and the European Refugees Fund 2008 (in October), and the External Borders Fund 2008 (in December).

JESMOND CAMILLERI

Director (Programme Implementation)

Information Management Unit

During 2007, the Information Management Unit (IMU) within the Ministry for Justice And Home Affairs was responsible for the provision of ICT services to provide the necessary support for the Ministry and its divisions/departments.

SCHENGEN SISONE4ALL AND SIS II

The IMU co-ordinated various efforts between the Ministry, Malta Police Force and MITTS Ltd in the implementation of the Schengen Information Systems. The next step in the Schengen project is the upgrading of the Schengen information system from the Portuguese solution SISone4All to SIS II.

IMPLEMENTATION OF NIDMS – NATIONAL IDENTITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

NIDMS is an integrated identity management framework which is aimed at enhancing Malta's security, improving the e-Citizen's quality of life. NIDMS will be used for core identity management processes including the issuance of electronic identity cards, electronic passports and biometric visas. NIDMS will also form part of the border checkpoint control systems and the systems for the registration of third country nationals. The e-ID Card will provide each Maltese citizen with a very secure way of conducting e-Government, of signing electronic documents and of authenticating oneself in the digital world. Additionally, it will be developing a national electronic register of persons through the registration process for the e-ID Card.

The IMU, with the assistance of the Programme Implementation Directorate, compiled the capital investment plan for consideration by the Core ICT Advisory Committee (CITAC) and Ministry of Finance.

PRÜM CONVENTION

The scope of the Prüm Convention is to step up cross-border cooperation, particularly in combating terrorism, cross-border crime and illegal migration. The Prüm Convention includes co-operation in the fields of DNA profiling, fingerprints and remote database access, and it is expected that major investments are required to satisfy the Convention's requirements. The Chief Information Officer has actively participated in the Friends of the Presidency Group on Prüm meetings in Brussels. This group focuses on discussing and revising the Annex to the Prüm implementing Decision. The Decision will be submitted for formal adoption to the Council once the negotiations on the Annex are finalised.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLANNING

During the year under review, the Ministry submitted 13 capital investment plans for 2008 from various departments. The IMU provided the necessary assistance, where required, to the different project champions compiling the various investment plans.

SECURITY

The IMU implemented different security measures at the Ministry including PC hardening and revised its LAN security policies. PCs were also updated with various security patches. With these security

measures, combined with the switch port-locking initiative taken by MITTS, internal LAN security at the Ministry has been tightened considerably.

NETWORK EXTENSIONS AND UPGRADES

A new fibre optic link was installed to link a remote office to the Refugee Commission's main building. Also, network hubs at the Ministry were replaced with network switches.

PROCESS IMPROVEMENT/WORKFLOWS

The procedure for logging ERFs was overhauled throughout the Ministry. The structure of ERFs loggers and approvers has been reorganised to allow a smoother and more efficient workflow by eliminating several bottlenecks.

TRAINING

In 2007, the Chief Information Officer attended a one week BPR intensive training course organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat Governance and Institutional Development Division.

E-INITIATIVES

Three new portals in collaboration with the Ministry for Investment, Industry and Information Technology were launched during 2007 as shown hereunder:

- Notification of Death Portal
- Search on Wills Portal
- Judiciary Portal (not yet launched).

KEVIN BUHAGIAR
Chief Information Officer



**Ministry of Education,
Youth and Employment**

Office of the Permanent Secretary

The Permanent Secretary is responsible for providing support and advice to the Minister for Education, Youth and Employment and ensuring the implementation of major projects, policy formulation and direction, sectoral strategic and business plan development and amending and drafting legislation. He is also responsible for providing leadership and contributing to the collective management of Government, particularly by contributing to discussions on major Government policies and providing long-term, strategic direction.

The Permanent Secretary is directly responsible for the Youth Section and the Institute of Tourism Studies.

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.

The Ministry encourages voluntary services in the form of social participation and integration, educational experiences and accreditation of employment. It ensures that easily accessible, adequate and relevant information is a fundamental requirement for the eventual effective participation of young people.

The Youth Section's task is to create an environment where young people will find fulfilment. The Ministry makes provisions for young people's basic and social needs and their personal development.

The Youth Section 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.

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, 55 non-governmental youth organisations were granted a total sum of Lm11,380 in order to cover expenses in connection with their 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, including post-graduate and distance learning courses, are not available in Malta.

According to the three-year agreement, this scheme allows students to apply for loans ranging from Lm5,000 to Lm10,000. The loan is repaid over a term of 10 years including a maximum holiday on capital repayments of five years depending on the duration of the academic course to be followed. A total

of 28 applications were received. Sixteen applicants were selected by a Credentials Committee. The Youth Section's total expenditure for the subsidised interest for 2007 was of Lm3,046.28.

'All Different – All Equal' European Youth Campaign in Malta

'All Different – All Equal' European Youth Campaign is organised by the Council of Europe, the European Youth Forum and the European Commission. The aim of this campaign for diversity, human rights and participation is to encourage and enable young people to participate in building peaceful societies based on diversity and inclusion, in a spirit of respect, tolerance, and mutual understanding.

Activities for the 'All Different – All Equal' European Youth Campaign are being held in every Member State. The following are the activities held in Malta in connection with the 'All Different – All Equal' Youth Campaign in 2007:

National Youth Day

The National Youth day is celebrated annually on 21 March. However, in order to make the event more fruitful, this year's National Youth Day started with an opening event on 18 March and ended on 24 March. Moreover, from 16 to 25 March, young people organised youth events in their community.

This year's National Youth Day's theme was in the framework of the 'All Different – All Equal' Youth Campaign and the event's activities focused on Diversity, Human Rights and Participation.

During the opening event of the National Youth Day held in Bay Street, on 18 March, young people participated in this activity through, information stands, youth performances, workshops and working spaces.

The working spaces were an innovative idea aimed to create certain spaces in Bay Street where young people can organise an activity in line with the themes of the campaign. There were five different locations in Bay Street dedicated to initiatives, activities or material related to the following vulnerable groups/themes: Gender, Sexuality, Ethnic Groups, Religions and Disability. Young people participated in these working spaces either by presenting material or an activity such as reciting in the respective location.

Between 16 and 25 March, young people and youth organisations were encouraged to organise activities in their locality. Hence, the events also took place on a local level and were spread throughout a whole week of activities.

During the closing event held on 24 March, young people coming from the five vulnerable groups, shared their experience and outlined the positive aspects of their work. Throughout this event, young people exhibited their talent through music. Later, the activity continued with a short training seminar regarding social inclusion of young people.

During the National Youth Day's activities, young people actively participated in various activities and they were provided with the opportunity to demonstrate their fruitful work and contribution to the society. This event also served as a tool to publicly exhibit the work of all young people including those actively involved in local social activities. It also provided an opportunity for the society at large to be exposed to, and learn about, the importance of diversity, human rights and young people's participation.

'All Different – All Equal' Boat Party

A boat party was held on 2 September on board Hera II, leaving Sliema at about 6:00pm, cruising round the Grand Harbour and returning to Sliema at midnight. This was an educational event specifically designed to educate and create awareness against discrimination while promoting inter-cultural dialogue and an understanding of the issues of diversity and human rights amongst the Maltese youth population.

During this event, young people also had the opportunity to participate in a living library which was the main attraction of the event. The Living Library methodology aims to create constructive interpersonal dialogue between people who would normally not have the occasion to speak to each other. The living library is an innovative idea that has been proven to work on a European level and is aimed especially to promote intercultural dialogue, human rights and pluralist democracy amongst young people in civil society. Participants had the opportunity to meet new individuals, communicate with each other and develop new networks.

YAP – Youth Active Participation, Training Weekend

Malta's national campaign committee held a second training course in Gozo after the positive feedback received following the first training held in 2006.

The training weekend was held between 23 and 25 November 2007 and focused on the issue of youth active participation in all spheres of society. This training weekend was an excellent opportunity for youth workers, youth leaders and any other agents working with young people to help them become more involved in society.

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 visits the centres whenever the need arises and attend all activities to which they are invited.

Youth empowerment 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.

National Youth Information Centre

The National Youth Information Centre (NYIC) is committed to helping young people to identify their own resources, take action and make their own decisions. The primary function of the 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 on 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 all youth organisations and social stakeholders directly involved in youth work regularly updated 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.

INSTITUTE OF TOURISM STUDIES (ITS)

The Institute of Tourism Studies provides vocational education of a high standard. It seeks to identify customer needs, monitors customer satisfaction and is responsible for providing the tourism industry with personnel trained to international standards.

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.

Programmes of Study for the Academic Year 2007/2008

The Institute of Tourism Studies offers the following 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 623 registered full-time students attending the Institute of Tourism Studies for the academic year 2007/8 in addition to around 450 part-time students. There are 64 non-Maltese students following full-time courses and 11 non-Maltese following part-time courses.

International Internships

117 students commenced their international internship in July 2007. Students were placed in the following countries: Scotland 35, England 63, Ireland 3, Isle of Man 12, Germany 1, Italy 1, Luxemburg 1 and Holland 1.

ITS Graduates - 2007

Course of Studies

| | |
|------------------------------------------|----|
| Higher Diploma in Hospitality Management | 20 |
| Diploma in Hotel Operations | 10 |
| Certificate in Hotel Operations | 16 |
| Diploma in Accommodation Operations | 18 |
| Certificate in Accommodation Operations | 3 |

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Certificate in Food Preparation and Production (Craft) | 6 |
| Certificate in Food Preparation and Supervisory Studies | 36 |
| Certificate in Food and Beverage Studies and Supervisory Studies | 1 |
| Certificate in Restaurant Operations – Level 2 | 2 |
| Diploma in Culinary Arts | 17 |
| Diploma in Food and Beverage Service | 2 |
| Certificate in Tour Guiding | 1 |
| Diploma in Travel Agency | 4 |
| Certificate in Travel Agency Operations | 3 |

66 students completed their studies in Food Preparation and Service – Level 1. One student completed his studies in Restaurant Operations – Level 1. 43 students completed their studies in the Extended Skills Training Scheme – Food Preparation and Service.

Participation in EU Programmes

During 2007 the Institute of Tourism Studies participated in the following programmes:

Interreg IIIA Italia – Malta – Saperi e Sapori;
 Interreg IIIA Italia – Malta Prisma Project (Integrated Relational Tourism);
 Leonardo Da Vinci NEW (No Borders European Workers) Hospitality;
 Comenius Project – Food – Healthy Youth in a future Europe;
 Comenius Project – European Business Handbook for young entrepreneurs;
 ESF80 Training of persons with learning difficulties and disadvantaged persons in basic hospitality trades.

FRANS BORG

Permanent Secretary, MEYE

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 the learning experience. 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 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 the public service employees, the Education Division was, up to mid-November 2007, under the directorship of a Director General who carried the overall responsibility for the Division's six departments. As from mid November 2007, the Division was re-engineered into two directorates – the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education and the Directorate for Educational Services. 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 INTO TWO DIRECTORATES

During 2007, the Education Division was 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 was phased out during 2007 and re-engineered into two distinct entities – two directorates. The Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education is responsible for monitoring and quality assurance. The Directorate for Educational Services is 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 which was sealed in the Government-MUT agreement signed in July 2007.

COLLEGES

Following the successful piloting of three Colleges during school year 2005/06, the MEYE was encouraged to continue with the implementation of the policy document *For all Children to Succeed*. By 2007, seven colleges were in operation with their College Co-ordinators. Colleges were given the status of legal entities by means of Act XIII of 2006, amending the Education Act 1988. The whole reform process was reinforced by the conclusion of the Government-MUT agreement.

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 ongoing refurbishment of existing schools. 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. During 2007, the Ħandaq School was completed and is now in full operation. Several other projects were completed and are underway in a large number of schools.

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.

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: one Director; one Head Infrastructure; two Assistant Directors; two Education Officers. During 2007, the Director, the Head of Infrastructure and an Education Officer retired from service.

Main Responsibilities

The main responsibilities of the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) include:

- co-ordinating policies of the Education Division;
- continually developing 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 DPD 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 decisions 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 of funds for maintenance, materials and supplies from the recurrent vote to schools, 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 2007, 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 and the migration of V Bugeja Boys' Secondary School (BSS) to San Frangisk D'Assisi BSS. V Bugeja School was refurbished to accommodate the first student intake into the Boys' Junior Lyceum of Maria Regina College.

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, 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.

In September 2007, the Research and Planning Branch was invited by the Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning (CRELL) to participate in the joint OECD/EC-CRELL international study on indicators on the educational provision for students with disabilities, learning difficulties and disadvantages (SENDDD). During the initial phase, the statistics unit and the research unit corroborated with the special needs network to harmonise the national categories with the international classification framework and draft a preliminary report. The second phase of the study – the development of indicators - will be implemented during 2008.

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 2007, the unit assessed and approved 268 requests for research in state schools. 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 | 112 |
| PGCE (Post Graduate Course in Education) | 70 |
| BA/BSc | 26 |
| B Commerce/B Commerce(Hons) | 40 |
| BE&A | 3 |
| D.AM | 2 |
| MA/MEd/MSc/MBA | 15 |
| Total | 268 |

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, 123 theses were deposited in the Documentation Centre.

Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)

There is growing consensus amongst educational stakeholders, both nationally and internationally, that greater emphasis needs to be placed on measuring educational outcomes. Further to this, both the national minimum curriculum and Malta's new social and political realities as member 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, which consists 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 2007, Malta participated in the main

study which was carried out in all secondary schools. Participation in TIMSS has an added value component since through close collaboration with the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), staff at the research unit was trained in the use of two international databases developed by IEA and developed international research management competencies. Skills transfer also cascaded to school level with the training of TIMSS school co-ordinators in administering research instruments. The whole process was monitored by an international quality assurance monitor, ensuring that the whole exercise met the international quality standard. All data was sent to IEA following data checks made by the Unit. IEA confirmed through quality assurance benchmarks and timeframes. The Research Unit professionalism was given due credit by IEA for the quality of data sent in its report on quality assurance. The successful implementation of the study would not have been possible without the collaboration of the schools' management teams and the TIMSS schools' co-ordinators.

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. The field test was carried out in March 2007 with a sample of four schools and 80 teachers. Malta registered a 100% response rate for the field test. The Research Unit participated actively in analysing and reviewing the instruments for the main study scheduled for April 2008.

International Civics and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS)

The purpose of the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) is to investigate, in a range of countries, the ways in which young people are prepared to undertake their roles as citizens. In pursuit of this purpose, the study will report on student achievement in a test of conceptual understandings and competencies in civics and citizenship. The international co-ordination is directed by a consortium consisting of three partner organisations: the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) in England, and the Laboratorio di Pedagogia Sperimentale (LPS) at the Roma Tre University (Italy). During 2007, the Research Unit drew up a sampling frame for the field study and reviewed the instruments, making the necessary cultural adaptations and also translated the students' modules into Maltese. Preparations for the field test included also the training of scorers and data entry staff in the use of ILO occupations database. The field test was administered in November 2007 on a sample of eight schools, 175 teachers and 350 students, with a response rate of 97% and 95% respectively.

Eurydice National Unit

The Maltese Eurydice Unit has participated in all the work carried out by the Eurydice Network throughout 2007. 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 2007, the unit accomplished the following projects:

- Drafted the Maltese contribution to the electronic publication *Organisation of School Year 2007-2008* - 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. For the first time, this included also the academic calendar of tertiary level institutions.

- 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 study was finalised in March 2007.
- Updated the National Dossier on Education to reflect developments which took place in the local education scene in 2007.
- Provided information for the comparative study on equity in early childhood education, focusing on special measures introduced in pre-primary education and checked the analysis prepared by the EEU.
- Continued work on the comparative study on governance in higher education.
- Updated indicators and provided information for the preparation of new indicators for the 2008 edition of Key Data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe.
- Co-ordinated the drafting of a working document on the autonomy of schools. This study is meant to provide a comparative analysis of how school autonomy is implemented in 30 countries of the Eurydice Network. The study traces the processes that have led to the devolution of decision-making powers to schools and provides a better understanding of how schools are held accountable for their responsibilities. The work involved the collation of information to produce qualitative indicators. The working document of the study was discussed during a conference on the subject under the Portuguese presidency, in Lisbon on 2-3 November 2007. The study was published in December 2007.
- Co-ordinated the drafting of a working document on the autonomy of teachers. This issue is a central priority for the Slovenian Presidency. The study will analyse the recent changes to the teaching profession and, more specifically, the widening of responsibilities conferred on teachers within the framework of increased school autonomy and with a view to improving the assimilation of innovative teaching practices. Findings from this study will be discussed during a conference on this subject in May 2008.
- Collated data and information for the 2008 Edition of Key Data on Education in Europe.
- Updated the summary *fiche* on Maltese education to reflect developments which have taken place during 2007.
- Provided 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.
- Collation in collaboration with the National Statistics Office of data for EUROSTAT questionnaires regarding expenditure in education, student enrolment and educational staff.
- Promoted 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.

The objectives of this publication – to serve as a means of information and also as a printed record of initiatives, achievements, plans and policies generated within the Education Division during 2007 – remained on track.

The overriding objective of Eduforum also aims to bring together and disseminate good practice among stakeholders and partners in Education, while serving as a medium for quality public relations with local and foreign entities.

DEVELOPMENT BRANCH

The following areas were the direct responsibility of the Development Branch of the Planning and Development Department during 2007:

- Health and Safety in Schools
- School Requisites
- Technical Services Branch
- Liaising with Local Councils.

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 2007

- Provided support to Skolasajf 2007 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.
- Yearly risk assessments in all primary and secondary schools.
- Talks to parents on local/EU legislation related to Health and Safety issues.
- Courses for school leavers in basic Health and Safety and first-aid.
- Inspecting and ensuring that first-aid cabinets are well stocked and contents comply with Red Cross European reference standards recommendations.
- Inspecting and ensuring that fire extinguishers are appropriate, well-maintained and serviced.
- Ensuring that evacuation, mandatory and warning signage is affixed appropriately throughout the schools.
- Advising on the procurement, deployment and fixing of emergency lighting as and where necessary.
- Liaison 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; European Union programmes.
- Providing a consultancy service to all schools, including non-state schools, and other Education Division services.
- Organising and/or participating in EU-funded projects related to Health and Safety.
- The compilation and editing of the quarterly journal Safe and Healthy.
- The distribution of monthly Health and Safety e-pamphlets to all schools.
- Active participation in various inter-departmental and ministerial committees.
- Promotion of Child Safety Education on the mass media.

School Requisites

- Revised and updated guidelines were published 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.
- Another objective for 2007 was the enhancement of a digital database which was initiated in 2005 to monitor the equipment procured by schools under the Equipment Expenditure Imprest.
- All schools are submitting financial records of the three funds which they manage 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 10 specialised sections.

| Works carried out by the TSB during 2007 | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Section | Manning Levels | Job Tasks Accomplished |
| Masonry | 22 | 97 |
| Carpentry | 17 | 184 |
| Plastering/Painting | 26 | 97 |
| Electrical | 18 | 387 |
| Plumbing | 16 | 321 |
| Drainage | 7 | 361 |
| Aluminium | 3 | 98 |
| Welders | 14 | 57 |
| Membrane Laying | 4 | 48 |
| Support Unit | 9 | - |

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 2007. This healthy co-operation is proving most beneficial in gradually turning our schools into community learning centres, through which the concept of lifelong 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.

STRUCTURE

The Department has four branches: Curriculum Development; Student Assessment; Training and Staff Development and Curriculum Implementation. In order to achieve its aim, the Department had a complement of one Director, three Assistant Directors, 18 Education Officers and 247/265 Peripatetic Teachers. Subject co-ordinators, henceforth Heads of Department, continued to work closely with the Department.

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 2007, the Department was heavily involved in facilitating the introduction of the euro. This involved training and awareness-raising of teachers, on the one hand, and pupils and students, on the other.

Apart from awareness-raising, the Department after the summer holidays moved on to focus on the actual teaching of the new currency. This was carried out through using mathematics textbooks that had been specifically converted from sterling and Malta lira to euro. The Department also prepared workbooks for use in primary and secondary schools, state and non-state, to teach the new currency to learners, and carried out various projects and initiatives across different subjects to ensure that learners got to grips with the new currency.

In-service training at the school level continued to be supported. The Department also delivered training during the July and September in-service courses, and it was also heavily involved with Professional Staff Development Sessions. The Department embarked on a project, in collaboration with the Foundation for Educational Services 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 were the more visible evidence of the work of this branch.

Insofar as curriculum development and implementation is concerned, the Department continued with its efforts of supplying updated learning resources to pupils and students. The branch also developed syllabi for the secondary sector. The Department invested time and effort on a number of pilot projects, namely one on entrepreneurship education at the primary level and a pilot project involving foreign language teaching in the primary sector. It was also involved as a partner in the *Facilitating Equality through Education* project. The Department applied for ERDF funding for science laboratory equipment, and was also heavily involved in the audit projects being carried out under the leadership of the Director General.

Curriculum development projects were carried out in schools, through the National Curriculum Council, presided by the Chairperson, who is the Director, Curriculum Management. The Council provided support to a number of projects including the Best Language Practice Award together with funding for 37 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 in the purchase of literacy materials for the Literacy Library at the National Curriculum Centre for use by schools in Malta and Gozo.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT BRANCH

- Procurement of school textbooks for the scholastic year 2007/08.
- Supervising the process and following closely the issue of books, and carrying out school inspections to identify surplus books.
- Ensuring that the general public is kept updated with recent reviews of the syllabi on the Curriculum website. Regular updating of Curriculum website with data and information relevant to section.
- Updating of secondary school syllabi.
- Regular updating of database on textbook requirements in collaboration with the Education Officer responsible for textbooks.
- Co-ordinating the evaluation and procurement of:
 - Maltese textbooks/readers for primary sector
 - Design and technology textbooks procured for the first phase of introduction of the subject in the secondary sector
 - New version of *Ambjenti* workbooks reviewed, printed and distributed in schools.
- Supervising the printing and distribution of new Maltese textbook for the secondary level, *Malti Komunikattiv*.
- Supervising and co-ordinating Education Officers and their subject teams to expand further the process of identifying exemplars for each level and develop a set of criteria that help in the assessment of students.

- Continuing of project on foreign languages in a number of primary schools.
- Supervising teams of Heads of Department in the absence of the subject Education Officers.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND THE EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT UNIT

During 2007, the Educational Assessment Unit (EAU) carried out various duties, which included:

- co-ordinating the construction of annual examination papers, their printing and distribution - 323 different examinations were held, involving 416,902 examination booklets;
- organising the Junior Lyceum Entrance Examinations into Form I in May 2007; 3,772 students (428 were provided with special arrangements) sat for these examinations; 2,301 (61%) were successful. Results were sent via SMS to candidates who opted for this service. There were 258 requests for revision of papers;
- 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. 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 2007. The collections are based on specified criteria with a view to monitor standards over the years;
- holding staff development sessions in state and non-state schools on *Enhancing Learning through Formative Assessment*;
- publishing on the Curriculum website a booklet entitled *L-Assessjar Edukattiv*, Guidelines on Assessing Student Achievement and Reporting and Guidelines for Paper Setters;
- piloting a newly developed Record of Development and Progress at kindergarten level.

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 (NGOs).

In-Service Courses

In-service courses for teachers and other teaching personnel were held as usual in July and September as stipulated in the Reorganisation Agreement for state and non-state school teachers and the Addendum to the Classification and Grading Agreement of the Education Class of 2001. A total of 99 courses (56 compulsory and 43 voluntary) were offered in both sessions. Some of these courses were organised solely by the Education Division, others were organised by the Education Division in conjunction with other bodies as shown in the following table:

| Organising Body | No of Courses in July | No of Courses in September | Total No of Courses |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Education Division | 32 | 25 | 57 |
| Secretariat for Catholic Education & Culture | 9 | 1 | 10 |
| Colleges | 10 ¹ | 6 | 16 |
| State Schools | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Non-State Schools | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| Other Bodies | 3 ² | 2 ³ | 5 |
| Total | 61 | 38 | 99 |

| | No of Participants in In-service Courses - July & September | | Total |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Males | Females | |
| Compulsory Courses | 697 | 2,267 | 2,964 |
| Voluntary Courses | 167 | 807 | 974 |
| Total | 864 | 3,074 | 3,938 |

¹ Three courses were also held in conjunction with the FES.

² The MTA, Heritage Malta and SEDQA held one course each.

³ The FES and the NECC held one course each.

In the course of 2007, the Training and Staff Development Branch organised and/or sponsored various in-service courses/seminars in support of improved teaching and learning. These included among others:

- ICT courses at various levels for teaching staff, such as the European Computer Driving Licence;
- training programmes with the FES in connection with the Malta Writing Programme and Basic Skills for teachers of Form I;
- seminar in conjunction with the University of Malta on Social, Emotional, Behaviour Competence and Difficulties (SEBCD);
- conference in conjunction with the University of Malta about Diversity;
- training courses for Heads of School and Assistant Heads of School in conjunction with the Department of Operations.

College-based or School-based Inset Training

Four colleges, one school network, five state schools (one primary and four secondary) and six non-state schools (three primary and three secondary) organised their own school-based in-service course during 2007.

Professional Development Sessions

Professional development sessions started being held in the first term of scholastic year 2006-2007. These were continued in state schools. In these sessions, schools can hold up to three two-hour sessions after school, one in each term. The sessions are on a theme chosen by the school, for all teachers, instructors and school administrators. In all, 321 professional development sessions were held during scholastic year 2006-2007. Sessions were approved or otherwise by the Director, Curriculum Management, who also offered advice on the services of a facilitator for such sessions.

Council of Europe Workshop

In April 2007, the Training and Staff Development Branch, in conjunction with the Council of Europe, held a four-day international workshop entitled: *A Route to Equality and Fairness in School*. Ten European and 25 Maltese primary and secondary school teachers, administrators and other education personnel participated. The proceedings of the seminar are to be published in CD-ROM Form.

Council of Europe Bursaries

During 2007, calls for application were issued regularly for education personnel interested in attending week-long seminars/shorter duration seminars of the Council of Europe offered as part of the Teachers' Bursary Scheme. Three Education personnel attended such courses.

European Centre for Modern Languages

The TSD Branch handled applications from education personnel for participation in workshops run by the ECML of Graz, Austria.

United World Colleges

During 2007, the United World Colleges of the Adriatic, (that is, the College of Trieste, Italy), and of the Pacific (that is, Pearson College, Canada) offered one full scholarship each, of two-year duration, to two Maltese students. Another two-year scholarship in music was offered by United World College of Duino, Italy) to a Maltese student. Interviews were held by the Branch to select the most appropriate candidates.

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.
- 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.
- Liaising with other sections and units within the Curriculum Department and other departments of the Education Division, to implement the broad aims of the National Minimum Curriculum within the Curriculum content.
- Liaising with Principal Education Officers and Education Officers to ensure monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.
- Providing support to teaching and learning of all curricular areas at all levels.
- Providing support to strengthen and refine the skills developed by pupils at primary level.
- Liaising with the Student Services Department to ensure that all students receive their entitlement in an inclusive educational setting.
- Co-ordinating and supporting peripatetic teachers to strengthen the personal and social education of each student.
- Strengthening parental participation.
- Supervising teams of subject co-ordinators in the absence of the subject Education Officers.
- Holding regular meetings with subject co-ordinators to co-ordinate and discuss curricular activities.

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, the Literacy Unit Programme, Hands-on Farming and EkoSkola. Art, Physical Education, Music, Drama, and Science are also provided by the service.

With such multiple-faceted teams, the Curriculum Department is expanding its services to all colleges and state schools in a large number of curricular areas. Activity Teachers for Art, Physical Education and Music have been incorporated as from September 2007, with the peripatetic teachers according to their respective area. Calls for applications for the post of peripatetic teachers of Music, Physical Education, Personal and Social Development for Gozo, EkoSkola, Science and Complementary Education were issued and interviews were held.

The following table shows the number of teachers chosen for each subject:

| Music | PE | PSD | EkoSkola | Science | Complementary Education | Total |
|-------|----|-----|----------|---------|-------------------------|-------|
| 7 | 12 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 9 | 39 |

The table below shows the number of teachers in each area or programme or subject as on January 2007 and October 2007:

| Teachers in the Peripatetic Service Malta and Gozo | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|
| Area/Programme/Subject | January 2007 | | October 2007 | |
| | Malta | Gozo | Malta | Gozo |
| Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) | 8 | - | 8 | - |
| Complementary Education | 63 | 10 | 67 | 10 |
| Let Me Learn | 3 | - | 3 | - |
| Literacy Tutors | 4 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Physical Education | 21 | 5 | 30 | 6 |
| Drama | 19 | 2 | 15 | 2 |
| Art | 11 | - | 16 | 1 |
| Music | 10 | 4 | 16 | 4 |
| Hands-On Farming | 1 | - | 1 | - |
| PSD Peripatetic Primary | 36 | 6 | 29 | 7 |
| PSD Thinking Skills | 8 | 1 | 6 | 1 |
| PSD Sexuality and Relationship in Education | 4 | - | 2 | - |
| PSD Alcohol and Drugs | 4 | - | 4 | - |
| Home Economics | 8 | 1 | 8 | 1 |
| Science | 14 | 3 | 17 | 2 |
| EkoSkola | - | - | 4 | 1 |
| Total | 214 | 33 | 229 | 36 |

Specific Learning Difficulties Unit

During the year, the Specific Learning Difficulties Service (SpLD Service) carried out a number of activities to further increase awareness of dyslexia and to support children within their school environments. The following is a list of activities which have contributed to the further development of dyslexia friendly environments:

- *Assessments:* Children are generally brought to the SpLD Service by parents and an assessment is carried out. The number of children referred to the SpLD Service has increased considerably as has the number of children applying for special examination arrangements. Following assessment, information on the child's performance is given to the parents and to the school when necessary.
- *Parents' meetings:* During the year, a number of meetings for parents were held but the most significant contribution was the four-day seminar held at the National Curriculum Centre in February 2007. About 50 parents attended the seminar and participated whole-heartedly in all activities proposed. In May 2007, a similar seminar was held in Gozo - this spanned over three days. The response was positive - parents participated actively. In fact, following this seminar the Gozo Dyslexia Association was formed.
- *School visits:* This year each teacher working at SpLD Service was assigned a college rather than a previously identified school.

- *PGCE Certificate Course in Teaching Dyslexic Children*: In February 2007, the Department for Curriculum Management launched a course that will be run by the University of Malta for the professional development of teachers working in the area of dyslexia. The majority of staff members are attending the course which though challenging, is interesting and relevant for the SpLD Service.
- *Courses for Teachers*: During the year, a number of staff development sessions were held in schools – this included primary, secondary and also upper secondary. At the end of the year the Voluntary In-Service Training Course for teachers was held at the Ospizio. The course was attended by approximately 60 teachers.
- *EU Projects*: Two teachers participated in the *Dyslexia Parents and Teachers Collaboration (DYPATEC)* Project. This project has aimed at devising a manual which offers support strategies for parents. Participants of the project met in Malta in February 2007. A further meeting was held in Luxembourg in June 2007. The manual is currently being translated into Maltese through EU funding.

An invitation to lecture on the *FORWARD* Project in Cyprus was accepted by the programme co-ordinator. This is an outcome of a Grundtvig 3 project which produced a teaching manual for the development of awareness of difficulties encountered by adults as a result of serious literacy limitations.

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 encompasses the philosophy that every child whatever his/her ability has the potential to learn and achieve. The objective is to develop and enhance the strengths and abilities of the individual learners. As at December 2007, a total of 77 teachers were involved in the programme. The number of children who are receiving the service is as follows:

| Children & schools receiving the service January 2007 | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------|--------------|
| Schools | Year | Children |
| 23 | 1 | 200 |
| 61 | 2 | 589 |
| 61 | 3 | 627 |
| 57 | 4 | 515 |
| 51 | 5 | 415 |
| 35 | 6 | 208 |
| Total | | 2,554 |

| Children & schools receiving the service October 2007 | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------|--------------|
| Schools | Year | Children |
| 18 | 1* | 151 |
| 52 | 2 | 608 |
| 52 | 3 | 644 |
| 50 | 4 | 481 |
| 35 | 5 | 173 |
| 11 | 6 | 45 |
| Total | | 2,102 |

*Complementary education starts in January for learners in Year 1

The service is provided for children in Year 1 in about 23 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. However, there are 18 schools that are providing the service for children in Year 1 throughout the year.

One in-service course was held in September for a group of teachers who joined Complementary Education in September 2006 and September 2007. Weekly meetings were held on a regular basis to discuss and work on assessment. Assessment packs were compiled and shared among the teachers to be used as tool for continuous assessment

Let Me Learn Programme

Stakeholders in child education are supplied with the means through which they can discuss, value and respect existent diverse learning pattern combinations and learn to appreciate, evaluate and cater for these differences.

Scholastic Year September 2006 – July 2007

- The end of this term was sealed by the publication of a paper which highlights the issue how LML used in conjunction with other teaching methods, namely, the writing process, can aid students even with severe learning difficulties express themselves as learners and thus build a better communicative relationship both with their teacher and their peers.
- The initiation of an internal, supplemented by an external LML research study.
- A new group of 88 educators namely, class teachers, facilitators and administrators, started the training in the LML Process during the first week of January, and participated in this process of discovery, experimentation and learning.
- Providing schools trying to implement LML as a whole school approach (Paola Primary B, St Albert the Great, Valletta, St Joseph, Blata l-Bajda) with a full on-site LML service. Tutors are each allotted a school and twice a week they work alongside the school's administration and staff, providing the necessary but more constant and consistent support.
- On 30 April, a school development meeting was held at De La Salle College, Cottonera.
- On 15 June, the LML team led a two hour workshop *Diversity Addressed* as part of the 3-day conference concerning *Teacher Education for Responding to Student Diversity* held at the Dolmen Holiday Complex, Buġibba, in conjunction with the Psychology Department at University.
- A 3-day in-service course was offered within the premises of St Joan Antide School, Gudja.
- The first week of July saw the finalisation of the compilation of a DVD, which was done in collaboration with Margaret Mortimer GJL, M A Vassalli BJL and St Albert the Great College, Valletta. Enmeshing together LML theory and practice, this DVD is aimed to supply secondary teachers with a much needed tangible teaching resource true to LML concepts and practices.
- The third international LML Conference was held between 11 and 13 July 2007 in Spain, hosted by the University of Roviri i Virgili in Tarragona. The conference, organised by the Centre for the Advancement of Learning in Rowan University in conjunction with the University of Tarragona, was entitled *Making a World of Difference*. Two other important features of the conference were the release of another book in a growing series of LML books which aid teachers to help students develop personal strategies in order to face academic and non challenges, and the availability of taking the LCI online in the near future.
- A three-year longitudinal research project concerning literacy through LML, being done in collaboration with the present Form II class, the teaching staff at Fra Diegu Bonanno, Marsa Girl's Secondary School and the Literacy Unit within the same Faculty of Education. The aims behind this study are motivating students to write by providing them with a purpose and an audience for writing and enhancing their basic literacy skills.
- Daily update of the LML website together with the compilation of resources through the whole team's collaborative effort in issuing brochures, adapting inventories, converting and e-mailing books in PDF format in order to keep schools informed about the latest LML theory and practices.
- Another 3-day in-service course, this time offered within the premises of Dun Ġużepp Xerri Primary C School St Julians on 14, 17 and 18 September, started the LML team's calendar of events for scholastic year 2007/2008.
- The provision of mentoring entails the re-invention of the LML team's role as a LML practitioner and disseminator throughout this year.
- On 5 November the LML team held another meeting at the National Curriculum Centre, dedicated to the delegation of duties.
- At the beginning of November but evolving across a number of consecutive Wednesday afternoons, the LML team started the first term of another four ECTS study unit *Empowering the Learner*.
- The 19 November marked another LML Certification Ceremony, held at the National Curriculum Centre in Hamrun.

Literacy Unit Programme

Common Action Plans – Primary and Secondary Schools

The Literacy tutors were mainly involved in:

- developing, implementing, and sustaining literacy programmes in schools;
- meeting with heads/assistant heads and teachers to discuss issues and planning strategies to be implemented throughout this year;
- advising and supporting class teachers/heads of school with school-based literacy programmes and on-site training;
- developing and adapting new resources to enhance literacy skills in various schools which is a great challenge especially in secondary schools;
- promoting a high quality Book Flood policy in schools and providing support materials and resources, and discussing on how best they can be used;
- devising and developing literacy schemes together with the teachers;
- encouraging child-centred and multifaceted programmes and helping to create a literacy-rich environment in classes;
- promoting and supporting literacy activities both at classroom level and at school level;
- organising and co-ordinating book week activities and book fairs, also during parents' day;
- organising story-telling, shared and paired reading sessions;
- promoting differentiated teaching, the all-English approach, reading techniques and other teaching and learning strategies;
- promoting reading by reading and writing by writing;
- setting up and/or upgrading of literacy rooms and libraries;
- sustaining and enhancing use of lending libraries;
- encouraging planning and preparation of students' own books and material;
- supporting schools and heads in the selection of appropriate materials and books;
- reviewing and selecting books according to the different levels of the pupils and their different needs;
- ensuring that the selected books are appealing, motivating, stimulating and are used effectively during literacy sessions;
- raising awareness about the importance of literacy for life-long learning and promoting reading as fun and an enjoyable experience;
- assisting the schools to apply for National Curriculum Council funding to enhance literacy projects;
- supporting and working with teachers from K2 to Year 6 and literacy teachers from Form I to Form V;
- planning, discussing and adapting an assessment system, which is designed for each specific school;
- encouraging continuous assessment;
- providing in-class support, individual attention and co-teaching;
- liaising with other peripatetic teachers, especially complementary and ICT teachers;
- creating a closer link with parents so that they become more involved in their child's development and learning;
- implementing new projects to be carried out during school hours, such as, ICT projects (with kindergarten and secondary classes), Educational English Programme, Best Language Practice Award, Pre-Reading and Writing Project, creating and publishing phonic pack for schools, a reading project for boys at Ninu Cremona Secondary School, Gozo (boysread@ninucremona), a publication of a booklet for all Year 1 parents of the Gozo College (Reading is Fun) and organising World Book Day activities at the Gozo College;
- organising and co-ordinating in-service courses, SDP sessions and seminars;
- planning and developing action plans and literacy strategies with college co-ordinators and other persons interested in the services of the literacy tutors of the Centre for Literacy;
- introducing a reading scheme with all classes, after in-depth consultation with all teaching staff; providing support material after analysing feedback from teachers;
- promoting the importance of having a contact person in school responsible for the running and logistical set-up of the literacy programme within that school;
- sharing of best practices within schools and colleges;

- requesting and allocating funds to schools from local councils, local banks and other agencies;
- setting up of the NCC literacy library and the Gozo Literacy Centre, maintaining and keeping the centres up-to-date with the latest resources, being on site to advise teachers borrowing material from the premises and co-ordinating all work related to the smooth running of the centres;
- exploring new possibilities and ventures regarding literacy awareness, strategies, action plans, research work and projects;
- participating in specific training activities organised by the Centre for Literacy in collaboration with schools and agencies abroad.

Literacy Programme specific to Secondary Schools

The Literacy tutors were mainly involved in:

- co-ordinating and supporting secondary schools to develop, implement and sustain school-based literacy programmes for adolescents - literacy programmes are student-centred, have a number of objectives, follow a framework for literacy and are based on several basic practice principles;
- striving to improve levels of literacy, to develop academic confidence, to build self-confidence, self-esteem, social skills and raise positive attitudes towards reading, besides considering lifelong learning;
- providing schools with a variety of books and resources as part of the Book Flood project. Discussing with teachers how these can be used effectively and how they can serve different purposes; the main aim being that reading should be an enjoyable experience;
- implementing the literacy programme using the whole school approach to literacy; raising awareness for team teaching, literacy across the curriculum and ICT;
- participating in regular meetings as part of a co-ordinating team set up in connection with a Basic Skills Training Course (Maltese, English and Mathematics) organised by the Department for Curriculum Management;
- planning and co-ordinating activities during Literacy Week at Ninu Cremona Boys' Secondary - literacy work carried out in this school is constantly being disseminated in local newspapers and the school website;
- producing and publishing a book consisting of a compilation of works produced by students in a number of area secondary schools who were asked to choose their favourite topic, carry out research on the topic, write about it in Maltese and draw pictures or scan photos to accompany the text.

The literacy tutors engaged within the Centre for Literacy worked in the following schools:

| Primary Schools | | | | |
|------------------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|----------|
| Malta | | | Gozo | |
| Birzebbugia B | Gharghur C | Valletta C | Ghajnsielem | Xaghra |
| Cospicua C | Hamrun C, | Vittoriosa C | Gharb | Xewkija |
| St Francis, Cospicua | Hamrun C, (SS) | Żabbar A or B | Nadur | Victoria |
| B'Kara C | Marsascale C | Senglea | Qala | Żebbuġ |
| Fgura A | Msida C | | San Lawrenz | |
| Floriana C | Sliema C | | Sannat | |

| Secondary Schools | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Malta | | Gozo |
| Dun Karm Psaila | Lorenzo Gafa | Agius de Soldanis |
| Erin Serracino Inglott | Lorenzo Manche | Ninu Cremona |
| F X Attard | Furtu Selvatico | |
| Fra Diegu Bonanno | Vincenzo Borg Brared | |

Literacy tutors worked with the following Colleges: St Margaret College, St Benedict College, St Ġorġ Preca College, St Clare College and Gozo College. They also run the Literacy Centre, National Curriculum Centre, Hamrun, Malta and the Literacy Centre, Gozo.

Physical Education

The PE peripatetic staff, a team of 26 teachers which has been extended to 36 teachers, visits and supports all schools in Malta and Gozo. The peripatetic teachers of PE have been allocated to colleges as from October 2007. Teachers for PE support the Sports Section of the Education Division with various sports activities, such as netball and football festivals, cross country national championships and tag-rugby tournament. Sports days and other various sports activities were organised and held in various colleges for state and non-state schools.

Drama

At the beginning of 2007, the Drama Unit of the Department for Curriculum Management was made up of one Education Officer, one Subject Co-ordinator and 18 teachers. Staff promotions resulted in the number being reduced to 15.

During 2007, the Drama Unit presented seven *Theatre-in-Education (TIE)* projects, reaching a total of 17,380 students. Five of these projects were presented at the Drama Centre, Blata l-Bajda. These were:

- *Stejjer Minn Chekhov* for Form 3, presented between 23 January and 8 February, with an audience of 935 students. The aim of this TIE was to introduce the great Russian writer to our students and to help them appreciate his work and theatre in general, thus increasing cultural learning in our students.
- *Il-Misteru fil-Mużew* for Years 5 and 6, presented between 26 February and 9 March, with an audience of 1,984 students. The aim of this TIE, organised in collaboration with the Science Centre, was to use a theatre performance to present science experiments which form part of the science syllabus in a fun and creative way. This was presented between 26 February and 9 March. This had an audience of 1,984 students.
- *Ir-Rużinjol* for Year 3, presented between 30 April and 11 May, with an audience of 1,730 students. The aim of this TIE was to strengthen citizenship principles, and to show the students that we share with other citizens and have responsibilities towards our country and fellow citizens.
- *Auld Lang Syne* for Year 6 and Form 1, presented between 22 May and 22 June, with an audience of 2,152 students. The aim of this TIE was to make students acquainted with the euro and its value, exploring the effects of and the reasons for the changeover.
- *Auld Lang Syne* for Forms 3, 4 and 5, presented between 3 and 31 October, with an audience of 2,638 students.

The other two TIEs were presented as indicated below.

- *Fawċu* for Year 2, presented between 22 February and 7 March, at Brighella B.J.L. Ħamrun, with an audience of 3,017 students. The aim of this TIE was to make students aware of animal rights, to encourage respect for them and to show how to take care of them through the use of song and poetry.
- *Money, Money, Money* for Years 2 and 3, presented between 22 November and 14 December at the Theatre of Saint Vincent de Paule, Luqa with an audience of 4,924 students. The aim was to prepare our younger students for the euro.

Apart from these TIE projects, a hands-on team teaching project in primary schools was launched in the second term of scholastic year 2006/2007 called *Għanijiet*, to help the students to acquaint themselves with the euro through activities.

In July and September, the Unit organised two in-service courses. Both were *Using the Drama Syllabus*, the one in July being aimed at Year 6 teachers, while the one in September was for Year 1 teachers and kindergarten assistants. All the sessions were run by the Drama Unit teachers.

Throughout the year, Drama Unit teachers visited schools, giving drama lessons, helping teachers to use drama in their teaching, and helping in the staging of the Prize Day play, as well as other activities related to drama and theatre.

As from October, nine teachers were allocated one each, to the colleges for a term, mainly concentrating on the primary schools, with a fixed time table, while six others, together with the subject co-ordinator, were doing TIE projects. During this year, the Drama Syllabus for the Secondary Schools was finalised. Furthermore, teachers from the Unit have helped in activities organised by the National Euro Changeover Committee, Animal Awareness, Tree for You, and YSO.

Art

The following are the tasks and initiatives undertaken by the Art Department during 2007, in addition to the regular duties in connection with preparation of examination papers and school visits:

- organising in-service courses for all Art teachers for secondary state and non-state schools in July and September;
- organising meetings for primary peripatetic Art teachers where various art workshops were planned as extra curricular activities to complement the art syllabus;
- producing a draft for a new secondary syllabus for form III, IV, V Art Option;
- collaborating with NECC in raising awareness about the euro changeover in children - artwork was created and exhibited in all schools and a national exhibition planned for March 2008;
- collaborating with the Special Needs section to run Art in-service courses for the staff in this sector in July 2007;
- acquiring a selection of books for the Art Department;
- sending a selection of children's art works to Russia to commemorate the anniversary of the first Sputnik launched in space.

Music

The peripatetic staff for music has been increased to 20. Peripatetic teachers of music have been allocated to colleges and they support schools in Malta and Gozo.

The Synergy Project

Three teachers coming from three different but related disciplines, namely art, music and drama carried out the programme. The project was carried out in 14 state schools, one church and one independent school involved in the *I am Special Programme* geared for Year 1 classes. Orientation visits, a synergy day and follow-up visits were covered during these visits, with pupils being given the opportunity to develop their expressive and creative skills as well as enhancing their self-esteem. The group helped class teachers on other projects during the final term.

Hands-on Farming Initiative

- In collaboration with the Information Section of the Department of Agriculture, the Department for Curriculum Management has been organising class visits to the Ghammieri Government Farm. Primary pupils are invited to the Government Farm where they are shown around, made aware of the way their food is produced through agricultural practices and also get the opportunity to see farm animals.
- Biology option group students, from all junior lyceums and secondary schools, also attend these classes and they get the opportunity to examine the way biological processes interact with each other, as well as, how crucial the knowledge of biology is to agriculture. A full-time teacher from the Education Division animates these educational visits and learning material is explained and distributed to all participants.
- The *Permanent Set Aside* land where students may observe biological and ecological interactions and carry out some land management practice has been extended by the planting of a stone fruit orchard whilst students from several schools planted a new Araar (*tetraclinis articulata*) windbreak in the autumn of 2007.
- Following a visit to Wied il-Qlejgha in January 2007, its potential for education is currently being assessed.

- A school carried out its *Clean up the World* initiative at Chadwick Lakes, whilst another is developing a biology research programme.

Arbor Day and Forest Week

- The Department for Curriculum Management was represented on the School Arbor Committee by the peripatetic teacher who served as its Vice-Chairperson in 2007.
- National Forest Week was organised in January and Arbor Day was celebrated on 16 January.
- Forest walks were organised to Tas-Silġ Delimara, Xrobb l-Għaġin, Salini Kennedy Grove, Wied il-Qlejgħa, and Mġiebaħ.
- The activity in Gozo saw Arbor Day being commemorated at l-Għadira ta' San Rafflu at Ta' Kerċem. Many schools have now planted an Araar tree (is-siġra ta' l-ghargħar) on their grounds.
- The tree growing competition was taken up again with the prize-giving ceremonies held in May (Malta) and June (Gozo).
- The School Arbor Committee also encouraged schools to participate in the tree-planting event held under the 34U campaign of the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment at the Foresta 2000 site at Mellieħa. This event was society's answer to the vandalism of 3,000 forest saplings at this site in May.
- An Arbor School Representatives meeting was held at San Anton Gardens early in December. The School Arbor Committee held regular meetings including in summer to prepare for the activities of 2007-2008. Advice and recommendations issued in previous circulars has been gathered in an electronic document which is available to all upon request.

Personal and Social Development - Sexuality and Relationships Education (SRE) in the Primary

- *SRE Parents' Programme:* Talks in SRE for parents in primary schools followed the schedule as planned with the respective Heads of School, who had requested SRE talks for parents following an invitation letter sent to schools on July 2006.
 - Talks were addressed to parents of Kinder 1-Yr3; with the exception of some small schools where talks were offered to all parents.
 - Continuous contact with the school for co-ordination.
 - Delivery on two consecutive SRE sessions for parents.
 - Collection and records of evaluative feedback from parents.
- *Revised Parents' Programme:* Following the meetings held with the SRE Primary Sector Action Committee, the SRE team re-assessed the procedures to be used for scholastic year 2007/08 and the programme itself. The procedure utilised for 2007-08 was modified to take into account changes and instructions given during these meetings.
- *SDP for Class Teachers and Administration:* Teachers' SDP programme was offered once again to schools to augment the two-day SRE parental skills programme.

Personal and Social Development - Thinking Skills

The aim of teaching thinking skills is to help children become autonomous thinkers and to stimulate critical and creative thinking as stated also in the NMC 1991, Principle No 3.

- In January there were nine teachers whilst in October there were seven. Each teacher was assigned to a college.
- The programme starts with an introduction to the concept of thinking skills and creativity and an introduction to and practice of the De Bono CoRT tools, with reference to their use in the curriculum.

- Pupils use the tools learnt during the lessons in areas relating both to their lives inside and outside the classroom. Activities include the use of the thinking tools in planning a composition, decision making and problem solving situations and working on various projects.
- Discussions in class, in groups and in pairs, have been done on a regular basis during lessons. Lessons involved discussions, games, story-telling, written tasks, puzzles and work on various projects. The thinking skills programme was given in various state schools.
- A number of professional development sessions entitled *The teaching of Thinking – An Integrated Approach* were given. A staff development session was carried out at Guardian Angel School.
- Other activities included a visit from Dallas Baptist University professors to Żejtun Primary B during May. These visitors observed thinking skills lessons and benefited from information about thinking skills, which was provided to them.
- A course on thinking skills was delivered to peripatetic teachers of PSD in primary schools.
- A research on *An analysis of teachers' perception about the Thinking Skills Programme* was carried out and a report written.

Home Economics and Textiles Studies 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 (Nutrition)* for Year 3 pupils and the Parents' Programme *Gawdi Saħħtek u Saħħet Uliedek* (a special nutrition programme for parents on premises in parallel with the Year 3 breakfast programme) - the seminars were attended by 2,810 pupils, 853 parents and 248 teachers;
- secondary school programmes in state, church and independent schools which included: *Halli Nieklu bis-Sens! (Nutrition)* for Form II students, *Qassam Flusek bil-Għaqal (Money Management)* and *Indokra d-Dinja minn Darek (Environment)*, for Form III students. Total participation was 3,253 students (1,409, 922 and 922 for the respective seminars) and 156 accompanying teachers;
- talks in state, church and independent schools which included: *Leading a Healthy Lifestyle* to secondary school students who were not included in the programmes held at the centre, other talks conducted with the primary pupils, *X'ser Nieklu* for Year 1 and Year 2 pupils, and interventions for teachers as part of their SDP about how schools can plan and develop a Food and Nutrition Policy with reference to the *Healthy Eating Lifestyle Plan*.

Nutrition talks were held for all day care centres in both Malta and Gozo, ladies parish groups, local councils and ladies' circle and other community groups, for example, Mother and Baby Club, Azzjoni Kattolika and Minus One.

Other projects undertaken were:

- Involvement in the Healthy Eating Lifestyle Plan, 2007: Following the participatory role in the TASNE group, the Education Officer was also detailed to form part of the Healthy Eating Committee. This involved regular meetings and a taxing commitment for the production of the *Healthy Eating Lifestyle Plan* document which was launched in July. Further work in this direction continues, to ensure that its philosophy is being nurtured and implemented in schools.
- Staff at the Home Economics Seminar Centre have revised TASNE's initial recommendations and completed the following sections namely: List of Permissible Foods and Drinks; List of Prohibited Foods and Drinks; Nutrient-based Guidelines for Food and Drink Providers; Food and Beverage Selection Guidelines; The Role of Milk in Schools.
- Consultations with schools in relation to the implementation of the Nutrient-based Guidelines for Food and Drink Providers.
- Food products analysis was conducted when requested by schools, educational entities and food importers for the distribution and importation of food and drink items in schools.

- Participation in media (TV and radio programmes) to promote the work done at the centre with particular reference to the Healthy Eating Lifestyle Plan.
- In an attempt to build social networks with food importers and distributors, several meetings were held in relation to: new sponsorship for seminars/interventions; improving existing food products following extensive correspondence to bring them in line with existing general guidelines for healthy food consumption; renewing existing sponsorship for various programmes geared towards primary and secondary school students, parents and elderly persons.
- Correspondence via e-mail with school teachers requesting information and resources.
- Consultations with schools regarding selection of food items for special events, for example, breakfast clubs in accordance to the *Food and Beverage Selection Guidelines*.
- Contact and meetings made with tuck shop operators regarding the provision of food and beverages in schools.
- Contact with committees, organisations and foundations in relation to the provision of tokens for programme participants.
- Market research and food analysis was conducted at various supermarkets to lay ground for the setting of the: *Nutrient-based Guidelines for Food and Drink Providers* and *Food and Beverage Selection Guidelines* and to keep abreast with new food products to formulate and update a comprehensive list of various food items which can be sold in school tuck shops. Certificates of approval for food manufacturers and distributors were devised.
- Members of staff were involved in organising nutrition interventions for the implementation of school development plans and performance management programmes.
- Revision and piloting of the *Duq il-Qawsalla* programme aimed for Year 5 pupils.
- Revision of programme handouts and worksheets – handouts were revised and amended where necessary. The main aim remains to make them all the more student-friendly. New handouts were devised, tried and tested with a sample population.
- Reviewed and amended programme invitations sent by to schools by HESC staff.
- HESC staff participated in staff development programmes held during each term: Malta Dairy Products Ltd, Maypole Bakery Ltd, James Caterers Ltd and Euro Changeover.
- Drafting of resources in relation to the launching of the *Milk Power* programme aimed at Year 2 pupils – partially commissioned by National Curriculum Council funds. These included PowerPoint presentations for parents highlighting the importance of milk and booklets with games and activities to be distributed to programme participants.
- Meetings were held with ICT professionals to set ground for the development of a software program to be used when facilitating the Milk Power programme in schools with the pupils.
- Collaboration with the Inclusive and Special Education Network, to devise a set of activities based on topics from the home economics syllabus for primary and secondary level pupils with special needs.
- HESC staff has offered its assistance and expertise in Shape-Up Europe – a school-community approach to influence the determinants of childhood obesity. As part of Shape-Up project, St Paul's Bay Primary School organised a two-day programme of activities to encourage healthy eating and an active lifestyle.
- Three members of staff also participated in a Shape-Up week organised by St Joseph School, Blata l-Bajda on 27 and 30 April 2007. A PowerPoint presentation was specifically prepared for this event: *Trendy Choices for Smart Teens*. This presentation addressed the determinants of childhood obesity and sought to provide a broader vision of the benefits of a balanced diet and regular physical activity.
- Participation in Health and Safety Expo '07.
- Participation in the open weekend for the official opening of Mater Dei hospital by setting up a display stand to promote a healthy lifestyle, with particular focus on the importance of breakfast. With the help of our sponsors, a healthy breakfast was given to a total of 150 members of the general public.
- Members of staff were involved in drawing up an Annual Report to describe and highlight the work conducted during the scholastic year 2006 – 2007. This report was presented to the directors and all entities which collaborated with the centre.
- The planning, organisation and delivery of two annual in-service courses, in July for home economics teaching staff and in September for textiles studies teaching staff.

Science

The Science Centre has continued to further enhance teachers' confidence to teach science and improve the quality of the science activities carried out in schools. The aim is to promote challenging and interesting learning activities which support the development of scientific skills and positive attitudes towards science from an early age.

- *Primary Science Education:* Support service has been provided to all primary schools in Malta and Gozo for science and technology. Peripatetic teachers of science have continued to assist in the teaching and learning of science in the classroom. They have developed more science resource boxes to support teachers in class and have produced a resource catalogue for teachers to borrow resources when needed.

A pilot project on Formative Assessment in Science at primary level has been carried out with pupils in Year 4 which was later performed by all the pupils in Year 4. Pupils were given a practical investigation and they were assessed on the following: scientific knowledge; the ability to make observations; predictions; carry an investigation and come up with conclusions. Teachers, pupils and parents had positive reactions. Furthermore, the outcome of the assessment was used to inform planning and the teaching of science. It is envisaged that this type of assessment will be carried out with pupils in Year 5.

- *Professional Development:* A number of professional development sessions have been held in schools to enable teachers find out ways on how to share the science syllabus with the peripatetic teachers and identify ways on how to integrate science across the other subjects.
- *Inset:* A compulsory in-service course for all Year 4 teachers was carried out in July. Its aim was twofold: to evaluate the assessment procedures carried out in class and to introduce teachers to science software and the use of interactive whiteboards.
- *Continuity not Transition:* The Science Centre organised hands-on development sessions for B Ed students, to make them aware of the work that goes on in schools regarding primary science. Peripatetic teachers discussed with students their role and the work they do in schools so that a smoother transition will take place from university to schools with regard to the primary science curriculum.
- *European Relations:* The Science Centre together with Lija, Rabat A and Żebbuġ Primary Schools continued working on the second phase of Comenius 1.1 projects with the following themes: *Let's Fly Together*, *The Environment around Us* and *Tell us Where you Live*. Partners from Spain, England, Finland, Italy, and Turkey visited the Centre and three peripatetic teachers visited Spain, England, and Finland.

The team continued working on the implementation of Scientific Thinking processes in Pre-Primary School Settings (STIPPS) with science educators from England, Belgium, Germany, Poland, and Malta. An article on the work done till now has been published.

It has also worked with *Science on Stage* which is at the moment in its evaluation stage. A representative from Germany involved in Science on Stage visited the centre to carry out an evaluation regarding the team's participation in Science on Stage.

The Commonwealth Association for Teachers of Science (CASTME) awarded the Science Centre a bronze award for good practice. This was an achievement which was won for the first time insofar as Primary Science is concerned.

- *Initiatives:* The staff at the Science Centre has taken the following initiatives to reinforce the work done at school.
 - Home-Sci-Home – a primary science learning project which converted a farmhouse in Gozo into a primary science learning area to encourage children observe the world around them leading them to scientific explanations. It aimed to encourage teachers and parents realise that places around us are filled with opportunities to learn science and can increase the wonder and understanding that children have of life.

- Science meets History – a week of activities at Cottonera College. Vittoriosa, which boasts of a great history, was used as a lab for teaching primary science to more than 1,000 students. Every morning, seven different groups of 30 students per group gathered near Couvre Porte to take part in this scientific event.
- *Il-Bomba fil-Mużew* – A project in collaboration with the drama and science peripatetic group. A script written by the primary science teachers was staged at the Drama Unit for Year 6, Form I and II children. Children participated in an active science performance to become more enticed in taking up science subjects as part of their study.
- *Dr Scitek u l-Gżira tat-Teżor* – 39 primary science programmes were produced in synergy with E22 to stimulate further interest in science.
- *Ix-Xjenza ma' l-Ewro* – This activity was held at the Science Centre between October and December and it aimed to engage students in science investigations whilst becoming familiar with the euro. Year 4 to Form II students (1,532 in all) participated in this event.
- Other small projects were carried out in schools according to the needs of students and teachers.

Primary Curriculum

Routine work carried out involved visiting schools, drawing up reports on visits, preparation of examination papers, carrying out interviews for teachers, animating professional development sessions and carrying out inset training. Meetings with parents were also held. The section was also involved in the judging of The Best Language Practice Award.

Other initiatives included the following:

- drawing up of a Timetable for Teachers in the Primary Sector;
- introduction of new English course books for Year 5 – *Way Ahead 4*;
- introduction of reading scheme and supplementary readers for Maltese in Years 1 – 6;
- syllabus/level descriptors supplement for pupils with special needs;
- helping in compiling a syllabus for the teaching of English for pupils functioning below the Level 1 of the National Curriculum;
- compiling an examination syllabus document for the Junior Lyceum English examinations, providing general guidance to all key stakeholders for the Junior Lyceum examination by:
 - delineating a description of the knowledge, skills and understanding on which candidates will be assessed;
 - encouraging methods of learning and teaching which enhance the use of language in meaningful contexts, focus on the learning of appropriate strategies and promote independent learning;
 - providing guidelines for revision purposes;
 - outlining a frame of reference for examiners;
- designing curricular material regarding the euro changeover (*Temj – A Cross-Curricular Approach*);
- the formulation of detailed Syllabus Guidelines for Years 6 and 7 teachers;
- provision of text books for the Primary;
- expressions of intent regarding textbooks;
- evaluating and reporting on Maltese Readers for Primary Years 1 to 6;
- co-ordinating, facilitating and supervising in-set courses – Introducing a new English language course book in Primary Year 5;
- evaluation of personnel for Complementary Education in the Primary Sector;
- participation in a number of school audits;
- guidelines regarding Time Management in the Primary.

Subject Specific Reports

Mathematics

New Initiatives undertaken by the Unit

- In order to familiarise students with the euro, the Mathematics Section published a set of five workbooks, *Money Matters*.
- Published six workbooks (one for each year group) for the introduction of the euro in Malta; the activity books were entitled *The Euro ... our money*.
- Published a booklet, *Attivitajiet għad-Dar – Home Activities*, in order to guide parents as to how they themselves can help their kindergarten-aged children in Mathematics.
- Introduced a new syllabus at two junior lyceums and general secondary schools. This syllabus is now subdivided into four schemes that cater for all levels of student ability, namely, from the high achievers to those who need mathematics as a basic skill.
- Introduced a new examination paper aimed at students following a Basic Maths (Numeracy) Programme in Forms IV and V.
- Introduced new textbooks at Form II and Form V at both junior lyceums and general secondary schools.
- Set the test paper and formed part of the team in charge of the Basic Skills Assessment at the various colleges.
- Carried out a basic skills training course for those teaching mathematics to students following a basic mathematics (numeracy) programme.
- Organised hands-on activities for gifted and talented Form IV and Form V students from state and non-state secondary schools.
- Issued the biannual magazine, *Mathsline*.

Ongoing Projects

- Set examination papers for junior lyceums and general secondary schools.
- Organised INSET courses in July and September for teachers of Form I and II and Form IV and V of state and non-state schools.
- Visited schools to support teachers in their good practices.
- Published two issues of the mathematics magazine *Mathsline*, a publication for the professional development of teachers at both primary and secondary schools.
- Participated in school-based staff professional development sessions.
- Carried out interviews for the engagement of supply and regular mathematics teachers.
- Carried out teacher appraisal and confirmation of appointments.

Maltese

During 2007, the Maltese section of the Curriculum Department produced and published *Malti Komunikattiv, Prattiku u Kreattiv*, a practice book for elementary and intermediate learners of Maltese. This practice book is being followed up by other resource and reference material on the Maltese language to be used by teachers at the secondary level. The section also provided support, assessment and audit services to schools at the secondary and primary level. The vision, aims and practices of the section of Maltese is to bring about a culture of literacy and language appreciation.

Italian

- The new syllabus for Italian continued to see an expansion with the introduction of learning outcomes and content for all secondary schools; for the scholastic year 2007-2008, the syllabus – put online by the Curriculum Management Department – covers forms 1, 2, 3, 3 (1st year of junior lyceums) and 4 (2nd year). The syllabus continues to see its foundations on learning outcomes.
- Level descriptors were thoroughly revised and a new set was put online by the Department for Curriculum Management.

- September 2007 saw the introduction in Forms III and IV (option) in government secondary schools and junior lyceum classes of the new textbook for the teaching of Italian: *Rete! 2*.
- The publication of two new numbers of *Lo Stivale* which is distributed throughout all schools (state, private and church) in Malta and Gozo; increase in the number of subscriptions and in the use of the magazine in classes of Italian was constant.
- The website dedicated to *Lo Stivale* (<http://schoolnet.gov.mt/lostivale>) was duly updated.
- The culture material continued to see its incorporation in the new syllabus and use in state schools.
- The Italian language awareness pilot project continued to be carried out in a number of primary schools. After last year's feedback from primary schools, it was decided to continue the project and to further and better the methodology used during the lessons. Pupils were offered the opportunity to become aware of the culture of Italy as a foreign country and through the use of Internet and the computer they were introduced to the enjoyment of singing and communicating in the target language.
- There was consultation with Heads of Department and teachers in preparation for the Secondary Education Certificate examination, 2008. This was carried out in view of the changes envisaged in the syllabus for the 2008 examination.
- There was collaboration and monitoring of the language project in various secondary schools.
- Relations between the Italian Section within the Department for Curriculum Management and the Faculty of Education were further enhanced and co-operation increased through bilateral talks and meetings between the two sides. Feedback has shown that B Ed students are reaping the fruits of such collaboration.
- There was a broadening of contacts with the Italian Cultural Institute.
- During 2007, contacts and collaboration with the Italian Embassy were consolidated and this, on the occasion of Giuseppe Garibaldi's birth bicentenary celebrations, brought about a project to which 16 different secondary schools (government, church and independent) participated. The theme for the project chosen was *Giuseppe Garibaldi*. All schools participated through exhibitions, research, plays, role plays, ICT presentations, etc. An adjudicating panel, headed by HE the Italian Ambassador to Malta, visited each school and judged the practice.
- The two annual short-term bursaries at the *Università per Stranieri* of Perugia for teachers of Italian were awarded in conjunction with the Director of the Italian Cultural Institute and the Italian Embassy.
- More Heads of Department and teachers of Italian participated in workshop and projects organised by the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) in Graz, Austria. The Education Officer for Italian is also the National Contact point between Malta and the ECML.
- An in-service training session was held, conducted by the author of *Rete!* Series, and teachers had the opportunity to discuss with him the methodology utilised in the new textbook.
- The Education Officer for Italian was this year's Chairperson of 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 19 October, the European Day of Languages in Malta.

English and the English Language Resource Centre

New Initiatives Undertaken by the Unit

- Form IV Junior Lyceum Course Book evaluation exercise. This involved the establishment of a specialist board, the issue of a public call for submissions, the short listing and piloting of submitted texts in various schools, and the provision of formal teacher feedback. Project completed.
- An Education Officer in the English Section was selected as the Maltese Representative on an EU Advisory Board planning the design and implementation of the *European Indicator of Language Competence*, a project launched by the EU Commission. This entails the production of an assessment tool and its implementation across the EU by 2010.

- Participation in school audits. Education Officers in the English Section were chosen to form part of four audit teams that conducted audits in four primary and secondary schools in Malta.
- Uploading of 2007 English Language syllabus on Curriculum website.

Ongoing Projects

- Identifying, celebrating and disseminating good language practice through membership of a Selection Committee entrusted with the task of rewarding good practice in 14 primary and secondary schools in the state and non-state sectors participating in the Best Language Practice of the Year Award 2007.
- *School networking.* This project was launched in October 2002 and developed over the years, involving a series of structured visits by subject co-ordinators to a number of schools without a subject co-ordinator. Each subject co-ordinator is assigned a school and a minimum of six visits a year are undertaken. This project enables more schools to receive support from co-ordinators. Among the objectives for 2007 was the evaluation of a Form IV course book and the updating of the English syllabus.
- The updating of the 2002 English Language syllabus with the aim of highlighting its outcome-based approach.
- The provision of an English Literature syllabus for Forms IV and V area secondary.
- The collection of exemplars in relation to the level descriptors.

Regular Operations

- Identifying, writing and moderation of annual exam papers.
- Chairing of and sitting on interviewing boards for permanent and supply teacher posts.
- Routine school visits.
- Attendance at and active participation in departmental and Division meetings and seminars.
- In-school staff development sessions in primary schools.
- Annual inset courses.
- Participation in overseas seminars.
- Regular meetings with subject co-ordinators at the English Language Resource Centre.
- Running of the English Language Resource Centre.
- Maintaining and adding new resources at the English Language Resource Centre.
- Chairing and membership on Matsec syllabus panels.

French and the French Resource Centre

- *School Based Activities:*
 - Working on annual examination papers for Forms I to V - Form V (annual examination in February), Form IV/4th Year (Junior Lyceum), Form IV/4th Year (secondary), Form IV/2nd Year, Form III/3rd Year (junior lyceum), Form III/3rd Year (secondary), Form III/1st Year, Form II (junior lyceum), Form II (secondary), Form I (junior lyceum), Form I (secondary).
 - Co-ordinating the clustering of schools for half-yearly examinations - 8 junior lyceums, 1 church school and 1 private school working in one group on one set of papers; 14 secondary schools working together on another set.
- *Syllabus:* After discussions with teachers and subject co-ordinators, changes have been carried out concerning the content to be covered from *Chez toi en France*. The overall result of these changes will be to ensure that material to be covered in Forms IV and V will not be bulky and hamper the other aspects of language teaching to be covered.
- *Textbooks:* Phasing in of *Oh là là!* in secondary schools continued; the textbook is now being used by Forms I, II and III.

- *School Visits*: Various healthy discussions and ideas are shared during meetings with subject teachers meeting hour.
- *In-service Training*: It has been decided to have different topics and points for the in-service training. 89 teachers were present for this course. Some teachers of French attended the in-service course organised by the college co-ordinators.
- *Exemplars for Level Descriptors*: Students' work is being used as exemplars of role play and of "composition" work. Role play is on a DVD. These exemplars have been graded by a number of teachers of French, and edited by B Ed students of French as part of their dissertation. Work done on exemplars is being used as criterion-referencing for composition work with students.
- *Activities at the Centre*
 - maintenance and refurbishment of Centre
 - distribution of material and resources to schools
 - phasing out of the *Immersion Programme* designed for the *International Year of Languages* and replacement by four to five 30-minute sessions involving several activities
 - organisation of activities to celebrate the day of Francophonie *Francofête* activities (March 2007). Multiple activities have been organised to celebrate (20 March)
 - holding of the annual Internet quiz, with a record 24 schools participating
- *Website*:
 - restructuring of the CFM website, launched last year - the provisional committee of the Association of Teachers of French give their support;
 - training of teachers on the setting up and maintenance of websites; continuation of training of teachers in the use of Dreamweaver;
 - a more specialised service provided by M Guillaume Westphal, a computer engineer who carried out a traineeship at the Centre Franco-Maltais.
- *Choice of Language at Form I in Secondary School*: Students at Fortini Boys' Secondary and Erin Serracino Inglott Girls' Secondary School (GSS) and San Franġisk t'Assisi Boys' Secondary School have been given the opportunity to have four languages in Form I before they have to choose one language at a later stage. Teachers involved have met at the Centre Franco-Maltais and have been given the necessary support for this exercise to be carried out.
- *Teaching/Familiarisation of French in Primary School*: The familiarisation of primary school pupils with a European language, planned in 2006, has been implemented in Gudja Primary School (French) and in Naxxar (Italian).
- *European Awareness Programme*: A European Awareness Programme was implemented with pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 at Maria Bambina Primary School, Mellieħa.
- *Language Awareness in Primary School (L'éveil aux Langues)*: Research into current European projects concerning language awareness in primary schools, as well as European Directives concerning this domain, has been undertaken with university students.
- *Programmes for Channel 22*: During 2006-2007, discussions were held with Channel 22 with a view to organising a series of programmes about French. Scripts have now been completed and filming has already started.

German and the German Resource Centre

- All state schools grouped themselves into clusters in order to be more easily reached by the two subject co-coordinators, the system continued this year, and the teachers in the school clusters met during their slot allotted to the departmental meeting, sometimes also with a subject co-ordinator, in order to discuss matters relating to syllabus, teaching, examinations, methodology, handouts, etc.
- Meetings were held at the German Resource Centre under the guidance of the Education Officer. During such cluster meetings there were also discussions on the introduction of a new textbook for

scholastic year 2008-2009. Teachers worked in groups preparing lesson plans based on the new textbooks.

- Frequent meetings were held at the German Resource Centre, with teachers working in groups to set and finalise the half yearly examinations.
- An in-service course was carried out in September at the German Resource Centre. It was animated by Dr Johannes Gerbes from the Goethe Institute in Rome who has been sent by the Government of Germany as a support to the Education Division. This support is given annually. The theme was: “An introduction into the use of the new Textbook *Schritte International* as well as the setting of examination papers to the European language level A1 and A2.” Teachers were also made aware of the opportunities which educational CDs and websites offer for use in classrooms.
- Three teachers who graduated from University in 2007 have been newly appointed as a result of interviews carried out by the PSC board during this year. All three teachers were posted in various schools to fill vacancies for teachers of German.
- School visits were carried out in state and non state schools.
- A student exchange with a school in Germany has been revived.
- A new series of level descriptors was finalised according to the latest form in which they were to appear. They were also discussed with the teachers in an inset course.
- The teachers of German have been using as a reference the level descriptors found in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEF) which are further explained by the “Can do” statements attached to each level.
- The standard of knowledge of German reached in our schools (up to Form V) is equivalent to level B1. When the new syllabus will come into effect next year, with the introduction of the new textbook, the examinations will be rescheduled as per CEF level.
- The selection of a new textbook and graded readers has been carried out after a research study conducted by the subject co-ordinators. Support has been provided from the Goethe Institute which supplied the latest textbooks on the market for the library. Furthermore, the Goethe Institute in Rome sent a large number of recently published books for reference to the German Resource Centre.

Arabic and the Arabic Resource Centre

- Produced and launched the Arabic Language website on the Internet within the curriculum management website of the Education Division.
- The Centre made its contribution to the quarterly leaflet related to the students of Arabic familiarisation visit to the Centre.
- In the first quarter of 2007, students taking Arabic visited the Centre where they exchanged views, watched Arab satellite news and borrowed books or magazines.
- Arabic adult evening classes in collaboration with the Department of Further Studies and Adult Education were launched and are still being carried out. Three levels of Arabic evening classes had to be organised at the Arabic Language Centre due to the number of applicants.
- On 6 March, the Head of Department of Arabic represented the Centre at the Paola Mosque. The Head of Department read a paper to a numerous audience about the teaching of Arabic in Malta and the new approaches in the teaching of Arabic.
- All the schools where Arabic is taught contributed to the organisation of an exhibition/project entitled *From the Arabs' Kitchen*. Teachers of Arabic together with their students were asked to prepare information charts, and typical Arab food. The research material of the students shall be duly exhibited at the Centre.
- The Arabic Language Centre, through its Head of Department, did its utmost to maintain good cultural relations with the Egyptian and Tunisian Embassies by paying several visits to the Embassies. As a result, occasionally, the Embassies supply the Centre with Arabic reading material.

- The routine work included the preparation of examination papers, school visits and administration of the Centre.

History

The highlights of the work carried out were:

- revision of the History (Option) syllabus for Form 4;
- organisation of an inset course dealing with the new History (Option) syllabus during the September session;
- unpacking of Level Descriptors for History;
- evaluation and upgrading of the History webpage entitled History--Primary and Secondary Schools which can be viewed on <http://schoolnet.gov.mt/history/>;
- piloting of new history workbooks for Forms 3, 4 and 5;
- co-ordination of the subject of European Studies as an option subject;
- activities regarding the euro adoption;
- helping the Inclusive and Special Education Network in the development of the History and Social Studies Syllabus Supplements;
- participation in various courses and seminars e.g. *The Image of the Other*;
- carrying out of audits in three schools;
- working in a European network for trainers of history teachers by uploading and evaluating training session plans on a history platform;
- recurring items such as preparation of annual examination papers, helping networks regarding half-yearly examination papers, moderation, interviewing boards, meetings with subject co-ordinators, routine school visits, confirmation of appointment of teachers, monitoring junior lyceum examinations and participating in school development sessions.

Teachers' Documentation Centre

Focus on Textbook Matters

- Vetting all requisition orders received from the primary and secondary sector ensuring that the number of books requested by the schools reflects their actual need and providing the Procurement Section with an accurate topping up list.
- Liaising with subject Education Officers regarding the introduction of new textbooks in the syllabus.
- Visiting various schools talking to the librarians on the positive effect of the *no hoarding system*.
- Holding a meeting for all Heads (or their representatives) in the primary sector and for all librarians in the secondary sector explaining clearly how an accurate requisition order is to be completed.
- Carrying out work in connection with the ordering of new textbooks.

Other activities

- Editing articles from education officers and teachers, and supervising the publication of three issues of the newsletter *Resources*.
- Checking how funds sent to school the previous year for the purchase of English and Italian literature books and Integrated Science textbooks were spent; working out the exact amount of funds *per capita* for the current year.
- Participating in various conferences held by different bodies and representing the Curriculum Department in seminars on gender issues.
- Visiting a number of schools, as a member of the team judging Best Language Practice in state & non-state schools.

- Sitting on a judging panel in the competition on ‘Garibaldi’ for all schools in Malta and Gozo, organised by the Italian department, in collaboration with the Italian Embassy.
- Acting as Chairperson of the United World College National Committee: holding regular meetings with the other members regarding the International Baccalaureate diploma and Music scholarships offered by the UWC of the Adriatic. The Maltese Music Scholarship candidate was chosen from a number of other candidates from all over the world. Although the Music Scholarship was administered by the National Committee, the final selection on musical grounds was made by the Maestri of the Trio of Trieste.

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 Resource Centres;
- 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, Vincenzo Bugeja Boys’ Secondary School St Venera was closed down and students attending this school were transferred to San Franġisk t’Assisi, St Venera. Colleges were named as follows:

College 1 – St Margaret’s College
 College 2 – St Benedict’s College
 College 3 – St George Preca College
 College 4 – St Ignatius College
 College 5 – St Clare’s College
 College 6 – Maria Regina College
 College 7 – St Nicholas College
 College 8 – St Theresa College
 College 9 – St Thomas College
 College 10 – Gozo College

Staff

Professional staff attached to the Department of Operations is: one Director; one Assistant Director; two Principal Education Officers and four Education Officers.

Deployment/Shortage of Teaching Staff

When schools reopened in September 2007, there was a shortage of Heads in the following schools: Primary - Bahrija, Mosta B, Mqabba, Rabat B, Safi, Senglea, Żejtun B, San Lawrenz, Xagħra and Żebbug; Secondary - Lorenzo Manche, Fortini; Dun Karm Psaila, Żebbug; St Ignatius College Boys’ Secondary, Lorenzo Manchè Boys’ School.

Number of Schools

| No of Schools | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Kindergarten Centres | 62 ⁽¹⁾ |
| Primary Schools | 72 |
| Junior Lyceums | 12 |
| Secondary Schools | 18 |
| Boys'/Girls' Schools | 2 |
| Post-Secondary Schools | 2 |
| St Benedict's College | 2 |
| Total | 170 |

⁽¹⁾ these centres are situated on the same premises as the primary schools, with the exception of Mosta and an additional centre at Paola

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 | 15 | 12 | | | 2 | | 50 | 42 | 92 |
| Assistant Heads of School ⁽²⁾ | | | 38 | 86 | 49 | 33 | | | 4 | 3 | 91 | 122 | 213 |
| Subject Co-ordinators ⁽³⁾ | | | 1 | 2 | 42 | 30 | | | 13 | | 56 | 32 | 88 |
| Teachers ⁽⁴⁾ | | | 130 | 531 | 541 | 939 | | | 98 | 87 | 769 | 1,557 | 2,326 |
| Resource Teachers | | | 2 | 8 | 17 | 22 | | | 1 | | 20 | 30 | 50 |
| Instructors ⁽⁶⁾ | | | 16 | 150 | 164 | 126 | | | 5 | | 185 | 276 | 461 |
| Part-time Instructors ⁽⁷⁾ | | | | 7 | 3 | 2 | | | | | 3 | 9 | 12 |
| Temporary Teachers | | | | | 2 | 1 | | | | | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Retired Teachers | | | | 1 | 2 | 2 | | | 2 | | 4 | 3 | 7 |
| Supply Teachers | | | 4 | 21 | 17 | 39 | | | 1 | | 22 | 60 | 82 |
| Facilitators ⁽⁸⁾ | | | | | | | 7 | 277 | | | 7 | 277 | 284 |
| Kindergarten Asst. (KGA) ⁽⁹⁾ | | 351 | | | | | | 49 | | | | 400 | 400 |
| KGAs (Spec. Educ.) ⁽¹⁰⁾ | | | | | | | | 97 | | | | 97 | 97 |
| P/T KGAs (Spec. Educ.) | | | | | | | | 4 | | | | 4 | 4 |
| Supply KGAs | | 59 | | | | | | | | | | 59 | 59 |
| Supply KGAs (Spec. Educ.) ⁽¹¹⁾ | | | | | | | 54 | 663 | | | 54 | 663 | 717 |
| Total | - | 410 | 224 | 836 | 852 | 1,206 | 61 | 1,090 | 126 | 90 | 1,263 | 3,632 | 4,895 |

¹ Not including 2 Primary Heads on unpaid/responsibility leave, 1 Secondary Head awaiting appointment as Head.

² Not including 9 Assistant Heads on Acting Head duties, 4 Primary Assistant Heads on loan to ministries/unpaid leave, 4 Secondary Acting Heads, 14 Secondary Assistant Heads awaiting appointment as Assistant Heads and 2 Secondary Assistant Heads on long leave*

³ Not including 1 on non-teaching duties and 1 on long leave

⁴ Not including 51 Primary Teachers on maternity/parental leave, sick leave, unpaid leave, 5 Secondary Teachers and 1 Post Secondary Teacher on non-teaching duties, 147 Secondary Teachers and 7 Post Secondary Teachers on long leave

⁵ Not including 15 Primary Instructors on maternity/parental leave, 6 Secondary Instructors on non-teaching duties, 10 Secondary Instructors on long leave and 1 Post Secondary Instructor on non-teaching duties

⁶ Not including 1 Primary Part Time Instructor on parental leave and 1 Secondary Part Time Instructor on non-teaching duties

⁷ Not including 21 on unpaid leave

⁸ Including 10 Female facilitators in Special School/Unit

⁹ Not including 2 KAs on clerical duties, 2 KAs on long sick leave, 4 KAs on pre-retirement leave and 3 KAs on unpaid leave. Including 5 Female KGAs (Incl. Educ.) in Special School/Unit

¹⁰ Including 14 Female KGAs (Spec Educ) in Special School/Unit

¹¹ Including 7 Male and 19 Female SLSA in Special School/Unit

Number of Classes and Student Population in State Schools

| Sector | School Population (at the beginning of scholastic year 2006/2007) | | | No. of Classes |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| | Population | | | |
| | Male | Female | Total | |
| Kindergarten | 2,544 | 2,459 | 5,003 | 356 |
| Primary Schools | 8,684 | 7,347 | 16,031 | 848 |
| Junior Lyceums | 2,876 | 4,875 | 7,751 | 336 |
| Secondary Schools | 3,356 | 2,958 | 6,314 | 315 |
| Post-Secondary Schools | 911 | 1,250 | 2,161 | n/a |
| Colleges | 1,735 | - | 1,735 | 82 |
| Boys'/Girls' School | 123 | 93 | 216 | 21 |
| Total | 20,229 | 18,982 | 39,211 | 1,958 |

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

The Department of Operations, together with the Staff Development Organisation, organised training programmes on Data Protection Awareness for school secretaries and clerks of all schools in Malta and Gozo. These were held between February and April. The last session was held in Gozo for secretaries and clerks of Gozo schools. 218 participants attended this training. Feedback from the participants regarding these courses was positive as the explanation given was detailed and relevant to the matters that the participants came across in schools. This training made the participants more aware of the importance and responsibilities in securing data and maintaining its confidentiality.

In October, a Data Protection training programme was held for all Operations Department personnel. This training programme organised in conjunction with SDO, helped participants to be more aware of the Data Protection Act, confidentiality and related issues.

In-service Management Course for Assistant Heads of School

The Department of Operations 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. It tackled the following topics: The Role of Assistant Head of School, School Development Planning, the Performance Management Programme (PMP), School Accounts and Student Services. The course was attended by 30 Assistant Heads.

School Transport

The Department of Operations was responsible for organising and providing school transport for students in primary and secondary schools. During 2007, 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 in October 2007 | | | |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Schools</i> | <i>Students</i> | <i>Daily Trips</i> | <i>Daily Expenditure (Lm)</i> |
| Primary | 4,320 | 170 | 1,515.22 |
| Boys' and Girls' Schools | 571 | 49 | 562.11 |
| Secondary | 6,049 | 190 | 2,181.56 |
| Junior Lyceums | 8,938 | 318 | 3,926.68 |
| Total | 19,878 | 727 | 8,185.57 |

Schools, Teachers' Students (STS) Database

The Operations Department, in collaboration with the Student Information System (SIS), conducted training courses in the various SIS software programmes, aimed at newly-appointed school administrators and school secretaries/clerks. Workshops for Heads of School in the Facility Timetable software were held before the start of the new scholastic year.

The SIS support team provided school clerks with the required support during the summer recess to perform the year-end update for their students' database.

At the start of the new scholastic year the SIS team conducted the Good Shepherd Project for the ninth consecutive year. This project identifies children of five years of age, whose parents have not registered them in any school according to the provisions of the Education Act 1988.

The main project for 2007 was the implementation of the new Students' database in all schools. STS (Schools Teachers, Students) is an online system which includes the data of all teachers and students on a live server. The SIS Unit installed the new STS programme in all state schools. This was done in stages with an average of 12 schools being trained in the software monthly.

The last group of schools where the programme was implemented were the Gozo schools. These schools were given training during the month of November. All state schools are now using the new system. Up to the end of the year, 94 schools had populated the database with all their school data and 85 of them are also using the attendance module included in the system.

From about 37,500 students in state schools, about 95% of them are already entered in the system. Once all data is in the system, statistical data can be extracted much faster by Head Office.

After School Activities

The After School Activities programme was extended and offered to nine secondary schools, namely Sir Luigi Preziosi Girls' Secondary School, Carlo 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 were involved in the project, which includes gymnastics, football, volleyball, netball, basketball, art, ceramics and music. This programme was not started in October 2007 as all Activity Teachers were absorbed in the peripatetic service.

Inclusive Education

- During the year, the total number of personnel employed to support students with special needs rose from 1,052 to 1,152.
- Interviews for Supply Learning Support Assistants to support students with special needs in the mainstream were held during December.
- The transition exercise for students with special needs proceeding from primary to secondary education, which included 168 sessions, was held between April and July.
- 260 supply kindergarten assistants applied to attend the course on *Supporting 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 course 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 | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Primary | <i>Teaching Practice</i> | <i>Class Observation</i> | <i>School Experience</i> |
| 1 st Yr Students | | | November-December |
| 2 nd Yr Students | | | |
| 3 rd Yr Students | November-December | | |
| 4 th Yr Students | November-December | | |
| Secondary | <i>Teaching Practice</i> | <i>Class Observation</i> | <i>School Experience</i> |
| 1 st Yr Students | | | November-December |
| 2 nd Yr Students | | November-December | |
| 3 rd Yr Students | April-May | | |
| 4 th Yr Students | November-December | | |
| PGCE | April-May November-December | | January-February October-November |

The schools taking B Educ (Hons) and PGCE students determine their own needs and student teachers are posted accordingly, as much as possible. Schools take full responsibility for 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, 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 712 placements in state, private and church schools were given to B Educ/PGCE students for their teaching practice or school experience and observation during 2007.

| No. of Student Teachers Training in State Schools – 2006/2007 | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <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> |
| 40 | - | 44 | 31 |
| <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> |
| 121 | 95 | 98 | 95 |
| <i>PGCE</i> | | | |
| <i>Teaching Practice</i> | | | |
| 187 | | | |

School Councils

During the year under review, there were 108 school councils (72 in primary schools, 32 in secondary schools and four in special schools). The School Councils' Section dealt with enquiries and information regarding school councils, including collection and checking of annual reports, monthly council meetings agenda and reports, etc. The section is also dealing with the introduction of the EU Milk Subsidy Scheme. The section also represented the councils in various activities and fora, 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 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 (CSS)

Child Safety Services is a specialised unit manned by five guidance teachers, working mainly in the area of child abuse. It is an educational, co-ordinative and therapeutic unit, offering interventive and preventive services to students, parents and staff.

During 2007, the Unit received 319 referrals regarding cases of alleged child abuse, of which the Unit closed 258 cases. The Unit is also involved in the tracing of students and during 2007 it received 235 requests for tracing. CSS has continued to be part of the Special Education Needs Team (SENT) being present on four SENT teams. SENT consists of a multi-disciplinary team that caters for children with learning problems trying to identify and help at-risk students.

Training was given a high priority by the Child Safety Services. During 2007, CSS invested a lot of time and energy, mostly during the weekends and after office hours in research. The Unit diversified and specialised its training programmes. Schools requested the Unit's services to address the school staff in staff development meetings. However, other institutions such as the Seminary, tal-Virtù, Ursoline Sisters, the University of Malta, the Malta Olympic Committee, and the Diploma Course for Facilitators have also requested the Unit's training services. For this end, Child Safety Services have developed the following specialised PowerPoint presentations: primary staff training, secondary staff training, special needs schools, Internet abuse, an animated PowerPoint presentation, including worksheets for Year 4 students, three-day training programme for the seminarians, and a session for the Malta Olympic Committee.

- On 23 January, CSS were invited to address a hands-on training session for Heads of School in order to sensitise them further to the seriousness of abuse and to indicate what steps need be taken in cases where there is a strong suspicion, disclosure or other evidence of abuse.
- Two separate three-day INSET courses on child abuse were organised by CSS in July, highlighting awareness, prevention and intervention for members of staff in the primary school sector.
- On 5 February, CSS held a meeting with the Directorate for the non-state schools briefing them on ITS services and about the National Policy for Child Protection.
- On 14 March, CSS addressed guidance teachers meeting launching its newly designed website.
- CSS are also in the process of organising several community talks at a parish and local council level.
- On 24 October, CSS were invited by PBS for a short interview on the Unit's services. This interview was broadcast several times both on TVM and on Channel 22.
- On 10 December, CSS held a meeting with the Commissioner for Children and discussed the need for more social workers in the child protection sector; the need for a criminal records bureau which has to be consulted prior any employment working with children; the need for supervision during school transport, and in school toilets; and the need for lawyers and judges working with children to be knowledgeable about the dynamics of abuse.
- Several meetings were held with the Rector of the Seminary to outline the programme for the seminarians.
- A member of CSS has been nominated by the Director General to be part of a Commission instituted by the *Kunsill Malti għall-Ispirt* whose aim is to draft a Child Protection Policy for Sport.

Counselling survivors of child abuse is a service being offered and always given great priority. The counselling sessions take place with the child within the school premises. For this purpose a circular was

sent to equip all primary state schools with the necessary toys and materials needed for play techniques. CSS have equipped themselves with two play techniques kits to be used in secondary schools.

| Services Provided by Child Safety Services Unit | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| <i>Service</i> | <i>Frequency</i> |
| Consultation by phone | numerous |
| Consultation on school premises | 75 |
| Consultation – Police Inspector | 2 |
| Consultation/Meeting parents | 42 |
| Case reviews | 11 |
| Court summons | 5 |
| Primary Programme year 4 classes | 44 |
| Primary Programme year 6 classes | 2 |
| Secondary Programme Form 1 | 3 |
| Secondary Programme Form 2 | 27 |
| Parents' Awareness Programme | 20 |
| Parents' Year 4 Preparatory Meeting | 30 |
| Parents' Talk Kinder | 4 |
| Parents Sec Internet Safety | 3 |
| Training for Facilitators | 4 |
| Talk with Assistant Heads | 1 |
| Talk with Heads | 2 |
| Staff Training | 25 |
| Talk: Malta Olympic committee | 1 |
| Counselling sessions (Clients) | 185 |
| SENT meetings | 21 |
| Meeting with PSD teachers Gozo | 2 |
| Meeting College Coordinator | 17 |
| Meeting Child's Commissioner | 2 |
| Meeting EO non-state schools | 1 |
| Meeting with Rector Seminary | 2 |
| Meeting Bishop of Gozo | 1 |
| Meeting Council of Heads | 5 |
| Meeting Head re-services | 47 |
| Meeting with Inhope | 3 |
| Meeting with teacher | 5 |
| Meeting with school counsellor | 12 |
| Meeting with facilitator | 2 |
| Meeting with Social Worker | 22 |
| Meeting with vice squad | 1 |
| Meeting with Co-op Minibuses | 1 |
| Meeting Education School transport | 1 |
| IEP | 2 |
| In-service | 2 |
| Media | 1 |
| Angela House | 1 |
| Comm. Child Protection in Sport | 1 |
| Tracing | 235 |
| Parenting Skills Course | 14 |
| Total | 887 |

| No of Alleged Child Abuse Referrals by Categories | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| <i>Type of Abuse</i> | <i>Referrals</i> |
| Emotional | 30 |
| Neglect | 57 |
| Physical | 49 |
| Sexual | 41 |
| Emotional and Neglect | 11 |
| Emotional, Neglect and Physical | 9 |
| Emotional and Physical | 27 |
| Emotional, Physical and Sexual | 4 |
| Emotional and Sexual | 15 |
| Neglect and Physical | 9 |

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|------------|
| Neglect, Physical and Sexual | 8 |
| Neglect and Sexual | 47 |
| Physical, Sexual, Emotional and Neglect | 1 |
| Unknown | 11 |
| Total | 319 |

Substance Abuse Policy Team (SAPT)

The SAPT 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 2007, SAPT offered assistance to schools whenever cases of alleged substance abuse occurred. It provided technical 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 the safeguarding of the school.

It assisted individuals who were allegedly abusing or were at risk of substance abuse. After setting up a case conference with professionals involved (these may include school administration staff, counsellors and guidance amongst others) the most appropriate procedure is adapted. 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 2007, 52 cases were reported to SAPT.

| Reports Submitted to SAPT in 2007 | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|----------|-----------------------|----------|----------------------------|----------|
| | <i>State Secondary Schools</i> | | <i>State Primary Schools</i> | | <i>Church Schools</i> | | <i>Independent Schools</i> | |
| | Males | Females | Males | Females | Males | Females | Males | Females |
| Total | 28 | 16 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

The Unit serves as a link between schools and service delivery units of Student Services in DSSIR and/or other agencies/professionals outside the Education Division. Throughout 2007, as indicated in the Tackling Substance Abuse Policy (September 2001), the SAPT made adequate use of the Drug Squad OF the Police Force and secondary prevention within the agency *Sedqa*. Whenever the case required, other links with non-governmental agencies, including Caritas and OASI in Gozo, have been developed. Particularly useful is the Unit's work with the Guidance and Counselling Unit and with services provided within the Safe Schools Programme. All cases are monitored regularly by keeping frequent contact with the students and workers concerned.

Prevention is a crucial aspect provided by SAPT. Its aim is twofold: to focus on those students who are mostly at risk and to be pro-active in promoting a healthy society. Activities are directed towards students, parents, staff and the community at large. The Family Strategies Programme (FSP) assists and supports parents in their ever-changing and challenging role, as first educators of their youth. SAPT participated also in some mass media programmes, as part of the Unit's general awareness programme.

Following the setting up of the college system, the Unit personnel were invited to provide information during Heads' meetings. Another tool targeting students, parents and educational staff, which has been launched during a Guidance Meeting in March 2007, was the Unit's website.

Throughout the year, the Unit, together with personnel from Sedqa, Caritas and OASI, under the leadership of the National Commission on the Abuse of Drugs, Alcohol and Other Dependencies, met regularly to work on the evaluation of the drug prevention programmes offered by agencies. Schools were

divided into a control and a research group. Post-programme questionnaires were held in May and November 2007.

The policy *Tackling Substance Abuse*, published in 2001, proved to be breaking ground for the education sector. All educational professionals have become more aware of drug issues in relation to young people. Moreover, professionals have understood the need of immediate action in order to assist the students in their care. This led SAPT to realise that the policy needed to be reviewed following the latest research and experience accumulated over the years. In fact, in July 2007, a representative of the Unit, together with Health and Safety teacher from the Education Division, and Operations Director Primary Prevention of *Sedqa* presented a draft copy of a new policy including both the preventive and interventive sides to the Director General (Education).

Anti-bullying Unit (ABU)

The Anti-Bullying Unit strives to initiate, support and co-ordinate the efforts of schools in anti-bullying programmes to ensure a safe and caring environment conducive to learning and well being.

The Unit provides advice, understanding and support in developing whole-school responses to bullying and promotion of pro-social behaviour (This includes raising awareness of administration, staff, minor staff, students, and parents to the long term effects of bullying, and implementing strategies to respond to situations of bullying behaviour); support to individuals, (staff, students, parents) to increase their confidence and competence in dealing with incidences of bullying behaviour; useful resources; and in-service courses for teachers.

The Unit liaises with schools and other student services or professional agencies within or outside the Education Department.

With prevention interventions being a central aim of the programme, new initiatives continued to be developed. Follow-up from the previous year continued. Prevention strategies through tailor-made programmes are developed with the school on demand to meet their individual needs.

The programme has continued with the three-pronged approach reaching out to parents, staff and students in a way that seeks to empower and impart general coping skills for dealing with incidences of bullying behaviour. Besides raising awareness, the programme aims to encourage reporting of cases.

Where the administration team has one member who acts as liaison person/pastoral carer, more success is recorded in resolving cases.

- The unit has had a greater demand for interventions from all schools including church schools and independent schools.
- Regular monthly visits were made to Gozo.
- An anti-bullying week in a church school was held.
- Primary schools are targeting input to all classes and their parents.
- During 2007, there was an increase in the number of schools (separately) that participated in a morning seminar for Year 6 after the Junior Lyceum examinations.
- The Unit was invited to participate in a number of school and staff development meetings.
- Due to the large number of applicants for the in-service course on power relations in schools, two separate courses were held in June.

Referrals were continually made by Educational Welfare Services, school psychologists, Guidance and Counselling Unit, social workers from Appoġġ 179, and directly from parents and students. The number of new individual referrals amounted to 186 new cases. The number of follow-up visits has decreased owing to the increase in volume of work. Constant contact is kept by telephone with parents or schools as the need occurs.

All 10 state colleges, as well as independent and church schools, were visited during 2007 for the following purposes: staff development, parents' meetings, individual cases and class contact.

A number of new books were added to the library and these helped to gaining new knowledge on trends, strategies and initiatives. Availability of PowerPoint has been added to the existing OHP with the acquisition of a laptop computer. The visiting seminarian (who is employed within the Safe Schools' Programme as a supply teacher and who spent from September to December with the unit) also made two videos and a PowerPoint presentation for the Unit's use. Nevertheless, there remains a need for videos and CD resources that would complement those already available.

As a result of the introduction of state colleges, three colleges were assigned to each member of the unit respectively. As for the Gozo college, one member of staff was assigned Ninu Cremona Boys' Secondary School, another member, Agius de Soldanis Girls' Secondary School, and the other member was assigned all the primary schools.

Work at church and independent schools in Malta and Gozo was equally divided between the guidance teachers within the unit.

New initiatives in the area of behaviour recovery were made. Often the Anti-Bullying Unit helps out and follows youngsters, both in primary schools and in secondary schools, by carrying out regular visits and by supporting them in their programme of behaviour change. In secondary schools, classroom groups are often divided into the smaller PSD groups in order to make experiential work more effective. Besides these tasks, therapeutic play work with youngsters with emotional and behavioural problems, often involved in bullying situations, as well as supportive work with school management teams, inclusion co-ordinators, teachers, LSAs and parents was performed. Referrals were received by School Psychological Services for specific cases of emotional and behaviour difficulties, both internalising and externalising type. These included mainly cases of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, and school phobia. The number of cases between March and December 2007 amounted to 54. Several cases where youngsters' abilities for frustration tolerance and flexibility have been severely compromised and youngsters could not be contained at school have been highly intense. This necessitated prompt assessment and a high level of family and school support towards the speediest return of the youngster to school with the appropriate provision of support.

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.

School Psychological Service

The School Psychological 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.

The main services offered by the School Psychological Service during 2007 included:

- Psycho-educational assessment and intervention for children and young people with learning and behavioural difficulties. The majority of referrals requested support relating to severe emotional and/or behavioural difficulties (including aggression, depression, suicidal behaviour, disruption, and school refusal) and identification of learning difficulties predominantly relating to dyslexia, dyspraxia, mental disability, ADD/ADHD and autism. Around 45 % of new referrals requested an assessment *vis-à-vis* special examination arrangements for junior lyceum or MATSEC examinations.
- Telephone consultation with parents, school staff and professionals in other agencies/services.
- Attendance for case conferences in schools and in child support agencies/services.
- Advising teachers and parents on the psycho-educational needs of children.

- Liaising with other units within the Support Services of the Education Division and with external child-support agencies.
- Participation in whole-school development, relating to children's psycho-educational development and/or special educational needs.
- Contributions to professional development of school staff.
- Contributions to policy review regarding special examination arrangements for candidates with particular requirements (Ministry of Education, September 2002).
- Participation in a project co-ordinated by the University of Malta and St Luke's Hospital. The aim of the project was to monitor for improvement in cognitive functioning in persons with dopa-responsive dystonia receiving 5-hydroxy-tryptophan.
- Supervision of trainee psychologists and psychology students.
- In 2007, 307 new referrals were received by the Service consisting of: individual case referrals: 170; junior lyceum special examination arrangements assessments for the May 2008 examinations: 114; MATSEC special examination arrangements assessments for the May 2008 examinations: 23.

As on 31 December 2007, the total number of closed referrals (received before or during 2007) was 217; 34 referrals were in the process of assessment and/or follow-up.

School Social Work Service

The School Social Work Service ensures 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 unco-operative parents to court.

During 2007, the tasks performed by the School Social Work Service were as follows:

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------|------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Home visits | 582 | Referrals out | 68 |
| School visits | 382 | Talks | 14 |
| Education court sittings | 156 | Meetings with other Professionals | 192 |
| Case conference | 34 | Attendance at SENT meetings | 12 |
| Juvenile court sittings | 4 | PQs | 8 |
| Juvenile court cases | 119 | School Reports on absenteeism – cases assessed | 7,848 |
| Social work intervention at Unit | 740 | School Reports on absenteeism – cases taken to court | 3,232 |
| Social work counselling | 360 | Police sittings | 8 |
| Exemptions | 1,228 | Datatrak sittings | 148 |

During the summer, the team of social workers at the School Social Work Service embarked on a summer project intended at working with primary school children who had been habitually absent during scholastic year 2006-2007. The main aim of the project was to work with habitually absent children, and their families, specifically, during the summer months. 99 cases with rather high absenteeism were chosen. Eventually, out of these 99 cases, 67% have been reported by their school and are now attending regularly.

Project Chance - 2007- 2008

Absenteeism is an important aspect of the School Social Workers' tasks, and, helping students re-integrate back at school, especially, after a long absence, is often the result of an intensive and planned intervention.

During the first few months of 2007, the team of Social Workers at the SSWS decided that, rather than address each student separately, a group approach was to be used. All the Heads of the state junior lyceums and secondary schools were asked to supply the Section with a detailed list of all the students who were habitually absent during 2006/07 and who had not yet attended school during scholastic year 2007/2008, so as to enable the social workers to take follow-up action in the hope of providing these young people with an opportunity to end school with a School Leaving Certificate.

School Library Service (SLS)

The School Library Service aims to support school libraries and librarians. All schools in the project are linked to a PC at IMU, Ministry of Education, which was still in use by the end of the year. Towards the end of the year a tender was issued for the supply of two servers to host Oliver Library Management Software at MITTS.

| Retrospective cataloguing (Cumulative to end of 2007) | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| | <i>SLS</i> (017) | <i>Naxxar</i> (345) | <i>Paola</i> (203) | <i>Żejtun</i> (153) | <i>Paola</i> (502) | <i>Mrieħel</i> (481) | <i>B'Buġia</i> (172) | <i>Verdala</i> (124) | <i>Victoria</i> (652) | <i>Kirkop</i> (306) |
| Totals | 9,709 | 7,042 | 4,162 | 7,288 | 3,895 | 9,047 | 3,431 | 3,519 | 3,284 | 3,310 |
| Gross Total: 54,687 books | | | | | | | | | | |

During the year, 4,625 books were either recycled or added to the Special Collections Scheme which by the end of 2007 had 4,760 fiction titles and 12,502 information books.

The annual professional development course ran from January to May, and November to December 2007.

The Section organised a seminar (the seventh) on International School Library Day in October. This year, the seminar was attended by more than 100 teacher-librarians from state schools, independent and church schools. It was held at Robert Sammut Hall, Floriana with the participation of the Malta School Library Association.

The section ran the annual quiz competition in conjunction with World Book Day (23 April) for secondary schools. The first prize went to a student from St Monica School, Gżira. A writing competition for primary schools was also well received. The first prize went to a student from Siggiewi Primary School. As in previous years, the library week activities were held just before World Book Day. Many schools participated in these events and they will be repeated next year if funds are available.

The Best School Library award for 2007 was given to St Monica School, Gżira. The Best Librarian of the Year Award was not awarded because no one met the required criteria. Awards were handed out during the October seminar.

The monthly booklist continued in January and eight numbers for primary and secondary schools were issued as well as eight special lists.

A number of primary schools brought their library stock to the SLS for processing. Siggiewi, Hamrun, and Żebbuġ A sent parents to help with the processing, while Pieta', St Julians and Luqa books were processed by SLS staff.

The SLS was also involved in the upgrading of a number of school libraries.

Statistics gathered from 35 secondary schools show that the total number of books in these schools amounts to 182,129. With a student population of 18,774, the number of books per student works out at 9.7. However, this is of course an inflated number because less than 40% of the books in the school libraries are of any use. A total of 10,064 books were added throughout the year. The number of periodicals purchased this year was 61. Loans during the year amounted to 68,498 books, which works out at 3.6 books per student. Żejtun Girls' Junior Lyceum issued 9,100 books (or 10 books per head) followed by Mrieħel Girls' Junior Lyceum with a total of 7,800 books (7.8 books per head).

The collection of School Admission Registers rose to a total of 99. Throughout the year, over 202 school attendance certificates were issued to ex-students. A number of SDPs were transferred to the SLS archives. These were sorted, numbered, bound and stored in archival boxes. Bibliographic data is being entered on our Library Management Software.

Work on the new SLS premises at St Julians started in mid January. A lot of work was entrusted to the Maintenance Unit of the Education Division.

Education Medical Service (EMS)

Education Medical Services endeavours to give an advisory and practical service to the centre-based administrative staff as well as to schools. In 2007, the Unit went through a period of staff recruitment in order to meet the demand for services especially as regards headlice screening.

Headlice screening continued to be offered in a much more efficient manner with requests usually being met within a week. The service provided screening of 11,344 girls and 10,673 boys, with over 158 schools visited.

As part of the Health Education Programme, the unit provided talks to students, parents and staff, delivering PowerPoint presentations, discussions and other similar activities. Health education is also carried out on an individual basis targeting special cases. Single mothers at *Għozza* are targeted for pregnancy and women's health related issues. Secondary school students are given adolescent health education and staff development is an opportunity to inform teachers and heads about school health issues.

The Unit also prepared for a series of TV programmes about common medical conditions, as part of an Adult Learning Programme being run by the Adult Learning Section. TV interviews were given for children programmes aiming at educating parents and the general public.

EMS gave advisory services to the Division's administrators, especially Directors and Heads of School. Parents, school staff and students also resort to this service. Advice is sought on subjects varying from administration of medicines in schools to specific conditions and fitness of students attending schools, to advice about special arrangements for students suffering from specific conditions. The Unit also gave advice regarding schoolbag overweight problems with the issue of a scientifically based circular to all heads of school and advice about the matter. The EMS was consulted by the Leaves Section regarding implementation of health related sick leave circular and interpretation of certificates by specialists in terms of Appendix A of OPM circular 12/99. There were around 28 similar personal cases passed to the unit for advice. Advice is also provided by updating of an information publication about students who suffer from specific conditions and are passed for statementing.

During 2007, the number of applications for special examination arrangements was about 30.

During the year, health promotion and education centred much of its focus on the obesity issue. Several intense meetings and the actual publication and launch of the HELP document were a major achievement of the Education Health services in collaboration with other units involved. The EMS Unit is in the forefront in the implementation process with an ambitious programme of providing high standard and precise instruments of body mass index measurements for all secondary schools on the island seeking also sponsorships. This project is aiming to start amongst Form I students and eventually spread to all secondary school children on the island acting as an ongoing audit to all the efforts of all those involved both intra and extra departmentally in this health promoting effort targeting childhood obesity.

Hepatitis immunisation programme for special school staff now has a precise electronic database of all the staff and the immunisation process in detail and is thus much more reliable.

EMS organised and provided a medical service of clinical assistance in cases of children who were sitting for their Junior Lyceum Entrance exam and were sick, or who needed special medical attention due to conditions they suffer from.

Health promoting school visits and inspections are also an important service offered by the unit. Heads of School often phone to ask for advice about the school clinic and first aid set-ups as well as special arrangements for students who suffer from specific medical and health conditions.

Guidance and Counselling Unit

The Unit seeks to provide a continuous 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 based on identifying and meeting the personal and social needs of pupils/students and helping them deal successfully with their concerns;
- meetings and training for guidance teachers and counsellors;
- work and contacts with other agencies;
- meetings and staff development sessions for teachers on personal guidance;
- seminars and on-going development programmes regarding work of other agencies and personal growth/enrichment;
- parenting skills programmes, consisting of six sessions with parents;
- individual and group counselling with students and parents, both as preventive action and crisis intervention.

The counselling service is given in all schools. Students usually ask for counselling themselves, and/or parents may be sent for. Counselling could range from crisis interventions to personal, vocational or educational counselling. A great number of referrals are also done, to other helping and support agencies.

Curricular guidance covers three key stages:

- Transition from primary into secondary schools. Choice of subjects at secondary level also covered.
- Choice of subject options in Forms II and III.
- Transition from secondary to post secondary education.

Career 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. Places visited were Bank of Valletta, Institute of Tourism Studies, Central Bank, Malta Stock Exchange, Middle Sea Insurance, AFM, Swatar Training Centre, the Malta Centre for Restoration, and University of Malta. These visits were held mainly for Form V students. In some cases, some fourth formers were also included in the groups. Apart from these visits, every school organised talks and visits on the initiative of guidance teachers. Careers' Market or Careers' Week, were also organised in a good number of schools. These visits are mainly organised for students of Form IV and V.

The Careers' Seminars section comprises five guidance teachers who are based at the Unit. They are in charge of career seminars held at secondary level for students of Form IV/V of all state, church and independent schools. There is an average of three seminars per day, where each seminar is delivered to a class of 25 to 28 students. In 2007, the team catered for 33 state schools, 15 independent/church schools, and the students of unit Għozza. A total of 4,080 fifth formers attended the seminars (1,726 boys and 2,354 girls). The programme consists of a day seminar (having one class per day) divided into three sessions. The seminar's aim is to help students base their career decisions on a good understanding of themselves, as well as a thorough knowledge of the occupations and courses open to them.

Counsellors and guidance teachers also gave a summer guidance service for ex-Form V students, during July and August. Issues dealt with concerned choices and decisions students needed to make in order to follow post-secondary courses.

The induction course for new guidance teachers took place during October and November. The subjects offered during the three mornings were: The role of the Guidance Teacher and the Counsellor, Transitions,

Confidentiality, Options, Record keeping, Student Services and Policies, The Computer and Career Education, and Vocational Guidance.

Sessions regarding parenting skills programme are held throughout the year and delivered by one of 30 trained facilitators for groups of not more than 20 parents. Requests are forwarded to the Unit regularly, especially by the primary schools. A six session parenting programme called *Nifhmu 'l Uliedna* is carried out. Topics include self-esteem, decision making, communication, relationships, drug abuse, assertiveness, health and sexuality. A new manual has been prepared for use.

One-day seminars were organised by the guidance sections of several schools. Counsellors identified particular needs which were then dealt with during the seminars. Issues tackled centred around leadership, relationships, communication, and other relevant topics.

The services of the Guidance and Counselling Unit are also requested by primary and secondary schools, and parish groups for seminars/talks and staff development programmes. Counsellors also liaise with other branches and services like Sedqa, anti-bullying, anti-substance abuse for prefects' programmes, for talks/discussions/seminars in schools and for preventive programmes.

Unit Ghozza

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 2007, the Unit provided service to 177 unmarried mothers - 84 attended the programme while 93 attending for 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, sessions of educational and informative topics that focus on pregnancy, motherhood and all legal and social issues that surround this situation. The girls are encouraged to continue with research on topics covered in the programme and present it as project work. A certificate of attendance is awarded to the girl who attends more than 50% of the sessions. Credit is also given to project work. A reunion of girls who had attended the Unit the previous scholastic year (October 06/07) was organised and certificates were distributed.

In 2007 the programme included input from the Midwifery Team at St Luke's, Consumer Rights, Social Assistance, Public Registry, Health Promotion Unit, Immunisation Unit, Speech Therapy Unit, Beauty Therapist, Breast-feeding Counsellor (Cana), Guidance Teachers-Careers Seminar (certificates awarded), Home Management, ETC, Anti-Smoking Campaigns sponsored by APS Bank.

- *The Parents of Pregnant Girls Programme* – the parents of the pregnant girl approach the Unit whenever they need information, support or counselling. This applies to the parents of the partner as well. Parents are invited to attend the first time the girl comes to the Unit, for the labour session at St Luke's Hospital and for a special session delivered by personnel from the Public Registry and the Social Service.
- *The Mother and Baby Programme* consisting of a meeting once a week. This support group has developed in a more structured programme where one-hour sessions are being offered to the girls and early learning activities are being organised for the toddlers. During 2007, the number of girls attending regularly increased and so it was more difficult to organise separate activities. A monthly outing was organised and special activities were organised for Christmas, Carnival, Mothers' Day and *Jum il-Mara*.
- *Parenting Skills Programme*, sessions were staggered between January and June. A certificate of attendance was awarded to the girls who qualified at the end of the scholastic year at a special celebration that farewelled the toddlers starting kindergarten in October.

- *Nifhmu 'l Uliedna fil-Bidliet Programme*, a programme for parents of children of Years 5 and 6 (as well as Year 7, where applicable), delivered to 30 primary government schools and to five church and private schools. This seminar was also offered to the schools in Gozo. This year, it was offered to parents of pupils in Year 6. Parents of pupils from 20 government and four church schools attended this seminar.

Other initiatives included:

- *Jum il-Mara* Celebration, in two separate activities with the pregnant girls and the young mothers;
- implementation of Health and Safety standards on the premises;
- distribution of an information leaflet;
- organisation of a visit to the Logos in March;
- participation in TV programmes and contribution to newspaper articles by personnel;
- meetings held with the Action Committee set up following the seminar *Children Having Children*; in suggestions for policies and programmes relating to Sexuality and Relationships Education were proposed and started to be implemented in October.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS BRANCH

International Links

During 2007, the International Links Section co-ordinated the following initiatives:

- *European Day of Languages 2007*: Fourteen schools sent written reports on activities held on or around this day. Of these, nine were primary schools and five secondary schools. Activities included drama, PowerPoint presentations, assembly presentations, native speakers of different languages invited to school, songs, poems, video conferencing, national anthems, greetings, exhibitions and traditional dances.
- *European Development Days Competition 2007*: This competition, organised by the European Schoolnet in Brussels, was open to students between the ages of 16 and 18. A total of 14 students participated. The International Relations Education Officer (EO) placed all entries on the European website where students from all over Europe could vote. The two national winners are to be taken to Brussels where they will meet Commissioner Louis Michel. The aim of the Competition is to raise awareness about how development co-operation between Europe and Africa works.
- *Spring Day in Europe 2007*: 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. As part of the 50th Anniversary of the signing of the Treaties of Rome, *Together Since 1957: Schools Celebrating Europe* was the chosen theme for Spring Day 2007. Awareness was raised on Europe's achievements in the past 50 years. Debate among students was also encouraged regarding the future of Europe.

The Education Officer for International Relations worked with various EU ambassadors, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Commission Representation and the European Parliament Information Office on this project. Members of the European Parliament, the EU ambassadors, 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 2007*: A total of 280 students from 15 schools took part in this competition which included drawings, paintings, bookmarks, posters, proposals for a better European Union and PowerPoint presentations. The prize for 30 students in the 14+ category was a Euroscola trip to the European Parliament in Strasbourg.
- *Europe Day 2007*: A total of 101 students from 13 schools in Malta and Gozo took part in the Europe Day celebrations in 2007. Celebrations started with a European Children's Parliament session, entitled *If I were an EU Commissioner*. The event was held at the Chamber of the House of Representatives.

Twelve students from different schools acted as European commissioners. The students were given the chance to question the Maltese MPs on current European issues. After the discussion, a *Europe's Birthday Party* was held at the Palace Courtyard presided by President Edward Fenech Adami.

- *Together Through Sport*: As part of the 50th Anniversary of the signing of the Treaties of Rome, the International Relations Section collaborated with the PE Section in the organisation of a sport activity at the Cottonera Sport Complex entitled *Together Through Sport*.
- *Euroscola trip to the European Parliament in Strasbourg*: The International Relations Section organised a Euroscola trip to the European Parliament in Strasbourg in May 2007. Thirty students from 11 schools participated in this event. The aim of the Parliament's EUROSCOLA programme is to bring together young people from the EU countries and provide them with an opportunity to express their views on current and future developments within the European Union during a day of meetings and discussions on topical European subjects.
- *Commonwealth Day Secondary Schools Competition 2007*: In 2007, 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 *Respecting Difference-Promoting Understanding*. A total of 47 students participated with entries which took the form of essays, drawings, portfolios and PowerPoint presentations.
- *Symbolic Dialogue with Space – Exhibition of Children and Youth Artworks in Moscow*: A number of students from Malta participated in an international exhibition with the theme *Symbolic Dialogue with Space* to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the launching of the first artificial Sputnik of the Earth (in 1957).
- *Staff Development Sessions*: The EO for International Relations conducted staff development sessions in various schools. The topic was Intercultural Dialogue and integrating International Relations projects into the syllabus.
- *Scholarships*: As in previous years the EO also liaised with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to communicate information regarding scholarships abroad to all schools.
- *School Partnerships*: The Section made several responses to requests for partner schools from abroad.
- *School Competitions*: The Section disseminated and facilitated competitions from various entities.

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 2007:

| Outgoing Country | Students | | Teachers | | Participating School/s |
|-------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------------------------------|
| | M | F | M | F | |
| Morocco | 10 | 1 | 2 | - | V Bugeja BSS, Sta Venera |
| Rome, Italy | 25 | 20 | 1 | 4 | St Benedict's College, Kirkop |
| Sta Sophia, Italy | 10 | 4 | 1 | 1 | Lorenzo Gafa BSS, Fortini |
| Bari, Italy (Festival) | 10 | 1 | 1 | 1 | Furtu Selvatico BSS, Naxxar |
| Europe Day, Italy | - | 9 | - | 2 | |
| Winterthur, Switzerland | 22 | - | 1 | 2 | Lily of the Valley GSS, Mosta |
| Madrid, Spain | 6 | 9 | 1 | 1 | Gianni Cilia Primary Sch, Mgarr |
| Verona, Italy | 6 | 2 | 2 | - | Sir Temi Zammit BSS, Mtarfa |
| Bourges, France | 1 | 18 | 2 | 1 | Carlo Diacono GJL, Żejtun |
| Expo Scuola, Salerno | 10 | - | 1 | 1 | Lorenzo Gafa BSS, Fortini |
| Total | 100 | 64 | 12 | 13 | |

| Incoming Country | Students | | Teachers | | Participating School/s |
|-------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------------------------------|
| | M | F | M | F | |
| Landshut, Germany | - | 18 | 2 | 1 | Maria Regina, GJL, Blata l-Bajda |
| Winterthur, Switzerland | 7 | 17 | - | 2 | Lily of the Valley, GSS, Mosta |
| Madrid, Spain | 5 | 6 | 1 | 1 | Gianni A. Cilia, Mgarr Primary |
| Verona, Italy | 6 | 5 | - | 1 | Sir Temi Zammit, BSS, Mtarfa |
| Morocco | 9 | 9 | 1 | 1 | V Bugeja, BSS, Sta Venera |
| Total | 27 | 55 | 4 | 6 | |

Marsaxlokk Youth Hostel

The hostel underwent regular maintenance works like whitewashing and mould treatment. A number of toilets/showers were completely refurbished and the office ceiling was demolished and reconstructed in collaboration with FTS. Extensive works were also carried out in the kitchen/dining area. The kitchen area was given a complete makeover including electrical and water piping, wall tiles and whitewash. New equipment for the hostel was purchased.

Competitions

- *Carnival Painting and Craft Competition 2007*: This competition is organised to promote Maltese cultural activities. Students 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 1,000 works were submitted.
- *Christmas Crib Competition 2007*: This annual activity is organised in collaboration with the National Commission for Folklore. The selected cribs were exhibited at the Education Foyer and later sold. All proceeds were forwarded to the Community Chest Fund.
- *Malta Football Association*: A drawing competition for Year 6 students was organised in collaboration with the Malta Football Association on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the first international football match and 50 years of international participation.
- *Festival of the European Song by Children, Un Testo Per Noi*: In collaboration with the *Associazione Coro Piccole Colonne*, through the Italian Cultural Institute, primary schools were invited to participate in a festival of songs for school children from 6 to 10 years. From the submissions sent, a Maltese school was selected by the Italian organisers to participate in the Festival of the European Song by Children, to be held in Levico Terme, Italy.
- *Enemalta 30th Anniversary Competition*: The YSO, in collaboration with Enemalta Corporation, organised a competition with three categories for primary and secondary schools. Entries included drawings, photos, as well as PowerPoint presentations.
- *British Culture Essay Competition 2007*: The YSO, in collaboration with the British Culture Association, organised an essay competition for 5th and 6th form students on various themes.

Other Activities

- *Annual Christmas Mass*: YSO organised the children's Christmas Mass at St John's Co-Cathedral. This event was attended by HE the President of Malta and Mrs Fenech Adami, Dr Louis Galea, the Minister for Education, Youth and Employment, as well as a number of high officials from the Education Directorates. The children's Christmas mass launches the *Milied Flimkien* campaign for the Community Chest Fund.

SKOLASAJF 2007

The twelfth edition of the Skolasajf programme was officially launched by the Minister on Monday, 28 May 2007 at Siggiewi Primary School. The main theme chosen for 2007 was *Welcome to the euro – Information – Participation – Friendship*. 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. The front page of the brochure featured prominent aspects in relation to the euro. Some 3,900 pupils participated in the Skolasajf programme in 58 centres in Malta and Gozo. Due to major refurbishments, arrangements had to be made to use B’Kara Primary as an alternative venue for Lija Primary School. 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 and Hellen Keller in Malta and at Sannat in Gozo.

Separate seminars were held for the first and second sessions centre co-ordinators and project co-ordinators – these seminars were held at the National Curriculum Centre and proved to be very successful. Meeting in smaller groups enabled the co-ordinators to make the seminars very much their own.

For the first time the *Fieramaratona* was held over three days at three different venues. The official opening was held at Luqa *Skolasajf* centre in the morning on 5 September while on the 6th and 7th it was held at Mgarr *Skolasajf* Centre and Maria Regina Girls’ Junior Lyceum respectively. Each Centre also displayed samples of their creative and colourful works on boards which were mounted at Luqa, Mgarr and Maria Regina GJL respectively. Such works focused on the main theme.

Klabbsajf, a programme which catered for Year 2/3 pupils who were receiving complementary education during scholastic year 2006/7, kept its share of popularity. 13 centres in Malta and five in Gozo were opened to cater for this programme and some 210 pupils were enrolled.

New initiatives/special programmes were introduced. These included:

- Euro Awareness - National Euro Change Over Committee – NECC
- Song – *l-Ewro tagħna lkoll*
- Involvement of NGOs
- Anti Smoking Campaign
- Visit to Sicilian Boy on the boat Walkirye
- Environment Protection – Nature Trust and 34U campaign
- Animal Rights Awareness – SPCA, Share Malta, Noah’s Arc and Island Sanctuary
- Visits to University radio – Campus FM
- Two live-in projects at the Marsaxlokk Hostel.

Skolasajf pupils also collected funds for the Community Chest Fund. Such funds were collected during the centre-based talent shows and from the door-to-door collections performed by pupils who attended the *Skolasajf* programme. The sum of money collected was presented to HE the President of Malta, Dr Edward Fenech Adami, at a ceremony held at the Palace.

The sponsors of the *Skolasajf* programme were the National Euro Changeover Committee, Paolo Bonnici Ltd, agents in Malta for Weetabix Ltd and HSBC.

DEPARTMENT OF TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Implementation

As from September 2007, more schools offered Design and Technology as an option. The total number of schools now offering the subject has gone up to 22 from a total of 29 secondary schools. The number of students opting for the subject is now 2,150. The first cohort of students will be sitting for the SEC Examination D&T in May 2008.

The Design and Technology Learning Centre co-ordinated works jointly with the FTS and the Education Division's Finance Section to refurbish laboratories, supply furniture, appliances and utensils, as well as equipment and tools in a number of schools. These included three Food, two Resistant Material, one machine shop, one CNC, and one Textiles, at the New Boys' Junior Lyceum (BJL), Handaq, three Food, one Resistant Material, one CNC and one Textiles at Agius De Soldanis G.J.L. Victoria, while another two textile laboratories at Sir Temi Zammit BSS, Mtarfa and Vincenzo Borg Brared BSS, B'Kara. Three food labs were set up at Dun G Brighella BJJ, Hamrun, Sir Temi Zammit BSS, Mtarfa and Vincenzo Borg Brared BSS B'Kara. The furniture for the latter three will be in place in January 2008. In conjunction with the Division's Technical Services Branch a number of classes were converted into Design and Technology Laboratories. These included Sir Adrian Dingli GJL where the full complement of labs is now in place. The relevant tools and equipment required were also procured and delivered. The second phase of tools and equipment was procured and had to be delivered where required in schools during December.

School Text Books

A tender document for the procurement of D&T textbooks was published in January as planned. The submissions were evaluated and later awarded. The schools are now furnished with the required textbooks. Groundwork for the procurement of the second phase of books was carried out. These books will be available for teachers and students in 2008.

Initiatives

- The Education Officer D&T held further meetings with lecturers from the Faculty of Education so that the BEd students could be given hands-on training at the Design and Technology Learning Centre. These prospective teachers would be in a better position to teach D&T when recruited.
- Students from a number of primary schools participated in D&T projects based on the four areas of study and ICT at the Centre. The scope behind this move was to help motivate and create enthusiasm in the students and to expose them to the subject.
- The D&TLC collaborated with the Special Needs Section in the formulation of the level descriptors and in the set up of a syllabus intended for these students.
- An internal call for applications for the retraining of teachers in Design and Technology - Food and Textiles was issued. A number of teachers applied and started their retraining in September. The successful teachers could be asked to teach the subject in the following scholastic year.
- A good number of B Ed's were recruited to teach Design and Technology. A number of them were asked to attend a hands-on skills training on the machines, tools and equipment that is being used in schools and required in the teaching of the subject. The rest were asked to attend a retraining course to be able to teach Food and Textiles Technology.
- Another evening course on Prodesktop was organised with an encouraging number of applicants attending.

Commitments

- Drawing up of annual examinations – Design and Technology.
- Drawing up of annual examinations – Graphical Communication.
- Co-ordinating the distribution of tools and equipment in schools.
- Preparing tender documents and technical specifications for the furniture, appliances and utensils for food labs to be used in Design and Technology, as well as Home Economics. Preparing tender documents and specifications for resistant material and textiles equipment, machinery and tools.
- Supporting D&T teachers both at the Centre as well as in schools.
- Helping in the setting up of examination papers with mark schemes in both Design and Technology and Graphical Communication.

- Re-training of teachers to be able to teach Design and Technology.
- Holding insets for teachers.

SECONDARY SECTOR ICT SUPPORT AT THE DTiE FOR 2007

The ICT Syllabus introduced in 2002 reached its fifth year and thus students who started this syllabus in Form I have now completed the whole course. Students were all given the opportunity to sit for the ECDL Full Certificate (seven modules) in the junior lyceum schools and for the Start ECDL Certificate (four modules) in the area secondary schools. These tests were spread out according to student abilities from Form III to Form V. In order to evaluate the whole ICT and ECDL Syllabus in view of the recent eLearning initiatives, a survey was held amongst all ICT teachers with the view of analysing and determining changes to enhance the teaching and learning objectives of ICT across the whole secondary sector.

Extensive testing was done with regard to an automated testing system for ECDL tests to replace the manual correction method which is laborious and time consuming. This was done in preparation for the projected introduction of the automated system as from next year. Meetings with the Examination Branch and experts on the subject were regularly held.

The secondary support staff at the DTiE set written ICT Annual Papers for Forms I to IV but 20% of the global mark was allocated using the now well established Automated Testing System (SSr) in Forms III and IV. However, Form V Annual Assessment was 100% automated. The success of this initiative is now in its third year and three schools, on a voluntary basis and in co-operation with each other, held their half yearly examinations using SSr. During the start of the 2007/2008 scholastic year, the Secondary Support Unit lost three active members of its staff due to promotions and to lack of teachers of Computing in schools so extraordinary measures had to be taken to mitigate the continuation of SSr.

The Secondary Teachers' Collaborative website was further enhanced by including notes for students for Forms I to III in an interactive manner, encouraging students to make use of the Internet for furthering their ICT knowledge. Moreover, the website includes focused material on ICT across the Curriculum with exemplars of good practice, advice on designing a whole school ICT Policy and relevant articles to encourage teachers to make use of ICT during their lessons.

The work undertaken last year, of encouraging all secondary schools to make use of ICT across the curriculum, started bearing results because six secondary schools, including a church school, opted to organise an in-house in-service course of three days in July and/or September. All members of the support staff were actively involved in helping to organise these courses and in participating by lecturing to about 500 teachers in all. Courses included not only training for beginners but also specialised training in the development of content for multi-media in education.

In view of the eLearning initiative, a one-day seminar entitled *Instructional Design in eLearning* was held at the DTiE for all ICT teachers in conjunction with MIIT and the Faculty of Education. Teachers were invited to submit eLearning projects, and books about the subject were rewarded. Further to this, Mr Gavin Dykes, an expert in eLearning brought over to design an eLearning policy on a national scale, was given full support by members of the secondary support unit, by sharing with him the work done so far with the secondary schools regarding ICTaC and by accompanying him on various school visits. The draft presented later by him was discussed and suggestions passed on.

The ICT Level Descriptors which had been designed two years ago were reviewed under the advice of Mr Keith Humphreys, an expert in special needs education, in order to make them more inclusive and to have a continuum of topics throughout the descriptor strands.

Other commitments were:

- review of the Business Management Draft for ICT proposed by MIIIT;
- review and suggestions for the eLearning draft proposal;
- hardware and software support to secondary schools;
- co-ordination of school laboratory technicians;
- conducting interviews for the recruitment of regular, supply and support ICT teachers;
- analysing results of the ICT/ECDL survey.

ICT SUPPORT INITIATIVES FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

In 2007, ICT support initiatives continued to be offered to schools. It is hoped that these support initiatives will help to enhance the pedagogical application of ICT across the curriculum. Each initiative is designed to address one particular aspect of ICT application as follows:

- *ICT in Practice (ICTiP)*: Provide continuous ICT to schools that are currently involved in a thematic whole-school project, including Comenius and eTwinning.
- *One 2one In-Class Teacher Training Programme*: Provide an in-service course with a difference to individual teachers, tailor-made and designed to take place within the teacher's immediate classroom environment.
- *School Resource Centres Support (SRCs)*: Provide consultancy and support to primary schools for the procurement of ICT equipment in school resource or activity centres.
- *Webmaster Support*: Help identify a member of staff in each primary school to act as webmaster for the creation, uploading of the school website. Provide the webmaster with training and support for this role. During 2007, ICTiP or one2one Support Initiatives (with Webmaster Support) were also offered.

Primary Sector Websites

The Sector's websites currently total five as follows:

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ICT Primary: | http://skola.gov.mt/ictprimary/ |
| Primary Theme Packs: | http://schoolnet.gov.mt/primarythemes |
| Support Initiatives: | http://schoolnet.gov.mt/ictprimary/supportinitiatives/ |
| ICT Admin: | http://schoolnet.gov.mt/ictadmin/ |
| ComputerWise: | http://schoolnet.gov.mt/computerwise/ |

Each website is aimed to address one particular aspect of support that the sector currently offers to schools in general, administrators, teachers, parents and students. The Support Initiatives website was launched last year to complement the newly-introduced pilot programmes described above.

ETWINNING

As part of the eLearning Programme of the European Commission, the eTwinning action aims to make pedagogical electronic interaction between schools from across Europe commonplace. This is an ambitious project which will span three years. The Department of Technology in Education recognised its potential and was selected as the eTwinning National Support Service (NSS) for Malta. An action plan has been designed and approved by the European Commission through which funding has been made available. eTwinning has been very successful in Malta, with 250 teachers from 80 schools registered and 115 partnerships so far. Proportionally, these figures rate highest in all participating countries.

These figures are very encouraging and, proportionally, are amongst the highest in Europe. The Malta eTwinning NSS organised and hosted a European eTwinning Workshop in October with 100 participants from 19 different countries. This workshop was a great success. The Malta NSS has also given great importance to teacher training – this was offered as part of the Department's after school hours courses. A National eTwinning Competition, sponsored by high profile ICT companies in Malta, was also organised. The Department aims to continue making eTwinning a strong driving force behind the use of ICT in education in Malta.

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’;
- process licensing, regulate, support, 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.

Professional Recognition

The legal responsibility of the Mutual Recognition Co-ordination is 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. A database of the designated authorities was constantly up-dated and the various queries and requests from migrants, designated authorities and Member State counterparts have been addressed. Meetings regarding recognition were held with various ministries, designated authorities and professional bodies. The Mutual Recognition Co-ordinator is an *ex officio* member of the Malta Qualifications Council. The second mandatory Annual Designated Authorities Conference was organised in May 2007.

Transposition of EU Directive 2005/36/EC

The Director was entrusted with the co-ordination of the transposition of the EU Directive 2005/36/EC, drafting the main legal texts, co-ordinating the transposition in the various sectoral legislation and the Better Regulation process in the field of professional recognition. Legal Notice 422 transposing the Directive was approved on 18 December 2006. Another legal notice was drafted transposing part of Annex V relating to the Minimum Training requirements for the Health Care professions and European Commission Regulation (EC) No 1430/2007. The office of the Mutual Recognition Co-ordinator was also involved in the transposition of EU 2006/100/EC and co-ordinated the notification of the Architecture Course, a derogation in relation to access into the engineering profession and various other sectoral issues. The Director represented the Ministry in the inter-ministerial committee for the transposition of the Services Directive 123/EC. The Office has been constantly consulted on EU matters relating to professional recognition, qualifications, mobility and services, lifelong learning, key competencies, vocational and adult education, drafting feedback and helping in the compilation of data and questionnaires. The Director was designated the national representative in the Commission Committee for

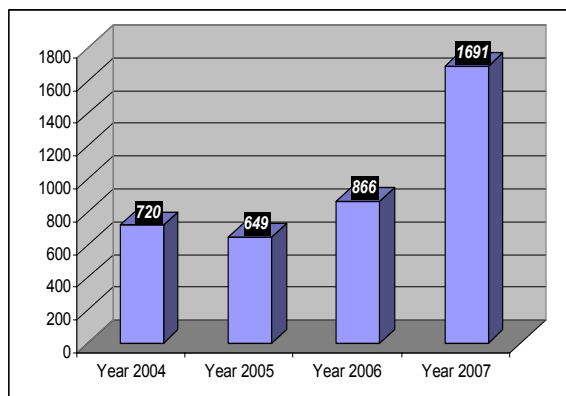
the Recognition of Professional Qualifications under Article 58 of EU Directive 2005/36/EC and National Co-ordinator under Article 56 of the Directive attending relevant meetings and compiling feedback from the various designated authorities within the different ministries.

Mutual Recognition of Qualification Council

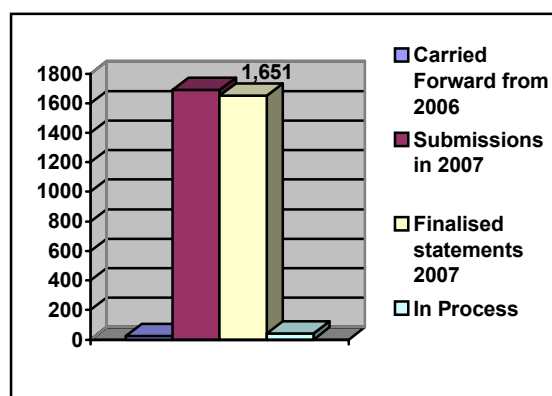
The Mutual Recognition of Qualification Council brings together the major further and higher learning institutions and qualifications evaluation experts in order to establish criteria and policies on which to base recognition. The Council convened 11 times. Items on the agenda of various current recognition issues included the National Action Plan for Recognition, the National Qualifications Framework and EQF, ECVET, Transnational and Joint Degrees, the Mediterranean Convention, Lisbon Convention and the European Credit Transfer System and non-recognised foreign qualifications.

Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre

The Malta Qualification Recognition Information Centre (QRIC) is the designated national centre for recognition of qualifications. The Centre also acts 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.

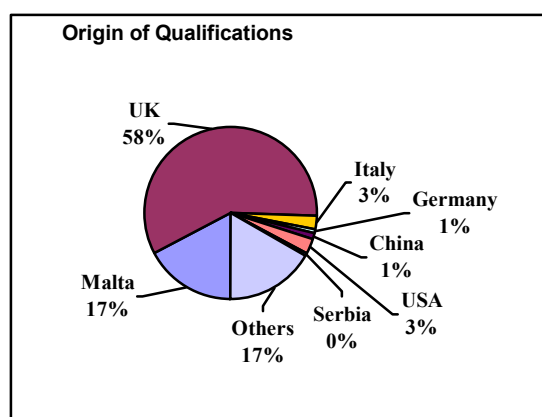


Number of requests by year

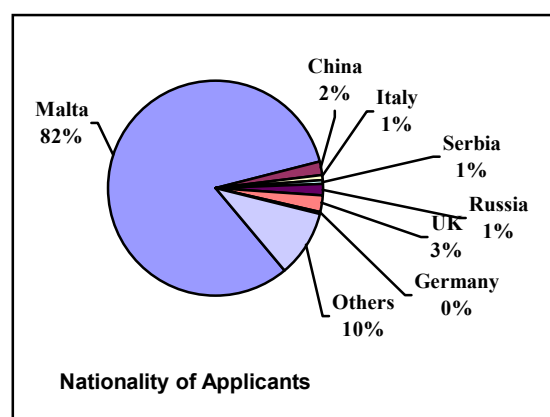


Number of statements finalised in 2007

The Centre is also part of the UNESCO, Council of Europe and the European Union 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.



Origin of Qualifications (Percent)



Nationality of Applicants (Percent)

This year the Malta QRIC received 1,691 requests for recognition, 1,224 of which asking for academic recognition while 467 requested vocational recognition. 58% of these requests concerned qualifications from the UK, 17% concerned Maltese qualifications while the remaining 25% hailed from various other countries.

Meetings were held with the Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business and the Self Employed, the Malta Tourism Authority, the Armed Forces 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.

During the year, the Malta QRIC 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 and took part in various media events.

The Malta QRIC 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 range 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. Information about qualifications acquired through the ENIC/NARIC networks is being compiled in a digital database for easy reference. Malta QRIC officials participate actively in the work programme of the ENIC/NARIC Networks, attending the 14th Joint Meeting of the ENIC/NARIC networks in Bucharest. During this meeting the Director was elected on the NARIC Advisory Board. Malta was also represented in the UK NARIC Annual Conference held in London where recognition issues relating to Eastern European Countries were discussed. The Malta QRIC organised a Thematic Visit early in 2007 which was part-funded by an EU Socrates grant. Participants from Spain, Latvia, Italy and the UK NARIC took part. Malta was chosen as the venue for the 15th Meeting of NARIC/ENIC in 2008, which is part funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe. The Department also compiled the National Action Plan for Recognition.

National Consultation on the European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education

The Department was entrusted with the national consultation on the EU proposal for ECTEV. A questionnaire was designed and disseminated together with the EU Document to the various stakeholders and social partners. A national conference was organised for 16 March. The National Report was compiled and submitted through Malta Representation.

Transparency and Validation of Non Formal and Informal Learning

The Department of Further Studies and Adult Education has been actively involved in technical working and groups organised on transparency of qualifications and validation of Informal and Non Formal Learning. The Department contributed actively to the national debate participating in seminars and conferences, while an officer from the Department followed the EU Peer Cluster Group meetings on Adult Learning and Learning Outcomes. The Department is participating in the OECD initiative on the Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning.

Links with European Training Foundation

The Director is alternate 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 Governing Board in Turin in November. The Department assisted in the organisation of an ETF Dissemination Seminar held in Malta in October.

Recruitment and Progression

The Recruitment/Progression Section within the Non-State Schools Branch is responsible for the issuing of all calls for applications pertaining to the Education Grades, from Learning Support Assistants to Assistant Directors, Psychologists and Social Workers, in the Education Division.

During 2007, the following calls for applications were published: Temporary Principal Social Worker; Regular Teachers; Assistant Head (Primary) Gozo; Assistant Head (Primary) Malta; Assistant Head (Secondary) Malta; Head of School (Malta); Head of School (Gozo); Learning Support Assistants; Inclusive Education Co-ordinator; Education Officers DQSE; Assistant Directors DQSE.

In the case of the call for Regular Teachers, which attracted the largest number of applicants, 30 selection boards were formed. A consultation meeting for prospective chairpersons of selection boards was held in April in order to increase the efficiency. A meeting for prospective candidates was also held at the University of Malta in May. In June, a briefing meeting was held for chairpersons of selection boards for Regular Teachers. Three candidates who were residing abroad were video interviewed. All results but one were published on 8 October 2007 whilst the other result was published on 11 October. An evaluation meeting regarding the selection process for the post of Regular Teachers was held on 31 October.

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 the licensing of schools and tuition centre and that they 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 2007 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. Officials from the section attended Prize Days, Open Days, School Concerts, School Exhibitions, for example, Comenius Projects, and other activities organised by the schools.
- Meetings with the Church Secretariat for Catholic Education and Culture. Regular meetings were held to discuss the approval of teachers, administrators and non-teaching grades, salary scales and other issues which cropped up during the year.
- Meetings with the Malta Environment and Planning Authority to discuss plans submitted to the Sector for the building of new schools or tuition centres or the extensions of already licensed schools or tuition centres. Sites were also visited.
- Collection of statistical data, which includes school population, absenteeism, staff and school fees. As from 2001, a record of absenteeism in schools has been kept on monthly basis. As from 2003, the collection of statistical data has been in line with that collected from state schools.
- Updating of statistics regarding guidance and complementary teachers.
- Compiling records of statements for students with special needs.
- Giving ongoing support to non-state schools in the School Development Planning process.
- Responding to queries from public, teachers, parents and education officials regarding non-state schools.
- The Non-State Schools Section is also represented on the Mutual Recognition of Qualification Council, the Advisory Board for the project *Hotline for Children over the Internet* and on the Ad Hoc Committee for 'Vetting and Barring Schemes for people working with or wishing to work with children'.
- Conducting a verification exercise on the approvals of the members of staff of schools.

- Entering of the compiled data of teaching staff in church and independent schools in a digital database which is constantly updated to reflect the actual complement within the schools.
- The processing of 80 requests for research in church and independent schools in the following distribution: Doctorate 2, Masters 13, Bachelors 51, Diploma 8 and Certificate 6.

Euro Changeover training to Cash Handlers in Schools

The Non-State Schools Section, in collaboration with the NECC, organised a half-day seminar in May for school administrators and bursars and three half-day seminars for 'cash handlers' in church and independent schools. Training was held at St Paul's Missionary College, Rabat in October.

Internet Safety Awareness Campaign

The Non-State Schools section collaborated fully with Aġenzija Appoġġ and MIIT in the *Internet Safety Awareness Campaign*. Teachers' and parents' representatives from church and independent schools attended the Train the Trainers programme seminars. The seminar for teachers was held in October whilst half-day seminars for parents were held in November in Gozo and in December in Malta.

Church and Independent Schools

Children attending non-state schools numbered 23,905 (16,627 students attended church schools while 7,278 attended independent schools). The following church and independent schools were in operation at the end of 2007:

| | Pre-Primary | Primary | Secondary | Post-Secondary |
|---------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|
| Church Schools | 33 | 24 | 22 | 2 |
| Independent Schools | 25 | 12 | 10 | 2 |
| Total | 58 | 36 | 32 | 4 |

Teaching Staff in Church and Independent Schools

| Church Schools | | | |
|-------------------------------------------|------------|--------------|--------------|
| <i>Religious Teaching Staff 2007/2008</i> | | | |
| | Male | Female | Total |
| Heads of School | 8 | 22 | 30 |
| Assistant Heads | 3 | 15 | 18 |
| Teachers | 24 | 24 | 48 |
| Supply Graduate Teachers | 5 | - | 5 |
| Kindergarten Assistants | - | 25 | 25 |
| Learning Support Assistants | - | 1 | 1 |
| Supply Learning Support Assistants | - | 1 | 1 |
| <i>Sub-total</i> | <i>40</i> | <i>88</i> | <i>128</i> |
| <i>Lay Teaching Staff 2006/07</i> | | | |
| Heads of School | 4 | 7 | 11 |
| Assistant Heads | 16 | 32 | 48 |
| Subject Co-ordinators | 6 | 6 | 12 |
| Teachers | 223 | 689 | 912 |
| Instructors | 5 | 17 | 22 |
| Supply Graduate Teachers | 12 | 19 | 31 |
| Supply Teachers | 18 | 13 | 31 |
| Kindergarten Assistants | - | 42 | 42 |
| Learning Support Assistants | 2 | 86 | 88 |
| Supply Learning Support Assistants | 26 | 277 | 303 |
| <i>Sub-total</i> | <i>312</i> | <i>1,188</i> | <i>1,500</i> |
| Total | 352 | 1,276 | 1,628 |

| Independent Schools | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <i>Teaching Staff 2007/2008</i> | | | |
| | Male | Female | Total |
| Heads of School | 7 | 17 | 24 |
| Assistant Heads | 4 | 6 | 10 |
| Subject Co-ordinators | 5 | 8 | 13 |
| Teachers | 90 | 319 | 409 |
| Instructors | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Supply Graduate Teachers | 1 | 18 | 19 |
| Supply Teachers | - | 25 | 25 |
| Kindergarten Assistants | - | 90 | 90 |
| Supply Learning Support Assistants | 1 | 17 | 18 |
| Total | 109 | 501 | 610 |

Approvals and renewals of staff

| Distribution of approvals of staff in Church Schools processed in 2007 | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| | Total |
| Heads of School | 2 |
| Assistant Heads | 4 |
| School Counsellors or social workers | 2 |
| Teachers | 116 |
| Supply Graduate Teachers | 46 |
| Supply Teachers | 19 |
| Kindergarten Assistants | 11 |
| Learning Support Assistants | 30 |
| Supply Learning Support Assistants | 81 |
| Computer or Science Lab Technician | 13 |
| School Secretary | 3 |
| Clerk | 5 |
| Cleaner or domestic | 24 |
| General hand or handyman | 4 |
| Total | 360 |

| Distribution of approvals of staff in Independent Schools processed in 2007 | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| | Total |
| Heads of School | 2 |
| Assistant Heads | 1 |
| School Counsellors | 1 |
| Teachers | 32 |
| Supply Graduate Teachers | 33 |
| Supply Teachers | 12 |
| Kindergarten Assistants | 11 |
| Total | 92 |

Commercial Schools and Tuition Centres

In 2007, there were 66 licensed commercial schools and 51 tuition centres while there are nine pending applications for new schools/tuition centres. These applications are held in abeyance because they do not have as yet the relevant permits from the Planning Authority or have not as yet provided the Division with the information requested. 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 programme 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.

Adult Learning

The Department of Further Studies and Adult Education is one of the leading providers of Adult Education in Malta and Gozo. The Department offered 205 courses in Malta and 59 courses in Gozo for the last quarter of 2007. These courses vary in type and depth and the comprehensive number of learners attending evening and adult classes is over 8,420. This year apart, from the general prospectus, the Department published a prospectus for each of the three performing and visual arts schools and another for the Lifelong Learning Centre in order to enhance the identity of these schools for adults. In order to promote the concept of Community Learning, the Department also launched a pilot decentralising project by offering adult courses within the framework of the newly created Colleges. The Department of Further Studies and Adult Education 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 2007, the number of subscribed adult learners was 3,546 of whom 763 were males and 2,783 females.

| Age Group | 14-16 | 17-20 | 21-30 | 31-40 | 41-50 | 51-60 | 61+ |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Malta | 214 | 314 | 619 | 451 | 525 | 584 | 690 |
| Gozo | 1 | 33 | 5 | 13 | 7 | 50 | 40 |
| Total | 215 | 347 | 624 | 464 | 532 | 634 | 730 |

| No. of learners in Adult Classes by gender - 2007 | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Males | Females | Total |
| Malta | 742 | 2,655 | 3,397 |
| Gozo | 21 | 128 | 149 |
| Total | 763 | 2,783 | 3,546 |

Basic literacy initiatives - ESF Project

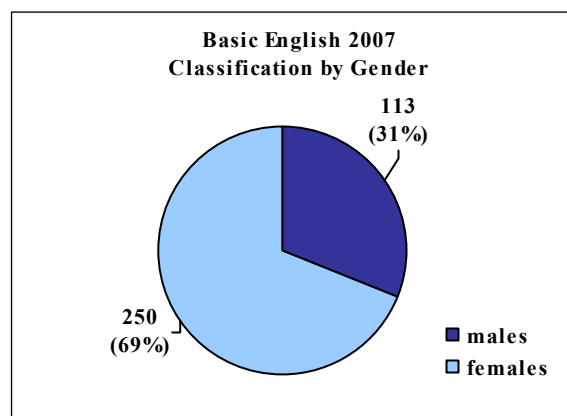
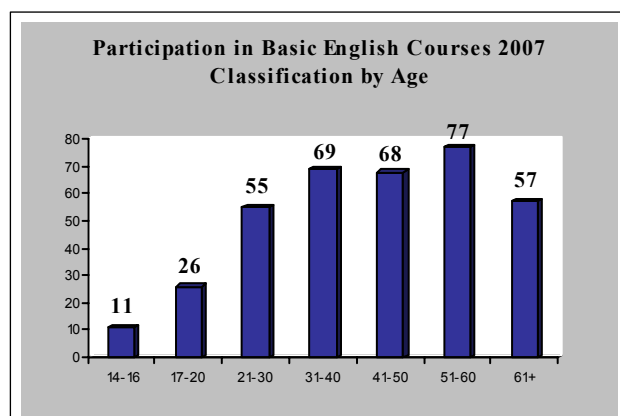
The project entitled *Pedagogical Training of Non-formal Adult Educators* was commenced in mid-2005 and conducted with considerable success during 2006 and 2007. This project is co-financed by the Malta Government and the EU through the European Social Funds.

A short refresher course for the trained adult educators was held in February. A second edition of *Sisien*, a set of three manuals for the teaching and learning of basic Maltese compiled by Profs Charles Mifsud, David Muscat and Ġorġ Mallia, was published in July. The Adult Learning Section put up a stand featuring the *Sisien* project in the European Union Fair organised in September.

The basic literacy programme was continued through the summer months with seven classes attended by 67 adult participants, 23 of whom were male and 44 female learners. In the last quarter of 2007, 11 Basic Maltese Literacy centres were set up consisting of 19 classes, attended by 55 male and 103 female participants. The total number of learners attending is 188 learners.

Basic literacy initiatives - Basic English

During 2007, 363 adults (113 males and 250 females) attended courses in Basic English literacy. These were distributed in eleven classes in three evening centres and in other centres run in collaboration with 22 local councils and the National Council for Women.



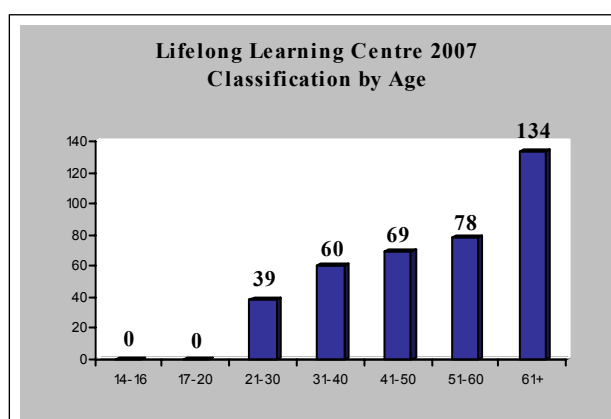
The Department also provided courses in Basic English for foreigners, including refugees, and courses in Basic English, Maltese and Mathematics and other basic skills as part of rehabilitation and integration programmes, in collaboration with other public entities and NGOs.

| No. of learners by age group and gender in Basic Learning Programmes - 2007 | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Age Group | 14-16 | 17-20 | 21-30 | 31-40 | 41-50 | 51-60 | 61+ | Total |
| Basic Maths | 2 | 2 | 4 | - | 4 | 2 | 2 | 16 |
| Basic Maltese | 3 | 6 | 15 | 13 | 11 | 16 | 17 | 81 |
| Basic Maltese for foreigners | 2 | 5 | 22 | 24 | 10 | 10 | 6 | 79 |
| Basic English for foreigners | 1 | 5 | 23 | 22 | 20 | 5 | 1 | 77 |
| Total | 8 | 18 | 64 | 59 | 45 | 33 | 26 | 253 |

| Adult Special Classes | | |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| Centre | Subject | No. of learners |
| St Mary Community, Luqa (Sedqa) | Gardening | 31 |
| Villa St Anna, Bahar ic-Caghaq (Caritas) | Basic English, Maltese | 13 |
| FITA | Basic Skills | 9 |
| Downs Group | Basic Skills | 8 |
| Refugee Tent Village | Basic English | 15 |
| Total | | 76 |

The Lifelong Learning Centre

The Lifelong Learning Centre in Msida is every year consolidating its achievement. In 2007, new premises were identified which will enable the LLC to expand its provision. The number of adult learners attending day classes in the last quarter of 2007 was 380 (51 male; 329 female). The courses offered include basic literacy courses in Maltese and English Language, as well as other academic subjects leading to SEC level examinations. Pilot initiatives have been undertaken to offer courses at matriculation level. Courses in ICT mainly ECDL and Computer Awareness and courses in entrepreneurship are also taken up at the Centre. The Empowerment course introduced successfully in 2006 has also been offered. As in the past two years, the Centre is organising courses for the Armed Forces of Malta, leading to ACE 1 and ACE 2 levels of academic attainment.



Computer Literacy

The demand for computer literacy is also on the increase. In 2007, 85 adults attended ECDL Start courses; 363 adults attended ECDL Core courses; and 168 adults attended ECDL Advanced courses offered by the Department in various centres. 26 adults followed a course in Photoshop.

| Number of learners following ICT Courses: Classification of learners by age and gender | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Males | Females | Total |
| Computer Awareness | 27 | 58 | 85 |
| ECDL Core | 109 | 254 | 363 |
| ECDL Advanced | 61 | 107 | 168 |
| Photoshop | 13 | 13 | 26 |
| Total | 210 | 432 | 642 |

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 2007, the aggregate number of students attending these schools stood at 3,239. Apart from the vast range of courses in expressive and creative subjects, these schools organise various cultural initiatives and events.

| Schools of Visual and Performing Arts: Classification of learners by gender | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| | Males | Females | Total |
| Mikelang Borg Drama Centre, Malta | 84 | 390 | 474 |
| School of Drama, Gozo | 33 | 282 | 315 |
| Johann Strauss School of Music, Malta | 242 | 284 | 526 |
| School of Music, Gozo | 191 | 188 | 379 |
| School of Art, Malta | 220 | 216 | 436 |
| School of Art, Gozo | 320 | 789 | 1,109 |
| Total | 1,090 | 2,149 | 3,239 |

The Johann Strauss School of Music

The Johann Strauss School of Music offers tuition to 526 students in theory and harmony, flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, althorn, tuba, violin, violoncello, classical guitar, bass guitar, jazz improvisation, piano, voice and piano accordion. It also has its own youth choir, a wind band, a clarinet choir, a flute choir and an orchestra. During 2007, the school organised concerts, recitals, master classes and specialised talks by local and international artists from Belgium, China, Austria and the United States. The School hosted the International String Orchestra Festival.

The School of Music, Gozo

The School of Music in Sannat offers tuition to 379 students in pianoforte, violin, cello, modern guitar, drum kit, bass guitar, saxophone, clarinet, flute, althorn, trombone, trumpet, euphonium, tuba and voice. During 2007, the School organised a parents week, a master class on the occasion of the Victoria International Arts Festival and several recitals.

Mikelang Borg Drama Centre

Mikelang Borg Drama Centre offered courses to 474 students in Mainstream Acting, Musical Theatre, Ballet, Flamenco, Contemporary Dance, Modelling, Personality Enhancement, Community Theatre, Outreach programmes, Costume Design, and script writing. During 2007, the school successfully prepared students for International Certificate in Drama of the London Academy of Music and Drama (LAMDA) and is preparing its ballet students for the Royal Academy of Dance graded examinations. The Centre actively involved students and tutors in Socrates/Grundtvic projects performing in Latvia, and leading workshops in France and Finland. The Centre hosted Austrian drama students and two French actors.

The School of Drama, Gozo

The School of Drama in Gozo is situated in Nadur. In 2007, the School ran courses at various levels in Drama, History of the Theatre, Appreciation and Criticism, Ballet, Ballroom and Latin American Dance, Movement and Aerobics. The number of students attending the school in 2007 was 315. During this year, the school successfully prepared students for International Certificate in Drama of the London Academy of Music and Drama (LAMDA) and is preparing its ballet students for the Royal Academy of Dance graded examinations.

The School of Art, Malta

436 adult students attend the Malta School of Art in Valletta. In 2007, the School offered courses leading to the Diploma in Fine Art, Sculpture, Life Classes, Gold and Silversmithing, Gilding, Printmaking, Aesthetics and History of Art. Apart from its regular activities, the School took part in the organisation of the Notte Bianca in Valletta, the OASIS International Exhibition, the project *Island of the Dead* and the Post Diploma Exhibition. The School also organised a Summer Art Enrichment Activity.

The School of Art, Gozo

The Gozo School of Art is situated in Ghajnsielem and has attracted 1,109 students in 2007. The School offered courses in Painting, Modelling and Casting, Wood and Stone Carving, Pottery, Mosaic, Silversmithing, Gilding, Pyrography, Glass Work, Textile Design, Lace Making, Thread Filigree, Airbrushing, Hansa, Fabric Painting, Upholstery, Leather Work, Mechanical Clock Restoration, Papier Mache', Mixed-Media and Semolina and Salt Painting. In all, 42 different courses in Art and Crafts were offered. The School has successfully attracted European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) and managed 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. The School was involved in hosting exchange visits and several exhibitions both locally and abroad.

Website and Prospectus

The Adult Education Branch within the Department published its annual General Prospectus and four other prospectuses, one for each of the schools in Malta, which were widely distributed with the cooperation of the local councils. Senior officials within the Department made use of several radio programme phone-ins to inform, encourage and invite the public to become active citizens through adult learning.

The official website registered over 340,000 hits throughout 2007. This is an increase of over 45% over last year, and is by far higher than the number of hits registered in 2003. There was also an increase in the number of applications effected online over last year.

Education 22

The Education Channel 22 is a very important tool for lifelong learning. Since 2004, its remit has been broadened to encompass a wider audience beyond compulsory school age. This concept has been further enhanced during the year under review with the introduction of Adult Learning courses through television. Several courses have been piloted which included bible study, language and culture, physical education, ICT and Empowerment. The learners of these television courses were provided with learning support in the form of mentoring by experts in the field, lesson notes and DVDs. A certificate will be issued after the submission of assignments.

The channel was also a good venue for the dissemination of educational concepts as well as a help to parents and educationalists. Education 22 produced a daily one hour programme on the national channel on educational issues. The Channel also provided personnel in order to systemise the archives of the national channel. Partnership in various ventures with PBS has been initiated in line with the public broadcasting policy. Another successful initiative was the broadcasting of imported documentaries supported by discussions on the topic.

The various developments and initiatives carried out during the year under review bore fruit increasing the viewership and making the Education Channel feature more pronouncedly among the other television channels. With the introduction of the morning Education TV and 22pm, the live air time has increased considerably while original programmes produced by the station have also increased. Private public

partnerships have also been sought through a public call for show of interest in an effort to make the station more sustainable.

Euro Changeover

The Director Further Studies and Adult Education was entrusted with the chairmanship of the Euro Changeover Training Task Force and was also member of the National Euro Changeover Committee. The Task Force was responsible for the formulation and up-dating of the Training Masterplan, and the drafting of the Training Manual. On behalf of the Training Task Force, the Department conducted two training audits for the Public Service in July and in December.

MICHELINE SCIBERRAS

Director General (Educational Services)

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 made tangible progress with regard to its two major IT applications, namely the Examinations Management System and the ECDL automated system.

Examinations Management System

Being the backbone and the motor of practically the whole operational system, it was imperative that the Department should make headway in the realisation of this initiative. Following some very decisive meetings with representatives from MIIT and MITTS on the proposal to replace the current Examinations Management System, the Department's efforts were realised when the Ministry of Education IT proposals was given the green light by CITAC. The tender document was prepared in collaboration with MITTS officials and forwarded to the Contracts Department to be issued at the beginning of 2008.

ECDL Automated System

At the end of the year, the Department reached an agreement with a private contractor for the supply of the automated system. The Department finalised also all the preparatory work, both administrative and technical, for the installation of the system in all the junior lyceums and secondary schools in Malta and Gozo so that the next ECDL session scheduled to be held in July 2008 would be conducted by an automated computerised system.

ANALYSIS OF 2007 EXAMINATIONS

Secondary Education Certificate and Matriculation Examinations

Secondary Education Certificate –May/June 2007

During May, a total number of 7,906 candidates applied for the Secondary Education Certificate examinations. In the re-sit session of September 2007, a total number of 2,405 candidates sat for these examinations. The total number of candidates who qualified for waiving of fees on social security grounds was 417. The total number of candidates who requested special arrangements and approved by the University was 255.

Matriculation Certificate Examinations May/June 2007

A total of 2,616 candidates sat for the Matriculation Certificate in May 2007. There were 5,129 subject entries at Advanced Level and 10,233 subject entries at Intermediate Level for this session. In the September 2007 re-sits, 1,474 candidates sat for this session.

Narrowly Failed Candidates

A total of 140 candidates sat for the Matriculation Certificate – Narrowly Failed Examination May 2007, with a total of 48 subject entries at Advanced Level and 92 subject entries at Intermediate Level.

Advanced Single Subject Examinations

A total of 1,030 candidates sat for May 2007 Session for Advanced Single Subject Examination with a total of 1,282 subject entries at Advanced Level and one subject entry at Intermediate Level.

September Re-Sits 2007

A total of 1,474 candidates sat for September 2007 session for Matriculation Certificate Examination, Single Subject Examination and Narrowly Failed Examination, with a total of 1,144 entries at Advanced Level and 1,180 entries at Intermediate Level.

| 2007 | May | Subject Entries | | September | Subject Entries | |
|--------------------------|-------|-----------------|--------------|-----------|-----------------|--------------|
| | | Advanced | Intermediate | | Advanced | Intermediate |
| Matsec Certificate | 2,616 | 5,129 | 10,233 | 1,474 | 1,144 | 1,180 |
| Narrowly Failed | 140 | 48 | 92 | | | |
| Advanced Single Subjects | 1,030 | 1,282 | 1 | | | |

| 2007 | May | Subject Entries | September | Subject Entries |
|------|-------|-----------------|-----------|-----------------|
| SEC | 7,453 | 49,187 | 2,405 | 4,108 |

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 2007 | 255 |
| | September 2007 | 99 |

| | | |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------|----|
| Advanced & Intermediate Special Arrangements | May 2007 | 25 |
| | September 2007 | 18 |

EDEXCEL International London Examinations – January 2007 and May/June 2007

Edexcel London examinations are held twice a year, in January for the winter session and in May/June for the summer session, at both Ordinary and Advanced Level. The January session offers a limited number of subjects while the May/June session subjects are offered on a wider scale. During this year a minimal decrease in the number of entries was also experienced.

A number of candidates requested special arrangements. These were processed by the Department and granted according to regulations of the Joint Council for General Qualifications.

| Session | Applications | | Special Cases | Revision of Papers |
|---------------|--------------|-----------|---------------|--------------------|
| | 'O' Level | 'A' Level | | |
| January 2007 | 71 | 8 | - | - |
| May/June 2007 | 2,270 | 138 | 38 | - |

Analysis of Results

| <i>London 'O' Level January 2007</i> | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Subject No | Subject | Sat | Pass |
| 7011 | Accounting | 5 | 3 |
| 7040 | Biology | 3 | 1 |
| 7042 | Human Biology | 1 | - |
| 7081 | Chemistry | 1 | - |
| 7120 | Economics | 1 | - |
| 7163 | English Language | 54 | 14 |
| 7193 | French | 2 | 1 |
| 7361 | Mathematics | 4 | - |
| 7540 | Physics | 3 | - |
| Total | | 74 | 19 |
| <i>London 'O' Level Summer 2007</i> | | | |
| Subject No | Subject | Sat | Pass |
| 7011 | Accounting | 568 | 299 |
| 7020 | Art and Design | 101 | 57 |
| 7040 | Biology | 96 | 45 |
| 7042 | Human Biology | 130 | 60 |
| 7081 | Chemistry | 54 | 25 |
| 7100 | Commerce | 5 | 2 |
| 7120 | Economics | 231 | 124 |
| 7161 | English Language | 1,826 | 1,252 |
| 7171 | English Literature | 6 | - |
| 7193 | French | 81 | 37 |
| 7209 | Geography | 4 | - |
| 7233 | German | 24 | 2 |
| 7262 | History B | 1 | - |
| 7333 | Italian | 52 | 38 |
| 7361 | Mathematics B | 88 | 30 |
| 7540 | Physics | 215 | 117 |
| 7593 | Spanish | 7 | 6 |
| 7603 | Classic Arabic | 1 | - |
| Total | | 3,490 | 2,094 |
| <i>London 'A' Level January 2007</i> | | | |
| Subject No | Subject | Sat | Pass |
| 9011 | Accounting | 5 | 5 |
| 9040 | Biology | 2 | 1 |
| Total | | 7 | 6 |
| <i>London 'A' Level Summer 2007</i> | | | |
| 9011 | Accounting | 112 | 93 |
| 9040 | Biology | 9 | 5 |

| | | | |
|--------------|------------------|------------|------------|
| 9076 | Business Studies | 2 | 2 |
| 9080 | Chemistry | 6 | 6 |
| 9106 | Computing | 3 | 3 |
| 9121 | Economics | 2 | - |
| 9373 | Pure Mathematics | 1 | - |
| Total | | 135 | 109 |

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 mainly coming from MCAST and the Malta Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise. The total number of entries for 2007 was as follows:

| | |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| Series 4 2006 Examinations | 87 applications |
| Series 2 2007 Examinations | 171 applications |
| Series 3 2007 Examinations | 153 applications |

Requests for Diploma Certificates 28

| London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Examinations Series 4 - 2006 | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------|------------|-------------|---------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Part | Subject | Entries | Sat | Pass | Credit | Distinction | Fail |
| Elementary | Business Administration | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| First Level | English for Business | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| | Text Production | 26 | 26 | 4 | 9 | 8 | 5 |
| Intermediate | English for Business | 8 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 0 |
| | Text Production | 21 | 20 | 8 | 6 | 0 | 6 |
| Second Level | Business Statistics | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | Advertising | 7 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Third Level | Business and Industrial Administration | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Customer Service | 12 | 11 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| | Management Accounting | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Marketing | 13 | 11 | 0 | 4 | 6 | 1 |
| | Selling and Sales Management | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | English for Business | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| | Text Production | 23 | 22 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 9 |
| | Principles and Practice of Management | 5 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | | 128 | 114 | 30 | 28 | 28 | 28 |
| London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Examinations Series 2 – 2007 | | | | | | | |
| Part | Subject | Entries | Sat | Pass | Credit | Distinction | Fail |
| Elementary | English for Business | 49 | 49 | 3 | 20 | 26 | 0 |
| First Level | English for Commerce | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | Text-Production | 38 | 38 | 0 | 16 | 16 | 6 |
| Intermediate | English for Business | 35 | 33 | 5 | 12 | 16 | 0 |
| | English for Commerce | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | Business Statistics | 19 | 18 | 4 | 8 | 1 | 5 |
| | Text Production | 41 | 41 | 4 | 19 | 12 | 6 |
| Higher | Advertising | 19 | 17 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 16 |
| Third Level | Business and Industrial Administration | 3 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| | Management Accounting | 3 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| | Marketing | 5 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Public Relations | 24 | 21 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 3 |
| | Selling and Sales Management | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | English for Business (Written) | 5 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| | English for Business (Speaking Test) | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | Text Production | 36 | 36 | 9 | 11 | 4 | 12 |
| Total | | 282 | 269 | 38 | 102 | 78 | 51 |

| London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Series 3 – 2007 | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|------------|-------------|---------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Part | Subject | Entries | Sat | Pass | Credit | Distinction | Fail |
| Elementary | Book Keeping | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| First Level | English for Business | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | Text Production | 19 | 19 | 1 | 4 | 12 | 2 |
| Intermediate | Book-Keeping and Accounts | 29 | 26 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 21 |
| Second Level | Text Production | 21 | 21 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 6 |
| | Business Administration | 52 | 51 | 8 | 18 | 24 | 1 |
| | English for Business (Written) | 6 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| | Business Practice | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | Business Administration | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Higher | Text Production | 32 | 31 | 8 | 7 | 2 | 14 |
| Third Level | Advertising | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | | 169 | 162 | 34 | 39 | 44 | 45 |

EFL English as a Foreign Language 2007

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 particularly during the summer months. The EFL Examination is being offered twice a year, in March and November.

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------------|-----|-----------------------|----|
| Total number of entries for March 2007 | 165 | Successful candidates | 41 |
| Total number of entries for November 2007 | 169 | Successful candidates | 44 |

European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) Testing 2007

During 2007, the Examinations Department conducted one ECDL test session which was held in July 2007. 3,475 applicants sat both from junior lyceums and secondary schools (academic year 2006/2007). The total number of individual tests in the various modules was over 16,000 tests.

| Results Statistics | | |
|---------------------------|------------|---------------|
| Module No | Sat | Passed |
| Mod 1 | 610 | 336 |
| Mod 2 | 1,129 | 765 |
| Mod 3 | 1,707 | 612 |
| Mod 4 | 1,679 | 607 |
| Mod 5 | 599 | 349 |
| Mod 6 | 957 | 608 |
| Mod 7 | 1,421 | 868 |

City and Guilds of London Institute 2007 Examinations

The City & Guilds examinations are held for candidates who attend vocational courses through evening classes and MCAST.

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 85 for 222 components; no applications were received for December.

AQA (Assessment and Qualifications Alliance) 2007 Examinations

The AQA Examinations Board offers subjects at Advanced Level twice a year, with one session in January and another in June. There was a slight increase in the number of entries over last year.

The total number of entries for January was: Malta - 30; Gozo - nil. The total number of entries for June was: Malta - 95; Gozo - 1.

| AQA January 2007 | | | |
|------------------|---------------------|------------|-----------|
| Subject No | Subject | Sat | Pass |
| 6360 | Pure Mathematics | 30 | 24 |
| Total | | 30 | 24 |
| AQA June 2007 | | | |
| Subject No | Subject | Sat | Pass |
| 6360 | Pure Mathematics | 51 | 44 |
| 6421 | Chemistry | 36 | 26 |
| 6456 | Physics | 13 | 8 |
| 6371 | Further Mathematics | 1 | 1 |
| Total | | 101 | 79 |

Other Foreign Examinations 2007

| University/College | Applied | Sat |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Association of Chartered Certified Accountants | 1,161 | 1,119 |
| Aston University | 3 | 3 |
| Birkbeck College | 4 | 4 |
| Chartered Institute of Linguists | 1 | 1 |
| Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport | 6 | 6 |
| Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply | 1 | 1 |
| CIMA | 3 | 2 |
| Engineering Council | 1 | 1 |
| European Institute of Education | 70 | 70 |
| Fitness Industry Education | 1 | 1 |
| IMIS | 1 | 1 |
| International Federation of Inspection Agencies | 6 | 6 |
| Professional Examination Services CISA/CISM | 32 | 26 |
| Royal Statistical Society | 1 | 1 |
| Sheffield Hallam University | 1 | 1 |
| The British Computer Society | 30 | 28 |
| The Chartered Institute of Purchasing & Supply | 1 | 1 |
| The Chartered Institute of Taxation | 23 | 18 |
| The College of Estate Management | 4 | 4 |
| The Market Research Society | 1 | 1 |
| University of Greenwich | 43 | 42 |
| University of Surrey | 16 | 16 |
| University of Warwick | 3 | 3 |
| Total | 1,413 | 1,356 |
| University of London Degrees 2007 | | |
| | Applied | Sat |
| BA English | 4 | 4 |
| BA Italian | 1 | 1 |
| BA Spanish and Latin American Studies | 1 | 1 |
| BA Philosophy | 3 | 3 |
| Computing and Information Systems Examinations | 182 | 181 |
| BSc Banking and Finance | 2 | 2 |
| BSc Economics | 1 | 1 |
| BSc Economics and Management | 11 | 10 |
| BSc Business | 2 | 2 |
| BSc Sociology | 2 | 2 |
| BSc Information Systems and Management | 22 | 22 |
| BSc Management | 4 | 4 |
| BSc Mathematics and Economics | 2 | 2 |
| BSc Geography and Environment | 1 | 1 |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Diploma in English | 3 | 3 |
| Diploma in Economics | 16 | 16 |
| LLM | 13 | 13 |
| LLB | 1 | 1 |
| MSc Information Security | 5 | 5 |
| MSc Occupational Psychology | 1 | 1 |
| MSc Environmental Management | 3 | 3 |
| MSc Financial Economics | 2 | 2 |
| MSc Agribusiness Management | 1 | 1 |
| MSc Organisational Psychology | 1 | 1 |
| MSc Financial Management | 2 | 2 |
| MSc Biodiversity Conservation and Management | 1 | 1 |
| MSc Sustainable Development | 1 | 0 |
| MSc Infectious Diseases | 1 | 1 |
| MSc Public Health DL (Short Courses) | 1 | 1 |
| PG Certificate Biodiversity Conservation and Management | 1 | 1 |
| Access Route | 3 | 3 |
| Total | 294 | 291 |

LOCAL PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS & LOCAL LICENCES

| Local Public Examinations | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------|------------|-------------------|
| | <i>Held</i> | <i>Sat</i> | <i>Passed</i> |
| Armed Forces Regular Soldiers | Nov 06/Mar 07 | 277 | 94 |
| Armed Forces Tradesmen/Bandsmen | Nov 06/Mar 07 | 21 | 15 |
| Second Secretaries in the Diplomatic Service | Feb 07/Mar 07 | 87 | 25 |
| Executive Officers in the Public Service (written Part I) | Mar 07/Dec 07 | 1,096 | 307 |
| Engine Drivers Land | May-07 | 17 | 12 |
| Officers Cadets in the Armed Forces of Malta | May 07/Aug 07 | 23 | 8 |
| Wireman Licence A | Jul-07 | 254 | 86 |
| Wireman Licence B | Jul-07 | 74 | 33 |
| Armed Forces Regular Soldiers | Oct-07 | 324 | still in progress |
| Armed Forces Bandsmen | Oct-07 | 34 | still in progress |
| Security Guards – Ministry for Rural Affairs & the Env. | Nov-07 | 18 | 8 |
| Engine Drivers Land | Nov-07 | 12 | 11 |
| Principals in the Public Service | Nov-07 | 607 | still in progress |
| Senior Principals in the Public Service | Nov-07 | 158 | still in progress |
| Court Messengers Malta | Dec-07 | 8 | 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, seven 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 objective of the Public Library System and information services provided by public libraries is to promote equal opportunities among citizens for personal cultivation, literary and cultural pursuits, continuous development of knowledge, personal skills and civic skills, internationalisation, and lifelong learning.

NATIONAL LIBRARY

Customer Care

The Customer Care Unit welcomes visitors and researchers to the National Library and keeps record of their identification data, not only for statistical purposes but also and principally for security reasons. During 2007 a total of 5,472 persons, an average of 18 per day, called to visit the Library, a 6% decrease from last year. The majority of them were Spanish, followed closely by French and German tourists.

Readers' Services

This year registered a total of 7,008 persons frequenting the Library's Reading Room with a view to carrying out research, a 6% decrease since last year. Research was mainly conducted in the newspaper and Melitensia collections, but some researchers, especially foreign scholars, consulted the archival sources and library manuscripts. The Adami collection remained popular this year among professional genealogists and others who simply wished to dig into their personal genealogy. Most of the simpler queries were handled by Reading Room staff who fetched an average of one item per day, per researcher.

During 2007, a total of 8,213 items with an average of 27 per day of opening were delivered to researchers in the Reading Room, a 1% decrease from last year. As usual, the bulk concerned newspapers with a total of 4,310 requests, followed by Melitensia items with 2,055. The Archives of the Order of St John, including the Treasury archives, attracted a total of 1,076 requests. Reading Room staff fetched 419 and 331 volumes from the Library Manuscript and Adami collections respectively. The least sought-after category of items was, as usual, the *Università* archives with only 22 requests by scholars for consultation.

| Items delivered by the Reading Room Staff during 2007 | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | <i>AOM/Treas. Mss</i> | <i>Univ. Mss</i> | <i>Library Mss</i> | <i>Adami Coll. Mss</i> | <i>Melitensia/Reference</i> | <i>Periodicals/Newspapers</i> |
| Total | 1,076 | 22 | 419 | 331 | 2,055 | 4,310 |
| Grand Total | | | 8,213 | | | |

The Library welcomed seven new foreign scholars this year, a 63% decrease from last year. As is the procedure, these brought along letters of presentation from academic institutions or presented publications of their own. All of them came with the specific purpose of consulting the Archives of the Order of St John.

Archives, Manuscripts and Rare Books

156 requests from Europe, North America and Australia reached the Library mostly by electronic mail, a slight 1% increase over last year. Queries requested information mostly about the Knights of St John and National Library holdings. Others required copies of newspapers reporting events that occurred in the 19th and 20th centuries.

| Electronic and Postal Enquiries | | | |
|---------------------------------|----|----------------|----|
| Australia | 10 | Italy | 40 |
| Bahrain | 1 | Malta | 40 |
| Belgium | 2 | Poland | 1 |
| Bulgaria | 1 | Portugal | 1 |
| Canada | 1 | Spain | 6 |
| Crete | 1 | Switzerland | 1 |
| Denmark | 1 | Sweden | 1 |
| France | 19 | United Kingdom | 20 |
| Germany | 6 | United States | 4 |
| Total | | 156 | |

Bibliographic Services Unit

The Legal Deposit Act plays an essential role in the preservation of the national memory since it ensures the continual growth of the Melitensia collection at the National Library. This Act stipulates that authors or publishers are legally bound to deliver to the National Library two copies free of charge, of any work printed and published in the Maltese Islands. During the year, 513 distinct books were deposited in total, together with approximately 486 local periodical titles that include journals, newspapers and magazines.

As a supplement to the works received by legal deposit, the Acquisitions Section purchased an extra copy of most titles published locally. With regard to the foreign books purchased, special priority was given to those works published overseas by Maltese nationals, as well as works manifesting a direct relevance to the Maltese Islands.

In 2007, the sum spent on books published in Malta amounted to a total of Lm860.57, while a total of Lm38.07 was spent on books published abroad. In all, Lm1,304.51 was spent on subscriptions and memberships to foreign periodicals. 22 new serial titles were entered into the computer database.

| Legal Deposits | Books | Periodicals | |
|--------------------|-------------|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 2007 | 513 | 486 | |
| 2006 | 673 | 496 | |
| Purchases | Local Books | Foreign Books | Foreign periodicals (subscriptions and memberships) |
| Amount spent: 2007 | Lm860.57 | Lm38.07 | Lm1,304.51 |
| Amount spent: 2006 | Lm1,284.11 | Lm352.11 | Lm1,099.00 |

In late October, the 2003-2004 edition of the Malta National Bibliography, compiled by the Bibliographic Services Unit, was published. 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. Each item is catalogued according to the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules and classified by subject according to the rules of the Dewey Decimal Classification. It is edited, indexed and formatted with the aid of Infor (formerly GEAC) software. Work also progressed on the cataloguing

and classification of bibliographical entries for inclusion in the 2005-2006 edition of the Malta National Bibliography.

Photocopying/Scanning/Duplication of Microfilms

Photocopying of books is generally discouraged since the process inevitably damages the books and manuscripts. This year the sum netted from this service was of Lm2,814, a 49% increase over last year's Lm1,892.

The process of scanning is advised in order to protect manuscripts and books from wear and tear, even though the fee is higher due to the high cost of maintaining the overhead scanning machine. This year registered a 39% decrease in orders for scanning with only 39 applications coming in. The intake from the service amounted to Lm304 as opposed to last year's Lm822.

During 2007, the Library also received one order for the duplication of a microfilm from negative to positive. The cost was Lm15.

Restoration/Bindery

The section collates and binds loose material of any nature, mainly newspapers and journals and also rebinds and 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 cleaning and restoration of a number of manuscripts and books. The staff also cleaned 515 volumes of the Hansard collection which were then deposited at the National Archives, Rabat.

The bindery staff also gave a hand in the mounting of the Fortresses exhibition at the National Library and of the exhibition featuring Illustrations in Children's Books, held during the Malta Book Fair in 2007.

Bindery/Restoration Section – 2007

| | |
|------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Binding of: Journals, periodicals, etc | 376 |
| Newspapers | 115 |
| Cleaning of archival manuscripts | 100 |
| Cleaning of books for National Archives, Rabat | 515 |
| Box files | 2 |
| Folders | 4 |
| Re-binding of manuscript covers | 41 |
| Re-binding of books | 46 |
| Envelopes for National Library postcards | 1,330 |
| Exhibition for Malta Book Fair in November | 1 |

Photography

Requests for photography or filming of Library material were received from local or foreign companies and individual persons since the National Library does not yet provide a photographic service. In 2007, 60 applications for photography and filming were filed, a 23% decrease from the previous year's 78. Of these, 56 requested to take photos and the remaining four wished to film the National Library premises and holdings. 23 requests were submitted by foreigners and 37 by Maltese researchers.

Sale of Publications

An increase was registered in the sale of National Library publications this year. The intake from pre-publication bookings of *Charles Frederick de Brocktorff: watercolours of Malta at the National Library, Valletta* alone amounted to Lm2,702.12. In all, the income accruing from this service amounted to Lm2,869. Lm18 were netted from the sale of the National Library CD-Rom and 80 cents from the sale of Charles V's Deed of Donation. An increase was registered in the sale of the *Giuoco d'Arme dei Sovrani e*

degli Stati d'Europa which yielded an intake of Lm78, as compared to last year's Lm48. The 2003-2004 issue of the *Malta National Bibliography*, which was published this year, did not sell many copies and only brought in Lm115. Two sets of postcards showing National Library holdings were printed and made available for sale this year. The sale from these postcards yielded an intake of Lm108.

Exhibitions Organised in 2007

Contribution of the National Library to exhibitions held in Malta

The National Library loaned out material for five exhibitions organised this year in various venues in Malta and Gozo, as follows:

- Libr. Ms 163 from its Library Manuscript collection (including two drawings by Mattia Preti) for an exhibition of drawings by Mattia Preti mounted as part of *Notte Gozitana* organised in Gozo in May;
- two volumes from the Library Manuscript Collection, to be displayed in an exhibition entitled *Voyage et Voir*, mounted by Heritage Malta between June and November at the Malta Maritime Museum, Birgu;
- a photographic reproduction of the George Cross citation loaned to Heritage Malta in September to be displayed during a 10-day exhibition commemorating the 8 of September events;
- manuscripts and books relating to the Order of St John or to Caravaggio, to be placed on display at a Caravaggio exhibition featuring Caravaggio paintings from collections overseas, which was set up by Heritage Malta at the National Museum of Archaeology in Valletta between September and November;
- two photo albums from the Library's photographic collection loaned to the National Archives, Rabat from 22 to 27 October for an exhibition of archival material mounted during the annual Archives Awareness Week.

Participation in exhibitions abroad

The National Library sent photographic reproductions of its holdings to be displayed in two exhibitions overseas. The photos were accompanied by detailed captions which required a considerable amount of research. In April, the National Library received a request from the Austrian State Archives to provide photos of three Library holdings in connection with an exhibition to be held in Vienna regarding the Order of St John as a naval power. The Library also contributed with a detailed account of the Order's participation in the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. In August, the Library was contacted by the Hon Chief Justice Dr Vincent Degaetano to provide digital images of the Independence documents conserved at the National Library to be displayed in a permanent exhibition set up by the Constitutional Court in Algiers. Also in this case, detailed captions accompanied the photos.

Exhibition – The art of Fortress Building in the Maltese Islands (1530 – 1798)

A joint exhibition between the National Library and Dr Stephen C Spiteri, a renowned expert in the Art of Fortress Building in the Maltese Islands, with the assistance of the Fortress Explorer Society and the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage, under the auspices of the International Institute of Baroque Studies at the University of Malta, was inaugurated on Saturday 15 September and lasted till end of December 2007. The exhibition focused on the architecture, craftsmanship, and building and engineering skills that went into the construction of fortified structures.

The National Library displayed some of the plans, manuscripts and documents in its collection that were relevant to the central theme. This rendered the exhibition even more appealing and unique.

Guided tours were organised for higher secondary classes and local councils. The exhibition was a huge success since it attracted hundreds of locals and foreigners.

Malta Book Fair 2007

In mid November, the Department of Libraries, in co-operation with the National Book Council, organised the 23rd edition of the Malta Book Fair at the Mediterranean Conference Centre. The number of exhibitors participating in the 2007 fair increased from that of the previous year, while public attendance remained on the same level of 2006.

A lot of activities, including discussions, reading sessions, story telling for children, and book launches, were organised during the fair's opening hours. The Department of Libraries organised its own stand focusing mainly on publications of the National Library. An exhibition focusing on Maltese Children's Book Illustrators was organised. All logistical organisations were made by National Library personnel.

Participation in Conferences Abroad

- *TEL-ME-MOR Final Board Meeting* – The European Library – Modular Extensions for Mediating Online Resources (TEL-ME-MOR) Final Board meeting was held at the Swiss National Library, on 22 January 2007. The main topics on the agenda included the overall progress of the project and the end of project administration.
- *LIBER* – The LIBER 36th Annual General Conference 2007, *European Integration: Conditions and Challenges for Libraries* was held at the National Library of Warsaw and at the Warsaw University Library between 3 and 7 July. Some of the topics covered included: Co-operation among Europe's Research Library Organisations; Strategy and Reality – the Role of a National Research Library Association in the West; The Activities of the Lithuanian Research Library Consortium (the View of a Small Country in the East); Consortium Negotiations with Publishers, Past and Future; Measuring Quality in Libraries; Who will take over the Libraries of New Europe? and The Impact of Electronic Collection Development.
- *CENL Conference For European National Librarians* – The 21st Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Foundation (CENL) was held on 27 and 28 September 2007 in Helsinki, Finland. The first part of the meeting centred on the CENL Workshop held at the National Library of Finland. The second part was dedicated to the general proceedings, a guided tour to the National Library of Helsinki, and discussions on the urgent need that national libraries initiate a digitisation programme to start digitising, at least their main holdings.

Repairs and Maintenance Work

The work at the maintenance workshop included the day-to-day maintenance and carpentry works of the Department. New shelving units were manufactured and installed at Xaghra Gozo, Żabbar and Tarxien Branch Libraries.

Store at Hal Far

The Department of Libraries owns stores at Hal Far to house amongst other items Book Fair furniture. A part of the building had to be demolished because of the road widening and to eliminate the nearby curve which had an unsafe alignment. As compensation, the Transport Authority accepted a request by the Department to build at their own expense a big store instead. The store has now been completed and a tender for provision and assembly of metal shelving units was awarded.

The store is to serve a twofold purpose – as a storage deposit for books at the National Library not that much in demand and also to store almost 1,500 second-hand books donated to the libraries from Belfast Public Libraries. Once these books are catalogued and classified, they will be used in the regional and branch libraries.

Restoration Works at the Facade of the National Library

Restoration work on the façade of the National Library together with its portico started in October 2006. This work is being performed by the Restoration Unit under the Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure, in accordance with the co-operation agreement the Libraries Department had signed with the said Ministry. This year the workers working on the project managed to complete another two fifths of the work.

Brocktorff Watercolour Collections

Following acceptance by UNESCO, in 2006, of a project proposal submitted by the National Library for the provision of funds for the publication of two volumes containing 71 Brocktorff watercolour collections, work continued during 2007 on the preparation of this publication. The two Brocktorff volumes belonging to the National Library consist of 89 watercolours depicting views of Malta by Charles Frederick de Brocktorff, an artist of Northern German origin who visited Malta and opened an art shop in Valletta in the 1820s. Many of his family members were painters and lithographers. The volumes are expected to be published in 2008.

Launching of brochures and postcards about the National Library of Malta

The National Library of Malta dates back to 1776. It is the last building built by the Knights of St John to serve as a National Library. Many Maltese and foreigners alike visit the Library and are curious to know about its history and the collections most of which are rare or unique.

On 16 May, the National Library launched interesting brochures in six languages, namely Maltese, English, Italian, French, Spanish, and German outlining its basic history. Two sets of postcards were launched, one containing 10 informative cards and the other five cards in a plastic bag. The cards demonstrate the main reading hall of the National Library, the deed of donation, an ancient map of the Maltese islands, and the first newspaper - *Journal de Malte* - amongst others.

Official Visit by the President of Hungary at the National Library

On 1 June, the President of Hungary, HE Mr Laszlo Solyom, paid an official visit to the National Library, as part of the programme of his two-day visit to Malta. Being a former librarian himself, he expressed his pleasure at being among books and showed a lively interest when he was shown some of the Library's treasures, among them the Papal Bull dated 1113, Charles V's Deed of Donation and the 15th century codex illustrating the Life of St Anthony the Abbot. At the end of the 30-minute visit, Mr Solyom was presented with a copy of the prestigious *Giuoco d'Arme dei Sovrani e degli Stati d'Europa* which the National Library had published as a facsimile in 2004. In turn he presented the Library with a lavishly illustrated, coffee-table book entitled *Maps of Europe 1520-2001*.

Seminar for National Library Employees

In 2007, the National Library organised a one-day seminar for its employees. The seminar focused on problems being faced by the Customer Care and Readers' Hall sections.

Notte Bianca – Lejl Imdawwal Valletta 2007

On 6 October, the National Library participated in the second edition of *Notte Bianca* organised by the Ministry for Tourism and Culture. On the evening the Library opened to the public from 7.00pm to 11.00pm.

Two important activities were held. These included: an audiovisual *Bringing Books to Readers for Enjoyment and Enrichment* screened every hour for four times; and an exhibition – *The Art of Fortress Building in the Maltese Islands (1530-1798)* mounted by the National Library and Dr Stephen C Spiteri.

Digitisation Programme

In September, the National Library applied for funds under the European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) scheme to start its digitisation programme with the aim of digitising the most important rare and unique documents, including the manuscripts of the Order of St John, newspapers and maps.

Donation of Books from Belfast Public Libraries

With the assistance of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment the Department received two containers full of books, circa 22,000, from the Belfast Public Libraries. This donation is in a very good condition and the stock consists of several adults fiction and non-fiction books and books in large print. Some of these books have already been catalogued and classified and donated to all branch and regional libraries. The remaining books will also be forwarded to the libraries in due course.

Security Services at the National Library, Valletta

In order to secure the preservation of its collections, the National Library has, over the past few years introduced a range of security services including a fire detection and suppression system and a CCTV system. To better preserve and safeguard the library's collection for posterity purposes, the National Library will be monitoring the premises on a 24 hour security service system. To this effect, the National Library decided to outsource the job to a security services company. A tender was issued and is in the process of adjudication.

CENTRAL PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Public Libraries Network

During 2007, the Central Public Library at Floriana with its seven regional libraries located at Birkirkara, Luqa, Mosta, Paola, Qormi, Rabat and Vittoriosa, were operational on a full time-table,. The branch libraries, 37 in Malta and 11 in Gozo, were open to the public every week for a basic minimum of four hours. The branch libraries of Gżira, Marsa and Tarxien were not functional during 2007. The hospital library at Zammit Clapp is still functioning and in 2007 registered an increase in book loans.

The Central Public Library has the following lending sections: namely the Adult and Junior Libraries, the Reference Libraries including the Melitensia, the section for People with Special Needs and the Audio Visual Library. The main library is also supported by a Customer Care Unit and a Bindery Section.

Information Technology Support

Since the closing down of the Information Technology Support Unit at the Central Public Library, all routine tasks are being carried out centrally by the Information Management Unit (IMU) at the MEYE. These tasks mainly consist of support in case of system failure and the replacement and configuration of hardware when it needs repair.

Two major changes occurred during the year that affected the Central Public Library and mostly the computerised regional and branch libraries - the introduction of the e-mail software Outlook and the migration to ADSL. Another attempt was made to computerise the remaining 16 branch libraries located at Fgura, Kalkara, Kirkop, Lija, Marsa, Marsascala, Marsaxlokk, Qrendi, Rabat, Safi, St Julians, Sta Venera, Senglea, Tarxien, Valletta and Vittoriosa, but as yet this had not materialised.

Customer Care Unit

The Unit itself is run on a one-stop-shop profile, having a personalised e-mail address so that people can easily get in contact serving also as a monitoring base for customer satisfaction.

The Customer Care Unit is responsible for the scheduling of various schools orientation visits to the Central Public Library, with the purpose of familiarising visitors with the services rendered. Twelve such visits were organised during 2007. In addition to these visits, educational talks were delivered in schools and local councils stressing the point on the importance of reading from an early age.

The Customer Care Unit also acts as a focal point to all sorts of queries put forward by the public. All questions put forward were answered promptly either by e-mail or verbally. It also offered its share of assistance in training new branch librarians on the library software performing monitoring of the tasks carried out by the branch librarian while undergoing training.

The number of new members enrolled during 2007 was 4,459: 2,547 juniors and 1,912 adults. The following list gives a breakdown of new members by locality:

| Library Membership - 2007 | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|--|
| <i>Locality</i> | <i>Juniors</i> | <i>Adults</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>Locality</i> | <i>Juniors</i> | <i>Adults</i> | <i>Total</i> | |
| Attard | 98 | 68 | 166 | Mqabba | 23 | 7 | 30 | |
| Balzan/Lija | 55 | 48 | 103 | Msida/Pieta'/Ta' Xbiex | 76 | 61 | 137 | |
| Birkirkara/Mrieħel | 148 | 172 | 320 | Naxxar | 98 | 60 | 158 | |
| Birżebbuġa | 58 | 40 | 98 | Paola | 71 | 26 | 97 | |
| Cospicua | 31 | 37 | 68 | Qormi | 116 | 74 | 190 | |
| Dingli | 27 | 21 | 48 | Qrendi | 25 | 20 | 45 | |
| Fgura | 101 | 56 | 157 | Rabat/Mdina | 78 | 60 | 138 | |
| Floriana | 5 | 8 | 13 | Safi | 13 | 6 | 19 | |
| Għargħur | 14 | 10 | 24 | St Julians/Kappara/St Andrews/Swieqi | 95 | 88 | 183 | |
| Għaxaq | 60 | 39 | 99 | St Paul's Bay/Burmarrad/Buġibba | 85 | 57 | 142 | |
| Gudja | 13 | 24 | 37 | Sta Venera/Fleur De Lys | 32 | 23 | 55 | |
| Gżira | 18 | 29 | 47 | San Ġwann/Ta' Ġorni | 85 | 50 | 135 | |
| Ħamrun | 47 | 41 | 88 | Senglea | 8 | 9 | 17 | |
| Kalkara | 11 | 10 | 21 | Siggiewi | 65 | 58 | 123 | |
| Kirkop | 27 | 7 | 34 | Sliema | 60 | 92 | 152 | |
| Luqa | 22 | 24 | 46 | Tarxien/Sta Lucia | 82 | 53 | 135 | |
| Marsa | 14 | 15 | 29 | Valetta | 19 | 26 | 45 | |
| Marsascalea | 107 | 80 | 187 | Vittoriosa | 49 | 44 | 93 | |
| Marsaxlokk | 65 | 34 | 99 | Żabbar | 132 | 70 | 202 | |
| Mellieħa | 15 | 20 | 35 | Żebbuġ | 63 | 45 | 108 | |
| Mġarr/Mtahleb | 14 | 17 | 31 | Żejtun | 77 | 56 | 133 | |
| Mosta | 177 | 93 | 270 | Żurrieq | 68 | 34 | 102 | |

| | | | |
|----------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| <i>Juniors</i> | <i>2,547</i> | <i>Adults</i> | <i>1,912</i> |
| Total | | 4,459 | |

| Number of members enrolled per month | | | |
|---------------------------------------------|-----|--------------|-----|
| January | 284 | July | 467 |
| February | 259 | August | 572 |
| March | 451 | September | 337 |
| April | 327 | October | 679 |
| May | 192 | November | 360 |
| June | 346 | December | 185 |
| Total | | 4,459 | |

Services to People with Special Needs

The Section is still pursuing the idea of setting up an assistive technology service to those people with a need in handling equipment that could help them in their daily life. An appeal for financing the whole project has been launched and there is hope that this will materialise as soon as the entity involved will give its approval for financial support. Research about the feasibility of the project has already been conducted and people with special needs will undoubtedly benefit once this service is introduced.

Recording of material by volunteers in the sound and vision studio continued successfully during 2007. There were 123 hours of recording from four volunteers materialising into 15 newly recorded books varying from religious topics, autobiographies, and Maltese romance. A number of recorded tape-cassettes were donated by PBS and Radju Kottoner.

A service for people with a hearing impairment has been launched consisting of 130 videos for lending and 65 DVDs to peruse on site. These videos and DVDs can be viewed by reading words appearing as subtitles when watching the video or DVD.

Accompanying these services there is also that provided by the Multimedia Library managed by the same person running the section for people with special needs. There are about 69 CD-Rom in English available for students at secondary education level who are a bit slow on reading or with a dyslexic condition.

During the year, 22,345 tape-cassettes forming up 4,979 titles were loaned to people who are visually impaired, illiterate, persons with a disability, dyslexic and old-age people.

416 new tape-cassettes were recorded at the sound and vision studio managed by the Section. This number brings the total of the collection to over 30,784 tape-cassettes. At present there are 505 members making use of this sterling service. The following are the number of titles found under the different subjects:

| Subject | No. of Titles |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| Biographies | 198 |
| Maltese Drama | 278 |
| Maltese Romance and Short Stories | 562 |
| Short Stories in English | 997 |
| English Drama | 352 |
| Non-fiction (various) | 672 |
| Music | 1,552 |
| Religion | 803 |
| Stories in Maltese for children | 75 |
| Stories in English for children | 258 |
| Junior non-fiction | 14 |
| Children's music | 23 |
| Total | 5,784 |

Audio-visual Library

The audio-visual library contains multimedia material consisting of CD-ROMs, video-tapes, DVDs, audio-tapes and the Internet. Most of the users frequenting this library are Internet users who come daily either to surf the sites through the various engines available or for the scope of research.

During the year an increasing number of users made use of this non-book media library. Internet users totalled 677, while 276 persons made use of the video service and 36 persons listened to audio-tape cassettes. A DVD service was introduced in the library during mid-year and surprisingly enough the number of DVDs issued totalled 380, justifying the investment in this type of information medium.

The Section also gave assistance to teachers who borrowed material to use in their classrooms to assist students in their learning.

Reference and the Melitensia Libraries

Weeding in the Reference Library was fully completed this year. All books were examined for their content material to discard any documents with obsolete information. Worn out spine-labels were changed while books considered to be of more use for lending were withdrawn from the collection and re-distributed to the regional or branch libraries. The section was used by adults and junior members of the public to acquire information for their research assignments or thesis.

The Melitensia library continued to prove to be a busy hub of activity for students especially with school projects ranging from biographies to other various subjects. A new photocopier was acquired to meet with the demands of the public especially at peak times and staff in the section was increased to assist in the retrieval of information. Well over a thousand persons visited the Melitensia Section and most of them were satisfied with the service given and the attention they received.

Area Libraries Support Unit

- Various contacts have been going on to re-open the Branch Libraries of Gżira and Tarxien:
 - With regard to the Gżira Branch, considerable progress was achieved in that it is scheduled to be reactivated by mid January 2008. During the last few months of 2007, negotiations were carried out to settle the main issue concerning direct public access eliminating the problem of having to enter the school area grounds to make use of the library. Overcoming this constraint, the Council then concentrated its efforts on the refurbishment of the library.
 - Tarxien Branch Library used to be housed at the Maria Goretti Secondary School. As the school needed the classroom, the Council had to find alternative premises to operate from. After many attempts the Tarxien Local Council managed to lease a place to serve as an educational centre for the Tarxien residents. Part of the premises is to be used as a branch library. The maintenance section of this Department manufactured the shelving units and it is hoped that the library opens in the immediate future.
- On 30 October, the Department of Libraries, in conjunction with the Malta Library and Information Association (MaLIA), organised a talk delivered by Ms Carole Wolstehome, a librarian from Burnley, , England on the topic *Libraries and their Functionality*, focusing on experiences derived from libraries in the United Kingdom with special reference to the service for people with special needs.
- Throughout 2007, there were various presentations of purchased new books by local councils to branch libraries complemented by a good number of used books in good condition brought over by members of the public and the local councils themselves.
- Regular monthly meetings continued to be held by the Mosta Library Committee and also periodically by the Gudja Library Committee. These meetings serve the purpose of involving both entities, that is, the department and local council to work together in a joint venture environment enhancing and promoting library services within a particular library fostering accountability.
- During 2007, the branch libraries of St Paul's Bay and Gharghur moved to other rooms within the same school premises.
- The total book stock in the regional and branch libraries at the end of 2007 totalled 360,595 books, an increase of 24,766 books over the previous year, after taking into consideration those that were withdrawn and discarded from the collections.
- A co-operation agreement was signed with the Xaghra Local Council on 3 March.

Book Stock, Book Donations and Loans

Lm6,600 were allocated for the purchase of new material in 2007. From this sum, 504 new publications were purchased for the sections of the Central Public Library; 478 for the Regional and Branch Libraries; a substantial amount was spent on barcodes 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 regional and branch libraries totals 26,177 (an increase of 7,232 over the previous year) which is divided into 612 for the sections of the Central Public Library and 25,565 for regional and branch libraries. Besides these books, 2,012 additional books from the Belfast donation were catalogued and issued for lending at the Central Public Library and the regional and branch libraries.

The number of lost and paid books during the year was 25, amounting to Lm66.40 while the number of books that were lost and replaced by a similar copy totalled 50 books.

An extensive weeding exercise was carried out during the year in the Adult Library resulting in a good number of withdrawn and discarded books. The following is the total number of books weeded out from the Adult and Junior Libraries at the Central Public Library: Adult Library - 2,319; Junior Library - 101 books.

The Central Public Library has got standing orders for the following publications:

- **Local publications:** Sacra Militia, Treasures of Malta, Saghtar, Heritage Malta, Malta at War and the *Kullana Kulturali għat-tfal*.
- **Foreign publications:** Automobile Yearly, Guinness World Records, Stanley Gibbons Stamp Catalogues, Guardian International Film Guide, Writer's Handbook and Whitaker's Almanac.

The total number of book loans issued by the Central Public Library and all the regional and branch libraries totalled 747,050, as shown in the following table:

| Book Loans issued by Central Public Library and Regional/Branch Libraries- 2007 | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Central Public Library | No of loans | | Branch Libraries (Gozo) | No of loans |
| Adult Library | 127,663 | | Nadur | 16,489 |
| Junior Library | 87,174 | | Għajnsielem | 4,790 |
| Total Central Public Library | 214,837 | | Sannat | 6,751 |
| | | | Qala | 5,878 |
| Regional Libraries | No of loans | | Għarb | 4,734 |
| Birkirkara | 68,503 | | Xagħra | 4,819 |
| Luqa | 38,007 | | Żebbuġ | 4,343 |
| Mosta | 35,448 | | San Lawrenz | 3,390 |
| Paola | 34,939 | | Xewkija | 1,727 |
| Qormi (St Sebastian) | 33,387 | | Għasri | 990 |
| Rabat | 13,132 | | Kerċem | 597 |
| Vittoriosa | 2,692 | | Gozo General Hospital | 538 |
| Total Regional Libraries | 226,108 | | Total Branch Libraries (Gozo) | 55,046 |
| | | | | |
| Branch Libraries (Malta) | No of loans | | Branch Libraries (Malta)(cont) | No of loans |
| Fgura | 18,564 | | Lija | 6,757 |
| Żejtun | 16,508 | | Kirkop | 6,386 |
| Mellieħa | 12,086 | | Qormi (St George) | 6,345 |
| Attard | 12,067 | | Għargħur | 5,804 |
| Żabbar | 12,025 | | Mgarr | 5,365 |
| Siggiewi | 11,925 | | Dingli | 4,774 |
| Marsaxlokk | 11,319 | | St Paul's Bay | 4,359 |
| Naxxar | 11,306 | | Safi | 4,114 |
| Gudja | 11,206 | | Senglea | 4,077 |
| Sliema | 10,780 | | Mqabba | 3,892 |
| Marsascula | 9,625 | | Msida | 1,759 |
| Hamrun | 8,873 | | Kalkara | 1,721 |
| Birzebbuġa | 8,048 | | St Julians | 1,276 |
| Għaxaq | 7,977 | | Cospicua | 1,231 |
| Żebbuġ | 7,687 | | Sta Venera | 822 |
| San Ġwann | 7,564 | | Valletta | 301 |
| Qrendi | 7,277 | | Zammit Clapp Hospital | 191 |
| Żurrieq | 7,048 | | Total Branch Libraries (Malta) | 251,059 |
| | | | | |
| | | Grand Total | 747,050 | |

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 (DIER) 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 and Research Branch*: allowing the Department to fulfil its role as the national focal point on issues relating to industrial and employment relations. This Branch is divided into two sections – International Relations and Research. The International Relations Section's main task is 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. The Research Section is responsible for library and archives, labour research and registration of trade unions.
- *Enforcement and Employment Agencies Branch*: carrying out the core inspection functions of the Department. This section is staffed by inspectors working in two sections - Terminations and Inspectorate. The Terminations Section 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 Section 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 Branch*: providing administrative support services to the Department and to the Industrial Tribunal. Such services entail the administration of the department's budget, revenue and expenditure, issuance and adjustment of salaries, administration of PMPs, progressions, allowances, the departmental inventory, supplies' stores etc. During 2007, an exercise was also carried out with the Education Division to transfer surplus unserviceable items to Education with the aim of setting up a Board of Survey in 2008.

Human Resource Issues

During 2007, an Assistant Director retired from government service and another Assistant Director was recruited to fill the vacant position. Another Assistant Director was appointed Director in another department. During 2007, two officers moved to DIER to replace respectively an officer on long-term sick leave and another officer who resigned from the Civil Service. A Junior Legal Officer on the other hand was recruited to replace another legal officer who moved from this department in 2006. Three Casual Substitute Officers were also engaged to replace temporarily three DIER personnel on long-term parental leave. A Manager was also recruited to serve at the Inspectorate Section and a messenger was transferred from the DIER.

During 2007, 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, three officers of the Department successfully graduated at the University of Malta following the completion of their studies.

Achievements - Employment Relations

Inspectorate Section

The Inspectorate Unit carried out 1,248 inspections throughout the year, covering 43,719 employees, out of whom 2,751 were interviewed. 519 irregularities were observed, issuing 22 claims amounting to Lm60,471.71.

Officials in this Unit dealt with 27,554 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.

Terminations Section

Throughout the year, officials in the Enforcement Unit served a total of 269 claims against employers in Malta, amounting to Lm162,281.42. Of these, 222 cases amounting to Lm56,535.86 were amicably settled out of Court, as a result of the direct efforts of the officers of the Enforcement Section. Lm13,500 were collected through Court intervention. 231 requests were made to the police for prosecution. Court hearings in Malta totalled 556. Fourteen appeals against Court judgements were made throughout 2007.

Employment Agencies

The number of Licensed Employment Agencies at the end of December 2007 was 49. During the period under review, 40 employment agencies renewed their licence. Eight new agencies were granted a licence to operate as such while two employment agencies had their licence withdrawn.

The total amount received as licence fees amounted to Lm7,200. The Section also vetted 358 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 2007, the Board held nine meetings and discussed various issues relating to employment and labour conditions such as minimum leave entitlements, fixed term contracts, equal treatment in employment and parental leave. The Board also discussed the European Commission Green Paper: Modernising Labour Law to meet the Challenges of the 21st Century and the observations made by the members of the Board were submitted to DG Employment.

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 17 legal notices were published:

- LN 46 of 2007 – Extension of Applicability to Service with Government (Part-time Employees) Regulations, 2007.
- LN 48 of 2007 – Employee Involvement (European Co-operative Society) Regulations, 2007.
- LN 51 of 2007 – Contracts of Service for a Fixed Term Regulations, 2007.
- LN 52 of 2007 – Extension of Applicability to service with Government (Contacts of service for a Fixed term) regulations, 2007.
- LN 53 of 2007 – Equal Treatment in Employment (Amendment) Regulations, 2007.
- LN 54 of 2007 – Extension of Applicability to Service with Government (Equal Treatment in Employment) Regulations, 2007.
- LN 140 of 2007 – Part-time Employees (Amendment) Regulations, 2007.
- LN 156 of 2007 – Notice of coming into force of the Contracts of Service for a Fixed Term Regulations, 2007.
- LN 157 of 2007 – Extension of Applicability to Service with government (Contracts of Service for a Fixed Term) Regulations, 2007.
- LN 164 of 2007 – Notice of coming into force of the Part-time Employees (Amendment) Regulations, 2007.
- LN 338 of 2007 – Equal Treatment in Employment (Amendment) (No 2) Regulations, 2007
- LN 428 of 2007 – Wage Increase (Employees) National Standard Order, 2007.
- LN 429 of 2007 – National minimum Wage National Standard Order, 2007.
- LN 430 of 2007 – Parental Leave Entitlement (Amendment) Regulations, 2007.
- LN 431 of 2007 – Protection of Maternity (Employment) (Amendment) Regulations, 2007.
- LN 432 of 2007 – Minimum Special Leave Entitlement Regulations, 2007.
- LN 433 of 2007 – Extension of Applicability to Service with Government (Parental Leave Entitlement Regulations and Urgent Family Leave Regulations) Regulations 2007.

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 56 occasions throughout the year. Agreement was successfully reached in 47 cases while such agreement failed to be reached in one case and another two cases were referred to the Industrial Tribunal.

Industrial Tribunal

The Industrial Tribunal, which is an independent tribunal set up in terms of the Employment and Industrial Relations Act, holds its sessions at the Courts of Law, depending on the nature of the case. The Industrial Tribunal hears and decides trade disputes referred to it by the Minister responsible for employment and industrial relations, at the request of either one, or both of the parties involved in a dispute. It also hears cases of alleged unfair dismissal, discrimination, harassment and different remuneration for work of equal value. The Department provides administrative support services for the Industrial Tribunal, to ensure its proper functioning.

Throughout the year, 92 new cases of alleged unfair dismissals and eight other cases of alleged discrimination/harassment/victimisation were received. Ten cases of trade disputes were also introduced.

The Industrial Tribunal disposed of 82 cases of alleged unfair dismissals, four cases of alleged discrimination/harassment/victimisation, and seven cases of trade disputes. The Industrial Tribunal also disposed of three cases introduced in terms of other provisions of the Employment and Industrial Relations Act and four cases of interpretation.

There were 496 pending cases on 31 December 2007 of which 314 refer to the same case of alleged unfair dismissal of Drydocks workers.

Industrial Actions

During 2007, five strikes were ordered involving 1,106 employees. Strike action resulted in a total of 5,763 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 2007:

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| New Collective Agreements | 5 |
| Renewals | 35 |
| Extensions | 3 |
| Side Agreements | 2 |
| Amendments | Nil |
| Addendums | 3 |

Registrar of Trade Unions

On 1 January 2007, there were 30 registered trade unions and 20 employers' associations. During the year, five organisations consisting of three employers' associations and two trade unions were cancelled. Trade unions cancelled during this period were St Edwards Teachers' Union and the Union of Assistant Chemists while the Gozo Bus Owners, the Association of Tractors and Trailers Operative Owner and the Association of Insurance Agents were the three employers' associations that were cancelled.

During 2007, two organisations applied to register as trade unions and were accepted by the Registrar. These organisations were the Union of TEFL Teachers and the *Għaqda Professjonisti tal-Korporazzjoni Għas-Servizzi ta' l-Ilma*.

At the end of the year, the Register of Trade Unions was composed of 30 trade unions and 17 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:

- The 96th Session of the International Labour Conference was held in Geneva between 30 May and 15 June 2007. The Director of the Department led a tripartite delegation which included a number of high-ranking officials from trade unions and employers' associations. During the conference, a new ILO Convention in innovative new labour standards in the fishing sector was adopted. The conference also presented the conclusions of the Committee on Sustainable Enterprises which stated that sustainable enterprises are a principal source of growth, wealth creation, employment and decent work. Among the other items on the agenda was a general discussion on international labour standards, as well as discussions on child labour in agriculture.
- The DG for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of the European Commission organised two meetings for directors general responsible for industrial relations. These two meetings were held in Lisbon and Ljubljana and were attended by the Director. During these meetings, various issues were discussed including the Commission's Green Paper *Modernising Labour law to meet the challenges of the 21st Century* and social dialogue at community level. Participants also exchanged information on recent developments regarding industrial relations in member states.
- An official of the Department attended an expert meeting on the implementation of Directive 2002/14/EC establishing a general framework for informing and consulting employees in the European Community. During this meeting, the Commission presented its draft report on the transposition of the directive in the various Member States. Participants gave information on awareness raising actions and studies in their respective countries concerning the application of the Directive.
- An official attended a Conference in Berlin, organised by the German Presidency of the European Union, on *Quality of Work - the key to more and better jobs*. This Conference dealt with the quality of work, which included employee rights and participation, fair wages, health and safety and family-friendly measures.
- The Department was also represented in a conference organised by the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union on *Reconciling Professional, Personal and Family life: new Challenges for the Social Partners and for Public Policies*.
- On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the EU, the German Presidency organised a meeting entitled *50 Years of EU – 50 Years of Jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice concerning Labour and Social Law*. One official from the DIER attended this meeting which highlighted the role the ECJ has played in the interpretation of community law since the beginning in so far as labour and social law is concerned.
- Another meeting attended by another DIER official concerned EU gender equality law. The meeting was held to outline the developments EU institutions have brought about in the field of gender equality law.
- A meeting concerning the implementation of Directive 2001/23/EC (Transfer of Undertakings) was held on 24 May 2007. The meeting was convened to discuss a report compiled by Profs Sargeant and the Middlesex University on the implementation of directive 2001/23/EC on the safeguarding of employees' rights in transfer of business in all Member States. One DIER official attended this meeting.
- Another official from the DIER attended a conference organised by the Directorate General of Enterprise and Industry of the European Commission that brought together entrepreneurs from small and medium-sized enterprises and experts from the corporate social responsibility (CSR) field to discuss how SMEs can be assisted to act in a responsible manner.
- The Directorate General of Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of the European Commission, organised the 15th meeting of the High-Level Social Representatives on CSR. These meetings act as an important platform for the exchange of information on initiatives taken by Member

States at a national level and other initiatives taken at a European level. One official from the DIER attended this meeting.

- The Department of Trade and Industry in the United Kingdom organised an event that brought together heads of government research to be able to discuss and share information on their research on industrial relations and working conditions. This inaugural meeting held between 20 and 21 September looked into the level of knowledge in industrial relations and working conditions research across Member States. One official from the DIER attended this Forum.
- Two officials attended the 16th meeting of the High-Level Group of EU Member States for Corporate Social Responsibility organised on 16 October. One of the principal aims of such meetings is the sharing of information between Member States, while on the other hand the EU also gives an overview of any developments at a European level. During this meeting this was enhanced since the members of the European Alliance were invited to brief participants on the development of the European Alliance for CSR.
- On 7 December two DIER officials attended a CSR conference entitled *CSR at a Global Level*. This conference discussed the role of the EU at an international level in promoting CSR.
- Another two DIER officials attended two different meetings in April and October of the Group of National Experts on the Implementation of Directive 96/71/EC. Posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services was the main topic discussed during these two meetings.
- In December the Director also attended the EPSCO Council at Brussels where the discussion centred on Temporary Agency workers, Working Time and Flexicurity.

Guarantee Fund Administration Board

The Employment and Industrial Relations Act (Cap. 452) and the Guarantee Fund Regulations (LN 432 of 2002, as amended by LN 444 of 2004 and 413 of 2005), provides for the setting up of the Guarantee Fund Administration Board. This Board is composed of the Director of Industrial and Employment Relations, who acts as Chairperson, four representatives of employees and four representatives of employers who are appointed on the Employment Relations Board, a member nominated by the Minister of Finance, the Chairperson of the Employment and Training Corporation and a person appointed by the Minister who shall be a member of the legal profession. The Guarantee Fund is endowed with the sum of Lm250,000 to be utilised, at the Administration Board's discretion, to guarantee payment of valid claims for employees' outstanding wages when the Administration Board is satisfied that the employer has become insolvent.

During 2007, the Administration Board held one sitting where 32 claims were processed and the sum of Lm15,375.80 was paid out of the Fund.

Newsletter

During 2007, two editions of the newsletter *I Review* were published. Such newsletters included various interesting articles mainly written by DIER staff on various matters related to industrial and employment relations. The *I Review* is intended to continue being issued 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. During 2007, Lm2,590 were recovered. Warning letters are regularly issued to defaulters who fall back on their payment of instalments of said loan scheme. In December 2007, in addition, judicial letters were officially issued to serial defaulters.

DR NOEL VELLA

Director (Industrial & Employment Relations)

Corporate Services Directorate

The function of the Department of Corporate Services (DCS) is to provide support services and advice to the Permanent Secretary on issues related to financial planning and management, human resources management and office management in line departments falling under the Ministry. The DCS co-ordinates activities of a corporate nature in departments and seeks to achieve uniformity in implementing policy directives from the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Finance, as well as the Ministry itself.

The Department is organised into five branches, namely Finance (Ministry), Support Services, Human Resources, Financial Services (Education Division) and Procurement and Administration.

FINANCE (MINISTRY)

During 2007, assistance was provided in various ways to the National Commission for Higher Education, the Malta Qualifications Council and the Institute for Tourism Studies in capacity building matters and assisted in the setting up of the European Union Programmes Agency.

The Department monitored recurrent and capital expenditure on a monthly basis. It is worth mentioning that in 2007 savings were made on various items, such as materials and supplies, repair and upkeep, office services and transport, when compared to expenditure in 2006. Although there was an increase in expenditure on other items, such as International Memberships, savings of 1.68% were achieved from the approved allocation in the Operational and Maintenance Expenses Category.

The Department also continued implementation of its programme aimed at effecting savings in electricity and paper consumption in order to cut costs and to be more environment-friendly. Problems connected with file storage in the Registry were appropriately addressed.

This year the Department processed a considerable number of payments in respect of EU related projects and scholarship-related payments. Before the end of the financial year, it also carried out an exercise to procure non-presented invoices to eliminate arrear payments in following years and effected virements to address shortages under various items.

The Department analysed financial information received from entities before recommending the release of periodic tranches to the Ministry of Finance. It also reviewed requests submitted by departments and entities for the 2008 Budget and presented its recommendations to the Minister and the Permanent Secretary.

During 2007, the Department continued to widen flexibility roles. At the same time, certain weaknesses that were identified were appropriately addressed through a number of self-enrichment courses. In both cases, co-operation from the staff was promptly forthcoming, a factor which also helped to enhance interpersonal relations. Throughout the year, several members of staff served as chairpersons or members on boards of enquiry, adjudication, disciplinary and selection boards.

The Department of Corporate Services continued to maintain good relations with the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Finance, the Budget Office, the Treasury and the Auditor General. Requested information was compiled and provided in time and directives implemented.

Draft replies were prepared to parliamentary questions. In various instances, this involved the collection of information from the line departments and organisations and the consolidation of replies.

Members of the Accounts Section also attended various courses to ensure that they were fully prepared to carry out their duties efficiently following the euro changeover.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Support Services includes the administration of the Students' Maintenance Grants Section, the Travel Abroad Unit and the Customer Care Unit. The Assistant Director (Support Services) also acts as co-ordinator of the Better Regulation Action Plan and of the Ministry's Programme Implementation. He also carries out the duties of Executive Secretary to the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Monitoring Board.

- *The Students' Maintenance Grants Section (SMGS)*: issued swipe cards and regularly remunerated students entitled to a Maintenance Grant at the Junior College, the University of Malta, the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), church and private schools' sixth forms and higher secondary schools in Malta and Gozo.

Following last year's introduction of an electronic attendance system, which allows adjustments to be effected up to the eve of each pay day, during 2007, a portal was introduced for all students entitled to SMART Cards to enable them to verify on a 24-hour basis amounts deducted from their swipe cards and the current balance.

- *The Travel Abroad Unit (TAU)*: is responsible for the preparation of documents related to travel abroad by delegates from the Ministry and the follow-up procedures on the return of the delegates, including the presentation of relative documentation to the Treasury and the submission of claims for reimbursements to the Ministry of Finance for expenditure incurred in respect of travel related to the EU Commission and Council.

Flexibility is implemented by having members of staff of the TAU assist staff in the SMGS in times of heavy workloads.

- *Customer Care Unit*:
 - facilitated the dissemination of information on services provided by the Ministry and the routing of complaints and queries to the appropriate service provider with the Ministry;
 - continued to implement the Customer Care Strategy, designed by the Management Efficiency Unit, driving quality services focusing on the customer;
 - handled applications for examinations and for vacant posts and positions within the Ministry and co-ordinated the distribution of various items;
 - co-ordinated and processed bookings for the Despott Hall and the Ministry's foyer for the holding of exhibitions and meetings;
 - a system was arranged where staff within the Unit follow the programmes presented on the Education Channel and attended by the Permanent Secretary to provide replies instantly to queries which may arise during these programmes;
 - following meetings with representatives of various departments and entities within the Ministry, answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) on the Ministry, departments, the Customer Care Unit and other topics were compiled and included in the Ministry's website.
- *Better Regulation Action Plan and Programme Implementation*: The Assistant Director (Support Services) liaised with Directors and entities within the Ministry and attended meetings regarding the Better Regulation Action Plan, forwarding monthly returns about progress to the Management Efficiency Unit following endorsement by the Permanent Secretary. Quarterly reports on programme implementation were submitted to the Permanent Secretary.
- *English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Monitoring Board*: The Assistant Director (Support Services) took initiatives and all the relevant and ancillary actions to develop and monitor effectively and

efficiently the performance of and within the 50 licensed EFL Schools and their annexes. The Board ensured that the expected standards were maintained by all stakeholders.

Teaching permits to around 2,700 EFL teachers were renewed and issued. The English Language Examination for prospective EFL Teachers was held twice in 2007. The 50 licensed EFL Schools and their annexes were visited during the year.

The record number of students (more than 80,000) who visited Malta and Gozo in 2007 to learn English as a foreign language signified an increase of more than 15,000 students (25%) over the previous year. Positive feedback received from students shows that their expectations were satisfied.

As a member of the Technical Committee within the Malta Standards Authority, the Assistant Director (Support Services) assisted in achieving recognition of all TEFL induction courses held locally as equivalent to the UK CELTA issued by the University of Cambridge. This recognition, which is valid in Member States of the EU and the European Free Trade Agreement (EFTA), has encouraged the University of Cambridge to introduce examinations and interviews which lead to CELTA in Malta and Gozo. A local accreditation of licensed EFL Schools was also introduced.

A general meeting of Directors of Studies and Heads of EFL Schools was held in February 2007. The persons present elected a new member to represent them on the EFL Monitoring Board. The data, which the 50 Heads of licensed EFL Schools had required before the peak season commenced, was collected and processed by the Branch and included in the website of the Ministry by the end of February 2007. This initiative was appreciated by all stakeholders in this sector, especially the Heads of EFL Schools, since the processed results helped them considerably in planning their activities well before the commencement of the peak season.

HUMAN RESOURCES BRANCH

The Human Resources (HR) Branch is made up of the Records, Employee Relations, Resourcing and Discipline Sections.

During 2007, the Branch continued to provide support and advice to the Director General, Director Corporate Services and the other line departments. It ensured conformity with policies, procedures and relevant legislation and supplied information required by central government and other agencies.

The HR Branch published 23 calls for applications for the recruitment and engagement of new staff, including part-time and casual staff, school secretaries, and various other departmental grades.

The HR Database (HRIMS) was regularly updated. The Branch also circulated the OPM and MPO Circulars to schools and Heads of Sections. Over 230 circulars were e-mailed to recipients practically on the same day of issue. Forms in use at the Branch were made available on the Division's website.

Several employees followed training courses organised through the Staff Development Organisation, whilst the Branch organised a course leading to the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL).

- *Records:* The Records Section carried out the following activities:
 - preparation of appointments of new recruits and promoted officers;
 - registration and engagement of new employees;
 - processing of 157 confirmation of appointments and 2,390 increments of Education Division employees;
 - preparation of letters of progression;
 - updating of all changes in personal records and appointment details of the Education Division's staff, including the personal record sheets, the various seniority lists and allowances database;
 - termination of employment due to various reasons including retirement, medical grounds and resignations. Necessary action was taken with MPO, the National Audit Office, the Public Service

- Commission and the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) in respect of the 537 employees who terminated their employment during 2007;
- processing of requests for qualification and other allowances, such as the all-inclusive and acting Head of School allowances, and revision of allowances in terms of the Agreement reached with the Malta Union of Teachers in July 2007;
 - drawing up of the service and leave record sheets to applicants applying under various calls for applications.
- *Employee Relations:* The Employee Relations Section:
 - maintained an electronic record of all sick and special leave availed of by Education Division and Ministry staff. Vacation leave records were maintained in the appropriate vacation leave cards;
 - processed requests for special leave, including parental, maternity, responsibility leave, pre-retirement, sports, alternative employment, unpaid study leave, vocational and cultural leave, as well as requests for reduced hours;
 - liaised with the Salaries Section in respect of pay and allowances deductions;
 - administered and processed reports regarding injuries at work. Where necessary, Injury Boards were set up to investigate all cases of injury on duty;
 - made the administrative requirements for the setting up of medical boards;
 - processed the leave requirements of casual and part-time staff.
 - *Resourcing:* The Resourcing Section:
 - processed a total of 391 cases of progression and promotions of staff as provided in the respective Classification and Regrading Agreements of the different classes and grades;
 - submitted monthly employment returns to the ETC and MPO;
 - submitted weekly returns of staff engagements, transfers to and from other departments, superannuations and resignations within the Education Division to MPO and ETC;
 - administered the Performance Management Programme (PMP) for the general service grades and ensured that every officer had drawn up a PMP;
 - referred 453 new employees for the required medical test by the Occupational Health Unit.
 - *Discipline:* The Discipline Section:
 - processed some 133 disciplinary cases in terms of the Public Service Commission (Disciplinary Procedure) Regulations, 1999;
 - made salary deductions in another 123 cases where employees were absent from their work area without permission.

FINANCIAL SERVICES BRANCH

The Financial Services Branch, which is made up of the Accounts Section and the Efficiency and Strategic Operations Planning Unit (ESOPU), is responsible for the preparation of the Education Division Business and Financial Plans and the Annual Estimates. It evaluated the three-year plans submitted by departments and submitted a holistic document consistent with Government's agenda and policies for senior management consideration in preparation for discussion held with the Ministry of Finance for the 2008 Estimates.

Recurrent and capital expenditure was regularly monitored throughout the year and a report submitted to senior management for control purposes. In particular, expenditure under Allowances and School Transport was closely reviewed. In the case of school transport, analysis established that the increase in expenditure was due to the increase in rates payable under the current agreement. Expenditure on allowances was kept at 2006 levels, in spite of increases in the rates payable. Immediate action was taken to vire any savings under the Division's Vote to those items which required additional funding. Through this process, the Branch succeeded in keeping expenditure as much as possible within the allocated budget.

The Branch continued to provide support services and advice on financial matters to departments, outstations and primary/secondary schools in Malta. At the same time, in its role as a financial controller, the Branch ensured that the Education Division's budget has been managed in conformity with current government financial regulations, through the operation of the necessary control mechanisms.

Imprest funds were allocated to primary and secondary schools in Malta for Materials and Supplies and Repairs and Upkeep. Interim and final reports were thoroughly checked and irregularities were remedied. A member of staff formed part of the audit team which visited 12 schools during the year. His role within the audit team was to ensure that the schools are in conformity with government financial regulations and that proper accounting records for imprest funds and school council funds are kept.

ESOPU was mainly responsible for the monitoring of the capital expenditure Vote of the Education Division, especially the capital imprest funds forwarded to primary and secondary schools in Malta. Reports submitted by the respective schools were checked to ensure that capital expenditure transactions were made in accordance with Government Financial Regulations.

The Unit was also responsible for the reconciliation of the School Councils' funds returns and the compilation of the list of bank accounts administered by the Education Division. The respective returns were forwarded to the Treasury Department within the established time frame.

ESOPU was also responsible for drafting, compiling and issuing departmental tenders and quotations related to capital expenditure. Lm210,000 were spent on IT equipment in schools, whilst Lm293,000 were invested in the purchasing of equipment and furniture for schools, in particular in those schools where major refurbishment works were done. The hardware maintenance agreement with MITTS was renewed for another year. The Unit continued to implement the e-procurement systems as regards the purchase of IT equipment. During 2007, a total of 100 quotations were issued on behalf of Government schools and outstations.

The sick leave verification exercise was continued during the year with the aim of monitoring man-hours lost through sick leave, through the co-ordination of home visits by professionals engaged to verify sick leave.

The Accounts Section and the ESOPU verified, processed and issued payments for all items procured by and services rendered to the Education Division, and ensured that payments were not unnecessarily left pending at the end of the year.

The Financial Service Branch compiled statistical data on education for the National Statistics' Office (NSO), the Ministry of Finance and the Treasury Department. In particular, data was collected for a sample survey on total emoluments for the NSO and the Schools' Councils' Funds of all school in Malta and Gozo for the Treasury Department. Other data was compiled for senior management as required.

The Financial Services Branch continued to advise senior management on the budgetary implications of various union demands and other aspects of the ongoing education reform. It played an active role particularly with regard to the Collective Agreement reached with the Malta Union of Teachers in July 2007.

In preparation for the euro changeover, the staff in the Accounts Section and ESOPU attended various courses, organised internally and by the Treasury Department, on the implications of the adoption of the euro on financial transactions, cash handling and security features, and updating of the Departmental Accounting System. The Assistant Director assisted in the organisation of courses for school staff and also made presentations on the effect of the changeover on school transactions.

PROCUREMENT AND ADMINISTRATION BRANCH

- *Procurement Section:*
 - processed 25 departmental tenders, 10 Contracts Department tenders, 10 sealed quotations and 15 hand quotations. These included 21 tenders related to the procurement of textbooks for state schools, involving an expense of Lm630,000;
 - conducted two ‘tale quale’ sales of surplus tools and scrap metal from the Division’s store at St Andrew’s;
 - received a total of 1,700 requisition forms from directorates within the Division for the procurement of goods and services and for the repair of office machinery. The corresponding local purchase orders were drawn up and contractors paid after ascertaining that the goods or services were delivered.
- *Stores Section:*
 - distributed 232,600 textbooks to state schools in Malta and Gozo. These included new Maltese textbooks introduced in primary schools and mathematics textbooks introduced in primary and secondary schools;
 - distributed 128,500 booklets mainly euro workbooks and other Curriculum Department publications, to state, church and private schools to accustom students with the new currency;
 - issued a total of 85 summer and 80 winter uniforms to general hands, messengers and other entitled staff;
 - received 410 requisitions for stores and cleaning material from directorates and sections within the Division;
 - processed 236 local purchase orders, amounting to Lm15,870 for the procurement of stationery and cleaning material. This amount represents a reduction of Lm3,811 from expenditure incurred during the previous year.
- *Registry Section:*
 - processed an average of 200 files daily;
 - opened 400 personal files, 520 general files and 505 fore files, while 380 personal files were marked as dead files;
 - 58 personal files of employees transferred from the Education Division to another ministry or department, were sent to the Personnel Section of their respective new department while, 26 personnel files of employees transferred from another ministry or department to the Education Division, were received at the Registry Section;
 - updated regularly the mail database and other databases used to track file movements and circulars issued by the Ministry of Education and other ministries;
 - a member of the Registry staff created a website in which one can find information and procedures on registry services to assist the Ministry’s and Division’s employees in their daily work.
- *Inventory Section:*
 - gave continuous support to school administrators to update their inventory database in line with the accrual accounting inventory system (the nine state schools that had not yet concluded this exercise have now made considerable progress);
 - carried out 24 inspections in schools to check inventory updates and members of staff also took part in school audits;
 - submitted every six months to the National Audit Office and the Treasury Department the general inventory database list and a new labelling system for permanent items was introduced;
 - emphasis was made on improving security in schools to reduce the number of thefts and in fact, only nine thefts from schools were reported in 2007, the lowest number recorded in the last 10 years.
- *Minor Staff Section:*
 - an inspection team was set up to regularly supervise the attendance of minor staff in schools, particularly after school hours and during the school holidays;
 - disciplinary action, including the deduction of pay, was taken in 125 cases where staff were not found at their place of work;

- a number of measures were taken to alleviate the shortage of minor staff in certain schools and to ensure that acceptable levels of cleanliness were maintained.
- *Transport Section:*
 - was responsible for providing transport services to the Ministry, the Division and the other sections (a total of 2,700 requests for transport were received throughout the year);
 - was actively involved in the distribution of books to schools;
 - during the scholastic year, provided seven lifter vans to special schools, two passenger vans to the Unit Ghozza, and three buses to schools at Kalkara, Tarxien and B’Kara;
 - was engaged in providing transport services to Skolasajf, youth exchanges programmes and various NGOs;
 - eleven cars were purchased to replace a number of hired cars, after a cost-benefit analysis carried out in conjunction with the Division’s Accounts Section and the Financial Management Monitoring Unit showed that it would be cheaper in the long run to purchase rather than to hire cars.
- *Electronic Servicing Unit:*
 - the unit, which is responsible for the repair of electronic equipment, repaired a total of 180 items of hi-fi equipment, public address systems, TV monitors and 120 computer monitors, mainly belonging to state schools.

LEONARD SACCO

Director (Corporate Services)

EU and International Affairs Directorate

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.

Horizontal Issues

During 2007, a wide variety of issues were tackled and a considerable number of meetings were covered. Horizontal issues included supplementary pension rights, competitiveness and growth, community Lisbon programme and internal market. The Directorate formed part of the implementation committee of PROGRESS and was responsible for the processing and co-ordination of the written procedures related to the programme received from the DG Employment Social Affairs and Equality of the EU and provided all MT's feedback in this regard.

During 2007, a directorate official continued to operate as MEYE representative during the collective agreements negotiations of the University of Malta and the ETC, both of which were concluded during 2007.

Documentation was prepared for nine Ministerial Council Meetings which tackled issues relating to this Ministry. The Directorate presented 50 background notes, 34 speaking notes, and 72 instruction notes to the EU Secretariat at the OPM for use by Maltese representatives attending Council meetings. There was a substantial increase in the number of explanatory memoranda submitted to the Inter-Ministerial Committee for EU Affairs with 39 being drawn up.

Employment

During 2007, the EU and International Affairs Directorate dealt directly with and processed a wide range of issues dealing with employment and conditions of work. It also provided feedback on social security matters, competitiveness and health, when these matters touched the entities falling under MEYE while input on issues such as migration, inclusion, parental leave and mobility, was also provided.

A number of issues were raised at the Ministerial Council Meetings held in Heidelberg and Lisbon. These included the Green Paper Modernising Labour Law to Meet the Challenges of the 21st Century, through the submission of a completed questionnaire to the Commission. Data was provided by DIER after consulting with the social partners in a National Conference held earlier during 2007. The issue regarding Guidelines for the Employment Policies of the Member States was adopted at EPSCO Meeting of 30-31 May 2007. Another issue in which the Directorate liaised extensively with DIER was that on Good Work (Decent Work). Flexicurity was also intensively discussed with an agreement being reached at the Lisbon Ministerial Council on 5 and 6 December 2007 which elaborated on its common principles. No consensus

was reached at the EPSCO Ministerial Council held in Lisbon in December amongst the 27 Member States on the two issues of working time and temporary working agency, with Malta together with some other Member States maintaining their position on a working week higher than the 48 hour working week proposed by the other Member States. The three issues of migration, access to the labour market and active ageing were discussed throughout 2007 and were still on the agenda at the end of the year.

Education and Training

A number of dossiers were discussed at the Council level, for which this Directorate prepared the required documentation. The issues included *Looking beyond 2010 - developing the Education and Training 2010 work programme*. During these discussions, Malta emphasised upon the need to continue investing better and more in the development of human resources, focusing particularly upon the socially disadvantaged, the emarginated and persons with special needs. Violence in schools was also tackled. Another item concerned adult learning: *It's never too late to learn*. The issue of strengthening pre-primary education in Europe was taken up and covered the strategies that governments could develop for efficiently allocating resources in order to achieve both universal access to pre-primary education and high quality social and pedagogical outcomes for all. A coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks for monitoring progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training were adopted by the Education Ministers. Another issue was that of evidence-based policy-making in the field of education. Malta was working on seven actions to ensure the drawing up of evidence based policy making. These include the setting up of a national regulatory mechanism to protect and develop standards and outcomes, the involvement of all stakeholders in schools within a process of evaluation, and an external audit on quality and action research. Conclusions were reached on how to improve the quality of teacher education. A resolution on new skills for new jobs was adopted. Discussion on the proposal for a Regulation on the European Institute of Technology continued. A Council Directive on Professional Qualifications (Directive 2005/36/EC) was transposed into Maltese law.

Youths

The German Presidency laid considerable emphasis on the Youth programme. The Lifelong Learning Programmes and the Youth in Action Programme for 2007 to 2013 were initiated during this year. Two resolutions on the implementation of common objectives for voluntary activities of young people, and on creating equal opportunities for all young people were adopted. The Council of Ministers drew up a list of conclusions on a transversal approach to youth policy with a view to enabling young people to fulfil their potential and participate actively in society. Discussions were held on a European youth policy. Malta emphasised the importance of further exchange and co-operation amongst Member States which should be complemented by a cross-sectoral approach. Malta also stressed upon the active involvement of all relevant partners especially those hailing from marginalised and disadvantaged groups, as well as the importance of bringing young people in direct contact with the tripartite social partners.

Health and Safety, Nuclear, Radiation

The following three Legal Notices were published during 2007:

- National Interest (Enabling Powers) Act (Cap. 365) – Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (Euratom Safeguards and Additional Protocol) Regulations (LN 182 of 2007). Additional protocols contain measures to improve the efficiency and strengthen the effectiveness of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'s safeguards system.
- Protection of the Health and Safety of Workers from the Risks related to Chemical Agents at Work (Amendment) Regulations, 2007 (LN 353 of 2007). This Legal Notice repeals the Regulations of LN 120 of 2003 establishing a first list of indicative occupational exposure limit values on the protection of the health and safety of workers from the risks related to chemical agents at work.
- Convention on Nuclear Safety Regulations (LN 440 of 2007). This Legal Notice enabled Malta to accede to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, which legally commits participating states operating land-based

nuclear power plants to maintain a high level of safety by setting international benchmarks to which states would subscribe.

Three important meetings were launched towards the end of the year to reflect what is being stated as a renaissance in nuclear energy:

- Implementing Euratom Treaty of Safeguards held in Brussels in September 2007. The Commission and Member States discussed the systems for the implementation of the tri-lateral Euratom safeguards.
- High Level Group on Safety and Waste Management – first meeting held in Brussels in October 2007. The main goal of the Group will be to help the Commission develop European rules regarding the safety of nuclear installations and the safe management of spent fuel and radioactive waste.
- European Nuclear Forum – inaugural meeting held in Bratislava in November 2007. The Forum aims to promote an inclusive, transparent and non-ideological debate on nuclear energy between all the relevant stakeholders.

International Relations

Multilateral Relations

In July, the Director attended for the First Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials of the Council of Europe in preparation for the 8th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth to be held in Ukraine during 2008.

In July, a representative from this Ministry attended a seminar in the University of Technology and Education in China on the invitation of the Chinese Government. The aim of the seminar was to introduce participants from 40 countries to the Chinese System of Vocational Education and Training through the various formal presentations and visits to vocational colleges.

In June, the Ministry representative attended for the First Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Higher Education and Scientific Research. The Cairo conference was used as a launch of the Cairo declaration, which defines guidelines for the future co-operation among all EUROMED partners.

Bilateral Relations

The International Relations within the EU Affairs Directorate sustained its initiatives to enhance co-operation, through bilateral agreements, with 48 countries on matters relating to education and training. In formulating its policy position, the Directorate seeks the advice of departments and entities that fall within this Ministry for onward transmission to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Particular emphasis is laid on neighbouring countries in the Mediterranean.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment granted English language scholarships to Italian and Czech students. During the year, 68 scholarships were awarded to Italian students and three to Czech students.

Under the terms of the XII Executive Programme with Italy 2007-2009, signed on 1 February, the Maltese Government offered 68 short-term English bursaries and 18 man-months for long specialised research studies. The Director was involved in the selection process held at the Farnesina for summer bursaries. It was noted that applicants were of the highest academic standard. The demand from Italian students to study in Malta was very high, exceeding that for other countries like Greece, France, Germany and Belgium. On the occasion of the 40th Anniversary since the signing of the present Cultural Agreement, a new Agreement was drafted and is in the process of being signed with the Italian authorities. A number of meetings were held with the University to pre-empt any complaints from Italian summer bursary students residing at the University Residence.

The Ministry gave its clearance to the signing of a number of bilateral agreements including: an Agreement on Youth and Sport with Bulgaria; a Co-operation Agreement with Tunisia in the field of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Technology; and a Cultural and Scientific Agreement with Ukraine. The Bilateral Programme of Co-operation with the Czech Republic was extended for one year. An agreement on Cultural and Scientific Co-operation with Portugal was ratified and entered into force on 8 March 2007, after the official signing was held way back in 1994 and eventually ratified by the Portuguese in 2003.

Outcomes from interested parties on an Agreement on Economic, Trade, Investments, Scientific, Technical, Cultural, Youth and Sports with Saudi Arabia were submitted to MFA, while the draft Framework Agreement on Education, Science, Culture and Arts, Youth and Sports, Mass Media and Contracts with Turkey is in process. The Ministry is also in consultation with the University and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the establishing of a Cultural Education Agreement with China on Higher Education which would provide for formal recognition of all Maltese education institutions by the Chinese authorities.

The Ministry participated in the 24th Session of the Maltese-Libyan Joint Commission convened in February 2007 and the minutes of the Joint Maltese-Libyan Working Group on Co-operation in the field of Higher Education were signed by the Permanent Secretary.

FUNDING

European Social Funds

During 2007, the implementation of 19 ESF Projects Structural Funds falling under the 2004 to 2006 Programme continued. Another four ESF Projects namely Nos ESF 72 (Job Experience Scheme), ESF 73 (Addressing the Demand and Supply of e-skills through Traineeships in ICT), ESF 80 (Provision of Training for Disadvantaged Persons and Persons with Learning Difficulties) and ESF 85 (Call Centre Training MCAST) were selected by the Project Selection Committee and approved by Cabinet under the third call for projects proposals. In 2007, these four projects were still at their infancy stages.

The following projects were completed:

- ESF 31 (Employment and Training Schemes) - Traineeship in Care of the Elderly has been completed. Basic Employment Training (BET) 007 and the lone mothers' project have also been completed with successful results.
- ESF 11 (Preservation of Traditional Maltese Crafts) - MCAST embarked on a number of training programmes both at Introductory and Intermediate Levels. At Introductory Level, courses running include Stained Glass, Wood Carving, Stone Carving, Pottery, Lace Making and Silver Filigree. With regard to intermediate programmes, the College is running the silver filigree programme, lace making, and pottery. MCAST also run three bee-keeping courses, two in Malta and one in Gozo.
- ESF 12 (Retraining and Reskilling of Workers for Engineering Industry) - A number of training programmes started, which include, Basic Course in Panel Beating, Motor Vehicle Service, Automobile Electronics Engine Management, Welding and Automatic Gearboxes, Service and Repair.
- ESF 14 (Technology Skills for women returning to the workforce) - Courses were organised in Accounting Technician, Customer Care/Information Technology and Sage Accounting.
- ESF 13 (Retraining and Reskilling of Workers for Electronics Industry) - A number of training programmes and courses started which include Electrical Fundamentals, Electronic Fundamentals and Computer Hardware Classes, Electronics and PLCs, Industrial Electronics, Microprocessors and Automation.
- ESF 15 (Retraining and Reskilling of Workers for Building and Construction Industry) - A number of new courses started in 2007 which include Plastering and Tile Laying, Stone Masonry, Scaffolding and Rigging and Lift Installation.

- ESF 16 (Training for Adults with No Formal Qualifications) - A number of courses finished in 2007: Care for the Elderly and Decontamination and Sterilisation Science. Practical sessions for the decontamination and sterilisation science course are being held at the Mater Dei Hospital whilst the practical sessions for the care courses are being held in various care homes, namely St Vincent de Paul, in Day Centres for the Elderly and in Homes for the Elderly.
- ESF 50 (National Campaign promoting the benefits of quality childcare) - Childcare campaign was implemented through TV and radio spots and through advertising in prominent local magazines, and on billboards in different localities in Malta and Gozo and in bus shelters in the inner harbour region. Leaflets were also distributed through the Sunday Times and through the parentcraft courses which were held at St Luke's. The website was constantly updated and the freephone operative. A national conference on the Benefits of Quality Childcare was held.
- ESF 47 (Promoting the Woman-Entrepreneur Culture) - The Business Skills Training took place. A person was appointed for the role of Expert in the composition of an entrepreneurship manual. TV spots were aired. A Mentoring Call for Quotations was advertised inviting interested persons to submit quotes for the rendering of a 48-hour training programme.
- ESF 1 (Training of Inclusion Co-ordinators) - Courses for 15 teachers were financed, trained to co-ordinate all the education and care necessary for students with special needs.
- ESF 5 (Initiating and Managing Community-based Lifelong Learning Centres) - There was the continuation of training of unemployed/underemployed teachers and youth workers as managers/co-ordinators of experiments that link up local councils with schools councils in the transformation of local schools into LLL Centres.
- ESF 19 (Supported Employment Scheme for Persons with Disabilities) - Agreements were reached between the ETC and employers who enrolled persons with disability under the Supported Employment Scheme.

Projects Not Yet Completed

- ESF 37 – End date of project is 31 March 2008 – A tender for the provision of services by a research company was issued, the tender was adjudicated, and the contract with the successful bidder was signed in 2007.
- ESF 18 - Work was undertaken on the development of training manuals in English and Maltese. A seminar is being organised for all stakeholders involved in the provision of adult literacy and to organise an awareness/promotional campaign in favour of literacy.
- ESF 52 –Phase 4 saw the commencement of IT training; the Nail Technician course; Sales and Retain vocational classes; vocational training classes (Call Centre Agent at ETC, Camerapersons course at PBS, Bar Service course at ITS and Food Preparation and Culinary Arts Level 1 at ITS); office skills course. The Nail Art course started for those students who finished the Nail Technician course.
- ESF 4 - A seminar was held in 2007. There was the editing and printing of SISIEN second edition. Summer classes opened in seven centres (eight classes). Classes will stop in March 2008.
- ESF 72 - 45 persons were placed on the Scheme. Clients have a scheduled monitoring visit which takes place on the third week from commencement, on the 7th and on the 11th week. Advertising material is being printed and adverts were published on the Sunday's newspapers. A publicity event took place.
- ESF 73 - Several adverts were published in order to attract prospective employers to sponsor trainees in scheme. 19 companies expressed their interest and submitted their applications requesting a total of 27 trainees. Tender calling for training colleges to submit their bid was issued. Adverts calling for trainees were circulated. Trainees set for trade tests offered by ETC. It was envisaged to start the traineeship programme in January 2008.
- ESF 80 - There was the food handlers' certification of two members from the probation services, and one participant with a moderate case of learning difficulty. One of the groups in the Customer Care module obtained a successful mark. The Customer Care, Grooming and Food Hygiene and Safety Module was successfully completed.

- ESF 85 - This project has not yet started. The Project Leader has drafted the tender document and sent it to the Department of Contracts and is waiting for feedback. In the meantime, MCAST also submitted the request to employ a part time co-ordinator. This is still in the pipeline as well.

Payments

All claims pertaining to projects ESF 24, ESF 17, and ESF 47, including disbursements to the relevant entities, were claimed from Capital Vote IV, item 7173 (EU Structural Funds 2004-2006). Other payments invoiced were still not executed at Treasury Level as at 31 December 2007. Some payments are at their final stages. Payments related to ESF 37, ESF 72, ESF 73, ESF 80 and ESF 85 will commence in 2008.

European Regional Development Funds

There are five ERDF Structural Funds Projects 2004- 2006, that is, ERDF Nos. 8, 9, 13, 25 and 26.

Works Completed in 2007

ERDF 8 (Construction of Extension to ETC's Skills Development Centre) - The total contracted value of supplies, services rendered or works is Lm257,909.

ERDF 9 (MCAST Childcare Centre) and ERDF 13 (Construction of Additional Floors, MCAST) - The total contracted value is Lm776,314.

ERDF 25 (MCAST Library and Resource Centre, Main College Campus) - Tenders for the supply, delivery and installation of Furniture, Equipment and Library Management software were awarded and all items were delivered. The total contracted value was Lm95,176.34.

ERDF 26 (Provision of Equipment for Modern and Relevant Vehicle Training Programme, MCAST) – A tender for the supply, installation, testing and commissioning of Didactive Equipment-Motor Vehicle Training Programmes was awarded and all equipment delivered. The contracted value was Lm87,651.99.

Transitional Facility Funds 2004

Institutional Capacity Building for the Occupational Health and Safety Authority

All project activities which this project comprise, that is, one Twinning Light, one service and four supply components, were completed and all payments were effected.

The development of University-based Courses to strengthen Malta's capacity in the field of Translation

The service component contract to set up a Maltese Terminology Database was completed during August 2007 and all payments were executed by the disbursement deadline December 2007.

Transitional Facility Funds 2005

Strengthening the Administrative Capacity of the National Labour Inspectorate

The DIER had one Twinning Light component and a service contract to develop a Management Information System (MIS) for the DIER. The DIER Twinning Light tender was circulated twice with no bids being submitted. The terms of reference were revised so that a third circulation could follow with the deadline for offers being set for August 2007. One proposal was received. In relation to the service contract, it was proposed to award the service contract to MITTS to develop the MIS, the reason being that MITTS already owned the rights to a system that could be tailored to suit the DIER's requirements.

The OHSA had only the Twinning Light component. The German contractor was selected for the delivery of the OHSA Twinning Light component and activities started in the last quarter of 2007.

In June, there was the follow-up of the objectives and target indicators of achievement. The experts who led the training on indicators went through the submissions and requested bilateral meetings, where needed.

MARIO BUTTIGIEG

Director (EU and International Affairs)

Policy Development and Programme Implementation Directorate

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.

General Directorate Administration

Although the Policy Development and Programme Implementation Directorate was not a cost centre and did not have responsibility for a line vote, it committed itself that during the process of policy development, the financial aspect of the exercise was portrayed and maximal quality output was sought using the minimal financial costs possible. During 2007, the main policy document published was the Career Guidance Policy. With regard to this publication, regular and careful scrutiny of expenditure was kept.

The main document focused upon in 2007 was the Government-MUT agreement. DPDPI was on the government negotiating team and had a co-ordinating role throughout the discussions.

The DPDPI kept track of the Ministry's projects in line with the budget speech. This Directorate kept the Office of the Prime Minister informed on the Ministry's progress in this regard, by giving status of budget measures in process.

EU Projects

During 2007, the DPDPI was also given the responsibility of co-ordinating the Ministry's EU projects for the period 2007-2013. This involved among other matters an increase in staff. Constant monitoring of directorate staff in order to achieve maximal output of services was kept throughout the year. Regular meetings were held with directorate staff on an individual basis. Such meetings were found to be fruitful since they gave clear direction, and challenges were addressed at the onset.

The DPDPI is responsible for the co-ordination of EU projects under the Ministry's remit. During 2007, the directorate was active in co-ordinating with all the entities which applied for funds, prior and post the call of applications, and the Ministry of Education during the first call presented 38 projects for ESF and ERDF funding. The DPDPI also drafted calls for application in the education sector which will eventually be taken over by the two new Directorates. These projects include training of staff at graduate and postgraduate level in career guidance, careers related to inclusive and special education, psychological services, and early childhood education.

Education

The main policy document, apart from the Career Guidance policy, during 2007, was the Government-MUT agreement signed in July 2007. Throughout the negotiation process, DPDPI had the responsibility of drafting the budgetary implications for measures agreed upon in the Government-MUT agreement. Such budgetary workings gave a clear indication of how reform measures can be implemented over another three-year period.

The DPDPI was directly involved in the formulation of calls of applications for the setting up of structures within the two new Directorates. Such calls included those for Directors, Assistant Directors, Service Managers and Education Officers. DPDPI has also presented to the Permanent Committee for Education draft calls of applications for College Administrators, College Precincts Officers, Trainee Counsellors and Trainee Career Advisors.

An analytical exercise of previous posts in the Education Division was carried out by the DPDPI, and amendments made to the newly issued posts. The DPDPI constantly revised legislation and regulation in relation to MEYE in order to suggest and make recommendations for more efficiency and effectiveness of service. Review of legislation related to Education was particularly focused upon in 2007 due to Government-MUT agreement. Legislation also guided the setting up of the two new Directorates.

Autonomy and Governance

The continued implementation of MEYE's proposals published in the document *For All Children To Succeed* (2005), reinforced in the amendments to the Education Act (2006) and culminating in the Government-MUT agreement in 2007. As a member of the Education Reform Steering Group, the PDPI directorate had the responsibility of co-ordinating effectively to the implementation of the education reform. During 2007, this involved constant contact with college co-ordinators, as well as other entities involved, including the Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools (with regard to policy decisions needed in the building of new schools) and the Foundation for Educational Services (with regard to services offered to colleges in the area of literacy). The DPDPI was on the official Government negotiating team during negotiations with the Malta Union of Teachers. During 2007, the DPDPI put forward a proposed organigram of new structures within the two new directorates.

Early Childhood Education

Following the publication of the Early Childhood Education review (2006), the DPDPI continued discussions with the University of Malta regarding training for kindergarten assistants. The DPDPI also actively put forward measures regarding this sector during the Government-MUT negotiation process.

The DPDPI also collaborated with the Ministry for the Family in the new project of opening childcare centres in schools. DPDPI was responsible for the contribution given by the education sector.

School Attendance

The DPDPI monitored the implementation of this policy document that was published in 2005. DPDPI put forward measures within the Government-MUT agreement to cover this policy area.

Inclusive and Special Education

The PDPI Directorate worked in close collaboration with the official implementing the Inclusive and Special Education Review Report (2005). Recommendations include:

Recommendations Implemented:

- 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 has started.

- Heads of Special School regularly meeting and working together within the Council of Heads.
- 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.
- Reviewed call of application for supply kindergarten assistants using new nomenclature, that of, supply learning support assistants.
- Research exercise analysing aspirations of Form V students who have a disability and what their plans are 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 *Għaqda 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 B Ed 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, visually impaired, profound and multiple learning difficulties and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties).
- Next year post-graduate course for specialists in specific learning difficulties (dyslexia).
- 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 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.

Higher Education

The DPDPI is a commissioner on the National Commission for Higher Education. During 2007, DPDPI contributed to the drafting of legislation in the higher education sector including the establishment of quality assurance mechanisms and licensing in the further and higher education sector. The PDPI Directorate already administers the Commonwealth Scholarship Scheme.

Career Guidance

Managed and published the publication of the Career Guidance Policy for Schools. Ensured swift distribution to schools and organised a website link for feedback to be accessed.

Adult Basic Skills

Managed and oversaw that the Adult Basic Skills policy was presented to the Minister responsible for education.

Employment

Collaboration and co-operation was maintained with the Employment and Training Corporation on issues related to NSRF funding, with specific emphasis on the development of childcare centres, career guidance and apprenticeship. The role of the directorate was to ensure the maximum collaboration possible between education and employment on common key issues. A common policy direction on identical projects, programmes and initiatives was ensured.

Youth

The Commonwealth Youth Forum Follow Up group was set up and gave handover to Uganda CHOGM.

Sport

The Directorate collaborated with *Kunsill Malti Għall-iSport* on agreements between schools and sports clubs regarding the use of school facilities after school hours.

Libraries and Archives

Ongoing meetings were held to ensure collaboration across the different entities falling within the Ministry and the aim this year was to identify pockets of policy vacuum that need to be addressed in both these sectors.

Occupational Health and Safety

Ongoing discussion was held with the Occupational Health and Safety Authority so as to collaborate and converge on health and safety promotion within the Ministry. Further discussion was also held on sanctions (including administrative fines) that may be implemented when Health and Safety procedures are not adhered to.

Industrial and Employee Relations

No major policy developments are expected in this area, however, it is important that a constant check is kept on Malta's adherence to EU regulations, as well as Malta's position.

Scholarships

While the PDPI is not a directorate that offers customer care service, since the Directorate was given the responsibility of administering the Malta Government Scholarship Scheme, it was imperative that the office staff was available for all queries from the general public. DPDPI took measures so as to ensure that during office hours, the public found the help they needed.

NSRF (NRP)

The DPDPI also contributed to the development of the NSRF document with input from the Ministry. The DPDPI was the National Reform contact point for the MEYE. Involvement in these three processes gives the Directorate the possibility of co-ordinating and ensuring synergy between local funded projects and those funded by the EU.

Interministerial Collaboration

Throughout the year, regular meetings were held with other PDPI directors in other ministries, especially with those where projects, targets and initiatives are similar (for example, health, family and social solidarity, etc).

Throughout the process of the agreement negotiations, DPDPI was regularly responsible for organising consultation with stakeholders regarding particular measures. Regular meetings were held with ministries working on related areas of operation, such as, childcare, mental health problems, challenging behaviour and environmental issues.

MICHELINE SCIBERRAS

**Ministry for Tourism
and Culture**

Tourism

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM & CORPORATE SERVICES

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 as well as 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 for information requested from the Office of the Prime Minister, 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. The HR section was 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, *Notte Gozitana*, *Notte Bianca* besides assisting in collaboration with the private sector in various concerts that took place during the summer months, the main event being the Isle of MTV concert, the Military Tattoo as well as the *In Guardia Allarme* parades that take place throughout the year in Fort St Elmo.

During 2007, the Department continued with the programme of changing light fittings at the Ministry and the Department to energy-saving ones.

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 Ministry's Secretariat and the Permanent Secretary's Office, continued to maintain all active files and open new files as required.

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 | 19 employees |
| Central | 26 employees |
| South | 23 employees |
| Back-up | 9 employees |
| Workshop | 7 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. During summer 2007, beach cleaners were also assigned duties after normal working hours, at Ghadira Bay, Bugibba perched beach, and St George's Bay, keeping these three beaches manned all day till 6.00 pm including Saturdays and Sundays.

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 repairs and will be replaced by the beginning of May 2008.

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.

OIL POLLUTION RESPONSE MODULE (OPRM)

The Oil Pollution Response Module is established to protect Malta's coastline and harbours from oil pollution and other hazards that may be caused by oil spills (that originate both on land or sea) or floating debris and other materials. It is the responsibility of this module to collect debris and flotsam from the sea

on a routine basis either by scooping or by gathering pollutants and hazards manually or by using our vessel *Ambjent* which is fitted with a hydraulic/mechanical arm.

The unit maintained constant contact with the Malta Maritime Authority and the Armed Forces of Malta. Special attention was given to cleaning the Viset and Grand Harbour Marina areas in the Grand Harbour. The unit also rendered services to the Malta Tourism Authority during the Blue Flag Exercise and to the Nature Protection Unit while they conducted one of their surveys. The unit participated in the co-ordination of underwater clean-ups organised by various diving schools and centres on request.

As in previous years, training exercises were organised during 2007. One was conducted on 26 July in St Paul's Bay with the collaboration of the Local Council and another was on 16 August in St Julian's Bay with the collaboration of the Sliema Local Council. These events combined practical and communication skills required by those involved to render an oil combating operation successful. Those participating in this exercise were the Oil Pollution Response Module, the Department of Tourism Beach Cleaning Section, the Malta Maritime Authority and the Civil Protection Department together with the assistance of the Armed Forces of Malta, the Malta Police and local company Alpha Briggs.

The OPRM also serves as a maintenance section and as a depot for protection booms, absorbent booms, machinery and various other absorbent materials that are essential in the eventuality of a major oil spill in the vicinity of our shores.

During the year, the OPRM responded to 17 significant oil spillage reports and dealt with approximately 25 tons of reported oil. Not all oil spills were at sea as OPRM had to deal with oil thrown in the Ghadira Wildlife Reserve and on the shore at St. Paul's Bay by vandals.

The amount of flotsam and debris collected both manually and mechanically by this unit was around 28 tons.

Oil Spills 2007

| Date | Place | Type | Qty | Measures Taken |
|--------|-----------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| 15 Jan | Menqa/Marsa | Heavy oil | 300 lts | Manual collection |
| 22 Jan | North of Valletta | Oil slick | 60m ³ | Surveillance and monitoring |
| 29 Jan | Pietà | Oily debris | 350 lts | Absorbents/manual |
| 30 Jan | Bridge Wharf | Oily debris | 400 lts | Absorbents/manual |
| 2 Feb | Hay Wharf | Light fuel oil | 250 lts | Mechanical |
| 3 Mar | Pietà | Oil/debris | 600 lts | Manual |
| 21 Mar | Ghadira Bird Reserve | Heavy oil | 200 lts | Manual |
| 7 Apr | St Paul's Bay | Diesel oil | 500 lts | Absorbents/mechanical/manual |
| 13 May | Pembroke | Light fuel oil | 400 lts | Manual |
| 7 Jun | Menqa | Fuel oil | 450 lts | Absorbents/manual |
| 25 Jun | Bridge Wharf | Diesel oil | 250 lts | Absorbents |
| 29 Jun | Balluta Wharf | Light fuel oil | 400 lts | Manual/mechanical |
| 2 Jul | South East of B'Bugha | Oil slick | 100m ³ | Monitoring |
| 5 Jul | M'Scala | Diesel oil | 500 lts | Absorbents/manual |
| 30 Aug | B'Bugha | Light fuel oil | 200 lts | Manual |
| 9 Oct | Hay Wharf | Heavy oil | 50 lts | Manual |
| 10 Nov | St Paul's Bay | Light fuel oil | 150 lts | Manual |

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT UNIT

During 2007 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 and the Malta Tourism Authority. Apart from routine operational and support services that the IMU offers, what follows is an

outline of the projects that have been implemented or activities in which the IMU was involved during the year under review.

Launch of the new national tourism portal visitmalta.com

The new e-tourism portal for the Maltese Islands was officially launched on 19 January 2007 where it replaced the previous and highly successful website. The main difference between the previous website and the new portal is that whereas the former was purely 'informational', the latter is also 'transactional' in that it features an online booking functionality for flights, accommodation and car hire. The new portal was designed to fulfil two roles: namely, to be the prime destination marketing tool for promoting the Maltese Islands globally, and to provide an online presence and a platform for local stakeholders wishing to exploit the benefits of e-tourism. The heart of the portal consists of a database of more than 800 pages of information about the Maltese Islands, organised in a multi-layered structure that makes finding information easy and quick. There is also a set of comprehensive directories relating to specific areas of service, including travel specialists, meeting venues, dive centres, language schools, and many more. The portal is also multi-lingual. At the time of launch, visitmalta.com was available only in the original English version. Since then, four other language versions – German, Italian, French and Spanish – were also launched, with several others in the pipeline.

VisitMalta has also been designed to serve as a tool with which the Malta Tourism Authority can analyse and understand the online visitor's expectations when planning a holiday in Malta. This allows for a better understanding of the behaviours, attitudes and preferences of the online visitor as they relate to the researching, planning and buying of travel related goods and services with respect to Malta. This project was fully co-ordinated by the Information Management Unit.

Euro Changeover

The IMU monitored all the information systems within the ministry and its entities and co-ordinated the works through a number of project leaders and to ensure that all systems displaying and/or transacting financial data are compliant with all the directives issued by the NECC vis-à-vis dual display requirements and historical data. It also ensured that all such systems are properly configured to switch from the Maltese Lira to the euro currency as from 1 January 2008.

Consolidation

As part of the ongoing ICT consolidation exercise, the IMU migrated several ICT services within the Malta Tourism Authority on to the Government IT infrastructure. These included mainly the migration of the e-mail system to Outlook 2003, the provision of Internet service via the MAGNET and updating of anti-virus software from the MITTS data files repository.

Better Regulation

One of the Better Regulation initiatives which the Ministry in conjunction with the Maltese Tourism Authority undertook in 2007 was the amalgamation of invoices for the payment of licence and contribution fees by tourism establishments into one database and issuing simultaneously the contribution and licence invoices per licensee.

This project ties back with a project finalised in 2006, whereby the payment of contribution fees could be carried out online or through the local councils using the Government's e-licensing system.

The advantages resulting from this initiative were:

- Cash Office and Customer Care officials are using one database system and they can serve customers more efficiently via a one-stop-shop concept;

- Data is also now more accurate and back-office personnel do not need to refer to two separate systems;
- Technical support and backups are provided for one system rather than two;
- Invoices for licences and contributions are now mailed at one go, so each licensee is receiving all fees due in one envelope;
- The Credit Control unit within MTA is in a better position to monitor payments due and arrears;
- Customers can now settle both their licence and contribution fees online or at local councils.

Training and Apprenticeships

During 2007, staff within the IMU attended a number of training workshops in the following areas: Electronic Records Management, IT security awareness and specific training on the VisitMalta portal content management system and the hotel booking back-end system.

The IMU also sponsored a three-month placement for a Leonardo exchange programme student from Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus, Germany. The student who was specialising in knowledge management, content management and project management was given the opportunity to apply in a practical way within the IMU some of the knowledge gained from her studies.

In liaison with the Employment and Training Corporation, the IMU offered an apprenticeship to a student who is following the National Diploma in Computing at MCAST under the Training Apprenticeship Scheme. In the first year of apprenticeship, the student was trained in trouble shooting and technical support and had the opportunity to apply in practice the skills learnt.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System

The IMU has implemented a new on-demand CRM system for the Marketing Department of the Malta Tourism Authority. The system will be used for online marketing campaigns and the dissemination and tracking of newsletters to thousands of overseas contacts including persons that have subscribed to the service though the registration process available on the VisitMalta portal.

FTP and Terminal Services

FTP services have been set up to provide the PR and Communications division of the Malta Tourism Authority a platform from where to make photos in high resolution formats available to its foreign offices and representative agents for production of brochures and other media.

Through the implementation of Terminal Services, the MTA's foreign offices namely in the UK and Germany could access and post in real-time financial transactions into the head office accounting system. This system enables management to have up-to-date management accounting reports to monitor income and expenditure.

Data Protection

The IMU ensures that the ministry is compliant with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2001. During 2007, the Data Protection Officer provided the necessary support and advice related to data protection issues arising within the ministry or department. The Chief Information Officer also acted as the data protection officer and represented the ministry on the data protection officers' forum.

NISCO

Through the IMU, the Ministry participated regularly in meetings organised by National Information Society Advisory Council (NISCO) which the Ministry for Investment, Industry and Information Technology convenes on a quarterly basis.

WORLD TOURISM ORGANISATION

During 2007, the ongoing exchange with UNWTO also involved participation in a wide number of surveys relating to data exchange and members' benchmarking. Foremost amongst these surveys was a detailed stock-take on Tourism Satellite Account related initiatives in European countries, on the basis of which future UNWTO technical assistance will be formulated.

The Department through its representatives also attended and actively participated in the General Assembly of the UNWTO.

EU AFFAIRS, POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION 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 also responsible for the monitoring of the Ministry's policies and plans. The Directorate worked on EU Council of Ministers meetings, the accompanying tasks of examining council documentation, consulting stakeholders, drafting Malta's positions on proposed legislative and non-legislative EU proposals. The main committees which the directorate focused its efforts upon were the Cultural Affairs Committee, the Media Management Committee, the Audiovisual Working Party, the Tourism Advisory Committee and the Tourism Sustainability Group and provided inputs to the various Council formations discussing proposals which affect tourism. These in particular included proposals relating to aviation, to the environment, to consumer affairs, and to competition issues. It also focused its efforts on tapping EU Structural Funds. It monitored the implementation of the projects funded under the 2004–2006 programme and worked on developing projects for funding under the 2007–2013 programming period. Furthermore, efforts to utilise direct EU funding programmes which are of relevance for tourism and culture were made together with an initial effort to disseminate information on such funding opportunities for tourism and culture stakeholders. The directorate is also responsible for the development and monitoring 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 2007 - 2013

As from November 2006, regular meetings were held for the preparatory work for possible projects that were identified after the consultation process carried out in 2005. On 7 September 2007 - the deadline of the first call for this programming period - nine project proposals were submitted to the PPCD within the Office of the Prime Minister. These projects ranged from cultural heritage projects, to tourism zone improvement projects, to beach development projects, to training and quality assurance projects. Two of these projects were developed and, should funding be made available, will be implemented by the MTAC, one project made up of three components will be implemented by Heritage Malta, and six projects were submitted by MTA. This Directorate provided inputs to the project applicant to improve the quality of applications. The Directorate also provided advice to other entities (including St John's Co-Cathedral and the Institute for Tourism Studies) on the compilation of their project application.

Two schemes, to be implemented by the MTAC, were developed in 2007. The aim of these schemes targeting tourism projects by enterprises and by NGOs is to increase the competitiveness of tourism operators in Malta. The application form and guidance notes for applicants were developed during the year. Common eligibility and selection criteria were also developed and agreed upon by all entities which

will be running schemes during this programming period. This Directorate played a leading role in reaching a consensus amongst all such entities on common criteria which were then approved by the Monitoring Committee for Structural Funds 2007-2013 in December 2007.

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. During this year the Ministry monitored the Structural Funds projects 2004-2006 and implementation of the MTA Grant Scheme 2004-2006. During the months of September and October an IAID Audit was carried out on the MTA Grant Scheme. Absorption of the funds through the scheme is over 90%.
- Haġar Qim/Mnajdra Temples Conservation Project, implemented by Heritage Malta. This project is to be completed in 2008.
- Tourism product improvements: Crucifix Hill and Howard Gardens, implemented by MTA. This project has been completed.
- Training and Support Services Tourism: a programme implemented by MTA. This project was completed but additional funds were made available by the PPCD to extend the training programme.

The total value of these projects is over €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.

Other EU Funding

Information Provision

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 amongst tourism and cultural organisations and the audiovisual sector. Stakeholders were provided with guidance on the more appropriate funding opportunities for their project ideas.

Funding for Tourism - EDEN Project 2006/2007

The Directorate applied for funding to participate in the pilot project *European Destinations of Excellence (EDEN)*, co-financed by the European Commission. The project seeks “to draw attention to the value, diversity and shared characteristics of European tourist destinations and to promote destinations where the economic growth objective is pursued in such a way as to ensure the social, cultural and environmental sustainability of tourism”. Every year a theme is chosen - following a discussion at the Tourism Advisory Committee - for the European Destinations of Excellence. The first year's theme was ‘rural tourism’ whilst the second year's theme is ‘intangible heritage’. The Directorate submitted a project application and obtained funding for both themes.

The EDEN project focusing on rural tourism was implemented and finalised in 2007. Nadur won the award. The selected destination together with the other nine European awarded destinations has sent in an application for a grant for a thematic networking of twinned towns within the ‘Europe for Citizens’ 2007-2013 programme. This Programme supports thematic conferences and workshops involving at least three towns, developed within the framework of town twinning. These events should be milestones for networking and should encourage the development of a long-lasting, dynamic, multifaceted co-operation between twinned towns.

The signing of the contract for EDEN 2007 has been undertaken between the Ministry and the European Commission. Project implementation started off in December 2007 and is moving ahead in 2008. The year's theme of excellence is 'Tourism and Local Intangible Heritage'. Localities in Malta and Gozo which have developed a new tourism offer based on their specific local intangible heritage will have the possibility to compete at a national level and be selected as the 2007 destination of excellence. The national competition, open to all eligible destinations according to the selection criteria chosen, will take place in the first part of 2008. It is expected that the winning destination will be selected in June 2008. Eighteen European countries (Member States and candidate countries) are participating in this project, namely, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, Spain and Turkey.

In December, the Ministry met with the Local Councils Association to discuss possible co-operation between the Association and the project co-ordinators so as to encourage more local councils to apply for the recognition award, which is also being given its full support from the European Commission.

Rural Funding Programme 2007-2013

The Directorate is also seeking to tap the EAFRD. Meetings were held with Rural Development Unit officials on the new Rural Development Plan, where proposals by MTAC were discussed, and bases for future detailed discussions on processes and procedures for implementation of culture and tourism projects under this fund were set.

Funding for Culture and Audiovisuals

Cultural Contact Point (CCP)

The role of the CCP is to provide information on the EU's Culture programme. Given the new programming period, the EU's Culture programme has slightly changed. The Cultural Contact Point facilitates the participation in the programme for the widest number of cultural professionals and operators. Dissemination of information on the new Culture programme was the focus in 2007 as the differences between the old and the new programme had to be explained to potential applicants. This was mainly done through one-to-one meetings, information seminars, workshops, direct mailings and a website.

Media Desk

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. Information dissemination was mainly done through one-to-one meetings, information seminars, workshops, direct mailings and a website.

National Arts Fund and Film Fund

Following discussions with the Ministry of Finance, national funds were budgeted for a new National Arts Fund and for a new Film Fund. In 2007, intervention areas, eligibility and selection criteria were developed and consultation with key stakeholders commenced. These two very important funds will assist the further development of the cultural sector in Malta. The two funds are to be launched in 2008.

Year of Intercultural Dialogue

In 2007, the Directorate facilitated and provided guidance on Malta's submission for a project related to the Year of Intercultural Dialogue. The project was submitted by St James Cavalier and was accepted for funding. The project will be implemented in 2008.

EU Affairs - Legislative Proposals

EU 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, the environment, employment, financial perspectives and the internal market.

The major discussions and legislative proposals, in 2007, included the audiovisual media services directive, the inclusion of aviation in the emissions trading scheme, the review of the timeshare directive, the agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism, the European agenda for culture in a globalising world, UNESCO conventions, preparations for the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, the European Capital of Culture, the economy of culture report. In 2007 work commenced on the transposition of directives including the audiovisual media services directives and the services directive.

The Directorate was also active in its participation in the Tourism Advisory Committee and provided inputs to the discussions being held within the Tourism Sustainability Group.

Policy Development

National Tourism Policy and Plan

The Tourism Policy and Plan were approved late in 2006. In 2007, regular monitoring of the various tasks outlined in the plan and to be implemented by the various ministries and entities was carried out. Feedback on the implementation of the tourism plan was provided to the Inter-ministerial Committee for Tourism and to the Private Sector Consultative Group.

Culture Policy

The culture 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.

Most of the drafting of the culture policy was carried out in 2006 and in the first quarter of 2007. Initial consultations with stakeholders on the principles of the culture policy were carried out. Due to capacity constraints and other priorities, however, the culture policy was not finalised in 2007. The need for capacity building in this area was felt and a call for a manager on culture was issued.

Audiovisual Policy

In preparation for the compilation of a policy on audiovisuals, one-to-one consultation meetings were held with the various players in the audiovisual sector. A better understanding of the issues facing the audiovisual sector was obtained. This helped in identifying the needs of the sector and the initiatives and incentives that are required to facilitate the development of the audiovisual sector in Malta.

Euro Changeover

Several meetings and plenary sessions on the preparation of the euro changeover were attended and input and feedback on draft documents were provided. During September, meetings between MHRA members, NECC and MTAC were held to discuss the final preparations needed for the euro changeover. During the last three months of the year, the monitoring of the preparations and vigilance on the Ministry's entities continued and intensified.

Route Development Scheme

A third and fourth call for proposals to operate new or underserved routes were issued in April and in September 2007 respectively. The third call requested the development of routes to and from Spain, Portugal, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Italy and Germany. The routes were awarded to Ryanair for offers made for developing routes to and from Girona in Spain, Stockholm Nykoping in Sweden, Bari in Italy and Bremen in Germany. The fourth call focused on Venice in Italy and Ryanair was awarded the tender.

Customer Care

On a daily basis, a number of e-mails are received by the Customer Care Unit which efficiently replies to requests for information from the general public, potential visitors, tourists who have visited Malta, and tourism and cultural stakeholders.

FRANCIS ALBANI

Director (Tourism & Corporate Services)



**Ministry for Competitiveness
and Communications**

Department of Civil Aviation

REGULATORY WORK

The objectives of the Department of Civil Aviation as a regulator are to ensure that all aviation activities are carried out safely and in conformity with international standards that 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 the Malta International Airport 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, Eurojet and Europe Executive Jet Services. In addition, safety oversight is required with regard to aerial work 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 2007, 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 and the Civil Aviation (Route Charges for Navigation Services) Regulations 2002.

STAFF

In order to be able to manage effectively its regulatory mandate, the Department's regulatory division has a staff complement of 10 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. Four Language Specialists (Examiner) were recruited, one in June 2007 and the other three at the beginning of October 2007. Besides, in June 2007, a call for applications was issued to fill the post of Operations Officer (Air Navigation Services) and in August 2007, another call for applications was issued to fill the post of Operations Officer (Safety Regulation and Air Transport). By the end of 2007, the two successful candidates were selected and awaiting issue of appointment from the Management and Personnel Office.

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.

The Department of Civil Aviation also operates a 24-hour office in the Air Terminal of the Malta International Airport in which six Duty Management Officers work on a shift basis.

During 2007, 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 2007, the Personnel Licensing Section managed the following number of current licences issued by the Department:

- 148 JAR-FCL Airline Transport Pilot Licences (ATPL)
- 63 JAR-FCL Commercial Pilot Licences (CPL)
- 61 JAR-FCL Private Pilot Licences (PPL)
- 51 Air Traffic Controller Licences
- 56 Apron Controller Licences
- 32 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 home and overseas base, at outstations and in flight. Two additional operators were granted an Air Operator Certificate during 2007 bringing the total to six operators certified for commercial air transport operations

Other tasks included the approval of simulators and the checking of training Captains for the issue of simulator pilot 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 nine aircraft of foreign airlines were carried out in Malta as part of the Safety Assessment of Foreign Aircraft (SAFA) inspection programme. The Air Malta Type Rating Training Organisation was inspected during the period in association with the Personnel Licensing Section.

A number of Operating Standards Circulars were published by the Inspectorate throughout the period under review containing information and guidance to Air Operators.

Throughout 2007, the Inspectorate participated in the JAA Operations Sectoral Team meetings and the Air Safety Committee established by European Commission Regulation (EC) 3922/1991 on matters concerning the European blacklist, SAFA, Occurrence reporting and EU-OPS.

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 and variation 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 EASA on airworthiness standards;
- minor certification tasks on behalf of EASA;
- International Civil Aircraft Register.

During 2007, the Airworthiness Inspectorate issued four new Certificates of Airworthiness in respect of one Airbus A320 (9H-AFE), one DHC-8-300 (9H-AEY), one DHC-3T (9H-AFA) and one LR-60XR (9H-AFB), renewed 26 Airworthiness Review Certificates and issued two export conformity statements. Four new 'Permit to Fly' were issued for microlight aircraft and nine were renewed following inspections. 19 new Part-66 AML as well as four changes to Part-66 AML's were made. The Airworthiness Inspectorate issued three variations to the Medavia Part-145 approval and two variations to Medavia Part-M Subpart G approval. The various approvals (Part-145, Part-147 and Subpart G) continuous audit programmes were updated and accomplished according to plan and followed up. All in all, the Airworthiness Inspectorate accomplished 38 inspections, 20 desktop audits and 20 audits as part of its safety oversight in Malta and abroad. Ten SAFA inspections were also accomplished during 2007.

The Airworthiness Inspectorate issued four Operating Standard Circulars and updated its internal procedures and website.

The Malta Civil Airworthiness Requirements (MCAIR's) were re-written and approvals issued to Harbour Air (Malta) Limited as part of the AOC approval. The Airworthiness Inspectorate issued a PART-147 Aircraft Maintenance Training Organisation approval to AeroMaritime (Mediterranean) Limited. A Part-M Subpart G approval was also issued to European Executive Jet Services as part of the AOC approval.

The auditing process for the approval of MCAST Part-147 was also started. The Airworthiness Inspectorate started preparing Part-66 Modules multiple choice questions.

The Head of Airworthiness Inspectorate participated in the EASA Standardisation Visit Programme as Standardisation Audit team member. The EASA Standardisation Visit open findings were all closed. Airworthiness Inspectorate staff attended six meetings at EASA and the European Commission. The Airworthiness Inspector attended a training course on Quality Auditing.

AIR NAVIGATION SERVICES

The Air Navigation Services Section was heavily involved in normal day-to-day activities such as the management of aeronautical frequencies and the analysis and investigation of air traffic management incidents.

Following the implementation of the EC Regulation on common requirements for air navigation services providers, the Section carried out an extensive audit on the two air navigation services providers in Malta,

namely Malta Air Traffic Services Ltd and the Meteorological Office of Malta International Airport plc. Consequently, the Department was in a position to issue these two entities with certification which enable them to continue to provide their services within Malta and its Flight Information Region.

Other activities included participation in the various EUROCONTROL projects as well as the annual update of the Local Convergence and Implementation Plan and in the European Airports Database.

Other technical matters required for the approval of procedures that need to be used by air traffic control personnel were also dealt with as part of an ongoing process.

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 2007, six new aircraft were added to the Malta Register of Aircraft, consisting of three Airbus 320, one Learjet 60XR, one DHC-3 Turbine Otter, one DHC8-315 and four microlight aircraft. On the other hand, two aircraft were deleted from the Register, namely one Airbus 320 and one Airbus 319.

At the end of 2007, there were 51 aircraft (including 19 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, Barcelona, Belgrade, Benghazi, Berlin, Birmingham, Bristol, Brussels, Bucharest, Budapest, Cairo, Casablanca, Catania, Cluj, Cologne, Dijon, Dubai, Dublin, Dusseldorf, East Midlands, Frankfurt, Geneva, Gerona, Glasgow, Hamburg, Innsbruck, Istanbul, Kiev, Larnaca, Lisbon, Liverpool, London Gatwick, London Heathrow, Luton, Luxembourg, Lyons, Madrid, Manchester, Marseille, Milan Malpensa, Monastir, Moscow, Munich, Nantes, Naples, Newcastle, Norwich, Nuremburg, Oslo, Palermo, Paris Orly, Pisa, Porto, Prague, Reggio Calabria, Rome, Sofia, Stansted, Stockholm, Toulouse, Tripoli, Tunis, Venice, Warsaw and Zurich.

The scheduled carriers operating at Malta were Aerosvit, Air Berlin, Air Malta, Alitalia, Central Wings, Clickair, Condor, Emirates, Excel, Finnair, GB Airways, Germania Airlines, German Wings, JAT, Libyan Arab Airlines, Lufthansa, Luxair, Ryanair, SAS, Transavia and Tuninter. Austrian Airlines and LOT operated codeshare flights with Lufthansa. SN Brussels Airlines operated codeshare flights with Airmalta.

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 2006 was 2,117,323 whilst the corresponding number of passengers for 2007 was 2,453,962. With regard to non-scheduled flights, the number of passengers who travelled on non-scheduled flights during 2006 was 574,696 whilst the corresponding number of passengers for 2007 was 516,868. From these figures, it can be noted that the increase in the number of passengers who travelled on scheduled flights far more outweighs the decrease in the number of passengers who travelled on non-scheduled flights.

COMPUTERISATION

During 2007, the Department continued with its plans to procure new computers to replace obsolete equipment and to standardise the computer software in use. In addition, access to Internet was expanded to cover all officers dealing with technical matters and to some administration staff. In this regard, mention must be made of the financial support given for the computerisation work by the Ministry's Directorate of Corporate Services and the invaluable assistance by MITTS. Full computerisation of the Department has been achieved.

The department website www.dca.gov.mt has now been in use since July 2003 and has proved extremely useful. In 2007, it averaged 4,387 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 2007, department personnel participated in various EU related meetings, JAA Committees and in EUROCONTROL and ECAC meetings.

ANTHONY GATT
A/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 Registration 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 councils;
- 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 FOR 2007

Trade-Related

During 2007, 394 applications were received for a licence for premises-based activities, 21 to register a commercial activity in licensed commercial premises, 131 for street hawkers, 78 for market hawkers, 97 applications were lodged to register a personal commercial activity which is not premises-based or

hawking, 46 for commercial fairs, 92 for change of licensed activity and 316 for cancellations, 421 for a business to business transfer, 19 for a transfer by inheritance and 25 for car boot sales. In addition 1,339 applications were received for import licences while 33 were filed in respect of export licences.

Industrial Property-Related

During 2007, 1,200 applications were received for registration of trademarks, 180 for registration of designs and 180 for the patenting of inventions. Furthermore there were 1,070 Industrial Property searches.

Crafts

Members registered with the Malta Crafts Council as on 31 December 2007 stood at 806 craftsmen and 429 entrepreneurs. Visitors (including locals and tourists) to a local exhibition of crafts at Crafts Centre, Valletta were 27,292.

ASSISTING BUSINESS

Business Care Unit

The Commerce Division through the Business Care Unit of the Small Business and Crafts Directorate continued to give first-hand assistance and advice to clients who required any service offered by the Division as well as to receive complaints from small businesses in respect of excessive bureaucracy and inefficiencies by service providers.

During 2007, around 2,000 telephone enquiries and 3,000 personal visits were received at the Business Care Unit, related mainly to services offered by the Commerce Division.

Outreach Activities

During 2007, a total number of 39 meetings 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.

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 45 enquiries during 2007. Out of these, 41 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 2007, the Division organised a number of 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 several seminars or meetings aimed at raising awareness amongst local stakeholders concerning import control, non-proliferation of arms, intellectual property, crafts and SOLVIT and the Internal Market Information System.

The intensive awareness campaign on Intellectual Property carried out in 2006 as a result of the implementation of an EU project under Transitional Facility Funds was extended to 2007 with students as the primary target.

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-Ghana*, the *Notte Bianca*. Malta Lace Day and Malta Day UK. These initiatives were complemented by articles and adverts in local newspapers as well as billboards.

The European Enterprise Award

In 2007, the Division organised the National Award *Inheggu n-Negożju* launched by the Ministry for Competitiveness and Communications to:

- identify and recognise successful activities and initiatives undertaken to promote enterprise and entrepreneurship;
- showcase and share examples of best entrepreneurship policies and practices;
- create a higher awareness of the role entrepreneurs play in society; and
- encourage and inspire potential entrepreneurs.

The entity chosen was then nominated to participate in the European Enterprise Award competition organised by the European Commission, to recognise and reward outstanding initiatives that support entrepreneurship at regional level.

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 Trade Marks Act; the Copyright Act and the Patents and Designs Act. These are complemented with a significant amount of subsidiary legislations.

The Trading Licence Regulations LN 1 of 2006 were amended in 2007 in respect of commercial activities licensed by the Commerce Division through the Trading Licences Unit of its Trade Services Directorate via:

- *LN7 of 2007* which introduced provisions enabling the Trading Licensing Unit of the Commerce Division to lay down conditions when issuing trading licences and to introduce the possibility for the licensing of Grain Silos. This was complemented by another Legal Notice which introduced regulations under the supplies and Services Act aimed at controlling the operations of grain storage facilities and penalising non conformers with a view to enhance safety, hygiene and competition.
- *LN186 of 2007* which *inter alia* reduced from eight weeks to ten days the time the Trading Licences Unit of the Commerce Division takes to notify the applicant of its decision from date of application.
- *LN235 of 2007* which provided for temporary arrangements for trading licence holders during the course of litigations.
- *LN366 of 2007* which removed the discrepancy where a premises-based commercial activity was charged a higher licensing fee than one of a similar size simply because it was based in a different locality and an additional incentive for business operating in Gozo. This was accomplished by: (i) replacing a locality-based system of calculating licensing fees with one based on the size of the footprint of premises used for a commercial activity which is non manufacturing; (ii) equating the trading licences fee in respect of commercial premises used for manufacturing purposes to 5% of rental value subject to a minimum fee of Lm20 irrespective of their locality. This replaced the old system which had trading

licence fees equal to up to 8% of their rental value depending on their locality; and (iii) introducing a 25% discount for premises-based commercial activities situated in Gozo.

Further to the above, LN98 and LN99 brought into force regulations concerning patenting procedures resulting from Malta's accession to the Patent Co-operation Treaty and the European Patent Convention in March 2007.

INTERNATIONAL AND EU INITIATIVES

International Instruments

In March 2007, Malta acceded to the Patent Co-operation Treaty which is administered by the World Intellectual Property Organisation and which enables a national/resident of a contracting state to file one international application in one language with the national office, designating in which of the 138 PCT countries the applicant desires protection, paying one set of fees.

The international application is subjected to what is called an "international search" with a view to providing the applicant a listing of the citations of published documents that might affect the patentability of the invention claimed in the international application. In addition, a preliminary and non-binding, written opinion on whether the invention appears to meet the patentability criteria in light of the search report results is also issued. The applicant would thus get an indication of the chances he has of being granted a patent in designated countries. It is only in those countries where the applicant wishes the procedure to enter the national phase that he/she must pay the national fees.

In March 2007, Malta concurrently acceded to the European Patent Convention. Under its system of intergovernmental co-operation, it is possible for any legal person to file a single patent application in one of three official languages (English, French and German), and thereby obtain a patent with effect in one or more of its contracting states which currently number 34. The term, scope of protection and grounds of revocation are the same for all contracting states thereby providing harmonisation of protection and facilitating maintenance of the patent in the different states.

Participation in EU and International Meetings

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, the European Charter for SMEs, 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, Regulation 2679/98 EC on Disruption to the Internal Market and the European Conference on Crafts.

In addition to the above, the Division participated in the General Assembly of the World Intellectual Property Organisation and the meetings of the Administrative Council of the European Patent Office and of the Administrative Board and Budget Committee of the Office of the Harmonisation of the Internal Market. As from last year Commerce Division also began participating in the EPO's Budget and Finance Committee, the Working Party on Patents and the Working Party on Technical Information.

EU and International Meetings Held in Malta

European Judges Seminar

The Office for the Harmonisation of the Internal Market (Trademarks and Designs) with the assistance of the Commerce Division held a seminar for Maltese Judges and Judges from other European States on Community Trademarks and Community Design issues.

Assembly of the World Crafts Council Europe

The Malta Crafts Council with the assistance of the Commerce Division organised the convening of the World Crafts Council Europe. This was complemented by a one-week workshop held in Gozo for local and foreign craftsmen. The workshop was conducted by a renowned Danish artisan and was aimed at promoting new techniques in filigree craftsmanship.

BILATERAL CO-OPERATION INITIATIVES

Co-operation with the Office for the Harmonisation of the Internal Market (Trademarks and Designs)

During 2007, the Commerce Division benefited from a Co-operation agreement aimed at increasing awareness on intellectual property rights and in particular the Community Trademarks and Community Designs. Discussions with a view to concluding a similar agreement for 2008 were also initiated.

Co-operation with the European Patent Office

A new IT system for Patents financed by the EPO went live in Malta last year.

In addition, following representations made by the Commerce Division the Administrative Council of the European Patent Organisations approved that in 2008: (i) Malta will receive assistance aimed at promoting the protection of inventions and patent information dissemination; and (ii) Malta will be in a position to request searches from the European Patent Office to determine the level of novelty in patent applications.

Co-operation with EU DG Enterprise

The Commerce Division joined 23 other partners in a project funded under the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme aimed at creating work packages intended to promote greater use of the IPR system by SMEs.

TRAINING

Officials from the Directorate attended various courses organised by the SDO during the past year as well as *ad hoc* seminars organised by the Division on social issues and health related topics such as cancer prevention, skin cancer and nutrition .

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.

GODWIN WARR

Director General (Commerce)

Consumer and Competition Division

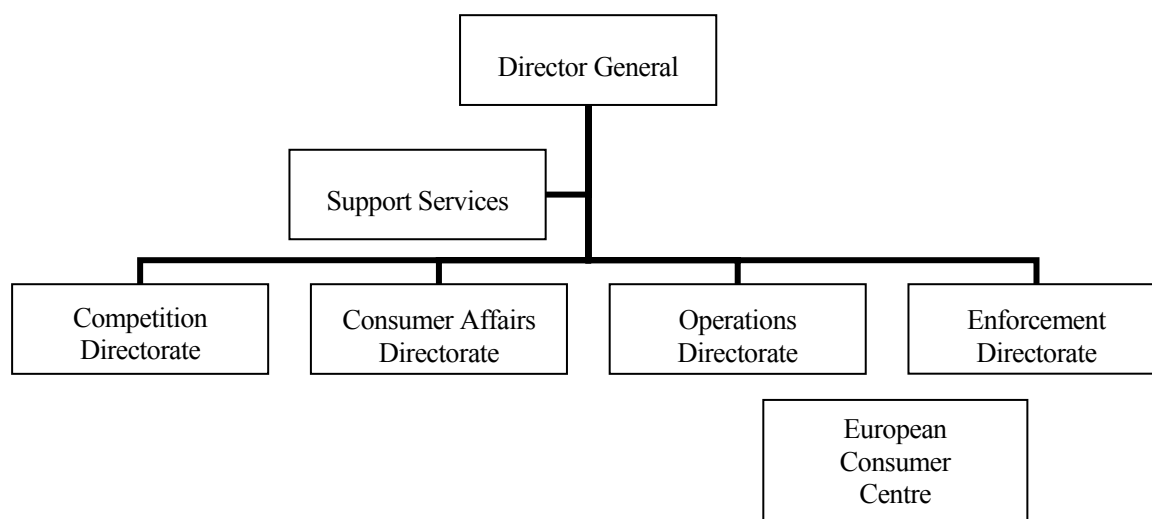
ORGANISATION STRUCTURE

The Consumer and Competition Division incorporates within it, the Office for Fair Competition and the Department of Consumer Affairs. The Division operates through four Directorates namely:

- the **Competition Directorate** which is responsible for the application and enforcement of competition law and intervenes in the market when necessary;
- the **Consumer Affairs Directorate** which, in turn, is responsible for the application and enforcement of Consumer legislation and for mediating between consumers and traders and disseminating information regarding consumers' rights;
- the **Operations Directorate**, responsible for monitoring the market when necessary and maintains an ongoing dialogue with the relevant stakeholders in the medicinals sector to ensure reasonable pricing; and
- the **Enforcement Directorate** responsible, for the enforcement of the price indications, the dual display and Euro pricing regulations and price monitoring.

The Division is also the host structure for the European Consumer Centre in Malta, an office jointly funded with the European Commission, whose aim is to inform and assist consumers with cross-border complaints.

Organigram



COMPETITION DIRECTORATE

The Competition Directorate carries out the tasks of the Office for Fair Competition within the Division.

As from 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.

The Competition Directorate is responsible for handling complaints and carrying out investigations regarding potential infringements of competition legislation. The Directorate advises the Director General regarding the exercise of her 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 and the Permanent Secretary on competition policy in general. It also tenders advice to, and actively co-ordinates with other public authorities, constituted bodies, traders and consumers.

The Directorate pursued with the transposition of the Unfair Business to Consumer Commercial Practices Directive (2005/29/EC) to become part of Maltese legislation. It drafted amendments to the Consumer Affairs Act (Cap. 378) and conducted a consultation process with interested stakeholders in order to discuss proper and timely implementation of the Directive. All the necessary amendments were included in Bill 112 of 2007. Furthermore, the Directorate also conducted discussions to introduce further amendments in the Consumer Affairs Act in order to widen the basis for appeal from decisions of the Consumer Claims' Tribunal, render such decisions, if not honoured, an offence, and an increase in moral damages which a consumer can claim.

The Directorate has also proposed a number of amendments in the Competition Act 1994 to address certain lacunae which have become evident in the course of its past experience in carrying out its functions under the Act. These amendments should improve the Office's investigative and decision-making powers. The amendments propose to introduce the power of the Office to issue interim measures, a power hitherto solely enjoyed by the Commission for Fair Trading, the power to accept commitments proposed by undertakings, and the power to impose administrative fines.

During 2007, the Directorate was also responsible for the drafting of other legislative instruments, which included the revision of the Regulations on Control of Concentrations, which were amended by LN 49 of 2007 of 13 March 2007. The purpose behind these amendments was to reduce the regulatory burdens on the industry as part of the Better Regulations exercise and also to align the Office for Fair Competition with the International Competition Network Merger Guidelines.

The Directorate continued to participate in various seminars through papers presented by its legal officers.

Competition Complaints

During 2007, a total of 24 cases were investigated by the Office for Fair Competition, 18 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 2007 concerned primarily:

- concerted practices and/or abuse of dominance in the inland fuel market;
- abuse of dominance and discriminatory conditions in the aviation fuel market;
- abuse of dominance in the transport sector;
- an abuse of dominance in the communications sector;
- an abuse concerning predatory pricing in the pet food market;
- restrictive practices concerning the yachting and berthing sector;
- an abuse of dominance in the theatre market by the tying of the theatre to the sales of tickets;
- an abuse of dominance in the waste sector;
- an abuse of dominance and determination of "undertaking" in the public transport sector;
- restrictive practices concerning the supply of ice-creams to retailers;

- discriminatory codes of practice as regards the approval of licences in the transport sector;
- abuse of dominance in the pricing of bottled water at the Malta International Airport;
- investigation concerning tomato prices in supermarkets; and
- investigation concerning abuse of dominance in the flour market.

Decisions

In 2007, the Office for Fair Competition delivered six decisions. One decision concerned alleged concerted practices in terms of Article 5 of the Competition Act, three decisions concerned alleged abuses of dominance under Article 9 of the Competition Act, and two decisions concerned infringements of both Articles 5 and 9. Five cases were considered inadmissible on grounds of no jurisdiction or lack of evidence. The decisions issued, amongst others, concerned the imposition of unfair terms and conditions in the provision of tug services, the sale and retailing of fuels, and the flour market. In one case, the Office submitted a request for an interim measure before the Commission for Fair Trading, which was granted. A letter decision on alleged predatory pricing as to scientific court experts fees was issued. In this case the Office had no jurisdiction as it was a state aid case.

Concentrations

In 2007, the Office received 12 notifications submitted to it under the Control of Concentrations Regulations 2002. Nine 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 concerned the hotel and accommodations market, the ice-cream market, the communications market, the security services and IT market, the LPG market, the ambient foods market, and the pay-TV market.

Market Studies

The Office for Fair Competition also actively investigates markets that do not appear to be in conformity with the Competition Act. Market studies were conducted not only in areas where there were concerns that a particular market is not working well for consumers but where competition does not appear to be performing in an appropriate manner. In this respect, the Directorate conducted a series of sectoral investigations in the following markets: cereals (concerning an alleged concerted practice between undertakings); commission rates for hawkers and jobbers; pay-TV; and cheese and butter.

National Reform Programme

The Directorate participated in meetings held with the European Commission to discuss the status of the Second Progress Report on the National Reform Programme, in particular, the outstanding issues and missing information from a number of line ministries regarding measures and specific issues with regard to assessment of progress achieved in the implementation of the Lisbon objectives.

The European Commission had identified a number of areas as requiring further action, these being:

- strengthening of the Competition Authority;
- strengthening of competition in the professional services;
- issue of leniency.

Advice Tendered

Tendering advice continues to be another important aspect of the work carried out by the Directorate. In 2007, 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;
- selective distribution agreements;
- rental of shops in a particular market;
- joint venture in the food market;
- exclusivity in the EU.

Within the framework of the Blueskies scheme, officials within the Directorate discussed and vetted the Call for Expression of Interest and Agreement between the Ministry for Investment, Industry and Information Technology and Broadband Service Providers to address competition concerns.

Relations with Local Authorities/Organisations

During 2007 the Directorate maintained, and enhanced, the established practice of holding informative meetings with sector specific regulatory authorities. A number of 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.

Furthermore, the Directorate established contact and maintained regular meetings with the Consumers' Association and the General Retailers and Traders Union. Links with specific market operators have also been established and ongoing contact was maintained in order to enable the Directorate to assess the behaviour of such markets.

Relations with the European Commission and other Competition Authorities

The Office for Fair Competition continued to participate 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 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. Links with the UK Office for Fair Trading were enhanced and topics of mutual interest were brought up for discussion during a visit by officials from the Directorate.

Participation in Conferences – Local and Foreign

On a local level, the Directorate actively participated through the presentation of a number of papers in a conference on Legal Framework for ICTs held in May 2007.

In the meantime, the Directorate kept up with its international commitments by participating at a number of seminars such as:

- Oral hearing case of Microsoft (Brussels – March 2007);
- ICN Merger Workshop (Dublin – April 2007);
- Meeting for Competition Chief Economists, ECN Working Group (April 2007);
- ECN Pharma sub-group meeting (Brussels – May 2007);
- ECN Meeting on national Competition law convergence (Brussels – May 2007);

- Competition among Multiproduct Platforms – 2nd Lear Conference on Economics of Competition Law – which dealt with companies that operate in multi-sided markets and offer “multiproduct platforms” (Rome – June 2007);
- Econometrics Workshop (Rome – June 2007);
- ECN Plenary meeting (Brussels – July 2007).

Twinning Light Project

The Directorate also developed a Twinning Light Project, the purpose of which was to address the capacity building of the Division, to monitor and enforce compliance with Council Regulation 1/2003 of 16 December 2002 on the implementation of the rules on competition laid down in Articles 81 and 82 of the Treaty, and legislation related to the adoption of the Euro.

Capacity Building

The Competition Directorate, following internal discussions, assessed its role and future challenges. For this purpose it set itself a set of specific targets. It is evident that the aim of the Directorate is not only to meet the current levels of demands through the numerous complaints lodged at the Office, but also to play a significant role through market monitoring and analysis. It is a fact that the current levels of human resources were not enough to meet these targets and in order to achieve this the Directorate also dedicated much of its efforts to address lacunae and seek ways and means how to significantly strengthen itself in order to meet the requirements of the tasks that lay ahead. It conducted research and collaborated with authorities abroad in order to conduct such assessment which enabled the Directorate to reach its conclusions. Efforts were also directed to strengthen significantly the legal, economic and accounting streams involved in Competition Policy. Furthermore, an effort was made to sustain the enforcement aspect of the Competition Act and enhance the capability of market analysis of specific markets of the Directorate. To this effect, calls of applications were issued to recruit Senior Case Officers, Economists, an Accountant, a Pharmaceutical Manager and an Operations Manager.

EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE - MALTA

The European Consumer Centre of Malta (ECC) is part of the European Consumer Centres network with offices throughout all EU Member States, Iceland and Norway. The underlying objective of the network is to enhance consumer confidence in the Internal Market through the provision of information to consumers and by providing assistance with any cross-border complaints consumers might have.

Administration and Organisational Developments

The Consumer and Competition Division successfully re-applied for a grant from the European Commission, for the period 2007-2008, to operate the European Consumer Centre (ECC) in Malta. After submitting the Final Report for the ECC for 2006, the Division elected to revamp and re-launch the ECC to accentuate its due importance. The Grant agreement, which provides 50% of the costs of the ECC, was signed by the Consumer and Competition Division as the host structure for the ECC and the European Commission in September 2007.

New premises were identified and restructured to house the ECC and also to accommodate the Consumers' Association as part of Government's commitment to strengthen the consumer lobby in Malta. A manager was specifically appointed to manage and administer ECC Malta.

The new offices, situated at 47A South Street, Valletta were opened on 10 September 2007 by Commissioner Meglena Kuneva, EU commissioner for Consumer Protection, and the Hon Ċensu Galea, Minister for Competitiveness and Communications.

Also on 10 September 2007, the Commission launched an information campaign for consumers in Malta. ECC Malta played a fundamental role in the operation of this campaign as the Centre's contact details appeared on all campaign materials as the entity to contact for more information. In fact, most queries and requests for information generated by the campaign were handled by the ECC with the national requests requiring more detailed advice being signposted to the Consumer and Competition Division.

The relocation and overhaul of the administration and complement of the ECC necessitated the attention of the management of the Division and the ECC to ensure the long-term stability and success of the Centre in Malta.

Once operating from 'Consumer House', the ECC focused mainly on the complaints component of its work plan. As the office was being promoted by the Commission's campaign, it was decided that additional advertising commissioned directly by the ECC would not have provided any added value at that particular moment in time as the Centre was enjoying substantial coverage (newspapers, radio, billboards and leaflets). The human resources available were put to more effective use in dealing directly with consumers with the aim of enhancing consumer confidence both in the new ECC and in the internal market.

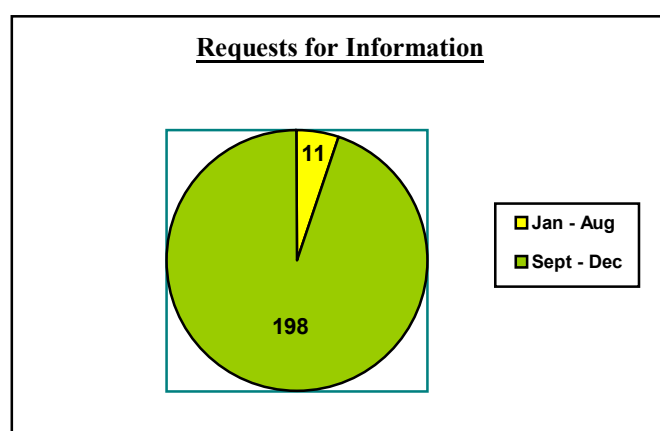
Requests for Information and Complaints

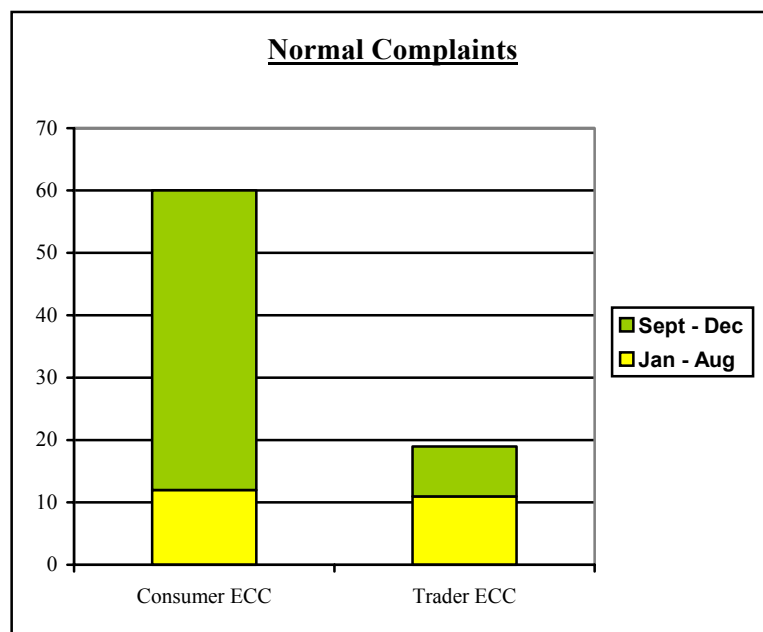
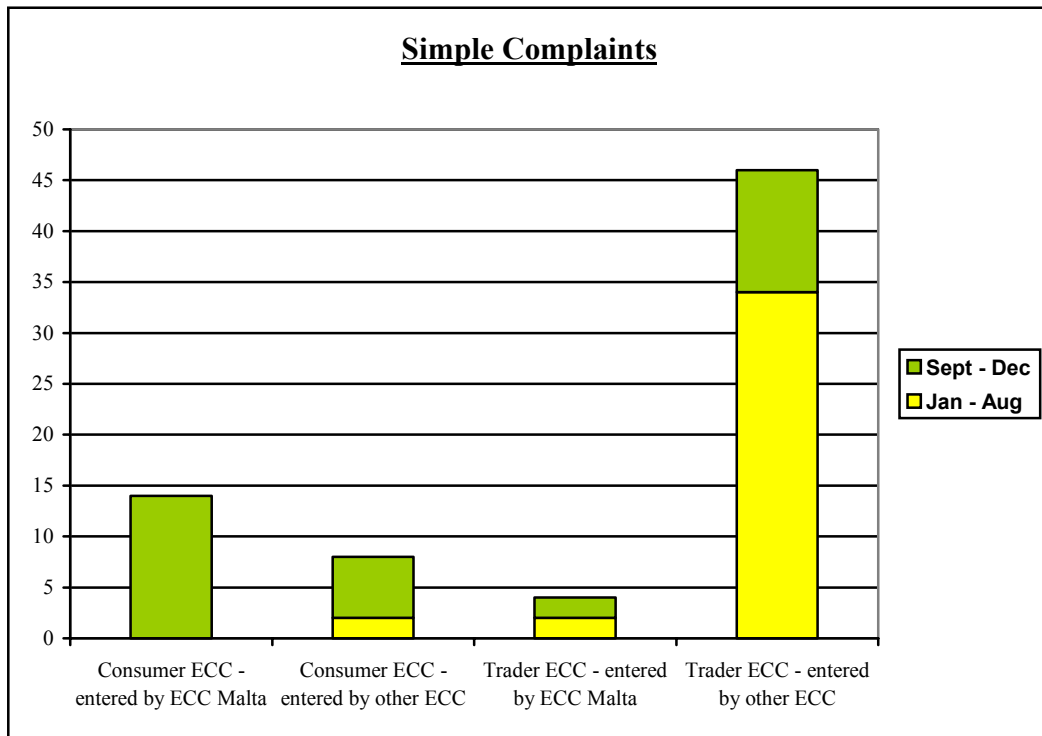
The queries ECC Malta handles are classified as follows:

- Requests for information (any query by a consumer regarding a national or cross-border consumer issue not related to a complaint).
- Simple complaints (a statement of dissatisfaction by a consumer concerning a cross-border transaction with a seller or a supplier which requires no follow-up by an ECC, that is, a one-step operation).
- Normal complaints (a statement of dissatisfaction by a consumer concerning a cross-border transaction with a seller or a supplier in which a further intervention by the trader ECC is needed).

ECC Malta, in 2007, handled:

- 209 information requests; 198 in the period September to December (furthermore ECC Malta received a large number of requests for information generated by the Commission's information campaign in the last quarter of 2007).
- 72 simple complaints; 34 in the period September to December.
- 78 normal complaints; 56 in the period September to December.





Main Operational Targets Achieved

- ECC Malta participated in a joint project on Tourism in the Mediterranean with other Centres of the network in 2007 that will continue throughout 2008. This involves the drafting of a set of eight leaflets on various aspects of tourism and the organisation of a Conference in Torremolinos, Spain, which was held in September 2007.
- ECC Malta also contributed to the ECC-Net Air Passenger Complaints Report 2006, launched in Brussels in December 2007, by submitting its complaints statistics relating to air passenger complaints for 2006.
- ECC Malta is also a campaign associate for the ‘You Choose!’ campaign on the opening up of energy and gas markets.

- The ECC launched its website also in September, www.eccnetmalta.gov.mt, which is gradually being updated with news and other information.
- A pocket-sized leaflet and matching posters explaining the work of the ECC were drafted and are currently in print. These will be distributed to the public to enhance the Centre's visibility to consumers.
- In Malta there are currently no notified ADR bodies; two centres offering mediation and arbitration services have, however, been identified. The ECC is planning to meet these centres at the beginning of 2008 to encourage them to get notification status as ADR bodies for the purposes of the ECC Network.
- ECC Malta will also be participating in the 'Europe Close to You' fair to be organised by the EC Representation in Malta, from 9 to 12 January 2008 in collaboration with the National Euro Changeover Committee, highlighting the introduction of the Euro on 1 January 2008. The fair will take place over four days and is being held in Freedom Square, Valletta. The ECC participated in a number of meetings with the organisers during 2007.
- ECC Malta, through the Division, actively participated in discussions with the Broadcasting Authority in the application of the distance selling regulations and the Broadcasting Act vis-à-vis teleshopping.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS DIRECTORATE

The main functions of the Directorate are the following:

- dealing with consumer complaints which could be amicably settled with the trader;
- dealing with enquiries on consumer issues in an informative and expeditious manner;
- carrying out an ongoing educational campaign to ensure that all players in the market are aware of their rights and obligations;
- monitoring EU developments in the field of consumer protection;
- enforcement of the Consumer Protection *acquis*.

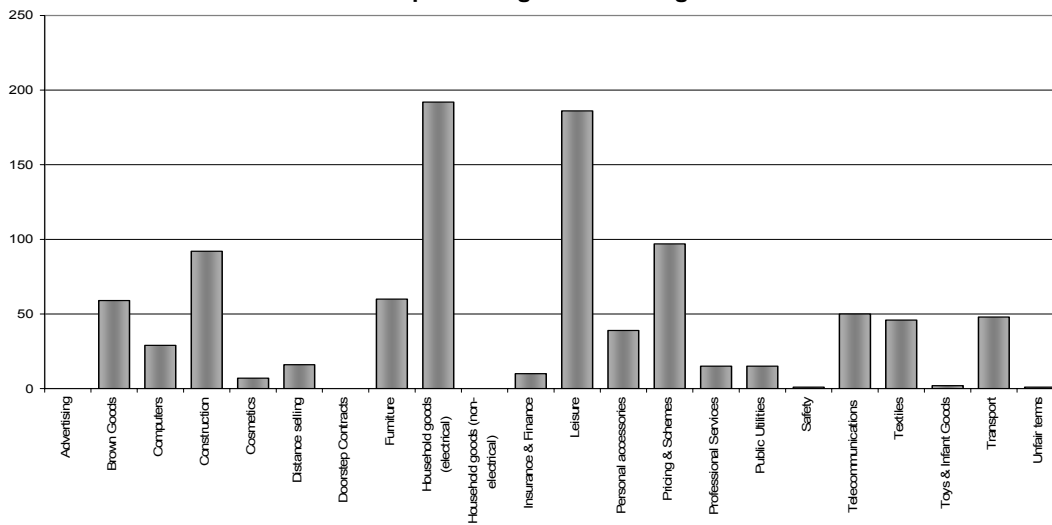
Consumer Complaints

Mediation, as stipulated by Section 23 (4) (a) of the Consumer Affairs Act, was initiated on 965 formal complaints which had been registered with this Division, together with 107 which had been brought forward as complaints that had still not been concluded in 2006. By the end of the year, 1,014 complaints were dealt with and were concluded as follows: (i) mediation was successful in 391 cases; (ii) 193 cases were either withdrawn or else not followed up by complainants; (iii) no amicable settlement was reached in 430 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 2007 there were 58 cases still pending which were therefore carried forward to 2008.

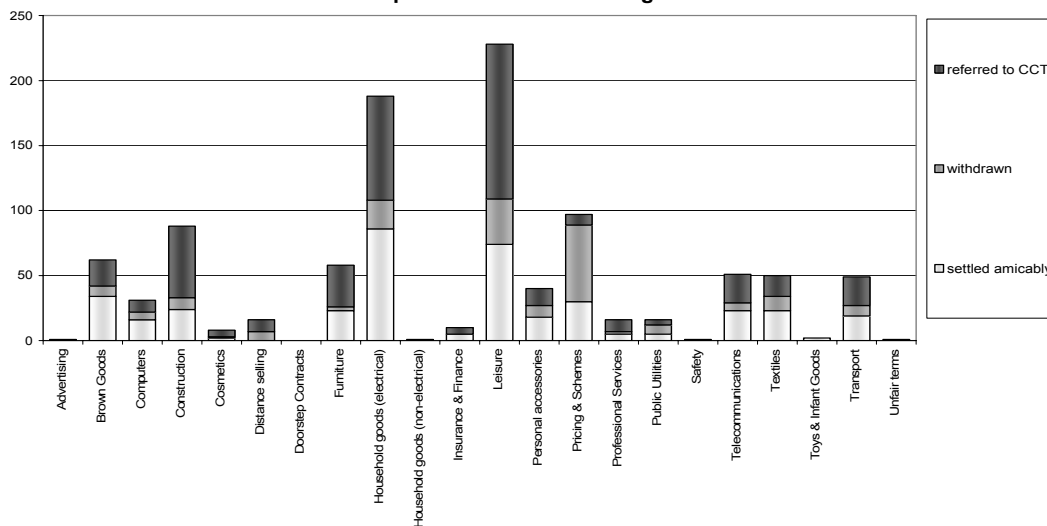
An analysis of the complaints shows that between 2006 and 2007 there was an increase of 126 cases that were registered with the Directorate by consumers. Between 2006 and 2007, the number of cases carried forward decreased from 107 at the end of 2006 to 58 at the end of 2007. There was also an increase in those cases that were settled amicably from 267 in 2006 to 391 in 2007. During 2007, the highest number of registered complaints was attributed to electrical household goods (192) and leisure (186). The cases attributed to electrical household goods also were the highest attributable to cases that were settled through mediation (86) while those complaints attributed to leisure registered the highest that were referred to the Consumer Claims Tribunal (119).

At the Gozo Office, 64 complaints were registered and 203 enquiries were made; 24 complaints were referred to the Consumer Claims Tribunal.

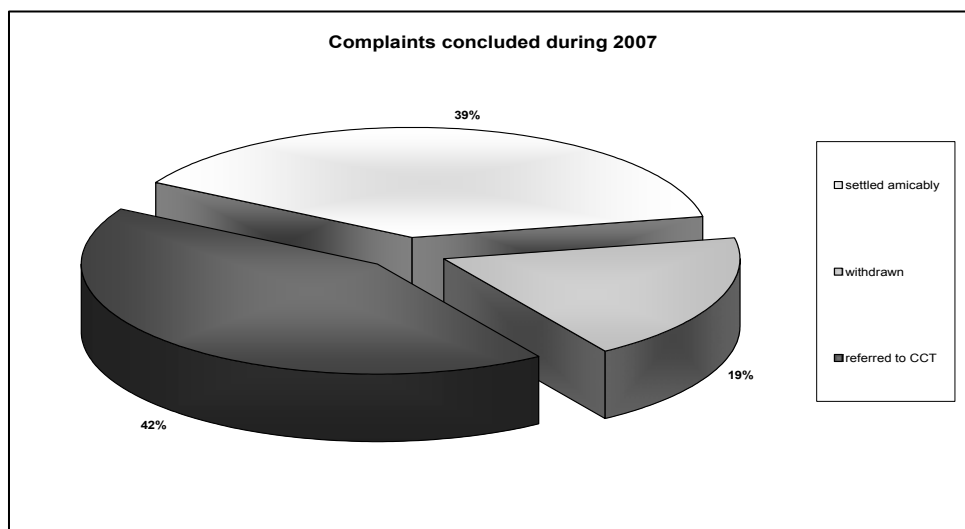
Complaints registered during 2007



Complaints concluded during 2007



Complaints concluded during 2007



Enforcement of Consumer Protection Legislation

During the year, 58 cases were handled and investigated by the Directorate. These included 35 cases of misleading advertising, 15 cases of unfair commercial practices and eight cases of misleading information. Besides the investigation of these cases, the Directorate was also consulted on a number of Directives namely the Injunctions Directive, the Consumer Credit and the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive.

Freephone

The Freephone service was again widely used by the general public to seek advice and lodge complaints. Consumers 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.

Consumer Education

The Directorate also continued with its role of providing information to consumers through the media. During the last year (October 2006 to October 2007) the Directorate participated in 229 radio and television programmes. In October 2007, the Directorate was given a daily three minute slot on Radio Malta to present and produce a question and answer programme for consumers entitled *Id-Drittijiet tal-Konsumatur*, the programme is aired at 12.30 pm, with a repetition at 8.15 pm.

The radio and television programmes included 125 radio programmes and 104 television programmes that were screened on: Channel 22 (22 PM); Net Television (*Bongu Net*, *Donne* and *La Qomna Qomna*); Television Malta (*Bongu*); One Television (*Tant Ieħor*); Radio Hompesch and Radio Cottoner; Radio 101; RTK and Radio Malta.

As part of the ongoing awareness campaign for schools, the Directorate has carried out various presentations for senior schoolchildren at public and private secondary schools. A total of 55 talks were delivered by information officers from this office (October 2006 – October 2007).

Once again, the Directorate was the National Partner to the EU funded project *Europa Diary*. This initiative, which is administered by Generation Europe (Brussels), produces the diary which is “localised” by each National Partner but which also includes useful information about the European Union, sustainable policy development issues and environmental awareness subjects. Over two million copies were prepared and distributed throughout the 27 Member States and 11,000 diaries were distributed to more than 60 schools in Malta and Gozo. The diaries were free of charge and designed for senior schoolchildren at secondary level.

The publication of the Newsletter *Fair Deal* continued to be issued and distributed.

During 2007, the Directorate delivered a number of talks and presentations to secondary schools as well as to commercial entities and trade union organisations. The purpose of these talks was to create a synergistic mechanism between consumer related and trade related groups which are essential elements in creating a successful competitive environment within the local marketplace.

Activities/Competitions

On the occasion of World Consumer Rights Day, the Directorate once again organised an activity at St Aloysius College Hall in B’Kara.

During 2007, 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 World Consumer Rights Day in March 2008.

Service Standards

In order to enhance its efficiency, and provide a better service to consumers, this Directorate maintained the criteria set out by the Quality Service Charter that gives its staff the responsibility to meet the established 15 day target within which complaints are dealt with and settled.

EU Affairs

Officials within the Division participated in EU Commission meetings regarding the following EU directives: Consumer Credit; Green Paper on the Review of the Consumer *acquis*; and Unfair Commercial Practices Directive.

Consumer Credit

Consumer Credit is currently regulated under Council Directive 87/102/EEC as subsequently amended. A Proposal was adopted by the Commission for a Directive of the Parliament and of the Council on harmonisation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States for credit for consumers. During the past year, Malta has actively participated in the Council Working Party on Consumer Protection and Information meetings, discussing the proposal for a Consumer Credit Directive.

Green Paper on the Review of the Consumer *Acquis*

The Commission launched the Review of the Consumer *Acquis* in 2004 with the objective to better achieve its Better Regulation goals by simplifying and completing the existing regulatory framework. The Review covers eight directives aimed at protecting consumers: Sale of consumer goods and guarantees (99/44/EC); Price indication (98/6/EC); Injunctions (98/27/EC); Distance selling (97/7/EC); Timeshare (94/47/EC); Unfair contract terms (93/13/EC); Package Travel (90/314/EC); Doorstep selling (85/577/EC). Officials from the Division participated in meetings in line with this process.

Unfair Commercial Practices Directive

The Unfair Commercial Practices Directive (UCPD) aims at *fully harmonising* the EU requirements relating to business-to-consumer commercial practices thus providing a high level of consumer protection. This means that Member States will not be able to impose additional requirements in the field regulated by this Directive, thus contributing to the proper functioning of the Internal Market. The Directive only protects the economic interests of the consumer and not other interests such as health and safety. Business-to-business commercial practices and matters of taste, decency and social responsibility are not covered by the Directive. This Directive was eventually transposed into Maltese legislation in early 2008.

Services Directive

During 2007, the Directorate also formed part of the inter-ministerial working group to screen and align the Doorstep Contracts Act (Cap. 317) with the Services Directive. The purpose of this is to strengthen the fundamental EU freedom of provision of services and persons.

International Co-operation

The Directorate conducted an Internet sweep together with the European Commission and through the Consumer Protection Network at the end of September 2007 to flag suspicious sites for further scrutiny or, if need be, follow-up actions. By using Internet search engines, authorities from all European Member States had the task to check air ticket selling sites for any misleading practice.

The main purpose of this sweep exercise was to identify practices infringing national consumer protection law, notably misleading information and unfair contract terms.

During this exercise two sites were flagged for misleading information. Both sites had an advert promoting thousands, even millions, of free seats but when checked it resulted that there were no free seats available even though the sweeper tried numerous dates. When available flights were found, none of these were completely free of charge.

International Contacts

In order to keep abreast of developments in the area of Consumer Protection, officials from the Directorate attended meetings held abroad. The Directorate kept in touch with various UK entities 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.

Officials from the Directorate participated in the following meetings:

- Meeting organised by DG Sanco for CFPC delegates to endorse the budgetary projections for the Consumer Protection (Brussels – January 2007);
- Consumer Protection Network meeting was convened and focused on those aspects of Consumer Policy that enhance consumer protection (Brussels – February 2007);
- Consumer Citizenship Network Conference (Sofia, Bulgaria – June 2007);
- Consumer Protection Network (Brussels – September 2007);
- CPN meeting on the Consumer Scoreboard (Lisbon – November 2007).

ENFORCEMENT DIRECTORATE

Information System

An information system was developed by the Directorate to enforce the Price Indication Regulations and to carry out assessments on price movements. This also permits that the data collected by the Directorate's Market Surveillance Officers be analysed.

Price Indication Regulations

Scope

Price transparency is an essential requisite in protecting consumer rights. This allows for consumers to compare prices amongst sellers. Every Price Indication required in terms of these regulations has to be displayed in a manner which is unambiguous, easily identifiable and clearly legible. Sellers must clearly display the full price of all goods for sale to consumers.

Inspections

The Directorate carried out 20,588 visits in various retail outlets. Such monitoring permits the Directorate to ensure price transparency in a variety of retail outlets, such as supermarkets, butcher shops, pharmacies, restaurants and clothes shops. As a result of the visit, 1,181 outlets were found not to be compliant with the said regulations. Following this, 103 compliance orders were issued, and eventually court proceedings were initiated against three outlets.

The following chart represents percentages of visits made during the year. 94.26% of the total visits were compliant, whereas 5.74% were not compliant.

Complaints

The Directorate is responsible for complaints related to price indication. The Directorate investigated complaints that emanated from the following sources: received directly by the Directorate over the phone; through the Euro Observatory (NECC) via e-mail; and through the Consumer Affairs Directorate itself.

During 2007, the Directorate investigated 113 complaints regarding an alleged breach of the Consumer Affairs Act (Price Indication) Regulations, 2002. As a result of these investigations, 45 cases were found to be unjustified, five inadmissible due to lack of information, 52 complaints were found to be justified and 11 are still under investigation.

In the context of the above, the following actions were taken by the Directorate:

- 52 verbal warnings given (warning given to retailer to display prices both inside the shop and in the shop window);
- six warning letters issued (warning letters are issued following a verbal warning);
- 11 compliance orders delivered (an order requiring any person to take measures necessary within a specified period of time to ensure that the Consumer Affairs Act (Price Indication) Regulations, 2002 are complied with).

Dual Display and Euro Pricing Regulations – Enforcement

The Directorate is also responsible for the enforcement of LN 4/2007. The objective of these regulations is to regulate the dual display of prices, values and monetary amounts of goods and services offered to a consumer and to ensure fair practices in euro pricing. Cases were initiated by NECC on outlets which had infringed the mentioned regulations. On issuance of Second Directions by the Euro Observatory, the Enforcement Directorate was subsequently informed to start proceedings against the offending establishments. After having confirmed the alleged infringement, the Enforcement Directorate issued *Final Warnings*, followed by a *Fine Notice*, within three days, in cases where the offence persisted. Eventually the Directorate issued 20 *Final Warnings* to outlets followed by three *Fine Notices*.

Price Monitoring

Following a series of meetings between the Directorate, the Ministry of Finance, the Economic Planning Division and the Euro Observatory, it was established that five leading supermarkets were asked to deliver purchasing patterns of consumers, and the brand names selected for pricing were determined according to a volume seller basis. Analysis of the information submitted by the supermarkets led to the compilation of a list of fast moving items which included the following categories: soft drinks, beers, wine, tinned food, tea, coffee, sauces, pasta, rice, baby food, cereals, oils and butter, fresh dairy products, frozen and chilled meat, frozen foods, sugar, sweets and snacks, dishwashing products and toiletries.

Further lists were compiled from different sectors ranging from butcher shops, pharmacies, restaurants, cafeterias and kiosks. In the compilation of such lists, attention was given to obtain an even distribution of retail outlets. On average 5,379 commodities were being monitored every month. This system also makes it possible to monitor those outlets involved in the tourism sector.

Since February 2007, prices of the selected commodities were monitored on a monthly basis from the following outlets:

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 12 Supermarkets | 227 fixed commodities |
| 25 Pharmacies | 34 fixed products |
| 29 Butchers | 28 fixed items |
| 80 Restaurants | monitoring 646 items |
| 43 Kiosks | monitoring 347 products. |

Recommended Retail Prices

The Directorate carried out an exercise among the leading discount supermarkets to establish whether fair practices under the Consumer Affairs' Act (misleading advertising) were being observed.

In a number of supermarkets it transpired that the way prices were being displayed were misleading to the consumer giving the impression of hefty discounts. To address this, the Directorate issued to all concerned a letter informing them to refrain from using such practices and to rectify their position accordingly and further inspections were carried out to verify that the practice stopped.

Misleading Advertising

The Directorate issued guidelines on misleading advertising to travel agents. Following the issuance of the guidelines, an extensive audit on promotional material on travel was carried out.

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 also monitors the prices of medicinals and initiated an exercise to ensure that the prices are fair and reasonable. It is also entrusted to administer the subsidy granted to bakers on Maltese type bread.

Medicinals

As a result of an agreement reached by the Medicines Committee, chaired by the Permanent Secretary and in which this Directorate was represented, a system was identified which would ensure verifiable, fair and just prices of medicines in the market.

Due to unforeseen problems, this Committee could not finalise its work by fine-tuning the system which was to be actually implemented. In view of this impasse, it was decided that the Directorate should start working to implement this system keeping in mind the issues raised during the various meetings of the Committee.

The Directorate compared consumer prices of medicinals in Malta with those found in a number of European countries forming part of a basket of countries subdivided in three categories, that is, high, medium and low. This comparison was carried out in line with agreed criteria established by the Committee. The Directorate monitored 966 medicinals. This involved an extensive exercise to collate current consumer prices retrieved from pharmacies and/or with prices provided by importers. In certain instances this required further investigation. Apart from the exercise of comparing the prices of medicinals, the different pack sizes, doses and different brand names marketed in different countries were also taken into consideration. Discussions were held with local importers and in some cases also with the manufacturers' representatives to discuss the prices of those medicinals which resulted to be selling locally above the average. In order to ensure transparency in the whole process, all the workings leading to establishing the price were given to the importers to be able to pass it on to the manufacturers for their evaluation. This led to a decrease in prices, ranging from 2% to 38%, of 38 medicinals during 2007.

During the last year, the Medicinal Unit visited 565 pharmacies to monitor prices. The Unit also investigated 60 complaints. Seven of these complaints were found to be justified and pharmacies were requested to affect a refund to consumers.

Product Safety

The objective of surveillance in this area is to ensure that the products placed on the market meet EU safety standards. During 2007, inspections were carried out in 1,946 retail outlets. These inspections were carried out with the purpose of safeguarding consumers from a health and safety perspective.

The Directorate through the RAPEX system received 1,341 alerts from the European Commission. This system ensures that information regarding dangerous products identified by the national competent authorities is quickly circulated through the Member States and the European Commission. The aim is that of preventing the supply of these products to the consumers. The Directorate identified 64 such products on the local market. Steps were taken to ensure appropriate corrective action on 31 products. This was not possible in the case of three other items where the importer had to withdraw these products from the market. The extent of the action required varies according to the case. One such case involved the Directorate contacting more than 1,100 motor vehicle owners in order to have their vehicle checked and the necessary repairs carried out free of charge by the official distributor in Malta. With regard to the other 30 alerts, appropriate corrective action is being taken.

The Directorate informed the EU Commission to alert the other EU Member States on seven products which have been found locally to be unsafe. These included night lamps, vacuum flasks, luminaries, toys and insect killers.

The Division continued to co-operate with the Customs Division to identify products imported from third countries which do not conform to the regulations issued under the Product Safety Act. Through this collaboration, the Directorate prohibited the release from Customs of two consignments that concerned 480 toys and 1,440 safety helmets. There were 23 other consignments where corrective action was taken before the products were placed on the market.

In Malta, producers and distributors must notify the Division, being the competent authority, if they know on the basis of information available to them that a product they have placed on the market is dangerous. Three notifications about dangerous electrical equipment and toys were received. The Directorate in collaboration with the representatives of the manufacturers had developed a recall strategy to be implemented to ensure that the public is informed about the health and safety issues created by the products notified to the Division.

In line with the Directorate's continuous efforts to inform and educate the business community, the Directorate held various meetings with prospective importers explaining the requirements of the regulations issued under the Product Safety Act.

Dolceta Website

In April, the Directorate entered a project funded by DG Sanco to develop a set of web-based tools for consumer education on product safety. This project will come to an end in December 2008. The Directorate participated actively in preliminary meetings held in Brussels and Lille whereby the contents of the website were discussed. In line with the contract, the Directorate completed 30% of the contents which covered the legal aspects of product safety, enforcement regarding product safety, playground equipment, detergents, product recalls and RAPEX.

Training

During 2007, the Directorate participated in three Twinning Light Projects covering recreational crafts, lifts, medical devices, radio equipment and telecommunications terminal equipment, machinery, construction products, noise emissions, electromagnetic compatibility and chemicals. During these projects, officers received training both locally and abroad and carried out inspections with the foreign experts. A foreign expert on recreational crafts was also attached with the Directorate for two months

during which he gave training both to the officers as well as to local boat builders. He also provided technical assistance during inspections carried out locally. In-house training was also provided to these officers by the Product Safety Inspectors and by experts in specific fields.

The Directorate also gave training to Customs officials as well as representatives of the trade sector regarding product safety. One-to-one meetings were also held with traders importing white goods regarding energy efficiency labelling, and their obligations under the Product Safety Act.

Bakers' Subsidy

Not to burden Maltese consumers with the increased cost of Maltese type bread, as a result of the increase in the prices of wheat and fuel on the international market, the Government decided to subsidise bakers to compensate them for the increased cost of these commodities. The Directorate calculated the amount due to each baker and issued bi-monthly payments. This required continuous monitoring of the consumption of flour by each baker to avoid abuses. More than 200 meetings were held with bakers and 936 cheques were issued during the year.

Service Standards

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 it offers by improving the timeframes in the Quality Service charter.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

CCD Information System

The initial priority was the development of the CCD information system to enable the monitoring of prices of key commodities and analyse reasons for changes. Retail price increases may be justified by increases in production costs or world market prices, or could be the result of market failure (lack of competition).

The Division felt that it was necessary to develop an integrated information system to monitor prices of key commodities and analyse reasons for changes.

The first step in this process was to analyse retail prices and prices of imported commodities. While such statistical evidence would not be sufficient as a basis for enforcement action, it would allow CCD investigations to be concentrated on markets and commodities where they would be likely to reveal problems.

In the second step it is envisaged to include financial models in the system to deal with commodities such as bread, the price of which could be influenced by the prices of wheat and energy, and subsidies. Similar models will be developed to monitor production costs for locally-produced commodities such as meat, eggs and milk.

Participation in the Price Monitoring Task Force

The Division formed part of this Task Force, the purpose of which was to analyse price movements in sensitive markets and assess appropriate remedial measures as necessary. The Task Force met on a regular basis. The Division was eventually requested to deliver a presentation on its performance in addressing certain issues of concerns raised in the market at a meeting of the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development.

Regular Meetings with Stakeholders

The Division felt it essential to create bridges, where possible, with the various stakeholders such as the General Retailers and Traders Union, and the Consumer Association. In this respect regular meetings were held on a regular basis discussing issues of mutual interest.

Consumer Campaign

The EU Commission launched the consumer rights' campaign in Malta last September. The key objectives of the campaign are mainly to create consumer awareness in Malta. The target age for the campaign was between 20 and 40 years of age. The campaign, which is envisaged to continue during 2008, will target the business community. The Division actively participated in the campaign by taking on consumer queries and complaints arising from the general public as a consequence of this campaign.

Gozo Office

In line with government policy, back office activities were moved to Gozo. In October 2007, the Consumer Affairs Office was opened in Gozo, handling complaints and managing the Freephone service.

Participation in Other Legal Entities as Required by Law

Furthermore the Division actively participated in a number of Council/Commission meetings as required by law, these being: Food Safety Commission; Consumer Affairs Council; and the Malta Standards Authority.

Green Initiatives

In order to strengthen the Division's Green initiatives, each Directorate appointed a representative to sit on the Green Initiative Committee. The Division participated in an Energy Efficiency survey conducted by the Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure. A presentation of the findings was carried out by architecture students in September 2007 at Project House, Floriana. Participants in the survey were informed of the students' findings and guided on what measures to take to make their offices more efficient vis-à-vis Legal Notice 238 of 2006 on Energy Efficiency.

DR MIREILLE VELLA

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 2007, 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. All Twinning Light projects were finalised in the course of 2007. Through meetings undertaken in the course of Twinning Light programmes, 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* that had started to be implemented during 2006 were finalised in 2007.

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 projects, covering mainly the following sectors: Medical Devices, Recreational Craft and Lifts; RTTE, Construction Products, Machinery, PPE and Noise Emission; and 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. In 2007 the MSD participated in two EMARS projects relating to child resistant and novelty lighters and surveillance in the area of toys and electrical products.

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.

BETTER REGULATION

The Directorate also contributed towards the implementation of Better Regulation projects and one of the two projects accepted by OPM that pertains to the transfer of certain legal notices from the Product Safety Act to the Food Safety Act in order to ensure that a more co-ordinated and focused approach in market surveillance activities was finalised.

The other exercise is related to a higher co-ordinative 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. Moreover, during 2007 the Revenue Unit implemented a smooth and seamless euro changeover process on the TV Licensing system in place.

Total revenue collected in respect of TV licence fees during 2007 exceeded Lm2 million.

JOSEPH TONG
Director (Corporate Services)



**Ministry for Resources
and Infrastructure**

Works Division Office of the Director General

LEGAL OFFICE

The Legal Office serves as the legal arm of the administrative structure of the Ministry for Resources and the Infrastructure (MRES). It provides expertise in the legal field to the Ministry, the Works Division and the Services Division, and all the departments within the set-up. The Legal Office is concerned with consultation and advising on legal matters, assistance in the drafting of contracts as much as when legal technicalities are concerned, as well as being the legal representative in proceedings before the Courts. As part of a process intended to keep the Office abreast with developments in the field, the lawyer in charge attended a number of seminars and conferences held locally and a congress held abroad.

Ninety judicial acts were filed in Court during the year 2007, as a result of which the Works Division recouped the sum of Lm74,193. The Legal Office provided legal assistance in approximately 40 cases in Court and the Small Claims Tribunals, as well as in arbitration proceedings before the Malta Arbitration Centre. It was also involved in the drafting and amendment of laws falling within the competence of this Ministry.

DOOR NUMBERING UNIT

Door numbering exercises were carried out in the following localities during 2007:

| Locality | Number of Streets |
|---------------|-------------------|
| Ghaxaq | 21 |
| St Paul's Bay | 47 |
| Qormi | 11 |
| Rabat | 1 |
| Birgu | 14 |
| Iklin | 1 |
| Fgura | 1 |
| Qrendi | 37 |
| Gżira | 1 |
| Total | 134 |

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.

WORKS PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT UNIT

During 2007, this Unit was involved in the preparation and updating of the progress of programme of works for various projects undertaken by the Works Division.

Programme of Works Carried Out During 2007

Projects

Blue Grotto Avenue in Żurrieq
Xatt is-Sajjieda, M'Xlokk paving & embellishment project
San Ġwann Parish Church - parvis

Żabbar Parish Church - parvis
Villa Francia – Lija
St Sebastian Qormi Parish Church - parvis

St George Qormi Parish Church - parvis
 Mqabba Parish Church - parvis
 Various restoration works
 Haġar Qim promenade
 Balzan Parish Church - parvis
 Fuel pumping station relocation to Kordin

Qrendi village core
 Merchants Street Valletta paving project
 Mall Garden in Floriana
 Fgura Parish Church - parvis
 St Gregory Żejtun Church - parvis

Refurbishment Works at the Auberge de Castille

Restoration works were carried out to the external paving surrounding the Auberge, and a new system of illumination was installed to light up the facade. Most of the stone moulding had deteriorated and the steel fencing had become dangerous for the general public. The soft areas were also in dire need of an upgrade. The necessary permits were obtained from MEPA and the work was taken in hand and completed during the month of August.

Works at DOI Stores at Sa Maison in Floriana

These stores were heavily neglected and required a general upgrade. Furthermore, it was decided to introduce a split level so as to accommodate more storage space in these rather high-ceiling stores. Following the approval by MEPA to carry out the proposed works, the necessary tenders were prepared, awarded, and the works taken in hand and completed except for the paving works of the split level.

Works at the OPM Stores at St Andrew Bastions in Valletta

The ceiling of these stores was in a dangerous state of repair and thus it was decided to replace the whole concrete roof structure. Following the approval by MEPA to carry out the proposed works, the relevant tender was prepared, awarded, and the works taken in hand and completed.

Works at Villa Francia in Ħal Lija

This project consists in the restoration of this Villa with a view to be used for official activities by the Office of the Prime Minister. Following the approval of permits, the works were taken in hand and are to include the complete refurbishment of the building fabric and new installations of all services which will include: electrical installation work and a new sub-station; installation of an extra low voltage system including IT, telephony, CCTV, intruder and fire alarms, access control, and other similar equipment; installation of lifts, air-conditioning systems, water pumps, kitchens; and general upgrade of the soft areas including the surrounding plantation, the garden paths, and shading fixtures. It is envisaged that the refurbishment work will be completed in the first quarter of 2008.

RAY FARRUGIA
Director General (Works Division)

Works Division

Building and Engineering Department

INTRODUCTION

During 2007, the Building and Engineering Department maintained its role as the principal design arm of the Works Division in respect of projects commissioned by the MRES, as well as for projects originating from other ministries and departments.

The main projects that originated from the MRES were landscaping projects aimed to enhance the environment and the quality of life of the local populace and tourists. The main project for 2007 was the paving of Merchants Street, St John Street and some other streets in Valletta.

The departmental configuration for this year was of the Building and Engineering Department as the overseer and co-ordinator of the various sections which included:

- the **Design Unit**, made up of the Office of the Draughtsmen, the Records and Archives Office, and the Architectural and Engineering Office which is responsible for the design and project management of assigned projects. The Services Unit which incorporates the Electrical and Mechanical Engineers Office is also a part of the Design Unit;
- the **Quantity Surveying Unit**, responsible for the preparation of tender documentation (pre contract), and measurement of works as 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 (VRP), the Mdina Rehabilitation Committee, and the Cottonera Rehabilitation Committee. The RPO is responsible for monitoring ongoing projects in these sensitive areas.

DESIGN UNIT

The following is a list of completed projects, or projects started and which were still in progress at the end of 2007.

Projects Originated by the Ministry

- *The Merchants Street Paving Project in Valletta*: Giving priority to pedestrians was the core concept behind this project, part of the process of giving back Valletta to the people. This idea has been enhanced further by the introduction of the Controlled Vehicle Access system (CVA). Works on the project started in May and were finalised in the first week of December. New services were installed by service providers namely Enemalta Corporation, Maltacom, Melita, and the Water Services Corporation. A concrete sub-base was applied over the utility works to serve as a firm foundation for the new flooring.

The actual laying of paving in Merchants Street started on 15 October and was finished within a six-week contract period. The total area overlaid with paving was of about 7,500 square metres. The paving in Merchants Street was carried out by a private contractor, whilst that in St Lucia Street and Old Theatre Street was carried out by direct labour, that is, by the Works Division workforce. The paving material used in this project consisted of porfido slabs and hard stone paving.

A new system of illumination was installed to light up important buildings in Merchants Street and the facade of St John Co-Cathedral. New benches were installed in front of the Cathedral and new cast iron decorative litter bins placed along Merchants Street and in St John Square.

- *The Ghar id-Dud Embellishment Project:* The embellishment of Ghar id-Dud was a continuation of the Sliema Embellishment project. This project had started in 2006 and the works that were continued in 2007 included the fixing of the lamp posts, paving works, the fixing of new railings, benches, and planting of trees and shrubs. The project was finalised in the last week of March 2007, covering an area of approximately 4,200 square metres of land.
- *The Cospicua Recreational Area:* Works on this project started in late 2005. The entire site was cleaned of all bulky waste that used to be dumped here. The construction here was of four open spaces interlinked with paved footpaths, with the entire area that was landscaped measuring some 5,000 square metres. Various facilities were built to enhance the project, namely a play area for children and public convenience facilities. More than 300 trees were planted and an irrigation system installed.
- *The Qrendi Embellishment Project:* The Qrendi project involved embellishing the centre of this village as well as the re-paving of the parish church parvis. The open space in front of the parish church was redesigned and the sidewalks closest to the church widened and paved with hard-stone slabs while the road surface was paved with grey and black concrete paving blocks obeying a set pattern.
- *Paving around Spinola Gardens in St Julians:* As part of the embellishment of the Spinola Garden, the Works Division undertook the paving of the walkways around the garden. Works were done during April 2007 using coloured concrete slabs.
- *Fuel Station and Depot at Kordin:* The scope of this project was to relocate the then existing fuel station at Kirkop to a site in close proximity to the MSD workshops at Kordin. The project consisted of oversight excavations, the construction of new offices and related facilities for the operation of the new station, installation of underground fuel storage tanks, and enhancing the area with landscaping works. All facilities conform to international standards.
- *Construction of a Recreational Area at Blue Grotto Avenue in Żurrieq:* This project envisages the construction of a sports complex and an underground reservoir for the storage of water. The complex will include a *boċċi* playing facility as well as two multi purpose soccer playing fields. Other amenities include public convenience facilities and the landscaping of the surrounding area.

The footprint of this project is an area of some 3,960 square metres, making good use of an otherwise disused public site. Such a project is intended to provide recreational facilities to the community in general, provide NGOs with the tools for organising activities here, considering also that this area is lacking of such facilities. It is also envisaged that the reservoir will serve as a water runoff catchment point to relieve flooding.

- *Upgrading Works to Anti Air Raid Underground Shelter at Hal Safi Square:* This small-scale project entailed the design of a proper entry point to an underground wartime anti air raid shelter in this square. A flat horizontal doorframe was manufactured of steel and fitted with structural glass permitting a see-through facility of the shelter below.
- *Upgrading of Recreational Facilities at St Joseph Home in Żabbar:* This project entails the upgrading of an already existing playground measuring approximately 26.5m by 23.5m, working out to an area of 622 square metres. At present this playground has a concrete surface surrounded by a high fence, providing only a few items of play equipment and in general is lacking in aesthetics. The design proposal aims at rendering this space more user-friendly and appealing to children. This will be achieved by integrating the play area with its surroundings as much as possible, by adding interest through the introduction of new paving materials and an appropriate design layout, by planting the soft areas with plants and shrubs, and by installing modern play equipment and garden furniture.
- *Refurbishment of the Mall Garden:* The garden commonly known as Il-Mall, situated in Floriana, was thoroughly refurbished. The project, which revamped this well-known landmark, consisted of the laying anew with *franka* stone slabs between trimmings of granite the whole of the pedestrian area of this

garden. The surrounding iron decorative railing was replaced with a new design, and parts of the stone structure retaining wall replaced. The various monuments were restored, wooden type seating provided, and an irrigation system put in place to sustain the landscaping of the soft areas. An underground water cistern was also built to capture and provide the necessary water for irrigation.

- *Upgrading of the St George Parish Church Parvis in Qormi:* This project, which is currently in progress, consists of the embellishment of the parvis with a view to enhance this parish church which is considered to be of architectural and historical value. Works will consist of the removal of the existing cement tiles, preparing an appropriate sub-base and a concrete base to take the new paving, making use of natural materials laid to a set pattern. The footprint is of around 650 square metres.
- *The Mqabba Parish Church Parvis:* A public call for tender was issued and awarded for the re-paving of the Mqabba Parish Church parvis. Paving works with lava and hard stone slabs started after the village *festa* and are now complete.
- *Paving Works at St Sebastian Parish Church Parvis in Qormi:* The thrust of this project was to refurbish the area to the sides and rear of the parish church which up till now had consisted of areas finished in concrete and macadam, an unfitting apron to such majestic architecture. The project covered an area of some 2,000 square metres, an area now befittingly rendered amply interactive with all activities that could possibly be held there as part of the village's religious calendar of events. The schedule of works consisted of the replacement of the raised kerb delineating the soft areas, scarifying part of the existing parvis surface, the construction of reinforced concrete sub-floor, tiling works, construction of service manholes, formation of access ramps and installation of lighting system.
- *The Balzan Parish Church Parvis:* The paving of the parish church parvis in Balzan is nearing completion. An area of approximately 650 square metres was paved using natural stone materials such as granite and hard-stone with a bush-hammered surface to render it non-slip. In conjunction with this project, further paving works in the vicinity of the church are being proposed to be carried out during 2008.
- *The San Ġwann Parish Church Parvis:* The flooring of the parvis, originally cement tiles, was rendered using granite slabs. Granite was also used to replace the old concrete staircase leading to the church.
- *The Fgura Parish Church Parvis:* Works are in progress to pave the area surrounding the church, as well as the staircase leading into the church itself. Materials being used are granite slabs and gres tiling.
- *The Birżebbuġia Parish Church Parvis:* Works here consisted of the removal of the existing cement tiling. The whole of the parvis was then paved anew with granite tiles. The former concrete stair construction was also replaced with a granite stairway.

Projects Commissioned by Other Ministries and Departments

- *Upgrading of Villa Rundle Gardens in Victoria Gozo:* Villa Rundle Gardens, laid out by the British in 1910, are situated in the heart of the Victoria. The Ministry for Gozo is intent on doing an upgrading exercise here with a view to revitalise these gardens thus promoting a fuller reintegration into the physical, social and economic ambits of present-day Victoria. The project falls under an EU funded scheme and the site covers an area of approximately 16,000 square metres.
- *Embellishment of the garden at Palazzo Spinola:* Palazzo Spinola now serves as a seat for the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean and accordingly hosts from time to time diplomats and dignitaries. The front garden of this building was in need of attention in view that the area is used to hold related functions. The focus of this project then was to restore and embellish this garden, where the design layout was left intact, with the works that were carried out being mainly concerned with the replacement of the *franka* paving slabs and the garden boundary wall in order to render good the disrepair. Two water fountains were also repaired, and a new irrigation network installed. Other works included landscaping and the installation of a new lighting system, and the putting in place of a number of wooden benches.

- *Administrative building for the maritime base of the Armed Forces of Malta:* The new office building in course of construction will replace the previous premises of the Maritime Base at Hay Wharf, and provide much needed office space in contrast to that of the former one storey building. Armed Forces personnel have already completed part of the construction works that houses a large garage, a generator room, and will soon be housing a new sub-station.
- *The Department of Contracts:* A MEPA application was submitted requesting approval to convert the existing basement stores at the building housing the Department of Contracts into offices. This project is in abeyance awaiting approval.
- *Transfer of REMPEC Offices:* The complete rehabilitation of the former Maritime House was carried out in connection with the transfer of REMPEC offices from Manoel Island to the former Maritime House in Floriana. Rehabilitation included interior and exterior painting works, false ceiling works, and electrical and mechanical works including fire alarm and security systems.
- *Structural inspections at Barn 7 at Sa Maison:* Barn 7 at Sa Maison is being reinstated following the result of a structural investigation which concluded that the roof of the barn could be retained. The premises will be used by the Department of Contracts for purposes of storage.
- *Playing field and garden at Manikata:* This playing field was designed in collaboration with the Mellieħa Local Council. The main features of this project are the ancillary facilities which have been placed underneath the paved areas and the playing equipment which caters for toddlers. Works were financed by the Mellieħa Local Council.
- *The Central Visa Unit:* The Central Visa Unit is part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and will handle all matters related to the Schengen agreement. This project involves the refurbishment of disused office space in Floriana. Works will be completed very shortly.
- *The Ta' Kandja Centre for asylum seekers:* This project is currently underway. It is intended to provide accommodation to about 400 persons, apart from the building of an administration block. The complex consists of four dormitories with ancillary facilities including living and dining areas, lavatories, and recreational spaces.
- *Extension of the St Marija Addolorata Cemetery:* This extension will increase the number of graves by approximately 2,600. The underlying principle here is to respect the existing characteristics of the landscape in general in an effort to blend in a harmonious way the new with the old.
- *Upgrading of public convenience facilities at the former school known as tal-Pilar in Valletta:* The client of this project was the Government Property Division, with the project consisting of the upgrading of the public convenience facilities at the former tal-Pilar school.
- *The Presidential dining room at San Anton Palace in Attard:* The presidential dining room was redesigned with the aim of converting the then existing pantry into a presidential dining room for Heads of State. Works included the removal of a pilaster supporting a chimney, the erection of a gypsum false ceiling and partition, and the installation of bamboo flooring and skirting made from wood. The room was installed with an air-conditioning system, and decorative fascias were fixed onto the walls to complement the setup. A fireplace made of marble was constructed as well as the installation of curtains and lighting fixtures. Some apertures were replaced with new ones while others repaired according to need.
- *The Msida Police Station:* The project involved the appraisal of the heavily deteriorated reinforced concrete members supporting the front terraces, the outlining of a methodology for the execution of the works, and the supervision of all repair works to come to a complete refurbishment of the façade at the Msida police station. Works were performed partly by contractor and partly by the in-house police trades section.

Projects Currently at the Design Stage

- *The Xatt is-Sajjieda promenade:* The Xatt is-Sajjieda project in Marsaxlokk involves the widening of the inner walkway, the re-organisation of the road to include a one way 3.2 metre wide carriage-way for vehicles, a parking bay to one side of the road, and a service shoulder on the side of the buildings, with the paving anew and the embellishment of the outer, seaward promenade. The material to be used for paving will consist of porfido, granite, and hard-stone slabs and cubes.

This project will give a much needed facelift to the whole of the area, especially the promenade which at present is only a concourse of friable and decaying mass-poured concrete. The proposed new materials, the new lighting system, and the proposed new street furniture will transform the place and make it much more amenable to the many activities that coincide here: the restaurants, the fishermen, the market place, and the public in general.

- *The Birgu clock tower:* Following the approval of an outline application for the re-construction of the Birgu clock tower, a full development application was submitted for the consideration and approval by MEPA. Approval is still pending.
- *Fixing of decorative lamp posts at Is-Salini Street in Marsascala:* The public call for tender for the supply and delivery of decorative lamp posts to be situated along Is-Salini Street in Marsascala has been awarded. The wiring installation is now in progress and expected to be completed by the month of February 2008.
- *The Siege Bell Memorial:* An on-site meeting was held to study the possibility of removing the internal staircase. Accordingly, an application was submitted for the consideration and eventual approval by MEPA to attain the objective of removing the said stairs, a request which has been sanctioned. The Department is waiting for the formal go ahead to start work.
- *The Ta' Kandja police academy project:* It is being proposed to build a police academy at the Ta' Kandja police held grounds in Siġġiewi. Studies are being carried out to formulate a brief and initial design.
- *The National Statistics Office (NSO) in Valletta:* Work at the NSO involved the inspection of all the façades of this large block of offices which is showing signs of precarious deterioration. A tender is being prepared for all repair works and for the total refurbishment of the façades of this block.
- *The Wied Ghollieqa stormwater relief project:* A soak-away type reservoir and a rainwater culvert of 900mm diameter are projected to ease off the flooding of Triq Turu Rizzu and Sliema Road, both streets in Gżira, thus providing ample flow of rainwater from Wied Ghollieqa and from the area near the University. The water catchment areas are Kappara, San Ġwann, Gżira, Msida and Tal-Qroqq, an area measuring approximately 1.5 square kilometres. This catchment area is bordered by the San Ġwann Industrial Estate, by Birkirkara, Ħal Lija and by Ta' Xbiex.
- *Construction of a parking area facility at AFM Barracks in Luqa:* This project involves the levelling and asphaltting of an open space at the Luqa Barracks of the Armed Forces of Malta. The area in question is situated in the AFM compound adjacent the airport runway, and will provide much needed parking space for armed forces personnel. A boundary wall, concrete foundations, levelling, and infilling works, are all part of the construction works, to be finished off with hot macadam.
- *Upgrading of the Collacchio area in Birgu:* This project is still in the design phase and involves the paving anew of a significant floor area forming part of what is known as the Collacchio area in Birgu. All existing services will be upgraded and open areas redesigned. To this end an urban analysis of the site has already been carried out and a design concept outlined.
- *A country walk along Dingli Cliffs:* The objective of this project is twofold. One is to provide a two kilometre long country walk facility along what is commonly known as the Dingli Cliffs. Another objective would be to enhance the beauty of this site with as little as possible interference on its natural character. The project necessitates the redesigning of the exiting road that presently runs along the cliffs,

provision of parking facilities, the introduction of safety measures for users, the installation of custom designed street furniture, and the reinstatement of a significant garigue area.

- *Upgrading works at Notabile Road at Mrieħel*: The intention here is to upgrade the existing boundary walls of the thoroughfare between the villages of Attard and Qormi across the Mrieħel area. The project is in the design stage and will take off in the near future.
- *The Ta' Xbiex Parish Centre*: The proposal entails the building of a small sized parish centre underneath the existing church parvis. The centre will include three halls, one of which doubles up as an audio-visual hall, with another hall doubling up as a games room, apart from offices and other amenities. The proposal includes also the embellishment of the parvis and of an adjoining garden.
- *Design of a centre for Policy Research and Training*: This project comprises the refurbishment of two blocks of buildings, together with the surrounding grounds. This complex, formerly housing the Department of Lotto, will in future serve as a research and training centre.
- *St Luċija Parish Church Parvis*: The parvis in its present state is overlaid with plain grey coloured concrete. A new design was drawn up utilising concrete paving blocks intended to embellish the immediate surroundings of the church and complement the neighbouring landscaped area. The new paving will have a total footprint of approximately 1,375 square metres.
- *Santa Venera Parish Church Parvis*: This project concerns the construction of a parvis with underlying office space, which will have provision of easy access to persons with mobility problems.
- *Office of the Consumer and Competition Division*: Upgrading works will be carried out at the offices of the Consumer and Competition Division situated in St Venera, improving on the available office space. There is the intention to install a passenger lift.
- *The Għar Lapsi car park*: This vehicle parking facility will be completed in the near future. Some works remained in abeyance due to problems of a legal nature.
- *The Mosta Parish Church Parvis*: The Mosta parvis is currently in a state of bad repair, especially where this concerns the surrounding stonework which is heavily damaged. Moreover, the concrete paving is damaged and in some areas stained and needs to be changed.

The intention is to replace the damaged stonework surrounding the parvis, install new metal railing where this is necessary, fix in place new metal gates to close off the access to the side stairs when necessary, overlay the parvis with new paving, fix appropriate bollards, and maintain the existing decorative light posts.

- *The Sa Maison Garden*: The project will cater for a general upgrade of this beautiful spot overlooking Marsamxett harbour. The present concrete flooring will be replaced and a new paving and footpath system installed along several parts of this garden. This is especially needed since at present there is no real path system linking the entrance to the rest of the garden; it will serve also to properly delineate the soft and the hard areas. Appropriate garden furniture will be installed on the lower levels of the garden, as well as a new decorative lighting system.
- *Rooftop restaurant at the Mediterranean Conference Centre*: One of the most imposing buildings in Valletta is the former Sacra Infermeria of the Order of St John of Jerusalem, now popularly known as the Mediterranean Conference Centre. The imposing geographical position of the building has given birth to the idea of developing a rooftop restaurant enjoying harbour scenes, with a seating capacity of some 300 patrons.
- *Proposed additional floor for the Plant Biotechnology Centre in Ħal Lija*: Estimates were carried out for the building of an additional storey on the premises that houses the Plant Biotechnology Centre in Ħal Lija.
- *Lift and escalator for the Valletta market*: Proposals for a new lift and escalator at the Valletta Market were presented to client. In the meantime the existing escalators are being given the required maintenance.

- *The Girl Guides Centre at Kordin*: A design is being finalised in order to submit the required application to MEPA.
- *The Siggiewi Parish Church Parvis*: The scope of this project is to upgrade the parvis of the Siggiewi Parish Church by paving anew with hard-stone slabs and with replacing worn out or damaged steps of the stairway leading onto the parvis itself.
- *Upgrading of the Ghadira promenade*: This project is still in the design stage. Works will include the redesigning of the promenade to include viewing vantage points, seating areas, and other facilities including good access to the beach.
- *The Xghajra promenade embellishment*: The second phase of this project concerns the embellishment of the remaining 600 metres of promenade using the same materials and street furniture used so far; the first phase being completed in 2005. The road will be resurfaced with hot-rolled asphalt, and the 58 parking bays on the seaward side retained and reorganised.
- *Embellishment of Ganado Gardens in Floriana*: These gardens are situated below the Duke of Edinburgh Road leading from Floriana towards the Auberge de Castille in Valletta. The gardens are in a rather good state of preservation. However, and although the trees and bushes are well maintained, the passages have deteriorated and need a facelift. *Tal-franka* slabs measuring 600mm by 600mm will be used in line with tradition, and a water feature installed to enhance the quietude of the surroundings. The overall paving area is close to 3600 square metres.
- *New centre in Swieqi for recreation and community services*: A site was identified and plans drawn up for a modern new building that will house the offices of the local council and provide also enough space for indoor sport and recreation activities for the residents of this village.
- *Embellishment of St James Square in Żabbar*: Plans were drawn up for the embellishment of this square which is situated in the middle of the village of Żabbar. These plans were sent to the Żabbar Local Council as well as to the Ministry for Resources and the Infrastructure for approval. Approval has since been sanctioned.
- *Mdina*: The old citadel of Mdina has of late undergone a comprehensive programme of rehabilitation and embellishment works. The latest addition is the provision of funds under the EEA Norway Funding Programme and from the European Regional Development Fund programme 2007-2013. Two separate tenders for works and services were prepared, issued through a public call for tenders, and adjudicated. These were:
 - Design and Build Tender for the consolidation of unstable terrain and restoration of historic ramparts underlying Council Square in Mdina. This project is being funded by the EEA Norway Funding Programme (2006-2008); and
 - Service Tender for the provision of geotechnical engineering consultancy and project management services with specific experience in ground consolidation of the fragile terrain underlying the bastion walls and historic places of the walled city of Mdina. This project in turn is being funded under the ERDF programme of structural funds according to the 2007-2013 budgetary plan.

Services Unit

Mechanical Engineers Section

The Mechanical Engineers Section within the Services Unit intervened on the following projects:

- *Mall Gardens in Floriana*: installation of irrigation system and underground water tanks;
- *Cospicua Recreational Area*: installation of an irrigation and plumbing system for the public convenience facilities and the water fountains; and
- *Works Division in Floriana*: installation of a CCTV system to cover the access points into and out of the immediate vicinity of the Ministry and the surrounding administrative blocks.

Other works commissioned by other departments and completed by the Unit are the following:

- *The Palace in Valletta*: installation of a new lift on the Parliament side of the Palace, and installation of an air-conditioning system of the newly refurbished records area;
- *St Vincent De Paul Hospital*: new air-conditioning and ventilation system in wards St Joseph numbers 13, 14, 15 and 16;
- *Mosta Residence for the Elderly*: air-conditioning for entire residence consisting of over 75 air conditioning units;
- *Auberge de Castille*: general mechanical works to existing lifts;
- *Archives at Mdina*: installation of fire detection and alarm system, an intruder alarm system, and a CCTV system;
- *San Anton Presidential Palace*: installation of an air-conditioning system in the new dining room and installation of a dumb waiter; and
- *Premises formerly housing the tal-Pilar School in Valletta*: installation of a new plumbing system.

The Services Unit is currently working on the transfer of the Works Division fuel pumping station from its former location in Kirkop to Marsa. A new air-conditioning system is being installed in the offices housing the Construction and Maintenance Department in Floriana, whilst a new irrigation and plumbing system is also being installed at the Żurrieq Recreational Area.

Moreover, other works commissioned by other entities involved the installation of an air-conditioning unit using the latest VRV system in Villa Francia, the installation of a passenger semi-panoramic hydraulic lift, and a dumb waiter. Several water fountains in the grounds of Villa Francia were rehabilitated and rendered in good working order. The Visa Unit in Floriana was installed with an air-conditioning system, whilst it is being proposed that a hydraulic type lift be installed in Spinola Palace.

Electrical Engineers Office

The electrical engineers office was responsible for a new street lighting layout and the installation of lanterns in pedestrian streets in Valletta. Decorative lamp posts and lanterns were installed in the village core of Qrendi. Other works were as follows:

- *the Palace in Valletta*: installation of a main switchboard and sub-main switchboard for the House of Representatives;
- *San Anton Palace*: replacement of main switch;
- *Verdala Palace in Siggiewi*: installation of surge suppression system;
- *Auberge de Baviere in Valletta*: continuation of electrical works and substation;
- *new premises to house the Joint Office (formerly the tal-Pilar school)*: installation of a new electrical system;
- *Wied Babu to Haġar Qim promenade*: installation of low-level recessed lighting units;
- *Xemxija Promenade (phases I & II)*: installation of decorative lamp-posts;
- *Ta' Xbiex Promenade*: installation of decorative lamp-posts;
- *Pieta' Marina Garden*: replacement of existing lanterns;
- *Ghar Lapsi bay*: illumination of the car park;
- *Marsaxlokk seafront*: procurement of lamp-posts; and
- *Żurrieq Sports Complex*: general lighting design.

The Electrical Engineers Office was also responsible to provide for the decorative illumination of parish churches and chapels, an exercise that was carried to the hereunder listed extent:

- San Ġwann Parish Church
- St Sebastian Parish Church in Qormi
- Mqabba Parish Church
- Żabbar Parish Church parvis
- Ħal Balzan Parish Church parvis
- Ta' Sarria Chapel in Floriana

- St Gregory Chapel in Żejtun
- St Mary Chapel in Bubaqra, Żurrieq
- Is-Salvatur Chapel in Kalkara
- St Joseph and the Annunciation Monument in Ħal Lija.

QUANTITY SURVEYING UNIT

This Quantity Surveying Unit (QSU) was involved in the following procedures namely:

- the preparation of tender documents including the bills of quantities and estimation of costs in respect of 33 tenders having an estimated value of Lm1,993,942;
- 50 final bills on a re-measurement basis were prepared for completed contracts with a total value of Lm236,354;
- the value of 19 contracts awarded but still in course of construction and being re-measured by the Unit as at end of 2007 was of Lm3,455,836; and
- valuation for monthly interim payments to contractors during the course of contracts amounted to Lm404,501.

The QSU was also concerned with giving advice to architects and engineers on contractual procedure regarding disputes with contractors and consultants. The Unit carries out estimates and measures works actually carried out by the CMD on behalf of local councils. Moreover, personnel from the Unit are assigned professional duties at the Courts of Law in cases of litigation. As regards to EU funded projects, the QSU was involved in the following: restoration works carried out to the spur and bastions at Senglea; St Andrew bastion and lower platform in Valletta; St Andrew bastion and tenile; the St John demi-bastion and surrounding area at the Valletta land front.

LAND SURVEY UNIT

The Unit carried out 166 survey downloads besides setting out to all listed projects. The Unit was commissioned by the Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure, the Health Department, the Armed Forces of Malta, the Malta Police Force and the Malta Basketball Association.

The Works Division in the Ministry commissioned the following projects: in Ħ'Attard - the Ta' Qali former counting hall/new US Embassy site; in Żurrieq - the Wied Babu Promenade and the Blue Grotto Avenue playing field; in Qrendi – the Hagar Qim Promenade; in Marsaxlokk – the Triq Xatt is-Sajjieda project; in Floriana – the Mall Garden; in St Julians – Spinola Palace; in Mellieħa – the Manikata Garden; in Paola – the Sta Maria Addolorata Cemetery extension; in Qrendi – the village core project; in Sliema – at Ghar id-Dud; in Cospicua – the Mixtla project; at Corradino – the new fuel pumping station; and the paving of streets in Valletta.

The following projects involved the cores of the villages namely the parvis of the relevant parish church: Qormi San Ġorġ; Qormi San Bastjan; Żurrieq; Birżebbuġia; Qrendi; Mqabba; Ħal Luqa; San Ġwann; Ħal Ghaxaq; Gudja; San Girgor in Żejtun; Ħal Balzan; Fgura; Siġġiewi; Santa Venera; Santa Lucija; and Fleur de Lys.

Surveying works carried out in connection with the Stormwater Project for the prevention and containment of floods involved the following areas: Marsa; Burmarrad and the Kennedy Grove area; the Magħtab area; Qormi; Pembroke; the Wied Qirda area in Żebbuġ; Triq il-Karmnu in Luqa; Triq l-Ewwel ta' Jannar and the surrounding area in Ħal Ghaxaq; and at Wied Xkora area in Siġġiewi.

The Unit was involved in other surveying works namely: the area around the tas-Salvatur Chapel in Kalkara; the Żurrieq Primary School; the village core at Birgu; the Manikata Garden in Mellieħa; the Santa Marija Addolorata Cemetery extension project; the playing field project in Swieqi; the Notre Dame area in

Floriana; the restoration process of Villa Francia in Ħal Lija; the football ground at Mqabba and the football ground at Marsaxlokk; and the survey of Tank Street in Birżebbuġia.

A survey of the area surrounding the Ta' Qali hangar site was carried out for the Malta Basketball Association, while the Malta Police Force requested a survey of the Ta' Kandja SAG Complex. The Armed Forces of Malta commissioned the Luqa Barracks car park, the Safi Barracks refugee compound, and the Hay Wharf workshops.

Surveying works were carried out in connection with expropriation procedures as commissioned by the Estates Management Department in the following areas namely: in Siggiewi - Triq Dun Manwel Żammit and Wied Hesri; in Ħal Ghaxaq - Triq tal-Millieri; and in Qormi at Wied il-Kbir area.

Pending surveying works are as follows: the Mosta Church parvis; Ġnien Sa Maison; Żurrieq at Triq it-Torri, in Floriana at the former Department of Lotto premises and grounds; in Żejtun at St Joseph Street; in Qormi at the Wied il-Kbir area; and at ta' l-Ibraġġ Church parvis.

Rehabilitation Project Office

Valletta Rehabilitation Project

The VRP Unit, as it is commonly called, restored various corner statues to be found in Valletta. Other works included:

- conservation works on the ceiling of the church dedicated to Our Lady of Victory (work is being carried out by restorers from the Courtauld Institute of Art in London);
- restoration work of frescoes found at the Paladini Room at the Palace of the President in Valletta, and the installation of damask and other works to rehabilitate this room;
- ongoing maintenance to the Great Siege Bell monument;
- general maintenance works are being carried out to the façade of the Santu Wistin Church;
- the Valletta Master Plan is being carried out by the Baroque Studies unit at the University of Malta; and
- restoration work on the water fountain known as the Fountain of the Eagles in the Mall garden in Floriana.

EMANUEL BUTTIGIEG

Director (Building and Engineering)

Works Division

Construction & Maintenance Department

INTRODUCTION

The Construction and Maintenance Department (CMD) is one of the largest departments within the Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure, with a workforce of around 900 employees that includes administrative, professional, technical, and direct labour personnel. The CMD is made up of the following units:

- Restoration Unit
- Central Districts Office
- Supporting Services
- Hal Lija Workshop.

RESTORATION UNIT

The Restoration Unit is engaged in works of a specific nature, specialising in restoring monuments and public buildings that are part of our vast and colourful national heritage. Works are of a varied nature, yet these have one focus; to render to its former glory the particular monument in question. Interventions are classified under four classes, each distinct yet interrelated: those of maintenance, of restoration, of conservation, and those of consolidation. Through the capabilities of the workmen of this Department, the Ministry for Resources and the Infrastructure is engaged in a systematic programme of restoration works across the Islands which have now been going on for several years.

Works Carried Out During 2007

Works carried out include the following:

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Completion of restoration works at San Bazilju and St Michael Chapel in Mqabba | Completion of restoration works at St Gregory Chapel in Żejtun |
| Restoration of facade of the Monte di Pietà in Merchants Street in Valletta | Restoration of the statue and wooden niche at St Nicholas Street and of St Michael in Valletta |
| Restoration of the facade of the Public Registry in Merchants Street, Valletta | Restoration works and electrical installation works at the Palace of the President in Valetta |
| Restoration of the tas-Salvatur Chapel in Kalkara | Cleaning of the facade of St Augustine Church Valletta |
| Replacement of dangerous roofs at ta' Liesse Church in Valletta | Initiation of restoration and consolidation works at Ta' Qrejċa Chapel at Qormi (first phase) |
| Restoration of tal-Grazzja Chapel in Qrendi | Restoration of St Mary Chapel in Żurrieq |
| Continuation of restoration works at Our Lady of Sorrows Chapel in Pietà | Construction of a lift structure and pantry at San Anton Presidential Palace in H'Attard |
| Conservation works at the old parish church structure in Siggiewi | Completion of restoration works at ta' Sarria Chapel in Floriana |
| Restoration of the old part of Santa Ubaldesca church in Paola | Restoration of St Barbara Bastion at Valletta (phases 1 and 2) |
| Restoration of St Luke Chapel in Żurrieq | Restoration of the land-front bastion at Vittoriosa |
| Restoration of St Lawrence Statue in Vittoriosa | Paving works in front of ta' Sarria Chapel in Floriana |
| Documentation of all bastions at Vittoriosa, Valletta, Mdina | Initiation of restoration works at tal-Ħlas Chapel in Qormi |
| Initiation of restoration works at the Annunciation Chapel in Kirkop | Continuation of restoration works on facade and portico of the building housing the National Library in Valletta |

CENTRAL DISTRICTS OFFICE

The Central Districts Office carries out various projects and works such as embellishment and maintenance works on behalf of various entities including ministries, government departments and the local councils.

The CMD provides other services through the Supporting Services Unit, such as waterproofing works and supplying of *franka* stone blocks from the Tar-Robba soft stone quarry situated at Mqabba, and which is government owned and run by CMD. The Lija Workshop in turn carries out various works in iron including railings and benches in connection with the various ongoing projects being executed by this Department.

Works Carried Out by the Central Districts Office (CDO)

The Districts Section carried out works which were requested by local councils, various government departments and the MRES. The works consisted mainly of laying of new pavements, reinstatement of several other pavements, embellishment works and upkeep of roads and gardens, patching up of primary and secondary road surfaces using the cold mix system, cleaning of water carrying canals, building of walls, and various maintenance works on government owned non-residential tenements; these works were requested by the Estates Management Department.

The main projects undertaken by CDO during 2007 were the following:

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Embellishment works at Wied Babu Promenade (phase two) leading to Haġar Qim in Qrendi | Paving works at the Aqueducts at Mriehel (phases one and four) |
| Reinstatement of pavement at Triq Ellul Mercer in Had-Dingli (joint venture project) | Embellishment works at Ġnien Regġie Cilia in Mosta (joint venture project) |
| Paving works at the Aqueducts at St Venera (phase three) | Embellishment works at Ta' Xbiex Sea Front Promenade |
| Paving works at Aqueducts at Birkirkara (phase two) | Reinstatement of pavement at Saqqajja in Rabat |
| Construction of a retaining wall of a road and widening of a pavement at Bingemma (joint venture project) | Embellishment of the promenade at St Paul's Bay (near ta' l-Għażżenin Primary School) |
| Embellishment works at ix-Xatt ta' Għar id-Dud in Sliema | Paving works at the parvis of the San Ġwann Parish Church |
| Paving works at the parvis at the Balzan Parish Church | Maintenance of various promenades |
| Initiation of paving works of the area behind the Fgura Parish Church | Maintenance and restoration of facade, and embellishment works at Palazzo Spinola in St Julians |
| Landscaping of St Anthony Garden in Birkirkara | Embellishment works at Magħtab area |
| Maintenance of the Ċirkewwa Quay and to the retaining walls, bollards, and the railings along the road leading to Ċirkewwa | Embellishment works at Merchants Street, at St Lucy Street, and the area in front of St John Co-Cathedral, all in Valletta |
| Embellishment works at the Mall Garden in Floriana | Embellishment of the Żabbar parish church parvis |
| Embellishment of the Mqabba parish church parvis | Embellishment of Żurrieq parish church Parvis |
| Embellishment of the Birzebbuġia parish church parvis and the surroundings | Embellishment of Msida Church parvis (joint venture project) |
| Embellishment of the Qrendi village core | Construction of a fuel pumping station at Kordin |
| Completion of the embellishment works at il-Mixtla ta' Bormla area | The construction of hard-stone steps leading to the Safi Parish Church |
| Paving works at the St Sebastian Parish Church parvis | Embellishment (paving) works at Spinola in St Julians |
| Construction of a sports complex at Blue Grotto Avenue in Żurrieq | Resurfacing and embellishment of the area (next to sheds) at the Works Division in Floriana |
| Maintenance works at Paceville Square | Works at the Gharghur Football Ground |
| Works at Pembroke (Athleta) Football Ground | Embellishment works at San Ġirgor chapel in Żejtun |
| Restoration and refurbishment works at Villa Francia | Construction up to the formation level of the road surface including the reinstatement of pavements at the following streets in Zurrieq, namely: Triq ir-Rettur; Triq Salvatore Magri; Triq Laferla; Triq il-Midra; Triq Hompesch; Triq Vincenzo Caruana; Triq Roncalli; Triq Zurki; Triq San Bastjan; Triq Bubaqra; Triq Fortunat Dalli; Triq it-Tin; Triq is-Sardinell; and Triq G Portelli. |

Works carried out in non-residential government-owned tenements were the following:

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Replacement of roof at the Department of Trade at Lascaris in Valletta | Maintenance works in garage at no 7, Area 22, Bertha Street, St. Julians |
| Repair of wall at Ġnien il-Kmand at Mosta | Alteration works at 21, Mediterranean Street, Valletta |
| Construction works at Ġnien no 28, Triq il-Kuncizzjoni in Msida | Preparation works in connection with the replacement of roofs at the Chinese Residence in Hal Far |
| Reinstatement of house structure damaged by explosion in Summer Street, Mosta | Works at no 45, South Street in Valletta (Down's Syndrome Association) |
| Works at roof level at Palazzo Verdellin in Valletta | Removal of danger at the Police Station in Birkirkara |
| Removal of danger constituted by the Xemxija Aqueducts | Maintenance of the Senglea Clock Tower |
| Maintenance and repair works at the Clares Convent in Valletta | Construction and finishing of works at Project House, Works Division in Floriana |
| Replacement of roof and other structural repairs at the store of the Manufacturing and Services Department in Marsa | Maintenance and construction works in connection with a dangerous structure at no 33, Barriera Bonds at Barriera Wharf in Valletta |
| Issue of a call for public tenders in connection with the construction of a sub-station at Valletta on behalf of the Government Property Division | Issue of a call for public tenders in connection with the construction of steel and timber decking (phase two) at the Auberge de Baviere in Valletta |
| Issue and award of a public call for tenders for the supply and laying of travertine type floor paving at the Auberge De Baviere, Valletta | Preparation of documentation and award of tender in connection with repair works to the landing of the stairs at no 13 at Barriera Wharf in Valletta |

SUPPORTING SERVICES SECTION

Apart from the usual cutting of *tal-franka* stone blocks, the quarry workers were also employed on extending the quarry floor by a considerable amount of square metres. This is part of an ongoing process to render the quarry area usable for the production of stone. The Waterproofing Section covered around 4,000 square metres of waterproofing membrane on various departments and other government-owned premises.

Materials issued from Tar-Robba Quarry during 2007 were the following:

| Material | Qty |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| <i>Blokki kbar (2'x3'x4')</i> | 1,049 |
| <i>Kantun tas-6", 7" and 9"</i> | 55,941 |
| <i>Ġangatura 24"x10¼"x3"</i> | 3,688 |
| <i>Ġangatura 16"x16"x3"</i> | 38,768 |
| <i>Blajjet (over 3ft in length)</i> | 350 |
| <i>Važi (different sizes)</i> | 1,840 |

ĦAL LIJA WORKSHOP

Works carried out by the Lija workshop were the following:

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Manufacture and fixing in place of an iron railing at Buġibba Promenade 430 metres long | Manufacture and fixing of an iron railing 400 metres long at Ix-Xatt tal-Gżira |
| Manufacture and fixing in place of an iron railing along a stretch of 400 metres at tax-Xama area in St Paul's Bay | Manufacture and fixing in place of an iron railing along 500 metres at the area known as ta' Fra Ben in Qawra |
| Manufacture and fixing in place of an iron railing along 700 metres at the Xemxija Promenade in Saint Paul's Bay (Phase 4) | Other ancillary works such as the manufacturing of iron and wooden benches, iron grills and gratings, and restoration works on wood at St Paul Church in Valletta |

NICHOLAS GRECH

Director (Construction and Maintenance)

Works Division

Financial Management Department

The Financial Management Department provides the necessary 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:

- Accounts Section
- Financial Control Unit
- Revenue
- Salaries Support Unit.

Accounts Section

During 2007, the Accounts Section continued with the Management Efficiency Programme (MEP), a restructuring programme which has now been running for the past five years, transforming the Accounts Officers' role from a passive to an active and dynamic one.

Through the Project Management Programme (PMP), senior officers from the Accounts Section set up monthly meetings with every project manager responsible for each Capital project in hand, to establish expenditure targets for each project and to regularly monitor the progress in the implementation of these projects. Thus we attain better management of the capital vote through clear projected expenditure and step up project implementation.

Financial Control Unit

The scope for setting up the Financial Control Unit (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 objective is to implement more control and monitoring on the commitments being raised and the relevant outstanding payments, attained through monthly management meetings held with every head of department regarding the commitments generated towards their effective management. The result is that funds are utilised better and the suppliers 'credit period' reduced to 30 days. Formulation of business plans and projections is now more realistic and financial data is being gathered in 'real time' and being reported upon on a much more regular basis. Another objective is to sustain a value for money concept. The FCU sustains several programmes namely:

- *Tenements Programme* – directed towards the upkeep of a correct inventory record of building as capital assets of this Ministry, a record comprising also the rental value of each asset. The objective is to continue the regular monitoring on the rental expenditure incurred by the Ministry.
- *Utilities Programme*

Telephone: following up on the inventory exercise that was undertaken in a thorough and systematic way some years back, the Ministry has registered a savings for the period up to August, when compared with the same period in 2003, of 19% or Lm29,000.

Water and Electricity: another inventory programme now some years under way is the one relating to water and electricity bills on consumption, with the main thrust being to curb unnecessary expenditure. When compared with the same period in 2004, the expenditure for a seven month period in 2007, incurred on rent and consumption for water and electricity pertaining to all the line departments within the Ministry, dropped by 30%, or Lm33,000.

- *Materials Control Programme* – This programme is another initiative being adopted under the FCU aimed at controlling the amount of material issued and used on major projects. The objective here is to create an audit in respect of materials used in projects.
- *Reconciliation of Materials Programme* – The FCU implements this programme to maintain an ‘audit trail’ of all materials issued from the central stores in Mriehel and the material actually used on the job. A fortnightly report exposes any discrepancies and its cost with a view to taking remedial action.
- *Transport Programme* - Transport costs have also been addressed by the FCU. In fact, the amount of hired vehicles as at end of 2007, when compared with the figure registered as at January 2003, registered a drop of 72% - from 94 vehicles in 2003 to 26 last year. This downsizing in the hired fleet resulted in yearly savings of around Lm155,000 in leasing fees last year, when compared to the number of leased vehicles in 2003.

Fuel consumption and costs are also being closely monitored and analysed with a view to identifying and eliminating excess expenditure. Results emanating from this initiative are quite positive: fuel consumed (in terms of litres) by vehicles pertaining to all departments falling within MRES have registered a reduction, as at end of last year, of 3% or 16,000 litres, when to year 2006, and of 15% or 101,000 litres, when compared to year 2003.

- *Datatrak - Vehicle Control Programme* - The main objective of the programme is to maximise the effective utilisation of the Ministry’s transport fleet and to better control and monitor the movement of vehicles so as to curb excessive fuel consumption and keep it under control.

Revenue Section

This section comprises the Cash Office Section and the Collection Unit. In collaboration with the Contracts and Procurement Section, the Cash Office within the Revenue Section attained a one-stop-shop regarding tendering and payment procedures, meaning that all quotation and 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. It is the ongoing goal of the Revenue Section to improve on effective control and monitoring of outstanding dues from various departments within the Works Division and on the proper registration of claims.

Salaries Section and the Salaries Support Unit

The Salaries Section was dismantled and the computation of salaries is now stationed in Gozo as back office work, which is being carried out by employees of the Ministry for Gozo under the direct management of the Financial Management Department. The transfer process was successfully implemented under the guidance of the Works Division Financial Management Department, as much as the current organisation structure was also mapped out by the Department. A Salaries Support Unit was set up

within the Finance Branch to co-ordinate the flow of information that is transmitted from the offices in Malta to the Gozo-based Salaries Section. The SSU acts as the centre or liaison office through which the information is channelled, serving also the purpose of customer care to 'clients' (in this case, employees). Monthly management meetings are also being held between the top officials of the Financial Management Department within MRES 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 SECTION

This Section is responsible for all the procurement needs of both Divisions as well as the issue of all contracts that are needed to implement the various projects of the Ministry. The Section processes on a regular and ongoing basis requisitions for the procurement of all type of materials, equipment, stationery, the purchase and repair of machinery, and the purchase of other stores through the period contractors. The main store is at Mriehel, with a smaller store for stationery and other ancillary items at Floriana. The Section also processes the disposal of unserviceable items through the proper procedure according to standing financial regulations. The upkeep of the inventory within the various departments of the Ministry is another task entrusted to this Section. The Section is currently implementing the final stages of a database management programme to monitor and control better the procurement function. The programme is to be made live by the end of January 2008.

Contracts processed by this Section

During 2007 the Contracts and Procurement section processed a total of 218 contracts, for a total amount of Lm1,795,382 categorised as follows:

| | Qty | Lm |
|------------------------------|------------|------------------|
| Contracts Department Tenders | 15 | 610,420 |
| Departmental Tenders | 94 | 761,085 |
| Departmental Quotations | 32 | 40,552 |
| Departmental Hand Quotations | 69 | 91,573 |
| Departmental Direct Orders | 23 | 291,752 |
| Total | 233 | 1,795,382 |

Purchase of material from contractors holding period contracts with the Works Division and Services Division amounted to Lm466,353. For the procurement of this material a total of 1,022 GSPOs were processed. Other GSPOs raised by the Floriana and Mriehel stores for the purchase of stationery and other items, other than period contract material, amounted to 2,245 for a total sum of Lm295,417. The total number of tender and quotation documents sold during the year was of 607 with an income of Lm7,255.

General categorisation of 2007 contracts

- embellishment of seaside and tourist areas, namely: the Blue Grotto Area; the Xemxija Promenade; the Wied Babu Promenade; the Hagar Qim Promenade; the Sliema Promenade; the Marsascula Promenade; the Marsaxlokk Promenade; the Ta' Xbiex Promenade; Pembroke; Ghar id-Dud; Il-Mall Gardens; Marina Gardens; the Marsa Open Centre; the Mixtla ta' Bormla; and Ġnien il-Kmand in Mosta. The total cost was of Lm127,662;
- embellishment of church parvises and chapels in localities including: Mqabba, Qrendi, Safi, Ghaxaq, San Ġwann, St Gregory in Żejtun, Fgura, St Sebastian Qormi, Sarria Floriana and Balzan, at a total cost of Lm84,879;
- embellishment of Qrendi village core for the cost of Lm38,869;
- restoration works namely at the Paladini Room in the Palace of the President and other general works for a total cost of Lm16,987;
- the paving of Merchants Street in Valletta for a total cost of Lm288,804;
- repairs to St Andrew Bastion costing Lm3,576;

- construction and maintenance material, namely concrete, concrete reinforcement, hollow concrete blocks, *franka* stone, etc, for a total cost of Lm392,847;
- manufacturing material, namely aluminium, timber, material for plumbing, electrical material, etc, for a total cost of Lm34,916;
- cleansing services and equipment for the cost of Lm36,005;
- road works and pedestrian pathways, a total cost of Lm71,842;
- trenching works in general, for a total cost of Lm22,633; and
- health and safety equipment and clothing for the total cost of Lm20,615.

Contracts carried out on behalf of other ministries and departments

- *Office of the President*: three contracts connected with refurbishing of San Anton Palace amounting to Lm27,769;
- *Office of the Prime Minister*: two contracts connected with refurbishing works at Castille amounting to Lm31,414; 16 contracts connected with the Villa Francia Project amounting to Lm139,556; one contract connected with works on the new Documentation Centre amounting to Lm2,419;
- *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*: one contract connected with the new Central Visa Unit amounting to Lm77,678;
- *Armed Forces of Malta*: two contracts for the construction of the Maritime Squadron Block at Hay Wharf and refurbishing works at Safi Barracks amounting to Lm64,932;
- *Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs*: one contract connected with refurbishing works at the Joint Office amounting to Lm9,061;
- *Department of Trade and Commerce*: one contract connected with works at Lascaris Wharf amounting to Lm3,051; and
- *Lands Department*: two contracts connected with works at Auberge de Baviere amounting to Lm20,101.

The Registry

Last year, the refurbishment programme at the offices of the Registry continued with the installation of more effective and modern equipment. IT hardware, including PCs, are currently being upgraded to meet the efficiency standards required by the Section. It is hoped that such initiatives will serve to improve substantially the performance and effectiveness of this vital section.

Security Section

The Security Section was set up in June 2003 to carry out daily after-office-hours inspections to monitor watchmen deployed at various sites across the Island by the Works Division. In 2005, these inspections were extended to cover vehicles parked during the night around the Ministry premises. During last year, around 2,578 night inspections were conducted and moreover, the Security section was also engaged in regular inspections on day workers when called for by line departments.

The Checkpoint System introduced in 2004 continued to be implemented to record the number of checks and inspections that are to be carried at identified sites by our security personnel. The 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 at these buildings. It will be extended further in the future.

MARIO RODGERS

Director (Financial Management)

Services Division

Office of the Director General

INTRODUCTION

Through its departments and units, the Services Division continued during 2007 to provide a comprehensive range of quality services to projects of the Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure. This delivery of quality services was also given to the clients of the Works and Services Divisions in an efficient and effective way, guided by the principle of good value for money. Through the work of the various units and the two departments that form the Services Division a number of projects and initiatives were realised.

BUILDING REGULATION OFFICE

Development of New Legislation

Work during 2007 was mainly concentrated on the drafting of legislation for the transposition of articles 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the Directive on the Energy Performance of Buildings (2002/91/EC), and a methodology for the issue of certification on energy performance of non-residential buildings.

In conjunction with a technical working group, officers from the Building Regulations Unit began evaluating a number of IT programmes that were developed in other EU Member States in connection with the aforementioned methodology to see whether any of these programmes suited our own requirements or could be amended to do so. This methodology has to be based on 40 standards of the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN), some of which are still under development. Two software packages were in fact chosen for further study and are being analysed and tested in greater detail. It is envisaged that by the first quarter of 2008 the methodology for both residential and non-residential buildings will be finalised.

The Building Regulations Office organised five seminars on the subject of energy efficiency in buildings and the new regulations that came into effect on 2 January 2007.

The Director General participated in meetings of the *Energy Demand Management Committee* of the Commission which met in Brussels, and other officers participated in the *Concerted Action Group* also on the subject of transposition and implementation of Directive 2002/91/EC.

During the summer, the Building Regulations Office organised a programme of works for Architectural and Engineering university students through which a number of energy audits were carried out on various buildings; these included three hotels, four schools, an old people's home, and three office blocks.

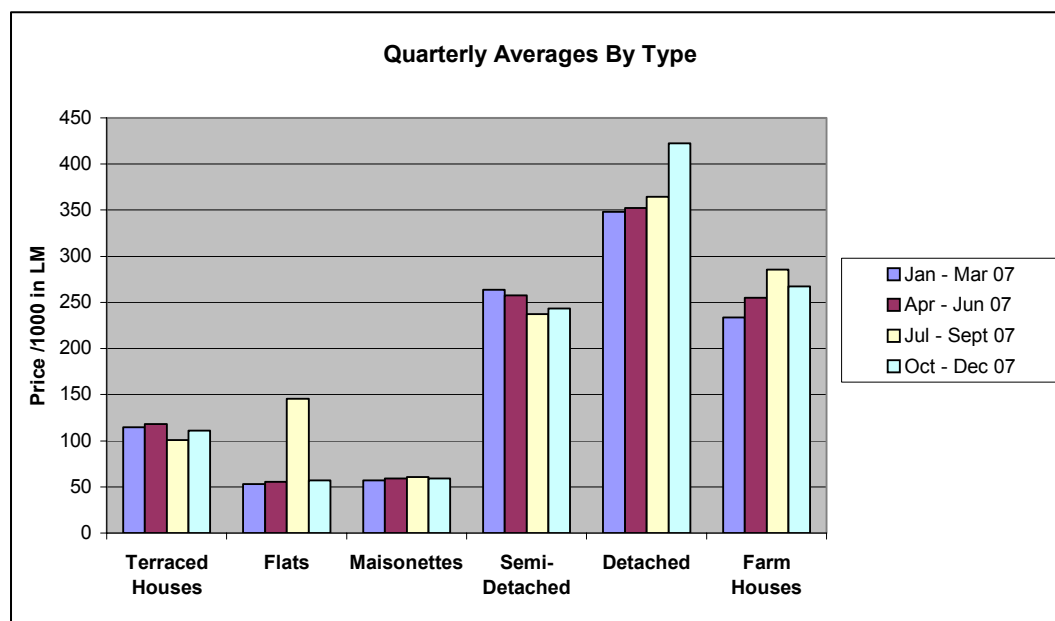
After the Division became a member of the 'Display' campaign which is being organised by *Energie-Cités* Association of European local authorities for promoting a local sustainable energy policy, the Division started gathering information on the use of energy at Project House, with an aim to carry out an energy audit and also issue a large poster that will be displayed in a prominent position at a location in this block, aiming to make people more conscious on the use of energy in the building. The Building Regulations Office also sent feelers to local councils and managed to attract one council to participate in this campaign. Officers from the Building Regulations Office continued to give their input by:

- participating in technical committees of the Malta Standards Authority dealing with Eurocodes on structures and codes of practice on ventilation of premises and occupational health and safety;

- participating in work done by the Ministry's EU Affairs Directorate on matters dealing with Free Movement of Services, Mutual Recognition of Qualifications, Education and Training in the Field of Architecture and the Floods Directive;
- participating in work on amending the Engineering Professions Act; and
- participating in the General Services Board of the Ministry for Health.

Property Prices Survey

Information gathering on the fluctuation of prices in the domestic properties market continued throughout 2007. 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 continued with its work of screening MEPA permit applications to identify those that had the potential of having a lift installation. These applications were entered into the database so that the Unit could monitor them by regular site inspections. The Unit took part in a twinning light project that was organised by the Market Surveillance Directorate of the Ministry for Competitiveness and Communications. This participation included visits by a number of officials to Austria and Brussels.

CE Marking of Other Construction Products

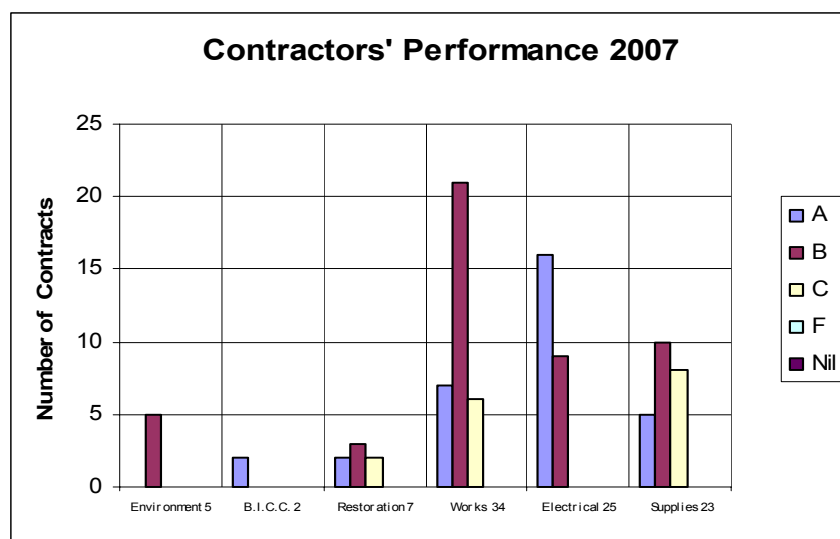
The Unit continued with its participation in the ADCO group which is attended by national representatives of most of the EU Member States, Norway, Iceland and Turkey. The Unit continued with its drive to see that CE marking of locally manufactured construction products is introduced as early as possible. However, due to the lack of at least one accredited local testing laboratory, local manufacturers are finding it extremely difficult to introduce the necessary testing regimes that are required to obtain certification of their factory production control processes.

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 stormwater projects and on various other embellishment and paving projects being undertaken throughout Malta. Around 850 samples were gathered and tested at the Malta University and other private laboratories.

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.



Occupational Health and Safety Unit

The Health and Safety Unit continued with its work to monitor health and safety issues and to increase awareness of such issues throughout the Ministry's workforce.

Routine Work

The unit made 155 inspections on sites of work and issued 175 reports in connection with these inspections. The Unit also investigated 20 cases of accidents where employees suffered some sort of bodily injury, and investigated also a number of complaints made by various employees or units. Seven meetings were held with the H&S workers' representatives where various complaints and other matters relating to H&S issues were tackled.

Risk Assessments

The Unit launched an exercise to encourage supervisory staff in different workshops at the Manufacturing and Services Department (MSD) to do a risk assessment or revise any existing ones. This exercise involved the metal shop, the carpentry shop, the heavy plant and heavy vehicles shops, and the electrical section.

Awareness and Training Seminars

The Unit organised a half-day seminar on generic H & S issues, another on safety during road works and on work sites, and one on manual handling. The Unit also gave a number of short talks on ergonomics, workplace inspections, risk assessments and the use and care of power tools. A member from the Unit also collaborated with BICC on a programme on the subject of safety of construction workers and on-site training.

Other Initiatives

- the redrafting of the Health and Safety Policy Document;
- an investigation and report on the presence of asbestos at the MSD workshops at Marsa;
- a case study and investigation of injuries that occurred during the period 2004-2006 at the Marsa and Kordin workshops; and
- an evaluation and recommendations on various period contracts for the provision of Personal Protective clothing.

All members of the Unit attended several seminars and courses as part of their continuous professional development.

ARCHITECTURAL CONSULTANCY SERVICES UNIT

During 2007, this Unit continued to focus its work mainly on preparatory work in connection with the Birkirkara-Msida Flood Relief and Water Conservation project, and in conjunction with the Water Services Corporation, the preparation of a Stormwater Master plan for Malta and Gozo. The work involved the preparation of a Project Description Statement for MEPA in connection with the application for a permit, draft specifications for the issue of tenders for an Environment Assessment Report of several options of flood relief methods, an Environmental Impact Statement, a Cost Benefit Analysis, and the provision of services of a resident engineer. It also gave its technical input in conjunction with Jaspers (Joint Assistance in Supporting Projects in European Regions – this is a partnership between the Commission [Regional Policy DG], the European Investment Bank, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development) for the development of various alternatives and a feasibility study on these alternatives. An exercise was carried out to identify the number and various categories of buildings and economic activities that may be affected in the area of the Birkirkara-Msida valley and the principal road network during the event of flash floods.

MARINE AND STORM WATER UNIT

The following works were carried out by the Marine and Storm Water Unit:

- project management and site supervision of works on the completion of construction of the quays on phases B and C at Hay Wharf as part of the new quays project for the Armed Forces Maritime Squadron;
- a slipway at Pembroke, the intervention of the Section consisted in a contract for an Environmental Impact Assessment, which was prepared and commissioned; and
- the Unit also prepared designs and MEPA permit applications for a number of slipways and the extension of the quay at Xatt is-Sajjieda in Marsaxlokk. It also started work on co-ordinating an underwater inspection of the breakwater at Marsalforn Gozo.

Storm Water Projects

- *The Qormi-Marsa Flood Relief*: Construction of the last phase of the storm channel was continued and the project completed at the beginning of February.

- *Burmarrad-Salini Flood Relief*: Work was undertaken and practically completed on the construction of the first phase of the project. This work consisted in the formation of a channel near the camping site close to Kennedy Grove using as much as possible earth embankments and local stone. A study of the area of Wied il-Ghasel was carried out and proposals for the construction of water retention basins developed. This study found a number of sites in the valley that had been used for illegal dumping of construction waste by enterprises working in the area. These sites were indicated to MEPA and action to clean up this waste is being taken.

INTEGRATED VALLEY MANAGEMENT UNIT

The Valley Management Unit (VMU) is responsible for the maintenance and rehabilitation works in valleys which included:

- the removal of illegally dumped material and rubbish from Wied il-Kbir in Qormi; Wied ta' l-Isqof in Siggiewi; Wied Morfu near Rabat; Wied San Martin in Haż-Żebbuġ; Wied Inċita and Wied Irmiedi at H'Attard; and Wied ta' l-Imdina, Wied il-Qlejja, and Chadwick Lakes in Rabat;
- the cleaning of a large water reservoir at Santa Luċija;
- the clearing of material and unwanted vegetation from the canals leading to a dam at Marsasċala;
- reconstruction of retentions to hold storm water at Wied is-Sewda in Qormi;
- construction of a 60m long stormwater culvert at Hal Farruġ in Siggiewi; and
- reconstruction of road retaining wall and water dam at Wied il-Ħesri in Siggiewi.

Office-based Tasks

The VMU office staff continued with cataloguing and recording the interventions that are carried out. The sites where works have been undertaken are now on record and under regular monitoring. This approach will continue on all forthcoming works in different locations.

CARMEL MIFSUD BORG
Director General (Services Division)

Services Division

Manufacturing and Services Department

The Manufacturing and Services Department carries out engineering works within the Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure. It incorporates the following trades: carpentry, metal trades, plumbing and electrical installations and repairs, the traffic lights section, lifts and air-condition servicing, the co-operative for traffic signs and road marking, and vehicles and plant repairs. All trades are located at Marsa, except for the vehicles and plant garages which are situated at Kordin.

MARSA BRANCH

The Marsa Branch continued to provide technical and manufacturing services to the MRES for the various embellishment projects carried out by the Ministry, and at the same time also provided maintenance services to other departments, both within and outside this Ministry. The staff complement at Marsa is of 380, including the workers of the only co-operative organisation that is still operating in the Department, namely Koptasin.

During 2007, 698 new jobs were initiated in all of the sections. Around 400 other jobs were carried forward from 2006 and previous years. In the meantime, 841 jobs were closed (it must be clarified that a job is considered open until all paper work is compiled and concluded). The annual turnover exceeded Lm1.5 million, excluding all works carried out for MSD. The table below summarises the works and their respective worth, and excluding Koptasin.

| Section | New Jobs | Closed Jobs | Lm |
|------------------|------------|-------------|------------------|
| Air-conditioning | 84 | 102 | 101,219 |
| Aluminium | 37 | 37 | 77,564 |
| Carpentry | 140 | 192 | 486,128 |
| Electrical | 136 | 144 | 398,980 |
| Lifts | 74 | 79 | 54,345 |
| Metal Trade | 156 | 178 | 309,846 |
| Plumbing | 71 | 109 | 122,953 |
| Total | 698 | 841 | 1,551,035 |

The major projects that MSD was involved in during 2007 were the paving of Merchants Street in Valletta, the Haġar Qim promenade, the Xemxija promenade, the restoration of Villa Francia, and the Mall Gardens project. Maintenance in government buildings and other public areas continued as in previous years.

Air-Conditioning Section

The Air-conditioning Section caters for the maintenance and repairs of some 3,000 split-unit air-conditioners and 20 centralised plants in government offices, health centres, and hospitals. The Section is most busy during the warm months of summer, where it attends to repair any breakdown of these units. During autumn and spring, when many air-conditioning units are not in use, the Section carries out the maintenance required to prepare the AC units for the months of high usage.

The Section attended to about 1,200 calls for repairs during 2007. On a number of cases, the AC units were dismantled and installed in a different place as needed by clients. The Section also inspects systems and

draws up a condition report on AC equipment and provides technical advice about maintenance and replacement of equipment.

Aluminium Section

The Aluminium Section carries out the manufacture and installation of aluminium apertures and fixtures as needed by clients. It also carries out works in gypsum partitions and false-ceilings, with clients being government department and entities.

The Section carried out 37 new jobs and continued with others that were started in the previous year. Gypsum partitions and false ceilings were erected at Villa Francia as part of the refurbishment project of this villa, and work is to be continued in 2008. Other gypsum and aluminium works were carried out at the Auberge de Castille and the Presidential Palace in Valletta. The offices of the Construction and Maintenance Department were completely refurbished, and all office partitions and false ceilings were made anew. Works at Project House included 13 sliding doors and partitions and other minor works in various offices.

Carpentry Section

The Carpentry Section engages in cabinet-making and joinery works, and carries out restoration works on old apertures as requested by architects in charge of restoration and maintenance projects. The Section also manufactures public garden furniture such as benches, litter bins, gazebos, and shadings for pathways. These are used at sites embellished by the Ministry. The Section carried out 140 new jobs during 2007.

The main works carried out during this year were the continuation of the restoration and the manufacture of new wooden apertures as needed at Villa Francia. Other works connected with restoration projects were carried out at the Old Parish Church in Siġġiewi, at St Luke Chapel at Żurrieq, and at St Gregory Church at Żejtun. At Haġar Qim promenade, eight wooden picnic tables were installed, while at Merchants Street in Valletta some more benches and access ramps were fitted. 90 benches were manufactured and installed at the Mall Gardens in Floriana, together with litter bins. Other benches were manufactured and installed at Ċirkewwa, Hal Lija, Mqabba, Gzira and Ta' Xbiex. At San Anton Palace in H'Attard, the section was engaged in the refurbishment of the new dining hall measuring some 13m by 6m, the intervention including the manufacture and installation of wooden false ceiling frames and wall panelling. Wooden benches and skirting were manufactured for Spinola Palace in St Julians. A Maltese-style balcony of considerable length was manufactured and installed at Safi.

Electrical Section

The Electrical Section carries out electrical installations in public gardens, promenades, government offices and other public spaces. This section incorporates also a unit that caters for all traffic lights installation and repairs, as is requested and instructed by ADT.

The main activity here remains the repairs, alterations and upgrading of installations being requested concerning government buildings, offices, bastion walls and monuments to be found mainly in the Floriana and Valletta area. However, a considerable amount of work is also carried out in several MRES offices in various localities.

The main works carried out during this year were embellishment projects, such as lighting of the Mall gardens, the Haġar Qim promenade, the Ta' Xbiex and Xemxija promenades, the façades of various churches where new parvises were laid, and at the old parish church at Siġġiewi. Decorative lighting was installed and maintained at the Sliema and St Julians promenades.

The Traffic Lights Section made two new installations at Qormi, Marsa, St Paul's Bay bypass, the Birkirkara bypass, in Sliema, Paola, and Hal Balzan. Maintenance and repairs on the existing installations are carried out seven days a week.

Lifts Section

The Lifts Section maintains and repairs about 88 lifts and hoists in various government buildings, offices, hospitals and health centres. This service includes emergency interventions as needed and is offered seven days a week.

During 2007, the Section carried out 550 interventions regarding lifts. The works included repairs, maintenance, upgrading of specific lifts, routine maintenance, and assisting in carrying out engineer's certification. Repairs and modifications as specified in the engineer's report were also carried out.

Metal Trades Section

The Metal Trades Section carries out steel fabrication and installation of various metal structures mostly related to embellishment and other projects that from time to time are carried out by the Ministry. Other maintenance works on existing structures are also carried out as needed and as requested.

The Section manufactured moulds for concrete shaped blocks used for various stormwater and other projects. Railings and staircases of various shapes and sizes were manufactured to the satisfaction of many clients, with the new railing at Mall Gardens being a case in point. Other iron railing works included those done at Jetties Wharf, and the restoration of railings at the main entrance gate of the Żabbar Parish Church parvis. Steel ramp footpaths were manufactured for St Helen Gate in Cospicua and for the old parish church at Siġġiewi, where steel frames for stone exhibits were also done at Siġġiewi. The large metal man-hole covers used in the Merchants Street paving project were manufactured to the required specifications and drawings provided. Damaged street lighting poles at Triq is-Salini Marsascalea are being removed by this Section so that Enemalta Corporation would install new lamp posts. A unit within this section has the task of putting up flag poles and hoisting flags in various streets and roundabouts as instructed by the Office of Prime Minister whenever any foreign dignitary visits Malta, and also for other public functions and festivities.

The Plumbing Section

Apart from the maintenance of plumbing systems in government buildings, the Plumbing Section does the installation works in all of the Ministry's projects, and maintains and repairs a number of fountains and irrigation systems in public spaces and gardens. The Section also erects chain-fencing and galvanised pipe railings.

The Section is currently carrying out plumbing works at Villa Francia. At the Mall Gardens, an irrigation system for all vegetation was installed and the fountains restored. Household water mains connections and the pressure mains were replaced along three streets in Naxxar. Chain-fencing was erected and repaired as needed in various sports facilities, namely at the football ground in Pembroke, and the Birzebbuga boat yard.

KORDIN BRANCH

The vehicles and plant repair workshops in Kordin employ 111 persons. This number includes the personnel manning the fuel station at Kirkop, five ESTS apprentices and another five people who are on loan from other departments.

The Kordin garage is organised into five sections, namely Light Vehicles, Auto Electricians, Heavy Vehicles, Heavy Plant, and Miscellaneous Works (including spray painting, panel beating, upholstery and

vulcanising works). The jobs performed range from routine maintenance to engine modifications and overhauling and body work on light cars, vans, trucks and heavy plant equipment such as shovels, bulldozers and road rollers. The workshops cater for vehicles and equipment owned by MSD, as well as equipment owned by other departments. It is a common practice that heavy plant and equipment is serviced on site whenever this is possible due to the logistic difficulties in bringing in the equipment to the garage. Various other departments make use of these services, the major customers being the Cleansing Services Department (CSD) and the CMD.

The garage carried out a total of 3,191 jobs during 2007, the total value of repairs being Lm204,782, distributed as follows:

| Section | No of Jobs | Material Cost Lm | Labour Cost Lm | Total Cost Lm |
|-----------------|--------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Heavy Plant | 394 | 16,591 | 33,812 | 50,403 |
| Heavy Vehicles | 591 | 31,470 | 64,154 | 95,624 |
| Light Vehicles | 363 | 7,933 | 9,064 | 16,997 |
| Auto Electrical | 843 | 7,358 | 10,091 | 17,449 |
| Miscellaneous | 1,000 | 15,670 | 8,639 | 24,309 |
| Total | 3,191 | 79,022 | 125,760 | 204,782 |

Kirkop Fuel Station

The MSD Kirkop Fuel Station supplies fuel to the same vehicles and plant equipment mentioned above. Heavy plant and immobile equipment is supplied by means of the fuel transport vehicle which delivers diesel to site. The table below summarises the consumption figures for the various types of fuel supplied during 2007:

| Fuel Type | Amount (litres) | Cost Lm |
|---------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| LRP | 15,200 | 7,015 |
| Unleaded Petrol | 173,109 | 77,540 |
| Diesel | 291,465 | 118,814 |
| Diesel (by carrier) | 172,812 | 70,614 |
| Bio Diesel | 15,261 | 6,036 |
| Total | 667,847 | 280,019 |

The above fuel consumption figures show a reduction of 2.4% with respect to the consumption figures for 2006. This fuel consumption reduction is mainly due to controls and monitoring of fuel issues and usage.

During 2007, the Department started work on the construction of a new fuel station across the road from the Kordin garage, with a view to relocating the Kirkop station to Kordin, thereby centralising the operations of the garage.

From an administrative point of view, the garage is also responsible for drawing up specifications for tenders for the purchase of vehicles and plants that are issued by the Department. These include the purchase of equipment by MSD and its customers and period contracts for replacement parts that are regularly used at the garage itself, and also for the hiring of equipment such as excavators, loaders and cranes and for towing services for small vehicles and plant equipment.

The following table shows the equipment purchased by the garage during 2007 :

| Description | Lm |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Water carrier for CSD | 11,681.68 |
| Road sweeper for CSD | 10,030.17 |
| 2 ride-on street sweepers for CSD | 11,801.03 |
| 5 pick-up vans distributed within various districts | 30,925.05 |
| Fork-lifter i.c.w. Merchants' Street works | 4,975.16 |
| Mini-dumper for the Stormwater Unit | 1,600.00 |
| Total | 71,013.09 |

During 2007, the Garage also acquired the following equipment to be used by the workshops themselves:

| Description | Lm |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 4 ton car jack | 1,099.87 |
| 2 ton scissors type car jack | 795.06 |
| Exhaust emission tester (diesel) | 1,600.00 |
| Pressure washer | 1,295.20 |
| Total | 4,790.13 |

Other tenders which are in progress or pending delivery concern a double cab van for the Aluminium Section, a sweeping attachment for skid steer loaders, and two vacuum litter collecting machines.

MARTIN GRECH

Director (Manufacturing and Services)

Services Division Cleansing Services Department

ADMINISTRATION

It is without doubt that although the workload and the responsibilities of the department have steadily increased throughout 2007, all targets were met in spite of the employee turnover mainly due to retirements.

The recording of the daily attendance of all the employees, 570 in all, was this year computerised, thus facilitating the daily reporting process to the Human Resources section in Floriana. This daily procedure is completed by 9.00am, thus improving our aptitude to redress any shortcomings in the proper recording of sick and vacation leave absences.

A special emphasis made this year was on the application of health and safety procedures by the workforce, who in turn were also provided with adequate clothing such as handling gloves, and provided also with road safety marking equipment. This equipment is used to highlight the presence on the roads of our workmen to drivers of oncoming traffic.

REVENUE

The Department continued to provide services to local councils and other entities. These services consisted in the cleaning of urban roads, the cleaning of public conveniences, and the collection of bulky waste from private residences. Arrears of revenue in respect of fees due to the department for services in connection with the disposal of waste at the former Magħtab landfill continued to be collected; legal proceedings were instituted against customers who despite various warnings failed to comply.

A breakdown of the revenue collected from services to entities in 2007 is as follows:

| Items of revenue generation | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| | <i>Local Councils</i> | <i>Landfills</i> | <i>VAT</i> | <i>Legal Fees</i> |
| Total Lm | 285,977.98 | 14,048.88 | 92,265.29 | 804.53 |

| Total Revenue for 2007 | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Description</i> | <i>Lm</i> |
| Local Councils | 285,977.98 |
| Landfills | 14,048.88 |
| Extra Services | 193,610.98 |
| Others | 20,870.11 |
| VAT | 92,265.29 |
| Legal Fees | 804.53 |
| Grand Total | 607,577.77 |

CONTRACTS OF SERVICES HELD WITH LOCAL COUNCILS

Contracts with local councils for 2007 vis-à-vis street sweeping, collection of bulky waste, and cleaning of public conveniences were as follows:

| Annual Values of Contracts with Local Councils | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| <i>Local Council</i> | <i>Value (Lm)</i> | <i>Contract</i> | <i>Description</i> |
| B' Buġia | 11,760 | sweeping | |
| | 7,400 | public conv. | |
| Birgu | 7,562 | sweeping | |
| | 5,440 | public conv. | |
| Bormla | 2,392 | public conv. | |
| Fgura | | bulky | Lm1.75 per household |
| Gharghur | 3,708 | sweeping | |
| | | bulky | Lm2.00 per household |
| Ghaxaq | 12,300 | sweeping | |
| Gudja | 8,860 | sweeping | |
| | 3,500 | public conv. | |
| | | bulky | Lm1.80 per household |
| Gżira | 10,850 | sweeping | |
| | 3,390 | public conv. | |
| | | bulky | Lm1.80 per household |
| Hamrun | 5,420 | public conv. | |
| Kalkara | 2,993 | sweeping | |
| | | bulky | Lm2.50 per household |
| Kirkop | 2,993 | sweeping | |
| | | bulky | Lm2.50 per household |
| Lija | 2,993 | sweeping | |
| | 1,165 | public conv. | |
| | | bulky | Lm2.50 per household |
| M'Scala | 3,227 | public conv. | |
| M'Xlokk | 7,094 | sweeping | |
| | 3,325 | public conv. | |
| | | bulky | Lm1.90 per household |
| Marsa | 12,300 | sweeping | |
| | 7,500 | public conv. | |
| | | bulky | Lm2.00 per household |
| Mdina | 2,806 | public conv. | |
| Mellieħa | 11,223 | public conv. | |
| | | bulky | Lm1.80 per household |
| Mġarr | 2,000 | public conv. | |
| | | bulky | Lm2.10 per household |
| Mosta | 1,165 | public conv. | |
| Mqabba | 6,000 | sweeping | |
| | | bulky | Lm2.00 per household |
| Naxxar | 8,275 | sweeping | |
| | 4,700 | public conv. | |
| | | bulky | Lm1.85 per household |
| Qormi | 15,113 | sweeping | |
| | 7,200 | public conv. | |
| | | bulky | Lm1.85 per household |
| Qrendi | 3,442 | sweeping | |
| | 2,678 | public conv. | |
| | | bulky | Lm2.50 per household |
| Safi | 2,993 | sweeping | |
| | | bulky | Lm2.50 per household |
| San Ġiljan | 32,555 | sweeping | |
| | 8,304 | public conv. | |
| | | bulky | Lm2.00 per household |
| San Pawl | | bulky | Lm1.90 per household |
| Sta Luċija | 4,450 | sweeping | |
| | | bulky | Lm2.50 per household |
| | 2,500 | public conv. | |
| Sliema | 43,470 | sweeping | |
| | 14,400 | public conv. | |
| | | bulky | Lm2.20 per household |
| Swieqi | | bulky | Lm2.00 per household |

| | | | |
|-----------------|--------|--------------|----------------------|
| Valletta | 30,000 | sweeping | |
| Commercial area | 25,000 | sweeping | |
| Xgħajra | 2,993 | sweeping | |
| | | bulky | Lm2.50 per household |
| Żabbar | 31,000 | sweeping | |
| | 10,000 | public conv. | |
| Żejtun | 12,313 | sweeping | |
| | 8,209 | public conv. | |
| | | bulky | Lm1.95 per household |

COLLECTION OF BULKY WASTE

The provision of the service for collecting bulky waste from private residences was continued efficiently by this Department, the service being given throughout 25 localities. Although given free of charge to residents, the Department charges expenses on a contractual basis to local councils.

| Total Revenue from Bulky Waste Collection Service | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| | Number of calls | Amount Invoiced Lm |
| Total | 23,840 | 48,364.83 |

| Amount of Bulky Waste Collected from Households | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|
| | No. of Calls | Metal | Wood | Mattresses | Sofas | White Goods | IT & TV | Glass & Others | Total Items |
| Total | 23,929 | 9,550 | 10,356 | 5,183 | 2,057 | 10,417 | 4,236 | 17,809 | 59,608 |

PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

Throughout the year in question, the Department renewed 24 contracts of service with local councils for the upkeep of public conveniences in the respective localities. Apart from this, the Department manages several other public conveniences that fall under the responsibility of central government.

Apart from maintenance and urgent works that were carried out in nearly all public conveniences, extensive refurbishment and embellishment works were conducted at the conveniences at Hal Lija and Bisazza Street in Sliema. Materials needed for the works were paid for by the local council concerned, and involved the installation of new wall and floor tiles, manufacture of aluminium partitions and doors, as well as new water and electrical systems of distribution. The embellishment works at the Valletta Bus terminus and the Sliema side public convenience was paid for by central government.

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Sliema Bisazza Street (Ladies & Gents) | Lm |
| Material cost paid by Sliema Local Council | 5,400.00 |
| Labour cost of 4 employees for 26 days | 1,291.68 |
| Total | 6,691.68 |
| Hal Lija Public Convenience (Ladies & Gents) | Lm |
| Materials cost paid by Lija Local Council | 1,975.00 |
| Labour cost of 2 employees for 67 days | 1,664.28 |
| Total | 3,639.28 |
| Valletta Sliema Side (Gents only) | Lm |
| Material cost | 1,400.00 |
| Labour cost of 4 employees for 12 days | 596.16 |
| Total | 1,996.16 |

CUSTOMER CARE SERVICE

The Quality Service Charter adopted by the Department is being constantly revised to reflect an ongoing improvement in the quality of the service delivery. The following table shows the number of complaints filed with the Department up to December 2007. All complaints were settled within stipulated target dates.

| 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 | 776 | 484 | - | 8 | 420 | 506 | 283 | 69 |

CLEANING OF ARTERIAL ROADS

A workforce of 50 employees make up the unit responsible for the manual cleaning of arterial roads on an ongoing basis. The work is varied and includes sweeping, collection of litter and residue, grass cutting along the kerbs, and a rapid response action to remove obstacles such as dead animals and spilled material. The nature of the work is both labour and machine intensive, with the unit having at its disposal five mechanical sweepers and two vehicles for transporting water.

Cleaning requests of an urgent nature involved mainly the removal of dead animals and the removal of spillage in arterial roads. There were cases where the material in question was illegally dumped by irresponsible persons, and timely response by the cleaning unit served a twofold purpose, that of cleaning and that of removing obstacles that could cause harm through accidents. Spillages originated also from overloaded vehicles carrying building material including concrete. The unit responded also to requests for cleaning of industrial zones and areas popular for recreational purposes such as parks and other popular spots.

Around 500 litter bins were emptied on a daily schedule. These bins are situated along the route from the Malta National Airport to Valletta, along the promenades from St Julians to Pieta' Creek, others fixed next to bus shelters in all the arterial roads around Malta.

Regular cleaning and washing of the carriage way along the tunnels, subways, the bus terminus in Floriana, was carried out on a regular basis. Ancillary cleaning works included the cleaning of hundreds of traffic signage and barriers fixed in arterial roads, and the removal of a large amount of illegally fixed advertising material. In order not to disrupt traffic flow, work was carried out at night time with police attendance in order to provide the safest possible working environment for departmental personnel.

| Waste Material Deposited in Landfills | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| <i>Month</i> | <i>Tonnes</i> |
| January | 3,014.33 |
| February | 2,962.66 |
| March | 1,851.56 |
| April | 2,292.56 |
| May | 1,870.50 |
| June | 2,143.86 |
| July | 1,840.92 |
| August | 1,638.28 |
| September | 982.27 |
| October | 3,617.07 |
| November | 2,845.18 |
| December | 473.53 |
| Total | 25,532.72 |

It is estimated that:

- 10,835 tonnes (42.44%) of waste was inert waste dumped illegally;
- 645 tonnes (2.53%) was illegally dumped and collected litter;
- 490 tonnes (1.92%) was made up of grass cutting; and
- 13,562 tonnes (53.12%) was waste coming from demolition and projects.

The estimated cost for collecting, transporting, and disposing of this waste amounted to Lm130,180 worked at the rate of Lm7 per tonne.

| Waste collected from various sites | |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Description | Tonnes |
| Għaxaq Bypass | 138.48 |
| Siggiewi | 18.05 |
| Għaxaq, Santu Kristu | 72.94 |
| Luqa Industrial Estate | 721.31 |
| Wied il-Kbir | 12.96 |
| Żurrieq Boċċi Club | 20.32 |
| Verdala Rabat | 48.72 |
| Mrieħel Industrial Estate | 257.96 |
| Park and Ride Bombi | 89.90 |
| Kalkara Heritage Malta | 52.96 |
| Tal-Hlantun Hal Far | 37.32 |
| Tarxien, Triq K Cachia | 40.74 |
| San Ġwann, Triq Stefanotis | 35.62 |
| Total | 1,547.28 |
| Waste collected from projects and other sites | |
| Description | Tonnes |
| Marsa Sports Complex | 3,165.00 |
| Marsa Project Phase 2 | 2,028.00 |
| Żurrieq Road Formation | 664.00 |
| The Mall Floriana | 156.00 |
| Ta' Xbiex Sea Front | 116.88 |
| Kordin HE Demolishing | 193.10 |
| Haġar Qim Promenade | 2,332.32 |
| Mixtla ta' Bormla | 359.20 |
| Burmarrad Project | 511.34 |
| Merchants Street Valletta | 2,808.94 |
| Mellieħa | 50.96 |
| Qormi San Bastjan | 90.26 |
| San Ġwann Parish Church | 22.90 |
| Saqqajja Hill | 46.72 |
| Balzan Parish Church | 35.72 |
| Qrendi Square | 22.62 |
| Żurrieq tal-Bebbux | 16.12 |
| Total | 12,620.08 |

| Works carried out during 2007 of type: general cleaning | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| <i>General cleaning</i> | <i>Mechanical sweeping</i> | <i>Removal of material</i> | <i>Litter picking</i> | <i>General cleaning</i> | <i>Removal of posters</i> | <i>Washing of signage</i> | <i>Labour Cost</i> | <i>Other Costs</i> | <i>Total Cost</i> |
| Km | Km | Tones | Km | Sq Mts | No | No | Lm | Lm | Lm |
| 2,836.44 | 24,083.21 | 5,721.15 | 30,386.62 | 1,410.00 | 4,217.00 | 927.00 | 399,865.50 | 131,170.13 | 531,035.63 |

| Works carried out during 2007 of type: culverts and pits | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| <i>General cleaning</i> | <i>Removal of material</i> | <i>Cleaning of culverts</i> | <i>Cleaning of pits</i> | <i>Labour Cost</i> | <i>Other Costs</i> | <i>Total Cost</i> |
| Km Run | Tonnes | Mts | No | Lm | Lm | Lm |
| 179.00 | 16.30 | 12,677.50 | 2,430.00 | 35,361.02 | 11,278.27 | 46,639.29 |

| Works carried out during 2007 of type: cleaning of valley ways and water courses | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Description</i> | <i>Details</i> |
| Wied iċ-Ċawqli l/o Qormi | 13 – 20/08/2007 |
| Removal of wild vegetation | 270m |
| Cleaning of existing water course | 270m |
| Loading of material and carting away | 151.72 tonnes |
| Levelling | 270m |
| Water Course at Marsa (adj Race Track) | 12 – 11/08/2007 |
| Removal of wild vegetation | 900m |
| Cleaning of existing water course | 900m |
| Loading of material and carting away | 595.04 tonnes |
| Levelling | 900m |
| Water Course at M'Scala Phase 1 | 20 – 22/08/2007 |
| Removal of wild vegetation | 200m |
| Cleaning of existing water course | 200m |
| Loading of material and carting away | 168.56 tonnes |
| Levelling | 200m |
| Wied l'Isqof Rabat | 21 – 11/09/2007 |
| Removal of wild vegetation | 830m |
| Cleaning of existing water course | 830m |
| Loading of material and carting away | 416.18 tonnes |
| Levelling | 830m |
| Wied is-Sewda Qormi / Żebbuġ | 24 – 05/09/2007 |
| Illegal dumping | 150m |
| Loading of material and carting away | 117.56 tonnes |
| Levelling | 150m |
| Chadwick Lakes limits of Mosta | 30 – 01/09/2007 |
| Removal of wild vegetation | 300m |
| Cleaning of existing water course | 300m |
| Loading of material and carting away | 137.22 tonnes |
| Levelling | 300m |
| Wied Garnaw Reservoir Sta Luċia | 03 – 04/09/2007 |
| Cleaning of water reservoir | 76.5 x 21.5m |
| Loading of material and carting away | 30.25 tonnes |
| Triq Garibaldi Reservoir Luqa | 17 – 27/09/2007 |
| Cleaning of water reservoir 1 | 57.5 x 17.5m |
| Cleaning of water reservoir 2 | 63 x 15.5m |
| Old Race Track Marsa | 07 – 10/09/2007 |
| Removal of pre-stressed planks | 8 in no. |
| Cleaning of catchments sump & reserve | 10 x 4.5m |
| Replacing of pre-stressed planks | 8 in no. |

Burmarrad Watercourse

A huge task was carried out by the Department's workforce to rebuild the valley way that from the area of Burmarrad leads on to the Salini low land. The first phase of this project, which is part of a larger project denominated as the stormwater project, was completed according to schedule.

Marsa Watercourse

Another project earmarked to alleviate the problem of flooding is what is known as the Marsa watercourse project. Split into phases, it entailed the widening of the watercourse that from the village of Qormi leads to Marsa and eventually to il-Menqa. Such a mammoth task is now reaching completion, and throughout this year, work was concentrated at the area that from the overhead bridge in Triq Aldo Moro leads to the flat land area know as il-Menqa. Works included the excavation of the watercourse, the construction of embankments with large blocks of *franka*, and the construction of a bridge at Xatt il-Mollijiet.

| Works carried out during 2007 of type: embellishment in arterial roads | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Masonry works</i> | <i>Plastering and painting</i> | <i>Labour Cost</i> | <i>Other Costs</i> | <i>Total Cost</i> |
| Sq. Mts | Sq. Mts. | Lm | Lm | Lm |
| 997.47 | 703.00 | 8,338.15 | 1,962.38 | 10,300.53 |

| Extra work carried out by CSD as commissioned by other entities during 2007 | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>On Behalf Of</i> | <i>Description of Works</i> |
| ADT | Repair of roundabout at Sta Luċija Avenue, Paola |
| ADT | Cleaning of stormwater system at Tal-Hanzira l/o Mosta |
| ADT | Removal of traffic signs from Hal Far Road, Birzebbuga |
| ADT | Repairing of kerbs at road leading to power station, Marsaxlokk |
| ADT | Replacement of gratings and slabs and cleaning of stormwater system near Wied |
| ADT | Repairing of retaining walls near St Julians tunnels and St Andrews |
| ADT | Trimming of trees at Blata l-Bajda |
| Agrarian Society | General cleaning after Mnarja festivities |
| David Anastasi | Cleaning and washing at Naxxar |
| Gharghur Local Council | Transporting and emptying of litter bins |
| Gżira Local Council | Replacement of broken slabs at Council of Europe Gardens, Gżira |
| Gżira Local Council | Cleaning and flushing of culverts |
| Health Division | Regular litter picking, general cleaning and emptying of litter bins at Mater Dei |
| JUGS Malta | Cleaning, grass cutting and carting away of material at Naxxar |
| KMKA | General cleaning after September 2007, regatta activities |
| KMKA | General cleaning after Carnival activities |
| KMKA | General cleaning after March 2007, regatta activities |
| Lands Department | Eviction of site at the back of Islamic Centre, Paola |
| Lija Local Council | Transporting and emptying of litter bins |
| Luqa Local Council | General cleaning near P.J. Sutters, Luqa |
| Marsaxlokk Local Council | General cleaning after festa tat-tonn |
| Mellieha Local Council | Supply, delivery and emptying of litter bins |
| Mellieha Local Council | Cleaning of pits and culverts |
| Mgarr Local Council | General cleaning at Triq tas-Santi, Mgarr |
| MCMP | General cleaning of Industrial Estates – January, February, March, April, May, June |
| MCMP | General cleaning at Luqa Industrial Estate |
| Mosta Local Council | Cleaning and repairing of culvert at Triq it-Trinkets, Mosta |
| MRAE | General cleaning and transporting of soil at Marsaxlokk |
| MTA | Regular general cleaning and washing of Cruise Liner Passenger terminal and access |
| MTA | Summer months, cleaning and washing of roads at Mdina |
| MTA | Summer months, cleaning and washing of promenade at St Julians |
| MTA | Regular cleaning and washing at Republic Street, Valletta |
| MTA | Summer months, cleaning and washing of promenades from Manoel Island |
| MTA | Summer months, extra works at Paceville icw general cleaning, washing, litter |
| MTA | Summer months, litter picking at Paceville pedestrian zone |
| MTAC | General cleaning at Lower St Elmo, Valletta |
| MTAC | General cleaning after MTV concert |
| MTAC | General cleaning icw summer arts festival |
| MUDR | Regular, general cleaning and emptying of litter bins at Vittoriosa Waterfront |
| NNG Promotions | General cleaning after Jose Carreras concert |
| NNG Promotions | General cleaning after Bryan Adams concert |
| NNG Promotions | General cleaning after Jazz festival |
| One Productions | General cleaning after 1st May 2007 activities at Valletta |
| Pieta' Local Council | General cleaning at Marina gardens, Pieta' |
| Pieta' Local Council | Removal of construction material |
| Qormi Local Council | Supply, delivery and emptying of litter bins |
| Renaissance Productions | General cleaning after fashion show |
| Reuben Spiteri | Supply and delivery of litter bins at Ta' Qali icw Earth Garden Festival |
| Sliema Local Council | Summer months, cleaning and washing of promenade and refuse collection at Sliema |
| Sliema Local Council | Emptying of litter bins - January 2007 |
| Sliema Local Council | Cleaning of culvert at St Publius Street, Sliema |
| Sliema Local Council | Emptying of litter bins - February 2007 |
| Sliema Local Council | Cleaning and repairing of culvert at Viani Street, Sliema |
| Sliema Local Council | Emptying of litter bins – March, April, May, June, July and September 2007 |
| St Julians Local Council | Repairing of culvert at Fabri Lane, St Julians |

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| St Julians Local Council | Repairing of culvert at Main Street, St Julians |
| St Julians Local Council | Cleaning of culvert at Birkirkara Road, St Julians |
| St Julians Local Council | Cleaning and flushing of culverts |
| St Julians Local Council | Cleaning of pits at Spinola Road, St Julians |
| St Julians Local Council | General cleaning at area near Indian Embassy, St Julians |
| St Julians Local Council | Repairing of slabs at Triq Santu Wistin, St Julians |
| St Julians Local Council | Cleaning of seepage holes from Neptunes to Spinola, St Julians |
| St Julians Local Council | Construction and replacement of slabs from Neptunes to Spinola, St Julians |
| Swieqi Local Council | Cleaning of pits and culverts |
| Valletta Local Council | General cleaning during and after <i>Notte Magica</i> activities |
| Valletta Local Council | General cleaning after new Archbishop ceremony |
| Valletta Local Council | General cleaning after St Paul's feast 2007 |
| Valletta Local Council | General cleaning after Mt Carmel feast 2007 |
| Valletta Local Council | General cleaning after St Dominic's feast 2007 |
| Valletta Local Council | General cleaning after <i>Notte Bianca</i> activities |
| Various entities | Opening of public conveniences after normal working hours |
| Veterinary Services | General cleaning at Abattoir street, Marsa on two occasions |
| VRP | Cleaning and washing of St Dominic's Church façade |
| VRP | Cleaning and washing of St Augustinian Church façade |
| Zurrieq Local Council | Supply, delivery and emptying of litter bins |

The total value of these extra services amount to approximately Lm116,471.

JOSEPH SAMMUT
Director (Cleansing Services)

Oil Exploration Department

The principal activities of the Department during 2007 are outlined below:

- The Department monitored the activities of four companies holding exploration licences in offshore Malta to ensure that they fulfil their contractual obligations. The companies were TGS-Nopec, Malta Oil Co Ltd, RWE Dea/Global Petroleum Ltd, and Anadarko/Pancontinental Oil & Gas NL.
- A Production Sharing Contract was awarded to Heritage Oil International Malta Ltd, a subsidiary of the Canadian oil & gas company Heritage Oil Corporation. The area covered by the contract comprises Areas 2 & 7 to the southeast of the Island. The obligations of the company under the contract include the drilling of a firm well within the first three contract years.
- The Exploration Study Agreements with RWE Dea/Global Petroleum and Malta Oil Ltd were extended up to 30 June 2008 and 23 March 2008 respectively. As a result of these extensions, the former group carried out a microbiological survey of the sea-bed while Malta Oil carried out a 2D seismic survey.
- TGS-Nopec relinquished their Exploration Study Agreement in Areas 2 and 7 in December 2007 after fulfilling all their obligations.
- The surveillance of exploration activities in the Central Mediterranean continued to be a priority activity of the Department during 2007. No activities were reported in areas of overlap claims.
- The Department provided technical support to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the negotiations with Tunisian authorities over establishing an area for the joint exploration and development of petroleum between the two countries.

GODWIN DEBONO

Director (Oil Exploration)

EU Affairs, Policy Development and Programme Implementation Directorate

The Directorate is the Ministry's focal point on EU matters, and oversees the progress of the Ministry's projects which are supported by the EU's Structural and Cohesion Funds. It also facilitates the development of the Ministry's policies and the implementation of centrally-mandated programmes.

NEW PROPOSALS

The Directorate screens EU dossiers, both legislative and non-legislative, and co-ordinates, supports, and provides input for the consolidation of Explanatory Memoranda outlining Malta's position on these dossiers. In addition, 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), COREPER, and Council meetings. The Directorate also follows meetings of expert groups, comitology, and expert conferences.

The year 2007 was characterised by an unusually heavy workload as regards EU developments on energy, starting with the Commission's Strategic Energy Review on 10 January 2007, the Spring European Council Conclusions of March 2007 containing several other ambitious measures, and a package of five proposals adopted in September 2007. Similar action along these lines is expected in 2008, since the Slovenian Presidency has already declared that one of its key priorities shall be Climate Change and Energy, in particular, a further package of four legislative proposals scheduled for publication on 23 January 2008.

During the period under review, the Directorate participated in 10 Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) Meetings for EU Affairs held at the Office of the Prime Minister, and presented 11 Explanatory Memoranda pertaining to issues falling under the Ministry's portfolio.

TRANSPPOSITIONS, NOTIFICATIONS AND REPORTING

The Directorate was involved in the following:

- The transposition of Directive 2004/8/EC on the promotion and development of high efficiency cogeneration of heat and power (Legal Notice no 2 of 2007);
- Communicate to the Commission and to all the Member States, simultaneously the formal qualifiers in respect of the courses held at the University of Malta principally concerned with architecture. This obligation is in line with Directive 85/384/EEC on the mutual recognition of formal qualifications in architecture;
- Liberalisation of the inland fuel market (Legal Notice No. 278 of 2007) and the closure of the infringement procedure against Malta;
- Channelling the monthly reports on oil stocks (as required by Directive 1968/414/EEC) and the submission of other reports such as the report on the Monitoring Programme for Groundwater Bodies (as required by the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC); the monitoring report for the Malta Resources Authority (MRA) project vis-à-vis the development of a Programme of Measures in the Maltese Water Catchment District required by the Planning and Priorities Co-ordination Division (PPCD) at OPM; Malta's National Energy Efficiency Action Plan in terms of Directive 2006/32/EC; and Malta's bio-fuels report in terms of Directive 2006/30/EC on the Promotion of Bio-fuels; and

- Drawing up a request for derogation from Directive 2005/36/EC (Recognition of Professional Qualifications) in connection with the foreign qualifications of Engineers and the right of choice given by Article 14 (Compensation Measures) of the Directive.

FUNDS MANAGEMENT

Interreg Projects

In 2007, the Works Division finalised the *Pagus* and *Voyage and Voir* projects, two projects on Maltese historic heritage co-financed by the Interreg III financial mechanism of the EU. These projects were closely followed by this Directorate to ensure the correct implementation of the re-imburement procedures as required by the PPCD at OPM.

The EAA Norwegian Financial Mechanism

In November of 2007, a pilot project focused on the restoration and consolidation of the Mдина fortifications, and which is being funded by the European Economic Area Norway financial mechanism, was officially launched. This project, which seeks to restore a 25-metre stretch of bastions, is being carried out by the Works Division through its Restoration Unit which forms part of the CMD. The total investment of this co-financing scheme is of €500,000; a pilot project for the much larger restorations which are being planned under the European Regional Development Fund. The EU Affairs Directorate is overseeing the project and liaising with PPCD as to paperwork and reporting.

The 2007-2013 European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

The Directorate co-ordinates submission of applications to the EU. These applications are requests for funding originating from the Works Division and the Restoration Unit, the genre of which concerns infrastructure. These submissions fall under the 2007-2013 ERDF call for proposals and during 2007, these requests were worth a total of €33 million.

LEGAL AFFAIRS

Drafts of Secondary Legislation in line with Acquis Requirements

- The Directorate is collaborating with the Building Regulations Unit within the Services Division to fully transpose Directive 2002/91/EC concerning the energy performance of buildings.
- Secondary legislation was also drafted under the Periti Act (Chap 390) to transpose Directive 2006/100 concerning adapting ‘certain Directives in the field of freedom of movement of persons, by reason of the accession of Bulgaria and Romania’, thereby recognising the professional qualifications of architects from these two countries. This legal notice is expected to be published in 2008.

Advice on Other Legal Matters

- The transposition of Directive 2005/33 concerning the reduction of sulphur in liquid fuels amending Directive 1999/32; and migration of Legal Notice 159 of 2002 (Reductions Of Sulphur Content Of Certain Liquid Fuels Regulations, 2002) from under the Environment Protection Act (Chap 435) to the Malta Resources Authority Act (Chap 423);
- The Intergovernmental Agreement on Stocks of Crude Oil and Petroleum Products;
- The Public Service Obligations contract between MRES and Enemalta Corporation;
- Directive of the European Parliament and the Council amending Directive 2003/54/EC as regards the application of certain provisions to Estonia;
- Transposition of Directive 2006/123/EC concerning services in the internal market; and

- The identification of service activities falling under the remit of MRES and the screening of relative legislation is being carried out. This exercise can subsequently lead to proposals to amend legislation in compliance with the Services Directive.

INTELLIGENT ENERGY EUROPE (IEE) AND THE TRANS-EUROPEAN NETWORKS OF ENERGY (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). It promotes the programmes in Malta, disseminates information, and participates in the comitology committees of the two instruments. In July 2007, the Directorate organised an IEE Info Day for local stakeholders with the participation of the Director General of the Executive Agency for Competitiveness (EACI) in Brussels. A local IEE website was also launched to cater for local needs, which can be found at www.mri.gov.mt/IEE/ieehome.htm.

NATIONAL REFORM PROGRAMME (NRP)

The Directorate co-ordinated the Ministry's ongoing contributions to the NRP for 2007. It provided information and participated in the drafting of Malta's replies to evaluations made and questionnaires sent by the European Commission, and contributed to the sections on energy, water, and stormwater relief.

EURO CHANGEOVER

Following Malta's acceptance for entry into the Euro zone, an official from the Directorate embarked upon a general awareness exercise concerning the euro by delivering several presentations to a substantial number of employees in the line departments and entities forming part of the Ministry. These presentations were delivered between March and September, whilst more focused and hands-on presentations were delivered to cash handlers in October.

CUSTOMER CARE SERVICE

The Ministry's Customer Care Service forms part of the Directorate under its programme implementation function. Complaints that are received electronically are registered daily and forwarded to the relevant entity. During the year, 99 complaints and requests for information were received of which 93 were settled. Complaints in abeyance will be tackled in 2008.

OTHER CENTRALLY MANDATED PROGRAMMES

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.

Gender Mainstreaming

Another official of the Directorate serves as the Ministry's representative for gender mainstreaming, participating at conferences and seminars organised by the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality and assisting the Ministry's Departments to identify and recommend family-friendly measures.

JOSEPH CARUANA

A/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 2,400 employees within the divisional departments as at the end of 2007. A manpower plan of these officers, including their grade extensions, was drawn up. A total of 22 employees were redeployed within the departments. The Directorate also processed the transfer of 31 officers who were transferred to this Ministry and 30 employees transferred to other ministries. A capacity building exercise was drawn up and calls were issued to fill vacancy requirements for the whole Ministry.

The Human Resources (HR) Branch was involved in the process of confirmation of appointments, increments, and progressions of staff. It initiated and processed 111 appointments by calls for applications and 32 officers were employed on a contractual basis. Another 16 appointments were made on the basis of seniority.

During 2007, the Directorate continued monitoring 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 47 reports of instances concerning injury of workers on duty. It also liaised with the Health Division for the processing of 17 cases of employees who were to be medically boarded out, and this in order to establish whether they were fit or otherwise to continue to perform their duties. The Unit also processed 129 pension papers of employees who reached retirement age.

DISCIPLINE

During the year, 104 disciplinary cases were initiated according to the Public Service Commission (Disciplinary Procedure) Regulations of 1999. Seven employees were found guilty of a serious offence while 21 were found guilty of minor ones. Currently, there are 11 officers undergoing criminal proceedings, and four of these are interdicted.

The Directorate continued to utilise the services of a private medical firm to certify the veracity of sick leave claims by employees.

JOHN BORG

Director (People Management & Support Services)

Information Management Unit

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

The Information Management Unit (IMU) guided the strategy in Information and Communications Technology (ICT), with a view to enhance the Ministry's service delivery standards. The primary focus of the Unit was the strategic direction and planning of the use of data to ensure that this data is translated into information and utilised as a strategic resource. The following were the primary functions of the IMU:

- planning for ICT within the Ministry;
- managing the ICT capital budget;
- managing ICT support, the supply contractors, and monitoring of service-provision;
- managing projects underway within the Ministry;
- managing the information systems within the Ministry;
- identifying IT/IS training needs and carrying out training as required; and
- purchasing of all ICT related equipment as required by the Ministry.

MAJOR PROJECTS

Euro Conversion

The dual-display roll-out, the data conversion, and the other preparations in respect of information systems to ensure compliance with the euro requirements pre and post €-day were carried out by the IMU in full collaboration with the Public Sector IT-Task Force. Existing keyboards were also replaced with ones bearing the euro symbol.

Ministry's Website

The Ministry's commitment is that through the use of its website, it offers better information content through an improved design. This improved design will enable key users to update the Ministry website with ease, while the website format has been re-designed to offer a service-driven website. The page layouts and the graphic content will assist web clients to facilitate interaction. This utility will be implemented during the first quarter of 2008.

Local Area Network

The demand on the data network has grown rapidly as a result of the implementation of various applications, and is forecast to grow as new applications and services are rolled out at the Ministry. An assessment on the Local Area Network (LAN) infrastructure was carried out to identify the critical areas that require improvement or those that require increased network security, together with the standardisation of equipment configuration set-up for all sites at MRES with a view to provide better fault-tolerance networking. The process involved the procurement of active networking equipment for the core and distribution layers, together with the configuration, testing, and implementation of these services.

Network extensions were carried out at the Restoration Unit and the Manufacturing and Services Department in Kordin.

AutoCAD

Auto Computer Aided Design Software (AutoCAD and AutoCAD Architecture) is used extensively within MRES by architects and draughtsmen to design major infrastructural projects for the Maltese Islands. All AutoCAD licences were consolidated on the main server of the Ministry to enhance the redundancy capabilities in this service area. In addition, all licences were upgraded to the latest version of AutoCAD and AutoCAD Architecture - 2008. The Ministry is one of the major entities in Malta that utilise this design tool.

AutoCAD Data Consolidation

A data consolidation exercise was carried out to centralise all storage of data and related documents. Data pertaining to various units can now be found on the main server MRES-01; thus enhancing the usage and the retrieval of information.

Use of E-mail

The use of e-mail, Internet, and electronic correspondence across MRES has been expanded further to render the use of e-mail an integral means of conducting business across government.

ICT Inventory

An extensive PC and peripheral audit exercise was carried out within the Ministry. This exercise consisted of updating the inventory held within the Unit. Other useful information was collected in connection with the PC leasing programme within the Public Service which is due to commence in 2008.

Restoration Unit

Six additional AutoCAD licences were installed at the Restoration Unit as part of the Bastions Restoration Programme, in addition to the installation of 12 high spec PCs. Through this process the Unit is now better equipped to offer a more effective service as part of the ongoing restoration programmes being carried out in many different sites.

Contracts and Procurement Section

The aim of the system is to cater for the needs of the Contracts and Supplies Section at the Ministry. The system provides a user-friendly interface for data entry, data validation functionality for ensuring consistent data capture, and a report generation tool for extracting information. The system also provides access control and generation of audit trails. The system is scheduled to go online in the first quarter of 2008.

CLIFFORD SCHEMBRI
Chief Information Officer

**Ministry for
Gozo**

Directorate General Operations

OBJECTIVES

The overall objectives of the Directorate General (Operations) are:

- to participate actively in the development and implementation of the Ministry's strategic, operational and resource plans and co-operate and collaborate with senior staff towards the achievement of the Ministry's goals by sharing resources, providing support and assistance, disseminating information of mutual interest, etc;
- to provide direction to Heads of Directorates, including the Chief Information Officer within the Office of the Permanent Secretary, in the preparation of operational plans to support the Ministry in the implementation of policy directives;
- in liaison with respective Heads of Directorates, to plan, develop and ensure the implementation of work standards within the Office of the Permanent Secretary to ensure quality, timeliness and cost-effective results;
- to establish and maintain effective channels of communication with client groups, and with other ministries, departments and agencies to enhance the exchange of information and ideas on matters of common interest and to ensure that services and programmes are appropriate to the needs of clients, as well as being compatible and complementary to other service initiatives;
- to co-ordinate the operations and activities of the line departments of the Ministry;
- to manage the day-to-day operations of the Back Office Unit as well as those of the Gozo Offices of the Land Registry, Public Registry and Notary to Government.

NOTARY TO GOVERNMENT OFFICE

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 their safe-keeping 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, 999 individuals requested copies of relevant deeds. Revenue collected amounted to Lm1,866.84.

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.

CIVIL STATUS REPORTING OFFICE

The functions of the Civil Status Reporting Office are to input data regarding birth certificates.

During 2007, the total of birth certificates inputted was 90,648. Moreover, 2,993 birth certificates were verified during the same period.

LAND REGISTRY OFFICE

This section deals with applications regarding the registration of property in Gozo. The following applications were received during the year:

| | |
|-------------------|-------|
| Applications LRAs | 1,679 |
| Charges | 460 |
| Official searches | 363 |
| Site plans | 2,000 |

PUBLIC REGISTRY OFFICE

During the year, 2,957 Notes of Enrolment and 2,099 Notes of Hypothec were registered in this Office. Notes of References relating to hypothecs amounted to 723 while 18 Legal Hypothecs were registered. The number of Schedules of Deposit relating to redemption of ground rent of immovables in Gozo and Comino was 42. There were also 33 Warrants of Prohibitory Injunctions and eight sales by auction (*subbasti*).

The acts registered by the Civil Status Section were the following:

| | |
|-----------|-----|
| Births | 282 |
| Marriages | 151 |
| Deaths | 273 |

The certificates issued by this section were:

| | |
|----------------------|-------|
| Extract Certificates | 7,961 |
| Full Certificates | 264 |

The Marriage Registry processed 153 marriage applications subdivided as follows:

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| Religious Marriages | 109 |
| Civil Marriages | 44 |
| Other Religions | NIL |

During 2007, 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.

SALARIES SECTION (HEALTH DIVISION)

The main functions of this section are to:

- pay the salaries due to personnel within the Health Division after the required amendments or adjustments are received by the respective sections within the same Division; subsequently provide the Treasury Department with the necessary information via the computer-based network program *Payper*;
- co-ordinate with the Personnel Section on matters concerning the attendance, transfers, resignations and change in working hours of the employees;
- issue reports relative to the Personal Emoluments block on a regular basis; and
- effect the required payments to governmental and non-governmental entities which provide their services to the Health Division.

SALARIES AND PENSIONS OFFICE (TREASURY)

The Salaries and Pensions Section within the Treasury Department migrated to the Ministry for Gozo on 3 October 2007. This is in line with government policy to identify back office work processes which can be performed from Gozo.

Staff started training at the Salaries and Pensions Section in Floriana at the start of November 2006. One principal and eight clerks were assigned to the Salaries Section, whereas another principal and five clerks were assigned to the Pensions Section. Intensive training commenced and continued uninterrupted till the date of migration. A very steep learning curve provided a tough challenge especially for the salaries section. Apart from this, one of the trainee desk officers was appointed to train as systems administrator. Three more clerks joined the section in July 2007. This section took over the production of the payroll as from July 2007 as well as the testing of the *euro payper* at the end of the year.

MARIO CALLEJA

Director General (Operations)

Department for Projects & Development

The Department for Projects and Development incorporates the Works Branch, the Construction and Maintenance Unit, the Public Cleansing Section, the MRES Salaries Section and the Agriculture and Fisheries Branch.

The main objectives of the Department for Projects and Development are:

- to ensure that Gozo has the proper infrastructure required for the island's development;
- to protect, manage and enhance the natural heritage of Gozo;
- to provide the proper environment and extend the necessary services in the agricultural and fisheries sectors so that progress and growth can be achieved in these industries;
- to support investment; and
- to ensure that progress in Gozo follows the principles of sustainable development.

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 2007, its principal involvement was in the maintenance and embellishment of playing fields, construction and maintenance 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, construction of water culverts, repair of rubble walls, maintenance on roundabouts and central strips, patching with hot and cold 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 the various contractors. During the year under review, new roads were completed in the following localities: Triq is-Sajjed and Triq Barda in Marsalforn; Triq il-Karmelitana in Kerċem; Triq Pawlu Portelli, Triq l-Izbark tal-Francizi, Triq Ġdida fi Triq Ġhajn Qatet and Triq l-Imhalled Cremona in Victoria; Ramla Road in Nadur; Profs Ġuże' Aquilina Street in Munxar; Sannat Road in Xewkija; Triq 10 t'Ottubru in Sannat and New Street off Skapuċċina Street in Żebbuġ.

By the end of the year, work was still in progress on different roads as follows: Triq il-Merkanti and Triq il-Qighan in Ghajnsielem and Triq Xemmiex and Gregorio Caraffa in Nadur.

During 2007, various tenders for the construction of new roads were awarded but were not yet taken in hand. The roads in question are Triq Santa Martha and Wistin Camilleri in Victoria and Sannat Road in Sannat.

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 2007, new furniture and apertures were manufactured for the Health Office, the Exhibition Hall at the Ministry for Gozo, new offices at the Administration Centre and at the ITS school at Qala. This unit was also responsible for the manufacturing of apertures for the public convenience at Xlendi, four units for the Cittadella Restoration Unit and furniture for a new hall at the Gozo Law Courts. The carpentry unit carried out works in connection with the Captive Bird Breeding Project at the Government Farm.

Throughout the year this unit constructed a number of platforms in connection with cultural activities, such as *Notte Gozitana*. The unit was also responsible for the erection of the carnival stands, the set-up of cubicles for the Local Council Elections and the maintenance of garage doors at Mġarr Harbour.

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, Xagħra, 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.

This Unit carried out new electrical installations at the new Xlendi public convenience and Ghasri roundabout monument. The unit also carried out on a daily basis routine maintenance works on electrical units at taċ-Ċawla H.O.S., Qbajjar Promenade, traffic islands, St Mary's Cemetery, Villa Rundle, public conveniences, offices at the Administrative Centre, Cold Stores, Experimental Farm and Law Courts.

The metal section manufactured billboards, benches, railings and beach ladders which were installed in various beaches and tourist resorts. During the past year, railings were fixed at the Victoria Sports Complex, Marsalforn seafront and at tal-Qaċċa belvedere at Xagħra. The unit also carried out maintenance on metal works at the Administrative Centre. A team from this unit was responsible for the laying and maintenance of water proofing membrane at various departments and offices. This unit afforded support to WasteServ Ltd in its operations of the Qortin Landfill.

Building and Engineering Section

This section is responsible for the provision of services which include the preparation of specifications for tenders, expropriations, draughtsmanship, quantity surveying and the issuing of trenching permits. It is also responsible for the various works carried out by direct labour.

Direct labour mainly consisted of undertaking new projects and general maintenance works. During 2007, this unit continued with its programme of carrying out alterations, maintenance and improvement works at the Administration Centre in Victoria. Other works carried out by this section include refurbishment works at Gozo General Hospital, restoration works at St Mary's cemetery, chain-link fencing works at various sites, cleaning of various water culverts, embellishment work in various localities in Victoria in connection with *Lejliet Lapsi Notte Gozitana*, and in Xlendi and maintenance works on government-owned property.

This section was also responsible for the supervision of works which were carried out by contract namely, the construction of a water culvert at St Francis Square in Victoria, cleaning of part of Marsalforn valley and the removal of dangerous shrubs from St Capuchin's Street in Victoria.

Building, Maintenance and Restoration Section

This section, stationed at the Cittadella, is mainly responsible for the carrying out of restoration, maintenance, and construction works.

During 2007, this section finished restoration works on part of the Citadel revetment walls facing the West/Northwest direction. Works consisted in the removal and replacement of deteriorated masonry works, structure consolidation and pointing. Restoration works were also carried out on the Gun Powder Magazine (Polverista). This entailed the replacement of all deteriorated masonry and pointing of the entire structure. Additionally, this unit was responsible for carrying out maintenance works on two halls at the Gozo Law Courts and the redecoration of various apertures.

Other works within the Citadel precincts included the restoration of the Citadel clock tower bells, maintenance and/or restoration works of various stretches of rubble walls, uprooting of weeds and invasive vegetation, the cleaning of shelters and public pathways and other ongoing sundry works.

This section was also responsible for the carrying out of restoration works on the *Ghajj tal-Hamimiet* in the limits of Victoria and commenced restoration works on a statue situated at the Bishop's Conservatory, Victoria. This section was also involved in the setting up of stands and platforms in connection with the *Notte Gozitana* activity held last year.

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.

During 2007, the Unit was entrusted with the laying of 1,700 sq metres of floor tiles and 130 sq metres of wall tiles at the New Crafts Centre in Ghajnsielem. This project was completed by mid August. Plastering and painting was carried out at the Examination Centre, Sir Arthuro Mercieca Primary School and Sir Michaelangelo Refalo School in Victoria. Other maintenance work was carried out at Ghajnsielem Primary School, at the School of Arts and at Gharb Primary School. General maintenance work was carried out at the Emigrants' Commission Office and at the Inland Revenue Office and Gozo Law Courts where electrical works were also carried out. CMU workers undertook maintenance work at the NGOs Centre in Xewkija, at the Adult Training Centre in Ghajnsielem, in various club houses, at the Oratory Don Bosco and at the Astra Theatre in Victoria.

The Unit's main involvement during this year was in the construction area. Excavation works and works on foundations for the re-construction of retaining and boundary walls with 'franka' stone was carried out in various localities in Gozo. An average of 357.20m x 8 crs. of retaining walls, some 46m x 4 courses of boundary walls and approximately 852m x 2m of rubble walls were built by the end of the year. Construction work was carried out on government tenements in Xewkija, Ghasri, Żebbuġ and Xaghra. CMU masons carried out construction works at Kerċem Sports Centre and at the Gozo General Hospital. An average length of 550m x 1m of pavements and ramps were constructed in various localities in order to facilitate access to persons with special needs.

The CMU carried out works on farm access roads, passages and ramps in order to provide easier accessibility to farmers' fields. This Unit carried out levelling and surfacing with concrete on an approximate length of 352m x 4m of farm roads, 251m x 4.50m of ramps and 921m x 3.50m of passages.

Other works carried out by this Unit included the installation of cabling and trunking in connection with IT in various government offices. The Unit is also responsible for the running of the Handyman Service scheme in Gozo which entails the carrying out of various odd jobs. Iron grates and iron railings for belvederes were manufactured at the blacksmiths' workshop. Repair and installation of chain link fencing was undertaken at Xaghra Football Ground, at the playground of Gharb Primary School, at Nadur Football Ground and at Kerċem Football Ground.

The CMU has some employees who are temporarily on loan with local councils. They were mainly concerned with the maintenance of local council offices, 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.

CLEANSING SERVICES BRANCH

Public Cleansing

This section's main responsibility is the upkeep and maintenance of cleanliness in public areas.

During 2007, scavenging was provided on a daily basis, except Sundays, in various urban localities in Gozo. Localities which opted to be serviced by private contractors included Victoria, Nadur, Xewkija, Ghasri, San Lawrenz, Sannat, Ghajnsielem and Fontana. Additionally, this service was even provided on Sundays in the core area of Victoria, in Mgarr, Marsalforn and Xlendi and in localities celebrating the parish feasts.

The Public Cleansing Section is responsible for the removal and disposal of cumbersome refuse. During 2007, the Department attended to around 816 requests to remove and dispose of bulky material. Additionally, the Unit attended to the cleaning of halls at the MCAST and Art School in Ghajnsielem and the removal and clean-up of garden material from their respective gardens.

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.

Other operations carried out by the section included the cutting of weeds and clearing of debris from valleys, 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 held discussions with MTA representatives on ways of improving the cleanliness of the island, notably beaches and other areas of scenic beauty.

Beach Cleaning

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. As of last year, refuse collection was additionally extended to Saturday and Sunday afternoons in Comino and Sunday afternoons in Ramla Bay. During 2007, this Unit performed maintenance on street furniture and general cleaning and embellishment works in connection with the berthing of cruise liners off Xlendi and Mgarr bays.

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.

SEWERAGE MASTER PLAN

The Sewage Treatment Plant project at Ras il-Hobż was completed during 2007. The project, which benefited from 51% funding through the EU pre-accession instrument, was completed with minor delays and started operating immediately upon completion. The project cost a total of €7.2 million.

Works on the San Blas (Nadur) Pumping Station were also completed in 2007 and thus, the sewage outfall at this picturesque bay was also eliminated. Sewage formerly discharged at this location has now been re-directed to the sewage treatment plant. San Blas Bay can therefore now start featuring prominently as part of Gozo's tourism product.

Calls for tenders for the construction of the Wied il-Mielah (Għarb) Pumping Station were published during this year. However, due to adjudication-related difficulties, this procedure had to be withdrawn and a fresh tendering process is expected to be launched soon.

GREEN OFFICE

Throughout 2007, the Green office within the Ministry for Gozo maintained the initiatives already initiated and assisted the lead Green Office within the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment in sustaining the initiative and its exposure on a national level.

The 10kW photovoltaic (solar panel) system installed at the Ministry for Gozo towards the end of 2006 was connected to the national grid and the MRA monitoring systems. By the end of 2007, this system was still the largest renewable energy-producing installation in the Maltese Islands. During this year, a monitoring system was installed on this photovoltaic installation. This system is basically a real-time monitoring and communication system which monitors the performance of these solar panels, makes possible the remote retrieval of performance data and the presentation of the panels' performance on an Internet interface.

During 2007, this office also maintained its initiatives connected with the sensible use and re-use of office stationery. The set of stickers facilitating the re-use of envelopes were taken up well by staff within the Administrative Centre and in effect, envelope recycling was introduced both for external and internal use.

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, and incorporates the Civil Abattoir, field work, Imġarr inspectorate, and prevention of diseases.

Civil Abattoir

As the refurbishment process at the Gozo Civil Abattoir was still not concluded - due to the need for the re-issuing of a major tender for equipment and ancillary services - the slaughter of live stock had to be carried out at the Civil Abattoir in Malta. The number of live stock slaughtered in Malta amounted to 1,386 cattle,

comprising 674 cows and 712 bulls, and 5,378 swine. All fallen animals, condemned meat and offal were disposed of by means of incineration.

Field Work

During 2007, all farms supplying milk to Malta Dairy Products (MDP) were tested for TB and brucellosis. Testing was carried out on 32 cattle herds as follows:

| | |
|----------------|-------|
| TB Tests | 2,239 |
| Brucella Tests | 2,241 |

Additionally, TB/brucella testing was also carried out on other farms which do not supply milk to the MDP. In all, 515 units were checked as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------|-------|
| Brucella tests on sheep | 4,418 |
| Brucella tests on goats | 1,184 |

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 | 2,241 | - | - |
| Non-MDP | - | 4,418 | 1,184 |

| Pig Tattooing | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| No. of tattoos | 7,322 |
| Registration of Deaths | 1,247 |
| Registration of slaughtered animals | 5,378 |

All pig units were inspected and a technical report and census made.

Poultry

During 2007, 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 ante-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.

Mġarr Inspectorate

One of the functions of the Mġarr Inspectorate is to prevent contagious diseases from reaching Gozo. In this regard inspections were carried out on a shift basis during the entire week on vehicles crossing over to and from Malta. Extra care is being taken by the inspectorate in not allowing certain palm trees to be brought over to Gozo in order to keep in check the red palm weevil outbreak.

Prevention of Diseases

The Veterinary Services in Gozo take the necessary measures to monitor and control contagious diseases.

- **Salmonella and avian influenza.** All layer farms were inspected. Faeces and blood samples were taken and sent to laboratory for analyses. This section has taken measures to equip itself in accordance

with the *Staff Manual of Instructions for dealing with outbreaks of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza on the Maltese Islands* in order to be prepared for any eventual outbreak.

- **Blue tongue disease.** In order to better control this disease, all farms on Gozo were divided in four quadrants. Blood samples were periodically taken from four to six randomly chosen cattle farms and sent for laboratory analyses.
- **Rigid control of animal movement.** With the inter trace in place all animal movements were recorded and cross checked to see that all farms were disease free.
- **Leukosis Disease.** All farms were being tested to check which ones were positive for such disease. Now all animals are being blood sampled so as to know which animals are positive.

Gozo Marketing Centre

The total value of produce sold through the Gozo Marketing Centre during 2007 amounted to Lm474,720, representing an increase in value of Lm16,738 or 3.7% when compared with the previous year. On the other hand, there was a decrease in weight of 178,296 kgs or 8.6% over 2006.

| Sale of Agricultural Produce through the Gozo Pitkali Centre | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| | 2006 | | 2007 | |
| | Kgs | Lm | Kgs | Lm |
| Pitkali | 110,899 | 21,701 | 64,415 | 17,962 |
| Co-operative | 1,951,629 | 436,281 | 1,819,817 | 456,758 |
| Totals | 2,062,528 | 457,982 | 1,884,232 | 474,720 |

Gozitan farmers also make use of the Marketing Centre in Malta to sell their produce. The total value of produce sold by Gozitan farmers through both Marketing Centres during 2007 was of Lm1,170,125. When compared with the sales for 2006 (Lm1,076,325), this represents an increase in value of Lm93,800 or 8.7%.

The Pitkali Markets Management System (PMMS) 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 maintenance of various public gardens in Gozo, namely Villa Rundle in Victoria, Ulysses Grove in Xewkija and Papa Ġwanni XXIII in Mġarr. It is also responsible for the landscaping and upkeep of central strips, roundabouts, street verges and other soft areas.

During 2007, more than 22,500 seasonal flowering plants, ornamental trees and shrubs, which were propagated at the Department's own nurseries, were planted all over Gozo. The Afforestation section also carried out other work such as weeding, soil cultivation and watering. Another function of the Unit is the pruning of trees which is carried throughout the year.

During 2007, this section honoured the contractual obligations it had with four local councils namely, Munxar, Żebbuġ, Qala and Ġħajsiem in maintaining their soft areas, as per contracts signed between the local councils and the Department for Projects and Development.

In 2007, 203 bags of logs and some palm fronds and olive leaves were sold to the general public netting Lm425.65,0 in revenue.

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-Ħlewwa - which during 2007 propagated thousands of decorative trees, shrubs and seasonal flowering bedding plants, as well as some indigenous species such as 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. The following table shows the number of plants supplied to the Afforestation Unit in 2006 as compared to 2007.

| Plants Supplied to the Afforestation Unit | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------|
| <i>Year</i> | <i>Standard</i> | <i>Decorative</i> | <i>Seasonal</i> | <i>Medicinal</i> | <i>Total</i> |
| 2006 | 500 | 665 | 24,360 | 14 | 25,539 |
| 2007 | 549 | 1,251 | 20,787 | 26 | 22,613 |

The nurseries supplied plants and shrubs to the "Greening of Gozo" trial project which was launched by the Ministry for Gozo some years ago. This project involves the reclaiming of idle land, prevents soil erosion and embellishes the environment with a greener landscape. Additionally, 1,436 plants were donated to various local councils, schools and NGOs.

During 2007, the nurseries supplied hundreds of potted plants on return basis to various entities in order to embellish their premises when holding cultural and similar activities. Seasonal plants and cuttings of decorative shrubs which require warmer temperatures were propagated under the two polythene tunnels that were specifically built for this purpose.

Revenue from sales of ornamental trees and shrubs to the general public amounted to Lm3,244 during 2007. This shows a sharp increase in both volume and revenue when compared to the previous year as the following table indicates:

| Sale of Trees and Shrubs from Nurseries | | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Year</i> | <i>Total Sale of Plants</i> | <i>Standard</i> | <i>Decorative</i> | <i>Medicinal</i> | <i>Total Value Lm</i> |
| 2006 | 1,398 | 685 | 696 | 17 | 2,796 |
| 2007 | 3,428 | 1,672 | 1,641 | 115 | 6,856 |

Government Experimental Farm

The Government Experimental Farm is mainly concerned with the cultivation of crops and trees using the latest techniques. Crops are cultivated both in the open and in glasshouses.

During 2007, the quantity of unprotected crops produced at the farm - consisting mainly of cauliflowers, onions, kohlrabi and aubergines - reached 595 kilogrammes. This figure shows a drop over the previous year. However, this drop in production was compensated for by the sowing of wheat on 28 tumoli of land. On the other hand, some 4,998 kilogrammes of crops, which is considerably higher than last year's, were produced in the glasshouses using organic spray and feeds and solarisation techniques. Plants included squashes, peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers, watermelons and melons amongst others. Vegetable seedlings, mainly onions and cabbages, were sold to the public. Revenue generated from the sale of crops, vegetable seedlings and wheat amounted to Lm2,641.47.

The Government Farm propagates fruit trees and vine rootlings for eventual sale to the public. Sales during 2007 amounted to 557 trees and 205 vine rootlings for a total amount of Lm865.67. Additionally, a small amount of soft fruit and 2,456 kgs of citrus were sold for Lm198.65.

Land and Water Use Section

This section is responsible for monitoring and preserving soil on the island when it is dislodged from one place to another. During the year, in accordance with the Fertile Soil Preservation Act of 1973, the section received 68 notices for the removal of approximately 15,355 cubic metres of soil which was then used for developing gardens and fields, reclamation of poor land or stored for future use.

This Section is also responsible for the drawing up of reports for farmers requesting alterations in their registration details. It also carried out on-site assessments in connection with the compensation for damages to crops and land. Additionally, land inspections were carried out in connection with applications for development permits and repair of rubble walls.

During 2007, this section processed applications for the purchase of fruit trees and vine and issued licences to commercial vintners. During the year some 48,240 kgs of grapes were pressed. Meetings were held at the Government Farm for persons interested in the Viticulture and Apiculture fields.

Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS)

The Integrated Administrative and Control System's (IACS) main function is to register and keep records of land under cultivation and to support farmers in their bid to access the various schemes that may be available.

Land Parcel Identification System (LPIS)

The LPIS is a computerised system in which data pertaining to all land under cultivation is inputted. The LPIS is continuously updated through adjustments of land ownership transfers and the registration of new land. Site-plans of all parcels of land being cultivated are kept in order to facilitate identification. This Unit dealt with and solved a number of problems regarding the overlapping and incorrect location of land. Some problems which could not be solved by the Unit were forwarded to the Board of Disputes.

Farmer's Aid Applications

During 2007, the following aid schemes were made available to farmers: Arable Aid; Fruit and Vegetables for Production; Fruit and Tomatoes for Processing; Autochthonous; Vines; Less Favoured Area; and *Ad Hoc* measure for full-time farmers.

This Unit received 1,299 applications for the above-mentioned schemes. It is to be borne in mind that a single application can be made out for more than one aid scheme. During 2007, the Single Payment System scheme was introduced. This scheme establishes the financial aid payable to farmers and is divided in two sections, namely, authorised entitlements and normal entitlements. Authorised entitlements are intended for the horticulture sector which includes all vegetables and tomatoes for processing. Normal entitlements cover arable land, set-aside fields and olive tree fields. Fruit and vine trees were not included in this scheme.

The Control Unit

This Unit is responsible for the carrying out of on-the-spot checks in order to verify that declarations made by farmers actually agree with what is found on the spot. During the year under review, 1,939 parcels of land belonging to 95 farmers were randomly selected for inspection. Some parcels were inspected on the spot whereas other parcels, used mainly for arable crop, were inspected by remote sensing. Most of the inspections were carried out during the summer months. The information gathered from inspections was inputted into a computerised system and resulting anomalies were addressed.

Other office work during 2007 included the updating of farmers' registration cards (FRC's) which are inputted in a computerised database. The unit also processed 40 applications for agricultural land development permits referred to it by MEPA.

Fisheries Section

- *Fishing population:* During 2007 the number of registered fishermen decreased from 433 to 364 (107 full-time, 177 part-time, 80 recreational).
- *Licences:* 33 fishermen were given a licence to lay *kannizzati* in four districts as follows - Xlendi (19); Marsalforn (9); Mġarr-Grigal (3); Mġarr-Lbiċ (2). In addition six full-time fishermen were issued with tuna fishing licences and set surface long line licences (*irmigġi*) were issued to five fishermen.
- *Crafts:* In 2007, a total of 389 fishing vessels (94 professional full-time, 178 professional part-time, and 117 non-commercial recreational) were registered with this section. The bulk of the fishing vessels are located at Mġarr Harbour whereas Marsalforn and Xlendi and Dwejra Bays hold smaller numbers. A very small percentage of vessels are distributed in other small bays.
- *Maintenance works:* During 2007, maintenance and repair works were carried out on the electric winches at Mġarr, Marsalforn and Xlendi Bays while sundry maintenance work was carried out on all other winches located in various bays. Other works included the changing of berthing rings and the cleaning of sand in front of the slipway at Mġarr Harbour, replacement of fenders on Xlendi Bay quay and the replacement of sleepers at Marsalforn main slipway. Additionally, regular inspections to all fishing centres were carried out during 2007.

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 2007, 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 the Gozo College Schools (state schools), church schools and to 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 2007 by new initiatives.

Construction works, refurbishment and maintenance works were carried out in practically all the Gozitan schools. Construction works at the Agius de Soldanis Girls' Secondary and Junior Lyceum included the building of a lift shaft by the Education office personnel and the installation of the lift, originally intended for Ninu Cremona Lyceum. Other major works included the setting up of five Design and Technology Labs and a Machine Workshop. Class partitions, tile laying and painting of various classes were carried out. Playground was levelled in preparation for laying of artificial turf.

Ninu Cremona Lyceum Complex was given the maintenance needed but was kept to a minimum since with the building of the New School the old premises will be demolished in a short time. Major works were carried out in Nadur Primary School in connection with roofs that had deteriorated. Various classes and corridors were painted. Corridors and classes were painted at Ghajnsielem Primary school. New aluminium windows and classroom doors were made with financing by FTS under supervision of education office technical staff.

A partition was erected at the new wing of the School of Art. Landscaping works were also carried out. Refurbishment works were started at Xaghra Primary School Hall. Various works were carried out at Żebbuġ Primary. These included roof waterproofing, painting of corridors and toilets, maintenance on concrete beams and the changing of all classroom apertures. A new installation of the school network system was done.

- Refurbishment programmes performed at St Lawrence Primary included plumbing and painting in various areas.
- Masonry works were carried out at Qala Primary.
- Refurbishment works at Xewkija Primary were completed.

The Peter Paul Grech Hall at Sir Michael Angelo Refalo Post-Secondary School was upgraded. Two ramps to provide accessibility for the disabled were also constructed. Refurbishment of toilets was carried out and two new toilets for persons with special needs were erected. Two partitions were erected.

At Sannat Primary School and Special Unit, a ramp for transport vehicles for persons with special needs was constructed. Refurbishment and upgrading of electrical system and floodlighting system were carried out. Painting of corridors, erection of partitions, and upgrading of rain water pipes was carried at Vajringa Primary. Routine maintenance was carried out at Kerċem and Gharb Primary schools.

The Literacy Centre was further equipped with books and periodicals and all schools could make use of its resources throughout the whole scholastic year. This Centre is now open all the time by assignment of a person to supervise when the teacher in charge is performing duties in schools

Peripatetic teachers posted at the Education Office continued to offer their services to all primary schools. Exhibitions were held by the Science Group and the Health and Safety Group.

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, the Annual Sports Rally and other extracurricular activities. 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 Hands-on Farming section continued to give regular programmes for all Gozitan schools and there were also visits by schools from Malta.

The school population and teaching staff in Gozo schools as at end 2007 was: Primary Schools (including kindergarten students) - 1,727; Secondary and Junior Lyceums - 1,664; Post-Secondary Schools – 523.

Education Salaries Section

As in previous years, this section continued to provide good service to all employees who fall under the Education Division in Malta.

Correspondence and communications received by e-mails and telephone calls from Leaves and Records Sections were dealt with efficiency due to Service Standards, and amendments were sent to the Treasury Department in time. Around 650 returns of casual staff were received every four weeks and wage sheets were then issued to every casual employee. Throughout the year, the section processed around 15,250 mid-day break supervision claims which were paid quarterly. There was an increase in Professional Development claims which numbered 8,105. The section also processed new entries, mostly of new teachers and supply teachers.

TAS and ESTS students were also paid from this section.

Refunds of ex-teachers pensioners and teachers still in employment, overpaid due to resignation, boarded-out, on unpaid leave and sick leave, and on maternity leave - which were previously being dealt with this section - have now been sent over to Malta after instructions given to the Section by the Audit Officers.

The staff monitored incoming requests for information and complaints and assisted the public with the best service possible. Staff dealt effectively and efficiently with a large volume of incoming queries and requests which were forwarded by the Ministry and other departments.

EXAMINATIONS CENTRE

The Examinations Centre in Gozo is responsible for the running of all local and external examinations held in Gozo. During 2007, the Centre handled the following work:

- *Applications (Local, Matriculation and External Examinations)*: 1,804 GCE and equivalent applications and 468 local examinations and eight others were received (653 Matsec May; 258 Matsec September; 19 London January; 210 Ordinary May; 29 Advanced May; 250 Matric May; 149 Matric September; 27 LCCI Series 2; 40 LCCI Series 3; 12 English as a Foreign Language; 160 ECDL applications; 27 Wireman Licence A & B; 44 Regular Soldiers in AFM; 8 Foreign University degrees; 300 Clerks; one Court Messenger; 78 Principals and 18 Senior Principals). On average, 22,000 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 432 examination sessions (External, Matriculation and Local Examinations). When the number of candidates was more than 40, outside help was sought by engaging invigilators from other departments to ensure the smooth running of the examinations in session.
- *Certificates*: Over 1,400 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 regarding 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.
- *ECDL examinations*: For the 5th year running this section has been nominated to co-ordinate the European Computer Driving Licence examinations. These examinations are now being held in Gozo.
- *English as a Foreign Language*: Two sessions of this examination (first session was held in November 2004) were held at the centre. Around 25 sat for these papers.

CULTURE SECTION

Administration

During 2007, 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 & Crafts Centre to accommodate the new offices and staff at the Cittadella Centre for Culture & Crafts.

During 2007, the Gozo Cultural Council held 12 committee meetings to discuss and plan the various cultural initiatives held throughout the year.

Organisation of Activities

During 2007, the Culture Section was responsible for the organisation of the following activities:

- The commemoration of five annual National Days, together with the 30 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* was celebrated on 25 October to commemorate the anniversary of the victory of the Gozitans against the French in 1798.

- Two evenings of traditional song and dance were held near different characteristic Gozitan summer villages. The initiatives called *Bajji*et was held near Xlendi Bay and Marsalforn in the summer months and were very well received by those present.
- A concert by the La Stella Band of Victoria in Independence Square, Victoria on the occasion of the 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 26 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 Cittadella Centre for Culture and Crafts.
- The Christmas season was marked by two concerts, one held at the Ministry Hall and another at the Oratory Don Bosco Hall. One with piano and soloists was conducted by Mro John Galea 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 37 participants.
- The first edition of *Lejlet Lapsi Notte Gozitana* which was the third in a series of "Nottes", two of which were organised in Malta, was held between 19 and 21 May 2007. These activities were held in the main streets and squares of Victoria and the Citadel. The three days of activities were attended by tens of thousands of Maltese, foreigners and locals alike.

Carnival 2007

Six triumphal floats, King Carnival and three tractors, four musical bands, two sets of grotesque masks, three dance groups, 14 school companies, seven hilarious companies, eight individual costumes, and three individual costumes with grotesque masks took part in the Gozo 2007 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, the Ministry for Gozo kept its annual commitment with the two Gozo opera theatres. A grant of Lm7,500 was given to each theatre as a subsidy towards the expenses involved in organising the annual opera performances. Part of the grant was given through the Gozo Attractions Incentive Scheme.

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 promoting and accessioning library services. All persons with access to the Internet can view the library's electronic catalogue through opac.library.gov.mt. Patrons can renew their books online and reserve others that are on loan.

Collections

- *Legal Deposits*: The Melitensia collection at the Gozo Public Library was enriched by 504 books. Besides, the library received a copy of government publications, newspapers and periodicals published locally.
- *New acquisitions*: The sum of Lm4,453.99 was spent on the acquisition of 1,706 new books (173 for the Gozo Public Library, 912 for the Gozo Lending Library, 621 for the Local Branch Libraries).
- *Donations*: 2,823 books were donated by various persons and entities: 383 to the Gozo Public Library, 576 books to the Gozo Lending Library, and 1,864 to the Local Branch Libraries.

Readers' Service

- *Internet service*: 8,177 persons availed themselves of the Internet Service (Gozo Public Library – 4,617 persons; Gozo Lending Library – 3,560 persons).
- *Photocopying services*: 3,121 persons requested a total number of 57,643 prints at the Gozo Public Library. This yielded an income of Lm2,842.78. All prints were made available on the same day of request.
- *New members*: 798 persons requested to borrow books for home reading (Gozo Lending Library – 447; Local Branch Libraries – 351).
- *Book loans*: A total of 121,149 books (3,268 more than the preceding year) were issued for home reading (Gozo Lending Library – 66,103; Local Branch Libraries – 55,046).

Publicity and Promotion

- *Library orientation visits*: 585 students from all over Gozo together with their respective teachers and occasionally by their parents 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*: One-hour storytelling sessions were held during the scholastic year, every Wednesday afternoons at the Gozo Lending Library. A total of 439 students attended.

Exhibitions

- *World Book Day 2007*: The events to commemorate World Book Day 2007 were spread over three days, from 25 to 27 April. These included an exhibition of over 700 new books earmarked for the Gozo Public Library, the Gozo Lending Library and local branch libraries. Other exhibits included the works of Fr Manwel Magri S.J. (1851 – 1907) and Major Albert E Abela (1932 – 2007). Two storytelling sessions were held for Year 3 and Year 4 students. These events also included the launching of a new publication.

Other Activities

- *Local Branch Libraries*: On the initiative of Nadur and Xaghra Local Councils, new premises were allocated for their respective branch libraries. Nadur Branch Library was named after Mary Zerafa, ex-Head of School for over 25 years, whilst the Xaghra Branch Library was named after Fr Ġiġi Camilleri SJ, a missionary who spent 44 years in India. Nadur and Xaghra were the first two localities in which the first two circulating libraries in Gozo were opened on 19 September 1925.
- *Lejlet Lapsi*: The Gozo Public Library was one of the venues which were open for the general public on 19 May 2007, throughout the evening. An exhibition of new books was put on display in the main reading hall. Among the distinguished guests who visited the library were the Prime Minister, the Minister for Gozo and the Minister of Tourism and Culture.
- *Nichelino Delegation Visit*: On 30 June 2007, a delegation from Nichelino, a city in Northern Italy, headed by Dott G Catizoni, Mayor of this locality, visited the Gozo Public Library to acquaint themselves with the facilities and services offered.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Introduction

The NAG 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.

Act V (2005) *The National Archives Act* enacted by the Parliament of Malta on 10 May 2005 laid out the constitution, composition, and functions of the National Archives establishing it as an entity or agency in its own right. It also made provisions for the appointment of a National Archivist and an Assistant National Archivist for Gozo together with other dispositions ancillary thereto.

The NAG is a sub-agency within this government entity. As such, the National Archives, as the Agency, will act as the *regulator*; the Ministry of Gozo as *administrator*.

The NAG, up to 31 December 2007, held deposits from 25 different entities, each of which is subdivided to reflect the diverse activity carried out by those entities. No new entity was added during the year.

Tasks

The Assistant National Archivist and his assistants carry out a four-fold task.

- The management of the archives – a most important task for the preservation of the national memory of the Maltese nation.
- Visits by the Assistant National Archivist to government establishments to make an appraisal of the documents preserved therein. During the year, these on-the-spot checks were carried out at the Law Courts-Gozo, the Gozo General Hospital, and the Government Clinic (*berġa*) of Ta' Sannat. A number of registers were identified for transfer from the entities to the NAG. These were eventually transferred and catalogued.
- Cataloguing of documents transferred to the Archives. This task devours most of the time as the majority of documents are transferred to the NAG without any pre-established order. The analysis of the oldest section of the Archives, the records of the old Universitas, the administrative body of Gozo during the rule of the Knights continues slowly.
- Making the general public conscious of this written memory of the Maltese nation. In this regard, the Assistant National Archivist proceeded with the publication of a document every month from the registers of the Universitas, the oldest section of the NAG. Serialised in the monthly magazine *Il-Ħajja f'Għawdex*, a Gozo magazine for local consumption, under the designation *Għawdex tliet mitt sena ilu* – Gozo three hundred years ago, the series has proved very popular and will be retained for the seventeenth consecutive year. Up to end year, 159 documents had been transcribed, translated, and published with an explanation. Besides, three exhibitions were held during 2007 to bring the general public closer to this heritage.

Teamwork

The NAG is a three-person department. The Assistant National Archivist decides on the registers that are to be tackled, draws a preliminary report, and proceeds to their cataloguing. The functions of the NAG staff include preparing the catalogue labelling of the documents; filling the cataloguing sheets; helping in the classification of records; renewing the binding of worn out volumes; and binding bundles of previously unbound documents. Processing the thousands of photos brought over from the Ministry of Gozo is still being carried out. This photo collection now spans 78 albums. Besides, members of staff deal with requests from researchers.

New deposits

During 2007, the NAG was enriched with deposits of new items in the following entities:

- *AG Archives Gozo (National Archives – Gozo section)*: Two new sections were added: AG/03 - Attendances and other related files; AG/04 - Exhibition Catalogues. Items were added in the following sections: AG/01 - Correspondence (01 vol); AG/02 - National Archives Advisory Committee (02 vols); AG/03 - Attendances and other related files (01 vol); AG/04 - Exhibition Catalogues (07 vols); AG/05- Miscellanea (20 vols).
- *CC Civic Council*: Two new sections were added: CC/04 - Financial Estimates; CC/05 - Reports – Administration and Functions. Items were added in the following sections: CC/04 - Financial Estimates (04 vols); CC/05 - Reports – Administration and Functions (03 vols); CC/06 - Miscellanea (01 vol).
- *CG Curia Gubernatoriali (Courts of Law)*: One new section was added: CG/26 - Superior Summons – Commerce. Items were added in the following section: CG/26 - Superior Summons – Commerce (137 vols).
- *CP Circulars and Posters*: Items were added in the following sections: CP/01 - Historic manifestos and other (04 items); CP/03 - Posters (01 vol).
- *HI Hospitals and other Institutions*: Four new sections were added: HI/09- Government Dispensary – Ghasri; HI/10- Government Dispensary – Ta' Kerċem; HI/11- Government Dispensary – San Lawrenz; HI/12 - Government Dispensary – Ta' Sannat; HI/19 - Medical and Health Circulars. Items were added in the following sections: HI/03- Admission and Discharges • Maternity (02 vols *retrieved Medical Sch-MT); HI/09 - Government Dispensary – Ghasri (05 vols); HI/10 - Government Dispensary – Ta' Kerċem (08 vols); HI/11 - Government Dispensary – San Lawrenz (14 vols); HI/12 - Government Dispensary – Ta' Sannat (64 vols); HI/19 - Medical and Health Circulars (03 vols); HI/20 - Miscellanea (02 vols *retrieved from the Medical Sch-MT).
- *LC Local Councils*: Items were added in the following sections: LC/07 - Munxar (01 vol); LC/09 - Qala (01 vol); LC/10 - San Lawrenz (01 vol); LC/12 - Xagħra (01 vol); LC/14- Żebbuġ (01 vol).
- *PA Photographs. Albums*: Items were added in the following sections: PA/01 - Historic Places and Events (02 vols); PA/04 - Ministry of Gozo • Miscellaneous (04 vols).
- *PM Plans and maps*: Items were added in the following section: PM/02 - Village Plans (03 items); PM/06 - Public Buildings (01 item); PM/08 - Miscellanea (03 items).
- *PW Public Works*: One new sections was added: PW/04 - Petition Books. Items were added in the following section: PW/04 - Petition Books (02 vols).
- *SN Street Naming*: An item was added in the following section: SN/03 - Miscellanea (01 volume).
- *ZM Miscellanea*: Items were added in the following sections: ZM/01 - Misc volumes (60 items).

During the year, a total of 360 volumes/items were transferred to the NAG and catalogued. This is almost double the number of volumes/items transferred during the previous year (188). It must be noted that each single item of the Miscellanea section had to be examined and newly bound.

Researchers and Accessions

The number of researchers at the NAG during 2007 rose to 401, the number of items consulted climbed to 1,679, and the number of research hours increased to 866, respectively 321% (from 125 to 401), 420% (from about 400 to 1,679), and 361% (from 240 to 866) over the previous year. The volumes handled throughout the year was about 17% of the NAG holdings. This upsurge is the result of two factors: an increase in researchers and more refined record keeping.

The following table shows the total number of accessions from each section.

| CC | CG | CI | DF | GL | HI | MH | MP | PA |
|----|-----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|-------|
| 6 | 105 | 62 | 2 | 5 | 8 | 55 | 22 | 92 |
| PD | PM | PW | SG | SS | ST | UG | ZM | Total |
| 12 | 40 | 12 | 46 | 70 | 985 | 96 | 61 | 1,679 |

Exhibitions

During 2007, the NAG-Gozo mounted three exhibitions.

The first was held on 19 May 2007 to coincide with *Lejlet Lapsi Notte Gozitana* - the Gozitan version of the *Notte Bianca*, the by now renowned night fairs held throughout the major cities of Europe. The exhibition, mounted within the premises of the National Archives, was designated Images of Gozo Past – an exhibition of old photographs. 60 large photos from the 1,000 plus collection that the Gozo section of the National Archives has amassed over the years were put on display. Each photo carried a short description in large print and an approximate dating. It was one of the winning exhibitions of the night.

The second exhibition was on Gozo Guide Books, open between 9 and 25 August – a period that coincides with the influx of thousands of local and foreign visitors to Gozo. The exhibition, mounted in conjunction with the Friends of the National Archives, was an added attraction to these visitors. It consisted of a collection of 100 guide books to Gozo and Comino or somehow related to the islands. Pride of place was taken by an original copy of Jean Quintin d'Autun, *Insulae Melitae Descriptio* – a guide to Malta and Gozo published in Lyons in 1536. Several hundred visitors came to see the exhibition and the Archives during the fortnight that it was on.

The third exhibition was held on the occasion of the Archive Awareness Week, by now an established annual event. This year the exhibition was related to The Citadel – the crown of Gozo and it was open from 18 October to 3 November. The exhibition featured a number of documents related to the Citadel, plans of the fortifications, maps, and old photographs. These were selected from several of the 26 entities whose records are deposited at the Archives. Concurrently, there was a parallel exhibition of 350 photographs on the Citadel shot by Daniel Cilia, a photographer of international fame, at the beginning of his photographic career. These photos are also property of the NAG. An exhibition catalogue – sponsored by HSBC (Gozo) – was specifically printed and it carries detailed information on all the exhibits as well as on the NAG. This catalogue in English was also made available online on the NAG webpage. A number of locals and foreigners as well as a number of secondary and senior primary school children from both government and church schools visited the exhibition.

Opening the exhibition, the Minister for Gozo affirmed that the Gozo Citadel is important both as a heritage site, as well as a tourist attraction. The Minister appealed to one and all to promote this heritage amongst locals and foreigners. She commended the efforts put in to mount the exhibition that will certainly lead to a better appreciation of this monument.

Webpage

The webpage of the National Archives Gozo Section is hosted on the Ministry for Gozo website at <http://www.gozo.gov.mt>. The Maltese version of the webpage was put online on 11 January 2007. It has five sections: History, National Archives Gozo, Entities, Facsimiles, and Info. It opens with the history of the foundation of the Gozo section of the National Archives and proceeds with a short description of the National Archives Gozo section; the enlisting of the entities in the alphabetical order of the cataloguing code with the period covered; facsimiles of a document from each of the 25 sections; and an info section.

The webpage is attracting an ever-increasing number of web browsers.

Saturation Point

The premises are reaching saturation point and the transfer of documents had to be put on hold. Two government departments – the National Statistics Office and the Gozo Courts of Law – and a private entity with bound but unwanted old copies of the Malta Government Gazette have requested the transfer of items to the NAG. The transfer, however, had to be postponed *sine die*. Attempts are being made to identify appropriate additional storage space.

GOZO SPORTS COMPLEX

The Gozo Sports Complex's main objectives for 2007 were reached successfully. Inclusivity and modernisation were the key for the success registered.

High quality services depend on the successful delivery of the priorities, policies and programs in a co-ordinated joined-up and cost-efficient manner within the financial resources available. The human resource capacity at the Gozo Sports Complex during 2007 was used to meet strategic objectives. An isolated area next to the main hall was transformed from an unused toilet into a table-tennis room. Plastering works, white-washing, electrical installation and tile-laying were carried out by the employees. Also, during 2007, with the help of the Gozo Climbing Association, the climbing area was completed and today the Gozo Sports Complex can offer its members and the sporting community a state-of-the-art indoor climbing facility. It has always been our commitment to give our members the best for today's requirements. As such during the previous year we continued to invest in new gym machinery.

During 2007, the Gozo Sports Complex was the show-case for the organisation of several cultural, religious and sport activities.

Cultural

The Sports Complex is the centre for community activities, besides its primary sport functions. During 2007, the venue hosted various cultural activities like the Gozo Business Chamber Trade Fair, the Gozo Bird Breeders bird show and the Children's Carnival. For the first time this year, the main hall of the Gozo Sports Complex was used for the organisation of a hair-dressing competition. The Eden Foundation kept its annual appointment to organise their annual fund-raising event. The counting of voting documents in the local council elections was also held at the Gozo Sports Complex. The Gozo College made use of the complex to organise two prestigious exhibitions – the Health and Safety exhibition and the celebrations to mark the European Union 50th Anniversary. Gozo's student population and other distinguished guests attended both activities.

Religious

The main religious event held at the Gozo Sports Complex during 2007 was the manifestation of Christ the King in November.

Sport

Sporting activities at the Gozo Sports Complex took place on a regular basis. Sport disciplines such as basketball, volleyball, table and lawn tennis, squash, karate, kick-boxing, spirit combat and akido were organised mainly through Gozitan sport associations with the five-a-side football (Futsal) being the most popular. Dancing sessions, fitness classes such as yoga, strike aerobics, line dancing, dancing and aerobics were also practised at the Gozo Sports Complex. Physical Education teachers of secondary schools used the Complex for their physical education lessons. Annual sports day activities and Christmas concerts by several private and state schools were held. In March, the Gozo Sports Complex sponsored the Spirit Combat Competition. In May, to commemorate the opening of the newly refurbished table-tennis area, a tournament was held in collaboration of the Malta Table-Tennis Association, featuring Malta's top national

players. The National Futsal Association and the National Basketball team held training sessions at the Gozo Sports Complex in June and December 2007 respectively. The annual football tournament organised by the SK Victoria Wanderers was held in July while the Akido tournament was organised in June.

Skola Sport entered into its ninth consecutive season, offering 15 different sports disciplines to school children every Saturday from November to May. The attendance was satisfactory and encouraging. During 2007, considerable investment was done in new equipment and instructors were sent for training sessions in Malta.

The strategic objective is mainly to develop the Gozo Sports Complex into a first-class sports centre. During 2007, all our energies were devoted for the fulfilment of these aims.

LAND REGISTRY OFFICE

The Land Registry undertakes various daily activities in order to compile a kind of ‘property log book’ so that in a matter of minutes one may retrieve all the information on a property, if that property is registered.

One of the main daily activities at the Land Registry is the provision of site plans and certificates of title to the general public and dealing with their queries. Around 2,000 site plans were issued during 2007.

In order to compile a type of ‘property log book’, all business in properties which are located in a registration area is recorded at Land Registry. Applications are submitted by notaries, lawyers or by the owners themselves indicating location of property and the rights appertaining to it, such as hypothecs and ground rent. Throughout the year, 1,679 applications were received and processed for first time registrations, for transfer of properties where the property is already registered and for corrections of previously submitted applications. Other 460 applications were received and processed for registration of charges or for registration of cancellation of already existing charge and for registration of cautions.

Once applications are processed and approved by the Land Registrar, the general public may obtain all information pertaining to a particular property by submitting an official search on the property at the Office. 363 official searches were submitted and processed by the department throughout the year.

LAND SECTION

The main functions of the Land Section in 2007 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 the Refalo Legacy Fund.

SOCIAL HOUSING OFFICE

The objectives of the Social Housing Office are:

- to provide social accommodation to needy families;
- to assist financially owner-occupiers to upgrade their housing standards;
- to encourage married and engaged couples to become owners of their own place of abode.

The number of new applications received and the subsidies paid in 2007 were:

| Scheme | Details | Applications | Amount Paid Lm |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| - | Alternative Accommodation | 9 | - |
| K,P,Q | Ground Rent Redemption | 5 | - |
| R | Rent Subsidisation | 11 | 4,199 |
| W | Adaptation Works – Government Dwellings | 4 | 2,526 |
| Z | Cash Grants/Loan Subsidy/Owner Occupied Private Dwellings | 8 | 4,288 |
| 5 | Adaptation Works – Leased Dwellings | 7 | 6,457 |
| 7 | Adaptation Works – Handicapped Persons | 2 | 2,922 |
| GFR | Grants First Residence (VAT Subsidy) * | 50 | 54,581 |
| RTB | Sir Sid Darek | 1 | 57,050 |
| - | Subsidy on Sale of New Premises | - | 13,699 |
| ESS | Equity Sharing Scheme | 15 | 30,000 |
| Total | | 112 | 175,722 |

*Paid by VAT Department

In December, 80 units were put up on sale to the general public. These were all at San Lawrenz. 15 applications were received for these units.

During the year, 52 requests were received from tenants at Taç-Ċawla Housing Estate. These related to repairs and maintenance works. Most of these works were approved and carried out during the same period, by workers from the Gozo Works Division and the Housing Construction and Maintenance Department.

INFORMATION OFFICE

The year 2007 proved to be another eventful year for the Gozo Information Office. The office's fundamental aim is to provide an effective information link between the public administration and the general public. During the year, the Information Office issued 30 press releases, the majority accompanied by photographs or video clips.

The Office is also responsible for the sale of all government publications, the major publication being the Government Gazette. The trend in decrease in sales of the Government Gazette has continued to manifest itself even during the past year. It has become quite evident now that more and more people are opting to view the gazette online rather than acquiring a hard copy.

The Office has also continued to fulfil another important function – that of serving as a point of retrieval and submission of E111, E121 and scholarship forms for their eventual transmission to the competent ministries for processing.

PASSPORT OFFICE

The aim of the Passport Office is to provide a high standard of passport services. During the year, 2,331 new passports for adults and children were issued.

Other services provided to the general public included issuing of collective passports; and providing information to persons enquiring about dual citizenship, freedom of movement and Maltese citizenship.

Notification of births and deaths was also dealt with by this office. During the year, notifications for 283 births and 271 deaths were received. Such notifications were then referred to the Public Registry for registration purposes.

LICENSING AND TESTING OFFICE

The past year marks various improvements within the Licensing and Testing Section - both in the quality of daily services offered to customers and also in the Section's administration. During the year, a number of

measures were introduced for the benefit of the public in general. Affidavits as regards lost vehicle registration certificates (log books), lost or stolen plates and vehicle road licences can now be sworn at the Licensing Section against a charge of Lm3, thus providing the least inconvenience possible and implementing a one-stop-shop policy for customers. Officers at the Licensing Section have been appointed as Commissioner of Oaths by the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs to serve this purpose. The transportation and bank deposit of daily cash has now been assigned to the Group 4 Security Company and financed by ADT in Malta. Apart from having a better and efficient security service, the staff complement is now fully assigned to the service of customers at the Section and not waiting in bank queues to deposit cash.

The number of vehicle road licences in 2007 was 11,208. People are now also renewing their vehicle road licences at sub-insurance agencies though the use of e-Vera in Gozo is still low. Apart from road licence renewals, numerous transfers, vehicle modifications, garaging and de-garaging for private and self-drive cars, plate re-issue, transfers by inheritance, conversions from self-drive to private and lately Part 3 Registration for auto dealers. The latter has undoubtedly avoided long waiting hours at ADT for motor dealers to register their imported vehicles.

In 2007, the Section had yet another challenge to face - mainly the extensive backlog of documents requested with each and every transaction carried out and that have to be inserted in the respective vehicle file. In a matter of months, these were reduced from three and a half years to four months keeping in mind that Gozo Section is operating with shortage of staff.

June marks the Audit week carried out at the Licensing Section. This was a follow-up of another week by Private Auditors at ADT in Malta. It has served to steer the Section more than ever in line with the policies and procedures applied in Malta and has given momentum to the long discussed introduction of the Driving Licence System (DLS) in Gozo. In fact the DLS was introduced in mid-September and now new driving licence applications are immediately fed through the system until the final process, thus eliminating the manual receipts that used to be issued. From mid-September, when the DLS was introduced, to the end of the year, the Section processed the following applications:

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Exchange of Driving Licence for foreign residents in Gozo | 14 |
| Renewal of Driving Licences | 204 |
| Driving Licence Inclusions | 12 |
| New Driving Licences | 73 |

This, together with the numerous applications that were manually started and then fed through the system until finally processed. Since the introduction of the DLS system, driving licence applications for Gozo residents that were usually processed in two/three months due to extensive work pressure at ADT Malta are now being effected in less than two weeks and with the minimal delay possible.

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 to operate their activity. The Malta Financial Services Authority registry of companies is another service offered by the office.

During the year the following activities were undertaken:

| | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Import Licences | 12 |
| Export Licences | 2 |
| Trading Licence Applications | 129 |
| Trade Marks | 4 |

The MFSA registry of companies receives new companies, of which nine were registered, and collects annual fees and other documents which are required to run a limited 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 handcrafts 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 2007, 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, 27,507 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. Moreover, during November and December, the Gozo Culture Section used the centre for cultural activities and exhibitions.

In 2007, several firms and craftsmen changed or added new handmade crafts while action was taken to encourage more firms and craftsmen to make use of the Gozo Crafts Centre by holding individual exhibitions.

Direct information about the crafts, firms, and the place was passed to all those interested, 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, with a new workshop opening for business in 2007. The majority of the workshops opened to the public.

To keep this place attractive to visitors, trees and shrubs were regularly trimmed and flower plants were planted all year round

GOZO GENERAL HOSPITAL

Gozo General Hospital has a total bed complement of 279 distributed as follows: Acute Wards - 104 beds; Geriatric Wards - 121 beds; and Psychiatric Wards - 54 beds. The total staff complement at the end of the year consisted of 645 full-time workers and 25 part-time workers.

Major Works Carried Out

During 2007, the following projects were undertaken:

- *Refurbishment of the Male and Female General Wards – Second Phase.* The project included: installation of new nurse call and fire alarm system; installation of new bedhead trunking units; upgrading of electrical and mechanical services; upgrading of the medical gases system; redecoration of wards; replacement of vinyl sheeting in the ward. These wards are now fully refurbished and modern systems have been installed. Patients are now cared for in a more professional and comfortable environment.
- *Replacement of the Air-conditioning unit at Residenza St' Anna.* After experiencing frequent problems with the consequent adverse repercussions on the well-being of the residents, the air-conditioning system at this residence was completely replaced with a new system.
- *Removal of the incinerator and the setup of a new refuse room.* As the incinerator at Gozo General Hospital was certified as non-compliant with EU legislations and standards, the Department in conjunction with Wasteserv Ltd has made the necessary arrangements for the transfer of clinical waste to be processed at the new Marsa Facility. The old incinerator was subsequently dismantled and the premises have been

refurbished to house a clinical waste collection room. The problem of environmental pollution has thus been addressed and completely solved.

- *Setup of a new lecture room.* The lecture room which was situated at the Male Geriatric Ward has been transferred to the ex-library area at Gozo General Hospital. This lecture room has been totally refurbished and a modern projection system has been installed. It caters for both in-house staff training and patients/clients health educational activities and is now situated in a central area of the hospital which is more accessible to all users.
- *Other projects.* Other works at this hospital included the redecoration of and other minor refurbishment works at the Long Stay Ward.

General Statistical Information

- The average number of beds occupied was 198.29 or 68.85%.
- The average length of stay in hospital (excluding the chronic ward) was 3.36 days per person.
- The average turnover (the mean number of patients occupying any one bed) in 2007 was 21.20 patients.
- The average turnover interval (the mean time, in days, that a hospital bed was left empty between successive patients) was 3.33 days (chronic wards excluded).

| | Admissions | Population |
|-----------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Male Ward | 1,972 | 6,784 |
| Female Ward | 1,933 | 7,809 |
| Male Geriatric Ward | 43 | 11,123 |
| Female Geriatric Ward | 59 | 28,123 |
| Paediatric Ward | 352 | 832 |
| Maternity Ward | 315 | 1,057 |
| Coronary Care Unit | 659 | 745 |
| Gynae Ward | 456 | 1,833 |
| Long Stay Ward | 41 | 11,946 |
| Short Stay Ward | 281 | 2,124 |
| Total | 6,111 | 72,376 |

Attendance of patients

| | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------|--------|
| Out-patients | | 40,678 |
| New Cases | 11,815 | |
| Follow-ups | 28,863 | |
| Emergency and Admitting Department | | 14,758 |
| Admitted to wards | 4,571 | |
| Transferred to SLH | 34 | |
| Discharged to home or Out-Patients | 10,153 | |
| Fresh Trauma Clinic Patients | | 1,263 |
| New cases | 984 | |
| Follow-ups | 197 | |
| Failed to turn up | 82 | |
| Physiotherapy (treatment sessions) | | 17,325 |
| Out-Patients | 6,296 | |
| In-Patients | 11,029 | |
| Occupational Therapy (patients) | | 6,807 |
| Speech Therapy (treatment sessions) | | 1,459 |
| Obstetrics (registered deliveries) (280 infants) | | 278 |
| Renal Unit (treatment sessions) | | 791 |
| Podology (patients) (new cases - 436) | | 5,671 |
| Blood donation (donors) | | 1,845 |
| Male | 1,224 | |
| Female | 621 | |
| Acupuncture Clinic | | 443 |
| New cases | 9 | |
| Follow-ups | - | |

Operations Performed

| | Intermediate | Minor | Major | Major Plus | Major Complex | Total |
|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|---------------|--------------|
| Surgical | 205 | 361 | 69 | 7 | 12 | 654 |
| Orthopaedic | 108 | 29 | 33 | 80 | - | 250 |
| ENT | 41 | 18 | - | - | - | 59 |
| Ophthalmic | 4 | 61 | 144 | - | - | 209 |
| Gynaecology | 98 | 169 | 181 | 7 | - | 455 |
| Dental | - | 13 | - | - | - | 13 |
| Pace-maker | - | - | 26 | - | - | 26 |
| Endoscopies | 272 | 252 | 5 | - | - | 529 |
| Total | 728 | 903 | 458 | 94 | 12 | 2,195 |

Investigations carried out

| | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| X-Rays | 12,556 |
| Ultrasounds general | 1,728 |
| Ultrasounds gynae | 661 |
| Electrocardiograms | 6,330 |
| Echocardiograms | 161 |
| Holter Monitoring | 144 |
| Laboratory Tests | 254,139 |
| Lab Samples sent to Malta | 53,895 |
| Stress ECG | 298 |

GOZO HEALTH CENTRE

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE GOZO

Primary Health Care services in Gozo are administered mainly from Victoria Health Centre. This Health Centre opens daily from 7.00 am to 8.00 pm, after 8.00 pm the service is continued from the Gozo General Hospital. Besides this, there are also twelve district clinics scattered around the island.

| Attendance at Primary Health Care - Gozo | |
|------------------------------------------|---------------|
| General Practitioner | 51,670 |
| Treatment | 13,245 |
| Home Visits | 50 |
| Foreigners | 450 |
| Immunisation | 5,477 |
| <i>Bereġ</i> (GP) | 15,390 |
| Medicine | 1,705 |
| Total | 87,987 |

| Attendance at <i>Bereġ</i> – Gozo | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| | GP | Medicine |
| Xewkija | 1,539 | 253 |
| Ghasri | 1,626 | 48 |
| Gharb | 797 | 68 |
| St Lawrence | 742 | 74 |
| Nadur | 3,747 | 242 |
| Qala | 1,452 | 114 |
| Ghajnsielem | 1,484 | 131 |
| Munxar | 474 | - |
| Kerċem | 594 | 60 |
| Żebbuġ | 427 | 34 |
| Sannat | 671 | 72 |
| Xaghra | 1,837 | 169 |
| Total | 15,390 | 1,265 |

| Immunisation Service | |
|----------------------|-------|
| Type of Cases | No |
| Di Te Per | 292 |
| Polio | 333 |
| Hib | 295 |
| MMR | 270 |
| Yellow Fever | 15 |
| Tab Inj | 51 |
| Meningitis | 19 |
| Hepatitis B | 287 |
| Hepatitis A | 5 |
| Adult Dip/Tetanus | 246 |
| Di Tetanus | 7 |
| Tetanus | 149 |
| Rabies | 8 |
| Flu Inj | 3,500 |

School Medical Service Gozo

A total of 969 school medical examinations were carried out at primary schools in Gozo during 2007. These were 653 in state schools (176 pre-kinder; 181 Year 1; 296 Year 6) and 316 in private schools (119 pre-kinder; 96 Year 1; 101 Year 6).

By the end of March 2007, 380 students were immunised for BCG. Students vaccinated between July and December 2007 were as follows: Form I students at Lyceum Boys Secondary School, Victoria – 143; Girls Secondary School, Victoria – 167; Sacred Heart Seminary, Victoria – 54; Bishops' Conservatory School – 40; and primary school pupils – 380.

During 2007, pupils in Year 3 primary schools were vaccinated for Hepatitis B – 359 first dose, 340 second dose and 325 final dose. In addition, 379 pupils in Year 4 received the second dose of MMR.

443 Form IV students in all secondary schools in Gozo were also vaccinated with the fifth dose for Diphtheria, Tetanus and Polio.

Prior to school closure for the summer holidays, the immunisation of 278 four- to five-year-olds at school against Diphtheria, Tetanus and Polio (Pre-school booster vaccine) was effected.

In line with the School Medical Service in Malta, all children in Year 1 were screened in the Obesity Survey. All children had their height, weight and family details taken.

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 and Diving Cards (licences) section. In liaison with the Administrative Unit of the Department for Environmental 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: Health Inspectorate Services, Burials (St Mary's Cemetery), Pest Control, and Diving Permits.

This region deploys six Health Inspectors who are assigned to two sections namely: Food Control and Environmental Health Control. These sections fall under the charge of the Principal Health Inspector.

Food Control Section

This includes maintaining constant supervision over food premises (catering establishments, food manufacturers, food retail outlets), and exercising control on the preparation of food, thus ascertaining that food reaches the consumer in a safe and wholesome condition. 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 inhabited areas, 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.

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

| Nature of Food Premises | No of Inspections | Grade % | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|---------|------|------|-----|---|---|
| | | A | B | C | D | E | F |
| Retail Outlets | 252 | 13.5 | 52.0 | 34.1 | 0.4 | - | - |
| Food Manufacturers | 82 | 18.3 | 78.0 | 3.7 | - | - | - |
| Catering outlets | 313 | 11.2 | 71.9 | 16.3 | 0.6 | - | - |
| Hotels | 19 | 15.8 | 73.7 | 10.5 | - | - | - |

Inspections and samples taken in connection with investigations/ follow-up cases of Food Poisoning

| | |
|---------------|----|
| Inspections | 19 |
| Samples Taken | 48 |

Miscellaneous

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Inspections of premises icw MEPA applications for development permission | 54 |
| Inspections of pharmacies, clinics, private hospitals, old people's homes | 15 |
| Fumigation of premises | 2 |

Other inspections of Food Premises

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Routine Inspections: | 170 |
| Follow-up inspections re deficiencies/contraventions | 697 |
| Product recall | - |
| Labelling of foodstuffs | 53 |
| Inspection re refrigeration of dairy products | 78 |
| Other inspections in connection with: | |
| a) Sampling programme | 60 |
| b) Undertakings | 13 |
| c) Emergency Control Orders | 2 |
| d) Emergency Prohibition Orders | 0 |
| Inspection of premises in connection with licensing | |
| a) Department of Health | |
| b) Department of Trade | 23 |
| c) Malta Tourism Authority | 57 |
| d) Department of Customs | 32 |
| | 1 |
| Total | 1,186 |

Contraventions

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Food related | 1 |
| Environment related | - |

Samples taken by category

| | |
|----------------|----|
| Food | 35 |
| Beverages | - |
| Drinking Water | 9 |
| Other Samples | 2 |

Environmental Issues

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| Service Water – Direct Mains | 18 |
| Service Water – Other Sources | - |
| Infiltration Water | 50 |
| Bathing Water | 552 |
| Swimming Pools | - |
| Other Samples | 14 |

Investigation of Complaints

| | No of Complaints | No of Inspections |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <i>In connection with Food:</i> | | |
| Unhygienic premises & unhygienic practices | 9 | 15 |
| Food unfit or past durability date | 4 | 5 |
| Labelling of food | 26 | 55 |
| Other food complaints | 11 | 22 |
| <i>In connection with Environment:</i> | | |
| Defective drains | 21 | 50 |
| Blockages in drains | 21 | 44 |
| Premises or sites dirty or containing accumulations | 33 | 66 |
| Infiltrations | 37 | 66 |
| Other complaints (rat sightings) | 536 | 554 |
| Re Tobacco (Sanitary Control Act) | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 699 | 878 |

Nuisance reports issued

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Defective drains | 9 |
| Blockages in drains | 2 |
| Premises or sites dirty or containing accumulations | 26 |
| Other complaints (rat sightings) | 1 |
| Total | 38 |

Undertakings

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Total no. of undertakings | 12 |
| Number concluded | 9 |
| Still pending | 3 |

Destruction of Food Items

96.5 kilos of food items and 4,000 litres of raw milk were destroyed by this office.

Pest Control

The Pest Control Section has adopted a programme of preventive baiting and attends to complaints of rat sightings by the general public. The section carries out regular routine rat baiting of sewers and public open spaces throughout the island so as to keep the rats and mice population on our island under control.

Operatives in the 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 | 785 | 13,334 |
| Complaints | 342 | 5,888 |
| Sewers | 104 (526 manholes) | 955 |
| Insect disinfection by spraying | 23 | - |
| Cases of Murine Typhus | 3 | - |
| Packets delivered to the Public | 12,550 packets | |

Control Cards for Narcotic/Psychotropic Drugs

1,579 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 2007 was 47 in private graves and 33 in common graves. 15 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 28 cases of cleaning of graves. During the year restoration works were undertaken on the facade 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 2007.

Conclusion

As part of an exercise initiated by the Department of Customer Services within the Ministry for Gozo, the Health Inspectorate in Gozo is adopting the new service standards. Through this service standard more efficiency is being achieved by the Health Inspectorate and a more efficient service is being rendered to the public.

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 853 beneficiaries in 670 households. The service is delivered by 85 part-time social assistants. Home Help Care Service (Gozo) is allocated by a Board, which in 2007 held 18 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 2007, a total of 49 applications were received while a total of 34 jobs were carried out. Nine applications were cancelled. Although the time frames for delivering this service according to our Quality Service Charter are meant to be same day service for urgent works and all others within 24 hours, six applications are still pending since the Handyman is not always available.
- *Telecare Service:* A Care Worker is assigned responsibility for this service. During 2007, 64 applications were received and 58 were installed. 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 2007, seven new applications were received under Scheme A while 61 new applications were received under Scheme B. There are 75 clients who benefit regularly from this service under Scheme A while 318 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 3,395 meals were delivered in 2007.
- *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 44 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 2007 was 7,020 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, a seven-day tour to Costa Blanca in Spain was organised by the Day Centre. The attendance of this tour was 50 elderly and helpers. The Day Centre organised a Christmas activity for the elderly which consisted of 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.

ADULT TRAINING CENTRE

- *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 intellectual, physical and emotional disabilities.
- *Liaison with other agencies:* A healthy co-ordination exists with most agencies for people with special needs in particular some ATCs in Malta, Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni b'Dizabilita` (KNPD), Support Living Division, National Parents Society of Persons with Disability (NPSPD), Eden Foundation Gozo, Educationally Sub-Normal (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, the Czech Republic, Denmark and Austria.

- *Referrals:* Normally referrals are made through the Head. For 2007, one person was referred from Arka Foundation and four persons from ESN. All five started attending the centre.
- *Services:* Services of Personal Aids were given to 20 individuals – these included communication therapy at the ATC (12 sessions), lace at School of Art Ghajnsielem (32 sessions), lace and weaving at ATC (60 sessions), ophthalmic at GGH (5 sessions) and podology at GGH (10 sessions); MMDNA nurse at ATC Ghajnsielem (52 visits); a weekly mass service; and dentistry services to all members.
- *Placements:* the following students had placements during the year - eight from MCAST; six student-facilitators from University (40-hour); 18 students from Holy Cross University in Manchester (15-day).
- *Cordial Visits at the Centre:* One of the highlights for the Centre this year was the official visit to the President of Malta and the Archbishop of Malta at the Palace Valletta and the Curia respectively. Delegations from Derbyshire and Sheffield and six groups from Malta, five visits from different European countries, one visit by an American group, 10 visits from different Gozitan organisations. In addition, the Centre was visited by a number of persons during the year - 2 persons from Poland in conjunction with the KNPD organisation from Malta; 6 persons from EDGE programme; 10 persons with disabilities from different European countries; 11 persons from OASI; and visits by the KNPD Chairman and Executive Director..
- *Support Group:* A support group consisting of parents and volunteers was organised. Through the group and with the help of JCR Ltd, a Bazaar is run in Victoria. Members from the centre, train, help and participate in the running of the outlet. Social help to people in need is provided from this point. Dancing, horse riding therapy, weaving, lace and craft 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. Support in the transportation of rehabilitation equipment and maintenance on accessories was done at primary schools, members' residences and other entities. The courier service was continued in liaison with Commercial Couriers Company Ltd.. Work was done for Magro Brothers. Four persons went to do some work at MAS apartments.
- *Gardening:* A gardening workshop at the centre is in progress all year round. Gardening is also held on a regular basis next to NGO Xewkija.
- *Cultural Activities:* Members took part in cultural activities in Malta and Gozo such as Carnival, Fun Games, Crafts Exhibition and Crib Exhibition. Members went on day outings to various places of interest in Malta. Two morning outings are organised on a weekly basis in Gozo. A visit to Malta Police Headquarters was also organised.
- *Transport:* Service was given by two mini buses on contractual basis, and two tail lift vans provided by the Support Group Friends of ATC.
- *In-service Training Courses:* A one-week course about self-esteem was held at the Centre. A health and safety course and management course was also organised. Through EDGE, four staff members attended a 15-day course at Derbyshire University. All expenses were paid by Enabled Living Foundation.
- *Public Information:* On the Programme *Għawdex Illum* on PBS, coverage was given of the functions of the ATC and other activities and various talk shows on the local community radio were held. This participation was given in liaison with other agencies.
- *Achievements:* Together with Enable Housing Association of Derbyshire England, the Centre strengthened the twinning project EDGE (Enabled Derbyshire Gozo Exchange).
- *Activities:* The Centre continued the pool therapy programme at Arka Foundation. Numerous social events were also organised especially during summer, Christmas and Easter time such as parents outing, day camp in Comino, swimming at various bays, etc.

FAMILY WELFARE (GOZO SOCIAL WORK UNIT)

The Gozo Social Work Unit offers social work intervention with a generalist approach. As from 2007, social work in Gozo is being delivered on a decentralised basis, with two support social workers and one casual welfare officer being assigned residential work at the Psychiatric Hospital, Ta' l-Ibraġġ GGH. Otherwise, social work is delivered from the main SW Unit at St Francis Square, Victoria. There were 162 new cases during the year - 110 new cases were dealt with by the Generic SW Unit while 52 new cases were dealt with by the support social workers at the Psychiatric Gozo Hospital.

Generic Social Work Unit

- *Follow-up cases:* By the end of 2007 the Generic SW Unit had dealt with 246 cases that required follow-up interventions. These follow-up cases were classified as follows: 84 cases that required weekly intervention and 92 cases that required intervention on a fortnight basis whilst 49 cases were terminated. 21 cases required other periodical intervention.
- *One-time intervention:* 89 cases which required one-time intervention were dealt with by the Intake section. Such cases are not considered as part of the Unit's caseload and therefore not recorded therein.
- *Telephone interventions:* Such service is delivered daily, and thus it is difficult to record and quantify such interventions.
- *On-call Service:* This service entails the service of a social worker after office hours. 42 calls needed outside intervention. There were also a considerable number of telephone interventions that is difficult to quantify.
- *Case conferences:* 29 case conferences were attended by staff members.
- *Supervision:* Supervision was carried out on a monthly basis with all staff members at the Unit.
- *University placements:* three university students and two MCAST students had their social work practical placements with the Unit during spring/autumn and summer respectively.
- *Detox:* SW service was delivered at the Detox Centre, and GGH.
- *Juvenile Court:* eight sessions were held.
- *Court appearances:* 52 court appearances by the social work staff were carried out. These included giving evidence, writing up social reports and seeking legal advice.
- *Supervised access visits:* five cases of supervised access visits ordered by Court were carried out. Such cases involve weekly visits at the Ċentru Ħidma Soċjali/community.
- *Carer's pension:* 14 applications were processed by the Unit. These applications require home and personal assessment followed by written reports.
- *Social administrators:* two persons benefited from this service every month.
- *Social reports:* 46 written social reports were done by the Unit to various departments, agencies, courts and places of work.
- *In-service training:* during 2007, the staff of the Unit attended several training sessions to enhance their performance as social workers.
- *Manual of Procedures:* A new revised manual of procedures was drawn up and presented for the Unit to serve as guidance for the social work delivery in a very professional way.
- *Psychiatric/Gozo General Hospital:* Social work was delivered to the psychiatric wards at Ta' l-Ibraġġ Hospital by the two support social workers who are assigned on a full-time basis there. Under regular supervision, the two support social workers worked with 52 new cases.
- *Community Chest Fund:* 21 applications were submitted to the CCF by the Unit, and 17 clients received material support through the Unit's intervention with the Fund.

- *National Commission of Disabled Persons*: 23 persons benefited from services given by the Commission after the Unit's intervention.
- *Elderly*: Social work interventions were carried out with the elderly and upon request from the 'agencies' concerned or by relatives in the community.
- *Talks*: 61 talks related to social work were delivered by SW staff in various localities and on various community radio stations.
- *Sub-committee domestic violence*: The senior social worker sits on the national sub-committee on domestic violence. Five meetings were held on a bi-monthly basis. Four meetings took place in Malta, and one in Gozo.

Hospital Social Work Services

New cases were referred to the section as follows:

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Psychiatric | 32 |
| Child Guidance Clinic | 17 |
| Social Support | 3 |
| Follow ups and reactivated cases | 35 |
| Put away cases | 8 |
| Deceased | 5 |

The following activities were also carried out:

- Staff formed part of the multi-disciplinary team during ward rounds on a regular basis at short stay and long stay ward.
- Participated regularly in Psychiatric Out-Patients and Child Guidance Clinic.
- Staff also participated in case conferences and case reviews.
- Regular home visits were carried out to psychiatric patients who are on leave or still attend psychiatric out-patients.
- Home assessments were carried out with the occupational therapist for the benefit of those patients who desired to return back to the community.
- School visits were also made since referrals from Child Guidance Clinic request such visits to liaise with head of school teachers and facilitators for the benefit of our clients.
- Liaised with other hospital personnel in organising social activities at Gozo General Hospital and Ta' l-Ibraġġ Hospital.
- Supervision was given to four student care workers placed at the hospital.
- Case conference and case reviews at Villa Chelsea.
- Regular contact was kept with Social Services, ETC, Housing, Public Registry, ID Office and CDAU. The aim of these contacts was to keep up-to-date on certain benefits, opportunities and schemes, which data was passed over to clients seeking assistance from these departments.
- Took part in local radio programmes to promote the service.
- Liaised with the Malta Community Chest Fund.
- Delivered Easter Eggs to Children at Children Ward and Psychiatric Patients at long stay ward and patients attending Child Guidance Clinic, Caritas, and Friends for the Sick and Elderly, Sovereign Military Order of Malta: supported clients in their requirements.
- Also SMOM managed to take a group of residents from St Anna and Male Geriatrics to Lourdes, France in May 2007.
- Supervision was carried out regularly in connection with social work delivery. Such supervision has been effective and provided the possibility of exploring different ways to be applied in practice.

SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICE

Victoria District Office

This Office deals directly with the general public in connection with National Insurance Pensions and other contributory and non-contributory Social Security benefits and assistance. Work carried out at this office mainly comprises financial investigations; the raising of applications for contributory and non-contributory pensions, benefits and assistance; dealing with customers' queries, and registration under the Social Security Act of newly-employed workers.

The following are the main activities:

- *Non-Contributory Pensions/Assistance/Benefits*: responsible for applications and monitoring of 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 or credited. It is also responsible for raising of Foreign Pension applications from Australia, the UK, Canada and all EU countries.
- *Children's & Supplementary Allowance/Marriage Grant/Maternity Benefit*: processes applications, declarations and queries in connection with these benefits; also responsible for filling of marriage grants and maternity benefit applications.
- *New Registrants/Medical Certificates*: registration under the Social Security Act of newly employed workers (NI 3). Medical certificates (SB) referred to this Section are entered daily on the computer system.
- *Medical Boards*: medical boards in connection with Medical Assistance, Social Assistance, Invalidity Pension, Disabled Pension, Sickness Benefits, Injury Benefits and Australian Pensions were held regularly every Thursday at the Gozo General Hospital. During 2007, the Board processed about 1,200 cases. The number of cases seen by the medical board has decreased from the previous year. This is because with effect from 1 July 2007, there was a change in the process of invalidity pension applications. Claimants applying for invalidity pension do not appear before the board but the applications are medically assessed by a medical panel on information given by claimants' consultants.
- *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 2007 which amounted to 24,810.

| | Total | Query | Application | In Person | By Telephone |
|-------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------------|-----------|--------------|
| Non-Contributory Pension | | | | | |
| Age Pension (AP) | 368 | 332 | 36 | 327 | 41 |
| Blind Pension (BLD) | - | - | - | - | - |
| Carer's Pension (CP) | 25 | 20 | 5 | 24 | 1 |
| Disability Pension (HP) | 69 | 66 | 3 | 66 | 3 |
| Contributory & Foreign Pension | | | | | |
| Retirement Pension (RP) | 2,327 | 2,128 | 199 | 1,978 | 349 |
| Widow's Pension (WP) | 571 | 523 | 48 | 469 | 102 |
| Invalidity Pension (IP) | 1,615 | 1,528 | 87 | 1,356 | 259 |
| Foreign Pensions (FP) | 970 | 872 | 98 | 888 | 82 |
| Social Assistance | | | | | |
| Social Assistance (SA) | 919 | 771 | 148 | 810 | 109 |
| Social Assistance Carers (SAC) | 61 | 53 | 8 | 55 | 6 |
| Drug Addicts (DAD) | 35 | 22 | 13 | 29 | 6 |
| Single Unmarried Parent (SUP) | 218 | 194 | 24 | 196 | 22 |
| Unemployment Assistance (UA) | 3,512 | 3,310 | 202 | 3,082 | 430 |
| Social Assistance Board (SAB) | 10 | 9 | 1 | 8 | 2 |
| Short-term Benefits | | | | | |
| Marriage Grant (MRG) | 62 | 14 | 48 | 59 | 3 |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| Injury Benefit (IB) | 43 | 38 | 5 | 40 | 3 |
| Special/Unemployment Benefit (SUB/UB) | 553 | 553 | - | 521 | 32 |
| Milk Grant (MG) | 13 | 6 | 7 | 12 | 1 |
| Sickness Benefit (SB) | 936 | 934 | 2 | 799 | 137 |
| Child Benefits | | | | | |
| Disabled Child Allowance (DCA) | 11 | 7 | 4 | 9 | 2 |
| Children's Allowance (CA) | 2,352 | 1,260 | 1,092 | 2,190 | 162 |
| Maternity Benefit (MB) | 201 | 84 | 117 | 186 | 15 |
| Foster Care (FC) | - | - | - | - | - |
| Medical Assistance/Aid | | | | | |
| Tuberculosis Assistance (TA) | - | - | - | - | - |
| Leprosy Assistance (LA) | - | - | - | - | - |
| Sickness Allowance (SKA) | 860 | 761 | 99 | 755 | 105 |
| Pink Form/Card (PF) | 1,709 | 745 | 964 | 1,680 | 29 |
| Supplementary Allowance (SPA) | 1,631 | 978 | 653 | 1,527 | 104 |
| Admission to Elderly Homes | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | - |
| Insurability (NI3) | 907 | 485 | 422 | 798 | 109 |
| Energy Benefit (ENRG) | 3,317 | 530 | 2,787 | 3,189 | 128 |
| SVB | 3 | - | 3 | 3 | - |
| NI Contributions | 1,128 | 1,031 | 97 | 936 | 192 |
| Foreign Bonus | 350 | 96 | 254 | 322 | 28 |
| Exemptions | 3 | - | 3 | 3 | - |
| Waiving of Examination Fees | 30 | 6 | 24 | 30 | - |
| Total | 24,810 | 17,356 | 7,454 | 22,348 | 2,462 |
| Total SB Certificates | 20,485 | | | | |

- *Training:* During the year, training was organised for all personnel at Victoria District Office, in Customer Care, SABS and IT. The aim of the training is to improve our services at district level. In addition, personnel attended other training courses on various topics as Data Protection Act, EU-related topics, and emotional intelligence at work organised by the Staff Development Organisation.

Nadur Area Office

Welfare

This section is responsible for all types 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 | 312 | 51 |
| Social Assistance | 18 | 82 |
| SAF (Social Assistance Females) | 9 | 5 |
| Handicapped Pension | 31 | 3 |
| Age Pension | 69 | 19 |
| Carer's Pension | 7 | - |
| Sickness Assistance | 98 | 27 |
| Water & Electricity Rebates | 6 | 11 |
| Supplementary Allowance | 100 | 635 |

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 | 240 |
| Revisions for Free Medical Aid | 95 |
| Pink Card (DH 128) for Free Medicines | 126 |

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 these types of applications was as follows:

| Benefits | Questions/Reviews | New Applications |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Invalidity Pensions | 63 | 33 |
| Retirement Pensions | 144 | 65 |
| Widows Pension | 18 | 21 |
| Marriage Bonus | 2 | 5 |
| Maternity Bonus | 1 | 20 |
| Over 75 Bonus (XM3A/82) | 11 | 80 |
| Children's Allowance | 150 | 457 |
| Foreign Pensions (Australia, Canada, UK) | 30 | 37 |
| Injury Benefit | 9 | 10 |
| Special/Unemployment Benefits (UB & SUB) | 40 | - |
| Sickness Benefit | 56 | - |
| Direct Credits Applications | 8 | 46 |
| Change of Addresses | 2 | 3 |
| Power of Attorney (<i>Prokura</i> DSS) | 3 | 31 |
| Stop Payments | 1 | 31 |
| NI 64 | - | 3 |
| NI 3 | 15 | 24 |

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 Lm1,874.14.

Medical Certificates submitted and registered at our Area Office for this period numbered 1,597.

During 2007, another benefit was introduced by the Government – Energy Benefit. These new applications were launched between April-May 2007 and the total number of applications for this new benefit was of 178. This Office also received 55 queries in connection with this new benefit.

The Budget 2007-2008 announced that Children's allowance was to be extended and given also to families who exceeded the Lm10,270 threshold. This new type of application - CA Flat Rate – was launched between November – December 2007 and the total number of CA Flat Rate applications totalled 74.

In line with the Quality Service Charter adopted by Department, which states that it is to “provide timely financial assistance and other benefits to eligible recipients” staff tried to provide as good a service as possible. This Section also dealt with social cases that are not necessarily provided by our Department but by other departments involved in the health, housing and social work sectors. Staff helped clients such as those residing permanently in government institutions to complete forms, provided guidance to individuals in receipt of non-contributory benefits on the submission of income tax returns, as well as, where applicable, any information concerning rebates on telephone bills and on telecare applications.

INDUSTRIAL AND EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS

During the year this Section carried out 251 routine inspections covering 684 employees, during which inspections 391 employees were interviewed and nine irregularities were detected. Action was taken to have these irregularities rectified; 203 follow-up/special visits were undertaken.

48 claims amounting to Lm36,742 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 41 court sittings/*perizias*.

CENTRE FOR NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS

During the year, the number of non-government organisations and voluntary groups making use of the service offered once again increased. The number of registered members with the NGO Association surpassed 148 and these organisations held 432 meetings. All registered organisations benefited from almost 26,812 photocopies at a heavily subsidised rate. Various sittings regarding the Tribunal for Warden and the ADT driving test were making use of the NGO Centre. 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 NGOs.

UNIVERSITY GOZO OFFICE

During 2007, the following courses were organised:

- *Completed:*
 - Course leading to the MA in Islands and Small States Studies (ended June 2007) - seven students successfully completed the course and were conferred with the degree in November/December at the University of Malta;
 - Course leading to the Bachelor of Commerce (ended June 2007) - 10 students successfully completed the course and were conferred with the degree in November/December at the University of Malta;
 - Diploma in Commerce course (ended June 2007) - 13 students successfully completed the course and were conferred with the diploma in November/December at the University of Malta;
 - Diploma in Lace Studies course (ended June 2007) - 12 students successfully completed the course and were conferred with the diploma in November/December at the University of Malta.
- *New Degree/Diploma/Certificate Courses:*
 - A two-year course leading to a Diploma in Facilitating Inclusive Education (commenced February) - 74 students;
 - A two-year course leading to a Diploma in Commerce (commenced October) - 31 students;
 - A three-year course leading to the Bachelor of Commerce (commenced October) - 11 students;
 - A two-year course leading to an MA in Islands and Small States Studies (commenced October) - eight students;
 - A one-calendar year course leading to the European Masters in Mediterranean Historical Studies (commenced October) - eight students.
- *Short courses:* the following short courses were offered at the University Gozo Centre during 2007 – Geographic Information Systems; One-Day Seminar on Dyslexia; Course in Systems of Knowledge (in collaboration with GERS).
- *Courses part-financed by the European Union:* 31 participants completed courses in Introduction to Agriculture, Introduction to Business Studies, Introduction to e-Commerce and IT, Introduction to Environmental Planning and Management. These courses commenced in October 2006 and came to an end in June 2007. The courses formed part of a project by the Ministry for Gozo, part-financed by the European Union under the Structural Funds Programme for Malta 2004-2006 ESF.

In November, a set of courses commenced at the Centre. These were aimed at promoting literacy and numeracy. The subjects consisted of Basic English, Basic Maltese, Basic Reading and Writing Skills, and Basic Numeracy. Concurrently, a set of courses dealing with Poultry Production, Good Agricultural Practices, Pesticide Application and Use also started. The courses are scheduled to come to an end in February 2008. All courses are offered by the Ministry for Gozo, and are co-financed by the European Social Fund under the Structural Funds Programme for Malta 2004-2006.

Extra Curricular Activities

- On 29 April, the Lace-Making Programme at the University Gozo Centre organised the annual event *Gozo Lace Day* for the eleventh consecutive year. The event consisted of a number of exhibitions and demonstrations of Gozo lace and talks on matters related to lace-making.

- On 2 April the Italian Ambassador for Malta paid a visit to the University Gozo Centre where he met with Gozitan artists, Members of Parliament, mayors and others persons who work in the cultural scene. The aim of this visit was the launching of a competition for Gozitan artists, organised by the Embassy of Italy in Malta in order to commemorate the bicentenary from the birth of Giuseppe Garibaldi who was born on 4 July 1807.
- A photo exhibition to mark the 15th Anniversary of the establishment of the University Gozo Centre was held. This photo exhibition which was held at the Exhibition Hall of the Ministry for Gozo contained captioned photos tracing the activities of the University Gozo Centre since its establishment in 1992. A commemorative booklet was also published on the occasion.
- On 31 August the Centre organised its annual summer activity entitled *Woodwinds for Summertime* with The Victoria Clarinet Quartet. The event was attended by an audience of about 200 persons.
- On 12 October, the Minister for Gozo distributed certificates to 31 candidates who had followed courses offered by the Ministry at the University Gozo Centre between October 2006 and June 2007. The courses formed part of a project part-financed by the European Union under the Structural Funds Programme for Malta 2004-2006 European Social Fund. The courses related to Agriculture, Business Studies, e-Commerce and IT and Environmental Planning and Management.

Publications

- The 16th and 17th edition of the *Gozo Observer* were published in June and December 2007 respectively.
- The Centre also published a booklet entitled *The University Gozo Centre: Fifteen Years On* to mark the 15th Anniversary of the establishment of the University Gozo Centre.

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. Moreover, in December a Call Centre was set up with the specific responsibility of processing all telephone calls, e-mails and other correspondence received by the whole Department.

FSS and Provisional Tax

FSS deductions, as well as Provisional Tax paid during 2007 are as a rule first set-off against tax assessed for the year of assessment 2008, any balance remaining is then credited against outstanding tax for earlier years, if any, or else refunded. During 2007, the number of employers who submitted the FSS annual reconciliation documents for 2006 was 750. The FSS Division captured and reconciled data covering 3,514 employees for 2006. The FSS Division also issued 70 notices for collection of outstanding tax and social security contributions due by employers. FSS collected by the Gozo Cash Office amounted to Lm636,837 as against the Lm672,917 collected in 2006. Provisional Tax collected during 2007 amounted to Lm1,286,708 exceeding 2006 amounts by Lm233,388. Provisional capital gains tax withheld on deeds of sales increased slightly from Lm2,603,908 (2006) to Lm3,463,056.

Revenue

Revenue from Income Tax collected during the year ending 31 December 2007 amounted to Lm6,667,981, an increase of 10% over the previous year. The following schedule is a breakdown of revenue by system of collection as received through the Gozo Office.

| | 2007 Lm | 2006 Lm |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| PAYE/FSS (Private Employees only) | 636,837 | 672,917 |
| Provisional Tax | 1,286,708 | 1,053,320 |
| Provisional Tax (Capital Gains Tax) | 3,463,056 | 2603,908 |
| Provisional Tax (Self-Assessment) | 843,793 | 1,269,506 |
| Part-Time Self-Employed | 56,732 | 56,297 |
| Penalties | 66,098 | 51,535 |
| Agricultural Scheme | 24,188 | 20,960 |
| Miscellaneous | 531 | 206 |
| Settlement Tax | 290,038 | 322,214 |
| Total Income Tax Receipts | 6,667,981 | 6,050,863 |
| Social Security Contributions | 3,034,463 | 2,888,591 |
| Total Income Tax & Social Security Contributions | 9,702,444 | 8,939,454 |
| Duty on Documents Acts | 3,316,114 | 2,889,809 |
| Death and Donation Duty | 17,254 | 19,542 |
| Miscellaneous | 208 | 194 |
| Total Capital transfer Duty | 3,333,576 | 2,909,545 |
| Grand Total | 13,036,020 | 11,848,999 |

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 performed by the Cash Office in respect of Income Tax and Social Security Contributions were as follows:

| | 2007 | 2006 |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Income Tax | 10,631 | 11,219 |
| Social Security | 13,014 | 12,772 |
| Total Receipts | 23,645 | 23,991 |

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, 19 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 Lm290,038; 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 2007, the Branch processed 264 authorisations for tax clearances in connection with the repatriation of funds from Malta. It also issued 17 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. 79 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 2007. The Branch acknowledged electronically 6,497 Self-assessment returns during 2007 received (301 of which were for previous years) and 9,416 automatic assessments were raised vis-à-vis Gozitan taxpayers under the Free-Filers system. 47

objection cases covering 133 years of assessment were dealt with. 55 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 2007, the Branch acknowledged electronically 348 Part-timer and 239 Full-timer Agricultural Scheme returns.

IRD Call Centre

A Call Centre has been set up at the Gozo Branch to cater for all incoming telephone calls, e-mails and other correspondence of the whole Inland Revenue Department. For this purpose, 12 new clerks have been transferred to the Gozo Branch to man this Call Centre. These officers were given extensive training about the Income Tax legislation as well as about all the Department's sections. The IRD Call Centre will start functioning on 7 January 2008.

Duty on Documents – Transfers *Inter Vivos*

During the year this Branch examined 1,620 deeds of sales and other transfers of immovable property, of which 946 were inspected by the Department's engineers. As a result, 649 original claims were raised. Stamp duty on such transfers amounted to Lm2,184,083. During the year, 145 new objections were registered and 68 cases were concluded. Besides duty on transfer of immovable property, Lm1,531 was collected in respect of share transfers. Duty collected from additional claims issued amounted to Lm66,525. Additional duty on such claims amounted to Lm23,485. Outstanding balance of assessed duty, including disputed duty amounted to Lm811,930.

During the period under review, 953 promises of sale were registered with the Department. Provisional stamp duty paid on these promises of sale amounted to Lm 441,698 (Lm474,717 during 2006).

Duty on Documents – Transfers *Causa Mortis*

The number of returns *causa mortis* filed during 2007 was 437, of which two cases were inspected by the Department's engineers. 233 original claims were raised during the year. Stamp duty on such declarations amounted to Lm641,998. 12 new objections were registered and four cases were concluded during 2007. Revenue collected from additional claims issued amounted to Lm11,039. Additional duty on such claims amounted to Lm734. Outstanding balance of assessed duty, including disputed duty, amounted to Lm109,709.

Death and Donation Duty

57 additional returns were filed during 2007. 30 assessments were raised, whilst 18 transmissions were found to be exempt from tax. Duty claimed during the period was Lm1,901, and revenue collected, including Lm8,097 interest, totalled Lm17,253. Outstanding balance of assessed duty, including disputed duty up to and including 31 December 2007 amounted to Lm84,609.

VAT OFFICE

- *New Applications:* This Office received and processed 314 applications for a new VAT registration number.
- *Returns:* VAT returns from Gozo taxpayers were received regularly throughout the year. These returns amounted to 8,914.
- *Fiscal Receipt Books:* 6,520 personalised fiscal receipts books were distributed to VAT registration holders. 5,320 personalised and 109 non-personalised fiscal receipts books were collected from taxpayers.

- *Cancellations:* 90 taxpayers applied for de-registration of their VAT number.
- *Appeals:* 20 appeals were received at this office from Gozitan taxpayers. These appeals were acknowledged and relative papers were forwarded to Secretary Appeals Board.
- *Courts:* 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 85 fiscal cash register transfers, helped in filling 230 applications for grants on funerals and 58 applications for marriage 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 council elections in Gozo at Munxar, Kerċem, Qala, San Lawrenz, Xaghra and Żebbuġ were held on 10 March 2007. 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.

The number of transactions carried out in connection with the Electoral Register and ID cards were as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|-----|
| New Registrations: | |
| (Electoral Register April 2007) | 295 |
| (Electoral Register October 2007) | 297 |
| Change of address | 749 |
| Change of status (due to marriage) | 165 |
| Corrections | 152 |
| Replacement of lost and damaged ID cards | 565 |
| Issuing of ID cards for foreigners (Aliens) | 271 |

JOYCE DIMECH
Director (Customer Services)

Corporate Services Directorate

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 2007, the Directorate of Corporate Services (DCS) 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 Directorate 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 Directorate during 2007 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 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 DCS 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 DCS 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, 16 appointments were issued during the year and the Directorate co-ordinated the promotion exercise in respect of 19 officers as well as the progression of one Agricultural Officer, five Principals, five Assistant Principals, one Medical Laboratory Scientist, nine Staff Nurses, two Marshals, 12 Enrolled Nurses, two Nursing Aides, two Clerks, one Principal Security Officer, four Supervisors, three Health Assistants, six officers in Group IV and three officers in the other Industrial Grades. Moreover, the DCS co-ordinated the exercise for the confirmation of 43 employees in their respective appointment.

In particular, the Directorate 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 DCS 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 DCS 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 Directorate. 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 course in 'Touch Typing'
- a course on 'Receptionist Skills' meant for minor staff
- a course on 'Using Emotional Intelligence at Work'
- a course in MS Windows XP
- an advanced course in MS Word XP
- an advanced course in MS Excel XP
- a course in MS PowerPoint XP
- a course on the Intranet
- a seminar on tendering procedures
- a course on 'The Fundamentals on Cost and Management Accounting' for officers deployed at the Accounts Sections
- three training programmes for cleaners attached to the Education Branch and the Gozo General Hospital
- two courses on 'Improving Customer Relations'
- a course on 'Communication Skills'
- various workshop sessions on Accrual Accounting
- an introductory course in MS Word XP
- an introductory course in MS Excel XP
- a course in MS Access XP
- a course on the Internet
- a course on MS Project 2003
- a training course for Hospital Auxiliaries
- in-service courses held in conjunction with the Department for the Elderly for care workers serving at the Adult Training Centre as well as part-time social assistants
- various training sessions on DAS Euro Changeover

CO-ORDINATING ACTIVITIES

During 2007, the Directorate 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 DCS maintained a database. During the year, the DCS asked for 4,518 medical visits to be carried out.

The DCS 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 Directorate 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 has been enhanced.

Cabling and trunking works were carried out at the Institute of Tourism Studies, the Male and Female General Wards at the Gozo General Hospital, the Social Security Office, the Education Salaries Office and the Treasury Salaries and Pensions Office. 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 DCS 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 holders and Internet account holders were 690 and 198 respectively. New users were given access to the Ministry's local area network. Twenty-one generic e-mail accounts were opened for various departments/sections. In addition, offices in Gozo were supplied with 43 additional computers whereas a number of existing computers were upgraded. Obsolete and unserviceable IT equipment was replaced Ministry-wide. During the year the DCS 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 Directorate evaluated and endorsed several requests for IT equipment. There were 22 quotations that were awarded via the e-procurement system during 2007.

SCHEMES

The Directorate of Corporate Services processed 26 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 DCS 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 – 650 students benefited from this subsidy in 2007. 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 – 2,549 applications were received.

Moreover, the Directorate 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 2007 – 81 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 Directorate 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 Directorate 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 2007, the Directorate 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 DCS 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 2007:

| Revenue | Lm | Treasury Pensions | |
|------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Fees on contracts/Notarial fees | 1,953.45 | Civil | 1,117 |
| Court Fees | 101,665.20 | Police | 134 |
| Services rendered to Local Council | 42,422.22 | Widows | 147 |
| Miscellaneous Reimbursement | 80.01 | P.I.S. | 2 |
| Miscellaneous Receipts | 4,389.55 | Total | 1,400 |
| Expenditure | | | |
| Recurrent | 20,917,221.02 | | |
| Capital | 5,240,130.00 | | |

Throughout 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 General (Operations)

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.

OBJECTIVES

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 domestic policies and those proposed by the EU;
- facilitating the implementation of the Ministry's policies and strategies;
- carrying out SPO functions for EU funded/co-funded projects and initiatives; and
- monitoring the implementation of programmes and projects including Customer Care.

EU AFFAIRS

EU Policy Co-ordination

During 2007, 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 Commission for the Peripheral and Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR) carries out on EU communications and proposals that are of relevance to island regions like Gozo.

Management of EU Funds

The Directorate 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 Directorate 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 regulations and established procedures. During the course of this year, the Directorate continued to fulfil the role of Senior Programming Officer for the projects led by the Ministry for Gozo.

The Directorate has sourced opportunities for the funding of projects. Besides the projects under the Gozo priority funding has been secured for another three projects, one under Priority Axis 2, entitled Training Courses to Enhance the Employability of the Workforce in Gozo, one under Priority Axis 3, Provision of Cold Storage Facilities and another one under the EEA financial mechanism entitled, Master Plan for the Cittadella – the Old Fortified City of the Island of Gozo. The Directorate also provided guidance and assistance to line departments and interested parties including local councils, NGOs, private sector organisations and individuals on the application for funds under different funding instruments.

Structural Funds

Under the Structural Funds Programme for Malta 2004-2006, the Directorate 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 (FIG).

By the end of 2007, four ERDF and three ESF projects were completed. These include:

- The Museum of Archaeology Display Project;
- The Niche Tourism for the Island of Gozo;
- The Upgrading of the Tina Road Network in Gozo;
- The extension of the Centre for Art and Crafts and setting up of a Crafts Development Centre;
- ETC Gozo Courses and Schemes;
- University of Malta Gozo Centre Courses;
- Crafts Courses for Sustainable Careers in Gozo.

The implementation of the three remaining projects namely, A Training Institute for the Tourism Industry in Gozo, Training Courses to Enhance the Employability of the Workforce in Gozo and Provision of Cold Storage Facilities is well under way. These projects will be completed during 2008.

The first phase of the project aimed to study the technical options for the construction of an alternative route at the port of Mġarr which was led by ADT has been completed.

Dissemination of Information

An important function of this Directorate 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 Directorate receives a significant number of queries as well as requests for information. Queries arise from both internal and external stakeholders for which the Directorate responds expeditiously. Besides the extensive use of e-mail to inform identified internal/external stakeholders, the Directorate 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 Directorate.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

During the past year the Directorate continued to monitor on a continuous basis EU developments, in particular, Commission and Council proposals in the areas of relevance to the Ministry's portfolio including regional policy, state aids, tourism, human resources, and business support, in order to co-ordinate the formulation of domestic policies in these areas. The Directorate 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 Directorate co-ordinates and monitors the implementation of the Ministry's programmes and projects. It worked in close co-operation with the project leaders who are leading the implementation of the EU co-funded projects for which the Ministry is the final beneficiary. Since certain projects, such as the Sewage Treatment Plant project co-funded out of pre-accession funds, the Reconstruction of Mġarr Road project which is co-financed from the Cohesion Fund and the studies on the alternative route to Mġarr co-funded under the Pre-accession instrument were being implemented in conjunction with other ministries/government entities, the Directorate maintained close contacts with the ministries/entities concerned.

New Project Proposals

The Directorate has submitted five project proposals following the first call for project applications under the 2007-2013 programming period. These are:

- Training courses to enhance the employability and adaptability of the Workforce;
- Upgrading of Villa Rundle Gardens;
- Reconstruction of part of Xlendi and Ta' Pinu roads;
- Upgrading of Żewwieqa Waterfront; and
- Upgrading of an Operating Theatre and Setting up of a Radiology Unit at the Gozo General Hospital.

National Reform Programme

Besides the co-ordination and monitoring of projects, this Directorate 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 Directorate is also supporting and monitoring the implementation of these initiatives in particular the Foster Entrepreneurship Scheme aimed to create and support businesses start-up in Gozo which is a direct measure under the NRP. This measure has been completed and as a result 14 entrepreneurs started their own business.

Euro Changeover

During 2007, the Directorate continued to co-ordinate the Euro Changeover process within the Ministry for Gozo, through regular participation in meetings held by the Management Efficiency Unit, the co-ordination of activities of the Ministry's line departments and the dissemination of information. To ensure a smooth transition to the Euro, the Directorate co-ordinated various training sessions held for ministry officials. In addition, the Directorate co-ordinated with NECC the delivery of a number of focused information sessions for vulnerable groups in Gozo. These groups had been identified earlier by the Directorate as needing more targeted information.

Green Initiatives

The Directorate, in collaboration with the Ministry 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 and sharing of resources, a solar energy generation system has been introduced in the Ministry's administrative block.

Customer Care Co-ordination

During 2007, the Directorate handled 762 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 Directorate 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:

- Continued to maintain 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 with a view to improve upon the system's effectiveness in the delivery of customer complaints to the appropriate ministry/entity and thus eliminate unnecessary delays.
- The Directorate also provided effective input for the enhancement of the Customer Care System (CCS) to help reduce bottlenecks and improve its functionality.

RITA CUTAJAR

Director (EU Affairs, Policy Development & Programme Implementation)



**Ministry of Health, the Elderly
and Community Care**

Office of the Permanent Secretary

DEPARTMENT OF CORPORATE SERVICES

Human Resources

Planning and Organisation

Whilst maintaining electronic records of the authorised complements of the various sections of the Health Division, this Department submitted 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. The following tables indicate the posts filled, number of resignations, retirements and transfers processed by the HR Branch:

| Grade | Progression | | Internal Call | | Public Call | | Total |
|-----------------|-------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|-------------|------------|------------|
| | M | F | M | F | M | F | |
| General Service | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Professional | 2 | 1 | 33 | 18 | 135 | 141 | 330 |
| Technical | 5 | - | 3 | - | - | - | 8 |
| Departmental | 22 | 22 | 50 | 50 | 99 | 333 | 576 |
| Industrial | 3 | - | 33 | - | - | - | 36 |
| Total | 32 | 23 | 119 | 68 | 234 | 474 | 950 |

| Grade | Resigned/Dismissed | | Retired | | Medical Grounds | | Transferred | | Total |
|-----------------|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------------|----------|-------------|-----------|------------|
| | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | |
| General Service | 1 | 1 | 2 | - | - | 1 | 3 | 6 | 14 |
| Messengerial | - | - | 2 | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | 4 |
| Professional | 10 | 6 | 3 | 1 | - | - | 5 | 2 | 27 |
| Technical | - | - | 5 | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | 7 |
| Departmental | 4 | 4 | 7 | 13 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 9 | 46 |
| Industrial | 1 | - | 7 | 3 | 2 | - | 2 | - | 15 |
| Total | 16 | 11 | 26 | 18 | 7 | 2 | 16 | 17 | 113 |

During 2007, the HR Branch 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 respective Unions.

Employee Relations

During 2007, the Department processed the following requests:

- *Injury on Duty* - 75 cases in respect of Health employees (42 males and 33 females);
- *Medical Boards* - 270 requests (200 males and 70 females) for medical boards on behalf of ministries, government departments, corporations and other organisations;
- *Private Work* - 52 applications (32 males and 20 females);
- *Discipline* - as per table below:

| Discipline | Males | Females | Total |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|---------|-------|
| Number of charges issued during 2007 in terms of Regs. 18,19,20 and 36 of the PSC Discipline Regulations | 151 | 81 | 232 |
| Criminal Offences | 14 | 1 | 15 |
| Cases finalised by the end of 2007 | 67 | 23 | 90 |

- *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 professional training of its employees to ensure the provision of trained personnel required to man the Health Services.

During 2007, a substantial 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 | 382 | 286 | 668 |
| Paramedical | 101 | 135 | 236 |
| Nursing/Midwifery | 127 | 273 | 400 |
| Engineering | 2 | - | 2 |
| Pharmacists | 25 | 62 | 87 |
| Other | 17 | 29 | 46 |
| Total | 654 | 785 | 1,439 |

| Grant of paid leave in connection with workshops/conferences abroad | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| | <i>Males</i> | <i>Females</i> | <i>Total</i> |
| Medical | 52 | 36 | 88 |
| Paramedical | 3 | 17 | 20 |
| Nursing/Midwifery | 13 | 17 | 30 |
| Total | 68 | 70 | 138 |

Transport Services

A project to enhance the drivers' and management staff workplace environment and facilities through appropriate investment was initiated at the latter part of 2007. The project is expected to be completed in 2008.

Meanwhile, the Datatrack System was introduced at the Transport Garage to monitor movements of ambulances and departmental cars used for transportation of personnel on official duties. This new system has brought about a desired upgrade in control, accountability and transparency.

Registry Services

The Registry Section is the heart of every department and the nerve centre of communications. It serves as a distribution centre for departmental files, personal files and disciplinary files. Correspondence for both incoming and outgoing are also channelled through Central Registry.

During the year under review, incoming mail amounted to about 90,000 items. These were received from the general public, government departments, parastatal bodies, hospitals, outstations, local councils and other organisations.

Outgoing mail during 2007 amounted to 135,694 items, classified as indicated in the following table:

| | |
|--------------------------|---------|
| Local Ordinary Mail | 125,815 |
| Local Departmental Mail | 5,617 |
| Local Registered Mail | 2,022 |
| Overseas Ordinary Mail | 1,751 |
| Overseas Registered Mail | 489 |

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.

| | |
|------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Office of the Prime Minister (OPM + MPO) | 199 (56 + 143) |
| Ministry of Finance | 3 |
| Contracts Department | 37 |
| Treasury Department | 6 |
| Health Division (DH circulars) | 335 |
| Others – Memos | 38 |

In addition to the responsibility for the safe custody of thousands of files (including 5,648 personal files, 6,100 files of retired, deceased and new recruits), 3,216 new files were opened.

Supplies and Projects Section

During 2007, the Supplies and Projects Section of the Health Division published 184 departmental tenders. Another 19 tenders valued over the departmental limit of Lm20,000 were published through the Department of Contracts.

135 Letters of Acceptance in respect of tenders and 46 Letters of Acceptance in respect of quotations were issued whilst another seven Letters of Acceptance were awarded on behalf of Health Division by the Director General Contracts. Forty 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 repair 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 is minimal.

Accounts Section

During 2007 the Accounts Section continued to effect payments for goods and services in a timely and effective manner and to provide monthly funds position reports and other financial statistical data to the various administrative directors within the Division 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.

A total of 782 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 2006 and 2007:

| Item | 2006 (Lm) | 2007 (Lm) |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Personal Emoluments | 43,197,481 | 44,818,083 |
| Operational & Maintenance | 6,929,168 | 6,789,276 |
| Programmes/Initiatives | 23,125,518 | 26,123,605 |
| Contributions to Govt. Entities | 9,133,430 | 9,238,826 |
| Total | 82,385,597 | 86,969,790 |

Revenue Section

The Revenue Section of the Health Division during 2007 issued several reminders to outstanding debtors to achieve the section's main target – to decrease the Arrears of Revenue.

The Revenue Section also sends several reminders to other debtors including Health employees who had resigned from government service; overpayments in their salaries and penalties against those employees that were granted special leave but did not fulfil their contractual obligations. 4,932 reminders were sent as follow-up action to these outstanding debtors and in some cases legal action was taken for the settlement of any amounts due to the Health Division.

This section also issued other bills in respect of de-ratting exemption certificates, fines, licences, examination and course fees.

Medical tests regarding certain employees and overtime performed by Health Inspectors in hotels was carried out.

Refunds were effected to 3,248 persons who returned previously hired Medical Aids. These refunds were effected by means of payment vouchers.

During 2007, the Section received 173 personal effects of deceased patients at St Luke's Hospital and action was taken to release the personal effects not only of last year but even of previous years to release these effects to their respective relatives on our legal consultant's advice.

In 2007, swipe card transactions amounted to Lm24,271.

The Revenue Section was also responsible to ensure a smooth and efficient result at all cash points with the introduction of the euro on 1 January 2008, by preparing the cash float/requirements of the Department. All cashiers within the Department were trained accordingly during 2007 and were well prepared with all the necessary information regarding the introduction of the euro.

The sum of Lm161,665 was deposited in the below-the-line accounts as follows:

| Item Below-the-Line A/C | Lm |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Loans of Medical Aids | 59,500 |
| Public Health Fees | 26,551 |
| Special Accreditation Committee | 889 |
| Pharmacy Council | 4,686 |
| Medical Council | 23,646 |
| Appeals Committee | 220 |
| Sale of Grave Sites | 28,750 |
| Conversion course | 450 |
| Vodafone | 16,973 |
| Total | 161,665 |

Total revenue collected for 2007 amounted to Lm473,183. The table below shows a breakdown of the revenue collected during 2007.

| Revenue by Item | Lm |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| Miscellaneous Licences | 4,250 |
| Attest., Certificates, Permits, etc | 5,033 |
| Miscellaneous Fees | 28,772 |
| Services to 3 rd parties | 39,484 |
| Ambulance/Funeral Expenses | 2,994 |
| Sale of Medicines | 141,747 |
| Hospital Fees | 200,776 |
| Sale of Graves/Grave sites | 3,545 |
| Miscellaneous Receipts | 45,582 |
| Total | 472,183 |

The Revenue Section collected a total amount of Lm634,848 of which Lm473,183 were total revenue and another Lm161,665 which were deposited in the below-the-line accounts.

Travel Section

In 2007 there were 227 travel cases. The majority of these cases concerned conferences in connection with the workings of the European Commission, Council and Presidency. Other conferences were organised by WHO and HOPE.

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 2007, the Health Department's Personal Emoluments expenditure amounted to:

| Item | Totals (Lm) |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1110 – Holders of Political Office | 30,319 |
| 1210 – Salaries | 30,336,423 |
| 1310 – Bonus | 584,449 |
| 1410 – Income Supplement | 459,907 |
| 1510 – Social Security Contribution | 2,982,453 |
| 1610 – Allowances | 9,127,945 |
| 1710 - Overtime | 1,260,588 |
| Total | 44,818,083 |

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 projected 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 2007, in view of the plan to migrate the Salaries Section to Gozo, five Gozitan employees were deployed to the Section for training purposes. Progress was monitored and the migration was effected in October 2007. Co-ordination is essential in order to maintain standard and uniform procedures throughout. Likewise, this contributes to the effective monitoring of the Department's expenditure trend, the projection of expenses and the implementation of remedial strategies where and when required.

NATIONAL BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICES

The year 2007 has seen significant changes within the National Blood Transfusion Service. The main highlights have been the finishing and commissioning of the new blood donation area, the starting of a University post graduate stream in Transfusion Medicine (within MSc Pathology), the opening of the new hospital with the transfer of Clinical Transfusion Medicine (Hospital Blood Bank) to the new centre and a number of other activities.

New Donation Area

This was officially opened on 14 May 2007 by the Hon Minister of Health Dr Louis Deguara. A special guest of honour was Professor Erhard Seifried from the German Red Cross and current President of the International society of Blood Transfusion (ISBT). The new centre was a huge improvement for clients and staff.

MSc (Pathology-Transfusion Science)

This is a significant milestone in the development of transfusion science in Malta. After lengthy discussions within the university, the training programme commenced in September 2007, currently there are two students both employed within the services who are attending the course.

The New Hospital Blood Bank

Although not directly involved within the Hospital Blood Bank, numerous logistical problems had to be faced. These included validation of transport (with procurement of vehicle, transport boxes, validation etc). The Department also had to reorganise various sections due to the unavailability of support services previously provided from SLH, including engineering, stores items, transport etc. This has led to a better control of expenditure and also probably in the near future facilitating the introduction of a proper accounting and budgeting system.

Other initiatives

- *Planning for the construction of the New Blood Establishment:* All the necessary preparatory work leading up to the preparation of tenders, plans, submission to planning authorities and ministry of finance are ready. Works are expecting to commence late this year.
- *EU projects:* The Centre has successfully actively participated in an EU co-funded activity led by the German Red Cross-Frankfurt with the printing of a manual *European operating procedure (SOP) methodology reflecting European best practice within the area addressing the quality and safety of blood.*

In September participation started in a new project dealing with inspections of blood establishments (led by the same German group), which should lead to a manual for inspectors and a training programme. A working group in which the Institute is involved will be held in Malta in May.

In January 2008 participation is expected in a new Dutch-led project dealing with European Best Practice in Donor recruitment, selection and retainment.

- *Continued active participation within the European Blood Alliance (EBA)*: The Centre has taken particular interest in, and is promoting a pan European harmonisation of standards for training in transfusion medicine. It is also actively involved in other areas within this EBA.
- The continuous development of a total quality system incorporating all aspects of the department, from procurement, donor selection, laboratory analysis and processing of blood to distribution and transport of blood.

A licence for Access Dimensions accounting package has been procured for NBTS in order to set up a proper accounting management system and stock inventory control. This will enable financial autonomy for NBTS, where the department can generate and manage its own finances (autonomy is planned for June 2008).

Intensive super user training was carried out and several meetings were held to define the business process and system set-up. Several modules have been developed to meet with the special requirements of NBTS and to enable compliance with EU and GMP regulations.

CUSTOMER CARE ACTIVITIES

CC System – Local Councils

In 2007, the Customer Care System - Local Councils generated a total number of 1,825 complaints (33 of these came from *servizz.gov* of OPM) of which there were: Pending complaints – 147; Settled complaints – 50; Closed complaints – 1,628.

The CCS – LC system has been intended to move towards Phase Two since it was launched in 2001 (*linking MHEC Departments to all local councils by electronic portals*), but due to lack of funds this activity is still on hold.

As part of CCC workings, annual reports on customer care activities for 2006 were collected from all MHEC entities, follow-up meetings scheduled and salient issues were discussed with respective Heads of Section/Units/Directors/CEOs.

On the other hand, a customer care review for the years 2001 to 2006 was presented to the Core Management Group as a status report.

PROJECTS

NGOs/Volunteering Activities

A number of meetings were held with Malta Resource Centre and other internal stakeholders to consolidate a partnership between MHEC and MRC, which was launched on 27 April 2007. A considerable number of volunteers were involved during the migration of services from St Luke's Hospital to Mater Dei Hospital in November.

Other Activities

Euro Changeover

This process, under the responsibility of the Director Corporate Services as the appointed Euro Ministry Co-ordinator with the assistance of the Assistant Director as deputy EMC, was successfully managed through constant co-ordination with the Euro Changeover Team of the Management Efficiency Unit.

MHEC representatives participated in regular PSSC meetings with a view to monitor progress on the process as it was expected to affect MHEC operations Ministry-wide, focusing on client/public interface at cash points and internal clients within the vulnerable group. Training was extended to all levels of staff through the train-the-trainer scheme organised by SDO/NECC, covering various directorates within the Ministry.

Better Regulation

Overall, all measures (DG03, ECC01, DPHC01, FA01, DPH02, DPH03, DPH05) were implemented within time frames except in some cases where constraints dictated otherwise. This exercise has been co-ordinated with the BRU Team (MEU).

Parliamentary Questions

This Office processed a total of 469 PQs during 2007, reflecting virtually the same level of PQs registered in 2006. This exercise entailed the co-ordination of additional efforts by the Offices of the Director-Generals, the Ministry Private Secretariats, and Heads of entities. Enhanced expediency in processing was achieved through a more centralised monitoring system managed by the Corporate Services Directorate.

Occupational Health and Safety

Administrative Directors/CEOs were regularly invited to nominate officers within their jurisdiction to participate in various training programmes and initiatives organised by the Foundation for Human Resources Development - San Ġwann, a leader in the provision of HR development services in Malta.

Difficulties have been encountered arising from inadequate human and financial resources.

Green Initiatives

A series of other Green initiatives were embarked upon, spread over a good number of departments and entities within their competences, focused on the procurement of a substantial number of waste separation bins to Primary Health Care Department and Department for the Care of the Elderly (St Vincent de Paul Residence) on the basis of the relevant framework tenders issued by MRAE on behalf of all ministries.

An Energy Audit service-wide exercise earmarked by MRAE for 2007 could not be favourably considered for implementation given the scarce financial resources available (Lm5,000 in 2007) and unviable options.

The Ministry Green Leader participated in the *Sustainable Waste Management Course* organised by Efoundation (Ta' Xbiex) in October and in a European Conference on *Sustainable Development in Public Procurement* held in Central London in November.

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 on 31 December 2006.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH POLICY & PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

In the light of the reform of the top management structures of the Health Division, the Department of Health Policy and Programme Implementation became the Department for Special Initiatives towards the end of 2007. The Department for Special Initiatives is responsible for co-ordinating special initiatives and measures taken by the Permanent Secretary. The Department will support the Permanent Secretary in

managing the change that such initiative and measures would entail. The Director will also carry out any other tasks entrusted to him by the Permanent Secretary.

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 but, despite issuing the relevant tender on two occasions, no bids were received. The Department is currently seeking direct quotations to implement this programme.

Training in Mental Health Issues

Cognisant of the health and social burden of mental illness in the community, agreement was reached between the Department and the Archbishop's Curia to initiate a basic training programme on common mental health problems for parish priests. This programme will be initiated in February 2008.

Legislation

The Department was responsible for the drafting of two key health sector Acts.

The Health Care 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 draft Mental Health Act was widely discussed with all key stakeholders including users of the mental health services and their carers. On the basis of these discussions, the Act was finalised in May 2007 and forwarded to the Attorney General for legal vetting. The new 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. Following discussions with the Chamber of Pharmacists and the General Retailers and Traders Union, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Health Division and these organisations in July 2007. The MOU lays down the modus operandi to implement the POYC scheme.

During the latter half of 2007, the Department mapped out the operational processes and the IT requirements for such a scheme. With the help of MITTS and the Ministry of Finance, the scheme was implemented on a pilot project in December 2007 and will be rolled out on a national level during 2008.

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.

Asian Flu Pandemic

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.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT UNIT

The Information Management Unit (IMU) leads the Ministry's ICT strategy aimed to enhance service delivery standards. The primary focus of the IMU is the strategic direction and management of information management investment within this Ministry to ensure that data is translated into information as a resource. Major initiatives included:

Network Infrastructure

The demand on the data network has grown rapidly with the implementation of various applications and is forecast to grow as new applications and services are rolled out within the Ministry.

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, a number of network extensions have been implemented to enhance the service provision within the Ministry. 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.

Discussions for the provision of a new network infrastructure for St Vincent de Paule are being undertaken. The process is still in the initial phase but it is envisaged that due to the large coverage area requirement wireless technology will be considered.

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.

The IMU has also initiated the process for the redesign and implementation of the new Ministry's portal. The portal aims at providing a one-stop-shop service, wherein all health-related services are made available through the same interface to enhance the user online experience. The new portal also aims at consolidating all government health sites. The new portal will be launched in 2008.

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 2008 where it is deemed feasible.

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.

Desktop Services

The IMU compiled a number of reports to facilitate the planning and implementation of the Desktop Services Agreement for the Ministry of Health, the Elderly and Community Care. The inventory compilation and maintenance requested by MITTS was completed successfully even though the IMU lacks human resources and the number of Ministry sites is high. A number of key personnel which are not part of the IMU have helped to be able to compile the report in the requested timeframe.

Euro Changeover

The IMU has facilitated the euro transition for the Ministry and has compiled a number of monthly progress reports which were submitted to the NECC. A number of stumble blocks were identified and an action plan was set up to be able to accomplish the changeover.

ICT Submissions to CITAC

New ICT Project initiatives have been submitted to the Core ICT Advisory Committee for approval. The IMU facilitated the submission of *ePatient Records in Primary Health Care* and the *Disease Surveillance Database* projects.

eHealth Portal

The eHealth Portal (www.eHealth.gov.mt) provides 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.

Currently the Immunisation system is being finalised with links being tested for all children under 18 years of age, to their maternal ID number and the mother's legal spouse, which will enable both mother and father online access to their children's immunisation record through an eID authentication.

The system will also be linked to an online database of registered medical practitioners and will be offering a facility for the online notification of vaccinations carried out in private practice through an eID authentication of medical practitioners.

Another facility of the system is for the online maintenance of vaccination records through a web based interface which will allow real time record keeping at any point within the government intranet.

Other features of the system include a set of reports which are auto generated on demand which will greatly facilitate the NIS administrator's work when reporting to international bodies such as the WHO or passing on defaulters to the local health inspectorate for follow-up and legal action.

In December, with the support of the Ministry for Investment, Industry and Information Technology, the Ministry of Health, the Elderly and Community Care signed off the agreement for the implementation of eHealth II for which business analysis were previously conducted. Services related to Progeny, Breast Care, Elderly Care, Diabetes, Speech Language and Schedule V will be made available through the eHealth Web Portal.

The development of the initial phase of Progeny, Diabetes, Speech language, Elderly and Breast Care projects are in progress. This will initially see a customised content management system so that project owners are able to maintain an information website on their respective section; online application forms which will allow citizens electronic transaction of information, regulated fora for electronic exchange of ideas between citizens about the topic and an FAQs and query forms. These will set the pace for the further development of services which relate to these sections.

Malta is also being represented as a Member State on the i2010 sub group on eHealth where exchange of information about national eHealth initiatives is undertaken. The mandate of this sub group is that Member State experts and leaders in eHealth and their associated stakeholders provide specialist advice to the i2010 High Level Group with specific regard to eHealth.

The key objectives of this working group are to develop a European eHealth service and information space that leads to improved quality and access to care while enabling cost effectiveness of eHealth systems and services, stimulating European industry, and supporting European patient mobility; and to facilitate and contribute to the implementation of the European eHealth Action Plan (2010) including eHealth actions plans in each of the Member States and European Economic Area countries.

Currently a draft Vision and Strategy for eHealth is being revised to be made available for public consultation.

FRANK MIFSUD

Permanent Secretary, MHEC

Public Health Regulation Division

The Division for Public Health Regulation, apart from the general safeguarding and promotion of public health, is also responsible for the formulation, monitoring and enforcement of national standards for health in both the public and private sector. It is its responsibility to ensure that public health legislation is being adhered to by all concerned and in this regard is responsible for the inspection and licensing of the various entities that provide health care as well as food establishments.

Within the Division there are four departments, namely:

- **Department for Environmental Health:** responsible for the enforcement of public health legislation as well as environmental issues.
- **Department for Health Care Services Standards:** responsible for the establishment and monitoring of standards to be adhered to by service providers in the primary, secondary and tertiary care sectors as well as the enforcement of legislation in relation to blood, organs, tissues and cells.
- **Department for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention:** responsible for all activities aimed at improving health and the prevention and control of communicable and non-communicable disease.
- **Department for Nursing Services Standards:** responsible for the establishment and monitoring of nursing care standards in all care sectors.

The **Medicines Authority**, which also reports to the Director General (Public Health Regulation), is responsible for ensuring the quality, safety and efficacy of medicinal products on the Maltese markets as well as the inspection and licensing of manufacturing and wholesale dealing establishments.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

International Health

A number of international projects were negotiated, co-ordinated and followed through by the International Health Office within the Office of the Director General, in particular projects funded and technically assisted through the World Health Organisation (WHO) Biennial Collaborative Agreement (BCA) 2006-2007. The main projects under this agreement with a total budget of USD 50,000 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. The budget for the next BCA 2008-2009 was increased by the World Health Organisation to USD250,000.

Environmental Health Policy Co-ordination

The BCA 2006-2007 gave priority to capacity building in environmental health. A public health specialist within the Office of the Director General (Health) finalised further 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.

The Office of the Director General (Health) continues to recognise the need for an integrated approach to tackling environmental issues that could adversely affect children's health (and therefore the health of all

concerned). An Inter-ministerial Committee on Environment and Health was set up as a secure institutional framework to specifically address the implementation of the revised National Environment and Health Action Plan (NEHAP) for Malta. The IMC is another initiative taken by the Office of the Director General (Health) to integrate health across policies, and to improve existing collaboration between different ministries and sectors in areas impacting on health such as transport, environment, education, energy, social policy, and local government.

During 2007, the Inter-ministerial Committee drafted an action document based on the revised NEHAP guiding document (2006-2010) centred around four Regional Priority Goals determined by the Children's Health and Environment Action Plan for Europe (CEHAPE). Priority actions focus on children's health in relation to clean air and prevention of accidents and injuries. A delegate from the National Youth Council and the Commissioner for Children were invited to attend the IMC meetings.

The study entitled *Transport-Related Air Pollution and Respiratory Symptoms in a Population of Maltese School Children*, funded through the WHO BCA 2006-2007 was completed by the end of 2007. This study was carried out in close collaboration with the Environment Protection and Transport Management Units (MEPA). Efforts will be made to get the study published in a scientific journal following a peer review.

As a result of the structural reforms of the Health Division, all work involving the foregoing is now carried out under the newly set up Directorate for Environmental Health.

WHO Intergovernmental Environment and Health Mid-Term Review

Two representatives from the DG's Office, also national WHO focal point for Environmental Health, together with the Commissioner for Children attended the Intergovernmental Mid-Term review meeting in Vienna in June 2007. During this meeting, country focal points reported the progress on implementation of CEHAPE, focusing on 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 for Malta may be viewed on the WHO website.

European Commission Framework Programme FP6

During 2007, 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, launched in August 2005 and supported by the EC, DG SANCO, was continued throughout 2007. During the year, Malta continued to participate in the HIA-NMAC project (Grant agreement no 2004128) and the Maltese counterpart in the Office of the DG (Health) completed a Health Impact Assessment of Tourism and Recreational Water Policies under work package 5 of the project. The aim of this project is to unite existing institutions and knowledge in the field of health impact assessments into one major network of collaborators by performing capacity building exercises, pilot studies, methodological development, and implementation exercise. The final financial report for the Maltese contribution was submitted at the end of 2007.

During the year, the Office of the Director General (Health) co-ordinated another project, Pollution Reduction Options Network (PRONET), through the Transport, Health and Environment (THE) Committee. The Committee's representatives from the Malta Transport Authority (ADT) and MEPA also participated 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, which commenced in January 2007, focused on the exchange of useful practices in reduction of traffic-related health hazards and improvement of indoor air quality.

Representation on Government-Appointed Bodies

A representative from the Office of the Director General (Health) appointed by the Prime Minister continued to serve on the MEPA Board as well as on the National Commission for Sustainable Development. A representative from the Director General's Office represents the Ministry of Health, the Elderly and Community Care on the Inter-ministerial Committee on Climate Change.

Clean Air Consultative Group

The multi-sectoral Clean Air Consultative Group chaired by the Director General (Health) continued to meet regularly during 2007 to discuss aspects of legislation regarding air pollution to be incorporated into a revised 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 and chair the tripartite Public Health Medicine Training Committee. The Malta Association of Public Health Medicine (MAPHM) and University of Malta (Public Health) are also represented on this committee. During 2007, six 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, and in collaboration with the Malta Association for Public Health Medicine. This initiative provides an opportunity for continued professional development mainly through creating a forum for critical appraisal, discussion and the sharing of work experiences, and encouraging the use of literature in evidence-based decision-making in public health.

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 was to direct the formulation of a non-communicable disease strategy for the Health Division. Discussions have been finalised and a final draft has been set up. This will be sent out for consultation in the first quarter of 2008.

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 was to direct the formulation of a Cancer strategy which will benefit the Maltese population. Discussions have been finalised and the draft has been sent out for consultation.

Data Protection Act Compliance

The implementation of general recommendations with regard to ensuring that the "fair and lawful processing" principle is adhered to have 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 2008.

Intersectoral Committee to Counteract Obesity (ICCO)

Following the Istanbul Charter on Counteracting Obesity (WHO 2006), a local intersectoral committee was set up by the health sector to create a forum whereby the key determinants of obesity would be addressed. ICCO meetings are chaired by the Director General for Public Health Regulation and the members represent a spectrum of sectors from Government i.e. education, agriculture, finance, transport (ADT), environment (MEPA), urban development (MUDR), health promotion and disease prevention, school health service, broadcasting media, and catering (MHRA).

The committee has the following terms of reference and is currently in the phase of appraising the plans originating from each sector. The plans will eventually form part of a national strategy to counteract obesity that reflects the current scientific evidence and will take into consideration local needs and priorities.

- To translate measures outlined in the European Charter on counteracting Obesity (2006) into a series of specific sectoral and intersectoral objectives and implementation strategies, within an appropriate timescale and priority ranking as defined in a working plan (action plan).
- To ensure close collaboration and consistency of action regarding food and nutrition as described in the Malta Food and Nutrition Policy (1988).
- To make proposals to Government on any matters related to its functions.
- To report regularly to the authorities on progress achieved.

FOOD SAFETY COMMISSION

During 2007, the Food Safety Commission met 17 times.

Correspondence

During 2007 the Commission discussed, decided and replied to a number of 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 393 letters and correspondences.

Legislation

On the agenda, during 2007, the Food Safety Commission had a number of different items relating to 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 a number of requests on its agenda under the item Requests for Approvals. Requests were received for the approval of labelling, the approval of food handlers course providers, for the approval of HACCP guidelines and others.

Research and Criteria

During 2007, under the agenda item Research and Criteria, the Food Safety Commission discussed 10 separate subjects ranging from scientific committees, a request for a twinning light project on the auditing of competent authorities, survey on colour, additives and sweeteners as requested by EU, the guidelines on

the single integrated multi-annual national control plan, the WHO Nutrition and Food Safety, 2nd Action Plan and others.

Proposals, Comments and Contributions by FSC Members

More than 20 different subjects have been discussed during 2007 relating to this item of the FSC agenda. The subjects were varied and included issues like the future of FSC, qualification requirement for HACCP Auditors and Providers, Low capacity establishments, salmonella in local meat products, approval of cold-stores, sale and labelling requirements of poultry products, withdrawal of food items from the local market, marketing regulations of meat products, various rapid alerts, and others.

Meetings

During 2007, 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. All reports generated from these meetings have been circulated amongst members for their comments and discussed during FSC meetings.

Other

From time to time and when specific matters have to be discussed, the FSC invites 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.

PHARMACEUTICAL UNIT

Following the Health Reform of 2007, NMPAU (National Medicines Policy and Audit Unit) was split in August so that part of it forms the Pharmaceutical Unit, Office of Director General, Public Health Regulation, whilst the other part is under the remit of Director General (Strategy and Sustainability). The Pharmaceutical Unit is responsible for and co-ordinates the administrative and technical aspects of legislation, policies and guidelines regarding pharmaceutical policy on a national level.

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 | 51 |
| Import Permits for psychotropic substances | 123 |
| Withdrawal Permits | 174 |
| New Methylphenidate approvals | 100 |
| Renewal of Methylphenidate approvals | 281 |

The Third Schedule to the Medical Kindred Professions Ordinance was amended by Legal Notices 127 and 404 of 2007, thereby placing under national control mCPP [1-(3-chlorophenyl) piperazine], oCPP [1-(2-chlorophenyl) piperazine] and pCPP [1-(4-chlorophenyl) piperazine]. Likewise the First Schedule to the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance was amended by Legal Notice 373 of 2007, by means of which oripavine was placed under national control.

Policy Setting and Implementation

NMPAU is responsible for the setting of policies in various pharmaceutical areas. This is done with technical support from the World Health Organisation through a biennial collaborative agreement (WHO BCA). NMPAU is responsible for the development of policies as well as for the proper implementation and continuous monitoring of the set policies.

National Availability of Medicines

NMPAU continued to monitor the list of medicines not covered by a Marketing Authorisation or authorisation via 126a, and therefore not available on the Maltese market. This list indicates the medicines essential for public health needs which however are not covered by a Marketing Authorisation in Malta.

Another list, known as the Malta Medicines List (MML) or national formulary, was developed and published on the NMPAU website in early 2007. This list, which is regularly updated, includes those medicines authorised to be placed on the market in Malta.

Unlicensed Medicines

NMPAU is responsible for the implementation of 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. The unit processes the individual requests by prescribers and for departmental use in public hospitals and private hospitals. It validates and reviews the requests, and gives the necessary recommendations and advice to support the decision of the Licensing Authority.

146 unlicensed medicines requests were processed in 2007. Various queries from foreign medicines agencies/boards, local health professionals and patients, regarding guidelines, procedures, and availability of medicines were also dealt with.

The Use of Medicines

NMPAU is responsible for the policies regarding the use and implementation of evidence based therapeutic guidelines. The Malta Medicines List (MML), a national formulary, was developed and published with the aim of keeping the patients and healthcare professionals informed on the medicinal products available on the market, and therefore ensuring the rational use of such medicines. Relevant information on the changes of the MML was included in the same website on a regular basis. Pages on rational medicines use including substitution, prescribing, dispensing, etc were also included in the website.

NMPAU proposed an action plan for the improvement of the rational use of medicines. The necessary ground work and meetings were carried out especially as regards the use of medicines in asthma, and the substitution of one brand of medicine with another.

In 2007, NMPAU actively supported the Consumer Competition Division (CCD) on various technical issues related to the use of medicines by the Maltese population, such issues being relevant for the setting and implementation of a medicines pricing policy by the same CCD.

Malta's Pharmaceutical Profile

NMPAU co-ordinated the drafting of Malta's pharmaceutical profile for the Pharmaceutical Pricing and Reimbursement Information (PPRI) network and contributed to this profile, especially with regard to the national private and public pharmaceutical systems and situations, relevant legislation, availability of medicines and rational use of medicines etc.

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).

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 2007 are indicated hereunder:

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|----------------------------------------------|----|
| Medical Council | | Professions Complementary to Medicine | |
| Medical Practitioners | 91 | Dental Technologist | 1 |
| Dental Surgeons | 8 | Nutritionists | 4 |
| | | Medical Lab Scientists | 8 |
| Pharmacy Council | | Physiotherapists | 17 |
| Pharmacists (Permanent Reg) | 41 | Radiographers | 10 |
| Pharmacists (Temporary Reg) | 30 | Occupational Therapists | 15 |
| | | Psychotherapists | 1 |
| Nurses and Midwives | | | |
| Nurses | 158 | | |
| Midwives | 19 | | |

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 postgraduate specialist training and registration.

Medical SAC

The SAC met sixteen times during 2007. The Committee has continued to accredit postgraduate training programmes proposed by the relevant Specialist Associations. The major training programmes have now been formulated and are being delivered to varying extent in the various specialities. The Training Programme in Family Medicine/General Practice was formally initiated in May 2007. This programme is currently responsible for 17 full-time general practice trainees. Certificates of Completion of Specialist training continue to be distributed. 224 CCSTs were issued in 2007. The SAC worked closely with the Medical Council so that the Specialist Registers were put online for the first time in October 2007. This innovation has been very well received by members of the public and other interested parties. The SAC website including relevant information can be accessed at <http://www.sahha.gov.mt/pages.aspx?page=76>.

During 2007, the Chairman and members of the SAC worked closely with the Ministry of Health in order to facilitate the planning, organisation and delivery of formal structured training programmes. This cumulated in

a successful workshop in November 2007 which agreed the structure and organisation of the specialist training programmes. A call for the employment of training co-ordinators has subsequently been issued, and junior doctor/trainee recruitment into the training programmes will commence in 2008.

Dental SAC

The Dental SAC met four times in 2007. Certificates of Completion of Specialist Training were distributed. The Specialist Lists in the two dental specialities were put online on the webpage of the Medical Council. No new applications for entry to the Specialist Lists in oral surgery and orthodontics were received in 2007. Training programmes were formulated by the Dental Association of Malta and approved by the SAC.

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. The Secretariat is provided by staff from the Office of the Director General (PHR).

Twinning Light Project Free Movement of Healthcare Professionals

The Office of Director General (PHR) has successfully acquired funds for a Twinning Light project within the Transitional Facility Programme 2006 for Malta. The aim of the project is to seek assistance from a Member State 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 Union Directive in an effective and efficient manner, and to inform and educate healthcare professionals on the associated issues. Bidding for the project was launched in December 2007 and the project will be implemented in 2008. A preliminary seminar was held to introduce the project to members of the Regulatory Councils.

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 (PHR). Over 180 proposals for projects were submitted from clinical chairmen, consultants, senior registrars and principal medical officers in February 2007. Final reports will be submitted by the end of February 2008. Project reports for 2006 were assessed according to published criteria.

Patient Safety Initiative

The Ministry of Health has become a signatory to the World Alliance for Patient Safety which is a WHO initiative. This initiative aims to promote a culture of safety within the healthcare system and to develop mechanisms enhancing patient safety. With this aim, the Ministry is committed to reduce healthcare associated infections. A concerted campaign on hand hygiene within hospitals and health centres was initiated in 2007. This included a study of facilities and observational studies. A poster competition was held with the participation of healthcare professionals. The four winning posters will be amongst a series of informative posters to be placed in healthcare facilities in order to remind both patients and staff on key

messages on hand hygiene. Further work will include a study of knowledge and attitudes of healthcare professionals, and targeted educational events, and further observational studies.

LEGAL UNIT

The main role of this office is to provide legal assistance to the administration, especially in the drafting of regulations, guidelines and laws. This section also deals with court cases instituted against the Division or which the Division itself institutes against third parties. Furthermore, this section gives legal advice to healthcare administrators and employees of the Division.

The following cases are being dealt with:

| | |
|------------------------------|----|
| Civil Court First Hall | 37 |
| Court of Magistrates (Malta) | 2 |
| Court of Appeal – Superior | 3 |
| Court of Magistrates (Gozo) | 1 |
| Small Claims Tribunal | 1 |
| Civil Arbitration | 1 |

Others

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|-----|
| Judicial Letters (Court of Magistrates) | 60 |
| Affidavits | 490 |
| Judicial letters (Superior Court) | 36 |
| Finalised Cases | 8 |
| Garnishee Order | 18 |

DEPARTMENT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

The Department for Environmental Health promotes and safeguards the well-being and health of the public from adverse environmental effects.

This Department, within the Public Health Regulatory Division, took over most of the functions of the Department of Public Health as from September 2007; however all statistical information contained in this report reflects the work performed by each section throughout 2007. The Department provides its services through the following three main sections, namely:

- *Health Inspectorate Services*: the executive arm of this Department. It provides its service through the Administration Unit; Citations Unit; Complaints Administration Unit; Regional Units; the Port Health Services; the Food Safety Unit; Environmental Health Unit (including the Pest Control Services); the Burials Administration Unit; the Drug Control Unit; Institutional Health Inspectorate Unit; and the Food Safety Commission Secretariat.
- *Port Health Medical Services*: primarily has the duty of border control from infectious diseases.
- *Public Health Laboratory Service*: provides technical and scientific support to the investigations performed by all the branches/units within the Department.

HEALTH INSPECTORATE SERVICES

Administration Unit

The Unit co-ordinates all work between regional offices, units and branches, replies to parliamentary questions, issues the relevant memos and correspondence, processes contraventions and is also responsible for procurement/distribution of equipment to all staff. Regions/units/sections that fall under the

responsibility of the Manager Health Inspector (MHI) are monitored, controlled and advised through this office, to provide consistency at work.

Citations Unit

During the year, 40 health sittings were held in Valletta. The total number of cases heard by the presiding Magistrate was 1,850 (cases may be heard more than once during the year) of which 274 were decided. Total number of new cases during 2007 amounted to 154, while 10 on-site inquiries were held; a total number of 406 charges were issued.

The number of health sittings appointed to be heard in Gozo was eight. The number of cases heard by the presiding Magistrate and decided was two (these were pending cases brought forward from 2006) while another case of 2007 is still pending.

Complaints Administration Unit

The total number of complaints as lodged with this Unit amounted to a total of 6,212, of which 5,338 were on environmental matters, 874 food related.

Regional Units

Environmental Health Officers have been deployed to work within six regional units around Malta and one in Gozo. The Health Inspectorate functions within a Quality Service Charter with respect to the service offered to the public. The services offered by the Health Inspectorate Services included:

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Inspections in connection with Licensing | 538 |
| Undertakings (re Article 39 of the Food Safety Act of 2002) | 187 |
| Inspections for Risk Assessment Grading purposes | 5,111 |
| Inspections of food premises (other than Risk Assessment) | 2,840 |
| Samples taken during inspections of food premises | 431 |
| Samples taken in connection with environmental issues | 2,034 |
| Samples taken in connection with sampling programmes | 857 |
| Samples taken in connection with food poisonings | 833 |
| Nuisance reports | 864 |
| Inspections re food poisoning | 156 |
| Inspections to verify immunisation of children | 260 |
| Complaints – food related | 874 |
| Complaints – environment related | 5,338 |

The Food Items destroyed during 2007 and the charges issued by the Health Inspectorate are summarised in the following tables:

| Type of food | Quantity/Weight |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Meat & Meat Products | 6,379.275 kgs |
| Fish & Fish Products | 609.06 kgs |
| Dairy Products | 253.06 kgs |
| Confectionery & Bakery Goods | 260 kgs |
| Vegetable & Fruits | 10.53 kgs |
| Savouries & Sweets | 1,044.087 kgs |
| Juices & Beverages including powdered drinks | 1,114.5 kgs |
| Additives & Additional Ingredients | 82.9 kgs |
| Sauces | 37.392 kgs |
| Ice cubes | 20 kgs |
| Tinned foodstuffs | 7 kgs |
| Food contact material | 25 kgs |
| Canned foods | 330 kgs |
| Pasta | 3.65 kgs |
| Milk (raw; unpasteurised) | >4,000 lts |

| Breakdown of the Number of Charges Issued during 2007 | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Food Hygiene Regulations of 2002 | 154 |
| Code of Police Laws | 101 |
| Food Safety Act of 2002 | 63 |
| Labelling, Presentation and Advertising of Foodstuffs (Amendment) Regulations | 21 |
| Registration of Food Premises Regulations | 23 |
| Registration of Food Handlers Regulations | 14 |
| Sausages, Salted Meat and Other Prepared Meat Regulations | 4 |
| Smoking in premises open to the Public Regulations | 12 |
| Public Health Act | 3 |
| Regulations respecting the construction of houses and drains | 6 |
| Dairy Farms Regulations | 1 |
| Control of Legionella Regulations 2006 | 1 |
| Use of fuel in Bakeries Regulations | 3 |
| Total | 406 |

Port Health Services

Activities of Port Health Office, Health Inspectorate Services, Floriana

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Inspections of marine crafts requested by Malta Maritime Authority | 25 |
| Inspection of refrigerated vehicles requested by Commissioner of Police | 85 |
| Repatriation of human remains | 121 |
| Burial at sea | 1 |
| Processing of requests in respect of import declaration of foodstuffs | 12,987 |
| Processing of requests for importation of pharmaceuticals and allied products | 5,027 |
| Issuing of Deratting Exemption Certificates * | 129 |
| Ship Sanitation Control Certificate ** | 88 |
| Ship Sanitation Exemption Control Certificate ** | 71 |
| Total issuing of Ship Sanitation Certificate ** | 159 |
| Number of Inspections of Catering Establishments and Warehouses | 114 |
| Samples taken of imported items of food | 101 |
| Health/Radiation free Certificates issued | 529 |
| Undertakings | 56 |
| Inspections of incoming consignments | 484 |
| Destruction Certificates for unfit food | 3 |
| Registration of trader's application | 65 |

* For the period 1 January to 14 June 2007

** On 15 June 2007 the International Health Regulation 2005 came into force. The Deratting and Deratting Exemption Certificate was substituted by the Ship Sanitation Certificate.

The Port Health Medical Services were offered from the Floriana Port Health Office and Malta International Airport Health Clinic (Gudja) and the Yacht Marina Health Guard premises.

Activities of Port Medical Services

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|--------|
| Number of ships granted <i>pratique</i> | 12,912 |
| Number of yachts | 2,510 |
| Ship disembarking sick or injured | 37 |
| Medical advice to ships | 41 |
| Examinations of irregular immigrants at sea | 1,702 |

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.

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------|
| Sick/injured travellers seen | 1,097 |
| Sick/injured employees seen | 3,321 |
| Passengers referred to SLH/Mater Dei Hospital | 217 |

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 – 74;
- issuing approvals connected with: Trade Licences (TLU) - 331; MEPA applications – 203; and Malta Tourism Authority applications - 110; Police Department (Temporary Licences) – 2; and the Health Department (SPH Licences) – 36;
- total number of applications for 2007 – 682;
- total number of inspections performed during 2007 – 1,099.

Environmental Health Unit

The main functions of this Unit included:

- investigation of complaints originating from noise pollution, air pollution and mobile phones' antennae;
- co-ordination of programmes for the monitoring, assessing and controlling environmental parameters which pose a threat to human health;
- producing reliable and standardised information for those concerned with further development of various country policies, which may affect public health;
- acting 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;
- registering of 16 Private Water Suppliers for 18 sources as per LN 357 of 2004;
- taking of 2,313 bathing water samples in collaboration with the Regional Health Officers and the Public Health Laboratory (87 official bathing sites were monitored);
- issuing of 5 health warnings in respect of bathing water sites (199 site days closed);
- registering of 282 swimming pools in accordance with LN 129 of 2005;
- performing 37 audit inspections of swimming pools;
- registering of 9 premises with respect to Cooling Towers as per LN 6 of 2006;
- performing 46 audit inspections re *legionella* control as per LN 5 of 2006;
- issuing of 83 abatement notices under the Public Health Act; and
- issuing of 28 undertakings.

Pest Control Services within the Environmental Health Unit

The Pest Control Section deployed two teams of operatives in Malta; 178,240 point baits and 4,788 sewers were baited.

Burials Administration Unit

The Burials Administration Unit was responsible for the running of Addolorata, Żebbuġ, Mosta, Burmarrad, Rabat, Mellieħa and Ta' Braxia Cemeteries. Burials carried out at government cemeteries were 1,448 in Addolorata and 273 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 and maintenance of Clinics, Laboratories, Radiology Departments, Blood Banks and Tattooists in terms of the Medical & Kindred Professions Ordinance and the Control of Tattooing Act.

During 2007 the following new licences were issued:

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Chiropody Clinics | 1 |
| Dental Clinics | 1 |
| Physiotherapy Clinics | 3 |
| Tattooists | 4 |
| X-Ray Department | 1 |

The figures below show the number of clinics registered with the Department by the end of 2007.

| | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| Acupuncture Clinics | 2 |
| Chiropody Clinics | 6 |
| Dental Clinics | 94 |
| Medical Diagnostic Laboratories | 6 |
| Physiotherapy Clinics | 14 |
| Radiology Departments | 17 |
| Tattooists | 19 |

A total of 24,222 Control Cards were issued during 2007.

Institutional Health Inspectorate Unit

The aim of the Unit is to work with that part of the community, which at some point in time is institutionalised or is frequenting some form of institution, by regulating the public health standards of these institutions.

This Unit carried out the following:

- 166 inspections in government hospitals;
- 442 food swab/samples and 578 service/other water samples were taken for analysis;
- 12 Planning Authority files relating to the construction/alterations of both new and existing institutions were dealt with during 2007;
- 7 outbreaks were investigated in institutions;
- 22 inspections were performed in Old People's Homes with respect to renewal of licence for 2006;
- 398 risk assessment inspections were performed in various institutions;
- 2 undertakings were issued.

Food Safety Commission Secretariat (FSCS)

The Food Safety Commission Secretariat was set up on 26 April 2004. During 2007, there are 7,784 food businesses registered on the new system. The number of food handlers registered and issued with the required document, during the year was 6,683.

Present number of registered food handlers amounts to 26,317, of which 3,298 are in category A whilst 23,019 in category B. The total number of food handlers cards issued so far including renewals is 40,243.

During the year, six new Food Hygiene Course Providers (FHCP) have been authorised by the unit. Presently there are 38 FHCPs individuals or organisations approved to provide food hygiene courses.

Registered cheeselets producers still stands at 1,300 as no new registrations were received during 2007

The FSCS is entrusted with the daily checking of all notifications received by e-mail from the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) of the European Union network. During 2007, the Secretariat has

checked almost 966 notifications, tables and other communication; an average of more than 81 e-mails per month.

PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY

The Public Health Laboratory continued to provide the vital technical back-up service for the whole department. This laboratory examined a total number of 7,139 samples. 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 | 466 |
| Water for Chemical Analysis | 1,021 |
| Food for Microbiological Analysis | 1,414 |
| Samples (Environmental Swabs) for Hygienic Standard | 465 |
| Water for Microbiological Analysis | 3,677 |
| Clinical samples for Microbiological Analysis | 96 |
| Total | 7,139 |

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES STANDARDS

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Health Care Services Standards (DHCSS) was officially established as a new Department within the Directorate General Public Health Regulation on 18 September 2007, with the appointment of the Director DHCSS.

Previous to the above date, the core licensing process was within the remit of the Department of Institutional Health and it encompassed the licensing of private and church homes for older persons as well as private clinics and hospitals.

This licensing process is now part of the responsibility of DHCSS but its breadth and scope have expanded with the added responsibilities specific to this new Department's portfolio as will be explained in the sections to follow.

OVERALL PURPOSE

The principal purpose for the Department for Health Care Services Standards is to achieve improvement in the Quality of Care and ensure Patient Safety through Regulation. Patient safety is of paramount priority as there cannot be quality of care without patient safety and this principle will be foremost in view when planning all the Department's activities in the years to come.

REMIT

The remit of the Department's regulatory jurisdiction is as extensive as our national health care services and can be classified into the following four main sectors where health care services are delivered:

- Clinics and Hospitals including for the first time Public Hospitals;
- Homes for Older Persons including for the first time Government Homes;
- Primary Health Care including for the first time all the service providers in this sector – public and private;
- Blood Transfusion services – including the National Blood Establishment and Blood Banks (public and private), and services involving Tissues and Cells – also all new territory for licensing as per conformity with the transposed EU Directives.

The above-mentioned four main health care services sectors are to be regulated by DHCSS with an overlapping central area representing Quality of Care improvement and guaranteeing Patients Safety as the main focus.

The extensiveness of this territory to be regulated, requests a proportionate and proper investment in capacity building to enable this new Department to discharge its functions in a proper and timely manner.

Cognisant of the main objective of improving health care services in the Maltese Islands, the Department of Health Care Services Standards embraces the following mission, aim, vision, principles and values:

- **Mission:** to regulate for improvement.
- **Vision:** ensure that care services should, improve people's lives, be accessible and timely, support independence and offer choice.
- **Aim:** to raise standards of care by involving people who are cared for, their carers and families, and working with people who provide care both in the public and private sector.
- **Principles:** embraced by DHCSS are, keeping people safe, promoting dignity and choice and finally but not least support independence.
- **Values:** being people centred, transparent and accessible and finally be rigorous and fair, and actively involved to change for the better.

MAIN STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AREAS

This new Department's strategic objectives can be grouped into the following four main strategic development areas of:

- **Consolidation** of the core regulatory functions which are already being offered.
- **Expansion** on the existing core functions to assume added responsibilities and expand into areas of health care as yet not being regulated.
- **Development** on the existing regulatory competencies and embark into new regulatory services.
- **Diversification** to venture into new territory and regulate novel sectors of health care services.

In each strategic development area, a set of specific task-based objectives and activities will be listed, which have already been achieved or have been initiated in the last quarter of 2007, to ensure Patient Safety and Quality of Care.

Consolidation

- *Furtherance of the licensing process of the homes for older persons*, which are run by the private and the Church: There are 28 of these homes in Malta and Gozo, and their scheduled inspections have continued during 2007 to ensure standards of care are being upheld. For each home, the yearly licence will be issued by the Minister of Health, the Elderly and Community Care, after DHCSS has presented the inspection report for each of these homes, with specific recommendations for the amelioration of service provision.
- *Participation in the Leonardo IV, European programme involving mobility of professionals* - to increase staff competences in the regulation of health care services. During 2007, DHCSS has continued participating in a collaborative project led by the Centre Hospitalier Intercommunal du Pays des Hautes Falaises de Fecamp, Normandy France, on the theme of *Prévention des Chutes: Fall's Prevention*. It is planned that a group from Normandy will be coming over to Malta during 2008 to demonstrate appropriate techniques in handling patients and elderly alike. Their visit to Malta will be jointly co-ordinated by DHCSS and the Directorate for Nursing Standards so as to maximise effective benefits to a wider audience of local participants in the workshops that are envisaged to be planned. Building on this concerted platform, it is planned that DHCSS will continue this collaboration with a view to sending local personnel to be trained as assessors in the use of the EVA method as part of the planned Leonardo V. The EVA method refers to a holistic method of inspecting homes for older persons developed by the Comte Européen pour le Développement de l'Integration Sociale.

- Continued to encourage and engage in *ongoing research* such as action research studies on special themes for each year's inspections. During 2007 the special theme was Social Integration of Homes for Older Persons. This theme was developed and adapted from the EVA method mentioned above. During the previous year the special research theme was Fire Safety in Homes for Older Persons. A collaborative initiative between DHCSS and Civil Protection was initiated in the last quarter of 2007 to plan to address the concerns and preoccupations regarding this safety issue that concerns residents in our homes.
- *Furtherance of the licensing process of the private clinics and private hospitals:* There are 12 of these private clinics/hospitals, and their scheduled inspections have continued during 2007 to ensure standards of care are being upheld. For each clinic/hospital, the yearly licence will be issued by the Minister of Health, the Elderly and Community Care, after DHCSS has presented the inspection report for each of these entities, with specific recommendations for the amelioration of service provision.
- During 2007, partly because of human resources constraints subsequent to St Luke's Hospital migration process to Mater Dei Hospital, external professional services to augment DHCSS's Inspectorate Team were engaged. In the future it is planned that more external professionals will be contracted to develop an independent core Inspection Team that will eventually be utilised to inspect government entities such as public hospitals and government homes for older persons.

Also for the same reason, DHCSS collaborated with the Directorate of Nursing Standards to augment its Inspection Team to visit the homes for older persons and clinics/hospitals for licensing purposes during 2007. This inter-directorate synergy is a step towards more transverse collaboration, which adds more value to the inspection process.

- One of the first initiatives of DHCSS was to organise a meeting with MEPA representatives to streamline the MEPA consultation process in proposals concerning homes for older persons and clinics/hospitals, to safeguard the interest of service users especially of older persons by guaranteeing standards even at this planning phase. A standard operation procedure was agreed to with a strong spirit of collaboration between these two government entities. During 2007, DHCSS continued to proffer its recommendations to MEPA's consultation process as regards the proposals of building new homes for older persons and private clinics/hospitals.
- Also DHCSS, in collaboration with the Parliamentary Secretariat for the Elderly, continued with pre-consultation discussions with private entrepreneurs interested in submitting proposals to build new homes for older persons and private clinics/hospitals.
- Collaboration with the Director for Elderly Care also continued as part of the screening process in the Private Public Partnership (PPP) scheme. DHCSS screens and actively engages in a propitious process to ameliorate the conditions of care in the Homes from which Government considers buying beds for older persons under the PPP scheme.
- As part of DHCSS's responsibility to facilitate communication and ensure ongoing consultation with all stakeholders especially external ones, a new initiative was embarked upon – namely active discussions with the just newly set-up umbrella organisation Malta Health Network (<http://mrc.org.mt>). DHCSS will be building on previous consultation initiatives such as the healthy links which already exist with Kunsill Nazzjonali Anzjani to be receptive to these well articulated expectations of all healthcare service users. For DHCSS, the patient's perspective and the journey they navigate through the healthcare system are very important.
- DHCSS continues to be actively engaged in the Mellieħa Government Home Liaison Committee set up with both government and Vassallo Builders representatives to steer this Private Public Partnership Project to completion according to the set timetable. DHCSS's input is to ensure that standards are upheld in this model government home for older persons.
- Also DHCSS continues to be actively engaged in the focus groups set up for feedback and consultation for the improvements of the Primary Health Care sector and Community Care. DHCSS has the remit to license these services and furthermore ensure a seamless transition of the service user's pathway from Community/Primary Health Care to Institutional/Hospital Care.

- DHCSS closely continues to collaborate with the Data Protection Commissioner's Office to ensure that all the collected data is according to the Data Protection Act. The Consultant in Public Health within DHCSS has been nominated as Data Protection Officer.
- DHCSS is networking with Management Efficiency Unit (MEU) to collate results of benchmarking exercises that has already been done, comparing government, private and church homes for older persons. This is essential to set a benchmark so that DHCSS could monitor trends in the quality of service being provided.
- DHCSS continues to investigate and act on service users' complaints. These reports need to be subject to a structured analysis which takes into account the wider factors within the organisation which may have given rise to the complaint. This is 'root cause analysis', a process that allows all of the factors which might have contributed to an event to be identified and analysed. Human resource capacity build-up is planned to enable DHCSS to continue to discharge this and all the other obligations in a timely and appropriate manner.
- DHCSS continues to be actively engaged in the Medical Devices Alert cascade. It is subsequent to the close collaborative networking between DHCSS, the Director of Procurement and the Malta Standards Authority that we could contribute jointly to this 'engineered safety devices' structured approach as per EU Directives.

Expansion

There are eight government homes for older persons in Malta, and in the last quarter of 2007 a roll-out plan for their scheduled inspections was drawn up. In close collaboration with the Director for Elderly Care, for the first time these homes will be inspected to be licensed to ensure standards of care are being upheld. For each home, the yearly licence will be issued by the Minister of Health, the Elderly and Community Care, after DHCSS presents the inspection report for each of these homes, with specific recommendations for the amelioration of service provision. This is the first in a series of initiatives that are planned so that DHCSS will be eventually licensing all institutions for the elderly including St Vincent de Paule Residence.

During 2007, invaluable work has continued within the National Standards for Elderly Care Committee (NSECC). The prime thrust of this multi-sectoral working group is to establish a national benchmark of caring staff ratio as related to the number of residents taking also into consideration the dependency levels of residents. The various instruments measuring this ratio with such an important impact on the quality of care deliverance have been piloted, with the next step being a gap analysis to study the impact of implementing this ratio on human resource capacity needs. This gap analysis has already been conducted and finalised during 2007 for the physical standards as applicable to the government homes.

DHCSS has close collaborative links with the geriatricians and discussions have been planned to start addressing the sensitive issue of dementia care and how standards will need to be applied, keeping in mind the demographic shift in the population and the ever-increasing cohort of this group of older persons requiring extra attention by carers.

Development

With the steering initiative of DHCSS, an Inter-departmental Working Committee - involving the Director of Health Information and Research, the Director of Implementation and Monitoring and the Head Financial Monitoring and Control has been set up to ensure that the granularity and content of the data collection especially at Mater Dei e.g. in the Hospital Activity Analysis, will enable effective monitoring and auditing by the development of clinical performance indicators.

One of the main remits of this Working Committee will be to increase the scope of the data being collected to meet national and international imperatives for health care planning. Furthermore the active participation of DHCSS will ensure that such data could be transformed into information for quality monitoring as well as analysis of performance indicators.

This inter-departmental collaboration augers well for the development, hopefully in the near future, of a National Strategic Plan on Health Information that will be considering European initiatives such as the Minimum Hospital Data Set and Systems Health Accounts.

Diversification

This strategic developmental area of diversification for DHCSS is imminently essential to satisfy the EU legal obligations emergent from the transposition into Maltese legal framework of the EU Blood and Blood Components Directive as well as the Tissues and Cells Directive.

Within days of its inception, DHCSS established a succinct roadmap in collaboration with the Medicines Authority for the setting up of the necessary mechanisms and structures to license the National Blood Transfusion Services as a Blood Establishment according to national legislation. The roadmap has been finalised and Irish experts are going to be brought over for the training of local staff and the licensing of the Blood Establishment.

Subsequent to the above, DHCSS has a plan for the second half of 2008 to build the appropriate mechanisms and structures to have the various blood banks assessed with an intention to regulate. Both private and public blood banks will be included in this regulatory framework.

DHCSS also drew up a concise plan in collaboration with the Medicines Authority to set up the haemovigilance system for the reporting and investigation of serious adverse events and reactions according to the specified EU Directives. It is envisaged that the Irish experts brought over for the licensing of the Blood Establishment would also tender advice in this specialised field, again to be in time for the next scheduled EU reporting timetable – namely June 2008. The co-ordination of this project is being done by a Public Health medical officer who is working in another department but is released one day per week to DHCSS. It is planned that haemovigilance would be incorporated in a national adverse events reporting system as part of a patient safety initiative.

DHCSS has already made key links with foreign experts to initiate the setting up of the mechanisms and structures to have the Stem Cell collection service providers assessed with an intention to inspect, regulate and license according to the Tissues and Cells EU Directive.

The literature research has already been effected, in collaboration with the Bioethics Consultative Committee, to identify the legal instrument for local adoption so as to set up the mechanisms and structures to have the privately run Fertility Clinic assessed with an intention to inspect, license and regulate according to the Tissues and Cells EU Directive.

DEPARTMENT FOR HEALTH PROMOTION AND DISEASE PREVENTION

The year 2007 proved to be a year of many changes when in September 2007 the Health Division was restructured as part of the health care reform. The new Department amalgamated the Disease Surveillance Unit, which formed part of the former Department of Public Health and the Department of Health Promotion. The Occupational Health Unit, which formed part of the Disease Surveillance Unit, now falls under the Primary Health Care Department.

The Department is divided in three sections:

- Health Promotion Unit (HPU)
- Infectious Disease Prevention and Control Unit (IDCU)
- Non Communicable Disease Prevention and Control unit (NCCU).

HEALTH PROMOTION UNIT (HPU)

Projects and Initiatives

National Anti-Obesity Campaign

The Anti-Obesity Campaign, *Hfief u b'Sahhitna tul Hajjitna*, that was launched on 22 May consolidated all key national initiatives and programmes that were held in the area of healthy eating and physical activity spanning the past 15 years. A budget of approx. €50,000 was allocated for this campaign which received broad media coverage.

Three main messages, represented in colourful posters, stem from this campaign:

- Need for daily physical activity in childhood to prevent overweight and obesity.
- Adults are encouraged to check their BMI regularly and to take necessary action by consulting their family doctor; an informative booklet on how to calculate the BMI was also printed.
- Persons with BMI > 30 are advised to enrol in the Weight Reduction Clinics run by the National Health Service.

As part of this national campaign, a three-gate leaflet that focuses directly on how to measure one's own body mass index and entitled *Is your weight telling you something* (also Maltese version) was published.

A brief description about the Weight Reduction Classes with data covering the period 2000-2006 was also prepared for the press release.

DAFNE V Project

The DAFNE V project 2004-2007 gave Malta the opportunity to monitor time trends in Malta's food availability, as well as compare with data collected in the other DAFNE countries. The analysed data were based on the 1994, 1995 and 2000 Household Budgetary Surveys. In this past year, work included amongst others, attendance of the Final Plenary Meeting of the DAFNE V project (Ljubljana, Slovenia), the harmonisation of the Food Classification Tables and the Socioeconomic Tables; regular checking of the project's financials; the finalisation of the results, the writing of the final country report and, following its revision, the translation of the final report into the Maltese language.

Inter-sectoral Committee to Counteract Obesity

Further to the Anti-Obesity Campaign, an Inter-sectoral Committee has been set up. The committee will address the main determinants of obesity and each sector will assist in the creation of policies and structures for the improvement of the health and well-being of Maltese citizens. The Department assisted the DGH in drawing up terms of reference for the committee as well as identifying the key stakeholders. Two staff members of HPDP attended the two meetings and their work plays a key role in this committee.

Shape Up Project

The following Shape Up schools held a week of activities as part of their commitment to the project.

- St Joseph School, Blata l-Bajda: seminar for parents, *Towards a Healthy Lifestyle*; aerobics for parents; traditional games and sports jamboree; daily fruit and fruit smoothies for pupils; healthy breakfast; outdoor activities including orienteering and body movement.
- St Paul's Bay Primary School: a day of games and physical activity for children; tasting healthy options for breakfast, snacks and packed lunch; preparation of food by parents and children; talk for parents on healthy eating for schoolchildren.

- St Benedict College: A day of activities bringing together the other schools of the college, to discuss, learn and experience healthier options; sports day; talks for parents and sampling of healthy food.

First Synchronised Breastfeeding Record for Malta

Following an invitation and various meetings held with the Malta Breastfeeding Foundation, preparatory work took place to organise an event to set up a worldwide and local record for synchronised breastfeeding in Malta. The event took place on August 8, and 82 mothers breastfed their infants between 10.00am and 10.01am at the Out-patients Department, Mater Dei Hospital, Tal-Qroqq. HPD also took care of the photography and the filming of the event. Following the event, a report and a newspaper article were prepared and reviewed by all the three collaborators (i.e. HPD, MBF and MDH).

Healthy Employees in Healthy Organisations

All the HPD staff took an active part during a Seminar on Workplace Health Promotion (WPHP), held on 29 April at the Le Meridien Hotel, St Julians. The aim was to introduce the concepts of Workplace Health Promotion to human resource managers representing local companies.

Two guest speakers from Germany addressed the audience. Dr Alfons Schroerer from BBK (major health insurance company) presented what his company is doing in the area of WPHP, while Dr Ewe Brandenburg from Volkswagen explained how the company practises Health Promotion. An officer from the Department gave a brief overview of the local current situation and how the HPD plans to take the WPHP initiative forward.

Health Weeks at Actavis and Baxter

A health week was organised at two companies employing over 500 workers. This involved taking BMIs and giving nutritional advice to the factory employees during their break times. Employees also had the opportunities to ask queries about Sexual Health. Printable material was distributed and some employees were also referred for STI testing at the GU clinic. Other workers were given advice on how to quit smoking and were encouraged to participate in the Smoking Cessation Classes. Carbon monoxide testing was carried out as well. Large banners were put up to show the services offered by the Department.

Health Promotion in Schools

A healthy day was held at Maria Bambina Primary C, Mellieħa. Parents and teachers helped the children to prepare a healthy breakfast. The HPD found sponsors for the food items and a donation of Lm100 worth of physical training equipment to the school. The Minister of Health spoke with the parents and visited the classes where the children were having breakfast. An HPD officer gave a presentation on the parents' role in creating a healthier environment in the home, making the healthy choice easier for all the family.

Tobacco Initiatives

Throughout 2007, major tobacco initiatives focused mainly on:

- Protection of non-smokers, through the giving of special advice, guidance and awareness on this effect;
- Education and support with the aim of decreasing prevalence of smokers through various health initiatives in the community, schools, workplaces and healthcare settings.

World No Tobacco Day

- *Press Conference to celebrate, World No Tobacco Day on 31 May 2006 with a difference...* : The event was held at Maria Bambina Primary School C, Mellieħa. The focus of this year's celebration was *Smoke-Free Environments*. The Department joined the initiative of the WHO. In Malta, legislation and

the smoking ban in public are already in place. Consequently, in order to enhance further and bring about more awareness on the harm that is caused by passive smoking, the Department focused on the education of and promotion of 'smoke free cars' and 'smoke free homes'.

One of the ways to get the message across is through education. Thus children, in collaboration with their teachers and the Department, organised a concert and were involved in activities that reflected anti smoking. The programme also included a presentation on tobacco and the services offered by the Department. Printed promotional material on passive smoking in the car and in a home setting were given out. Inflated balloons with information on the Quitline and a poster *Vizzju Valenuż* were also available. A banner to mark WNTD was created and displayed during the event.

- *Press Conference to present the results of the CO mets study Carbon Monoxide measure of exposure to tobacco smoke:* As part of its ongoing efforts to combat tobacco, the Department is engaged in *Help For a Life without Tobacco*, an EU campaign that was developed as a specific way to engage audiences in the 27 Member States, now in its third year. A press conference was held at Radisson SAS Baypoint Resort, St Julians on 5 November 2007. The Help-COmet campaign based on enabling citizens to measure their tobacco-related carbon monoxide concentration in exhaled air provided an interactive method to allow people to come to a personal realization of the effects of tobacco smoke in their health.

The results of the study were presented in which Malta was shown to have had a considerable participation in the campaign and ranked third in terms of number of measurements per 100,000 inhabitants.

HELP Campaign and Co testing

An anti-smoking tent was set up at various public and educational places. These included Carnival in Valletta, 31 May World No Tobacco Day, Luqa and Mġarr Primary Schools. The public was informed about the dangers of smoking, passive smoking and encouraged to quit. Carbon monoxide testing was also carried out and smokers were encouraged to start attending Smoking Cessation Classes organised by the Department.

Youth manifesto Press Conference

As part of its ongoing efforts to combat tobacco, the Department attended a press conference where the final Youth manifesto document was presented to the Minister of Health. The Department is the major contributor to the HELP campaign. During the conference a representative from the EU Commission gave a brief overview of the campaign and the benefits of a *Life without Tobacco*. Recommendations for the best way forward to a smoke-free environment were also presented.

Malta Medical Students Association (MMSA)

The Department works in close collaboration with the MMSA. Following consultations and support, the students gave anti tobacco talks at the Junior Lyceum and at other four primary schools. The number of students that were reached through educational talks at primary level amounted to over 500 together with a considerable number of students at the Junior Lyceum.

Continuous Professional Education for Healthcare Providers

Presentations for healthcare providers working within cardiology and other departments were given at St Luke's Hospital.

Workplace

Another initiative to encourage quitting was reach-out at workplaces with the aim of reaching a wider spectrum of the smokers and hopefully decrease the prevalence of smoking. Education, information,

advice and guidance on the effects of tobacco on health were given. Also assistance on quitting that was adapted according to age groups, settings and covered various sectors. During these events, carbon monoxide testing was also carried out and tobacco exhibitions put up. This initiative was offered to five different work places with a total of 25 sessions consisting of two hours each time. Workplaces that were visited included the hospitality industry and factories. In order to motivate participation one of the programmes was named the *Winning Ways Initiative*.

Community

A stand was put up in the grounds of Mater Dei Hospital during the open weekend Health Festival Fair held to inaugurate the official opening of the new hospital. Large canvas anti tobacco banners and boards were put up in the stand. That covered campaigns and services offered by the Department. Carbon monoxide testing was also offered. An initiative that was created was that young people were encouraged to write messages against tobacco on a large piece of cloth. The finished product is being used as a declaration to encouraging peers not to start smoking. A similar banner was made available to smokers who had kicked the habit. Balloons with the Quit-line logo were also distributed to the children.

The Department participated at the International Fair of Malta in collaboration with the HELP and carried out carbon monoxide testing.

Presentations that were followed by a discussion on tobacco issues were given at different centres. These included Mosta, Qormi, Iklin, Mellieħa ladies circle or parent groups.

Institutional Mental Health and Rehabilitation

Another anti-tobacco initiative has been the extension of service, for persons who are encountering psychological and social problems living in an institution and/or within the community. Awareness and cessation talks/presentations were delivered at YMCA, Access, Fejda, Mount Carmel Hospital day centre, Jean Antide Home, Richmond Foundation, Dar Qalb ta' Ġesu' and Cospicua Mental Health day centre.

United Nations Road Safety Week

This first of its type initiative which was held between 23 and 29 April, was called for in the 2005 UN General Assembly resolution A/60/5 on Improving Global Road Safety. Young people constitute a major risk group on the road. Thus the theme for this year was Young Road Users.

Local activities included:

- Press conference held at Maria Immaculata Primary School C, Cospicua. The schoolyard was changed into a real life scenario where children met various situations that they would normally meet on the road.
- Demonstration by the police to children on Road Safety in various schools.
- Posters were designed and distributed to schools, police stations, post offices and other public places.
- Participation by young person to attend the Global Young People's Forum in Geneva during the same week.

Outreach Activities within the Community and Educational Fields

Education

Various school-based activities were carried out this year. These included presentations and activities in various settings: University, National Youth Day activities at MCAST, National Youth Council, St Martin's college, schools and hospital setting for healthcare providers. Throughout these events exhibitions were set up and posters and information leaflets were also distributed.

A new concept within the educational field was an event that was held at a primary school during the summer period. The event focused on healthy lifestyle that included tobacco. Education messages were passed on through the involvement of children in fun activities such as colouring, puzzle and anti tobacco games. Presentations on healthy lifestyles, for the older group were also included. Tobacco promotion material was distributed to the children at the end of the event. A large banner with anti smoking messages written by children was put up in the school grounds and left on display until the open day that was to be held at the school.

Sexual Health Initiatives

Community Support Services

During the year the Department focused mostly on sexually transmitted infections and parent-adolescent sexual health communication targeting three main groups - parents, young adults and persons receiving community support services.

Discussions with these population groups often focused on the prevention of STIs and STI testing, preventing unwanted pregnancy, assertiveness when communicating with partners and sexual health communication between parents and adolescents. A total of 32 outreach activities were carried out between January and December 2007 totalling approximately 175 hours of sexual health education. It is calculated that over 1,600 individuals benefited from these activities which were held at various locations.

Seminars in Social Institutions

A summer project was developed along with social workers and carers at Fejda and Jean Antide Homes focusing on sexuality and relationships education to young female residents. A series of six weekly seminars took place which proved successful amongst participants. During the last session the participants also presented four short enactments in which they demonstrated the knowledge and skills learnt. It is intended that this project be repeated next summer.

STI Testing Initiative

As of June 06, as an initiative to encourage people to go for STI testing, the sexual health helpline not only gave people the details of the GU clinic but also started acting as a bridge between the clients and the clinic. Through collaboration with the GU clinic, clients can leave their contact details with the officer in charge of the helpline who would in turn inform the clinic to get back to the client. Clients' feedback to this arrangement has been positive since many distrusted the answering machine when they call the clinic.

World AIDS Day

A press conference was held on 30 December at a post secondary school. The HPDP launched the ABCD campaign – Abstain, Be faithful, Use Condoms, Don't do drugs with the slogan *My body. My right. My say* for this year. A calendar was distributed during outreach sessions in schools and the community.

Physical Activity Initiatives

Kun Aktiv Kuljum

A campaign bearing the name, *Kun Aktiv Kuljum* was launched during December with the aim of reminding people that even though Christmas was being celebrated, one should still find some time every day to do some exercise. The press release also included a Physical Activity Pyramid with the aim of summarising many basic facts on physical activity. The pyramid has been published on large posters which should prove

useful for school education. The press were also informed about a new specialised service through a new helpline (Be Active Helpline) that is being offered to people requesting information on physical activity.

A new service that will be offered for free as from 2008 involves providing aerobics classes to the general public (males and females, from ages of 20 onwards). Preparations for this national project are currently underway and being concluded with the *Kunsill Malti għall-iSport* and Floriana Local Council. A pilot project will first be held at Floriana.

Agreement between HPDP & Kunsill Malti għall-iSport

An agreement was drafted between the Department and the *Kunsill Malti għall-iSport* which binds the *Kunsill* to recruit and pay the aerobics instructors that will be providing free aerobics classes to the general public. The Department's role will be to process the application forms (all participants are required to present a medical clearance certificate, immaterial of their age and condition of health).

Malta International Trade Fair

The HPD participated in the Trade Fair. This year, the Department focused on healthy eating as its main target. A number of services were offered including BMI, blood pressure, glucose monitoring and carbon monoxide testing. Healthy food was prepared on the stand and visitors had the opportunity of tasting it. Thousands of leaflets were distributed throughout the whole event.

The Department also supported the Nursing Department in its initiative to recruit new nurses and encouraged former nurses to return to their careers.

Mater Dei Open Weekend

A stand was put up in the grounds of Mater Dei Hospital during the open weekend Health Festival Fair held to inaugurate the official opening of the new hospital. Large canvas banners were put up in the stand covering the current campaigns and services offered by the Department. These included: Healthy Eating, Physical Activity, Tobacco, Alcohol Sun Awareness, and Sexual Health. Presentations on these topics were given by our officers.

Visitors were measured and weighed for their BMI and given advice accordingly. The officers who participated in the two day event also gave talks to groups of people. As in the other fair, the Department gave support to the Nursing Department.

Training in Health Promotion

- The Department was asked to lead train-the-trainers sessions organised for Girl Guide leaders entitled *Get Going*. The aim of the training was for Girl Guide leaders to be trained in Healthy Eating and Physical Activity to be able to pass on what they learnt to girls under their leadership.
- Parents were addressed at Ladies Circle Mosta and Qormi, St Augustine School, Rabat and Mtarfa Secondary schools, Gozo 6th Form.
- Young adults: Students were met at St Martins college, Erin Serracino Inglott Girls' Secondary School and Fra Diegu Bonanno Girls' Secondary School, MCAST during National Youth Day and World AIDS week, Higher Secondary (Naxxar) on World AIDS week, Junior College, University and Gozo 6th Form on World AIDS week. Other young adults were also met through the Mosta Girl guides, Baxter Ltd., and ST MicroElectronics.
- Persons receiving community support were met at St Anna rehabilitation home, *Future Focus Programme* (ETC), YMCA, Richmond Foundation, Programm Fejda and Jean Antide Children's Home.

- Other sessions were also held at AFM barracks and for PSD teachers at the Education Division, Floriana and Gozo secondary schools.
- Topics covered included areas such as Personal Hygiene and Personal Care, Women's Health, Nutrition and medical conditions (diabetes, hypertension and hypercholesterolemia) and various other subjects as requested. The range of settings for such activities was varied and included presentations at Mount Carmel Hospital, at activities organised by local councils, ladies' circles and shelter homes.
- A presentation on *healthy eating for school-age children* was delivered at a seminar for a group of PE teachers at Kordin Sports Complex organised by the Malta Sports Council.

Talks to the Elderly Living in the Community of Gozo

A series of four talks were made to four different groups of elderly citizens residing in different Gozitan localities attending once weekly at St Joseph's Home in Ghajnsielem, Gozo. Each talk tailored for the elderly, focused on healthy living with emphasis on a balanced diet (Mediterranean Diet) and regular physical activity.

Breastfeeding Week 2007

A presentation entitled *Healthy eating for you and your child* was delivered at Mater Dei Hospital during a seminar organised by the staff at the Breastfeeding Walk-in Clinic as part of the activities for this year's Breastfeeding Week. Various other talks were carried out in schools and in the community at large upon request by head of schools and organisations such as SDO, AZAD, CARITAS, parish centres and local councils.

Launch of NGO Website on Breast Cancer Awareness

The Department hosted a press conference with NGO to launch their website on breast awareness on 10 October.

Press Conference on Psoriasis

The Department hosted a press conference on psoriasis with psoriasis association on the 29 October 07 which was aimed to raise awareness on this condition.

Press Conference on Alcohol

A press conference was held in conjunction with Sedqa and MFSS re alcohol on 18 December 2007 with the aim of preventing injuries related to alcohol and encouraging responsible drinking.

Media

The Director and other departmental officials took part in numerous television and radio programmes and talk shows on a wide range of health topics. Articles dealing with other health aspects were published in local newspapers.

Various adverts on health promotional issues were published throughout the year. These were either advertised as billboards, publications, adverts in local newspapers, magazines, banners and TV and cinema clips.

The Director and staff members participated at various local meetings, conferences and seminars on topics including nutrition, cancer strategy and obesity among others.

Services Offered

Weight Reduction Programme

Reports of all the Weight Reduction Classes for all the months between January and August were completed. To date, some reports of weight reduction programmes September till December are still pending since they have not been submitted to the Department by some facilitators. Overall, 63 weight reduction classes were carried out in 2007 with a total average weight loss of 3 kgs.

National Quitline

Counselling through the Quitline is an ongoing process within the Department. On average, the Quitline answers to about three calls a day, averaging around 750 calls in a year. Callers are assessed on their readiness, motivation and given quitting guidance. Assisted by given brief suggestions, in a manner that is clear, strong, and personalised to the individual's situation. Depending on their requirements, smokers are offered referral to smoking cessation classes depending on their individual smoking habits and work schedule.

Smoking Cessation Clinics

Sixteen clinics were held throughout 2007 in Gzira, Poala, Vittoriosa (Aċċess), Floriana, B'Kara and Gozo. Three hundred and sixteen smokers applied for the clinics. Application forms can be processed directly through the internet, telephone or post.

One-to-One Counselling

One of the most effective way to help a person quit is one-to-one counselling that is usually done through an appointment; however due to the nature of the smoking cessation process, smokers were supported upon request. Throughout the year, 79 smokers received about one hour counselling at the Department. This was either followed up either by other additional appointments or through telephone calls. Counselling is also offered in sexual health, breast care and women's health, nutrition and weight management.

Meals Board

Several visits were carried out throughout 2007 to St Vincent De Paule Residence's kitchen and wards as well as to the different governmental old people's homes to identify any rising problems with the food system, including any complaints about meals served in these residences.

Various meetings were held between the Meals Board, the Assistant Director responsible for the Elderly and Community Care), Heads of Homes and representatives from James Caterers to discuss: a) follow-ups of recommendations made during previous meetings; b) new complaints arising from the homes; c) revise the meal-ordering forms as to better inform the elderly about their ordered meals; and d) revise the tender for meals supply to old people's homes.

Recommendations on improving the nutritional content of meals served at two different premises

Following formal requests by the heads of Christ the King Convent in B'Kara as well as Id-Dar tal-Providenza, Siggiewi, visits were carried out respectively, including inspections of their food stores. Meetings were held with the kitchen staff on how to improve the nutritional intake of the meals provided within their premises.

In addition, a presentation on the importance of healthy eating as per the Mediterranean diet was carried out at Christ the King Convent to 25 workers/nuns, following which clarifications and additional information were given to participants addressing any further queries. A detailed report with recommendations was

also submitted to the Head of the Convent and similar report will be submitted in due course to id-Dar tal-Providenza (visit took place on 27 December 2007).

Helplines

National Sexual Health Helpline

At the start of September 2006 the helpline was re-established and promoted on all media programmes, posters, adverts and articles. During the period between January and August 2007, the helpline gained popularity and received a total of 90 calls, of which 50% were from female callers. The peak numbers of calls were received between May and June, which appears to be in direct relationship to the amount of print adverts and articles that appeared during these two months. On the other hand, in the period September-December, the helpline registered only 10 calls which is once again in direct relationship to the lack of sexual promotion on media outlets.

Be Active Helpline

The Be Active Helpline started offering a service to people through the telephone. Some people take physical activity seriously and ask specific questions on the actual exercise training they wish to perform or are already doing.

Referrals

During this period, 45 callers were given the details of the GU Clinic in Boffa Hospital. Starting from June 2006 a referral system started operating whereby callers on the helpline could leave their details with the officer in charge and then details were passed to the clinic. Twenty-three referrals were since made. This facilitated clients who were often hesitant to call the clinic themselves and thus made the service more accessible. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly adhered to at all times.

Research

Sexual Health

In collaboration with a local manufacturing company, the HPD conducted a sexual health survey amongst a representative sample of 300 male and female employees with ages ranging from 18 - 25 evaluating their sexual attitudes, self-efficacy skills, control in relationships and sexual behaviour. This will be the first survey to explore sexual behaviour and its determinants amongst a sample of working young adults and is expected to give a better picture of the way this population group thinks and behaves. Analysis of this survey is currently underway.

European Tobacco Control Report

The European Tobacco Control Report was published by the WHO. The local tobacco scenario and legislation was included as a result of the submission of questionnaires and enquires from the Department to the WHO. A positive step forward in seeing Malta data together with other EU within WHO countries published.

Quit and Win

A study to assess the success rate of the 2006 campaign was carried out after one and a half years as a follow up. The Department carried out the study through a telephone survey. It resulted that out of the 1,560 participating smokers, that was the biggest number ever registered since Malta first participated in 1994, 23% have remained non smokers one and a half years after.

Workplace

A survey among workers of a local textile factory was concluded. It resulted that out of the 572 people employed 36% are smokers. The response rate was 89%. The idea of all this is to implement a Tobacco Cessation programme within their working environment.

Physical activity among 11-year-olds

Prior to promoting PA on the individual and population levels, the Department embarked on a self reported study involving mixed Form I children from six state schools (n = 581) in order to see whether they know, in the first place, how to perform three basic types of PAs.

Swimming was the most common activity easy to perform (95% boys; 94% girls). The second easily practised activity was cycling (90% boys; 82% girls). The least popular activity was skipping-rope (47% boys; 88% girls).

It was concluded that, with the exception of rope skipping in boys, the authorities can promote, liberally and on a regular basis, these types of activities and investigate the barriers which may still be impeding other children from performing them.

International Participation

- *Shape Up*: The Shape Up regional meeting held in Bonn on 6 and 7 July was attended by a departmental official. Participants at the meeting presented initiatives that were held in the respective countries. A presentation of the initiatives carried out by St Benedict, St Joseph and St Paul's Bay Primary Schools was delivered. The presentation included the aim and outcome of the projects. The meeting then discussed the way forward in the project with plans for the next scholastic year focusing on Physical Activity for children.
- *Health Promotion Capacity Mapping*: An officer took part in a conference call with the WHO European Office for Investment for Health and Development, in Venice (17 July). The aim of the interview was to review the results from the 2005 WHO/EURO Health Promotion Capacity Mapping Initiative (CMI) in which Malta participated. The purpose of the CMI was to map the functional capacity of health promotion systems across Europe, with specific reference to how they take account of the social determinants of health.
- *Final Plenary Meeting for the DAFNE V Project*: The DAFNE V Final Plenary meeting took place in Ljubljana, Slovenia to monitor the DAFNE V work progress of participating countries; provide update of the work done by the DAFNE V team and to discuss the work plan for the completion of the DAFNE V project. During the meeting, it was announced that it was now possible for the Co-ordinating Centre to proceed with the finalisation of the data reading and data harmonisation. Following this task, preliminary results for the Maltese HBS datasets could be sent to the Department.
- *Finnish Study Tour on Physical Activity*: A study tour on Finnish experiences took place in May to promote physical activity (PA) for health and to mark *Move for Health Day – Europe*, organised by WHO Regional Office for Europe in collaboration with the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and KTL Public Health Institute. The aim of the study tour was to directly observe structures and projects that are most effective in increasing physical activity levels in the population.
- *Meeting for Nutrition and Food Safety Counterparts on the Second European Action Plan for Food policy*: Following a broad consultation process on the second European food and nutrition action plan between various national and international health experts on nutrition and food safety, a meeting took place in Paris for Nutrition and Food Safety Counterparts on the Second European Food and Nutrition Action Plan. The main aim of the meeting was to review and to agree in principle on the Second European Action Plan for Food and Nutrition Policy. The final draft action plan was further revised and

presented in September 2007, to the Regional Committee for Europe in Belgrade, Serbia for consideration and endorsement by Member States.

- *ENQ meeting*: Two meetings of the European Network of Quitliners (ENQ) were held. The aim of the ENQ is to contribute to and promote health improvement, reduce morbidity and premature mortality by bringing together both experienced and new European Quit lines. The primary objective of this European network is the sharing of knowledge, best practice, experience and a supporting network for all its members. Two separate meetings were held and although ongoing support through the telephone quit line is quite established and popular there is room for improvement. The second meeting revolved round a European campaign that will be launched in January 2008.
- *European Network for Smoking Prevention meeting*: The ENSP is an international non-profit making organisation, whose mission is to develop a strategy for co-ordinated action among organisations active in tobacco control in Europe by sharing information and experience and through co-ordinated activities and joint projects.
- *HELP meeting*: The European *HELP: For a Life Without Tobacco* anti-smoking campaign is intended to reach out to young smokers, non-smokers, those exposed to second hand smoke and smokers who want to stop. HELP Campaign includes a road show, TV adverts and press coverage that all include the Malta *Quitline* number. The Department is a very active participant in this campaign with ongoing Co testing that is included in most of our activities.
- *WHO Tobacco meeting*: A WHO meeting for EU Member States was attended. It was aimed to demonstrate the experiences and discuss the prospects of promoting the implementation of internationally standardised surveillance in tobacco control. Emphasis was placed on recent experiences of the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS). Demonstration of existing databases will prove invaluable for further developments at national and international levels.
- *PHETICE Meeting*: An officer attended the PHETICE meeting that was held in Prague between 28 and 31 August. The PHETICE project is an EU funded project that aims at setting standards and competencies for Health Promotion specialists from all Member States. The project is led by the Public Health Institute in Stockholm. The contribution from our Department, particularly in devising and formulating the competencies of Health Promotion, was greatly appreciated.
- *HIV/AIDS conference*: Attended the conference in Bremen entitled *Responsibility & Partnership – Together against HIV/AIDS* (March 12-13): Building upon the outcomes of the previous HIV/AIDS conferences in Dublin and Vilnius, the conference in Bremen centred on the special importance of governmental co-operation with civil society actors in their joint fight against HIV/AIDS. Prevention and promotion are considered to be an integral element of future-oriented health systems and the conference served as a meeting point for several countries to discuss various campaign strategies as well as ascertaining which political leadership tasks can be carried out by Germany in the context of HIV/AIDS prevention.

Health Promotion Resources

Graphic Design Unit

A number of publications were produced and various adverts were disseminated to the local media. A number of these artworks were published as billboards. The campaigns were either launched at the Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Department boardroom or in other public places such as schools. An appropriate set-up and photographic coverage of each press conference was carried out.

By the end of September an MCAST student finished her apprenticeship, which the Department sponsored. The student began a 4-year course of studies in Art & Design, (technician level), two years of which she was attached to the Health Promotion Department working in the Graphic Design Unit.

Apart from the design of publicity material for the Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Department, the Graphic Design Unit was commissioned to work for various other departments within the Health Division. The most important of which was done (and it is still in the process of finalisation) for the Infection Control Unit of Mater Dei Hospital. This has the aim of making the professional staff more aware of hand hygiene, thus preventing various dangerous infections.

Other important work was done directly for the Ministry of Health, the Elderly and Community Care, the most significant of which will be the bi-monthly magazine *Medi Kura*.

NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION AND CONTROL UNIT (NCCU)

This unit is responsible for the setting up of strategies for the prevention and control of non communicable diseases and for setting up guidelines. During the three-month period from the setting up, this unit, although not as yet formally set up with staff, concentrated on the non communicable disease strategy and the cancer strategy.

The first draft of the non communicable disease strategy was re assessed and amendments were made. In view of the proposed seminar organised by MAPHM on cardiovascular diseases, circulation for first consultation was held until this seminar to be able to include the outcomes of this seminar in the document. Early in 2008 it is planned to send the document for first consultation.

The cancer strategy was at an advanced stage after public consultation. The comments from the consultation were integrated in the document. Two focus groups were set up to discuss the final document. The strategy will be published early 2008.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE PREVENTION AND CONTROL UNIT (IDCU)

During 2007 the Disease Surveillance Unit (DSU) continued its primary role of surveillance, investigation and control of infectious diseases notified to the Department.

Notifiable Diseases

Notifiable infectious diseases are reported to the Disease Surveillance Unit by medical practitioners, the microbiology and virology laboratories at St Luke's Hospital and other medical diagnostic laboratories. The data presented in this report may be subject to changes according to further investigation results. Tabulated data is indicated hereunder:

Annual Notifiable Infectious Diseases 2007

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 | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----|-----|----|-----|----|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Acute Flaccid Paralysis | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 | |
| Acute Encephalitis | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | - | |
| AIDS | 2 | 2 | - | - | - | - | 2 | irregular immigrants |
| Chickenpox ⁽¹⁾ | 225 | 124 | 101 | 42 | 107 | 66 | 10 | ⁽¹⁾ include 22 clusters of two cases, 14 clusters of three cases, 4 clusters of four cases, 2 clusters of five cases |
| <i>non-resident cases</i> | 3 | 2 | 1 | - | 3 | - | - | |
| Chlamydia | 72 | 48 | 20 | 16 | 10 | 18 | 28 | gender distribution of four cases is unknown |
| Erysipelas | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | |
| Food borne illness, <i>Campylobacter</i> ⁽²⁾ | 91 | 46 | 45 | 22 | 28 | 26 | 15 | ⁽²⁾ one case imported |
| <i>non-resident cases</i> | 1 | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | |

| Notifiable Disease | Total | M | F | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Food borne illness, E. Coli | 8 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 | |
| Food borne illness, Salmonella | 80 | 38 | 42 | 15 | 16 | 26 | 23 | three cases imported |
| Food borne illness, Scombrototoxic | 8 | 2 | 6 | - | 3 | - | 5 | |
| Food borne illness, Unspecified ⁽³⁾ <i>non-resident cases</i> ⁽⁴⁾ | 62 6 | 35 3 | 27 3 | 17 1 | 11 - | 15 3 | 19 2 | ⁽³⁾ two cases imported ⁽⁴⁾ two cases imported |
| Giardiasis | 9 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 | one case imported |
| Gonorrhoea ⁽⁵⁾ <i>non-resident cases</i> ⁽⁶⁾ | 51 2 | 40 1 | 9 1 | 10 2 | 16 - | 21 - | 4 - | ⁽⁵⁾ one case imported; gender distribution of 2 cases unknown ⁽⁶⁾ one case imported |
| Hepatitis A | 3 | 2 | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | one case imported |
| Hepatitis B | 2 | 1 | 1 | - | - | 1 | 1 | |
| Hepatitis C | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 | |
| HIV ⁽⁷⁾ <i>non-resident cases</i> ⁽⁸⁾ | 13 3 | 6 3 | 7 - | 1 2 | 5 1 | 1 - | 6 - | ⁽⁷⁾ include 2 clusters of 2 cases ⁽⁸⁾ cases imported |
| Legionnaire's Disease <i>non-resident cases</i> ⁽⁹⁾ | 12 7 | 7 4 | 5 3 | - 2 | 3 1 | 7 4 | 2 - | ⁽⁹⁾ include 2 clusters of two cases; one case imported |
| Leishmaniasis, Cutaneous | 9 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 7 | - | include a cluster of two cases |
| Leishmaniasis, Visceral | 4 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | - | 2 | |
| Leptospirosis | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | |
| Malaria | 3 | 3 | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | three cases imported |
| Measles | 2 | 2 | - | - | 2 | - | - | |
| Meningitis, other bacterial | 10 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | |
| Meningococcal, meningitis | 7 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | |
| Meningitis, septicaemia | 5 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | - | |
| Mumps | 10 | 8 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | |
| Rubella | 2 | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | - | |
| Scarlet fever | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | - | |
| Septicaemia and Meningitis | 1 | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | - | |
| Shingles, Herpes Zoster | 30 | 12 | 18 | 9 | 11 | 5 | 5 | |
| Syphilis Latent | 9 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 2 | - | |
| Syphilis Primary <i>non-resident cases</i> ⁽¹⁰⁾ | - 1 | - 1 | - - | - - | - 1 | - - | - - | ⁽¹⁰⁾ case imported |
| Syphilis Secondary | 2 | 2 | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | |
| Tuberculosis, Non-Pulmonary | 11 | 9 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 4 | nine cases imported |
| Tuberculosis, Pulmonary ⁽¹¹⁾ <i>non-resident cases</i> ⁽¹²⁾ | 24 3 | 21 2 | 3 1 | 12 - | 5 3 | 4 - | 3 - | ⁽¹¹⁾ ten cases imported ⁽¹²⁾ one case imported |
| Typhus, Murine | 11 | 6 | 5 | 3 | - | 7 | 1 | one case imported |
| Typhus, Tickborne | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | |

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 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|----------|---------|---------|
| Food borne illness, Campylobacter (6) | 16 | 8 | 8 | - | 10 | 2 | 4 |
| Food borne illness, E. Coli (2) <i>non-resident cases</i> | - 5 | - 4 | - 1 | - 2 | - - | - 3 | - - |
| Food borne illness, Salmonella (6) | 22 | 9 | 13 | - | - | 19 | 3 |
| Food borne illness, Scombrototoxic (8) | 20 | 11 | 9 | 6 | 2 | 10 | 2 |
| Food borne illness, Unspecified (36) * <i>non-resident cases</i> (3) | 170 16 | 62 7 | 78 9 | 19 6 | 46 10 | 29 - | 76 - |
| Norovirus, Gastroenteritis (5) | 194 | 79 | 115 | 56 | 56 | - | 82 |
| Norovirus, Suspected cases (6) <i>non-resident cases</i> (2) | 54 4 | 23 2 | 31 2 | 21 2 | - 2 | - - | 33 - |

Notes to Section B

* Gender distribution of one outbreak is unknown

Section C: Reported deaths from Notifiable Infectious Diseases

During 2007 there were five deaths from notifiable diseases:

| Notifiable Disease | Total number of Deaths |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| AIDS | 1 |
| Hepatitis C - Chronic | 1 |
| Legionnaire's Disease | 2 |
| Tuberculosis, Pulmonary | 1 |

Food-borne Diseases

The table below shows the sporadic cases per month for 2007. A short description for each type is listed.

| Numbers of sporadic cases of food borne illness in Maltese residents according to causative pathogen where this was identified | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Total |
| Campylobacter | 11 | 8 | 3 | 3 | 14 | 12 | 10 | 13 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 5 | 91 |
| Salmonella | 8 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 10 | 5 | 14 | 7 | 5 | 12 | 4 | 7 | 80 |
| Unspecified | 7 | 4 | 6 | - | 8 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 8 | 62 |
| Giardiasis | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 9 |
| E. Coli | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | 3 | - | 1 | - | 1 | 8 |
| Toxic | - | - | - | - | 2 | 1 | - | - | - | 4 | 1 | - | 8 |

Salmonellosis affected 80 individual cases and 6 separate outbreaks involved a total of 22 persons. These outbreaks occurred all in residents.

Campylobacter enteritis is again on the rise this year with 91 individual cases (and one a non resident) affected and 6 separate outbreaks affected 16 cases.

E. coli affected 8 individual cases which were all in residents. There were 2 separate outbreaks of *E. Coli* 0157 affecting a total of 5 cases. Both these outbreaks have occurred in non-residents but were acquired locally.

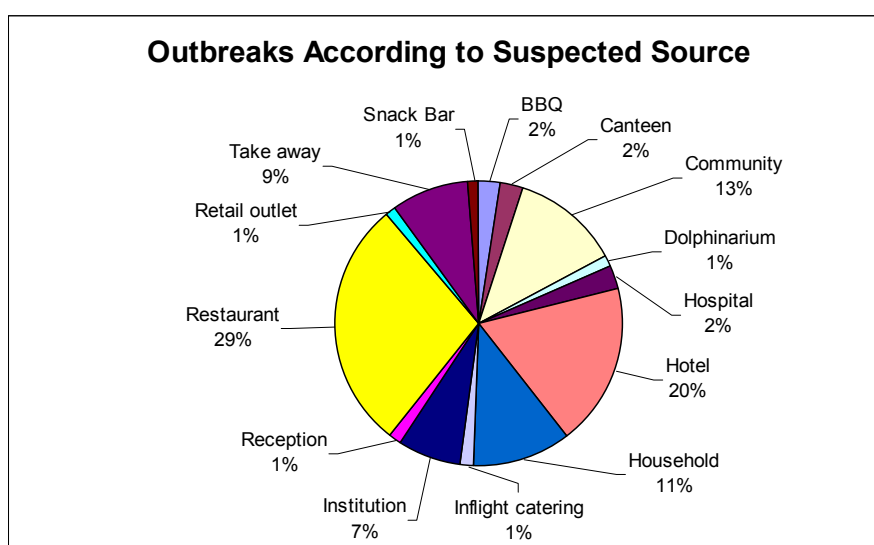
Scombrototoxic food-poisoning affected eight individual cases and 8 outbreaks affecting 20 cases.

Giardiasis affected 9 sporadic cases which affected only local residents.

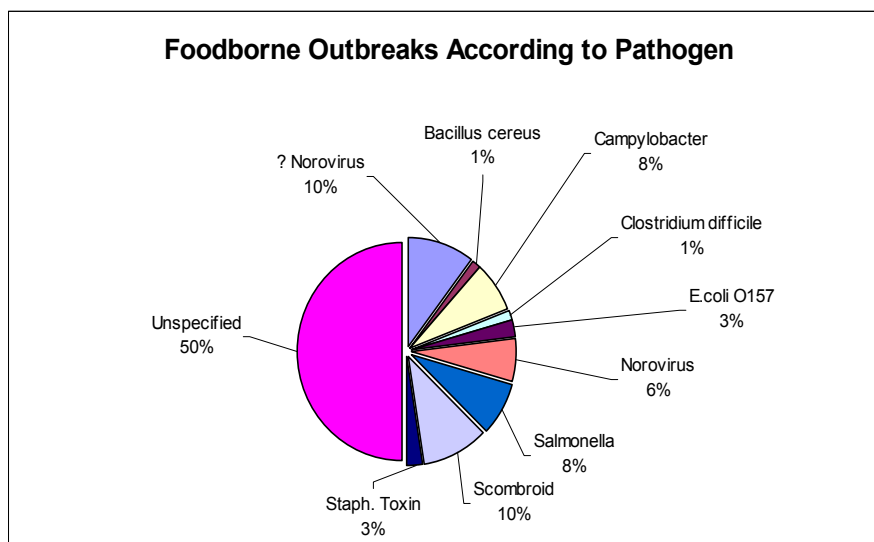
Cryptosporidiosis: none were laboratory confirmed.

Unspecified food-borne illnesses: there were 62 individual cases (and 6 in non residents) and 39 separate outbreaks affecting a total of 186 persons.

Outbreaks of Foodborne Illness



This year's outbreaks show a pattern with a predominance related to restaurants: 29%; hotels: 20 %, and households: 11%. At community level (13%) most of the outbreaks represent Noroviral illnesses coinciding with known community patterns of the disease. This picture is only the tip of the iceberg for community viral gastroenteritis. Take away outlets accounted for 9% of the outbreaks while institutions have shown a high level of disease mainly represented by a few large outbreaks of Noroviral disease. The chart above shows the different notified outbreaks classified by the source while the following chart shows the various types of outbreaks according to the pathogen or toxin causing the illness.



Foodborne outbreaks classified according to Pathogen causing the illness. Unspecified outbreaks refer to those outbreaks whose cause has remained unidentified for various reasons such as: stool samples not examined, stool samples examined late, intermittent excretion of pathogens and where pathogens are not examined for in our laboratories.

In total an estimated 501 persons were affected in these outbreaks with 197 males and 304 females. In one outbreak the gender distribution is unknown.

Meningococcal Disease

During the year, 13 cases of meningococcal disease (MD) were reported in Maltese residents. All were sporadic cases. MD was reported in 10 males and 3 females. The main clinical diagnosis was Meningitis in 7 cases, 5 cases were septicaemia and the remaining case was meningitis and septicaemia. During the previous year, 38 cases were notified.

Of the 13 cases, *N. meningitidis* was cultivated in 3 cases. Information on serogroup, type and subtype is available for these cases. Serogroup B accounted for 2 cases and Serogroup W 135 for one case.

There were no deaths directly caused by meningococcal disease.

Acute Flaccid Paralysis

Active surveillance continued throughout this year with reporting to the WHO. There was one case of AFP in a child aged <15 years. Stool samples sent abroad were negative for the polio virus.

Legionnaire's Disease

During 2007 there were 19 reported cases of Legionnaire's Disease that were diagnosed and confirmed using urinary antigen testing. 12 occurred in residents and 7 in non residents, one of which was imported. Four of the cases were reported by EWGLI regarding tourists who acquired the disease during their stay in

Malta. Four of the cases were associated with a hotel (including 2 clusters of 2 persons each and one case was associated with a cruise ship. Twelve cases were of Maltese residents and associated with households. Two deaths were recorded.

Diseases of Childhood

There were two cases of measles; 10 one cases of mumps; 2 cases of rubella; no reported cases of pertussis; 228 cases of chicken pox notified to the unit, three of which occurred in non residents; 30 cases of herpes zoster and one case of Scarlet fever.

Sexually Transmitted Infections

There were 72 notified cases of Chlamydia, 51 cases of Gonorrhoea in Maltese residents and 2 in non residents, one of which was imported. There were 9 cases of latent syphilis in Maltese residents, one case of primary syphilis that was imported and 2 cases in Maltese residents of secondary syphilis.

Sentinel Surveillance

In 2007, 12 private GPs participated in sentinel surveillance of influenza, pneumonia, acute respiratory tract infection, acute otitis media and acute bronchitis.

Travel Medical Advice

The Unit provided information to the general public requesting medical advice prior to travelling abroad.

Website

The Disease Surveillance Unit maintained its website by posting monthly reports and also posting information of communicable diseases and any related press releases.

Academia

- Talk on *Communicable diseases in schools* at the Health and Safety Conference.
- CPD lectures to undergraduates and post graduate students.
- A series of CPD lectures on Infectious Diseases to Public Health doctors.
- Talks on radio and TV on communicable diseases.
- DSU organised Meningococcal Disease seminar to physicians and paediatricians.

One medical officer from the Unit finished her Masters Degree in Public Health Medicine and four medical officers started this course at the University of Malta this October.

Conferences, Seminars, Courses and Meetings

Departmental officials attended various conferences, seminars, courses, meetings and workshops both locally and abroad.

Other Work involved during 2007

- Twice monthly participation in Influenza pandemic preparedness intersectoral committee.
- Review by ECDC on DSU preparedness and response during an influenza pandemic.
- Visit by Libyan delegation to discuss communicable disease surveillance and possible collaboration between the two countries.
- Chairing of the Advisory committee on Immunisation Practices.
- Launch travel advice booklet.

Other Functions of DSU

The Unit was also involved in other duties falling under the Department of Public Health namely:

- The renewal and issuing of licences. These included the inspection of dental, X-ray, chiropody, acupuncture and tattoo clinics, blood banks, medical diagnostic laboratories.
- Involved in the vetting of working permits of foreigners from the health point of view.

CHEST UNIT

Screening Activities

The following reports the activities of the Chest Unit as regards TB (Tuberculosis) prevention, surveillance and control. The following indicates the categories of clients “at risk” tested and subsequent outcomes.

| Category | Total | Outcome |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Foreign work permits | 1,399 applicants 17 family members | 5 abnormal CXRs*** which were followed up at Chest Clinic SLH; no cases of active TB |
| Prison | 124 prisoners 49 Maltese 75 foreigners | no cases of active TB; one prisoner with abnormal CXR followed up |
| Foreign students | 225 school children | 2 high tuberculin reactors referred to Chest Clinic SLH |
| Irregular immigrants * | 1,698 | 32 abnormal CXRs; these were followed up at Chest Clinic SLH; 4 cases notified active TB |
| Refugees, humanitarian cases ** | 1,585 | 92 strong tuberculin reactors; 39 abnormal CXRs; 131 referred to Chest Clinic SLH |
| Miscellaneous referrals to Chest Unit | 52 | 4 abnormal CXRs; 13 strong tuberculin reactors all followed up; 1 case notified active TB |
| Periodic follow up | 26 | No abnormalities |

* 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 2007.

** Screening of refugees, humanitarian cases and other immigrants released after a period of detention refers to the TB screening of asylum seekers *before they leave the closed barracks to open centres*. In this table this refers to those immigrants who arrived in Malta at any time but released in 2007.

*** CXR means chest X-ray.

The following summarises the examination of contacts of notified TB cases.

| Outcome | Contacts |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| Notified and Treated | - |
| Referred to Chest Clinic, SLH | 70 |
| Followed up / Discharged | 421 |
| Total | 491 |

Annual TB screening was offered to all personnel working with irregular immigrants. This included AFM, Police, and Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) and Refugee Commission and Appoġġ personnel. The objective was to test for tuberculin seroconversion and high tuberculin reactors and to offer them preventive treatment if required.

The following table summarises the examination of these personnel.

| Department | Tested | High Mtx | Given BCG | Abn CXR | Referred Chest Clinic |
|------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------------------|
| AFM | 107 | 17 | 4 | 3 | 17 |
| Police | 19 | 2 | - | 1 | 2 |
| Refugee Commission | 17 | 5 | - | - | 3 |
| Jesuit Refugee Service | - | - | - | - | - |
| Appoġġ | 14 | 5 | - | - | 5 |
| Total | 157 | 29 | 4 | 4 | 27 |

There were no cases of active pulmonary TB in these personnel.

Tuberculin Testing and BCG Vaccination

The staff at Chest Unit was responsible for the administration of all BCG vaccinations. A total of 173 vaccinations were performed during the year. The clinic has also performed tuberculin testing on all the people coming from “high risk” countries i.e. countries with a much higher incidence of TB relative to Malta. 995 people were tuberculin tested this year.

Referrals from School Medical Services

27 school children were referred by the School Medical Services because of a high reaction to tuberculin testing. They were tested for TB disease by a chest x-ray. All CXRs were normal. 20 were referred to Chest Clinic for further follow-up and possible preventive treatment.

Surveillance

TB cases in Malta in the year 2007

There were 38 TB cases notified in 2007. These were divided into:

- 12 pulmonary TB cases in Maltese nationals
- 15 pulmonary TB cases in foreigner nationals (11 asylum seekers)
- 2 extra pulmonary TB cases in Maltese nationals
- 9 extra pulmonary TB cases in foreigner nationals (8 asylum seekers).

24 of the TB cases were foreigners and of these 19 were asylum seekers.

Other Activities

- Collaboration of data with WHO/EuroTB joint TB data collection, ECDC and various other entities.
- Participation with EuroTB regarding monitoring of treatment outcome in TB patients.
- Organisation of Directly Observed Treatment (DOT) for irregular immigrants and noncompliant patients.

Presentations regarding tuberculosis were given to people working with asylum seekers in Malta. This included Aġenzija Appoġġ, and AFM personnel. The presentations consisted of an overview of TB including transmission, screening activities, treatment, DOT and drug resistance.

DEPARTMENT OF NURSING SERVICES STANDARDS

Mission Statement

To promote excellence in all aspects of nursing and midwifery services while contributing to the delivery of high quality care at a national level.

Executive Summary

During this past year, the Directorate Nursing Services changed its nomenclature to that of Department of Nursing Services Standards (DNSS) (*Dipartiment għal Standards Dwar is-Servizzi Infermeristiċi*) following the setting up of the Public Health Regulation Division. DNSS 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 and initiatives all requiring a hefty element of intradepartmental teamwork and interdepartmental collaboration.

The Director, Nursing Services Standards is the national policy-level nurse with key responsibilities relating to the development of standards regarding nursing workforce utilisation and the standards of

nursing service provision across public and private entities. The main aim of the Director Nursing Services Standards is to provide vision and directions of nursing services as part of health service delivery in Malta.

All projects and initiatives fall under the direct responsibility of the Director. The Director is assisted by a delegated member of the team for each project initiative. Such initiatives include the formulation of nursing standards, policies and guidelines, ensuring adequate nursing and midwifery manpower across all departments, the running of the Enrolled nurse – Staff nurse (EN-SN) conversion course, and intravenous therapy (IV) course, etc. Collaboration with other sectors such as the human resources contingency planning input to the Pandemic Contingency Plan, the Institute of Health Care, the Council of Nurses and Midwives, the Migration Process involving St Luke's Hospital and Mater Dei Hospital and the setting up of a new rehabilitation facility at Karen Grech Hospital, recruitment of EU nurses, the setting up and consolidation of the Continuous Professional Development scheme for nurses, a marketing campaign to recruit nurse returnees and student nurses, and a number of industrial relations issues with a number of unions were also among the challenges taken up by this office.

Staff within DNSS has the responsibility to focus on specific areas or specialty in nursing care and delivery. The methodological process of consultation through discussion and dialogue with colleagues in understanding the context of nursing and the drafting of standards and policy is frequently used. Thus, these projects were sounded with staff and feedback sought from peers and experts, which dialogue is reflected in the various stages of work or projects carried out.

Formulation of Nursing Standards and Policies

The Controlled Drug Policy

Following the publication of the Controlled Drug Policy in 2006, an audit tool was developed in preparation for the audit to proceed in 2008. An audit team was also appointed. During 2007, amendments to the policy were drafted and published. The amendments came about because of certain industrial issues that arose in 2006 and a process of consultation following implementation of the policy.

Standards of Care for Homes of the Elderly

During 2007, the DNSS drafted Standards of Care for Homes of the Elderly. The process involved literature searches relating to elderly care standards and meetings with key persons. A technical working group was set up to identify an assessment and audit tool for measuring the level of elderly dependency and staff levels for the provision of care.

Nurses' uniform policy

The nurses' uniform policy is in the process of being drafted whilst a consultation process was initiated with relevant stakeholders.

Guidelines and formulation of applications

Other published guidelines include the application for transfer following a request for transfer by nurses, and the guidelines in connection with the Continuous Professional Development Scheme.

Inspection of Health Care Facilities

Inspection of Private and Public Homes for the Elderly

In line with assuming the role of nurse services regulator, the DNSS has agreed to take part in the regular inspection of non-governmental homes for the elderly related to renewal of licence of these homes. The

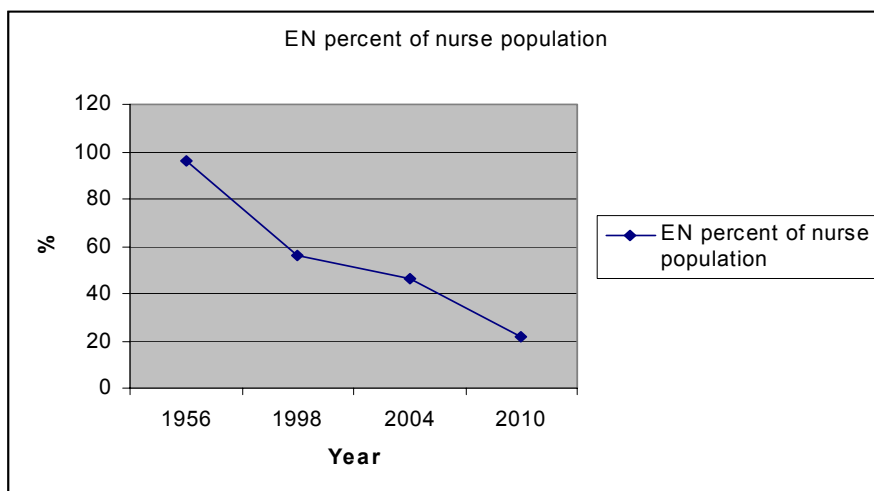


Figure showing the progressive decline of Enrolled Nurse Population during 1956-2007

DNSS team collaborates closely with the Department of Health Care Services Standards. Inspection includes a formal meeting with the Home Administrator made up of the Multidisciplinary Team, and on-the-spot observation and query with staff and residents.

Inspection of Private Hospitals and Clinics

The DNSS has also agreed to take part in the regular inspection of private hospitals and clinics. The DNSS' role as part of this Inspection Team is particularly to inspect and provide feedback from a nursing perspective.

Projects and Initiatives

The DNSS is responsible for the running of the Enrolled Nurse to Staff Nurse (EN to SN) Conversion Course. The Course was reactivated in 2003 in preparation of Malta's accession to the EU, and continued as Course 7.

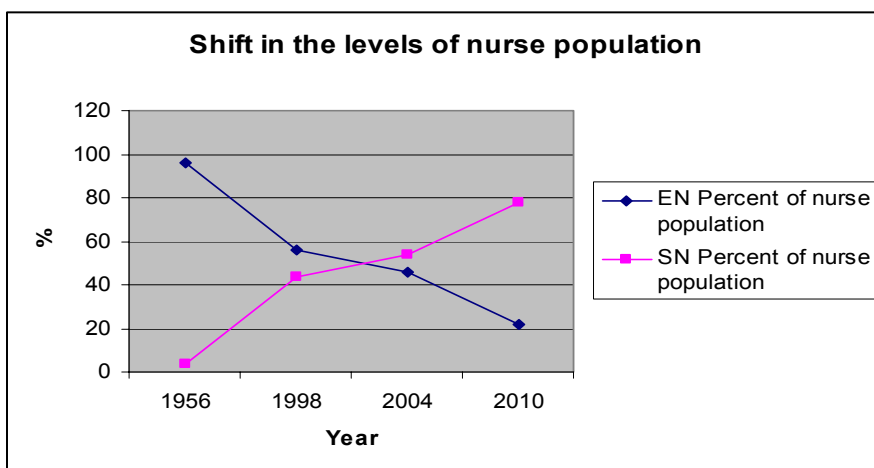


Figure showing the relative shifts between the levels of nursing during 1956-2007

This project is in process and is expected to be concluded in 2012 when a target of more than 90% first level nurse population is reached.

Overview of courses during 2007

Currently three courses are in progress namely Courses 14, 15 and 16, after which on completion, it is estimated that nearly half the number (310) of Enrolled Nurses from the 794 applications, will be registered as level one nurses. In February 33 students from Course 12 were successful in final examinations held and were registered as first level nurses with another student successfully sitting for the final examinations in June. In August, 28 out of 32 students successfully completed final examinations and registered as first level nurses. Four students will be re-sitting exams in January 2008, when Course 14 final exams will be held.

Awarding of certificates

A presentation ceremony was organised by the DNSS in November 2007, during which students from Groups 11, 12 and 13, were presented with a certificate by the Hon Minister of Health and Elderly.

Clinical Placements

Students from groups 13 and 14 did their clinical placements within diverse clinical settings in different hospitals. In addition, during the months of July and August, students from groups 14 and 15 were doing their clinical placements within the different hospitals. In November, preparations were initiated for Course 14 final examination scheduled for 22 January 2008. The Board of Examiners is now composed of the subject co-ordinators and an external examiner, who will be responsible for the whole exam process. Arising concerns and difficulties in the smooth running and co-ordination of this course to various groups included various concerns such as availability of lecture rooms.

Role of Preceptorship

During 2007 EN – SN Conversion Course students from Zammit Clapp Hospital, Primary Health Care Department, private entities, MMDNA and St Vincent de Paule Residence were supported by the five preceptors from the DNSS. This relationship is maintained throughout the entire course and includes practical and academic support. IV assessments were also carried out with these students as part of the nationwide strategy to deliver this training to all nurses and midwives.

The impact of the migration process from St Luke's Hospital to Mater Dei Hospital

The hospital migration process mainly affected participants of Courses 14, 15 and 16. This occurred during the month of November, and left repercussions on the proceedings of these three courses in that some lectures had to be cancelled due to lecturers being heavily involved in the migration process and their unavailability to deliver lectures. Added to this was also the fact that students who were working at St Luke's Hospital were often not allowed to attend lectures during this period. In view of this, students were therefore instructed to submit a short report stating the dates and lectures they missed. It has been agreed and planned that most lectures that were missed will be repeated some time in January or February 2008 during the students' clinical placements.

Intravenous Therapy Course

In 2005, the Directorate Nursing Services embarked on a nationwide training programme in intravenous therapy for all qualified nurses with the aim of increasing nurses' awareness about the implications of various aspects of intravenous therapy and to enhance nurses' empowerment in this shared clinical responsibility.

Throughout 2007, this ongoing project of training nurses working at St Luke's (SLH)/Mater Dei Hospital (MDH) and Zammit Clapp Hospital (ZCH) also included nurses following the EN – SN conversion course. Courses were also provided to nurses in St Vincent de Paule Residence and Mount Carmel Hospital. While

training of nurses at Gozo General Hospital is currently complete, the IV therapy course was extended to nurses working in the private sector. The total number of nurses who completed the Intravenous Therapy Course exceeded 400.

- **Zammit Clapp Hospital:** Logistics and Management of co-ordinating the IVI Course at SLH, ZCH and MDH included the smooth running organisation of monthly courses at the Institute of Health Care: These sessions aimed mainly for nurses working at SLH and ZCH required constant communication with officers within the Institute of Health Care with reference to the selection and co-ordination of dates and venues within this Institute. Constant regular communication with ward managers at SLH, as well as with the nursing manager and practice development nurse at ZCH to select prospective participants from each area was vital in ensuring effective and appropriate provision of the course.
- **Gozo General Hospital (GGH):** Following the first two sessions carried out in July and October 2006, a third and final session the IV Course was organised at GGH for the remaining 60 nurses in February 2007. These nurses were then assessed by clinical assessors working at GGH. This project is now complete, as virtually all nurses working at GGH and at the Victoria Health centre have completed the course. This followed the successful completion of training of nurses at Sir Paul Boffa Hospital during the previous year.
- **St Vincent de Paule Residence (SVPR):** A new initiative which was initiated this year was that of organising sessions of the Intravenous Therapy courses for nurses working at SVPR within SVPR premises. This was done to make it easier for nurses working at SVPR to participate in the course. For this reason, following discussions with the Manager Nursing Services at SVPR, a number of SVPR nurses received training to act as clinical assessors. As from February 2007, monthly courses were carried out at SVPR lecture rooms. These nurses then completed the practical component with clinical assessors working in the same institution.
- **Mount Carmel Hospital (MCH):** In 2007, following a request from the nursing management, the IV course was extended to MCH for the first time. Two sessions were carried out at the newly refurbished lecture centre, one in July and one in September/October. Unfortunately, due to various pressing issues, the attendance from MCH was lower than expected. Efforts will be made to increase participation in future sessions of the course at MCH. MCH nurses who have completed the theoretical component of the course are currently undergoing supervised practice and clinical assessments with the newly recruited clinical assessors working at MCH as well.
- **Recruitment of New Clinical Assessors in the IV therapy course:** In order to enable nurses to undergo clinical assessments in their own area of work, two courses for new clinical assessors were organised in February and June 2007 at SVPR and MCH respectively. 17 nurses working at SVPR, MCH and in the private setting completed the assessors' course and are now assessing colleagues working in the same areas. During 2007, 115 nurses at SVPR completed the course. It is envisaged that by the end of 2008 almost all the nurses working at SVPR would have completed the course.
- **Extending the course to nurses in the Private Sector:** Another new initiative initiated this year was that of extending the course to nurses working in the private sector. As from mid-2007, nurses working in private hospitals were invited to participate in monthly sessions of the IV therapy course carried out in state institutions. For this reason, a number of nurses working in these hospitals have received further training to act as clinical assessors to enable their colleagues to complete the course. So far, about 40 nurses working in the private sector have completed the course and are currently being clinically assessed by clinical assessors working in the same area.
- **Other Aspects of the IV Therapy Course:** In collaboration with the Institute of Health Care, the IV therapy course is now being delivered to all undergraduate general nursing and midwifery students both at degree and diploma level. This process ensures training of all newly qualified nurses and midwives in IV therapy.

Discussions were also held with the co-ordinators of the 'Back to Nursing' course organised by the Continuing Professional Development section of the Nursing Division at the Institute of Health Care to

include the intravenous therapy course as part of this course. It is planned that the group of nurse returnees currently following this course will receive the intravenous therapy course at the Institute of Health Care between January and February of 2008.

IV Course Databases and Websites

Throughout the year the IV Course co-ordinator updated and maintained databases indicating which nurses have completed the various sections of the course. The course website, which forms part of the Ministry of Health, the Elderly and Community Care site, was also revised and regularly updated with course programmes and venues, clinical assessors' allocation, lecture notes and other useful material. In particular, documents and guidelines about intravenous therapy issued by the Royal College of Nursing and the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention were uploaded. Links to various local and international organisations were added.

Future direction of the IV therapy course

Plans for the coming year focus mainly on providing this course to as many nurses as possible. Monthly sessions of the course will take place at MDH and/or SVPR. Efforts will be made to increase the uptake of nurses working in MCH in specially organised sessions. It is envisaged that, towards the end of the year, plans will be initiated to extend the IV course to nurses working within the Primary Health Care Department. This might involve modifying certain aspects/contents of the course to make it more relevant to this group of nurses.

It is also planned that a refresher course will be offered after five years of obtaining the first IV therapy certificate. This is planned to include electronic and practical methods to cover theoretical content and assessment of skills.

Primary Health Care (PHC) Nursing

Drafting of a Proposal to Develop PHC nursing

The proposal was first presented in March 2006 at a conference organised by the Directorate *Developing Nursing Strategy through Consultation*. The proposal was refined and an updated general proposal of how the nursing and midwifery services can be developed and enhanced within the PHC was finalised in 2007. In the new proposal, each area is addressed in more depth.

A particular focus was given to the School health services and Child health services. A strategic proposal was concluded and consequently another paper is being prepared focusing on the role, competencies and 'job' description of school nurses within the school health service. A curriculum was developed for school nurses in Malta and a proposal was sent to the University Senate for approval.

A preliminary document in relation to Child Health Services has been prepared for discussion, to consider the introduction of weight monitoring and guidance clinics and the important role of the nurse, in response to the alarming figures of overweight and obese children in Malta.

Regular contact has been maintained with the PHCD clinics. A series of visits to the *Bereġ* last year provided a fruitful insight on what needs to be addressed prior to considering the initiation, enhancement or expansion of nursing services within.

BSc (Community Health Nursing)

Because of the 2006, DNSS conference, a need was felt for Primary Care Nurses to be provided with the opportunity to develop their skills in order to be able to participate and lead any impending reform in the sector. The Director Nursing Services in collaboration with the Institute of Health Care proposed a BSc

(Community Nursing) course to the University Senate. The overall aim of the course is to help nurses/midwives develop knowledge and skills that can be utilised when caring for individuals or communities in various primary health care settings. The programme was offered to qualified registered nurses and midwives with at least two years working experience. The course commenced in February 2007. Twenty nurses were released.

MSc (Community Health Nursing)

Two nurses finished their MSc studies in Community Nursing at the University of Salford (UK). The scholarship came about because of public-private collaboration. The Stabile-Ryan Foundation supported financially both nurses in their studies. Both nurses after their finishing the course were deployed at the Continuing Education Unit, Primary Health Care, Birkirkara with the intention to drive continuing education initiatives and support and mentor colleagues on the BSc (Community nursing).

Together for a Healthy Community - Technical Support Group

The DNS formed part of the technical support group led by the Permanent Secretary. The technical support group involved regular meetings, planning and following up focus groups, listening sessions, preparing write-ups, literature review and research.

Oncology Nursing Services

First Master class held by the European Oncology Nursing Society (EONS)

Discussions were initiated to negotiate for a number of nurses to be able to attend as observers during the first Master class held by the European Oncology Nursing Society during February-March 2007. Four nurses were accepted to attend as participants and ten nurses as observers.

Continuing Professional Programme in Adult Cancer Nursing

As part of the Directorate's commitment to develop cancer nursing, a course was developed as part of the Institute of Health Care continuing professional development programme. The course is aimed for nurses who work with patients with a cancer diagnosis. This course Adult Cancer Nursing is being led and co-ordinated in conjunction with another colleague at the Institute of Health Care, and 30 participants out of over 50 applications were accepted to participate in the course.

Development of further services related to Oncology Nursing and Care

The Directorate is part of a working group involved in the technical preparation of developing an in-patient Palliative Care Unit. Regular meetings were held with Administration and Nursing Management at Sir Paul Boffa Hospital. Issues to be looked at include admission criteria to the unit, referral processes, discharge criteria and process, assessment and evaluation of care, liaison with other settings such as the community, and other organisational support to patients requiring palliative care.

Continuous Professional Development Scheme

CPDAC (Continuous Professional Development Audit Committee)

The DNSS is also responsible for the co-ordination of the Continuing Professional Development Scheme.

The scheme briefly consists in the management of a CPD activities registration system. Claims are then submitted by registrants for financial assistance based on the number of credits in their account. A number of template forms and letter were prepared. All applications for 2006 were paid for in 2007. All claims

between January and June 2007 were processed. The claims for July and December 2007 will be processed by March 2008. The reason for this administrative backlog is the fact that for the first six months, the processing of the scheme was partially frozen since the issue of capping of funds was still being negotiated between the Management & Personnel Office and MUMN as part of the sectoral agreement that was signed on 25 October 2007. It is projected that the overall sum requested for reimbursement was in excess of €232,900 (Lm100,000). Other related work being carried out is the drafting of all previous memos into a set of guidelines to be eventually uploaded on the DNSS website.

Nurse Retirees Event

A get-together was held on 23 March 2007 for nurses who retired during 2006. These nurses were presented with a certificate and souvenir by the Hon Minister of Health, the Elderly and Community Care.

The DNSS Quarterly Newsletter 'The Link'

During 2007, four issues of *The Link* (nos.15-18) were published. 2,500 copies were circulated for each issue to all nurses and midwives in Malta and Gozo. The Link was also uploaded and made accessible in pdf format on the DNSS webpage.

Council for Nurses and Midwives (CNM)

The co-ordination and collaboration between the DNSS and CNM is maintained at all times as the objectives of the two are closely related and the effective performance of each complements the needs and strategies of the other. Attendance to CNM meetings was maintained regularly as well as to sub-committee meetings and attendance to Appeals Committee sessions. The guidelines for registration in all registers for both EU and non-EU countries were reviewed as well as the relevant application forms.

International Conferences

The Directorate Nursing Services has participated in the Institute of Health Care initiative to organise an International Conference in Malta in October 2007 entitled, *Spirituality: The Human Dimension in Care*.

Manpower

During 2007, regular contact regarding data management was maintained with all hospitals and departments. 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. This is also imperative when planning current and future projections for service delivery, new services and workload analysis. This database and all related data is kept regularly updated.

Nurses and midwives requesting to be deployed have been acceded to regularly when replacements were available and/or management recommendations were favourable. Throughout the year requests for movement was particularly high, and this can be attributed to the opening of Mater Dei Hospital and other new services including the extended Rehabilitation Hospital at Karen Grech Hospital.

Particular attention was also given to the manpower database concerning nurses who have left the service. This was done as part of an exercise carried out by the DNSS to encourage nurses who have resigned to return and for retirees interested in continuing beyond the age of retirement to do so.

The manpower requirements of elderly homes are still being evaluated and it is planned that an assessment team will assess elderly dependency and therefore will provide a foundation to evaluate the workload and needs. Such an exercise has already been carried out in Mosta and Floriana Homes for the Elderly. A similar exercise is planned within the Primary Health Care Department in relation to nurses and midwives

and the planned reform in the Primary and Community Care settings. The total number of nurses and midwives in Malta as at December 2007 is as shown below.

| | Staff Nurses | Midwives | Enrolled Nurses |
|--------------|--------------|------------|-----------------|
| Total | 1,576 | 153 | 811 |

Public Service Calls for Senior Nursing Posts

Positions of Assistant Directors

Three positions of Assistant Director Nursing Services, Standards and Policies, Research and Projects and Resourcing and Development were published in 2007 and the interviews were held in December 2007. As soon as the two successful applicants for the first two positions are appointed, they will head the Standards and Policy, and Research and Projects Unit respectively within DNSS. The other Assistant Director Nursing Resourcing and Development will be deployed with the Department of Corporate Services at MHEC.

Marketing Campaign

In July, the DNSS embarked on a marketing campaign for nurse recruitment and student nurse recruitment. A marketing plan was drafted by the Director Nursing Services Standards and endorsed by the Permanent Secretary. This marketing campaign consisted briefly of a series of events such as TV programmes participation, handout and poster publishing, meetings and participation at the Trade fair and Health Fair at Mater Dei. The campaign was targeted at new recruits to nursing and nurse returnees. Other ways of promoting the campaign were carried out as well, particularly in giving advice on the telephone and to visitors at the DNSS premises, the use of four billboards during July, and the distribution of posters to parishes and local councils.

Interviews on the Media, and contact with the General Public

DNSS staff attended various interviews on TV programmes on different stations to promote nursing as a career and to encourage resigned nurses to return to work. Nursing staff also attended and participated in the Mater Dei Hospital Health Fair and the Malta Trade Fair. Nurses also offered screening services during the Malta Trade Fair where numerous attendees from the public were assisted in the taking their blood pressure and blood glucose levels and given professional advice and guidance accordingly. Hundreds of leaflets were distributed. Advertisements targeted for nurses returnees were published twice on the Magazine *Flimkien*, which is delivered to all households (c. 100,000) in Malta and Gozo.

In addition, in collaboration with the Student Advisory Service at the University of Malta, DNSS staff was involved in offering guidance during registration of courses in August where interested students were given information related to their requests in following nursing courses.

Outcome of the marketing campaign for nurse returnees

Several numbers of interested nurses contacted the DNSS through numerous phone calls and emails as well as through personally calling at the Office. Various queries were answered by all nursing staff. Various contacts and appointments were made with all interested parties which eventually resulted in re-entry and posting of 45 nurses within the Department of Health.

Outcome of Marketing Campaign for new nurse trainees

Eventually total numbers of potential students who applied for several nursing courses started in October included 31 applications for the BSc (Hons) Midwifery from which 10 were accepted and registered. 92

applications were forwarded for entry into the BSc (Hons) Nursing, with eventual acceptance of 69 applications and 47 registrations into this full time course. Other courses as the BSc (Hons) Diploma to Degree part-time course received 101 applications, 21 of which were accepted and registered. 85 applications for the Diploma in Health Science (Nursing) were received from which 49 were accepted and registered. The preparatory course for the Diploma in Health Science (Nursing) received 85 applications of which 49 were accepted and registered.

Recruitment of Nurses

Recruitment of local nurses

The Maltese health system has been through the process of expanding its services mainly through the migration of present health care services from St Luke's Hospital to Mater Dei Hospital and the setting up of a rehabilitation facility at Karen Grech Hospital. This is further aggravated by the fact that there is a number of nurses needed for the additional workload in the female wards at SVPR and the replacement of all vacancies as a result of resignations/retirement. This necessitated the employment of additional nurses apart from other staff. In 2007, the call for staff nurses incorporated the possibility for final year students to be able to apply for the post of a staff provisionally on the condition of attaining registration upon successfully completing the course. This would ensure that most graduates would take up employment with the Health Division. In fact, 105 new graduates were recruited this year. This fact was not plain sailing since unprecedentedly nearly half these graduates failed their exam on their first sitting. In addition to the latter recruits, another 45 nurses were recruited through the back to nursing campaign. Most of the latter category joined the service on a part-time basis. In all this year, no less than 170 nurses and midwives joined the Health Division. This fact mitigated to some extent the increase in demand for human resources. As a matter of fact, for 2008 it is projected that at least another 185 nurses are needed to sustain current levels of services and possibly be able to extend some other services later in 2008.

Recruitment of EU nurses

The DNSS has embarked on an initiative to recruit around a 100 EU trained nurses to fill some of the vacancies across the division. Approval was sought for such an initiative and the project is at an advanced stage. Eastern Europe was identified as a market for targeting since local salaries proved to be attractive only to individuals in such countries. The process for someone to come over and work is a laborious process that requires a certain amount of negotiation and a time consuming process of getting the necessary documentation by the competent authorities.

The Director Nursing Services was responsible for the provision of information to interested parties. The DNSS also drafted a welcome package for potential recruits to contribute towards integration and acculturation of foreign nurses who are chosen to come and work in Malta.

DR RAYMOND BUSUTTIL
Director General (Public Health Regulation)

Health Care Services Division

OBJECTIVES

The Health Care Services Division started to operate in July 2007, bringing together all publicly-funded health care services delivered from hospitals and health centres, residential and long-term facilities and community care services. The objectives of the Health Care Services Division are:

- to develop synergies and maintain an integrated continuum of services at both community and institutional level;
- to promote patients' and users' involvement, rights and obligations;
- to monitor patient and user satisfaction and ensure that an effective customer care service and complaints system is in operation;
- to carry out regular internal and public consultation with a view to assess patients' and users' needs;
- to give advice and make recommendations on matters of policy, strategy and overall direction in Health Care Service delivery;
- to liaise with stakeholders to facilitate the effective, efficient and timely implementation of endorsed policies, strategies, standards, regulations and change programmes;
- to chair the Division's Management Committee made up of the Directors and all heads of service delivery entities;
- to ensure an efficient system of procurement, storage and delivery of pharmaceuticals, medical devices, materials and supplies;
- to ensure governance of state health care services;
- to evaluate and review health care services and support their service development and consolidation;
- to manage and monitor performance and outcomes, and ensure that effective self-regulation and quality assurance systems are in operation by service delivery entities;
- to facilitate the development of operational policies and the introduction of inter-agency protocols that will provide for seamless and personalised services;
- to plan and allocate human, financial and other resources and ensure their proper use;
- to maintain good public relations, communicate pertinent information, and disseminate good practices;
- to develop and maintain networking and partnerships with NGOs, church, private and public sector organisations and other stakeholders;
- to negotiate the purchasing of services and manage service agreements; and
- to plan for and facilitate programmes for post-graduate training and continuous professional development.

Malta has an integrated network of public and private health care services. With the opening of the Mater Dei Hospital, clinical services are adequate for acute hospital services to perform at high levels and standards. During 2007 some improvement in clinical support services in Radiology and Pathology was achieved. The Government-MAM agreement signed in November 2007 lays the foundation for new work practices, introduces job planning at Consultant level and orients the service to improve teaching at all levels. 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 in Luqa to complement the acute care facilities and to widen the scope of the services of Geriatric Rehabilitation to include all rehabilitation services. With the migration of acute services to Mater Dei Hospital, the extended rehabilitation service started operating from temporary facilities in Karen

Grech Hospital. The rest of the rehabilitation service currently offered at Zammit Clapp Hospital will also migrate to the temporary facility 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 will continue to decentralise management of publicly funded hospitals and health care services. The status of delegated responsibility and decision-making to the appropriate level needs a 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 Health Care Services Division Health will 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.

DEPARTMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL HEALTH

OVERVIEW

The main targets of the Department of Institutional Health for 2007 were:

- support the migration of the Mater Dei Hospital focusing on a safe and effective transfer of all acute hospital services to the new site;
- sustainable development of a temporary rehabilitation service at Karen Grech Hospital, with the ultimate aim of complementing the services to be provided from Mater Dei Hospital, offering intensive rehabilitation following acute care episodes;
- support of management structures delegated to provide management of public hospitals, health centres, residential and long term facilities and community care services;
- refinement of monitoring systems of recurrent expenditure in each service with particular attention to controlling use of medicines and medical devices and curbing overtime costs;
- introduction of quality standards and audit programmes in clinical departments;

Publicly funded health care services will remain the main providers of medical care in Malta. The Health Care Services Division must ensure good governance of publicly funded health care services. It must develop further co-ordination and monitoring of the delivery of care in publicly funded services on behalf of Government. It must seek partnerships with private providers, NGOs and partners interested to develop services.

Standards of care and benchmarks are being established. These will require extensive changes and adaptation in current policies and practices to align the local health care facilities and services to the standards, guidelines and practices already implemented in centres of excellence abroad. This involves extensive interaction with service providers and should lead eventually to the establishment of a consolidated accreditation scheme for health services.

In order to address waiting lists, a systematic approach must be adopted for each service whose waiting list is being tackled. This includes the availability of the waiting lists, the criteria for entry into the waiting lists and patient categorisation, the calculation of the approximate waiting times for service, based on the output achieved during past years, extrapolation of data to illustrate the most likely scenarios in the coming years, establishment of criteria for patient eligibility to participate in any future waiting lists initiatives, indications

of the current cost of service and a thorough evaluation of possible options that can be employed to decrease waiting lists, such as government part sponsorship, extra sessions carried out at public service outlets or negotiation of best packages with the private sector.

As a full member of the European Hospital and Healthcare Federation (HOPE), the Division 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 General takes up the position of President for three years from June 2008. During 2007, two Maltese participants took part in the HOPE Exchange Programme. Three European exchange participants were hosted in Malta.

Officials from the Division also attended EU meetings concerning patient safety and the regulation of organ donation and transplants. It is recognised at EU level that organ transplants are highly beneficial life-saving procedures.

Patient safety remains a top priority on the local and EU Health agenda. In 2007 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 improve Patient Safety in the European Union and set out the framework for the development and implementation of a strategy for patient safety at national and EU levels. Research is underway on the development of 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 2007, the Division was represented on the following Committees:

- National Pandemic Preparedness Committee
- Medical Equipment Consultative Committee (Mater Dei Hospital)
- Health Ethics Committee
- Gender Mainstreaming Committee
- Quality Assurance Steering Committee
- Risk Management Subcommittee
- Malta Resuscitation Council
- Clinical Waste Consultative Group
- Public Private Partnership Committee.

During 2007 the Division continued with 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.

Within the National Committee, we facilitated the drawing up of the National Influenza Pandemic Plan which was finalised in April 2007.

ST LUKE'S HOSPITAL/MATER DEI HOSPITAL

29 June 2007 was the historic date when the Mater Dei Hospital was handed over from Skanska to the Government of Malta. The migration process from St Luke's Hospital (SLH) to the Mater Dei Hospital (MDH) started on 19 July 2007, when the management offices migrated to their new department at MDH. During the intensive migration period starting from 5 November 2007 and ending 20 November 2007, the migration process was co-ordinated and overseen by a Migration Core Team working from two control centres, one at SLH and one at MDH. In all, 411 acute patients and nine babies were transferred from St Luke's Hospital to the Mater Dei Hospital during the entire process. 160 non-acute patients were left behind at SLH during the migration. From migration onwards, all potential social cases and rehabilitation patients arising at MDH are transferred on an ongoing basis to Karen Grech Hospital or Zammit Clapp Hospital.

Overview

The major objectives for 2007 were for SLH and MDH were:

- Continuity of acute hospital services at SLH/MDH before, during and after migration
- Planning and implementation of migration from SLH to MDH
- To ensure that MDH was functioning in an acceptable manner following the opening date
- Human resources
- Extensive staff training programme on MDH (particularly training on new equipment)
- IT requirements at MDH
- Relocation of social cases at SLH
- Efforts to improve internal and external communications at SLH/MDH
- Planning and implementation of the handover of SLH to ZCH during the migration
- Preparation of a realistic MDH operation budget for 2008
- Post-migration fine-tuning of operational issues.

Hospital Management

The major undertaking for Human Resources and Administration in 2007 was the extensive accelerated recruitment programme in support of migration of services. Various human resources issues were dealt with, including: recruitment of various members of staff, technical staff, medical staff, dental surgery assistants, and others. Enhancement of occupational skill of support staff was carried out. Clerical/Reception Services for MDH was contracted. Several meetings were held with different unions including MAM, MUMN, UHM, GWU and others. The Directorate was involved in the formulation of the parking policy and the issue of access control and staff cards. A Sick Leave policy was finalised in order to reduce the abuse on sick leave. The Directorate was also involved in the discussion of staff meals and staff restaurant at MDH. Considerable number of students commenced their summer work phase at the Medical Records, Personnel, Engineering and Pharmacy. A staff nursery at B'Kara Oratory was operational by the end of migration. A smoking policy was developed to identify areas outside the hospital building to serve as smoking areas for the general public and staff. The Hospital Administration tackled several pressing issues including: public transport, seminar rooms booking, telephony (1,804 installations of telephone sets), free phone service and general complaints. A new internal telephone directory has been prepared for all staff members.

Around 750 requests for continuous medical/dental/pharmacy education were processed. A total of 170 disciplinary proceedings were initiated. These follow from the findings of the sick leave verification and other regular monitoring procedures. In 2007 MDH management staff was offered a number of training and CPD opportunities to enhance their management and leadership skills. Specialist training, training for support staff (ESF 43) and staff psycho-social support service was offered.

The Health and Safety Unit has worked to raise awareness and distribute relevant updated Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) information. Total number of trained personnel on Basic Fire Fighting is around 1,300. Total number of consultations and guidelines regarding OHS issues amount to 35 each month. Inspections were made in each ward and workplace to seek out best OHS standards. OHS participated in various policies and guidelines which included Non-smoking, Helipad procedures, bomb threats and physical security, proper storage and transportation of gases and medication in stores, guidelines on the performance of risk assessments, and guidelines on movement of people and vehicles in Level -2 areas at MDH.

The Directorate Nursing Services (DNS) (SLH/MDH) had overall responsibility for the Nursing Services provided within SLH and MDH and for the migration of the staff and patients from SLH to MDH.

By the end of the year, there were 10 Departmental Managers: seven Managers for each of the seven nursing departments within MDH, one manager responsible for the nursing services of the hospital during the night, one responsible for Bed Management and one for Operations Support and IT. By the end of the year, there were 37 NOs, 30 Acting NOs, 22 DNOs, 22 Acting DNO. This means that almost half (47%) of the nursing management of the clinical areas was made up of persons in acting positions. There were also 563 Staff Nurses and 283 Enrolled nurses, as well as about 200 other staff members including nursing aides, and health care workers, making the Directorate responsible for more than 1,100 members of staff.

The transfer of the clinical areas from SLH to MDH resulted in a significant re-organisation of the nursing department, with new wards and units being created (Observation Ward, Emergency Ward 2 (SAU), MITU, Rainbow Ward and Cardiac Medical Ward), others ceasing to exist (M7), and the total reorganisation of others (e.g. Theatres, Infectious Diseases Unit, Medical Out Patients, Physiological Measures etc). Other new services (Paediatric Day Care, Plastic Surgery, Primary Care Area and Pre Hospital Care in A&E) or the expansion of existing services (e.g. in Renal Unit, CICU, Theatres, Urology 2) are also planned, pending the availability of more staff.

All staff was trained on the various medical and engineering systems in use at MDH. A system of ‘train the trainers’ was set up where key persons were identified, trained and then charged with training staff in their area.

The Clinical and Social Support Services Advisory Group (officially inaugurated on 21 February 2007) has been established in order to create a medium for the dissemination of information between the executive management and the group of paramedical and clinical staff. Thirteen meetings were held during the year to set up the Advisory Group, including the formulation of the mission statement, statute and objectives for the year, meetings with Executive Directors within the SLH/MDH organisation and high ranking officials within the Ministry of Health, the Elderly and Community Care and active participation in the migration to MDH. Three reports were drawn up during the year: Hospital Volunteers during and after migration, Observations and comments in relation to Draft Mental Health Act 2007 and Proposals on Primary Health and Community Care.

The Chart of Accounts as a first step in the setting up of Mater Dei Hospital’s Nominal Ledger has been compiled. The cost centres were reviewed to have them in line with the requirements of MDH. Overtime requests were submitted to MHEC for approval and eventual allocation to the various sections/departments. Regular performance reports on Actual Overtime incurred were also submitted to MHEC and presented to the Executive Management Committee.

The accounts section processed a large number of purchase and payment requests, including the generation and recording of financial transactions, monthly reconciliation statements and other *ad hoc* reports.

The introduction of the System of Health Accounts (SHA) is wholly dependent on clearly defined criteria in the categorisation of procedures. A detailed report consisting of the splitting up of the payroll costs by cost centre for 2005 and 2006 has been compiled. Until such time as all the systems are in place, the

Department continued to improve on the payroll data by Cost Centre through the use of the DAKAR Software System. In conjunction with the Medical Materials Management Directorate and the Pharmacy, a system is now in place to ensure regular and timely reporting of consumption of medical materials and pharmaceuticals by each cost centre. Improvement is needed in the analysis of financial data by mode of service delivery i.e. Inpatient, Day Care and Out-patients. Besides the financial aspects, it is of the utmost importance that the hospital continues to generate, comprehensive activity data and analysis which documents all episodes of care.

On 30 December, euro conversion was performed on three Access Accounts databases, which were successfully implemented. The databases included MDH, MDH-PH and the old SLH databases. The conversion took about 24 hours to be completed. Accounts checked balances to verify that all was acceptable.

A guideline on the Transfer of Inventory on Migration to Mater Dei Hospital has been finalised, distributed and published on KURA. This document provided detailed guidelines to staff at SLH on the procedures necessary to ensure effective control is maintained and to eliminate discrepancies during the transfer of assets from SLH to MDH. During this year, the compilation and recording of fixed assets at MDH has been commenced. Unfortunately there are problems since a considerable amount of items do not have stickers attached to them or are being detached or being torn during handling. The Policy regarding the Patients' Valuables at MDH has been revised. It has been decided by MHEC that MDH will also have to take into custody the valuables belonging to deceased patients.

The Customer Care Services department dealt with the management of complaints, enquiries, external communications, migration-related issues and new service development initiatives. The department was also involved in the regular monitoring of the Non-Attendees and Cancellation Project. This resulted that 14% of the number of those contacted had cancelled their appointment and other patients were seen instead.

An External Communications Strategy was devised and put in action. This involved participation in media, visits by staff and relatives, organisation of the open weekend, creation of information booklet, the setting up and the day-to-day running of a call centre – Linja Mater Dei 158 (which answered more than 13,000 calls from 22 October 2007 till the end of migration) and the management of the generic e-mail – mdh@gov.mt.

In association with Volserv, a programme for volunteers in Out-Patients' and the Main Concourse of MDH were established. Voluntary services are being very useful for way-finding i.e. in guiding people the way around the hospital, and provided assistance during several conferences held at MDH. Several policies have been formulated including a role description for voluntary services officers, a religious belief policy, and training of all volunteers on several aspects of hospital work including professional secrecy and the Data Protection Act. A visiting time policy was formulated for MDH. A process for decentralisation of booking of new case appointments was initiated. E-Government services are also being discussed. The following forms are to go online: Referral of a patient to hospital, Application for prenatal classes, and Application for organ donations. Once the online service is up and running, patients could be reminded of their upcoming appointment via an SMS.

The year was an exceptional one for the Information Management and Technology (IM&T) Directorate as the normal day-to-day IM&T related work at SLH and MDH was supplemented by the work carried out on two major projects: the implementation of Phase One of the new Integrated Health Information System (IHIS) and the physical migration of almost all the existing IT systems and services at SLH to MDH. The greatest challenge was undoubtedly the balance between managing and enhancing the numerous existing information systems at SLH and developing new systems for MDH, while preparing for and carrying out the physical migration between the two sites. This challenge was met with very limited in-house resources against a backdrop of tight migration deadlines. On 3 June, the IT network went live across all MDH (except the IHC area), according to schedule.

ICM was officially launched on 9 August and went officially live at SLH/MDH on 21 August 2007. The RIS/PACS went technically live at MDH for skeletal and chest imaging modalities on 30 September, while it went technically live for all other modalities (except MRI) in October. On 19 November, PACS went into use at Casualty. On 7 December, iSoft iLab, the stand-alone Laboratory Information System (LIS), went live. A period of adjustment was required, within which all disciplines (except Mortuary) had gone live. The Pathology Department now boasts a fully integrated system. Phase One will be completed early in 2008 when the integration between the Clinicom PAS, iCM, RIS/PACS and the LIS goes into live clinical use.

Throughout 2007, intensive efforts were made to secure adequate human resource for the implementation of the IHIS and the migration of all information systems from SLH to MDH. During the year a large number of calls for applications were issued and processed by the Directorate. The Directorate faced intense difficulty in providing services during the migration period; it will continue to face significant challenges until effective recruitment approaches are adopted.

The team of three IT trainers pursued a regular schedule of activities, with a range of lectures to various individuals working for MHEC. These concerned several PAS modules as well as EGM, Internet and HAA. Trainers also trained and retrained users and activated accounts for various members of staff in different wards/units. iSoft Clinical Manager was later added to the training portfolio, followed by GE Centricity Web (PACS) in October, which proved to be a program that was vitally important for the successful Go Live of MDH. The trainers trained a very large number of doctors in record time during October and November, leading to successful use of the PACS by doctors all across MDH from 12 November onwards.

The Application Support Section began operating formally on 1 July 2007. The main function of this section is to offer IT application support to all MDH employees and on certain occasions to other employees within the Health Division. Support is given to employees in various IT applications which are used at MDH.

Data was extracted regularly throughout the year, for use in routine reports for the Central Performance Management Unit (Admissions, A&E, Out-patients), the Medical Records Department, the IT Trainers' Section, the Data Management Unit, the Department Nursing Managers and the HR department as well as in *ad hoc* reports on ward admissions, ward attenders, use of hospital services by migrants, reports for the Customer Care department, data required for replies to PQ's, and data required by the Medical Records Department.

The Electronic Case Summary (ECS) went live during 2007. By the end of the year, 80 user accounts for medical doctors were in use. One of the features of this system is computer generated prescriptions for which the issue of a legal notice was required.

A new ID Tag system was developed and implemented for MDH using in-house resources. This system is based on the one that had been developed for SLH, and is used to print eye-readable data on MDH staff ID tags. Support was provided, whenever required, to HR directorate staff during the use of this system.

A new Surgical Register database was developed and configured. Surgical operations from 2008 onwards will be inputted into this new database, which also has a different front-end. Access Accounts was installed in several sites which include Pharmacy, Finance and the Supplies Stores. All stock data was exported from the old database and cleaned. Accounts and security profiles have been created. Online Requisitions System (ORS) was updated to be more user-friendly than the one used at SLH. New features were included to help make it easier for nurses to order items from Stores online.

The total number of Hospital Activity Analysis (HAA) Forms received at the Data Management Unit from November 2006 to October 2007 amounted to 36,482. On comparing the number of HAA forms received with the total number of admissions (59,161) as recorded on the Patient Administration System for the

mentioned months, one can see that the return rate for all HAA forms received was of 61.7%. On comparison with the same period of last year, the response rate of HAA received decreased by 5.3%. The main reason cited by the ward staff for not compiling was the lack of interest from the medical doctors to fill the HAA forms, this in spite of the repeated awareness in the importance of filling the HAA forms for statistical analysis. Hopefully the introduction of the Electronic Case Summary in every ward will improve the response rate of the HAA forms.

The Kura hospital intranet was maintained throughout the year. A large number of new user accounts were added as necessary to allow access to the Medical Records Online Files Request facility. Users were also trained or assisted to register and use the system. New graphics were created in-house incorporating the new MDH logo.

2007 witnessed a lot of changes in the Medical Records Department (MRD), especially in its management and staff complement. Migration of MRD started on 22 October. It is expected that in 2008 the physical space at SLH will be handed over to SLH and that the new premises at MDH on Level -2 will be handed over to MRD. During the migration of MRD (which is still ongoing), the MRD is offering a split-site service, working both at SLH and MDH. This is only possible due to a tail-lift van which acts as a shuttle van between hospitals to transport urgent files and boxes on a 24-hour basis. Different exercises utilising reports derived from the PAS were carried out to identify certain issues and in preparation for migration. 437,407 files were loaned out from and returned to MRD in 2007. These numbers increased drastically during the months of October, November and December during migration.

Performance Review and Analysis

More than half a million patient records were analysed by the Clinical Performance Unit. The Total Bed complement at Mater Dei Hospital (as at 31 December 2007) stood at 811 beds for inpatients. The Available Bed days were 356,053 resulting in mean bed occupancy of 76.1%. The turnover rate, that is the mean number of patients that have occupied any one bed during the period, was 74.7. The average Ward length of stay was 4.3 days. The total number of Direct Admission was 47,220 whilst the Transfers-In to the ward was 14,530. The Number of Patients treated and discharged from the hospital was 45,829, the total number of Deaths was 1,463. The total numbers of Day Care beds available amounted to 96; in addition there were 54 Nursery cots. The total number of day cases was 13,815. The total number of social cases was 244. At Out-Patient clinics there were 252,422 registered attendances, of these 70,678 (28%) as new cases and 181,744 (72%) as follow-ups and walk-ins.

The efforts of all the staff in the Accident and Emergency Department were rewarded by a relatively smooth migration process of the Emergency Services. The total number of patients registered in 2007 was 111,688, of which 15,119 were ambulance cases i.e. 13.5%. Of the total patients registered, 80,882 (72%) were self-referrals. 30,174 were referrals by GPs and health centres.

| Source of Referral | Admitted | % | Not Admitted | % | Total |
|--------------------|----------|----|--------------|----|---------------|
| GP & Health Centre | 9,198 | 30 | 20,976 | 70 | 30,174 |
| Self-Referral | 13,390 | 17 | 67,492 | 83 | 80,882 |
| Others | n/a | | n/a | | 632 |

The validity of the gate keeping role of Primary Care is confirmed by this table.

The Observation Unit (OU) in the A&E Department is a new facility and consists of 10 beds. This Unit caters for those patients that are potentially discharged from the A&E Department but require to be kept under medical observation for a number of hours, or pending investigation results. An official Operation Policy for the Observation Unit was developed and implemented from the first day of migration.

The Primary Care Area in the A&E Department was also a new concept in MDH. This area incorporates Dental, Ophthalmic, ENT and Gyn/Obs Examination Rooms, to deal with emergencies in these specialties. There are also facilities to treat patients that are neither Emergency nor require detailed assessment or admission, cases than can be seen by GPs or health centre doctors.

Training was organised for all staff working in the A&E Department. It included repeated walk-through visits for familiarisation with the A&E Department and with the different support areas in the hospital focusing on the relationship of activities to each other, and detailed hands-on orientation and introduction exercise to the systems and equipment. Porters and ambulance drivers were separately given orientation and basic, first aid training.

The Department of Medicine has a total of 30 Consultant Physicians with their support staff. Specialisations include: cardiology, neurology, haematology, endocrinology and diabetes, gastroenterology, rheumatology, respiratory, nephrology and infectious diseases. The department was successfully transferred to MDH. A Clinical Practice Guidelines Committee has been set up in this Department. The following Clinical Practice Guidelines have been officially endorsed for the use of the Department of Medicine: Management of Chemotherapy complications including tumour lysis protocol, Antibiotic policy, Antiemetic policy, Extravasation policy, Hickman line care and transfusion policy; Treatment of Haemophilia; Severe Sepsis and Septic Shock Guideline; Diabetic Ketoacidosis in Adults; Suspected Lower Limb Deep Vein thrombosis Guideline; Treatment of DVT Guideline; Hypokalaemia and Hyperkalaemia; and Initial Chest Pain Assessment Guideline.

A consensus policy on overcrowding in Medical wards has been put into effect which will facilitate the use of beds in non Medical Wards for Medical patients during periods of overcrowding. A substantial number of Anticoagulant Clinic patients have been transferred to peripheral clinics hence reducing overcrowding at the out-patient area. The Medical Admission Ward is rendering valuable service. Formal postgraduate teaching and training is high priority.

A total of 375 patients were seen at Nurse led Rheumatology Clinic and 1,357 patients who attended the Rheumatology injection clinic.

A total of 250 new cases on enteral nutrition (EN) and 40 new cases on total parenteral nutrition (TPN) were followed up in 2007. The main areas of services offered by Dietetic Services included dietary advice to patients referred by consultation from all departments and wards at St Luke's Hospital/MDH and from other hospitals with a wide range of clinical conditions, liaison with consultant physician and clinical nutrition nurse regarding Naso-Gastric Feeding, Total Parental Nutrition, food supplementation and alternative products, and professional advice to Medical Stores on products purchased by GPS and which fall under the category of nutritional supplements or complete foods. 2,766 total patient contacts for 2007 were as follows:

| Referrals | New Cases | Follow-up |
|-----------------------|--------------|------------|
| Diabetes OP/IP | 689 | 400 |
| Medical OP/IP | 492 | 155 |
| Surgical OP/IP | 90 | 20 |
| Paediatrics | 194 | 134 |
| Orthopaedics | 155 | 59 |
| Other Hospitals | 10 | 12 |
| Health Centres | 121 | 48 |
| Gozo General Hospital | 187 | Nil |
| Total | 1,938 | 828 |

The Cardiac Medical Ward took in its first acute cardiac patients on 12 November 2007. A total of 338 patients were admitted to the ward in its first six weeks of operation. This ward takes inpatients from the

A&E Department, CCU, Cath Lab. and the Cardiac Lab., all medical wards, Medical Admission Ward and from the Out-Patients Department.

436 patients have been admitted in Cardiac Intensive Care Unit (CICU) in year 2007. 381 were admitted post a cardiac operation, 21 were re-admitted due to a post-operative complication and 34 patients were admitted for other causes. There were 294 Coronary Artery Bypass Graft operations, 56 valve replacement, one heart transplant, 20 double operations, and one repair of Atrial Septal Defect.

During the year, 351 cardio-thoracic cases required cardiopulmonary bypass (CPB). This was a decrease of 15% when compared to the previous year. However there was an overall increase in the use of blood products when compared to 2006.

As from 2007, the number of PTCA cases requiring stand-by cover was being recorded. Out of 294 known stand-by cover requested by Cath Lab, only one patient required emergency surgery due to a failed PTCA procedure.

In 2007, 83% of the CABG patients required CPB and only 1.7% of combined bypass and valve surgery required CPB. 12.9% of the patients undergoing valvular surgery required CPB and 1.7% of other cardiac surgeries made use of CPB. Other perfusion techniques carried out are haemofiltration (25 cases) and blood cardioplegia (205 cases).

The Department of Surgery includes the following specialities: General Surgery, Urology, Paediatric Surgery, ENT Surgery, Neurosurgery, Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery and Vascular Surgery. A total of 49,342 Out-Patient attendances were seen. Of these 14,522 were New Cases and 34,820 were Follow-Ups. 15,116 procedures were carried out, 2,710 were admitted to the Day Care Surgery Unit and a total of 5,175 endoscopic procedures were carried out. 378 medical patients were admitted directly to surgical wards; this resulted in a loss of 1,571 bed days to the Surgical Department and hence loss of beds for elective surgery.

In the Department of Orthopaedics, a total of 3,495 operations were performed (a net decrease of just 53 operations over 2006 in spite of the migration to Mater Dei Hospital). These included 1,772 (51%) trauma cases and 1,723 (49%) elective operations. 102 'Complex Major' Surgery cases (3%), 649 'Major +' (19%), 691 'Major' (20%), 1,596 'Intermediate' (47%), 366 'Minor' (11%) and 6 (<1%) were unspecified. 75 total hip replacements or revisions were performed. There were also 233 knee replacements or revisions, 95 hemiarthroplasty, 367 arthroscopies (17 bilaterals) and 66 spinal surgery procedures. 3,084 were direct admissions and 'in-transfers' (an increase of 108 over 2006) and 983 were registered as Day Case Orthopaedic admissions to SLH/MDH. 10,422 new cases (a net increase of 659 over 2006) and 16,147 follow-ups (a net increase of 2,052 over 2006) were seen at orthopaedic out-patient.

Besides supporting the Maternity (3,332 newborns assisted) and A&E services (9,185 children seen in Paediatric Casualty), the Department of Paediatrics had 4,688 general paediatric ward episodes, of which 48.5% were in-patient admissions, and 51.5% were day cases and ward attenders. There were also 143 oncology admissions, 888 cardiology reviews, 339 admissions to the Special Care Baby Unit and 19 children admitted in the Adult Intensive Care Unit. There were 12,325 child attendances in the various out-patients' clinics and 2,521 episodes of care at the CDAU. A total of 6,408 cases reviewed at Well Baby Clinics and 267 were referred to health centres.

The Department also provided medical assessment and follow-up for specific groups of children in need: 204 children in the community who are at risk of, or are undergoing any form of abuse be it physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect; 208 children living in institutional care or in foster care; and 14 children admitted to hospital with suspected abuse.

The performance of the Department of Pathology during 2007 (and percentage change from 2006) was as follows:

| Service | No. of Tests | % Change from 2006 |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| Cytology | 9,820 | + 1.9 |
| Histopathology | 77,225 | + 8.5 |
| Haematology | 429,494 | + 20.0 |
| Clinical Chemistry | 2,152,395 | + 11.0 |
| Bacteriology* | 540,755 | - 12.8 |
| Virology* | 63,182 | + 10.0 |
| Mycology | 4,800 | + 2.8 |
| Immunology | 89,720 | + 5.9 |
| Toxicology | 51,631 | - 0.1 |
| Emergency Lab** | 751,895 | - 25.0 |
| Genetics, Molecular | 10,525 | - 7.3 |
| Blood Bank | 80,645 | +44.0 |

* Serology tests shifted from Bacteriology to Virology in 2007

** Data does not include totals for urgent haematological tests carried out in November and December 2007. This data is however included with the global haematology totals for 2007.

173,207 examinations were carried out in the Department of Radiology units within St Luke's Hospital. 48.6% of all radiological examinations carried out at the A&E Department. 8.2% were carried out at the Out-Patients Unit. 74,842 examinations were performed at the Main Radiology Department as follows (percentage change from 2006 in brackets):

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| General Planar Radiography | 24,658 (- 2.3%) |
| Magnetic Resonance Imaging | 6,895 (+ 12.8%) |
| Ultrasound examination | 17,802 (+ 3.1%) |
| Mammograms | 3,859 (- 8.5%) |
| All contrast medium studies | 4,233 (+ 1.5%) |
| CT scans | 14,187 (- 2.2%) |
| Angiography (not cardiac) | 873 (+ 4.6%) |
| Gamma Scans | 2,335 (- 9.9%) |

The Pain Management clinic is run by two Consultant Anaesthetists/Pain Specialists. They perform two Out-Patient sessions per week and four interventional sessions. Also two sessions are performed by two registrars for trigger points/zones infiltrations, Transcutaneous Electric Nerve Stimulators (TENS) and others. During 2007, there was an increasing demand for the services of the pain clinic from oncology patients who in turn are treated urgently. Consequently, the waiting list for interventional pain management procedures on other patients is getting longer.

The total number of patients seen at the Department of Dental Surgery was:

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| New cases | 12,099 |
| Follow-ups | 4,507 |
| Other | 4,054 |
| Walk in patients | 552 |
| Total Patients | 21,212 |

There were 3,915 contacts in Consultant Clinics, 58 contacts in the Cleft lip and Palate Clinic and 102 contacts in the Consultant Child Dental Clinic. 4,415 treatments under local anaesthesia were performed. 282 procedures were performed under general anaesthesia. The bulk of the workload was Conservation and Prosthetics with 12,119 contacts.

Dental hygienists provide their service at St Luke's Hospital, Mater Dei Hospital, Primary Health Care clinics, St Vincent de Paul (SVPR) residence. A total of 2,857 cases were seen at SLH whereas 196 patients were seen at SVPR. A total of 1,605 patients received finished custom-made dental appliances. The movement to Mater Dei Hospital was successful.

Visits by foreign specialists to St Luke's Hospital generated a number of activities. 125 surgical procedures were carried out in Spinal Surgery, Paediatric Cardiology, Vascular Surgery, Hand Surgery, Orthopaedic Surgery, Uro-Surgery, Paediatric Surgery, Pain Management and Ophthalmic Surgery. Consultants who were brought to SLH during the year included: a consultant in Paediatric Respiratory Diseases, a Paediatric Nephrologist, a Paediatric Oncologist, a Paediatric Endocrinologist, a Paediatric Gastroenterologist, an Orthotist and Prosthetist, a Paediatric Neuro Muscular Diseases Consultant, a Paediatric Neurologist, a Paediatric Neurosurgeon, an Ocular Prosthetist and a Cochlear Implant specialist. 258 patients (404 episodes) were sent for treatment abroad.

A total of 3,026 persons qualified for free medical aides and appliances, whilst a total of 44,883 applications (20,226 new cases and 24,657 renewals) for free medicines under Schedule V of the Social Security Act were processed.

The migration of the Pharmaceutical Services to Mater Dei involved a lot of preparatory work. At St Luke's hospital, the inpatients and out-patients pharmacies were split with each having its own store, at Mater Dei the infrastructural set-up is different and one store is allocated to both pharmacies. The provision of services was modified and the ordering and delivery system from GPS was revised. Orders to GPS are made electronically, thus making the ordering system more efficient. A Policy Manual has been compiled to serve as a guide for the proper operation of the Pharmacy services within the new hospital.

The revision of the ordering and distribution system for medicines to wards achieved the following targets: new policies for ordering and supplying of pharmaceuticals, some medicines were transferred from the non-formulary items to the Formulary section, guidance to ward management regarding the assembly of the Clean utility room and on the safe and secure transfer of medicines from SLH and MDH, new emergency trolleys were assembled and distributed to all the wards, ward orders medicines through the online Requisition system. It is envisaged to introduce a ward top-up system for pharmacy in the forthcoming year to achieve better financial control.

A total of 118,316 patients attended Out-patients Department/MDH throughout 2007, an average of 396 patients per working day. This was a 15.5% decrease when compared to the previous year. This could be attributed to a change in the frequency of dispensing which was extended from two to three months. The number of sales from the Pharmacy in 2007 reached a total of 9,802, a 56% increase over the previous year.

A total of 177,784 items were dispensed from the Inpatients pharmacy, 98,902 occurring during the day and 78,882 occurring at night. An average of 23 Emergency drug drawers are exchanged per month, with a total of 68 items replaced in the trolley. Approximately 2,064 non-formulary items are dispensed to wards every month.

A total of 573 patients were dispensed anti-tuberculosis drugs, a 30.8% increase over 2006.

The number of green prescription drugs dispensed in 2007 reached a total of 16,029.

A Medical Gases Pipeline System Policy for Mater Dei was set up and implemented for supply of medical gas cylinders to wards. The supply and delivery of medical gas cylinders to health centres and Boffa Hospital was farmed out. Following an extensive exercise to determine the medical gas cylinder requirements for wards and clinical areas at MDH, a starting stock of over 1,000 medical gases cylinders were delivered through Pharmacy for Mater Dei. Quality Assurance of all medical gases supplied including liquid oxygen is undertaken by a QA pharmacist. An exercise in retrieving medical gas cylinders in wards and plant rooms from SLH was performed; a total of 212 were transferred to MDH and a total of 168 were transferred to Zammit Clapp Hospital (ZCH). 677 cylinders were returned to the supplier. A retrieval exercise was also carried out for domiciliary oxygen cylinders with the result that 125 cylinders were returned.

A new patient queuing system has been established, whereby patients take a numbered ticket on entering the waiting area and a voice prompt directs the patient to the particular dispensing cubicle. The Pharmacy dispensing transaction can be entered electronically and a label is generated listing the medication dispensed to patients which is attached to the entitlement card. This system enables the user to see previous transactions thus facilitating future transactions. The Pharmacy uses the Pneumatic Tube System for receipt of urgent manual orders and also for supply of urgent medicines to wards.

The re-packaging system is now undertaken by the QA & Compounding section. A total of 463 batch runs were made for medicines intended for out-patients with a total of 104,545 packs. 237 batch runs were made for medicines intended for wards with a total of 33,630 packs.

The Reconstitution Unit at Mater Dei Hospital is currently undergoing further validation tests to ensure its safety and to reach ISO standards. There are plans to set up a Central IV Additive Service; however it is envisaged that more manpower would be needed and a risk assessment exercise should be performed.

The Clinical Pharmacy Service is currently being provided to 15 consultants within the Department of Medicine. Clinical Pharmacists perform on average 700 interventions a month. Clinical pharmacists have other functions, namely of consulting, defining drug formularies, participating in clinical trials, teaching and training. They also vet requests for non-formulary items and are on the Clinical Practice Guidelines Committee. The Medicines Information Service provides information and advice on all aspects of the therapeutic use of medicines. It also provides medical toxicology services. The Medicines and Poisons Information section is actively involved in the provision of Proactive Medicines and Poisons Information through the biannual journal Rx Times.

Clinical Pharmacists also have important roles within the Medicines Approval Section. In 2007, 20,000 permits for non-formulary request were issued. They also work closely with consultants and NMPAU in the setting up of protocols for new drugs, deletion of drugs and requests for specific patients.

The number of new inpatients referred for physiotherapy was 8,894. They were given a total of 62,273 treatment sessions in the various wards. 31 home visits were carried out by ward staff. 3,399 treatments were carried out outside normal working hours. A total of 8,727 adult patients were referred to the adult Physiotherapy Department at St Luke's Hospital (and later from MDH). Of the total number of new patient referrals, 1,799 were re-directed to health centres and 58 to SVPR (out-patient treatment) leaving a total of 6,870 patients who were treated at SLH. A total of 45,712 out-patient treatment sessions (adult services) were carried out at SLH. There were 1,044 new paediatric out-patient referrals and were given 5,340 treatment sessions. The number of home and school visits carried out was 86.

The total number of patients who received Occupational Therapy services as inpatients was 1,680, as out-patients was 2,786 and 7,816 at CDAU. 7,790 sessions in wards, 13,798 sessions at out-patients and 13,253 sessions amounting to 106,441 units of care were delivered. 2,415 patients were new cases. 452 home and 48 school visits were performed.

The Central Sterile Services Department (CSSD) supplies sterile services to all wards, units, departments and theatres in the Health Division. As from 12 November 2007, both TSSUs of the Main theatre and Orthopaedic theatre ceased to function, and the service is being delivered centrally from CSSD.

In view of the increased demand for its services, the CSSD had to extend the operating hours by three hours, from 1900 to 2200 and a night duty shift was introduced. Furthermore, two employees are giving their service in the dental department on a daily basis. These factors reduced the manpower to four employees per shift. To rectify this situation, there was a change in roster and a new course for CSSD technicians was introduced through the Malta College of Arts and Technology. The CSSD also requires the services of another porter.

Quality Assurance tests were introduced to ensure that all contamination processes are done and documented and may be used for future references. A problem with the cleaning and disinfection of medical devices arose and this problem is being tackled.

MOUNT CARMEL HOSPITAL (MCH)

Overview

The main targets of the Department of Psychiatry at Mount Carmel Hospital (MCH) for 2007 were:

- Focus on the consolidation of existing services, on the modernisation of the hospital's facilities and on the extension of the Mental Health Community Services
- Addressing human resource limitations
- The new medical, paramedical and nursing agreements signed between the Government and the unions concerned
- Staff training and the refurbishment of the new Training Centre at MCH began operations
- At ward level, the nursing department contributed towards the introduction of assessment charts, care plans and operational protocols
- Preparatory work for refurbishment of Female Wards 3A & B
- Refurbishment of staff canteen, the Male Ward 3 and Half Way House and other modernisation and refurbishment projects
- Short Stay Psychiatric Unit (SSPU) expanded from an eleven bedded mixed gender open unit to a fifteen bedded at Mater Dei Hospital (MDH)
- Centralisation of the Occupational Therapy (OT) department at the Colony Building outside MCH
- Transfer of the Clinical Psychology Department to MDH.

Performance Review and Analysis

There were 433 first admissions and 861 re-admissions. Statistics for patients admitted to Mount Carmel Hospital are summarised by the following activity figures:

| MCH Admissions | Males (%) | Females (%) | Total |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Informal | 545 (71) | 222 (29) | 767 |
| Compulsory | 337 (63) | 200 (37) | 537 |
| Re-transferred* | 57 (51) | 54 (49) | 111 |
| Total | 939 (66) | 476 (34) | 1,415 |

* Patients who were transferred (discharged) to SLH/MDH and re-transferred (re-admitted) to MCH

| Discharges | Total (%) |
|--------------|--------------------|
| Males | 926 (70) |
| Females | 391 (30) |
| Total | 1,317 (100) |

The Dual Diagnosis Unit (DDU) consists of six male beds. There were 90 admissions: 33 (37%) new admissions and 57 re-admissions (63%). 78 (87%) of the admissions were informal whereas 12 (13%) were compulsory.

The Rehabilitation Unit consists of the mixed gender Half Way House (HWH), Male and Female Hostels, and four long stay rehabilitation wards, i.e. Male & Female Wards 3A & 3B. The latter will undergo extensive refurbishment in the coming months. The preparatory work has been in progress on an interim transit ward for these patients. The unit has important outreach links with Sa Maison, Richmond Foundation and Suret-il Bniedem.

The Psycho-organic Unit consists of Male and Female Wards 2 and 7. Two consultants share responsibility for these wards.

The Young People's Unit is an 8-bedded mixed gender unit. It caters for youngsters with emotional and behavioural psychiatric problems up to the age of 16 years. Two consultant psychiatrists and a multidisciplinary team (consisting of nurses, teachers, occupational therapists, social workers, psychologist and physiotherapists) take care of the youngsters. The unit is very active and various sponsors assist including HSBC Care for Children Fund, Friends of Mount Carmel Hospital Society, Daniel Delicata Foundation and Prof Vassallo Trust. There were 20 admissions and 18 discharges. 274 Electroconvulsive Treatments were delivered during this year.

The Short Stay Psychiatric Unit admits informal patients for up to three weeks and is controlled by an updated protocol. It is managed by the newly-appointed consultation-liaison consultant but all nine consultants can admit patients to this unit which is mainly run by nurses supported to some extent by other multidisciplinary team members. Patient activity was as follows: 250 admissions of which 61.6% were females and 38.4% were males. 44% of patients were re-admissions. 912 psychiatric consultations were provided to acutely ill patients at St Luke's Hospital.

The migration of the Psychiatric Outpatient department to MDH entailed meticulous planning to anticipate the new systems operating there and to amalgamate psychiatric with general medical files. In 2007, there were 942 new cases; 11,808 follow-up attendances; and 264 depot injection attendances. 1,000 phlebotomy attendances and 70 attendances per month for clozapine related blood monitoring.

Twelve Learning Disability Clinics were held during 2007 (10 in 2006). At the Child Guidance Clinic, during 2007, 279 new cases (168 males and 111 females) were screened and 1,436 follow-up attendances (1,008 males and 428 females).

During 2007, at the Substance Misuse Co-morbidity OP Clinic, there were 38 new cases, 261 follow-up attendances and 195 failed to attend.

At the Neuropsychiatry Clinic, there were 49 clinics with 31 new cases and 142 follow-up attendances.

At the Perinatal Psychiatry Clinic, during 2007, there were 66 new cases and 324 follow-up attendances.

At Qormi Health Centre, 1,999 patients were seen during 2007. Another 3,743 patients were seen in Community Clinics held in the other health centres.

More than 200 in-patients were using the Occupational Therapy (OT) Department service on a regular basis. There were 64 new admission male service users and 76 new admission female service users.

In 2007, the psychologists within the Psychology Department followed 683 new cases and 352 follow-ups.

The Social Work Department at MCH received 567 new referrals and dealt with 763 home assessments, 55 court attendances, 224 meetings with other agencies, 697 office-based interview (over 45 minutes), 262 psychosocial reports, 97 assistance finding employment, 41 assistance finding vocational training and 211 assistance finding accommodation.

During 2007, the Physiotherapy department received a total of 146 psychiatric inpatients from the wards, with 100 being new referrals and with a total of 5,699 treatment sessions carried out.

At the pharmacy there were over 67,000 transactions, an increase of 1,750 transactions. The net cost of pharmaceutical and medical devices was of Lm580,000, an increase of Lm6,000 over 2006.

The Laboratory Services at MCH processed 86 different tests, amounting to a total of 21,712 test requests (20,407 in 2006).

During the year, 207 patients were seen on wards by the visiting dentist. There were 229 emergency dental clinic visits resulting in 182 extractions and other interventions. Approximately 60 patients were seen at Rabat Health Centre for conservation and dental hygiene. 18 patients have been provided with dentures.

Developments

During 2007 a new consultant (consultation-liaison psychiatry at St Luke's Hospital and Mater Dei Hospital) and a new senior registrar (supporting the Cospicua Community Service) were appointed. Two new consultants are being selected in two sub-speciality fields: substance misuse and learning disability. The clinical and non-clinical services are still hindered by a severe shortage of non-consultant medical and multidisciplinary staff which is having a negative effect on the services delivered to patients. The implications and impact of the new Government-MAM agreement provides a framework for postgraduate training.

The Short Stay Psychiatric Unit was an 11-bedded mixed gender open unit at SLH and was expanded to a 15-bedded unit at Mater Dei Hospital. An occupational therapist has been identified to support and help improve the therapeutic milieu of this unit hence improving the services provided by this unit at MDH.

The Occupational Therapy department has now centralised its services at the Colony Building outside the hospital. A number of objectives have been achieved during 2007. There are 12 occupational therapists working in MCH and another three in the community, two female care workers and seven male technical staff. OT services are offered to the acute admission wards, Young People's Unit, Rehabilitation Services and Learning Disability Services. Seven occupational therapists employed at the Social Centre provide a repertoire of activities seven days a week throughout the year. There is also a wide range of leisure and community based activities including song festival, picnics, cultural visits and several others.

The Psychology Department based at MCH has provided services in a wide range of multi-disciplinary settings including Mixed Admission Ward, Young People's Unit, Forensic Unit and Rehabilitation Unit, and at Psychiatric Out-patients, the Child Guidance Clinic and the Short Stay Psychiatric Unit. In August 2007, the department was transferred to Mater Dei Hospital.

The Social Work Department at MCH consists of 10 basic grade social workers, three senior social workers and one principal social worker. It 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.

Physiotherapists have worked within the multi-disciplinary team attending ward rounds as necessary, and liaising with various mental healthcare professionals especially in the Elderly Mentally III Sector, in the Rehabilitation and Community Sector and in the Child Psychiatric Sector (YPU). The Wheelchair Programme, initiated in 2005, was revamped. The ward managers were entrusted with the responsibility for the upkeep of their respective ward wheelchairs. The department was also involved in undergraduate teaching and in a wide range of CPD activities.

The Pharmacy Department is constituted of three main sections namely Dispensary, Pharmacy Stores and Clinical Pharmacy Section. Human resources are still a major problem as it is functioning on skeleton staff although towards the end of 2007 a Pharmacist and a Senior Pharmacy Technician were appointed.

Mount Carmel Hospital continued to offer a limited but useful laboratory service staffed by two lab technicians.

The official opening of Female Ward 1, which was refurbished to a high standard, left a very positive effect in the care given to patients. The opening of the New Teaching Centre was another important step forward. It comprises three different teaching rooms. Since it is situated at MCH, more MCH staff could attend

various seminars, teaching sessions and continued professional development organised throughout the year. Weekly meetings by the Nursing Administration with the nurses in charge of wards/units are held here.

The hospital restaurant was also refurbished, leaving positive feedback by the staff. Several social visits took place including: an official visit by the Prime Minister, the National Via Sacra Procession, the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and high authorities on World Mental Health Day. During the latter event, all speakers had encouraging messages towards the patients. Nursing staff together with patients organised an arts and hobbies exhibition to commemorate this day. Another visit was by the Horatio Board during which the Nursing Management took part in the informal discussions held with the hospital authorities. The Worker of the Year Award became an annual event and the number of nurses who are being recognised for their performance during the year has increased each year. Nursing staff who retire from service are presented with a memento in recognition for their service during this evening.

The nursing management took an active part in continued professional development. The management was also involved in the development of constant watch protocol at SLH/MDH. This office, together with the medical side is active in the improvement of Response Teams where one team is dealing with de-escalation/control of aggression and another with life threatening situations.

The Community Mental Health Services Department consists of:

- Qormi Primary Team
- Qormi Secondary Teams
- Qormi Day Centre
- Cospicua Day Centre
- Cospicua Health Centre (launched in November 2007; currently providing a limited service)
- Outreach Team
- Out-Patient Service
- Health Centre Peripheral Clinics.

Late in 2007, the owners of the premises of Qormi Day Centre wished to reclaim their property. A temporary arrangement for six months with the local parish priest is currently providing alternative premises to ensure service continuity.

An extensive training programme for Community Staff has been initiated since it is important that everyone understands mental illness; can build a healthy relationship with clients which would help them in their rehabilitation process; can help educate people about mental illness and its effects; has a right to further his/her education; has a right to feel part of the team s/he works in.

The first phase of this training programme was targeted at leaders and deputy leaders of community services and is now in its third year. The second phase is an ongoing one and aims at consolidating the first part of training and helping participants to apply what they learnt to their day-to-day problems. The third phase is also underway and is open to all staff working within this Department.

Finance Department

The inflation rate in 2007 measured in November 2007 was 3.29%. This affected the cost of the hospital's consumables. Food costs rose by 5.83% due to:

- Rise in some food prices
- An increase in the number of bed nights from 2006 to 2007 by 5%
- St Jeanne Antide Ward was operational at full capacity all year and hence affected food cost.

2007 like 2006 has continued to see an increase in repairs and alterations all over the hospital. The repairs cost in 2007 increased by 25% over 2006.

The cost of medicines increased in 2007 by 21% due to increase in cost of medicines and increase in bed nights.

Patients' salaries and allowances increased to euros 213,936 in 2007 as an average of 59 patients benefit of this scheme.

Water and Electricity consumption has pushed the cost up from 2006 by 14.24% due to an increased in the purchase and installations of air conditioners. To offset this however the cost of boiler fuel has gone down by 21%.

Training costs have decreased because in 2007, the hospital was not obliged to finance scholarships abroad.

SIR PAUL BOFFA HOSPITAL (SPBH)

Overview

The main items on the agenda were:

- That Sir Paul Boffa Hospital will continue to focus on Oncology, Dermatology and Neuro Rehabilitation services up to the day when it ceases to exist and the same services would commence to be offered from Zammit Clapp Hospital excluding the Neuro Rehabilitation services.
- The upgrading and extension of the former Female Oncology Ward wherein the Neuro Rehabilitation Unit has been re-allocated proved a success. This ward offers plenty of extra space and the bed complement has been increased by two.
- The new Chemotherapy Day Ward, inaugurated during 2005, has also proved a success. Considering that the number of chemotherapy patients has increased sharply during the last years, the present location is adequate to cater for this increased workload.
- Further studies and meetings were held for the establishment of a Palliative Care Unit at the former Spinal Unit of this hospital in order to accommodate cancer patients in a better environment. This has been temporarily suspended and it was decided to establish this service upon migration to Zammit Clapp Hospital.
- The refurbishing and extending the old NRU Ward into a multi conference unit has proved another success. Part of the required visual equipment has been acquired. Discussion meetings and lectures are being held by various departments and entities in appropriate conditions.
- The CT Simulator that has been installed through the assistance of the International Atomic Agency, the Malta Cancer Foundation and the Maria Bugeja Cancer Support Group in collaboration with the Ministry of Health is providing accurate three dimensional images while the consultants and radiographers are concluding treatments with better results and efficiency.

Performance Review and Analysis

There were a total of 26,387 Dermatology out-patient visits during 2007, a 2.2% decrease over the previous year. The ratio of new cases to follow-ups was 1.38. The detailed activity swings were: 5,817 new cases (-12.8%), 4,205 follow ups (-1.9%), 1,486 minor operations (+11.6%), patch tests 130 (+6.6%), leg ulcers 4,794 (-5.4%), 3,972 PUVA/UVB (+6.6%), 236 plastic surgeries (+7.2%), 367 skin tags (-46.3%), 204 laser (-32.7%) and 2,221 attended the GU clinic (+14.4%).

106 patients were admitted to the Dermatology Ward during 2007.

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Total no. of admissions in 2007 | 106 (+5 remaining from 2006) |
| Number of Male Patients | 57 |
| Number of Female Patients | 49 |
| Minimum length of stay | 1 night |
| Maximum length of stay | 84 days |
| Average length of stay of patients | 25 days |

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Total bed stay of all patients | 2,800 |
| Average daily bed state | 7.7 patients per day |

The Leg Ulcer Clinic started to be held in Ward as from 10 October 2007. In order to provide a better service, restructuring of the leg ulcer room is due to start in January 2008.

| | |
|------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Total no. of patients that attended the clinic | 428 |
| Total no. of leg ulcers done in clinic | 519 |

The Oncology Department had 944 new cases referred for treatment. Of these, 619 received radiotherapy at the time of presentation, 264 received chemotherapy as Out-Patients, and 277 received hormone therapy. A number of patients received a combination of therapies. The number of treatments was as follows: Radiotherapy – 14,559; Chemotherapy – 5,142; Simulator Planning – 1,021; Mould Room appliances – 82; Cobalt Planning – 168; Linac Verification of Films – 275. 34 High Dose Radioactive Iodine, 24 Low Dose Radioactive Iodine, 2 Radioactive Phosphorus and 5 Caesium insertion treatments were administered in the Isotope Administration Unit. The Department has catered for 1,289 admissions in the 28 beds at its disposal for inpatient treatment. An additional 170 day-cases were attended to. 45.4% were males and 54.6% were females.

Three D planning is now well established in the Radiotherapy department and this together with the CT Stimulator have provided a quality leap. The introduction of PACS has also been much welcomed.

The European School of Oncology was again delighted with their Masterclass meeting in Malta and though they cannot repeat this will be doing a Masterclass in Radiotherapy in conjunction with ESTRO in 2008.

A total of 64 patients were catered for at the Neuro Rehabilitation Unit during 2007, the stay of the patients varying from a couple of weeks to six months average.

| Diagnosis | Males | Females |
|---------------------|-------|---------|
| CVA | 17 | 10 |
| MS | 3 | 8 |
| Spinal Injury | 2 | 1 |
| Laminectomy | 5 | 5 |
| Head Injury | 4 | 1 |
| Spinal Abscess | 1 | 1 |
| Guillian Barre | 0 | 1 |
| Meningioma | 1 | 1 |
| Acoustic | 1 | 0 |
| Transverse Myelitis | 0 | 3 |

| Admitted from | No of Patients |
|----------------|----------------|
| M8 – Neuro Med | 31 |
| Neuro Surgery | 15 |
| Orthopaedics | 2 |
| From UK | 2 |
| Home | 14 |

A total of 220 patients were referred to the Social Work Unit. The following is a breakdown of patients referred:

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Total no. of Patients referred | 220 |
| NRU | 60 |
| Oncology | 140 |
| Dermatology | 20 |
| Other patients the Social Work Unit provided services for in 2007 | 50 |

In general, social work with patients referred from the various wards, units and clinics at Sir Paul Boffa Hospital consists of hours of work including: Assessment of patients in his/her social context, Meeting with family members, Assessment of presenting problem, Home visits, Liaising with other agencies and government departments, Completion of application forms; Housing Authority; SVPR etc, Counselling patients and family members, Organising family therapy sessions, Attending Ward Rounds, Interdisciplinary team meetings, Preparing discharge plans, Making necessary follow-ups.

The Radiology Unit performed 5,210 X-Ray Unit procedures. The major users of this service are the Chest Unit and the Floriana Health Centre which between them exceed 80% of the total workload.

There were 6,853 physiotherapy treatment sessions for 953 patients.

62 new patients were referred for treatment at the Neuro-Rehabilitation Physiotherapy Service. 177 patients are on treatment resulting in 2,962 treatment sessions. The majority of patients admitted to NRU during 2007 were CVA, post-laminectomy, Guillain-Barre and Head injuries. These were admitted from St Luke's Hospital, Mater Dei Hospital and even private hospitals.

There were a number of patients with Multiple Sclerosis that were admitted directly from home for a period of two weeks for intensive rehabilitation. The average turnover rate was approximately 5-6 patients per month. Most of these were sent back to their homes and reintegrated into their home environment. Apart from the daily rehabilitation sessions, a number of family sessions were held, which enabled the patients' main carers to learn and integrate with the treatment goals.

Out-patient activity consisted of treatment and follow-up spinal cord injury patients. A need to assess the patient in the home environment before discharge was identified in 2007. A new initiative to address this was the Home Integration Programme (HIP), which was set up by the physiotherapists. The aim of this programme was to assess and identify any problems the patients might encounter in the home environment by assessing the patient performing everyday tasks and also by doing a risk assessment.

The need for a formal stroke information leaflet for the patients and their carers has been clearly identified, whereby the patient and the carer will have printed material covering general information, recommendations and advice for post-discharge. This leaflet covers information regarding the pathology of stroke and preventative measures that should be taken to prevent complications post-CVA. This leaflet is in its final editing phase and will be available in the coming months.

Throughout 2007 the Oncology and Palliative Physiotherapy Service continued to provide its services; clinically to the in- and out-patients referred from sources of Oncology; and also through various public education and awareness programmes. The team also covered the clinical responsibilities of referrals from Dermatology. In addition, staff development activities were undertaken. Services to the inpatients continued for the male and female oncology wards and chemotherapy day clinic. The majority of the referrals covered mobility problems of the patients. There was an improved interaction with the ward staff, and patients were being referred at an earlier stage. This implies an increasing harmonious collaboration and interaction between the physiotherapists and the MDT. Normal relationships continued with Malta Hospice Movement with close liaison with their MDT. Out-patient services were provided to oncology patients discharged from the wards, direct referrals from the out-patient radiotherapy department, and direct referrals from the consultants.

The lymphoedema clinic continued its services and a clinical review study was carried out. 173 patients were treated, 78 of whom were new referrals. 633 treatment sessions were offered to this patient group. There has been an increase in the number of sessions because the referrals have required more rehabilitation. Sources of referral are recognising the added value of physiotherapy as rehabilitation in oncology too.

4,664 patients attended the Occupational Department. 13,482 units (one unit is equivalent 10-15 min.) were delivered, of which 3,887 inpatient sessions and 777 out-patient sessions. In the Oncology Section of the Occupational Department, assessment and follow-up treatment of both male and female wards is carried out. In and Out Patients from radiotherapy or chemotherapy were seen following referrals but as from this year an occupational therapist is attending a weekly out-patient service with the team so as to be able to offer home visits where necessary, hence reaching more patients within the community that are not usually admitted as inpatients. For dermatology patients, assessment and follow-up treatment is carried out in wards. In the Neuro Rehabilitation Ward, assessment and follow-up treatment includes out-patient services and home visits. Group therapy sessions and home visits and out-patient service following referrals is offered to the Hospice Movement. It is being planned to focus more on oncology patients and continue to reach out in the community.

DEPARTMENT FOR THE ELDERLY AND COMMUNITY CARE

Overview

The total budget allocation for 2007 was Lm1,280,000 for Capital Expenditure while Lm15,741,000 was allocated for Recurrent Expenditure.

During the year, the Department for the Elderly and Community Care 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;
- commissioning of gerontology studies and educational facilities (training courses and participation in national and international conferences); and
- actively participating in the task force set up by the Ministry of Health to formulate a strategy and an action plan for strengthening Primary Health Care and developing Community Care during the fourth quarter of 2007.

RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

St Vincent de Paule Residence (SVPR)

Performance Review and Analysis

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. The population at the end of 2007 stood at 1,045, consisting of 332 males and 713 females.

The fact that the average life expectancy of the Maltese population is on the increase is being reflected in the demand for admission to the Residence. There were 481 new admissions in 2007, of which 130 were respite admissions and 351 long-term care admissions. 187 (53.3%) were admitted from the acute hospital services. The main challenge faced by SVPR is the large number of social cases awaiting admission from St Luke's Hospital/Karen Grech Hospital. There were 83 social cases awaiting a long-term care bed at the end of 2007. During the year, 31 extra beds were increased at SVPR.

1,043 influenza vaccines were given to residents at SVPR and 580 vaccines were given to residents at Residential Homes. 998 influenza vaccines and 173 Hepatitis B vaccines were also given to staff at SVPR and staff working at Elderly Homes.

A total of 103 patients, of whom 51 were new cases, were referred for Domiciliary Physiotherapy Services, resulting in 186 interventions. 78 governmental and 14 NGO day centre visits were visited giving group physiotherapy services to a total of 2,135 participants. A total of 323 cases were newly referred as out-patient services, 777 patients were seen resulting in 2,347 interventions.

1,095 residents were referred to Occupational Therapy Services at SVPR. 26 patients were attending on an out-patient basis. 10,786 sessions were delivered. 1,597 clients are registered at the Speech Language Pathology service.

61 outings were organised outside SVPR. In addition numerous activities were organised within SVPR including plays, talent show, BBQs, parties and celebration of various traditional feasts.

During 2007, a total of 206 (67 males and 139 females) admissions to Respite Care were requested. Of these, 130 were accepted (63.1%). The main reasons for requests for such relief admissions include: relief of carers under stress; to temporarily alleviate carers; carers develop states of conflict of roles; holiday admissions. In July a decision was taken by the team to decrease the stay per respite user from 21 days to 18 days, so as to better meet the pressing demand and to decrease the waiting time for the service. A preliminary analysis of results has shown that on average, each of the seven respite beds at SVPR was utilised by 15.9 respite users during the last year. These figures show that during 2007 there has been a throughput of one respite user per bed per 23 days. These statistics indicate the effectiveness of such a service in comparison to the provision of permanent beds, where, assuming zero mortality or discharge, each bed is "permanently blocked" by one older person.

During 2007, the Assessment and Rehabilitation Team received 31 requests for relocation. As a result of assessment and appropriate rehabilitation, 24 (77%) were found to truly require relocation to an alternative care setting, whilst seven (23%) could remain to be managed in their present environment.

The major project has been the beginning of a major overhaul, refurbishment and construction extensions on one of the old buildings previously known Female Wards 1-2, 3-4, and 15-16, housing female residents. On completion of works, this block will be named Pope John II Block. Other projects include the completion of the construction works on two lift shafts and installation of the two lifts at the Administration Block; the installation of a new air-conditioning system and a new soffit ceiling at Ward 13, Ward 14 and Ward 15/16 St Joseph; installation of new water mains for Ružar Briffa Complex and St Vincent de Paul Complex; setting up of an Activity Centre for residents at SVPR; works taken in hand for the installation of a new air-conditioning system for the whole of Ružar Briffa Complex which includes the installation of a new electrical supply; setting up of a new Speciality Unit including the Infection Control Unit, Incontinence Unit, Tissue Viability Unit and Nutrition Unit; setting up of a new Wheelchair Clinic for the maintenance and repairs of wheelchairs at SVPR; laying new and repair old membrane on all roofs of the residence which works have, for the first time, been carried out by the construction section at SVPR; installation of new walk-in freezers at the Main Kitchen and at the Provisions Stores; procurement of two tail lift vans for transportation of residents.

New initiatives for Infection Control were carried out in 2007 including, sporadic and spontaneous ward assessments and documentation; vaccination programme for Hepatitis B for staff in elderly homes; collection of data of all Culture and Sensitivity results received at SVPR for surveillance purposes; distribution of pocket size leaflet to all staff at SVPR regarding Hand Hygiene was carried out; hand hygiene enforcement with a strict policy issued to all health care workers against wearing false nails.

The activities and initiatives undertaken by the Continence Care Section during the year included: giving ongoing advice and guidance on continence promotion, prevention and management at the day centres and

other community church or local council day centres; implementation of the referral form, assessment checklist, incontinence monitoring chart and bowel habit diary; new Guidelines to Practice in Elimination were formulated and given to all the wards at SVPR & state community homes; the Continence Advisory Service established a working relationship with CommCare, bladder scans to referred cases and also as an emergency service. 168 persons benefited from this service.

COMMUNITY HOMES FOR THE ELDERLY

Performance Review and Analysis

At the end of 2007 there were 623 residents in Community Homes for the Elderly. During the year, a total of 107 residents were admitted at the Residential Homes of the Elderly, while a total of 555 (including 50 old applications) applied for admission.

| Residents' Complement in Homes | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| Home | Males <60 | Females <60 | Males +60 | Females +60 | Total |
| Cospicua | 1 | 2 | 30 | 94 | 127 |
| Floriana | | | 12 | 34 | 46 |
| Gżira | | | 4 | 25 | 29 |
| Mosta | 3 | 1 | 19 | 44 | 67 |
| Msida | | | 15 | 49 | 64 |
| Mtarfa | 1 | 2 | 34 | 89 | 126 |
| Żejtun | 1 | 1 | 26 | 136 | 164 |
| Total | 6 | 6 | 140 | 471 | 623 |

During 2007 the major refurbishment of Mosta Home continued and almost reached the end. This refurbishment consists of both internal and structural works, which included:

- extension and complete refurbishment of the home main kitchen;
- extensions of various residential rooms;
- structural changes of all bathrooms in order to be fully accessible for wheelchair users and walking frames;
- installation of a new water and electricity supply systems in all residential rooms;
- installation of an air conditioning system throughout the home, including all residential rooms and common areas; and
- supply of new furniture and soft furnishings in the residential rooms.

Other initiatives carried out in the other homes during 2007 included:

- *At Floriana Home:* maintenance and repair works were carried out on convection oven, a food processor, freezer, air-condition units, lifts, electricity switch board, water circulating pumps, roof solar system and washing machines. Structural alterations were carried out to a single room; sacred furniture and items were procured; and this was transformed into a Chapel, which was officially inaugurated on 21 December 2007. A new store for medical supplies and nappies was identified and commenced to function. Fourteen new benches were fixed in the internal yard.
- *At Mtarfa Home:* maintenance and repair works were carried out on all chillers and fan coil units of the air-conditioning system, passengers lifts, kitchen equipment, laundry equipment, aluminium apertures and changing of plugs and fixing of new extensions. As part of the ongoing home upkeep, besides the painting of false ceilings along the main corridors, all shafts were plastered and painted and existing toilets and flushing were replaced.
- *At Gżira Home:* aluminium works were carried out and a roof canopy was installed. Maintenance and repair works were carried out on the air-conditioning system, electrical generator, water distribution

system, fire extinguishers, lifts, boiler system and dishwasher. A new tumble dryer was procured while two bathrooms were refurbished.

- *At Msida Home*: a new nurse call system was installed and commissioned.
- *At Żejtun and Cospicua Homes*: a new initiative was carried out with a view of encouraging residents to get more involved in the life of the home, offering the residents the possibility to participate in activities such as organising mass, bingo and helping out in the home administration.

During 2007, the Department maintained its agreements with private entrepreneurs for the provision of beds for government-referred residents in private home settings.

As part of the community-based public-private partnership scheme, the Mellieha Home project has been finalised. Structural works commenced and were finalised by the end of the year. This Home, which would accommodate 130 residents, is expected to open in March 2008. An Expression of Interest through a departmental circular was issued in December 2007 for those nurses and carers who would like to be considered for deployment to Mellieha Home.

Following finalisation of the *Standards on Admission Process to State Community Homes* in 2006, these standards were successfully used across all government homes in 2007.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

There are 16 day centres in Malta, all opening on a 5-day week basis, except for Safi Day Centre, which opens once a week. Qormi Day Centre moved to new premises in May 2007.

Attendances at day centres were as follows:

| Centre | |
|---------------|---------------|
| Żejtun | 1,275 |
| Hamrun | 1,965 |
| Dingli | 901 |
| Qormi | 1,182 |
| Sliema | 816 |
| Żurrieq | 1,275 |
| Mtarfa | 1,426 |
| B'Kara | 1,508 |
| Cospicua | 1,032 |
| Luqa | 840 |
| St Paul's Bay | 1,440 |
| B'Bugia | 940 |
| Mosta | 1,034 |
| St Venera | 967 |
| Naxxar | 757 |
| Safi | 657 |
| Total | 18,015 |

The transport of elderly persons to attend the day centres continued to be an issue, as not all local councils agreed to finance transport.

Day centres organise a balanced activity programme in the day centres consisting of creative, physical, social and educational activities. Different crafts such as parchment, *gamutel*, knitting, crotchet, glass painting and paper creations were carried out in certain day centres.

From this year computer lessons were organised by the Elderly & Community Care Department and TCTC Ltd for elderly members attending day centres. Computer sessions were done at B'Kara, St Venera, Mosta, St Paul's Bay, Luqa, Naxxar and B'Bugia Day Centres. Physiotherapy, podology and occupational therapy

services are all provided at the day centres. The aim of these services is to help the elderly person to continue to live in the community by doing activities of daily living prevent them being admitted to a residential home.

At the end of December 2007, Telecare installations reached the total of 9,414 (165 Carelink installations).

| | No. of Calls 2006 | No of Calls 2007 | Change (%) |
|-----------|-------------------|------------------|------------|
| January | 17,750 | 11,010 | - 37.97 |
| February | 12,321 | 10,216 | - 17.08 |
| March | 11,562 | 10,849 | - 6.17 |
| April | 9,503 | 9,658 | + 1.63 |
| May | 10,306 | 9,900 | - 3.94 |
| June | 9,476 | 11,575 | + 22.15 |
| July | 10,546 | 9,166 | - 13.09 |
| August | 9,509 | 8,929 | - 6.10 |
| September | 9,831 | 9,120 | - 7.23 |
| October | 10,545 | 11,622 | + 10.21 |
| November | 10,553 | 10,761 | + 1.97 |
| December | 10,846 | 16,036 | + 47.85 |

During 2007, Telecare Centre operated in conjunction with Telecare Service and Carelink Services. The Carelink System enables any person wishing to subscribe to pay at commercial rates and be allocated a Telecare set and gadgets such as burglar/flood/smoke/natural gas and bogus caller button. Moreover, Telecare clients are given the option of subscribing to the additional gadgets at advantageous rates.

Up to the end of 2006, there were 704 registered disabled persons who were making use of Incontinence Service. During 2007, there were 85 new applications while 60 others stopped the service. This means that up to the end of 2007, there were 729 persons.

There were 2,201 elderly persons aged 60+ years and certified as suffering from incontinence who benefited from the service up to the end of 2006. In 2007, 821 new applications were registered while 624 stopped the service. This means that a total of 2,398 benefited from the service up to the end of 2007.

During the year, the Handyman Service section received a total of 1,449 new applications. 1,509 jobs were completed (this includes pending jobs from 2006). The most requested jobs were: plumbing (649), electrical works (407) and carpentry (323).

During 2007, the Electoral Office processed 9,927 Kartanzjan cards for new holders (60+) and (75+). During the same year, 2,620 complaints (lost cards) were passed on to the same office and all cards were renewed.

The main aim of the Social Work Unit is to provide help in the form of psychological support, counselling and guidance. It also discusses all referred social cases. The officer in charge helps clients who come for intervention at the office or liaises with referring agencies. Up to the end of 2006, there were 2,551 households who benefited from the service offered by the Home/Help Unit. During 2007, 565 new cases were presented, thus the total number of beneficiaries up to the end of December 2007 stands at 3,533.

By the end of 2007, the number of elderly persons benefiting from telephone rebates stood at 5,748. Rent payable is Lm6.42 instead of Lm30.78 as long as the subscriber satisfies the conditions submitted. There are no pending applications as at end of December 2007. In the year under review there were 615 new applications and 406 cancellations.

During 2007 the meal-on-wheels service provided 62,400 meals. This figure is an increase of 3,367 over the previous year.

DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY HEALTH

OVERVIEW

The Department of Primary Health provides a comprehensive primary health service within the community, which includes the following services:

- 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).

PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

During 2007, there were 515,777 General Practitioner encounters of which 324, 872 were seen in health centres, 177,025, in district clinics, 11,936 home visits by day, and 1,944 home visits by night. A total of 6,601 patients were seen by consultants at the health centres. 4,648 attended for Schedule V issues or renewals. 1,064 new cases and 1,779 follow-up cases were screened for glaucoma at the health centres during 2007. Other specialist services were offered as follows:

| Service | No. of attendances 2006 | No. of attendances 2007 | Change (%) |
|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Diabetes Clinic | 13,653 | 12,597 | - 7.7 |
| Obs/Gynae Clinic | 7,060 | 6,667 | - 5.6 |
| Ophthalmic Clinic | 5,709 | 5,017 | - 12.0 |
| Mental Health Clinic | 4,842 | 4,112 | - 15.1 |
| Dental Clinic * | 21,880 | 20,259 | - 7.4 |
| Well Baby Clinic | 6,177 | 6,406 | + 3.7 |
| Acupuncture | 2,561 | 3,286 | + 28.3 |
| Total | 61,882 | 58,344 | - 5.7 |

* only services provided by Dental Surgeons are included

Other Professional Services offered included the following:

| Service | No. of attendances 2006 | No. of attendances 2007 | Change (%) |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Nursing Care in the treatment rooms | 193,070 | 175,356 | - 9.2 |
| Podology | 52,771 | 50,412 | - 4.5 |
| Speech Therapy * | 19,711 | 20,968 | + 6.3 |
| Radiology | 11,733 | 7,682 | - 34.5 |
| Pathology | 49,477 | 58,084 | + 17.4 |
| Physiotherapy | 24,911 | 27,456 | + 10.2 |
| Dental Hygienist | 5,244 | 4,867 | - 7.2 |
| ECG | 4,206 | 3,448 | - 18.0 |
| Total | 361,123 | 348,273 | - 3.6 |

* at health centres and district clinics

50, 412 cases were seen by the Podology Services.

Community Nursing and Midwifery Services carried out 403,648 attendances, of which 82,416 (20.4%) were for general care; 82,188 (20.4%) surgical cases; 11,939 (3.0%) injections; 203,919 (50.5%) diabetic patients; and 23,186 (5.7%) tablets.

1,590,801 items (an 8% increase over 2006) were dispensed to 829,178 patients (an increase of 12% over 2006) by the Community Pharmacy Services.

A total of 7,618 medical examinations were carried out by the School Health Service during 2007. These were subdivided as follows:

| Service | No of children 2006 | No of children 2007 |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Medical examinations | 7,316 | 7,618 |
| BMI measurements | 8,029 | 9,758 |
| Development assessments | 5,863 | 5,902 |
| Visual acuity tests | 8,434 | 9,664 |
| Injury at school | 151 | 176 |
| Scoliosis screening | 3,771 | 3,886 |
| Ophthalmic referrals | 633 | 750 |
| Dental referrals | 26 | 5 |
| ENT referrals | 19 | 10 |
| Speech/Language referrals | 379 | 288 |
| CDAU/Child Guidance referrals | 136 | 143 |
| Education Psychologist referrals | 29 | 50 |
| Surgical referrals | 32 | 27 |
| Paediatric referrals | 9 | 25 |
| Orthopaedic/scoliosis referrals | 92 | 317 |
| Health Centre referrals | 105 | 43 |
| Chest Clinic referrals | 6 | 9 |
| Podology referrals | 8 | 3 |
| A & E Department referrals | 9 | 4 |
| Dermatology referrals | 11 | 7 |
| Immunisations | | |
| Hep B 1 st dose | 2,347 | 2,182 |
| Hep B 2 nd dose | 2,198 | 1,981 |
| Hep B 3 rd dose | 2,022 | 2,150 |
| MMR | 5,737 | 2,776 |
| BCG (State Schools) | 2,462 | 2,463 |
| BCG (Church and Independent) | 3,385 | 1,734 |

10,198 patients attended the School Dental Clinic and services were carried out as follows:

| Service | No of child encounters |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Check-ups | 1,417 |
| Total Extractions | 754 |
| Total conservative treatment (fillings) | 2,301 |
| Scalings/Polishing & Oral Hygiene | 1,107 |
| Fixed Appliances | 662 |
| Surgicals | 23 |
| Orthodontic new cases | 680 |
| Orthodontic reviews | 2,055 |
| Orthodontic impressions | 642 |
| Orthodontic fits | 557 |
| Total Patients Attending | 10,198 |

The National Immunisation Schedule for Children in 2007 was as follows:

| Child Immunisation Schedule | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Age | Vaccine | Remarks |
| At 6-8 weeks 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 | MMR + Hepatitis B 1 st dose | to all children |
| 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 + Polio | 3 years after the 3 rd dose of basic course |
| At 7 years | MMR | to all children |
| At 8 years (year 4 junior sch) | Hepatitis B | to all children |
| At 12-14 years | BCG | to all children |
| Booster at 16 years | Dip/Tet + Polio | 5 doses of tetanus vaccine offer a lifelong protection. No further doses are necessary unless specifically indicated. To continue with diphtheria (adult dose) and polio every 10 yrs. |

A total of 91,022 vaccinations were administered including 172 patients attending for reading of Mantoux test and 66 patients for screening purposes. The following is a list of immunisations administered:

| Vaccine | Total |
|----------------------|---------------|
| DTP | 7,441 |
| DT Vax | 2,329 |
| Polio | 15,877 |
| HIB | 7,590 |
| Tetanus | 587 |
| Diphtheria | 287 |
| MMR | 4,602 |
| Influenza | 26,416 |
| Varicella | 35 |
| Tuberculin/MTX | 215 |
| Hepatitis A | 1,086 |
| Hepatitis B | 10,625 |
| Hepatitis A + B | 1,919 |
| Rabies | 404 |
| Cholera | 144 |
| Typhoid | 2,734 |
| Yellow Fever | 530 |
| M. Meningitis ACWY | 561 |
| Di-Te adult | 7,320 |
| Infanrix Hib | 47 |
| Dt + polio (Revaxis) | 18 |
| Prevnar | 9 |
| Imovax Polio | 2 |
| Rotarix | 1 |
| Infranrix Hexa | 5 |
| Total | 90,784 |

As to the Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Campaign, this year there was a very smooth running of the campaign, co-ordinated from the National Immunisation Service at Floriana Health Centre. The Primary health Department received a consignment of 85,000 doses. The Department embarked on extending the flu vaccine to all teens and children below the age of 16 years. However, the uptake was still very poor, possibly due to a weak publicity campaign but also due to the fact that children attending schools could not attend the centres during school hours other than during the weekends.

The following activities continued to be carried out in 2007:

- Hepatitis B, Diphtheria, 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.
- Diphtheria, Tetanus and Typhoid vaccinations for drainage workers, Works Division employees and Water Services Corporation employees.

- Tuberculin testing/scar examination and Hepatitis B for Health Division employees.
- Vaccinations for foreign students.
- Vaccinations for Hepatitis B contacts, IV drug users, patients with blood, hepatic and renal diseases.
- Recalls which on normal basis are sent monthly for all those who fail to come for their due vaccinations. (This year because of the problems with the new program, this could not be done on regular basis as in previous years).

DEVELOPMENTS

The Department of Primary Health Care officially changed its name to the Department of Primary Health. This reflects a more proactive approach to Health in general rather than focusing on care as a result of established disease. Similarly the Department adopted its official logo following a thorough consultation with its staff.

The schedule of activity in Rabat, Qormi, and Cospicua Health Centres remained curtailed, the centres closing at 2000hrs from Monday to Friday and at 1300hrs on Saturday, reopening on Monday at 0800hrs. The general practitioner service at these health centres stopped at 1700hrs. The other health centres, namely Mosta, Paola, Floriana and Gżira, were kept open round the clock but the GP service switched over to ‘emergencies only’ between 1700hrs and 0800hrs week days and from 1300hrs on Saturday till 0800hrs the following Monday.

In the other medical and paramedical services, appointment waiting times were maintained at an acceptable level and services were streamlined. The ophthalmic services are still sub-contracted and services provided as in previous year.

The introduction of the appointment system in GP prescription clinics is working well, although this does not offer a real Primary Health contact with the patient.

The vetting office within Commcare Department has been consolidated and is working to provide a more holistic assessment of the patient needs, beyond just nursing care and its operations is being often quoted as a good practice of care.

Plans for a comprehensive Management Information System for the Primary Health Department have been completed following a detailed report by two UK experts in medical records and work has now started on a project to introduce an electronic health records system which will achieve a seamless continuity of care between government primary and secondary health care. At a later stage the private primary health system will be incorporated as well. The project has been presented to CITAC group for government acceptance and it has been proposed that it should be included as a priority project within the IHIS project within the Health Ministry.

1,113 Complaints received are broadly classified as follows:

| Nature of Complaint | No | % |
|------------------------|--------------|------|
| Attitude of Employee | 62 | 5.5 |
| Appointment Failure | 202 | 18.1 |
| Prolonged waiting time | 211 | 18.9 |
| Undelivered service | 561 | 50.4 |
| Mistakes by employee | 25 | 2.2 |
| Others | 52 | 4.6 |
| Total | 1,113 | |

During 2007 all cases were investigated, of which 820 cases (73.65%) were found to be justified and corrective action was taken, 249 cases (22.3%) were found to be completely unjustified while in 44 cases (3.9%) the benefit of the doubt was given to the complainant, although it was not clear whether the

complaint was justified. In order to limit the number of complaints, necessary action, including disciplinary action, was taken.

Refurbishment of the various health facilities continued throughout the year, in some cases in collaboration with local councils. Attard peripheral clinic was inaugurated on 29 November. The peripheral clinic in Żurriq is in its final stages of being opened as well. Works were also proceeded at a fast pace for the construction of another peripheral clinic at Mellieha within the new complex for the elderly. Major refurbishing works were also carried out at Qormi Health Centre and Head Office in Floriana. Two new dental clinic chairs were purchased and installed.

Community Nursing and Midwifery Services continued to be provided by the MMDNA and a new agreement between the Association and the Department was signed in the beginning of 2007. CommCare section within Primary Health is responsible to vet, verify and approve all calls before being forwarded to the MMDNA for the visits. During the home visits patients, relatives or carers are being involved more in the patient's care plan and are being informed on different related issues such as education, handling of patients and awareness on other services to encourage their participation. 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.

As from January 2007, the new contract with MMDNA provided for payment per visit at an agreed rate according to nature of call. There were six categories, namely: General Care, Surgical, Diabetics, Injections, Post-Natal visits and administration of medication. The cost per visit varied according to the complexity of the visit.

This has resulted in an increased workload on Commcare, as visits needed to be checked on a daily basis increased. Besides regulating the visits, CommCare is responsible to check and verify all payments. At present a process of reviewing the clinical categories is in progress and is in a very advanced stage.

As from 2007, reviews for post-natal visits were also included as part of Commcare's responsibilities.

MMDNA calls to detention centres during the morning are in process of being terminated. In collaboration with all involved parties it was agreed that the contracted nurses outsourced by the Detention Services will carry out all nursing duties at Detention Centres in the morning. In order to achieve this aim, it was agreed that PHC provides the Detention Services with equipment and supplies as required. These included blood glucose monitoring machines, wound dressing trays, suture packs etc.

Partnerships with local councils were continued, so that diabetic injections are administered by nurses recruited by local councils. These services were still paid by the Health Division but the service has an advantage in that it offered more individualised and timely patient attention. Efforts were done to extend services to other local councils – notably Żejtun and Hamrun/St Venera area but this had to be postponed in order to provide training to the nursing staff identified.

During 2007 an intense effort was carried out to make an inventory of items that were beyond repairs and needed to be disposed of. A board was set up and, after an intensive exercise, a programme was started whereby all items that were accumulated during the years were gradually disposed of according to government and MEPA procedures. This relieved space with health centres to be used for other scopes. This also laid down procedures so that similar items are not left to accumulate again.

Part of the role of the Infection Control Nurse in Primary Care involved waste management. There was a lot of liaison with MEPA and WasteServ for the processing of clinical waste. Another action embarked upon in 2007 was aimed at addressing the problem of sharps disposal in the community. Action is being co-ordinated with WasteServ to find a logistical solution towards decreasing needle stick injuries resulting from lack of facilities and improper disposal.

In accordance with PHCD Occupational Health and Safety Policy (2005), risk assessments were performed in November 2007 by the Senior Medical Officers and Nursing Officers in all eight health centres. The risk assessment reports were reviewed by the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) committee and the 2007 Annual report compiled.

A Medical Check-up clinic is held every Tuesday and caters for eight clients at every session to discuss their awareness of their well-being. Evaluation of the check-up clinic was carried out, quantitative and qualitative data was collected and analysed and presented at the PHCD Conference 2007.

Scoliosis clinic is done on voluntary basis on Fridays once every 3 to 4 weeks depending on the number of referrals and according to the availability of the doctor. The same nurse assists the doctor to keep the clinic organised and for continuity of care. It is done between 1400 and 1700 with an average of 12 patients per session. The purpose of this clinic is to screen and check school age children mostly from 10 years up till the age of 18 years for scoliosis referred from schools from the school nurse/doctor, private GPs or health centre GPs.

The aim of the Education Unit is to promote and enhance staff development and the standardisation of practice in the day to day running of the health centres and other related areas. Also, it aims to research and analyse new forms of practices to meet the new demands associated with the health needs of the community.

NATIONAL BLOOD TRANSFUSION CENTRE

The main events for 2007 were the commissioning and official opening on 4 May 2007 of the new blood donation area in St Luke's Square, G'Mangia; the starting of a University postgraduate stream in Transfusion Medicine (within MSc Pathology); and the transfer of Clinical Transfusion Medicine (Hospital Blood Bank) to the new centre at MDH. Priorities were given to component parameter monitoring, thus assuring quality products, equipment monitoring and standard operating procedures preparations, to assure consistency of any possible variables that may affect the component parameters. In 2007 the main blood bank IT application, Progesa, was finally upgraded and transferred on to a new server.

18,646 persons called at the various sites. From these a total of 14,125 Whole Blood Donations were accepted. There were also 355 Single Donor Platelets procedures.

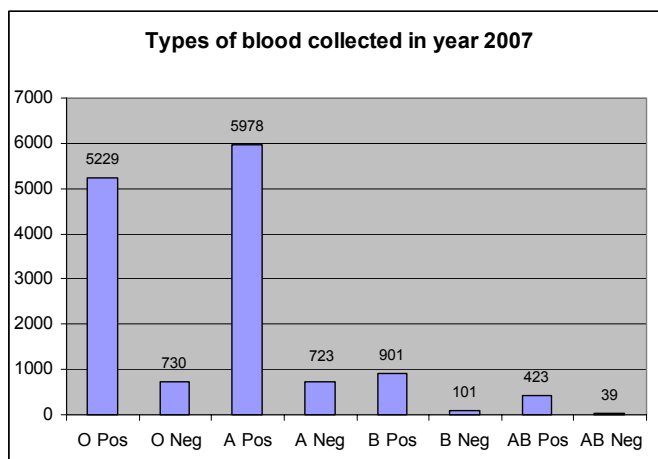
| | 2007 | 2006 | Difference |
|------------------------|--------|--------|------------|
| Callers | 18,646 | 16,947 | + 1,699 |
| Donations Whole | 14,125 | 14,413 | - 288 |
| Single Donor Platelets | 355 | 393 | - 38 |

The Whole Blood Donations were as follows:

| Whole Blood Donations | 2007 | 2006 | Difference |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| NBTC | 9,005 | 8,786 | + 219 |
| GGH | 1,619 | 1,601 | + 18 |
| MOB | 3,501 | 3,582 | - 81 |
| SMOM | 0 | 439 | - 439 |
| Total | 14,125 | 14,408 | - 283 |

2007 represented the end of SMOM as a contributor to blood donation. There were 1,687 first time donations during 2007. Of the 14,125 whole blood donations, 9,158 were males and 4,967 were females. 3,501 whole blood were collected during blood drives.

91,308 screening tests were carried out on blood donations received; 26,324 serology examinations were also performed.



The Processed Blood Products for 2007 included 13,626 Whole Blood, 1,051 Cryoprecipitate, 319 Single Donor Platelets, 761 Pooled Platelets, 1 Single Donor Red Cells, 7,508 Filtered Fresh Frozen Plasma, and 6,118 Fresh Frozen Plasma.

An accounting package has been procured for NBTS in order to set up a proper accounting management system and stock inventory control. This will enable financial autonomy for NBTS, where the department can generate and manage its own finances. Total purchases of medical consumables 2007 amounted to Lm357,530.

New Laboratory Equipment Commissioned at NBTC during 2007 included BD a Flowcytometer, Analyser systems, six Medical refrigerators, a Plasma freezer, six Point of care haemoglobin estimation system, 20 Blood transport boxes and a Serum archiving system. A multi purpose vehicle for the Blood Donation Centre was also purchased. The plans for the construction of a new National Blood Transfusion Centre at Attard have been presented to and approved by the Ministry of Finance.

The Blood Establishment faces various constraints due to having to function within rules and regulations that are not relevant and actually have a negative impact on a production facility as the blood bank. There are serious problems with excessive bureaucracy, staff recruitment, working conditions and job descriptions, finance and procurement and other practices. A significant improvement will be possible if the Blood establishment (as the operator) works as a semi autonomous entity with a budget, ability to recruit staff etc under the auspices of the Health Care Services Division and an independent auditor.

GOVERNMENT PHARMACEUTICAL SERVICES

2007 marks the last year of operation of this Department as the Government Pharmaceutical Services (GPS). From 2008 all procurement services will be amalgamated in the new Procurement Department within the Health Care Services Division. GPS is entrusted with the purchase, storage and distribution of pharmaceuticals and medical devices for the National Health Services. These functions are carried out in line with current financial regulations and legislation, with the aim of providing a timely, quality-approved and cost-effective service. Continuous efforts are made to actively ameliorate the services provided, in collaboration with the various departments involved, in the provision of health care services.

During the year the National Audit Office carried out an auditing exercise with regard to expenditure incurred for the year ended 2006 within the Governmental Pharmaceutical Services. Based on the preliminary report received, it is expected that the NAO would be affirming that practices followed at the GSP comply with the Public Procurement and Financial Regulations.

The National Formulary Management Section (NFM) checks and updates specifications of medications approved for inclusion in the National Formulary. It leads the adjudication of offers and recommendations

based on information submitted with offers and from the Medicines Authority, deals with problems arising during the procurement process, and responds to complaints, rapid alerts and batch recalls. A special Interface Unit addresses customer care issues, the management of out-of-stock and the urgent processing of orders. 55 rapid alert notifications were received from the Medicine Authority for verification with GPS data records - none were found to have been purchased by GPS. 17 defect reports were received and investigated and in three cases the recall of the batches was necessary.

Throughout 2007, more than 4,850 batches of medicinal products from quarantine were released after confirming that all the necessary requirements were met. The total number of Drugs of Dependence and Abuse (DDA) requisitions amounted to 259 and the total number of items issued amounted to 2,419. There were 144 consignments delivered to the DDA stores.

12,982 consignments were received from suppliers. 46,520 requests from the various outposts generated 51,163 consignments which were delivered in 3,205 deliveries to the various outposts. With the migration of SLH to MDH (Out-patients Dispensary, Inpatient Dispensary and the Hospital Medical Stores) a change in the method of requisitioning has been carried out to improve efficiency. Therefore GPS embarked on a system of electronic ordering, and presently the system has been tested, refined and is currently in use. The eventual adoption of this electronic ordering system to all GPS' clients is being considered once the system is certified to be an improvement on the previous paper-based system.

GPS Stores were involved in the MDH migration. The process which took place before the actual migration was carried out in two phases. During the first phase, the Pharmacy services were supplied with all pharmaceutical items, and the MMMU were supplied with medical devices for distribution to the various hospital wards and units. During the second phase, orders were sent to the Pharmacy and to the MMU for replenishment purposes. The whole stocking exercise was concluded in 12 days, whilst at the same time supplies to the different units at SLH were distributed as required. Another exercise was carried out by GPS Stores with respect to the necessary stocking of the pharmacy at SLH/KGH under the new management of the Zammit Clapp Hospital's Pharmacy Staff.

Circa 30% of the pharmaceuticals bought by GPS were directly imported from different suppliers, mainly from the UK. Some of these pharmaceutical were imported directly on more than one occasion. A number of pharmaceuticals originating from non-EU countries were also purchased. Throughout the year there were various instances where pharmaceuticals were purchased directly from the manufacturer. In cases where unlicensed or specially manufactured medicines have to be procured, GPS files an application to the Licensing Authority for the granting of an approval: 34 applications were made during 2007.

Additional Standard Operating Procedures were drawn out throughout 2007. In order to facilitate the recording of observations during self inspections, a check list was devised, using the current Guidelines for Good Distribution Practice as reference. Quality enhancement included improved temperature monitoring systems to be utilised to monitor effective storage conditions within GPS stores and also during transport of goods. Two types of temperature indicators were obtained, namely those which activate above 10°C for cold room items and those which activate above 25°C for room temperature items.

The function of the Contracts Section at GPS involves various processes whereby contracts for the purchase of drugs, medical equipment (together with prosthetics and orthotics) and general items are issued, after requests for offers are made either through tender calls or via direct orders.

Calls for tenders are issued either through the Department of Contracts of the Ministry of Finance for items whose projected value is Lm20,000 and over; and through departmental tender calls whenever the projected value is below Lm20,000. The latter calls for tender are advertised on the GPS website (as are other calls for quotations). The preparatory process involved before the eventual issue of awards is rather elaborate and depends on the technical advice submitted by various specifiers, consultants and users. 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 equipments and general items during 2007:

| Government Pharmaceutical Services: Letters of Acceptance Issued during 2007 | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| <i>Issued by type</i> | Total number issued | 828 |
| | Drugs | 385 |
| <i>Issued by category</i> | Equipment | 443 |
| | Treasury (Contracts' Dept) | 162 |
| | Departmental | 548 |
| <i>Cost by type</i> | D/O via tender | 118 |
| | Drugs | Lm 11,674,500 |
| | Equipment | Lm 4,729,005 |
| | Total Cost | Lm 16,403,505 |

The Purchasing Section within the GPS procures supplies of pharmaceuticals, medical devices and general supplies.

| Tenders, quotations and proforma invoices processed during 2007 | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Tenders published via Contracts Dept. | 189 |
| GPS Departmental tenders | 843 |
| D/O via GPS Departmental tenders | 216 |
| Government Gazette quotations | 810 |
| Proforma invoices request placed on website | 1,243 |
| Direct proforma invoices requests | 799 |

The GPS currently stores and distributes approximately 10,000 medical items including pharmaceuticals, medical devices – disposable and non-disposable – and foods for special diets. Amongst the various GPS clients are the six government hospitals, eight health centres and other nine other clinics, in addition to 94 CAPD patients eligible for monthly home deliveries of voluminous renal fluids.

The reduction of the stockholding levels within the GPS Stores resulted in better financial budgetary management through a reduction in the stockholding and expired drug costs, with the effects of this measure being at least instrumental in partially offsetting the hefty increase in costs brought about by the consistent rises in consumption levels and/or exorbitant price increases in the purchase of particular drugs. However for some products, the stockholding level has been kept at a higher level in line with the Pandemic Influenza national plans.

On the other hand in the last quarter of the year, the stockholding levels were reduced further as a result of the migration exercise from SLH to MDH. This entailed the stock-piling of pharmaceutical and medical devices at MDH. Consequently the monetary value of stock in hand decreased from circa Lm9 million to about Lm6 million.

A current project undertaken by MHEC is the centralisation of all stores in one place. Another project is underway to increase space utilisation at the leased Marsa stores to optimise storage space.

The Finance Section within the GPS consists of two units: the Accounts Payable Section and the Management Accounts Section. The Accounts Payable Section was involved in payment transactions amounting to an average of Lm2.121 million per month in 2007. During the 2007, it has spent the total amount of Lm25,919,280, the total monetary provision allocated to GPS. Notwithstanding this, it has been left with over Lm10,772,648 worth of arrears as at 1 January 2008. The Management Accounts Section is responsible for the issue of payments to suppliers related to the administration of GPS. During the year, this Section has paid out over Lm204,627 worth of payments.

DR JOHN M CACHIA
Director General (Health Care Services)

Strategy and Sustainability Division

INTRODUCTION

The Strategy and Sustainability Division was established during 2007 as a result of the administrative restructuring that took place within the Ministry for Health, the Elderly and Community Care. The Director General for this Division was appointed in July. The directors responsible for Policy Development & EU Affairs and Health Information and Research were appointed in September and the Director for Programme Implementation Monitoring was appointed in November. The Director for Pharmaceutical Policy and Monitoring is yet to be appointed.

This report includes all the activities carried out by the sections that came together under the responsibility of the Director General Strategy and Sustainability in 2007.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The Strategy and Sustainability Division is responsible for research and analysis, policy development, co-ordination of strategy planning, and EU affairs. It will also develop proposals and give direction on the sustainability of health services. In developing policy and strategy, the Division will plan, lead and maintain an ongoing process of consultation with stakeholders and user involvement.

- To set up and direct the Strategy and Sustainability Division and develop the pertinent functions of the directorates within the Division;
- To co-ordinate an ongoing process of consultation with stakeholders and promote user involvement;
- To gather, analyse and disseminate health information and carry out research;
- To develop policy, co-ordinate strategic planning and put forward proposals that contribute to the sustainability of public health and health care services;
- To monitor the implementation of policies, strategic plans, programmes, services and initiatives adopted by the Ministry;
- To co-ordinate and prepare reports identifying issues, problems, unmet needs and service gaps, and recommend initiatives, review of policies, and amendments to procedures and programmes as required;
- To develop pharmaceutical policies and procedures and carry out related audits;
- To co-ordinate and promote EU and International relations.

THE YEAR UNDER REVIEW

Management of the Division

2007 marked the start up of the Strategy and Sustainability Division. During the first few months, time was devoted to initiate the development of work plans for the coming three years. A management committee to steer and monitor the work of the Strategy and Sustainability Division was established. This committee met six times between October and December 2007. Horizontal priority areas where synergies can be obtained between the various directorates were identified. Attention was given to plans for the

development of human resources, mapping out of functions and deliverables as well as the development of a corporate and team approach. This work will be further developed during 2008.

Human Resources Training and Development

The Director General and Directors participated actively in the coaching sessions and leadership development programme for senior managers organised by the Ministry. Assistant Directors and Senior Principals attended the leadership programme for middle management. Staff within the Office of the Director General participated in the Performance Management Programme and progressively took up increased responsibilities during 2007. A number of training opportunities organised by SDO were availed of.

The Strategy and Sustainability Division hosted and mentored a trainee manager from the British National Health Service for the period September – December 2007. This experience was a positive one for the staff in the Division as mutual learning and development took place.

Media Communications

The following media releases and articles appeared during 2007:

- Cancer survival in Europe (Press release)
- Towards a national cancer strategy for Malta (Newspaper article)
- European health consumer index (Press release)
- Medical travel (contribution to article in The Malta Economic Update).

Radio programmes were attended to impart information on health care entitlement when travelling in the European Union.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

Routine Activities

The Director General participated on Ministry management committees and decision making bodies as required including acting as MHEC representative on the Occupational Health and Safety Authority. Throughout 2007, several meetings were held with patient organisations and industry/union representatives.

This office was responsible for the technical policy contribution to the pre-budget document for 2007. Routine activities during 2007 included the preparation of briefs, speeches and presentations that outlined the Ministry position for key activities in the health sector that took place during 2007 namely:

- *Patient Safety - Developing strategic approaches*: Conference on Patient Safety organised by the Medical Association of Malta.
- *Health Care in Malta*: Presentation at a joint meeting on the compatibility of the Maltese social security legislation with the European and international standards between the Ministry for Family and Social Solidarity and the Council of Europe.
- *Current challenges for health care in Malta*: Presentation at conference organised by Conference Generale de Santé.
- *The role of NGOs in influencing European Health Policy*: Presentation at conference organised by the Malta Resource Centre to mark the launch of the Malta Health Network.
- *Health and the Strategic objectives of the European Union*: Presentation at conference organised by the European Public Health Association.

- *The effects of European policy developments in health services on small EU Member States and remote regions and communities*: Presentation at conference organised by the European public health association.
- *Health services for sale*: Policy brief for conference organised by UHM.
- *The Health Sector in Malta: Is there a human capital issue?*: Policy brief for meeting.

The Director General retained direct responsibility for the Senior Programming Officer function and the general supervision of EU funds management as well as representing the Ministry on the Monitoring Committees for the Structural and Cohesion Funds.

During 2007, the Director General retained direct responsibility for the Pharmaceutical Policy and Monitoring function pending the appointment of the respective directors. The detailed reports on these activities appear under the respective sections.

Specific Initiatives

Strategy for Primary Health and Community Care

As Deputy Chairperson of the Task Force on Primary and Community Care, the Director General actively assisted the Permanent Secretary in the listening sessions, focus groups and preparation of the national consultation conference to obtain feedback for the preparation of a strategic document for the future development of primary health and community care. The Director General acted as general rapporteur for the whole process and a strategic document based on the feedback received from this process is being drawn up. A technical support group made up of professionals based within various departments of the Ministry supported the whole process.

Development of policy for Post-graduate Medical Specialist Training

This office collaborated with the chairperson of the Specialist Accreditation Committee to draw up a policy paper on the establishment of post-graduate medical specialist training in Malta. The office was also responsible for the organisation of three seminars during 2007 to discuss this topic and obtain feedback on the way forward. Two seminars invited clinical chairmen and specialist association representatives while a third seminar was targeted at potential medical specialist trainees.

Policy options on breast cancer screening

This office co-ordinated the development of technical policy options for breast cancer screening to provide background information for a policy decision on the breast cancer screening programme.

E health strategy

Towards the end of 2007, work was re-started on the preparation of the e-Health strategy in collaboration with the newly appointed Chief Information Officer. The strategy is expected to be released in 2008.

Support for the promotion of Health Tourism

The Director General represented MHEC on a national inter-sectoral committee for the development of health tourism. During 2007 several briefing meetings were held with interested parties from overseas seeking to develop the health tourism niche market in Malta.

National focal point for EU Health Programme

The Office of the Director General has been established as the National Focal Point for the EU health programme. Malta is participating in several projects under the Public Health Programme 2003-2008 and is represented on the Public Health Programme Committee by a public health consultant in the Office of the Director General. During 2007, work was undertaken on the preparation of a guideline document to be used by a wide audience of people to provide reliable information on all the stages of participation from the launching of the call for proposals by the European Commission till the end of a project. It will provide a useful aid to all end users and ensure that EU funds as well as Maltese funds used for co-financing are utilised in an efficient, effective, consistent and transparent manner. This guidance is expected to be approved and utilised from the launch of the health programme call for proposal in 2008.

Integrated Health Information System

MHEC continued to chair the Adjudication Committee for Phase 1 of the Integrated Health Information System. The contract was awarded in a timely manner and this enabled the necessary systems to be in place in time for the opening of Mater Dei Hospital.

Health and Health Systems Impact Assessment

The Strategy and Sustainability Division has been tasked with the role of setting up and co-ordinating health and health systems impact assessment. A workshop in Portugal on health impact assessment was attended by the public health consultant assigned to develop this area of work. Stocktaking of existing initiatives and practices has been carried out and during 2008 it is planned to build on the available knowledge and experience, and develop expertise.

Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland (RCSI)

The Director General represented MHEC on the steering committee set up to negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding with RCSI. This was finalised in December and outlines a framework within which Government is to hold talks with RCSI on the possibility of reaching an agreement for the setting up of an RCSI graduate medical school in Malta.

Overseas meetings attended

- European Public Health Association Annual Scientific Meeting – Helsinki
- High level Committee on Public Health –Lisbon
- Ministerial Conference on Health in all Policies – Rome.

Conclusion

Despite its very short existence, the Strategy and Sustainability Division achieved several important objectives and successfully concluded a number of projects over the past months. The Division is still in the process of becoming established and new sections will be assigned under its responsibility during 2008 to bring together the health care entitlement sections. Capacity building to ensure that all the Directorates and sections have the required expertise and resources to fulfil the assigned objectives will be a major undertaking for 2008. The work achieved is the result of the commitment and collaboration shown by all the staff in adjusting to the changes the various directorates have undergone and using the opportunity to further the growth and development of their activities, thereby enhancing the output of these government departments. Detailed activity description and achievements by the directorates that formed part of this Division during 2007 is shown below.

DIRECTORATE FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND EU AFFAIRS

INTRODUCTION

In September 2007, the EU and International Affairs Directorate was replaced by the Directorate of Policy Development and EU Affairs (DPDEU). The responsibilities of this new Directorate within the Strategy and Sustainability Division include the drawing up of policies in the areas of public health, health care services and long-term care and the promote the sustainable development of the Maltese health sector in line with service users' and national needs and priorities. The Directorate is also responsible for the co-ordination of the formulation of the Ministry's position on policies proposed by the EU, and is the local and international link that explores and utilises opportunities arising from EU membership and bilateral/international relations. The Directorate is responsible for co-ordinating Malta's participation in EU structures and processes through co-ordination with local stakeholders including the EU Secretariat, other ministries and the Permanent Representation 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). These functions will be handed over to the newly established Directorate for Programme Implementation Monitoring in 2008.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The main functions pertaining to this directorate are the following:

- To develop and consolidate the policy development structures of the Ministry, identify key areas in line with general government policy for advancement and conduct this development, employing international best practice and local evidence and reflecting appropriate consultations with stakeholders which includes user participation. To assist in the performance of assessments of economic and sustainability implications of proposed or existing policies and programmes and review of standards, regulation and service development initiatives.
- To proactively identify areas of key strategic importance for the Maltese health sector where the EU institutions are engaging in discussion and formulation of proposals and act as the focal point in preparing EU positions following consultation within the Ministry, with other ministries as relevant and with external stakeholders.
- To ensure that all obligations entered into by Government as a Member State of the EU are adhered to within the set time-frames. To promote the development of bilateral activities with other countries and seek opportunities for fostering greater collaboration and ensure compliance with bilateral and multilateral agreements and commitments.

THE YEAR UNDER REVIEW

Policy Development

The policy development function was officially incorporated under the responsibility of this directorate in September 2007. Policy development takes places on an ongoing basis through the submission of reports, positions and questionnaires in response to requests from the European Commission.

Other specific areas of health policy development carried out by this directorate during 2007 include the following:

- Elaboration of policy on the developments of cross border health care in Europe;
- Monitoring and updating of health and long-term care aspects within the “National Strategy Report on Social Inclusion and Social Protection 2006-2008” and input as health representative on the Social Protection Committee;

- The development of a draft national cancer control plan in collaboration with the Department for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention using an open consultation methodology. The plan is due to be finalised and published in 2008.

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.

Memoranda and Instruction Notes

The process to deal with new Commission proposals at the various levels of discussion is co-ordinated by the EU Affairs Office. This process consists mainly of preparing updated instruction notes and briefing notes on the agenda items for discussions. The EU Affairs Office was responsible for preparation of instruction and briefing notes (and speaking notes as necessary) for our Maltese representatives attending Council working parties, MERTENS and COREPER meetings, as well as meetings of the Council of Minister. The agendas of these meetings consisted of topics on which there was ongoing discussions at EU level; most of them being legislative proposals. The successful preparation of these dossiers was the result of teamwork and a good working relationship with line ministries, the EU Secretariat at OPM and Permanent Representation in Brussels.

This office was also responsible to prepare briefing notes for meetings attended by ministers and the Permanent Representative. In 2007, these included the visit to Malta by Commissioner Markos Kyprianou in October 2007 where the health strategy and the Commission's work in the area of cross border health services were the main issues discussed.

Monitoring of the proposal list was conducted at regular intervals in collaboration with EU Secretariat at the OPM. Furthermore these legislative items were classified according to the degree of relevance to Malta. The directorate continued to employ a process of wide consultation in drawing up Malta's position on EU proposals by communicating with a wide range of stakeholders (internal and external) during the formulation process of the position of Malta on these proposals. Key issues that were of direct relevance to this Ministry during 2007, included health and migration, HIV/AIDS, food improvement package, medicinal product, EU health strategy, tissues and organs, health care and long-term care actions for social inclusion and bio-preparedness.

EU Presidency Topics

The following were the main health-related topics tackled by the German Presidency (January–June 2007):

- Health Care across Europe – Community Framework on Health Services
- Prevention of Injury and the Promotion of Safety
- HIV/AIDS
- Advanced therapies
- Strengthening of health promotion and disease prevention by means of balanced nutrition and sufficient physical activity
- Food improvement package
- Second Programme of Community Action in the field of Health (2007-2013)
- International health regulations.

The main topics tackled by the Portuguese Presidency (July–December 2007) were:

- Health and Migration in the EU
- EU Health Strategy
- Commission Communication on organ donation and transplantation
- Commission White Paper on a strategy for Europe on nutrition, overweight and obesity- related issues
- Framework Convention on Tobacco Control
- Combating HIV/AIDS within the EU and in the neighbouring countries.

This office continued to strengthen its working relationships with other EU Affairs Offices, the EU Secretariat (OPM), the Permanent Representation in Brussels and also foreign entities. This networking continued to increase as a result of the ongoing sharing of information and queries between MS mainly on national legislation and operating procedures in their respective national health systems.

During this year the EU Affairs Office channelled a variety of queries from simple questions to questionnaires to requests from large international organisations. Despite strict deadlines, this office managed to work its way to the various stakeholders, sometimes with great difficulty and achieved the desired results.

In this regard, this office has dealt with issues on:

- Tissues and cells
- Guidelines for single integrated multi-annual National control plans as required by under Article 43 of Regulation (EC) No. 882/2004
- Green Paper *Adaptation to Climate Change in Europe – options for EU action*
- Sphygmomanometers
- Questionnaire on Counterfeit Medical Devices
- Licences for Hearses
- Health in the field of development (External Affairs)
- The implementation of measures in Member States on the limitation of exposure to Electromagnetic Fields Council Recommendation (1999/519/EC)
- Questionnaire addressed to the EU Member States' National Reference Laboratories for Brucellosis in order to identify the procedures used to perform the Complement Fixation Test
- Ageing Well in the Information Society
- Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe
- Guidelines on sun beds
- Establishment of National Reference Laboratories
- Genetically modified foods
- Green Paper from the Commission *Towards a Europe free from tobacco smoke*.

This office also co-ordinated the production of reports and questionnaires, some being Community obligations, on:

- Bathing water
- Questionnaire on the transposition and implementation of the European Blood and Blood Components regulatory framework
- 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
- Questionnaire on ionizing radiation (directive 97/43/Euratom)
- Coagulase positive staphylococci (CPS) and *L. monocytogenes* in food Questionnaire
- Updating Survey on Legislation on Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research
- Questionnaire novel foods
- Alcohol labelling and health warnings
- Role of cancer screening in national cancer control programmes

- Cross-border health care – E112
- Health care benefits in EU countries
- Preliminary assessment of countries' migration status profile and vaccination access of migrant population
- Patients' rights acts in EU – formulation and implementation of the legal right to a second opinion
- Retail pharmacy industry
- Diabetes Policy Audit.

The office also conducted consultation exercises with internal and external stakeholders on:

- Breast implants for women under 18 years
- EU sustainable development strategy implementation
- Access to harmonised telephone numbers for services of social value – 116 range
- Health and migration in the EU: building a shared vision for action
- Health effects of smokeless tobacco products
- A strategy for Europe on nutrition, overweight and obesity related health issues
- Organ donation and transplantation: Policy action at EU level
- Revision of the variations regulation
- The future of pharmaceuticals for human use in Europe.

The Office collaborated closely with *Forum Malta fl-Ewropa* to disseminate information on health related issues and proposals.

Legal Issues

This office participated actively in the transposition of Council Directive 2006/100/EC of 20 November 2006 adapting certain directives in the field of freedom of movement of persons, by reason of the accession of Bulgaria and Romania. This office also co-ordinated linguistic verification of regulations on various topics, mainly medicines.

Participation in Overseas Meetings

This Office participated actively in EU related conferences, seminars, workshops and meetings both locally and abroad. Key overseas meetings attended included:

- EPSCO Ministerial Councils
- Informal Council of Health Ministers, Aachen
- Council Working Party on Public Health meeting at Senior level
- High level committee on Public Health
- Administrative Commission on Social Security for Migrant Workers
- Europe Centre for Disease Control – Management Board
- The Social Dimension in the Internal Market - Perspectives of Health Care in Europe Potsdam
- Seminar on European Pharmaceutical Law.

The DPDEU co-ordinated attendance at EU meetings in order to ensure that Malta was appropriately represented at all meetings where important decisions are taken. The office was also responsible to identify and nominate national experts in the field of medicines, food, communicable diseases and other public health organisations and networks.

The meetings attended overseas by officers within this Ministry are shown in the Table below. During 2007, the health attaché in Brussels covered most of the relevant working party meetings. This office also keeps records of MHEC officials attending EU-related meetings, stores reports drawn up from these meetings in its archives and monitors the actions that need to be taken as follow-up.

EU Meetings attended in 2007

| | Council | Commission | Presidency | WHO | Others | Total |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Ministerial | 4 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 15 |
| Public Health | 5 | 8 | 2 | - | 2 | 17 |
| Food | 1 | 15 | 1 | - | 6 | 23 |
| Pharmaceuticals | 3 | 11 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 22 |
| Social security/social questions | 3 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 16 |
| Health promotion | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 12 |
| Health Information | 2 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 17 |
| Regulatory committees; tobacco, blood, tissues & cells | 2 | 5 | - | 2 | 2 | 11 |
| Others | 3 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 22 | 41 |
| Total | 24 | 69 | 14 | 13 | 54 | 174 |

EU FUNDS MANAGEMENT

The Director carried out the function of Senior Programming Officer for this Ministry during the first half of 2007 as in previous years. The Director General assumed this role in the second half of 2007. 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 as far as possible 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 for the preparation of the Operational Programmes for the forthcoming EU financing period. No project applications for EU funding were submitted during 2007 as preparatory work on project applications is still taking place.

European Social Fund 2004-2006

During 2007, this office 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 was closed successfully during 2007. Closure of the projects was accompanied by a seminar to disseminate the results of the project. This office was responsible for the administrative processing of finances in accordance with Structural Funds regulations. During 2007, several project monitoring meetings were held to ensure that procedures were followed and the projects were being implemented successfully. During a 2007 call for proposals for ESF, this office has actively contributed to the submission of two projects entitled:

- Enhancement of Occupational Skills of Support Staff at St Luke's Hospital (ESF 43).
- Developing and delivering a training programme in preventive mental health (ESF 55).

Both projects were accepted initially on a reserve list basis, however due to some savings in the ESF programme, both projects are now set to be implemented in 2008.

Transition Facility Fund 2004-2006

During 2007, 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 following projects funded through the TF 2004 fund were implemented during 2007:

- *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 resulted 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 2008/9.
- *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. Delays took place 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 and the project was closed successfully with full absorption of funds.

During 2006 and 2007, four 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 are currently undergoing selection procedures for Twinning Light partners and implementation will commence during 2008.

Bilateral Co-operation with the Swiss Government

As a result of Malta's membership in the European Union, Malta is benefiting from a funding agreement with the Swiss Government. The EU fund management unit co-ordinated the drawing up of proposals for health sector projects that could benefit from this fund in accordance with the policy document laid out by the Swiss Government. Project selection and implementation is foreseen for 2008-2009.

Bilateral Affairs

The Ministry of Health, the Elderly and Community Care successfully continued to operate the administrative arrangement within the framework of the reciprocal health agreement with the United Kingdom. This 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 2007, DPDEU collaborated with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in the preparation for a Joint Commission meeting between Malta and Libya. A high-level delegation from Libya was hosted in the beginning of August. Specifically, collaboration in the area of pandemic preparedness

and communicable disease surveillance were identified as areas for further joint action. An agreement between the two Ministries is currently being negotiated.

World Health Organisation and International Affairs

The European Union has stepped up its efforts to co-ordinate its policy and actions within the World Health Organisation. In this respect, the DPDEU has supported preparation of regional and world health assembly statements and positions vis-à-vis EU co-ordination activities. This Directorate co-ordinated Malta's position on WHO policy in relation to the International Health Regulations and the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

This Directorate was also the contact point for policy matters at United Nations in the field of health particularly on health aspects related to sexual and reproductive health to ensure that Malta's policy on these matters was consistently promoted and safeguarded.

Staff Development

Between 2006 and 2007 the EU Affairs office experienced a marked turnover in staff. A staff development and team building day was organised in March 2007 to assist the new team in working together. This led to the development of a mission statement and key goals for the EU Affairs section.

Staff within the EU and International Affairs Directorate attended continuing professional development events and SDO courses throughout the year. 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 on the Documentation Management System on the EU Forum software system in July 2007.

Conclusion

Health issues have continued to increase in importance on the agenda of the European Union. The publication of the first ever White Paper on the European Health strategy testifies to this effect. The prioritisation of health infrastructure within national operational programmes for the utilisation of structural funds during the period 2007-2013 is yet another indication of the importance being given to health systems at national and EU level. The integration of responsibilities for Policy Development and EU Affairs has been welcomed as a further step that mainstreams EU related policy initiatives into the fabric of national policy development. Further working on the ensuing policy development needs in response to EU identified strategies and national priorities will undoubtedly be the main challenge for the DPDEU in the coming twelve months.

DIRECTORATE FOR HEALTH INFORMATION AND RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Directorate for Health Information and Research (DHIR) 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 Directorate is made up of National Registries, the Health Survey Unit, the Statistics Clinic and the Director's Office. The Unit was upgraded to a Directorate with the appointment of a Director in September 2007. The scope of the department was amended to include research in its remit. This Directorate forms part of the newly established Strategy and Sustainability Division.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The Department of Health Information and Research will lead the collection, analysis and delivery of health related information in Malta. It will provide high quality epidemiological information and indicators on the health of the population and health services. Health information shall be made available for policy and decision makers, for the public in general, interested institutions and other that may require it. Research initiatives shall be developed and assistance shall be provided to the Director General (Strategy and Sustainability) by contributing the necessary evidence for the formulation of policy and strategy in the area of public health and health services for both existing and proposed programmes.

- To gather, analyse and disseminate health information;
- To conduct epidemiological surveys and maintain disease registers;
- To maintain and develop the range of services and products that the department produces, ranging from reports to requests for customised information, accurately and in a timely manner;
- To co-ordinate and prepare reports identifying issues, problems, unmet needs and service gaps, and recommend initiatives, review of policies, and amendments to procedures and programmes as required;
- To develop the infrastructure needed for the provision of non-expenditure data for the System of Health Account;
- To promote and carry out research;
- To communicate relevant results and reports from the above initiatives to stakeholders and the public.

THE YEAR UNDER REVIEW

Activities Common to all Sections of the Directorate

New Management Structures

A number of key areas of departmental function and management were identified. These included:

- Health Interview Survey
- Development of new function re: Information on Health Services
- EU Projects
- Data Protection
- Marketing
- Health and Safety.

For each of these identified key areas, a management team was assembled with the aim that this small group of people can concentrate their energies on a particular area and help offer advice and expertise to the leadership of the department. Each team consists of 3-4 members of staff, one of whom was nominated as the co-ordinator. Terms of reference were given to each of these teams with specific tasks.

Policy Positions

The Directorate was required to give its expert advice for the formulation of policy positions on the following EU related proposals:

- Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Community statistics on public health and health and safety at work.
- Comments on the Working Document on the processing of personal data relating to health in electronic health records (EHR).

Registry Database

Apart from the Gozo General Hospital Activity Analysis and the Injury Database, all registers were to date being kept electronically on outdated dBaseIV software. Over the past two years, new databases for these

registries were being designed and implemented from some of these registries. The development of the new databases has reached an advanced stage and implementation is nearing completion. During 2007, migration of the new system from a local server to a MITTS server took place.

The development of interactive online national databases was accepted as a Better Regulation project. The work on this project is also nearing completion and it should be active in the first half of 2008.

Human Resources

- A call for applications for research officer has been issued with a plan to employ research officers as part of a strategy to broaden inter-disciplinary working within the Directorate.
- Replacements for personnel lost through promotion and retirement have not been readily available. A manpower plan has now been integrated in the capacity building plan of the Strategy and Sustainability Division. The Directorate is hosting a public health trainee as part of the specialisation programme for public health.
- In addition, several members of staff have received training from SDO during 2007.
- A University Student reading for BSc Statistics performed summer work with DHI. She assisted in the statistical analysis of the pilot study for the Health Interview Survey.

Information Technology

- Old PCs declared beyond economic repair were upgraded through a ‘cannibalisation’ process using parts taken from other PCs and kept for use as backup PCs. Four new PCs were bought and installed. An old and malfunctioning LCD projector was replaced with a brand new one.
- DHI staff attended beginners and advanced course in MS Access organised by the company which is also designing the upgrade of the present databases for the DHI registries.

Data Protection

The Data Protection management team have produced a draft flow chart of pathways to be adopted by DHI when dealing with requests for data involving the supply of different categories of identified data. A series of consultations were performed on these proposals with stakeholders. The DP Audit report that was conducted by the DP Office of the OPM and MITTS Ltd was also finalised.

The advanced draft for a revised death certificate was also discussed, sent for approval by the Data Protection Commissioner and published by Legal Notice. The new certificate came into effect on 1 January 2008.

DHI attended one-day data protection courses organised at SDO by the OPM Data Protection Team.

ROUTINE ACTIVITIES ON NATIONAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Malta National Mortality Registry (MNMR)

During the year, 3,164 death certificates were received and entered in the Mortality Register at the DHIR. These included 482 death certificates for 2006 and 2,682 death certificates for 2007. Processing involves validation through the Patient Administration System (PAS) and Central Database (CdB), updating of PAS, coding of occupation, medical council number and causes of death. 20% of death certificates require information to be obtained from other sources due to lack of good medical data. These other sources include deceased patient records, newspapers, police, pathologists, toxicologists as well as the certifier him/herself. A copy of death certificates involving cancers, infectious diseases, occupational diseases and congenital anomalies is made for the relevant registries. Collection of data regarding foetal/infant deaths as

well as Maltese residents dying abroad requires specific tracing from St Luke's Hospital/Mater Dei Hospital and Public Registry respectively.

The National Mortality Registry was responsible for answering queries from a number of institutions and individual persons. These included:

| Type of Query | Number | Comments |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Parliamentary Queries | 8 | |
| Requests from Public Registry | Approx: 5 each week | This includes clarifying what is being written on death certificates as well as chasing certifiers for missing information |
| Institutional requests | Once a month | Demographic data of deceased requested by a number of hospitals/clinics and other entities |
| Requests for mortality data | 10 – 15 per month | |
| Requests from International Organisations | Eurostat WHO EMCDDA | Updated 1995-1998, 2006 2006 2006 |

During 2007 the Annual Mortality Report for 2005 was issued. This was made available on the DHIR website as well as by means of an e-mail sent to all employees having a gov.mt address and as an alert on the Synapse website.

The death certificate was revised and launched at the end of 2007, together with a training package and awareness campaign, as explained in the Projects section. An online version has also been produced as part of a Better Regulation measure.

Malta National Cancer Registry (MNCR)

Incidence data for selected cancer sites and type from 1995 to 2005 and cancer mortality data for the same sites and types from 1995 to 2006 by age groups and gender were published on the 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 webpage are also updated from time to time to reflect the most recent publishable information available from the Registry.

Cancer data on cases diagnosed from 1998-2002 that has received comprehensive validation using International Association for Research on Cancer (IARC) check programs supplied to the Registry, were accepted for inclusion in the Volume IX of the *Cancer Incidence in Five Continents*. This publication will be issued in early 2008. It is a five-yearly publication of the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC). Malta has already participated in Volume III, VII, and VIII.

The EUROCORE 4 study which evaluated the differences in survival from cancer across Europe published its results in a number of journals during 2007 and the Maltese data on cancer cases diagnosed between 1995-1999 and 1998-2002 was included in these analyses. The head of the Registry attended a meeting in Italy in February 2007 that discussed these results and the application for EUROCORE 5.

The Principal Medical Officer in charge of the Registry has contributed very actively to the compilation of the Cancer Plan for Malta and was the main co-ordinator of the three phases of consultation that were performed on this document during 2007.

During the year, 4,951 cancer reports were received from different sources. All cancer reports were cross-checked with the old cancer database to exclude duplicates. All the new cases were coded and entered in the National Cancer Register at the DHIR. The other already registered cases were edited in their respective database program and filed. The following table indicates the source of the notifications:

| Source | Number of cases |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Pathology Lab (SLH/MDH) | 1,920 |
| Cytology Lab (SLH/MDH) | 267 |
| Oncology (Sir Paul Boffa Hospital) | 930 |
| Private hospitals and clinics | 754 |
| Notifications from doctors | 280 |
| Mortality Register | 900 |
| Total | 5,051 |

The Cancer Register received requests from individuals, local institutions and from international organisations and was responsible for answering these requests. During the last three months of 2007, five requests for extensive customised data were processed.

National Obstetric Information System (NOIS)

The National Obstetrics Information System received, checked, coded, entered and validated 3,870 NOIS data sheets. These sheets record a total of 106 variables for every birth on the Maltese Islands.

The NOIS Annual Report for 2006 was compiled in 2007 and is available, together with several other reports, on the Department's website. The NOIS website has been kept regularly updated throughout the year.

A new Antenatal Booking Sheet developed by the Registry in collaboration with the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology was fully implemented in January 2007 and is being used with success. To capture the increased information now available in hospital files due to the use of the new antenatal booking sheet, a new NOIS data collection sheet was developed and approved in 2007 this will be fully implemented as from 1 January 2008.

The Registry continued as an active member of the EUROPERISTAT II project and supplied a first set of detailed obstetrics and perinatal data to this project. Malta data is being analysed alongside that of all other EU Member States and will be published when this analysis is completed.

Malta Congenital Anomalies Registry (MCAR)

The Malta Congenital Anomalies Registry actively identified a total of 244 infants/foetuses as potential cases of major congenital anomalies. These cases were followed up and hospital files of both mother and baby reviewed. Of the identified cases, 158 did fit the criteria of major congenital anomaly and were registered with the MCAR, 86 other cases were excluded after review and follow-up of hospital files. Over 460 hospital files were traced and reviewed.

The 158 cases of infants/foetuses registered in the MCAR with major congenital anomaly in 2007 were as follows:

| Category of infant/foetus registered in 2007 | Number of cases |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Isolated | 107 |
| Multiple anomalies of the same system | 15 |
| Multiple anomalies of different systems | 14 |
| Chromosomal anomalies | 20 |
| Recognised non-chromosomal syndromes | 2 |

These figures reflect work procedures in 2007 and not date of birth of the infants/foetuses. The MCAR website has been kept regularly updated and detailed statistics until 2005 were made available.

Malta National Organ Transplant Registry

Data on transplants was collected in liaison with the Transplants Co-ordinator in St Luke's/Mater Dei Hospital. The transplant website of the DHIR is updated on a yearly basis with figures regarding organs donated and transplanted during the previous year. There were eight corneal transplants and seven kidney transplants performed in Malta during 2007. One heart and one liver were sent for transplant abroad.

National Hospitals Information System (NHIS)

This relatively new system will eventually collect data on hospital activity from acute state and private hospitals. To date no data from the private sector is being collected.

NHIS has collected full paper record based data from Gozo General Hospital since July 2004. Validation of hospital data for 2006 and data entry into the Gozo General Hospital Activity database was continued in 2007. It was 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 2006 was put up on the Department's website in end March 2007.

Data on hospital activity for 2007 is still being validated and entered into the database. To date NHIS has received 5,221 clinical, episode-based data sheets from Gozo General Hospital and 4,670 records have been validated and entered into the database.

Anonymised record-based data from St Luke's Hospital was collected for 2006 from the Hospital Activity Analysis System. This data was merged with data from Gozo General Hospital. The resulting aggregated data was analysed and sent to EUROSTAT as part of the latter organisation's annual request on non-expenditure health care statistics data.

Several requests for data from local clients and the National Statistics Office relating to Health Care Data - 2006, the Maltese Health Care System and aggregate data on admissions to Gozo General Hospital were processed. Partial answers to Parliamentary Questions (PQs) insofar as they related to admissions to Gozo General Hospital were also forwarded.

The NHIS deals with EUROSTAT's yearly request for non-expenditure health statistics data. Eurostat carries out an annual data collection on health care statistics (non-expenditure data), covering data at National level on health staff (manpower/health care professionals), equipment and use of health resources in the field of health care. The data request from EUROSTAT is structured into three parts:

- Routine data collection on health staff (manpower), hospital beds and beds in residential institutions and procedures by category of episode of care performed in hospitals;
- Routine data collection on hospital patients, core output and high-tech resources: This is based on the recommendations of the Task Force on "Hospital Statistics Minimum Data Set" and on the agreement reached at the OECD/Eurostat/WHO meeting on a morbidity shortlist for hospital discharges – the International Shortlist of Hospital Morbidity Tabulation (ISHMT). Included with this data collection is a section dealing with patient migration;
- Pilot data collection on hospital manpower and technical resources and a mapping exercise for the nursing professions.

EUROSTAT's 2007 request for data (basis year 2006) was partly answered using the data which was available, and was forwarded in June 2007.

Further work will be carried out during 2008 to strengthen the health care statistics activity within DHIR. This is however dependant heavily on data collection at source from the hospitals and other health care providers.

Injury Database (IDB)

Data collection regarding Accidents and Injuries from the Emergency and Admitting Department at Gozo General Hospital is still ongoing. 1,411 have been collected, checked, coded and data entered. Forms for the month of December have not yet been submitted to DHIR. Data for 2006 was submitted to Department of Home, Leisure & Sports in Austria for collation of IDB Final Report of participating EU countries.

Training for reception staff at Emergency and Admitting Department in Mater Dei Hospital was carried out. Patients presenting themselves at A & E following an injury are now being flagged. Negotiations are underway to start training staff at Triage and full data collection during 2008.

The IDB was approached by the Malta Standards Authority with a view to establishing a regular liaison as a surveillance tool to pick up any hazardous products that could be giving rise to injuries.

Public Health Reporting & Research

System of Health Accounts (SHA)

Extensive groundwork has been carried out by DHIR in collaboration with other directorates notably EU Affairs and Financial Monitoring and Control Unit to identify the way forward for the development of the national capability to collect and process the required data for the System of Health Accounts. DHIR prepared a document that identified currently demanded indicators and their un/availability status and the infrastructure needed for further development and this was present to all key players in the public health sector.

DHIR has applied for funds through a EUROSTAT grant and a European Commissioner Transition Facility Fund Twinning Light project with a view to the planning and implementation of a System of Health Accounts. These funds should be made available for use during 2008.

The EU Health Portal

During 2007 a number of deep links were requested by the EU-Health Portal for Malta. These links involved the various areas covered by the portal. The member of the editorial board for Malta sent these links to be updated by the EU portal.

A journal club meeting of Public Health in Malta was held later during the year to present and increase awareness of the Health-EU Portal to Public Health practitioners.

Health Interview Survey (HIS)

At the beginning of 2007, an expert from the Danish Agency responsible for the Health Survey visited DHIR to assist with setting out a timetable for completion of the HIS 2008. The project has commenced with completion earmarked for early 2009 with the publication of a series of reports.

The following activities on the roadmap for the HIS 2008 have been completed:

- Translation of modules into the Maltese language
- Pre-testing of questionnaire
- Template design for Mark reader (this technology replaces manual data entry)
- Production of random sample from Electoral Register for pilot test of HIS
- Receipt of deciles of income from NSO from the EU-SILC survey
- Pre-testing of interview questionnaires
- Completion of changes of questionnaires following completion of the pre-testing exercise
- Printing of questionnaire for the Pilot study

- Pilot fieldwork and data collection using Mark reader
- Transmission of pilot data and reports to EUROSTAT
- Planning for main study to be conducted in 2008.

In the meantime, more requests have been made for customised data from the Health Interview Survey 2002 dataset, including parliamentary questions. Extensive use of Health Interview Survey data has been made for the purpose of the primary health care consultation process and for the preparation of presentations for the Cardiovascular Health conference to be held in January 2008.

WHO-EURO Health for All (HFA)

Data on Health Indicators for the year 2006 was submitted to WHO-EURO towards the end of 2007. For this submission DHIR supplied some new indicators particularly relating to absenteeism due to illness and the number of newly recognised invalidity/disability cases. Experience obtained with WHO is being used to develop methodologies for the implementation of EUROSTAT's European Core Health Indicators.

Statistics Clinic

The statistics clinic has been highly in demand during 2007. While attempts were made to maintain appointments on the prescribed slots on Tuesdays and Thursdays afternoons, these appointments have overflowed into the rest of the week around peak demand periods such as May and September. The Statistics Clinic handled an average of six hourly consultations per week.

Following the appointment of the statistician as Director of this Department, the Statistics Clinic has been reduced to once weekly. Additional human resources in this area have been included in the capacity building plan for 2008.

Health Ethics Committee

DHIR has continued its support to the Health Ethics Committee. Secretarial support is still being provided by DHIR, together with the co-ordination of all its activity. In addition, the Consultant and the Statistician are both appointed members of this committee. The former has been serving the role of Secretary to the Committee.

Scientific Publications by DHIR Staff in 2007

DHIR staff has been involved in a number of collaborative research activities during 2007. A number of conference presentations and publications arose from these studies. Here follows a list of articles published in peer-reviewed journals in 2007 by DHIR staff.

- Cutaneous melanoma in the Maltese Islands: 2000–2004. M Dalmas, K England, MJ Boffa, J Degaetano, P Gatt. *European Journal of Cancer*.
- Twin pregnancy outcomes in the Maltese Islands. Savona-Ventura C, Gatt M, Zammit K, Grima S. *Int J Gynaecol Obstet*.
- Survival for eight major cancers and all cancers combined for European adults diagnosed in 1995–99: results of the EURO CARE-4 study. Franco Berrino, Roberta De Angelis, Milena Sant, Stefano Rosso, Magdalena B Lasota, Jan W Coebergh, Mariano Santaquilani, the EURO CARE Working group. *Lancet*.
- Recent cancer survival in Europe: a 2000–02 period analysis of EURO CARE-4 data. Arduino Verdecchia, Silvia Francisci, Hermann Brenner, Gemma Gatta, Andrea Micheli, Lucia Mangone, Ian Kunkler, the EURO CARE-4 Working Group. *Lancet*.
- The magnitude and distribution of infectious intestinal disease in Malta: a population based study. Gauci C, Gilles H, O'Brien S, Mamo J, Stabile I, Ruggeri FM, Gatt A, Calleja N, Spiteri G. *Epidemiol Infect*.
- Estimating the burden and cost of infectious intestinal disease in the Maltese community. Gauci C, Gilles H, O'Brien S, Mamo J, Stabile I, Ruggeri FM, Calleja N, Spiteri G. *Epidemiol Infect*.

- General practitioners role in the notification of communicable diseases - study in Malta. Gauci C, Gilles H, O'Brien S, Mamo J, Calleja N. *Eurosurveillance*.
- Sentinel Surveillance: an option for surveillance of infectious intestinal disease. Gauci C, Melillo Fenech T, Gilles H, O'Brien S, Mamo J, Stabile I, Calleja N, Ruggeri F, Cuschieri L. *Eurosurveillance*.
- Antenatal psychiatric morbidity in Maltese women. E Felice, J Saliba, V Grech, J Cox, N Calleja. *General Hospital Psychiatry*.
- Low intervertebral disc height in postmenopausal women with osteoporotic vertebral fractures compared to hormone-treated and untreated postmenopausal women and premenopausal women without fractures. Muscat Baron Y, Brincat MP, Galea R, Calleja N. *Climacteric*.

Projects

The DHIR continued to participate in a number of EU funded projects during 2007. These projects, whilst requiring a commitment in terms of time and human resource effort, have provided an opportunity for growth and development of new activities as well as networking opportunities at a European level.

Anamort

The Anamort project has been developed by InVS and Inserm as an EU Project aimed to evaluate the quality and comparability of injury mortality statistics in Europe and to produce indicators on the causes of death by injury which will be useful for public health decisions. During 2007 the Anamort steering group met three times as well as meeting during the large annual meeting. More work on comparing figures for injury related deaths in various countries was done with the aim of coming up with recommendations to be used in the creation of injury-related mortality statistics. These recommendations were presented during the annual meeting in December of 2007.

Perisat II

The aim of the EURO-PERISTAT II project is to complete the development of a strategy for monitoring and evaluating perinatal health in the EU. The National Obstetric Information System, together with the Mortality Registry, is participating in this project.

Improvement of Statistics of Causes of Death

The main objective of this project, which was funded through the Transitional Facility Fund 2004 and carried out in collaboration with NSO, was the improvement of data quality of causes of death statistics. The actions were aimed both at the certification and codification process. It is hoped that by improving the certification and codification at country level this will increase comparability of mortality data between countries. It forms the basis of many epidemiological studies as well as providing evidence which may be used in the planning of health care services and the evaluation of these plans.

The measures carried out for Malta during this two-year project (Jan 2006-Dec 2007) were aimed at improving the certification and codification procedures. The measures took into account deficiencies present as well as priorities in this area as outlined by Eurostat but also taking into account national needs. A number of documents outlined in the grant aimed at assisting Member States were reviewed and their recommendations taken into account.

As part of the project, the current death certificate was revised and launched together with the provision of training material for certifiers on the website. This material was promoted through meetings such as the 6th Medical School Conference, induction of the new house officers and a launching conference and through e-mail in collaboration with The Synapse.

Our mortality database was also adapted for automated coding and a quality check program included through this project, in addition to training provided to the registry staff abroad.

Meetings related to project:

- Workshop on certification
- Workshop on codification.

EUROCHIP-2

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 in early 2008.

EUROCAT & ICBDSR

The Registry continued active participation in two international project networks: EUROCAT (European Surveillance of Congenital Anomalies) and ICBDSR (International Clearinghouse for Birth Defects Surveillance and Research). Through participation with these bodies, in 2007, Malta data was approved for participation in several international collaborative studies.

Meetings related to project:

- European Symposium on Congenital Anomalies and Annual EUROCAT meeting (Naples, May 2007)
- Scientific Session and Annual Meeting of the ICBDSR (Chianciano, Italy September 2007).

Health Labour Accounts (HLA)

This project was carried out with the co-operation the Head of the Financial Monitoring and Control Unit within MHEC. Through these funds, a system for managing human resources has been developed in SVPR. This system was then presented in a seminar to HR personnel from other entities within the public health sector with a view to its implementation across all these institutions.

Health and Disability Statistics

The expert visit to help to lay out the implementation plan for HIS 2008 in Malta was funded through this Transition Facility Fund project. In addition, a review of existing survey vehicles and their methodology has been carried out to investigate the possibility of linking the HIS 2008 to an existing survey structure. No such vehicle existed locally and it was therefore decided to have the HIS 2008 as a separate survey.

Preparation for the Implementation of the European Health Interview Survey

Funds from the Transition Facility Fund enabled DHIR to translate and pilot the European Health Interview Survey questionnaire as released in December 2006. Most of the actions listed under the Health Interview Survey section were made possible through this project. Guidance was provided through documentation being made available by EUROSTAT and through three workshops organised over the whole period of the project.

Meetings related to project:

- Workshop, Prague: March 2007
- Final workshop, Luxembourg: June 2007.

IDB-I

This project has been running for a number of years and has enabled the Department to implement a data capturing system for injury data. These funds also facilitated the change of database software being used for national data collection and archiving. This project has now been concluded.

Improving the Product and Safety Dimension in the IDB

This project was concluded in 2007 with a dissemination event in Gozo General Hospital wherein personnel involved in the compilation of IDB data were given feedback on the results of this telephone survey conducted by DHI in 2006.

SafeStrat

Malta is performing the duties of a co-ordinator for the IT-Tools sub-work package within the SafeStrat project. This work entails the piloting of IT tools to aid data capture within IDB. The emphasis lies on automating data capture as much as possible, at the point of entry.

Policy Impact Assessment & Public Health Reporting

The PIA PHR project is being carried out by a working group under the co-ordination of the Institute of Public Health North Rhine-Westphalia (Löegd), Bielefeld, Germany with the financial support of the European Commission. The project Policy Impact Assessment of Public Health Reporting (PIA PHR) aims to find ways to enhance the impact of PHR on different audiences (particularly politicians and policy makers, but also scientists, health service organisations, citizens ...) and to develop a methodology for health reporting in Europe which considers the most appropriate and effective ways of disseminating information to the various user groups. Therefore it is necessary to understand decision-making processes of different user groups on the national, regional and local level, their needs and expectations.

During 2007, the results of the 1st round of the Delphi Survey, organised by this project in 2006 among top-level personnel and politicians, were disseminated and the 2nd round was organised, inviting 35 Maltese participants. This was then followed by two focus group events, during which 29 users and producers of public health reporting took part and the conduct of 20 face-to-face in-depth interviews. A report on national health-related priority areas under OPER I and OPER II of the Cohesion Funds 2007-2013 was compiled. Finally, a country report for Malta was compiled, containing an in-depth analysis of both focus groups and face-to-face interviews. The research officer was also involved with the collation of the project financial and interim reports in collaboration with the German partner.

Meetings related to project:

- 3rd Meeting PIA PHR & Presentation during EUPHA Workshop: Public health reporting – the Challenge to realise a Policy Impact, Helsinki: October 2007.

EUGLOREH

The DHIR is participating in the preparation of the Global Report on the Health Status in the European Region (EUGLOREH 2007). This project is co-financed by the European Commission in the framework of the Community Action Programme, Work Plan 2005. 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. 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.

During 2007, the work done on the project included providing the project leaders with the national data that was not available in international databases. Data was obtained from other data sources including local national statistics, national registers, administrative sources, local health surveys and *ad hoc* studies.

Following the data collection and submission phase, a first draft of the report was produced by the various authors. This first draft of the report was then submitted to all the project partners for review. Comments

on this draft version were invited from local stakeholders and submitted to the project leaders and authors. The final report will be published in mid-2008

Meetings related to project:

- EUGLOREH 2nd plenary meeting, Lisbon: November 2007.

Other Meetings Abroad

- Technical group on Causes of Death (TG COD): October 2007
- Annual meeting, International Association of Cancer Registries (IACR) in Ljubljana: September 2007
- Pre-conference course: Cancer mapping and spatial statistics in cancer epidemiology: September 2007
- General Meeting: European Network of Cancer Registries (ENCR) (*when PMO in charge was asked to chair meeting on Data Protection Issues*): September 2007
- EURO CARE 4 Results Presentation and Launch of EURO CARE 5, Italy: February 2007
- Workshop on Methodological Approaches to the assessment of Risk of Congenital Anomaly due to Environmental Pollution, Budapest: March 2007
- Technical Group CARE (TG CARE), Luxembourg: September 2007
- OECD meeting of Health Account Experts, Paris: October 2007
- 2nd meeting - Health-EU Portal Editorial Board, Luxembourg: June 2007
- DG SANCO Network of Competent Authorities meetings
- Meeting of the Task Force on Data Protection and Confidentiality
- Meeting for National Data Administrators of IDB
- Core Group Health Interview Surveys (CG HIS) meetings
- Technical Group Health Interview Surveys (TG HIS), Luxembourg: June 2007
- Steering Committee - European Health Surveys Information Database (EUHSID)
- e-Health Conference
- Working Party – Health Indicators, Luxembourg: June & December 2007
- Working Party – Public Health Statistics, Brussels: October 2007
- ISG-SPC meetings.

Conclusion

During 2007 a number of changes took place within this Directorate. Some internal restructuring is taking place to enable the Directorate to better respond to the changing needs for provision of information on a national and international level as well as to provide the much needed evidence to drive evidence-based policy in the health sector. Contribution to the national health strategy, the implementation of a system of health accounts and the organisation of the Health Interview Survey are expected to be the main challenges facing the DHIR in 2008.

PHARMACEUTICAL POLICY AND MONITORING DIRECTORATE (PPMD)

INTRODUCTION

In view of the administrative reform carried out within the Ministry of Health, the Elderly and Community Care during 2007, the Secretariat of the Drugs and Therapeutics Committee (DTC) which formed part of the National Medicines Policy and Audit Unit and previously falling under Director General (Health), was incorporated with the Strategy and Sustainability Directorate as of August 2007. This is gradually developing into the Pharmaceutical Policy and Monitoring Directorate (PPMD) within the same division.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The Pharmaceutical Policy and Monitoring Directorate has the mission of developing equitable and sustainable pharmaceutical policies for Malta. It is also tasked to ensure that these policies are implemented effectively through continual and systematic monitoring.

- Formulate, monitor and evaluate pharmaceutical policies to be implemented in the Government Health Service within the framework of a National Health Policy and international pharmaceutical practices;
- Be responsible for the implementation of EU legislation in the field of formulary management;
- Establish, maintain and periodically review the Government National Formulary for pharmaceuticals and surgical materials for the Government Health Service;
- Optimise analysis of information and evaluation of clinical evidence in order to draw up prescribing guidelines and develop a systematic rational approach to prescribing and drug use through the use of international health technology assessment;
- Set service-wide protocols governing prescribing and the rational use of medicines;
- Audit prescribing policies set by the Standing Committee for Medicines Management, assess the results of the audit and submit recommendations for necessary action;
- Give advice and provide technical assistance in the establishment of technical specifications for the procurement of medicines, surgical devices and related technology.

THE YEAR UNDER REVIEW

Legislation

During 2007, LN 399/03 concerning the availability of medicinal products on the Government Formulary List was amended in line with the EU Transparency Directive 89/105/EEC and a new legal notice, LN 165/07 was issued. This legal notice regulates the request for introduction of new drugs/new indications on the Government Formulary List. A new application form for Marketing Authorisation Holders (MAH) was placed online on the website for this purpose.

Government Formulary List Advisory Committee (GFLAC)

Towards the end of 2007, a new Government Formulary List Advisory Committee (GFLAC) was set up so as to assist MHEC with the management of the Government Formulary List for the national health service, taking into consideration the quality of the service, the financial impact rendering medicinal products available within the Government Health Service and the entitlement criteria for free medicines. Two meetings of this committee were held during December. The approved terms of reference are as follows:

- To assist the Ministry of Health, Elderly and Community Care with the management of the Government Formulary List for the National Health Service, taking into consideration the quality of the service, the financial impact of rendering medicinal products available within the Government Health Service and the entitlement criteria for free medicines. This comprises advising on:
 - The inclusion of new medicinal products on the formulary, as well as new indications for medicinal products already available on the Government Formulary List, in line with LN 165/07
 - Protocols for use of medicinal products within the Government Health Services
 - Deletion of medicinal products from the formulary list
 - Other issues that may arise as presented by the Secretariat.
- In carrying out the functions specified in 1 above, the Committee may consult with experts from within the Government Health Services as the need arises.
- To investigate any problems relating to medicine use, demand clarifications, and take the necessary actions if the service providers fail to abide with the established policies and criteria.
- To advise policymakers regarding any changes to entitlement for free medicines.
- To advise on requests for medicinal products (not included on the formulary) on a named patients basis.

The advisory committee has been appointed by the Permanent Secretary for a period of two years.

Routine Activities

During 2007 the following routine activities were performed. In the absence of a Director, weekly meetings were held between the technical staff and the Director General to ensure the smooth running of the unit and process the requests received for consideration.

- 59 requests for new introduction of medicinal products were submitted – 37 from consultants working within the Government Health Service and 22 from the Market Authorisation Holders. 20 requests were approved and four were refused. The remainder are still being evaluated.
- 281 requests were submitted on a named patient basis.
- 24 new drug protocols were approved and put online on the website. Four further amendments were carried out to existing protocols.
- 15 medicinal products were deleted from the Government Formulary List.
- 10 circulars outlining policies concerning the products on the Government Formulary List were prepared.
- The specifications of several medicinal products were changed to ensure the availability of the needed medicinal products in consultation with the Government Pharmaceutical Services.

Queries, Parliamentary Questions, Ombudsman letters, newspaper letters, etc, related directly or indirectly to the Government Formulary List, were processed and answered.

Four new databases were developed: Deletions; Specifications; Protocols; Queries.

Liaison with Stakeholders

- The health professionals working within the Government Health Services were constantly informed and updated as regards ongoing issues. A number of meetings were held with consultants, pharmacists and the industry.
- The PPMD continued to actively support the Consumer Competition Division (CCD) as regards the various technical issues of pricing and reimbursement.

Projects

INFOPRICE

Data regarding the pricing of 15 medicinal active ingredients was sent to the Transparency Committee Secretariat, as part of the INFOPRICE project which aims at improving availability and exchange of price data on medicinal products between Member States as well as EEA/EFTA countries. This was done in collaboration with the Consumer and Competition Division.

PPRI

The Pharmaceutical Pricing and Reimbursement Information (PPRI) network is an EU project supported by WHO and the Austrian Ministry. PPMD was involved in answering questionnaires submitted by the PPRI team, exchanging pharmaceutical information and submitting a very detailed pharmaceutical profile of Malta.

Participation at International Meetings

- Transparency Committee meetings pertaining to DG Enterprise dealing with the implementation of the Transparency Directive 89/105/EEC.
- PPRI meeting held in November.
- The Medicines Evaluation Committee (MEDEV) is an official committee of the EU Social Health Insurance Forum. The main purpose of the MEDEV meetings is to evaluate new drugs, define

parameters for cost-benefit analyses and international pricing analysis and to perform comparisons of countries and systems with regards to drug benefits. A pharmacist attended one meeting held in November. There is ongoing collaboration regarding any queries raised by the MEDEV members mainly regarding reimbursement of medicines.

Conclusion

The National Medicines and Policy Audit Unit underwent significant changes during 2007. Part of this unit has now been incorporated under the Strategy and Sustainability Division and is gradually developing to take on the functions and meet the objectives set out for the Directorate for Pharmaceutical Policy and Monitoring. The main challenges for 2008 will be the appropriate administrative implementation of the Transparency Directive and the setting up of procedures and processes to monitor implementation of policies set out to ensure equity, quality and sustainability of medicines for the Government Health Services.

DR NATASHA AZZOPARDI MUSCAT
Director General (Strategy and Sustainability)



**Ministry for Investment, Industry
and Information Technology**

Ministry

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Most of the items on the service contracts with MITTS were revised during 2006 and usage optimised during 2007 with the objective to accommodate a further reduction in the allocated budget for the year. The sharing of peripherals to support office automation continued with the result of reducing running costs while centralising peripherals.

A software inventory took place. The register is being kept in place by the IMU while the last few sites were upgraded. MIIT now has a homogeneous set-up throughout. Data integrity reminders are being sent periodically.

Core Services Contract

The Government CSC was maintained during 2007. Further discussions took place in order to streamline the contract while providing adequate services to all ministries. Other services entertained through the CSC during 2007 were the mGovernment mobile operators running expenses and the Data Protection Compliance Programme through the Office of the Prime Minister.

During 2007, the CIO participated in the Public Sector Progress Review Board. Pursuant to Circular 29/2005, MITTS Ltd, as the ICT agency for Government is to provide core services to all Government and the public sector. The board has continuously reviewed each entity and carried out the consolidation task. The progress is ongoing and will continue throughout 2008 as per table below:

| Public Sector Entity | Status |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Transport Authority | Complete |
| Broadcasting Authority | Works in progress |
| ETC | Complete |
| Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools | Complete |
| Gozo Channel | Works in progress |
| Heritage Malta | Complete |
| Lotteries and Gaming Authority | Works in progress |
| Malta Centre for Restoration | Works in progress |
| Malta Freeport Corporation | Complete |
| Malta Industrial Parks | Works in progress |
| Malta National Laboratory | Complete |
| Malta Resources Authority | Works in progress |
| Malta Standards Authority | Works in progress |
| Malta Tourism Authority | Works in progress |
| MCST | Works in progress |
| Mediterranean Conference Centre | Works in progress |
| National Audit Office | Complete |
| National Employment Authority | Complete |
| OHSA | Works in progress |
| Public Broadcasting Services | Works in progress |
| Superintendent of Cultural Heritage | Complete |
| Wasteserv Limited | Works in progress |
| Water Services Corporation | Works in progress |
| Air Malta Co Ltd | Complete |
| Kordin Grain Terminal | Works in progress |

eGovernment Programme

- **Consultancy Services:** MIIIT issued a framework tender seeking to procure consultancy services to assist in the identification of the business implications relevant to the delivery of particular eGovernment solutions together with the relevant procurement documents where applicable. This programme sufficed in requesting professional services, thus identifying potential eServices to be developed for Government. This programme enabled MIIIT to kick-off a number of projects as shown in the table below:

| Owner | Service Description |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| OPM | DOI Press Cards |
| MJHA | Notification of Death Portal |
| MJHA | Will Searches Portal |
| MEYE | Scholarships On-line Applications |
| MCMP | Starting a New Micro-Business Portal |
| MIIT | Bill Settlement Portal (mygov) |
| MFIN | Basic eProcurement + Integration MFIN EU system |
| MRAE | Agriculture-related Services – Fisheries |
| MRAE | Agriculture-related services - Livestock |
| MEYE | Integrated Public Libraries Portal |
| MEYE | Education, Lecture, Student Communication Portal |
| MEYE | National Archives – eGov Services |
| OPM | eDemocracy Portal |
| MFIN | Registration of Warrants & Licences (Licenses A & B) |
| MJHA | Judiciary Portal |
| MJHA | Police Services Portal |
| MHEC | eHealth Portal – Phase II |
| OPM | DOI Online Portal |
| MFIN | Accountancy Board Portal (cost estimated) |
| OPM | DOI Photographic Prints |
| MFSS | Online Application for Pensions |
| MJHA | Police Conduct Certificates |
| MCMP | Online registration of Patents and Trademarks |
| MEYE | Sports Online Services |
| MFSS | Overpayments |
| MJHA | Police Portal |
| MRAE | Veterinary Services Portal |
| MCMP | Online Registration and payments of Small Crafts and Moorings |
| MCMP | Ports one-stop-shop electronic “single window” |
| MFIN | Finance Portal |
| MIIT | Notification of Change of Circumstances |
| MFSS | Housing Authority Online Services |
| MFSS | Online Services for the Elderly |
| MTAC | Transport Ticketing Portal |
| MJHA | Land and Property Portal |
| MJHA | Local Government Portal |
| MTAC | Travellers Portal |

- **Alliance Agreement:** MIIIT, on behalf of the various ministries, departments and authorities forming part of Government, engaged into an e-Government Alliance Framework Agreement in order to develop a number of e-Government solutions together with the various ministries, departments and authorities. To this effect, MIIIT issued an Expression of Interest where Government invited submissions to evaluate and choose a number of suppliers that will act as Contractors in the further development and improvement of e-Government in Malta. A total of 14 suppliers applied of which three dropped out. All the remaining 11 contractors were selected to carry out the task of developing e-Government applications.

Services started/completed during 2007 include:

| Owner | Service Description |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| MUDR | New Vehicle Registration (back-end connectivity) |
| MUDR | New Vehicle Registration (Front Desk) |
| MCMP | MSA ePayment Portal |
| OPM | Content Management System for OPM |
| MHEC | eHealth Portal (Immunisation DB Module) |
| MJHA | Notification of Death Portal |
| MJHA | Will Searches Portal |
| MCMP | Starting a New Micro-business Portal |
| MIIT | myGov Portal Contract – The Proposal |
| MJHA | Judiciary Portal |
| MFSS | Application for Child Allowance and New Supplements |
| OPM | Recruitment Portal for the Public Sector |
| MEYE | MCAST – Enrolment into Higher Secondary |
| MIIT | Electronic Change of Address |
| MTAC | Digital Asset Management System |
| MJHA | Online Aviation Security Services |
| MEYE | National Archives Project |
| MFIN | All Warrants Portal |
| MFSS | Online Application for Pensions |
| MHEC | eHealth Portal Services Phase II |
| OPM/MIIT | e-Democracy Portal |
| OPM | DOI Online (Shop for Gov Publications/Photographic reprints) |
| MFA | Scholarships |
| MRAE | Agricultural Related Services Including Livestock |
| MCMP | MSA Portal |
| MUDR | Online Renewal of Driving Licence |
| MJHA | ePassports Notification for Cag Gemini |
| OPM | Electoral Commission Online Services |
| MHEC | Digitisation of Medical Records |
| OPM | Customer Care of One Government |
| MIIT | Enemalta Online Services |
| MJHA | Malta Arbitration Centre |
| MIIT | National ICT Strategy Portal (thesmartisland) |
| MIIT/MJHA | NIDMS Project Passport Office |
| MJHA | Application for Permits and Notifications – MEPA |
| MJHA | Digital Certificate for Certifikati eGov Portal |

- **Other Support Programmes:** Other programmes kicked off to support the e-Government Web Framework.

| Owner | Service Description |
|------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| MIIT/MITTS | Connectivity to the Electronic Payment Gateway |
| MIIT/MITTS | Setting up of the R&A Part of eID Phase 2 |
| MIIT | e-Mall |
| MIIT | Maltese Language Styleguide for Localised MS Products |

During the year, MIIT requested various services for which the Chief Information Officer was appointed to chair various adjudication boards. These programmes included the request for both Major ICT Projects, Adjudication Boards and Selection Boards including the Tender for the Provision of Legal Services for the National Identity Management Systems (NIDMS), Childnet - Internet Safety, Contract for QA on Windows Localisation, Comparative Market Research & Benchmarking Analyses, Malta Police Forensic Lab Tender, ICT in Government Unit selection board and the Government Services Unit selection board.

e-Learning

MIIT has finalised an e-Learning Vision and Strategy document, including a corresponding Action Plan which covers a series of measures which will actualise the said vision. The e-Learning Strategy is intended to complement the transformation of the local educational system. The focus of the Action Plan is to establish the basic building blocks which are essential in a teaching and learning environment for e-Learning to kick-start and eventually flourish.

ICT IN GOVERNMENT UNIT

During 2007, the ICT in Government Unit consolidated its efforts to promote and facilitate the delivery of ICT in the public sector. It continued to focus its energies through the delivery of the e-Government programme and improved on the positive results attained in 2006.

This has been recognised and reflected in Malta's placement in the EU Commission's independent benchmarking review of the supply of online public services which has seen Malta not only maintain but actually advance on the previous year's efforts with Malta holding on to its second place in online sophistication and advancing from third to second place in online availability.

2007 has seen renewed vigour in terms of the delivery of eServices; the manner with which they are delivered, and the tools that are centric to ensuring their effective deployment in a secure customer-friendly environment.

Apart from the development of the new services such as that relating to children's allowances, notification of death, MCAST Courses, and search on wills; key milestones for 2007 include:

- *The development of an alliance agreement with a number of private development firms.* It is recognised that Government does not have the means, nor should it compete with the private sector. To this end a synergistic approach to the development of e-Government initiatives has been adopted that harnesses the expertise and competence of the private sector and brings it together with the requirements of service owners and the technological strength of MITTS.

This was achieved through the issuance of an open call at the close of which, submissions received were evaluated and companies that had met the requisite criteria were selected and included in an 'Alliance' framework where members are allocated e-Government initiatives to develop with individual ministry-based service owners. As soon as a project is delivered, the alliance member is allocated the next project that is scheduled for delivery.

Despite the initial delays that were encountered in getting this system off the ground, significant benefits are now being reaped in terms of:

- Price stability of developed services since prices were established at the onset of the call within a two-tier structure of normal and complex, with projects being paid for in accordance to the tier that they are assessed to fall into by the project managers;
 - Greater expertise of developers. This mechanism provides the comfort to developers that for the duration of the agreement they are assured a share of the business. This has meant that developers can plan beyond the immediacy of any one project and can look at experience in the development of e-Initiatives as an investment and not as previously 'a sunk cost';
 - Reduced deployment time. Whilst staying within established procurement parameters that safeguard transparency, this system avoids the need to issue separate calls for each intended service and thus saves considerable time and effort that had previously been invested in such calls when preparation and issuance of the call often exceeded the effort necessary to deliver the objective.
- *The implementation of a policy* that has seen all new e-Government initiatives being developed through Government's eID framework and that shall, during 2008, see the implementation of a programme that seeks to review all the older systems and migrate and upgrade them to the eID platform with the

increased security and flexibility that this offers and making it possible for single sign-on for all e-Government services.

- *The enhancement of the eID framework* which has seen the implementation of the 2nd phase of the eID solution as planned and which now offers PKI digital Certificates in addition to the username and password mechanism offered by the earlier eID version and which provides increased levels of security. This second phase of the eID solution also offers the possibility of deploying services that may be accessed through third parties either by delegation to a trusted individual or as a one-off through an agency framework with the first of this next generation of e-Services that may be accessed through agents being scheduled for deployment by mid 2008.
- *The development of a new e-Government Services Portal*, branded as *mygov.mt* and which is accessible at www.mygov.mt. This portal permits users to access all e-Government services that are delivered through the eID framework through a single sign-on mechanism and to customise their profile in accordance to their particular needs and preferences when acquiring e-Government services and thus avoid having to browse through web pages they do not need.

The above and the recognition that Malta's progress in this area has been given by the EU Commission's independent assessment, provide a convincing argument that Malta's performance was no flash in the pan but the fruit of a consistent, focused and targeted customer centric programme that aims to provide the Maltese public with one of the most sophisticated e-Government service available in Europe.

Just as it has been of benefit to the citizen, this programme offers tremendous opportunity for the elimination of unnecessary bureaucracy and the rationalisation of resources. Reaping these benefits is dependent on a holistic analytical approach and attempts to address this through greater synergy with Government's management consultancy arm were made. However, these have not been particularly successful and the resources that were agreed to in a memorandum of understanding between MIIT and the MEU have not been committed.

This effectively means that the present structure is overly reliant on outsourcing of management analysis and review which although effective is costly and does not afford the timely reliability of an in-house competency. More importantly it does not provide a bird's eye view that transcends sectors and renewed efforts will be made during 2008 to harness the necessary resources with which to maintain the momentum of the programme and to reap the benefits associated with the other half of the same coin, that of rationalising and streamlining government activities.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES UNIT

The Government Services Unit (GSU) was created after the publication of the Master Plan for the development of SmartCity Malta which will see a site in Ricasoli being transformed into knowledge based township incorporating an ICT and Media Business Park as its core business activities. The GSU was set up in mid 2007 and has been tasked with the creation of a client interface with which to provide an administrative one-stop-shop for the provision of services to business entities operating from, or seeking to operate from, the Maltese Islands.

The targets for which it has been set are twofold and relate to:

- the provision of a single point of reference from which government services may be sourced;
- the identification, review, and adjustment of those operational structures and activities that are necessary for the provision of government services in a manner that meets client expectations and conforms to legislative and administrative requirements and generally leads to the delivery of more efficient and effective government services.

Initially its focus has been limited to meeting the commitments that Government has entered into with regard to the development of SmartCity Malta. In this context, and although embryonic in nature, the GSU

during 2007 has focused almost exclusively on the development of service level agreements with key government service providers in order to establish minimum commitment and delivery times with these same entities.

It is planned that these service level agreements be largely in place by the end of the first quarter of 2008 and service delivery is optimistically being expected to commence by mid 2008. This is dependent on a successful sourcing of a small but skilled customer centric and public service oriented team of professionals for which approval has already been given although the parameters that have been established may prove to be a limiting factor.

INFORMATION SOCIETY SECRETARIAT (ISS)

In 2007, the ISS continued with the implementation of Information Society initiatives with efforts mostly oriented towards the completion of projects initiated under the previous strategy. A new National ICT Strategy was launched towards the end of the year after a period of planning, consultation and reflection.

Two new Community Technology Learning Centres (CTLCs) were launched in 2007. One was set up at the PHRF Kordin, which is a voluntary organisation offering services for the physically handicapped. A second centre was set up at Birkirkara to cater for around 25,000 residents. The basic Myweb course continued to be held throughout the year. ISS also developed a centralised database which enabled a more efficient and effective mechanism of taking registrations and scheduling the courses around the various CTLCs. Efforts were made to attract people with special needs. This was made possible through a special agreement with FITA.

ISS also introduced an ICT Training initiative which targets residents undergoing the drug rehabilitation programme offered at San Blas Residence. This training aims to support residents in the process of re-integrating in society. The aim of this training programme is to support San Blas residents enhance their capabilities of integrating in the labour market and potentially find employment through the acquired ICT skills.

During 2007, the ISS prepared for a number of initiatives aimed at increasing the penetration of computers and Internet in Maltese households. Through Project Blueskies, the Government negotiated with broadband Internet providers a €3 monthly package for those households with no Internet connectivity. Further initiatives planned during the said year included the PC refurbishment scheme and the PC rebate scheme. All three initiatives will be launched in the first quarter of 2008.

ISS also worked in collaboration with *Aġenzija Appoġġ* on a campaign aimed at raising awareness on Internet Safety for children and youths. A second agreement for the provision of content and materials was signed with Childnet International in 2007. Childnet is a non-profit organisation working with others to “help make the Internet a great and safe place for children”.

To instil further trust in electronic commerce by consumers, after the preparations in 2006, ISS finalised the agreement with the Chamber of Commerce - the body to manage and run the Euro-label Trustmark. The Euro-label website was launched and a total of 10 businesses were awarded the Euro-label Trustmark. These included: Alert Communications, Airmalta, Atlas Insurance, Eden Entertainment Ltd, HSBC, Inspire Ltd (ChooseMalta), Middle Sea Insurance, Mobisle Communications.

ISS was also instrumental in the development of a set of telework guidelines. These guidelines were presented to CITAC in July 2007. Following the Management and Personnel Office’s initiative of drafting a Telework policy at the beginning of the last quarter, the Telework guidelines and the accompanying appendices were integrated into one document and have been presented to Cabinet for reconsideration. In parallel to the guidelines, ISS initiated work on a pilot project aimed to offer educational support to year 4 pupils and flexible working opportunities to teachers on parental leave. The project is a partnership

between MIIT and the Education Division with the participation of the Ministry for Family and Social Solidarity, which will provide the technological infrastructure and training.

In 2007, MIIT signed an agreement with ESRI, a US-based company considered one of the leaders in the provision of Geographic Information Systems. The agreement includes the delivery of training on ESRI software to teachers in secondary and tertiary education and the donation of software to schools, University, MCAST and students.

ISS was also involved in a number of initiatives aimed to promote the usage of ICT by businesses, especially SMEs. In 2007, ISS conducted a number of studies and finalised a call for tender for the provision of an e-Mall infrastructure to serve the needs of small and micro businesses. The tender will be issued in the first quarter of 2008. ISS also worked in conjunction with Malta Enterprise for the development of a new scheme that will provide SMEs and sole traders with a maximum of 100% tax credit on investments related to the development and operation of e-Commerce systems.

During the year under review, ISS commissioned the National Statistics Office to administer four surveys. These surveys gauged the internet/computer penetration in Maltese households and individuals. Furthermore these instruments were instrumental at exposing attitudes, perceptions and awareness of the Maltese towards these technologies and their adoption.

PRIVATISATION UNIT

During 2007, the Privatisation Unit was busy with preparatory work on the Commercialisation of the Petroleum Division of Enemalta and three other processes. These included the finalisation of the Government share sale in Tug Malta Limited, the privatisation of LPG and the Initial Public Offering of 40% of Government Shares in MaltaPost.

The process of the Government share sale in Tug Malta Limited continued. Following the due diligence process finalised before the end of 2006, five offers for these shares were received in February 2007. An evaluation committee and the technical consultants were already appointed and the evaluation process commenced early in March. By the beginning of April a set of clarification questions was sent to the bidders. Early in May, following these clarifications, the adjudicating committee finalised its selection and recommended that negotiations could be undertaken with a preferred bidder. Before the end of the month the preferred bidder was informed and invited for negotiations. The other bidders were also informed and advised that negotiations could be opened with them if no agreement is concluded with the preferred bidder.

Negotiations with the preferred bidders were successfully concluded and the agreement was signed on 18 July 2007.

During the year the project team together with Enemalta Management continued to meet to resolve a number of issues related to the commercialisation of the Petroleum Division. Early in April 2007 the Privatisation Unit issued a call for Expression of Interest for the concession, management, operation, maintenance and development of the Petroleum Division of Enemalta Corporation and the business activities undertaken by MOBC Limited. A number of companies expressed an interest in the process. After an evaluation the compliant companies were informed that they could go forward for the next stage of the process.

Work on the preparation of data room due diligence and vendor assistance reports was completed. The drafting of the Invitation to Tender and the draft concession agreement was also finalised. Following the amendments to the Enemalta Act in November 2007, a call for the Invitation to Tender was published in the Government Gazette on 4 December. Most of the pre-selected bidders collected the documentation and by the end of the year arrangements were made for the potential bidders to visit the data room and the

Petroleum Division sites. All is set for the process to move ahead in 2008 and it is envisaged that this process will be completed during the year.

Work on the commercialisation of the GAS Division of Enemalta continued. The bids, which were received in November 2006, were adjudicated early in 2007 and a preferred bidder was selected in March. Following the drafting of the concession agreement, negotiations with the Preferred Bidder commenced in April. These negotiations were slowed down as various other extraneous issues had to be tackled and settled before a final agreement could be concluded. By the end of the year these negotiations were still ongoing.

In September 2007 Government sold 25% of its MaltaPost shareholding to Lombard Bank Malta Limited. At the same time Government announced its intention to sell its remaining 40% shareholding in MaltaPost through an Initial Public Offering and that the company should be listed on the Malta Stock Exchange to enable the trading of the MaltaPost shares. The Privatisation Unit together with MIMCOL was entrusted with this task. Work was taken in hand and following the setting up of the project team the process was set in motion. The Prospectus together with all relevant documentation was finalised by the end of the year for launching in early January 2008.

The Privatisation Unit together with Malta Freeport Corporation was entrusted by Government to scrutinise the sale of MFC shares in Oil Tanking Malta Limited. The deal was finalised in July 2007.

JOHN GATT

Permanent Secretary, MIIT

Corporate Services Directorate

The Corporate Services Directorate is responsible for the daily running of some of the Ministry's core functions such as Accounts, Registry, Human Resources, Procurement and Asset Management.

During 2007, the Directorate continued to provide support services to the various secretariats, directorates, authorities, corporations and other entities falling under this Ministry's portfolio, particularly in the fields of financial planning and management, and human resources management and development.

STAFF COMPLEMENT

During 2007, the staff complement within the Directorate remained practically the same except for one employee who was transferred to Gozo as per Government's policy on Gozitan employees. However, some changes of duties were effected to enhance the performance and output of the sections and of the employees themselves.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

During this year, this Directorate co-ordinated and assisted in the preparation of the Business and Financial Plans together with the Draft Estimates of the Ministry for 2008. This Directorate was also responsible for the co-ordination of the Revised Draft Estimates.

This Directorate managed requests for the release of approved Capital and Recurrent budgetary subventions and other financial allocations submitted by the several entities falling under the portfolio of this Ministry. These included amongst others, Malta Enterprise, Malta Industrial Parks, Enemalta Corporation, Water Services Corporation, Public Broadcasting Services, Malta Freeport Corporation, Malta Air Traffic Services, the Data Protection Commissioner, Privatisation Unit, Malta Shipyards, Malta National Laboratory and the Grand Harbour Regeneration Corporation.

During 2007, this Directorate was also involved in:

- leading and enhancing the process to award tenders and direct orders;
- compiling information related to the drafting of replies to Parliamentary Questions;
- co-ordinating replies to several requests and queries from the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Finance, the Treasury, the National Audit Office and the Internal Audit and Investigations Directorate;
- assisting in the preparation of travel documents required by the Ministry's officials when travelling abroad on official business;
- monitoring expenditure from capital, recurrent and other approved financial allocations.

TRAINING

During the year under review, several employees were encouraged and offered the chance to attend for training seminars organised by the Staff Development Organisation, the European Institute of Public Administration in Maastricht and other private training institutions. Also this Directorate supported members of staff to undergo courses leading to diplomas by providing the financial means to cover part of the expenses involved.

Support was provided in the drawing up and compilation of the relative Performance Management Programmes.

SELECTION BOARDS, INVESTIGATING BOARDS AND EVALUATION COMMITTEES

The Director Corporate Services assisted the Permanent Secretary in his duties and contributed to the collective management of the Ministry by serving as chairman or member in several interviewing boards or tender evaluation committees.

This Directorate ensured the timely implementation of decisions within the set timeframes.

DENNIS ATTARD

Director (Corporate Services)

EU Affairs Directorate

The Directorate continued keeping the entities within its portfolio informed and well-advised of EU initiatives, enabling all within the Ministry's remit to obtain the most favourable outcomes out of EU opportunities. Consultation not only within the Ministry and its entities, but also at an inter-ministerial level was undertaken on a variety of EU initiatives. As a result of these consultations the concerns of various entities were catered for in national positions taken at various levels of EU decision-making fora.

PARTICIPATION IN WORKING GROUPS

The Directorate continued to ensure adequate participation in areas within its competence. The year saw an increase in the participation in IT related working groups both at Commission and Council level. The Directorate ensured adequate preparation and reporting related to such meetings. Issues were followed up and assistance was provided to the entities with their participation in these expert groups and committees. New groups created during the year and now being attended by staff from entities within the Ministry include Testa Sap ISG, Testa II, Interoperability and eLink, Open Document Exchange Formats, European Interoperability Framework, EU PAN e-Government Working Group, CIP-ICT, System Safety and Security Committee of the European GNSS Supervisory Authority and the Implementation Tempest Task Force. Meetings of CIP National Contact Points were attended by MIMCOL.

Participation in Other Meetings

The Directorate gave its contribution and participated in the delegation at the Ministerial Conference on e-Inclusion held in Lisbon in December 2007.

CONSULTATIONS AND EU DECISION-MAKING

The Directorate continued in its role as the Ministry's focal point between other ministries (MCMP, MRES, MHEC, MFIN, MRAE and MFA) on a myriad of technical matters that were the subject of EU proposals. The Directorate gave its contribution to various memoranda presented to the Inter-Ministerial Committee on EU Affairs and Instruction Notes for use by the Technical Attachés. These included proposals to include aviation emissions in the EU ETS, the Energy Package and the Airport Package.

During the year the Directorate also presented various memoranda to the Inter-Ministerial Committee on EU Affairs, these concerned subjects such as safer Internet, the Interoperable Delivery of European e-Government Services to Public Administrations, Business and Citizens (IDABC) Programme and the financing of SME growth. Following approval by Cabinet these were sent 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 such as the *acquis* concerning Enemalta Corporation, Water Services Corporation and MATS. Various projects financed by EU funds were completed during the year: these included a project enhancing the

Competitiveness of SMEs and Micro-Enterprises through Lifelong Learning; capacity building for Malta Enterprise; a capacity building Programme in Information Security; and the construction of the Gozo Sewage Treatment Plant. These projects cost a total of €7.3 million, of which €4.28 million were financed by EU funds. The Directorate also frequently represents 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 an interface between the Ministry and the Planning and Priorities Co-ordination Division OPM. In order to continue to ensure that entities within the Ministry's remit continue in the process of implementing the *acquis*, the Directorate ensured that all within its remit were kept informed of all funding opportunities that presented themselves throughout the year.

During the year the Malta Air Traffic Services Ltd came into line with Regulation 550/2004 on the provision of air navigation services in the Single European Sky. The Malta Air Traffic Services Ltd has also been designated as the air navigation services provider of the above-mentioned services on an exclusive basis within Malta and the Malta flight information region and for the provision of airspace that has been delegated to Malta by an adjacent State.

Programme Funds

The Directorate assisted in the setting up of a unit within MIMCOL to target the newly set up Competitiveness and Innovation Programme which, with a budget of €3.6 billion, aims in supporting actions allowing for the innovative capacity of SMEs to be developed and their competitiveness enhanced. The CIP is composed of three specific sub-programmes: the entrepreneurial spirit and innovation programme with a budget of €2.170 billion (of which €430 million will be for promotion of eco-innovation), to facilitate access by SMEs to sources of funding, foster better integration of existing service support networks for SMEs (Euro Info Centres and Innovation Relay Centres) and finance innovation activities (INNOVA, Pro-Inno, etc.). Another €1 billion will be earmarked for the financial instruments managed by the European Investment Fund (EIF) which jointly invests in venture capital funds and obtains joint guarantees on loans; the support programme for ICT policy, with a budget of €730 million; and the programme on intelligent energy for Europe. The Programme concerns entrepreneurship and innovation, ICT and energy.

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 *ad hoc* Commission Package meetings. The Directorate gave its contribution in the drafting of replies to Commission infringement correspondence, correspondence relating to state aid notification, questionnaires and reports related to areas within the ministry's remit.

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 annually 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.

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, Better Regulation, Administration of EU Funds 2007/2013, the NRP and Gender Issues.

PQ Section

During the year the section dealt with 648 Parliamentary Questions, with the highest number of 109 PQs during October alone. This involved meticulous research and collating of information from different sources.

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 its portfolio. During the year, 34 queries regarding Enemalta, Malta Industrial Parks, WSC, PBS and the Ministry's Information Technology Section were dealt with and resolved within a very reasonable timeframe.

Euro Changeover

2007 was a very demanding year as it comprised also the final preparations for the Euro Changeover. Various meetings for all Euro Project Managers were held at the Ministry, and progress regarding measures adopted by the entities within our portfolio was discussed, and problems solved with everyone's co-operation. The entities' plans were analysed with the emphasis being laid on the effectiveness of the IT systems, training for staff, financial and administration and operational matters. The Public Sector Sectoral Committee, through its meetings for Euro Ministry Co-ordinators, highlighted progress achieved. It is with great satisfaction that one remarks that everything proceeded smoothly and efficiently. The Euro Changeover within the Ministry, through the untiring efforts of the Director and Staff, was an unmitigated success.

EU Structural Funds 2007-2013

During the year under review, responsibility for EU funds for the years 2007-2013 was assigned to the Directorate. Two officers, an EU Fund Manager and an EU Fund Support Officer, were engaged with the Directorate to co-ordinate, monitor and assist new projects under the 2007-2013 Structural Funds. Several applications were filed concerning ICT Technology, the Upgrading of Industrial Parks, the Expansion of Kordin Business Incubation Centre Malta and the South Sewage Treatment Infrastructure. Other applications were related to energy generation and aid schemes to industry.

Green Issues

The Ministry, under the direction of a Policy Officer and Green Leader, continued with its efforts to implement several green measures including the:

- installation of window film;
- removal of conventional element water heaters and their replacement with solar water heaters;
- installation of door springs, leading to energy saving on air conditioning;
- re-plumbing of hot water piping to improve insulation;
- commencement of the process of renewing the electricity-light system with the aim of saving significantly on electricity bills.

Other ongoing measures focused on the efficient use of water and electricity, paper and waste reduction, and recycling.

National Reform Programme

During the past year, the Directorate has contributed towards the annual progress report on the implementation of the National Reform Programme and the Lisbon Strategy which was later on presented to the EU Commission. Several public sector entities within MIIIT's remit were involved in this exercise which covered areas dealing with ICT, Energy, Industrial Parks and Business Promotion.

Pandemic Influenza

The Director as a member of the Pandemic Preparedness Committee (PPC) substituted the Permanent Secretary as necessary. Meetings of the PPC were held regularly. During the year the Director was once again 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. The Director also chaired a sub-committee regarding the exit and entry screening measures. During the period under review the Director held meetings regarding the critical infrastructure and key resources measures with contact points from the various entities and a final report was submitted to the sub-committee dealing with the measure mentioned.

Better Regulation

The Director co-ordinated the works in connection with Better Regulation. In October 2006, MIIIT was informed of the two measures that it had to steer in the following months. Meetings in this regard were held with stakeholders.

Occupational Health and Safety

Health and Safety was given its due importance in order to ensure a safer environment for staff. Measures undertaken included the replacement of dangerous roof balustrades at our premises, the replacement of old water tanks with new and safer ones, better stair lighting, and the fumigation of an adjacent derelict building.

Gender Issues

A three-member committee was set up under the auspices of the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE), to cater for gender issues. Staff members attended meetings and seminars organised by the NCPE.

JOHN GATT

Permanent Secretary, MIIIT

Office of the Data Protection Commissioner

Since the bringing into force of the Data Protection Act in July 2003, data protection awareness has been growing steadily and this can be quantified in terms of the nature of queries and complaints received by this Office. Citizens are becoming more aware of their privacy rights and this even more so with emerging new technologies and information systems that are being introduced to facilitate data controllers' processing operations. The automated processing of personal data will potentially increase security risks and adequate safeguards, both organisational and technical, have to be introduced. Large and medium-scale organisations are nowadays placing internal security requirements at the top of their agenda and making heavy investments in this area. This progress in information technology is not limited to the commercial sector, because public sector organisations are making gigantic strides in the delivery of public services.

During the year under review, the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner received 37 complaints with the major topic being the improper use of CCTV cameras. In the course of its investigation, the Office carried out seven inspections; three of which following a complaint and the others as periodic reviews in terms of EU requirements.

During 2007, 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 sectors. These included financial institutions, journalism, insurance, social welfare, education, security, gaming and police. Consultation meetings were specifically held with the electronic communications sector in connection with the transposition of Directive 2006/24/EC on the retention of data generated and processed in relation to the provision of publicly available electronic communications services. Also, the Office maintained close co-operation with other regulatory authorities, associations and federations.

During the year, the Office gave its contribution to European and international fora by participating in 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 of Schengen, Customs, Europol and Eurodac, the Case Handling Workshop and the Council of Europe Eurojust and the Bureau of the Consultative Committee of the Convention for the Protection of Individuals on the Automatic Processing of Personal Data.

With increased threats of security and terrorism, measures were introduced to combat these phenomena both at international and European levels. Particular mention in the field of data protection is the request by the US authorities for personal data of passengers travelling to the US. This PNR issue involved lengthy discussions and a court case, until an agreement was found. Security was also on top of the EU agenda and this year saw the commencement of developments to create new legal instruments to enhance police and judicial co-operation. Also, the SWIFT case affected Maltese citizens and all data protection authorities of the European Union joined forces to address this problem collectively.

On the local level, 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. Articles and presentations on different aspects of data protection were published in local media and presented on radio and television. A substantial number of queries, both by telephone and by e-mail, were handled by the Office.

On 28 January, the Data Protection Commissioner joined the other Data Protection authorities in Europe to celebrate Data Protection Day for the first time. This day coincides with the opening for signature of Convention 108 of the Council of Europe, entitled Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data, which took place in Strasbourg in 1981. This was an occasion for European Citizens to be made more aware of their right to privacy in terms of the protection of personal data.

In a resolution issued by the Article 29 Working Party, the forum for data protection authorities in Europe, for this occasion explained that in a time of omnipresent data processing, this initiative offered an excellent occasion to show and understand how necessary privacy protection should be in a democratic society. Authorities have agreed that, in the future, a more co-operative stance should be taken with the Council of Europe to make this data protection day a success and to show that fundamental rights are best defended by data protection authorities.

To mark the Day, this Office made a prior announcement through the Department of Information by a Press Release, participated in a local TV education programme and distributed information material, including posters and rulers, to school children. Also, with the assistance of the Office of the Prime Minister, the Commissioner addressed all the Data Protection Officers within the Public Service.

PAUL MIFSUD CREMONA
Data Protection Commissioner



**Ministry for Rural Affairs
and the Environment**

Rural Affairs and Paying Agency Division

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

CROP HUSBANDRY SECTION

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, herbs, flowers, fruit trees and forage crops. In 2007 various crops were grown besides the maintaining of the fields and the surroundings.

Outdoor Crops

Various crops were cultivated, some of which were in trials while others were taken to the Pitkali Market. Vegetables grown in the field included broccoli, kohlrabi, cabbages, onions, lettuce, zucchini, beans, peas, aubergines, sweet corn and globe artichokes. Currently a trial regarding a new variety of globe artichokes from Sicily is being undertaken to see if there is potential for export to Sicily. Although this season proved to be a bit difficult, there could be a new market for the local farmers' produce.

The Section also maintains the Citrus Orchards, the Olive Orchard, the Grape Vines and the Prickly Pear collection plot. It also sows and harvests the produce of all fodder such as wheat and sulla for the Animal Husbandry Section.

The Outdoor Crops workers carried out maintenance work on rubble walls, watering of crops and orchards and the cleaning of weeds and litter from fields, manuring the fields and ploughing them.

Protected Cropping

During the year, greenhouse crops such as tomatoes, runner beans, zucchini, melons, basil and cucumbers, were produced in all the greenhouses while in two other greenhouses, 1,000 poinsettias were grown for the farm and ministry embellishment during December. Other pot plants and herbs are continuously propagated and grown.

Sale of Onion seedlings produced by the Crop Husbandry

In January, onion seedlings were sold to the public at the price of Lm0.75 per bunch of 100 seedlings for a total value of Lm726.50. The following table shows the total amount of sales during 2007:

| | | | |
|--------------|---------------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Jan-07 | Onion Seedlings | Lm | 726.50 |
| May-07 | EchoFest | Lm | 79.50 |
| Jun-07 | Spring Fair | Lm | 254.50 |
| 2007 | Vegetables from Ghammieri | Lm | 543.38 |
| 2007 | Pitkali Market | Lm | 2,235.30 |
| Total | | Lm | 3,839.18 |

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND FORAGE CROPS

Dairy Restructuring and Upgrading

In 2006 all 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. This was done to encourage farmers to apply for EU funding which was being made available under the Rural Development Schemes. A MEPA fast-track system was created to process these applications as fast as possible; however the objective has not been reached since most of the applications submitted were still pending. In 2007, a joint effort was made to have the pending applications processed and, with the intensive collaboration of MEPA, this office and KPH, a number of permits were granted. This enabled dairy producers to benefit from the second call of the Meeting Standards measure.

The Dairy Restructuring Board set up in 2006 discussed in detail the way forward to carry on with the government plan to subsidise financially approximately 50% of the cost incurred by milk producers to erect canopies to cover their herds. It was agreed that two flat rates would be established, one for a steel canopy and the other for a concrete structure. Eligible applicants would then be paid half this rate per square metre of covered area, according to the type of structure they choose. Eligible applicants must have their proposed development covered by a MEPA permit, and the necessary works should be finished by August 2008. Since funds are to be taken from the SMPPMA, and since this was available from 2002, work which was carried out since that date would be considered as eligible for financial support. The application form was prepared and endorsed by the Dairy Restructuring Board. It was established that applications would be received during the month of January 2008.

An application with MEPA was submitted by the MRAE to relocate 17 farms in Malta which are situated in urban zones and in historical sites. The site in question is located at Siggiewi. This proposal is being evaluated by MEPA and is currently at the pre-EIA stage. Another application for the construction of a communal manure clamp also submitted by the MRAE on an adjacent site is being concurrently considered by MEPA. The same exercise was done for the 13 Gozitan farms situated in urban zones. A site has been identified in Gozo and an application for development submitted.

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.

The production of whole wheat crop in 2007 totalled to 760 square bales from the Ghammieri grounds, 120 square bales from the Saint Vincent de Paul hospital grounds and 114 square bales from Tal-Kmand nursery Lija. Each square bale weighs approximately 20 kgs.

Fodder purchased amounted to 3,160 square bales of wheat crop, 1,736 square bales of oats, and 100 large round bales from the airport groups (KPH). A further 40 large round bales of airport grass was donated free of charge by KPH.

Maltese Goat Project – Co-operation with Tunisia

The ten pure breed male Maltese bucks which had been selected in 2006 were sent to Tunisia by sea freight. Prior to the shipment, all the necessary documentation was prepared. It is expected that the Maltese breed male goats will be mated with local Tunisian goats and the performance of their offspring monitored. The results of the first cross are expected in mid 2008.

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. This was the second time that the Dairy Premium and Additional Payments allotted for Maltese dairy producers according to Council Regulation EC 1782/03 was distributed. These payments were effected through the Paying Agency and totalled Lm171,316 in Dairy Premium and Lm79,477 in Additional Payments. These were the payments related to milk year 2005-2006. The dairy premium and additional payments for the year 2006-2007 will be incorporated in the single payment scheme. For the purpose of the latter, all the information requested was forwarded to the single payment unit so that the dairy entitlements could be calculated and provisionally allocated to all producers accordingly.

Maltese Cattle

Two Maltese cows, a heifer and a male calf were bought by the MRAE and transferred to the Ghammieri Farm. The two cows are approximately 93% pure. The heifer and the male calf are over 96% pure and can be considered as pure breed. Another female calf was born later during the year, and the Maltese cattle herd at Ghammieri were two bulls, two cows, a heifer, a male and female calf. The oldest bull nicknamed 'Wenzu' died later during the year as a result of old age.

St Vincent de Paule Nursery

Among the main activities undertaken by the Nursery during the year were:

- uprooting of the fruit tree seedlings;
- holding of a sale of fruit trees and rootstock in February, with sales amounting to Lm19,035, and the annual sale of fruit trees, olive trees and other potted fruit trees in October (sales Lm6,814);
- planting and grafting of various types of rootstock and cuttings;
- grafting of an additional 2,000 olive rootstock with the Tal-Bidni olive oil variety and delivery of grafted olives to the promoter of Project Primo;
- clearing and sowing of abandoned fields; and
- general care of the rootstock and other plants, and maintenance of the Nursery.

ORGANIC FARMING UNIT

Administrative duties in the Organic Farming Section were taken up late in September, during which close collaboration with the previous agricultural officer ensured smooth handing over. Contacts were made with the Secretariat of the Organic Farming Unit in Brussels and the Malta Standards Authority. For the time being, no technical services can be offered since no agricultural/scientific officer was assigned to the section.

Standing Committee on Organic Farming

Although no official could participate at the Standing Committees on Organic Farming in Brussels, all agendas and minutes were thoroughly monitored, discussed internally and processed to the Director of EU Affairs. Major points of concern were discussions on the creation of a new organic logo and on new implementing rules on imports from third countries.

Primary Schools Agriculture Programme

This Unit also co-ordinated the organisation of primary school visits. Various meetings were held with Heads and Assistant Heads of School who were interested in the programme devised for years 4 to 6. Such programme closely addressed various subjects such as drip irrigation, organic farming, healthier food and animal awareness in social studies; greenhouses, seed sowing and the process of growth in plants in

sciences. A circular was sent through the Education Division to all state, church and private primary schools informing them of the programme for the scholastic year.

During the year various schools visited the farm and took active part in the programme – 1,052 students participated in the programme in 2007. One particular school worked more closely with this programme. St Benedict's College, together with other two colleges from Latvia and Turkey, worked together in a Comenius project entitled Water in Agriculture. All colleges visited the Farm and were given thorough explanation of water usage in agriculture in the Maltese Islands. Another group which drew the attention of the Press were children whose relatives work in the Police Force. This group visited the Farm during the Easter Holidays. Various posters and other material were given to the children, who showed their appreciation and expressed the wish to visit the Farm once again with their parents.

San Anton Private Gardens, Verdala Palace Buskett and the Palace Valletta

San Anton Private Gardens, Verdala Palace Buskett and The President's Palace Valletta make up of about 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 looked after, 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, among them the August Moon Ball.

Other Duties

- The Unit represents the Ministry of Rural Affairs and the Environment as member of the Inter-sectoral Committee on Counteracting Obesity, which holds meetings regularly at the Health Division. Various initiatives from the agricultural area were proposed to promote healthier lifestyles and it is planned that proposals concerning the intake of fruit and vegetables in schools be initiated in 2008.
- A group of ETC students visit the San Anton Private Gardens twice a week to obtain practical experience.
- During 2007, the Sant'Antnin Plant distributed recycled water to farmers, repaired damages to water ducts and carried out weeding of 14 tumoli situated at the Olive Grove in Żabbar.

PITKALI MARKETS

- The year 2007 was dominated with discussions of when and how the Pitkali Markets should be upgraded. Other main issues were the fruit and vegetable reform including marketing standards and negotiations between all Pitkali stakeholders to reschedule the opening hours.
- Several meetings were organised between the Director of Agriculture, Pitkali Officers and Architect David Xuereb and an estimate of the total upgrade including all standards was submitted to the Director of Agriculture. The estimate is of about Lm3 million.
- Meetings with the Chief Information Officer and Ministry of Finance were carried out for a new computer system with the incorporation of weighing scales for better control of what is actually delivered at Pitkali Markets.
- The new fruit and vegetables reform brought several discussions related to marketing standards and issues related to Producer Organisations.
- The Pitkali Markets hosted the Single Payment Unit for the land registration application for 2007.
- Several energy-saving units and warning signs were installed in the Pitkali premises and a rodent control system was also introduced.

- Discussions were also carried out with WasteServ regarding a new CA site in the Pitkali Markets for the benefit of farmers, *pitkala* and hawkers.
- The SMPPMA subsidies on fresh fruit and vegetables and on specific produce such as potatoes, water melons and tomatoes for processing were also calculated at the Pitkali Markets Administration Offices.
- Health and Safety issues and HACCP were also implemented.
- Frequent ongoing problems which arose concerning farmers, hawkers and *pitkala* were solved daily through proper channels.

Statistics

| Sales from the Pitkali Markets (2007) | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| | <i>Pitkali</i> | <i>Co-op Stalls</i> | Total |
| Value (Lm) | 6,374,419 | 2,271,666 | 8,646,085 |
| Weights (Kg) | 35,784,186 | 11,421,682 | 47,205,868 |

Sales from Pitkali Markets registered an increase of 8.95% (Lm710,077) over 2006, and a decrease of 3.34% (1,632,294 Kgs) in volume over 2006.

APICULTURE

- The Apiculture Unit set up a new and vast state-of-the-art apiary at Ghammieri which includes an observation tunnel, various nectariferous plants, trees and shrubs and new hives and hive stands.
- All the bee colonies owned by the Apiculture Unit were moved from the Mdina apiary to the new apiary at Ghammieri.
- Colonies and nuclei were routinely managed and the apiary was kept clean.
- New queens and nuclei, honey and beeswax were produced and sold.
- Two members of staff attended a one-week course on honey analysis at INA, Bologna and one officer participated at a one-week global beekeeping conference in Finland.
- Hive inspections were carried out in Malta and Gozo.
- A Triennial National Apiculture Programme was drawn up.
- The Manual of Procedures was kept updated as necessary.
- All the necessary work associated with the Apiculture payment subsidies was carried out.
- Participation in TV/Radio programmes and publishing of various articles on apiculture matters (in local and foreign publications).
- Collaboration with Veterinary Division staff for the annual honey analysis exercise.
- Participation in fairs/exhibitions.

VITICULTURE AND OENOLOGY UNIT

Wine Regulation Board

The Wine Regulation Board set up in terms of Article 16 of the Wine Act (Cap 436) met six times during the year. A technical sub-committee of the Wine Regulation Board was also established in order to address the technical issues which arise, and this year the focus was on the DOK and IGT protocols and how these are going to be regulated and observed. This committee has met three times.

Two seminars were organised in 2007. One, concerning the Winery Registers and labelling regulations to conform to the Wine Act and EU regulations, was intended for the wineries. The other, organised in collaboration with *Malta Forum fl-Ewropa*, was aimed at wineries and the general public and was meant to explain the new wine Common Market organisation which was being discussed at EU level and also to state Malta's position on various points of the reform.

Officers participated regularly in working groups on the wine reform in Brussels. A memo on the wine reform was prepared to consolidate Malta's position and as a basis for the meetings.

During the year a consortium formed by a number of wineries, a producer organisation and the farmers' association Soċjeta' Vitikultura Maltija was forwarded for the approval of the Viticulture and Oenology Unit. The protocol was approved and the relevant legal notices were published: LN 167 of 2007 for the IGT protocols while LN 416 of 2007 gives the details for DOK scheme.

The office also registers the land parcels of those farmers who intended to produce grapes for the production of DOK and IGT wines. As part of the certification process, inspections were carried out at the wineries during the grape harvest and samples were collected. These samples were analysed at the laboratory for sugar content and these figures are considered the official ones and used as reference in subsequent checks.

Following receipt of results of chemical and organoleptic analyses, and a series of administrative checks carried out at the office to confirm the data received, certificates were issued for each application which passed all these steps.

Other work required for the enforcement of legislation regulating the wine sector consisted of:

- Data inputting of the Grape Harvest Declarations of 2005 and 2006 as per Article 11(1) of Wine Act;
- Issuing of planting right certificates as per Article 22 of the Wine Act for new plantings;
- Issuing of licence of wineries as Article 3(3) of Wine Act;
- Updating of vineyard register as Article 5 of the Wine Act;
- Production declaration for 2006 harvest of wineries as Commission Regulation 884 of 2001;
- Stocks declarations situation of wineries as on 31 July 2006 as Legal Notice 189 of 2006;
- Registration of wineries interested to take part in the quality wine scheme of DOK and IGT.

Another important work performed by this unit was that of sending the wine samples of 2006 to the Joint Research Centre (JRC) for analysis as per EC regulations 2729/2000, 2120/2004 and 2030/2006 regarding the Wine Databank Network. Malta has an obligation to send four wine samples every year to this research centre in order for a database on Maltese wine to be created and, in case of court disputes in future, a cross reference can be made to this data. Also, during the grape harvest, the samples for the year 2007 were prepared and in fact this year more samples were vinified, two of them using local grape varieties being the Girgentina and the Ġellewza. The latter variety has given a very satisfactory result which is a good start for more experiments about local varieties and can be promoted in the future to local growers and the wineries.

During the year the Control Unit had performed a number of inspections concerning the new planting schemes and so several application were processed to be paid through the Paying Agency. Also there was the manual inputting of data for the payment of the additional aid applications for 2005 and 2006.

The measure of the restructuring campaign for the wine year 2006/2007 was processed and the necessary payments were effected. Moreover, the application for the wine year 2007/2008 was opened and the process will continue in 2008.

At Ghammieri, seasonal works were carried out in the vineyard and olive grove which included pruning, removal of weeds, placing of poles in the vineyard and training of the vines. These plots are intended to be planted with different vine varieties suitable for wine making listed in Legal Notice 188 of 2006. The plot of the olive grove was planted with different varieties of olive trees and the Maltese variety Tal-Bidni was grafted.

An article was prepared for publication in *L'Extravergine 2008*, a guide to the best certified quality Olive Oil in the World Production.

Also the Harvest declaration and Production declaration for olive oil and table olives were sent and processed and updating of the Olive register was done continuously.

During 2007 officers from the Unit participated on various occasions in the radio programme *Wirt Artna* aired on the Public Broadcasting Radio on Sunday morning. Articles on different issues were contributed for the magazine of the Ministry *Biedja u Sajd* and for the 118 wine magazine. In addition, officers from the Unit took part on the TV programme *Bongu in Rokna ta' Wenzu* and in the special edition of *Mnarja*. Also during the opening of the new hospital Mater Dei, officers were present on the panel to discuss with the general public two important products - olive oil and honey.

Another traditional activity undertaken by the Unit was the production of Orange Blossom water. The licence was re-activated and the Unit once again started the distillation with the "Lampik" the blossoms of sour oranges. This water was well received by the customers during the sale of Ghammieri products during activities organised by the Ministry in various locations.

As part of the Leonardo da Vinci programme on apiculture, a visit to the Istituto Nazionale di Apicoltura was undertaken which consisted on the chemical and physical analysis of honey. Also a seminar on Food Quality Certification adding value to Farm Produce was attended in Brussels.

PAYING AGENCY

The Maltese Paying Agency was established by Legal Notice 126/2004 and amended by Legal Notice 294/2007. It was set up in accordance with Commission Regulation (EC) No 885/2006 of 21 June 2006. The Maltese Paying Agency lays down rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No 1290/2005 as regards the accreditation of the Paying Agency and other bodies. It is the Paying Authority of the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment and it administers and controls CAP payments. It is responsible for the clearance of EAGF and EAFRD accounts.

APPLICATION UNIT

The main functions of the Application Unit are:

- Management of the Application Campaign
- Provision of information for farmers
- Data entry for on-the-spot Controls.

Application Campaign

In 2007, the application campaign was managed by the Single Payment Unit. After the termination of the campaign, there was a restructuring within the layout of the Paying Agency. Throughout the restructuring process, the Front Office was set up.

The application campaign was launched on 15 March 2007 and lasted up until 15 May 2007. Applications submitted after 15 May were considered as late applications. Late applications were accepted until 9 June. With regard to the late applications for the single payment scheme and for the other measures, a 1% reduction was enforced per working day pro rata to the amounts that the farmer would have been entitled to, had the application been lodged within the time limit.

In total there were five Application Centres: Ghammieri Centre; Mosta Extension Service; Żabbar Extension Service; Pitkalija Centre; and Rabat Agriculture Centre (Gozo).

Applications were received at the Pitkali Centre for the first time during 2007. The Pitkali Centre is considered as a very convenient application centre especially for full-time farmers and farmers owning large holdings.

The single aid application included the:

- single payment scheme for the issue of entitlements;
- the application for *ad hoc* measures (land based) for full-time farmers;
- aid for tomatoes for processing;
- aid for potatoes;
- verification and declaration of interest of the Rubble Wall scheme of previous years (i.e. 2004, 2005, 2006);
- additional aid for vines;
- SMPPMA fruit and vegetables;
- scheme for the less favoured areas.

The following statistics show the total applications for each scheme:

| Scheme | Applications |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Single payment scheme: | |
| o Land Based (Arable, Olives, Horticulture) | 5,930 |
| o Livestock and Milk Quota | 536 |
| <i>Ad hoc</i> measures | 802 |
| Aid for tomatoes for processing | 382 |
| Aid for potatoes | 2,706 |
| Additional aid for vines | 2,208 |
| SMPPMA fruit and vegetables | 4,726 |
| Less favoured areas | 6,037 |

A total of 17 operators were responsible for the data entry of the applications in Malta. Two of the operators also carried out work on the LPIS. Another three operators were allocated to work on the LPIS. In Gozo, nine operators received the applications and three operators worked on the LPIS.

Provision of Information to Farmers

This is generally carried out throughout the year via telephone calls and personal visits from farmers. However, during the application period, farmers are given advice concerning the available measures and aids, their eligibility towards these measures and the requirements to implement these measures. Farmers are also advised about the sanctions and penalties they could incur should they not abide by the measure requirements.

Printing and Data Entry

The front office carried out the printing for all parcels that were selected for on-the-spot for the above mentioned schemes. At a later stage the data entry for on-the-spot controls was carried out. A total of 10,321 parcels/inspections were inserted in the software. This was carried out by five operators.

SINGLE PAYMENT SCHEME (SPS) UNIT

Malta introduced the CAP reform in 2007. One of the requirements of the CAP reform was the introduction of the Single Payment Scheme (SPS). It was the responsibility of the Single Payment Unit to implement such a scheme. This involved allocating, by 31 December 2007, payment entitlements to applicants who submitted the single application between 15 March and 15 May 2007. In this regard, over 6,500 entitlement letters were sent to farmers and breeders by 23 December.

During October, the Single Payment Unit began to collect data needed for the establishment of such entitlements from various entities within the MRAE. After all the data on land area cultivated, the milk quota, number of bovines slaughtered and number of sheep reared were collected, provisional entitlements were allocated to the eligible farmers. The Unit communicated with 6,500 farmers for their provisional entitlements. Farmers had the possibility to object to the data provided to determine their payment entitlements, by forwarding their concerns to the SPS office. The cases and data of such farmers were individually examined and adjusted accordingly.

MITTS developed the software of the entitlements register on which the entitlements data was uploaded.

TRADE MECHANISMS SECTION

The Trade Mechanism Section, within the Paying Agency, is divided in three units, mainly Imports, Export Refunds and the Temporary State Aid units. Each unit has specific officers responsible for every measure.

Imports Unit

Main Responsibilities

The Imports Unit's main responsibility is the issuing of licences to importers on certain commodities which originate from third countries. Such licences, which are obliged by the Commission, are issued and based on quotas or as surveillance licenses. Surveillance licences are issued by this Unit for those commodities which do not have a quota affiliated to the specific product or to products which are imported on a full duty basis. On the other hand, under the General Agreement for Tariffs and Trade (GATT) of the WTO, the EU issues certain quotas on products which originate from specific third countries. These quotas are also issued through bilateral agreements with countries of regions, such as ACP and Euro-Med countries.

The Imports Unit assists import companies in logging applications for licences concerning both quota and surveillance. Such tasks are done through the compiling of the application form, logging the licence, whilst checking the relative EC Regulation and administering bank guarantees where applicable.

Daily, the Imports Unit sends reports to the Commission on the amount of imports made on certain commodities and the number of applications for quota allocation. These reports are sent via the AMIS system, which is web-based.

Interface with the EU Commission

The Imports Unit regularly attends monthly Trade Mechanisms Management Committee meetings in Brussels. During these meetings, new regulations as well as change in quota allocations are discussed.

Statistics

During the year, the Unit dealt with forty different companies which trade in the following commodities: rice, wine, corned beef, maize, canary seeds, frozen beef, garlic, bananas, apples, sugar, juices, high and low quality wheat and pet food.

Export Refunds

Export Refunds are applicable to CAP goods that are exported to non-Community countries. The aim of this regime is to enable these exported goods to be competitively priced in the international market by paying subsidies to exporters [of agricultural products] to compensate them for the difference between the EU internal market prices and the lower world market price. The Export Refunds regime is divided into

two, Annex I and Non-Annex I. The former relates to basic products whilst the latter refers to processed agricultural products.

The Export Refunds Unit assists companies in managing and calculating the restitution for the export of CAP products of the EU with capabilities to assign securities, manage export licences, maintain recipes and calculate and apply for refunds. Furthermore, it keeps *au courant* by constantly monitoring the Official Journal, updating relevant EU regulations and keeping track of events relevant to export refunds.

There is one major company that exports both Annex I & Non-Annex I products in the form of maize starch [former] and processed goods deriving from maize starch such as custard powder and puddings [latter]. During the year under review, a total of 486,530 kgs was exported under the Annex I regime whilst 1,415,204 kgs was exported under the Non-Annex I regime.

The Unit obtained full accreditation of its system during 2006. This was followed up during the year under review by consolidating all of its procedures. The Unit carried on in issuing on a regular basis export licences for CAP goods, Refund Certificates and Advance Fixing Certificates for export refunds. The Unit also authorised all the payment claims [for export refunds] submitted up to the end of 2006 and actively processed the claims for export refunds licences and refund certificates issued during the year under review. There were also three intensive audits on the export refunds system, which the Unit passed with very positive results. Furthermore, the Export Refunds Unit also underwent two Compliance Audits by the Paying Agencies (PA's) Auditors.

Information Technology

The Unit had also conceptualised its in-house built software and further to this also enhanced its IT capability to make it fully integral with the existing Paying Agency software. The Unit continued to maintain a webpage with several downloadable forms, trader manuals and regulations useful for all those economic operators who wish to participate in the export refund regime.

Local and Foreign Seminars

Officials regularly attend the monthly management committee meetings of the Joint Trade Mechanisms, the Non-Annex I Management Committee and the Agrimonetary Committee meetings held in Brussels.

Officers from the Unit attended two important seminars dealing with the Single Export Declaration held with the Customs Department, the CAP Reform by Italian Experts and Better Regulation meetings concerning Simplification and related themes.

Interface with Delegated Service

Regular meetings with the Customs Department, as the Paying Agency's delegated service, are conducted covering a whole range of issues. During the year under review, the Export Refunds Unit continued to reinforce the work modalities and also strengthened the good working relationship it has with the Customs Department by way of elaborating working procedures, information sharing/networking and consolidating Malta's position via EU Affairs' interface and Customs Department's interface.

Temporary State Aid

The Temporary State Aid Unit launches applications from operators which are found on the Ministry's website. The period concerning Temporary State Aid is based on two tranches which are on a six-month basis, the first being from January to June whilst the second is from July to December.

The Temporary State Aid Unit offers its services to the public (importers) by way of handling and addressing queries. The Unit also issues and vets applications together with bank guarantee processing for Temporary State Aid.

Work carried out by the Temporary State Aid Unit included:

- Meetings with MRAE Consultants and Customs are held regularly so as to formulate and issue guidelines and applications;
- Receipt of applications, Bank Guarantees and Past (trade) history;
- Vetting of applications (including Past History) and Bank Guarantees;
- Distribution of allocations to each applicant;
- Updating of Database;
- Amendment and release of Bank Guarantees, where necessary, according to allocations;
- Submission of claims for State Aid by importers;
- Checks with Customs when and if necessary to ascertain that all details are correct;
- Affecting payments to importers.

During the year under review, in the first tranche (January-June) there were 41 operators and during the second tranche (July-December) there were 38 operators.

One-stop Shop

In order to enhance the execution of the scheme, the Temporary State Aid unit was streamlined with the Trade Mechanisms Section of the Paying Agency so as to offer a one-stop-shop service to the Ministry's clients and stakeholders for the importation of goods. Further to this, there was also a relocation of premises so that all queries of stakeholders are directly addressed under one department. Since there is overlapping in procedures with the Import Quota Management System, this made the day-to-day business of the stakeholders much more operator friendly and in fact eradicated the inconvenience for the stakeholders. In view of the envisagement of the Better Regulation project by the Management Efficiency Unit at the Office of the Prime Minister, this project was successfully realised on time.

The Temporary State Aid Unit undertakes its executive function in full deference and compliance with the Data Protection principles as laid down in the Data Protection Act 2001.

THE CONTROL UNIT

Background

The Control Unit is one of the functions within the Paying Agency responsible for co-ordinating and conducting on-the-spot checks, set up in accordance with Article 23(3) of Regulation (EC) N^o 1782/2003 and Legal Notice 294/2007. 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 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 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.

Activities and Results

Controls

In 2007, the CU conducted approximately 19,627 on-the-spot inspections on agricultural land parcels and livestock farms and on 1,810 beneficiaries, as shown in the following table:

| On-the-spot Controls | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Inspection</i> | <i>Total Farmers/Breeders</i> | <i>Number of parcels</i> |
| Cross Compliance (Land) | 94 | 6,749 |
| Cross Compliance (Livestock) | 91 | 91 |
| Measure 3.1 & 3.2 | 66 | 66 |
| <i>Ad Hoc</i> (Land) | 82 | - |
| <i>Ad Hoc</i> (Livestock) | 53 | 53 |
| Viticulture | 449 | 812 |
| Milk Subsidy (SMPPMA) | 60 | 60 |
| Apiculture | 14 | 710 (colonies) |
| Meeting Standards | 97 | 97 |
| Single Payment | 746 | 10,541 |
| Deprived | 2 | 2 |
| Cattle Hygiene | 25 | 25 |
| Tomatoes for processing | 30 | 420 (certificates) |
| Autochthonous species | 1 | 1 |
| Quality Control | - | 176 |
| Total | 1,810 | 19,803 |

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 a quality control inspection was carried out by the quality control officer. An evaluation of the inspection reports was carried out in order to identify irregularities in the controls. The number of quality control inspections carried out for the on-the-spot controls was 176 parcels (137 parcels in Malta and 39 in Gozo).

The Manual of Procedures for On-the-Spot Controls was revised and updated to reflect the changes effected in 2007. The previous version of the On-the-spot Manual of Procedures included only the procedures of the area based measures, while the revised manual included the procedures of all the controls performed by the CU. The CU together with the Internal Audit Office of the Paying Agency revised the checklist and notes for inspectors to be in line with EU regulations and observations made by Commission Audit.

In 2007 the CU introduced controls with remote sensing following the procurement of the necessary software and set-up of the procedures with the assistance of the short-term experts. For this purpose a direct order for the purchase of GEOMATICA was issued to PCI Geomatics. The software package assists in the orthorectification of satellite images supplied by JRC. In order to fully utilise Geomatica, MEPA supplied the CU with DTM's and Ground Control Points.

Cross Compliance

A new manual of procedures was compiled giving detailed procedures on the operation of Cross Compliance in Malta. LN 346 of 2005 was amended accordingly to reflect the changes and to be in line with EU Regulations. The revised regulation included details on the penalty system adopted by the Maltese Paying Agency and the revised Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAEC) standards.

Following analysis of the 2006 Cross Compliance results, which revealed that 99% of the persons selected

for control were in breach of certain regulation, the Paying Agency issued a warning to all the beneficiaries of direct payments, to inform them that if certain breaches are found in 2007, they would be considered as repetitive and a penalty will be applied.

As the Competent Control Authority for Cross compliance, the CU conducted all the controls required as per Annex III or Regulation 1782/2003. MEPA provided an inspector to assist the CU in the controls of the Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) and the Habitat Directive (92/43/EEC). An agreement was reached with a veterinary officer from VAFD to utilise the results of the inspections on Farm Hygiene for Cross compliance purposes.

In 2007, the Animal Welfare Directives entered into force as part of the Cross Compliance regime. The checklist were drafted by the CU and vetted by VAFD. Notes on checklist and training were provided by VAFD as per MoU between the PA and VAFD. Officers from the Internal Audit and Investigation Directorate participated in the training provided by VAFD.

The Unit also provided support to the Veterinary Affairs and Fisheries Division in the controls related to the Identification and Registration of Animals.

Weekly Instruction Notes are prepared by the Unit. These notes are used in the Special Committee of Agriculture and the Agriculture and Fisheries Council regarding the simplification of cross compliance, particularly changes in Regulations (EC) 1782/2003 and (EC) 1698/2005. Malta agreed with the simplification process and with the entry into force, where possible, already in 2007. Malta also supported the idea of introducing *de minimis* rules for minor infringements and the intention to clarify the rules about the risk analysis. Malta also supports the adoption of the €100 threshold. Malta was in favour of the abolition of the ten-month retention rule. Malta accepted the changes proposed in Council Document DS 1073/07 dated 7 December 2007.

Land Parcel Identification System (LPIS)

When the LPIS was developed back in 2004 and updated through the years, the integration of different digital orthophotos has caused some discrepancies when overlaying the orthoimagery on the LPIS parcels. The Reference parcels have been digitised over different data sources that in some cases did not overlay correctly. However, the positional accuracy of the reference parcels has been more accurate on the 2004 aerial photos than the 1998 derived parcels. The major setback of the 1998 imagery is that they lack colour saturation and imagery is not sharp especially in edge definition. This means that the LPIS basis could achieve better results using higher resolution 2004 imagery.

In order to update the LPIS in accordance with EU requirements, two main tasks were required: the adjustment of the pre 2004 LPIS reference parcels on 2004 orthophotos and the updating of eligible areas using 2007 VHR images.

An action plan for the updating of the LPIS in consultation with Short-Term Experts of the Twinning Project was made. The plan identified the 15 November as a target date for the completion of the task. In view of the short period of time, the quantity of parcels to be corrected (93,000) and the skills required to perform the task, the Paying Agency required the engagement of knowledgeable temporary staff.

Assessments

Twenty-nine 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 2007, a total number of 35 permits out of 39 applications were issued by the CU on behalf of the Director of Agriculture in connection with the Fertile Soil (Preservation) Act of 1973. A total number of 19 on-site inspections were made in order to verify that all those granted the permit are in fact in conformity with their obligations. The officer in charge gave evidence in court on three cases related to this LN. 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. Due to the lack of personnel and other resource limitations, no monitoring of any of the granted licences was possible or was carried out in 2007.

A total of 181 permits/clearance certificates to uproot or prune protected trees in connection with LN 12 of 2001 - Trees and Woodlands (Protection Regulations) - were issued during 2007. Court evidence on such matters was provided on 11 cases. A decision was taken to transfer the responsibility of the clearance procedure from the Control Unit to the Malta Embellishment and Landscaping Project (MELP).

A number of amendments have been proposed by MEPA (the competent authority) and a meeting was held between MEPA and MRAE for this purpose in February 2007. In view of these developments, it was recently agreed with the Director of Agriculture and the Acting Head of the Paying Agency that the new system which is to replace the current procedure is to be in place as from 1 January 2008.

Technical Support

A total of 464 new development applications in outside development zones were handled by the CU for the necessary consultations as envisaged by law. The CU conducted 203 on-site inspections out of the total applications received for consultation. The principal source of information exchanged with MEPA is still being kept in old registers and site maps and therefore a manual search is all the time required for each and every farmer and/or agricultural land listed in this Register. This system is evidently time-consuming and coupled with this, experienced personnel were also lacking.

During 2007 a major difficulty that persisted has been the lack of personnel, mainly with regard to the on-site inspections and monitoring of the prevailing situation on the relevant sites related to MEPA applications. Priority was given to major projects, requested sanctioning of ODZ developments and applications related to improvements benefiting from EU funding. During 2007, two key officers engaged as part of this procedure left the government service.

Farmer Registration (FRC)

An ever-increasing number of requests for official information from the Farmers Register were received during 2007. These requests were received mainly from the general public and from various government agencies such as Enemalta, the Pitkali Markets, Heritage Malta, ADT and the Lands Department. In each case a reply was given subject to an approval by the Director of Agriculture. Such replies do not include any court evidence, the MEPA consultation process and/or any other enforcement procedure conducted by a government agency.

A phasing-out programme of the FRC Register was undertaken in 2007 following a ministerial decision with the aim to stop the present system by the end of the year. Part of the information maintained in the FRC will be incorporated into the new system which will replace the current system. The new system is expected to start in March 2008.

EUREPGAP

In 2007 the CU was entrusted with the co-ordination of the EUREPGAP certification scheme. Assistance on the certification was provided by CHIEAM, which consisted of amending the documentation, provision

of training, assistance in inspections and guidance on the procedures. The CU inspected five potato exporters, and the certification of the pack houses was issued by ISARCERT and CMI.

Human Resources Development

Various members of staff within the Control Unit attended training organised by the Paying Agency and AGEA in order to enhance their knowledge in their respective areas. These courses were held between July and October. The training was on OTSC and various EEC regulations on Nitrates, Pesticides, Birds/Habitats, Welfare and Controls of Environmental Directives.

Participation in Conferences, Seminars, and Workshops

Various CU staff members attended foreign and locally held conferences, seminars, workshops and meetings. These were organised by the European Commission and Council, the JRC, INRA and Interreg project. The topics included Cross compliance, Remote Sensing, LPIS, Water Framework, ENVASSO and WP2.

Officers from the Unit participated in six Expert group meetings held on Cross Compliance organised by the Committee on Direct Payments of the European Commission in Brussels. Officers also participated in meetings on the Simplification of Cross Compliance organised by the Council of the European Union.

Projects

Twining

The CU was actively involved in the Twining project MT05/IB/AG/01, *Support to the Paying Agency and its Delegated Services for the implementation of the CAP Reform*. Short-term experts from Italy assisted the Unit in the areas of on-the-spot controls, cross compliance, remote sensing, LPIS, amendments of legal notices and manual of procedures between the months of June and November.

Assistance was provided through training of staff, review of manual of procedures, review of GAEC standards, review of SMR checks and recommendation for software development.

ENVASSO

ENVASSO – *The Environmental Assessment of Soil for Monitoring* project was 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 were built on previous outputs from Technical Working Groups (TWGs). The project initiated in January 2006 and was terminated in December 2007. The project was co-ordinated by the University of Cranfield with the participation of 46 institutions from European Member States.

The final ENVASSO Consortium meeting was held in Bordeaux, France from 21 to 24 November 2007. During the meeting, the leading partners presented the results of the project.

CENTRALISED AUTHORISATION FUNCTION (CAF)

The Centralised Authorisation Function (CAF) is a new sector within the Paying Agency. It started operating as from the new financial year – October 2007.

In the Paying Agency organigram, the CAF stands between the delegated services and the execution of payments. In this respect, all authorisation letters from all the delegated services are being received by this

office. Authorisation will be accepted or rejected, after all the necessary checks, including the actual quality control are conducted and finalised by the authorisation officers.

For every measure, a checklist is prepared so as to ensure that all the procedures for the compilation of the payment file were properly carried out by every delegated service.

By December 2007, two authorisation letters were approved with respect to Meeting Standards and the Deprived Measure. The payments file was passed on to the Payments Section for the actual execution of payments.

PAYMENT FUNCTION

Payments Effected by the Paying Agency

- Four measures/schemes under the SMPPMA (nine PAMS sub-items as more than one yearly payment was effected) amounting to some €2,547,774.50 (€1,220,883.39, co-financing under the Tomatoes for Processing measure only).
- Six EU-funded measures/schemes were paid under the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2004-2006 amounting to €5,185,032.25 (Co-financed on a 20:80% / Malta:EU funding ratio). Some €5,507.46 debts were recovered from debtors and subsequently paid to the EU Commission.
- European Agricultural Guarantee and Guidance Fund (EAGGF) funding is shown in more detail in the following paragraph.

EAGGF Measures (in total amounting to €1,973,008.78)

- Two exporters benefited some €203,885.41 under the Export Refunds measure.
- Two Producers' Organisations (POs) benefited from some €144,680.11 funding under their five-year operational programmes.
- Two measures were implemented under the Programmes for the Deprived Persons (incurring some €139,936.32 as related/ancillary costs).
- Tomatoes for processing payment (Common Market Organisation, CMO-EU component) amounted to €352,825.32.
- Three livestock measures (only EU component part of the payment was paid) amounted to €343,914.70.
- Two Dairy related measures payment amounted to €595,272.67.
- Wine restructuring payment amounted to €42,939.38.
- Arable Aid payment amounted to €160,511.38.
- Apiculture amounted to €8268 (co-financed on a 50:50% / Malta:EU- funding ratio).

The Paying Agency issued cross-compliance penalties amounting to €13,593.53. Two Commission decisions resulted in deductions of €5,565.11. An outstanding debt of €65.87 was recovered.

So as to ensure the proper administration/implementation of the above-mentioned measures, staff from the Paying Agency attended regular monthly participative meetings in Brussels to ensure a smooth financial and compliance clearance.

Furthermore, between 2 and 6 July 2007, an audit mission was carried out by DGAGRI (EU Commission) auditors. Currently, the Paying Agency is co-ordinating a consolidated reply in this regard.

Reporting/Accounting

The Paying Agency met its frequent reporting obligations both for the accounting (expenditure) and the audit function (communications/follow-up). Moreover, the Commission upgraded its IT reporting systems both for the *financial clearance of accounts* procedure as well as the routine (weekly/monthly/

yearly) declarations. The Paying Agency staff with the help of MITTS Ltd reacted promptly to ensure a smooth transition.

PLANT HEALTH DEPARTMENT

PLANT HEALTH LABORATORIES

During 2007, standard operating procedures were drawn up for a number of tests and assays performed in the respective laboratories according to approved international and EU protocols.

Diagnostic and Identification Laboratories

The overall responsibilities of the Plant Pathology Laboratory of the Plant Health Department 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.

Plant Pathology (Mycology) Laboratory

In 2007 the number of samples examined totalled 36, the number of tests amounted to 27, while 25 inspections were made.

- *Monitoring of quarantine fungal diseases:* During the year, *Phytophthora ramorum* was monitored and a survey was initiated on *Verticillium dahliae* olive trees at SVDP, analysis on grain samples for the possible presence of *Tilezia indica* and monitoring for the possible presence of *Gibberella circinata*.
- *Annual Surveys:* The annual *Survey for Phytophthora ramorum* for 2007 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 seven locations including public gardens, public green areas, parks of national importance, woodland pockets and garigue-type areas and three plant species (e.g. *Quercus ilex*, *Lonicera sp.*, *Laurus nobilis*) inspected. All visual inspections and laboratory tests on suspect samples were negative for *P. ramorum*, confirming the absence of the pathogen upon Maltese territory.
- *Fungal diseases recorded:* The following fungal species have been identified on the indicated host plants on the Maltese territory:
 - *Fusarium oxysporum* fsp *radicis-lycopersici* (FORL) on tomatoes
 - *Verticillium dahliae* on olives
 - A species of rust on *Limonium sinuatum*
 - *Rhizoctonia* on outdoor tomato
 - Olive cancer at *Ta' Baldu*.

Virology and Virus-like Laboratory

In 2007 the number of samples examined totalled to 1,388, the number of tests amounted to 1,939, while 148 inspections were made.

- *Monitoring of Quarantine Viral Diseases:* The national protected zone Citrus Tristeza Virus survey for 2007 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, 21 inspections of citrus trees were carried out at private gardens, commercial orchards in various localities. A total of 698 samples corresponding to 2,601 trees were collected. During the inspections, the trees were inspected for CTV symptoms and data on the trees was collected. All samples were tested by Enzyme Linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA) using commercial polyclonal antibodies (Bioreba). Suspect samples were also tested by RT-PCR during June to August. Results of tests performed were sent to the growers visited.

- *Pepino Mosaic Virus (PepMV), Tomato Spotted Wilt Virus (TSWV) and Tomato Yellow Leaf Curl Virus (TYLCV) Surveys:* These surveys were run in accordance with Commission Decision 2004/200/EC. Surveys were carried out in April, July and October. Inspections were made on field and protected tomato crops, during which a total of 223 compound samples corresponding to 1,085 tomato plants were sampled. The samples were tested by ELISA testing. Results were sent to the growers involved in these surveys. No symptoms were observed in the holdings visited.
- *Flavescence Dorée Survey:* The Grapevine *Flavescence dorée/Scaphoideus titanus* survey was carried out from July to November. A total of 101 inspections were carried out in vineyards as part of the survey for this disease and its leaf hopper vector *Scaphoideus titanus*. During the inspections all vines within the vineyard were inspected for Flavescence dorée symptoms. A total of 139 leaf-samples were collected from 43 vineyards to be tested by PCR for the presence of Flavescence dorée. Yellow sticky traps were replaced every 15 to 20 days for the monitoring of the vector. A total of 82 yellow sticky traps were set. Collected samples were extracted using Phytoplasma isolation technique followed by DNA extraction. A total of 316 tests were run by PCR and analysis of DNA amplicates was done by means of Agarose or Acrylamide Gel electrophoresis.
- *SVDP Government Nursery Monitoring:* Inspections at the SVDP Stone Fruit Government Nursery mother plots were performed during June, July and August. All stone fruit trees within Plots 29 and 30 (demonstration plot) were sampled (331 samples collected) and tested for the presence of Plum-Pox Virus (PPV) and a percentage for Prune Necrotic Ringspot Virus (PNRV) and Prune Dwarf Virus (PDV). The trees were inspected for viral symptoms and samples collected were tested with ELISA for each virus at the Diagnostic Laboratory. Thirty mechanical transmission tests were carried out for quality viruses.
- *Rootstock Certification:* GF 677 and Myrabolan rootstocks were certified to CAC standard for onward transmission to SVDP nursery. Tests were also specifically carried out for the presence of the fungal pathogen, *Thievaliopsis basicola*, which is locally a potential pest of these host plants and for viral pathogens namely PNRV, PDV and PPV.

Bacteriology Laboratory

- *Monitoring of Quarantine Bacterial Diseases - Potato Ring Rot (Clavibacter michiganensis ssp sepedonicus) and Potato Brown Rot (Ralstonia solanacearum) Surveys:* Between January and December 2007 a total of 145 samples were collected by the Inspectorate & Surveillance Unit and were tested for the presence of Potato Brown Rot and Potato Ring Rot. The samples were tested according to the test schemes given in Council Directive 98/57/EC on the control of *Ralstonia solanacearum* and Council Directive 93/85 on the control of *Clavibacter michiganensis sepedonicus*. In total, 10 inspections and 984 tests were carried out which included bacterial plating, immunofluorescence, gramstaining, PCR and biological assays. Biological assay trials of positive controls were performed on 38 tomato plants in the hot room.

SOP's for the diagnosis of *R.solanacearum* have been revised according to Commission Directive 2006/63/CE of 14 July 2006 and of *Clavibacter michiganensis sepedonicus* according to Commission Directive 2006/56/EC of 14 June 2006. SOPs for the diagnosis of *Erwinia amylovora* have also been compiled according to official EPPO standards.

- *Tomato Field Surveys:* Five inspections were carried out at tomato growers where plants in the growing phase were observed for symptoms. One sample of tomato showing wilting symptoms was tested by bacterial streaming, SMSA plating and Gram staining for Potato Brown Rot and Potato Ring Rot and resulted negative with all tests.

Entomology and Nematology Laboratory

Over 230 laboratory tests/diagnoses were carried out on entomological material and about 19 laboratory tests were carried out on nematode identifications. In total more than 30 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 Survey*: Monitoring of the Red Palm Weevil (*Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*) and of the Pine Wood Nematode (*Bursaphelenchus xylophilus*) was carried out together with the Surveillance and Inspectorate Unit.
- *Pest Identification*: Among the most common and important identifications carried out during 2007, the following are worth mentioning - *Othiorynchus moriger*, an endemic weevil found damaging olive trees; *Saissetia olea* and *Palpita unionalis* on olives; an unidentified species of wood boring insect which needs further studies; an unidentified species of aphid on *Pistacia*; *Greenidea ficicola* on *Ficus nitida*; *Tuberalachnus salignus* on *Salix*; an unidentified species of aphid on cammomille; two aphid species on citrus: *Toxoptera aurantii* and *Aphis spiraeicola*.
- *Participation in the VI Framework Project (Second Ringtest Portchecks Project)*: As part of the Second Ringtest Portchecks Project, the SMART Cyclor and Homogeniser were in Malta during May/June. Real-time PCR tests were carried out at the Diagnostic Lab for *Phytophthora ramorum*. Tests for Potato ring rot and brown rot were carried out in Italy on Maltese samples.

Tissue Culture Lab (In Vitro Laboratory)

The Tissue Culture Lab focused on the production by micro-propagation techniques of endangered plant species and also the sanitation of accessions of local varieties of peaches was continued.

Micro-propagation

- *Production of Myrobalan 29C plants*: The variety Myrobalan 29C which had been conserved in the cold room from the previous year has been used for the production of plants. Survival and rooting of the healthiest plantlets was attempted. The propagation process yielded a satisfactory multiplication rate and a total of 4,532 plantlets were transferred for rooting purposes. Around 3,000 trees were transferred to the glasshouse of the Plant Biotechnology Centre for acclimatisation.
- *Production of GF677 plants*: During the year, clones of GF677 were micro-propagated. The consignment of plantlets brought from Italy in September 2006 to initiate a new culture, did not respond well to micro-propagation techniques and therefore their condition had deteriorated to the point that very few plantlets survived; however they were not suitable and were eventually discarded.
- *Production of ornamental plants*: During 2007, a batch of 435 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 150 plants has also been transferred to rooting media *in vitro*.
- *Research Works*: Research work was carried out on indigenous endangered wild plants by the adviser at the Plant Tissue Culture Laboratory, who was previously employed with MEPA as a consultant. Most of the work is being undertaken upon MEPA's initiative which is being conducted at the Tissue Culture Lab because of lack of facilities at MEPA. The following is a brief description of the research carried out in 2007:
 - *Micro-propagation of Maltese indigenous plants*: The micro-propagation of the endangered local species of orchids and tulips was continued this year. This is a project sponsored by HSBC under the Care for the Environment Fund. The orchids *Ophrys lutea*, *Ophrys italica*, *Spiranthes spiralis*, *Barlia robertiana* and the tulip *Tulipa sylvestris* were chosen for this regeneration program to prevent plants from disappearing from the Maltese archipelago. From the beginning of this year until October 2007, routine transfers of the plantlets were carried out. Experimentation on the media composition to be used in the different stages of growth was performed. Few plants have been transferred *ex vitro* in compost.

Micro-plants of the evergreen rose (*Rosa sempervirens*) were propagated on a small scale at the Tissue Culture Lab and experiments on the composition of the media for proliferation and multiplication of the plants were carried out. No success with rooting was achieved.

The micro-propagation of *Aristolochia clusii* continued. A number of healthy and well-developed plants were transferred for acclimatization in the growth room and greenhouse. Others were transferred to the cold room for long-term storage.

Action plans for the re-introduction of the plants that are being micro-propagated have been drafted. Protocols for the propagation including the costs of production of *Rosa sempervirens* and *Tetraclinis articulata* (*sigra tal-gharghar*) were prepared.

- *Sanitation of local varieties of stone fruit trees*: The trial on the sanitation of local varieties of peach trees being kept at Plant Biotechnology Centre continued throughout the year. Experimentation with varying concentrations of chemicals in media and types of containers was carried out in order to note the effects on shoot tip proliferation.

Chemistry Laboratory

The main activity of the Chemistry Laboratory was the testing of soil and irrigation water supplied by farmers and public or private entities.

Lab analysis

A summary of the number of samples received and the laboratory tests performed in 2007 at the Chemistry Laboratories is shown below:

| Type of agricultural material | No of samples received | No of tests performed |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Soil (routine) | 207 | 1,221 |
| Irrigation water (routine) | 138 | 721 |
| Total | 345 | 1,942 |

Oenology and Viticulture Laboratory

Following the approval of the DOK and IGT protocols, around 700 grape samples were collected from various wineries in order to test the sugar content as stipulated by the protocols due to eventual certification.

In accordance to Commission Regulation 2729/2000 and Commission regulation 1607/2000, wine samples were produced from local grapes for analysing. The results were then forwarded to the Joint Research Centre in Ispra, Italy.

Dissemination of Information

Limits of salinity of irrigation water for various agricultural crops/fruit trees and the susceptibility limits that lead to foliar injury from saline water were prepared and distributed with the test reports. In detail interpretation of the test reports has been carried out on a regular basis.

Students/Trainees at the Plant Health Laboratories

The main activity of the Chemistry Laboratory was the testing of soil and irrigation water supplied by farmers and public or private entities.

- *Plant Tissue Culture Laboratory*: The laboratory was visited by a number of students from different schools in Malta. A presentation on the main activities of this lab was given by MRAE officials.
- *Chemistry Laboratory*: A number of post-secondary, graduate and post-graduate students of the University of Malta carried out soil and irrigation water analysis as part of their dissertation under the supervision of lab officials. Another student who finished secondary school paid regular visits to the lab during the

summer of 2007 as part of her interest in getting familiar with the work carried out by the Plant Health Department. Students together with their teachers from local and foreign schools have also visited the lab.

- *Bacteriology and Virology Laboratory*: An MCAST student (lab technologist) worked at the lab between February and September while another student who had just finished her O level exams worked at the lab during the summer months. A Junior College student attended five lab sessions as part of her Systems of Knowledge project.
- *Mycology and Entomology Laboratories*: A University student reading for BSc Biology & Chemistry worked in the entomology and mycology laboratories during the summer months; most of her work involved research and drafting of SOPs.

SEEDS AND OTHER PROPAGATION MATERIAL

General Issues

Officials of the Seed and Propagation Material Unit (SPMU) regularly visited local nurseries to gather information on the plant varieties being introduced in Malta of agricultural plants (cereals, fodder plants and potatoes), vegetables, fruit trees and vines. The data collected are being used for the national catalogues of the various species.

Seeds of agricultural plants and vegetables

The Plant Health Department went through notifications received from other Member States on varieties of agricultural plants and vegetables which are regularly added, deleted or modified on the Common Catalogues of varieties. Also, notifications on authorisations for the marketing of seed of not yet listed varieties according to Commission Decision 2004/842/EC were reviewed.

Trials on varieties of cereals and vegetables belonging to plant genetic resources which are at risk of genetic erosion have started. These are taking place in the fields of the Plant Biotechnology Centre. The aim is to compile descriptions of all the varieties of local varieties marketed in Malta and also as part of conservation activities. Melon, watermelon, kohlrabi, vetch, onions, marrows and carrots were sown for such purposes. Morphological characterisation of the mature fruit was carried out and recorded.

Research was carried out on the weeds which are regulated by the national legislation on the marketing of agricultural plants for the various crops and the respective seed categories. This exercise was considered important as the SPMU needed to familiarise itself with the seed infestants.

Fruit trees and vines

The SPMU focused on the establishment of the national catalogue of varieties, and where appropriate their clones, of fruit trees and vines which are covered by Legal Notices 271 and 470 of 2004 and 188 of 2006. Only varieties and clones included in this catalogue will be allowed to be marketed in the Maltese territory. A description of the main morphological and physiological characteristics of the plants shall also be endorsed for each variety.

Batches of rootstocks of fruit trees that were produced by micro-propagation purposes were certified. A total of 6 certificates, which approve the designation of the trees as CAC material, consisting of 6,060 trees, were issued by the SPMU.

A plan of action for the national certification of local varieties/ecotypes of citrus fruit trees has been drafted. It includes all the steps from the identification of candidate stocks to the certification of the plant material.

Recommendations on the draft EPPO guidelines for grapevine and strawberry (schemes for the production of healthy plants for planting) were forwarded to EPPO Secretariat.

Forest trees

Communication with the PARC Unit was held in order for the SPMU to gather information on the species of forest trees being imported and marketed in Malta.

A search for any records of a fungal disease caused by *Chalara fraxinea* that attacks forest trees has been carried out.

GMOs

During the year, the Plant Health Department held meetings with MEPA to discuss issues on GMOs, bio safety and co-existence of crops. The MRAE EU Directorate forwarded a number of Commission Decisions on the withdrawal from the market of seeds and derived products of genetically-modified maize and oilseed rape. Also, questionnaires on the labelling of authorised genetically-modified seeds in conventional seed lots have been received and comments forwarded where appropriate.

Advisory Services

The SPMU gave advice and shared its knowledge and experience with other national and foreign public and private entities on the introduction of varieties of seeds and other propagation material in Malta and re-export, and on verification of the type of which submitted wheat samples belong.

Officials of the SPMU also participated in local television and radio programmes during which dissemination of information was carried out.

PESTICIDES UNIT

Product Registration

During the year, 39 EU Active Substance Dossiers were received from companies in relation to Plant Protection Products (PPPs) and Draft Assessment Reports from other European authorities regarding centrally authorised procedure of biocides and PPPs across all EU Member States. Several meetings were held with foreign companies interested in registering their products locally.

Twenty-nine PPPs and two biocides have been authorised and placed on the Maltese market. Dossiers were being reviewed on a 'first come first reviewed' basis and eventually permanent market authorisation will be issued to these products.

Product Approval

Six licences were issued for the importation of biocides and PPPs from third countries. All the licences were approved.

Pesticides Control Board

The Pesticides Control Board met on 19 January, 23 February, 23 April, 4 May, 25 June and 18 July. No quorum was reached in meetings held in August, October and November.

Inspections and Sampling

Placing of Pesticides on the market

During 2007, the Plant Health Department started the routine inspections at the retailers for plant production products on the market. These inspections were carried out according to the Manual of Procedure drawn up by officials of the Department.

In all, 150 inspections were carried out in the localities of Attard, Balzan, B'Kara, Dingli, Gharghur, Hamrun, Luqa, Mgarr (Malta), Mosta, M'Scala, Mtarfa, Naxxar, Paola, Qormi, Qrendi, Rabat (Malta), St Julians, San Gwann, Siggiewi, Sliema, Sta Venera, Ta' Qali, Tarxien, Żabbar, Żebbuġ (Malta), Żejtun and Żurrieq.

Biocide inspections

During this year, 13 leading supermarkets were visited for the biocides inspection, all of which were found to be non-compliant with Legal Notice 294 of 2004 under the Pesticides Control Act 2001. All retailers were given three months grace period by the Pesticides Advisory Control Board to abide by the said legal notice.

MRL analyses

Samples (65 in all) were also collected from various retail outlets. The samples were sent to CEFIT for testing for pesticide residue levels. Samples included peaches, nectarines, grapes, *Girgentina*, tomatoes, lettuce, head cabbage and apples. Most of the results returned as negative, however there were a few tomato samples with low levels of residues and some peach samples which had excessive residues. Meetings were held with the peach growers concerned.

Revocations

Twenty-five plant protection products have been revoked as they have been removed from Annex 1 of Commission Directive 91/414.

Rapporteur - Member States (MS) for Biocides

As a rapporteur for two active substances for biocides, in June 2007 the Plant Health Department signed an agreement with the Italian Competent Authority to help it carry out the necessary evaluation of the dossiers forwarded. The completeness checks were carried out and the results forwarded to the Commission.

SURVEILLANCE AND INSPECTORATE UNIT

Phytosanitary Inspections

Inspections of Commodities originating from Third Countries

- During 2007, 394 full inspections were carried out on third country commodities subject to inspection as per LN 97/2004.
- A small consignment of vine cuttings originating from America were retained at the customs airfreight for destruction. These were held as their entry in Malta is prohibited as per Annex III of EU directive 2000/29 EC.

Inspections of Wood packaging material (WPM)

- WPM originating from third countries are subject to inspection as per ISPM 15 and EU Directive 2004/102/EC. All WPM imports were in line with ISPM 15.

- Inspectors were involved in the stamping of WPM for Comtec Ltd, a service which is being given free of charge. There were 332 heat treatments consisting of 3,590 pallets, 213 boxes and 570 dunnage.
- Training was also given to the S&IU staff by Head of Unit on how to carry the survey for WPM as per ISPM 15.
- All non-conforming wood packaging material arriving at the *Hal Far* container terminal from third countries was destroyed.

Plant Passport System

- A seminar on plant passports was held during November. All nurseries and other entities dealing with the propagation of plants and registered with the Plant Health Department were invited for this seminar. The seminar was addressed by Director (Plant Health), the Head of the Surveillance and Inspectorate Unit and an official from the Virology Section. Following this seminar, various outlets were visited. During the visits, information regarding the databases was explained in further detail. A booklet, *Guide to Marketing Requirements and Plant Passports*, was produced for the seminar and was placed on the departmental website.

Sampling

- During the year, various samples were collected with regard to the brown rot and ring rot survey, the Colorado beetle survey and the *Phytophthora ramorum* survey. A sample brought by the PARC Unit was sent to Bari for Mycology identification. During the year, seven samples were obtained from importers and farmers. One of the samples consisted of a compound sample of grain which arrived from Bulgaria and was taken to the Mycology Laboratory for testing of *Tilletia indica*. Another sample was taken from Pine plants to be tested for the pine wood nematode while another sample was sent to the Nematology Laboratory.
- During the year inspections regarding the *Citrus tristeza virus*, *Pepino Mosaic virus*, *Flavescence dorée* and its vector *Scaphoideus titanus*, Pine wood nematode and *Phytophthora ramorum* and for CAC certification were carried out. Various samples were collected and sent to laboratories for testing. Seven citrus trees were found to be infected with CTV and had to be uprooted.
- The Red Palm Weevil was first detected in June in a private residence in Wardija; following the first detection, around 150 traps were set in Burmarrad, Gozo, Gżira, Sliema, Marsaxlokk, Qormi, Żebbuġ, St Paul's Bay, Mellieħa area, Naxxar, San Ġwann, Mtarfa and Fgura. Monitoring for this pest was carried out between June and December and the beetle was detected in various areas. During the 150 inspections which were carried out the beetle was found in all the different stages of growth, ie from egg to adult.
- Other inspections were carried out regarding the leaves and penduncles of oranges on fruit arriving into Malta from Italy.

Inspections on Pesticides

Around 150 pesticide inspections in various locations were carried in conjunction with the Pesticides Unit.

Phytosanitary Certificates

- A total of 28 export phytosanitary certificates (Phyto number 000174 - 000202) were issued.
- 17 re-export Phytosanitary certificate (Phyto number 000019 - 000036) was issued during 2007.

Collection of Revenue

During 2007, a total of Lm4,007.61 (€9,335.220) was collected by the S&I Unit.

Registration

During 2007 there were 18 new entries in the Traders Registration and a total of 238 imports of various agricultural products and timber from third countries which were duly registered in the database.

Others

- During 2007 the SIU was involved in the Portchecks project. This project is part of the EU VI framework Programme and is combined to RTD and demonstration activity. The aim of this project is to deliver tools and procedures to aid Plant Health competent laboratories to carry out inspection services and molecular diagnostic assays “on-site” and at points of entry. The tests carried out were for *Phytophthora ramorum*, Potato Brown Rot and Potato Ring Rot. Activities included sending equipment and samples to Italy for further diagnosis, budget formulation for obtaining of EU funds and correspondence with the Customs Department for payment duty.
- Contingency and Emergency plans for both the Citrus Tristeza Virus and the Red Palm Weevil have been compiled by staff from the Diagnostic and Control and the Surveillance and Inspectorate Unit.

Advisory Work

- Inspectors visited a number of private farmers to carry out inspections and collect samples for further diagnosis.
- Most advisory work by the SIU was on the Red Palm Weevil. The Unit received many queries from third parties who sought help through all possible means. Many inspections were also carried out following such requests.
- A number of importers and individuals called at the Unit for queries regarding any import regulations.

PLANT BIOTECHNOLOGY CENTRE MANAGEMENT

Glasshouse Facilities

Routine work such as cleaning of pots, application of pesticides and fertilisers was carried out in the glasshouses, screen houses, shade house, mother block and outdoor plants. Routine works for the up keeping of the PBC grounds were carried out. These included weeding and rotovation of fields and general cleaning of the premises.

- *Acclimatisation Glasshouse*: During the year, 200 jars of Myrabolan containing approximately 3,250 plantlets were transferred from the lab for acclimatisation. A quantity of around 500 ferns which had been propagated in the *in vitro* lab was also acclimatised. Rootstocks and ornamental plants were continually cared for and regular applications of insecticides were necessary to control sciarid flies and other insects. Preventative drenching with fungicides was carried out to avoid soil borne fungal diseases and fertilisers were applied during irrigation. Acclimatised rootstocks were transferred to the shade house for hardening and certification.
- *Diagnostic Glasshouse*: A continuous production of herbaceous indicator and indexing plants for virus diagnosis was carried out throughout the whole year. Apart from the regular herbaceous plants, pumpkins, tomatoes, aubergines, fava beans and others were used as indicator plants. Chardonney vine cuttings were propagated for indexing and Mexican lime, GF 305 and Elberta seeds were also sown for indexing purposes. 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.
- *Plastic House*: A continuous production of herbaceous indicator and indexing plants for virus diagnosis was carried out throughout the whole year.
- *Shade House*: Rootstocks were transferred to the shade house for hardening off prior to being certified and transferred to SVDP for eventual sale to growers. Regular irrigation, application of pesticides and

drenching with fungicides for the control of *Thialaviopsis basilicola* was carried out. Other work included organisation of plants and weeding. The *Sarcopoterium* plants are currently waiting to be re-introduced into nature by MEPA. Their roots had to be pruned as they started to grow into the gravel.

- *Screen Houses*: Plants were regularly cared for and required irrigation, weeding and spraying for scale insects, red spider mites and whiteflies.

Sale/Donation of Plants

During 2007 the following rootstocks were forwarded to SVDP - 2,450 Myrabolan and 1,360 GF 677. The following plants were donated to various entities including PARC Unit, Nature Trust and MRAE – 50 ferns, 19 spider plants, 1 *Philodendron*, 1 *Yucca*, 205 carob, 17 Casuarina and 6 rootstocks. A further 30 baskets with plants were donated to MRAE upon request.

Maintenance Work

- During the year several maintenance works and services were carried out at the PBC premises for the upkeep of the laboratories, offices, glasshouses and ancillary equipment. The Diagnostic lab backyard was converted into an office with kitchenette.
- Efforts were made to obtain specifications, costs and approval for the new Surveillance and Inspectorate Unit and also for the extension to the Diagnostic lab. These projects have been approved and a bill of quantities has been drawn up. Current efforts are aimed towards obtaining the necessary MEPA permits.
- Action was also taken to have the glasshouse computer system and the hot room repaired by a team of engineers from the University Engineering Department who have been carrying out tests to try and isolate the cause of the problems.
- The shift of the maintenance section was terminated by the beginning of 2007 and the working hours of the maintenance section were brought in line with normal office hours.

Other Activities

- A total of 114 small bales of hay were grown within the PBC and sent to the Agricultural Research & Development Centre, Għammieri.
- During the year, trials on the local vegetable seeds were started within the premises. Such trials included local varieties of melons and watermelons which had been obtained from San Lawrenz, Gozo and from Mdina. The aim of these trials was to determine the characteristics of the varieties. These trials will be continued during 2008.

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.
- *Attendance at meetings*: Department officials attended various meetings of the Plant Health Standing Committee, Seeds and Propagation committee meetings and meetings of the Administrative Council of the Community Plant Variety Office.
- *Communications to the EU*: The Department submitted comments on a number of working documents on various topics, the main ones being
 - the halting of the loss of biodiversity by 2010 and beyond which focused on the main areas which shall be covered by this initiative, key policy areas and priority objectives for 2007 to 2013;

- the acceptance and marketing of seeds of other propagation material of landraces and varieties of agricultural plants, vegetables and seed mixtures of fodder plants;
 - national focal points for the Common Catalogues of varieties of agricultural plants and vegetables;
 - better organisation of the work and dates of the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) sessions;
 - total area accepted for certification and the estimated harvest for the years 2006 and 2007 of seed of the species specified in EU legislation;
 - testing of new hemp varieties and the assessment of the content of *tetrahydrocannabinol*;
 - amendment of the Regulation on the entitlement for the filing of an application for a Community plant variety right;
 - new structure of the Common Catalogue of vegetables and on the varieties of shallots, beet and pepper;
 - authorisation for derogations to Member States to market seeds of agricultural plants satisfying less stringent requirements;
 - questionnaire on ornamental species in which a list of all harmful organisms that have been documented to affect the species covered by the relevant EU directive were enclosed; and
 - renewal of the temporary derogation allowing the import of seed potatoes from certain provinces of Canada.
- *Preparation of Memos:* A number of restricted and unrestricted explanatory memoranda on various draft Commission documents relating to plant health were prepared.

National Legislation - New Legal Notices Adopted

A total of 53 EU Directives were transposed into Maltese law during 2007, 13 legal notices under the Pesticides Control Act 2001 and 10 legal notices under the Plant Quarantine Act 2001 were published in the Government Gazette.

Seminars/Meetings

- Following the detection of the Red Palm Weevil the Plant Health Department organised three informative seminars about the topic. Two of the seminars were held in Malta (one was aimed at gardeners and the other at local councils), while the third seminar was held in Gozo and catered for the Gozitan local councils and the general public. The Department also organised a seminar regarding Plant Passports aimed at the local nursery men.
- Departmental officials attended several meetings, seminars and training courses, both locally and abroad, in the course of the year.

Publications

During the year various related articles were published in the MRAE monthly magazine *Biedja u Sajd*, and press releases appeared on the Government Gazette and on the Department of Information website.

General Issues

- During the year, the existing Department website was kept up to date with regard to the published legal notices and the list of plant protection products. New information was also added to the site regarding the revoked plant protection products in Malta, the Red Palm Weevil, *Citrus Tristeza Virus*, marketing requirements for various commodities and plant passports.
- The new Department website was completed and sent to Alert Communications in order to be aligned with the required rules and regulations as stipulated by MITTS Ltd. and FITA. Upon completion, the site was then forwarded to MITTS Ltd for testing and approval.
- During the year the Department bought specific health and safety wear and equipment; it is envisaged that during the coming year more safety wear will be purchased.

- Staff within the Department was involved in field inspections and on-the-spot controls organised by the Control Unit of MRAE in connection with the single payment schemes.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

In 2007, the Rural Development Department (RDD) served three main functions. It was primarily responsible for the management and implementation of the various measures funded under both the Guidance and Guarantee (EAGGF) 2004-2006 programmes as well as for preparing the 2007-2013 Rural Development Plan.

In the case of the Guidance funds, the RRD was the final beneficiary under the Single Programming Document for Malta and, as such, it was responsible for the implementation of Priority 3 measures, mainly Investments in Agricultural holdings and Improving the Marketing and Processing of Agricultural Products. This task involved continuous liaison with the Managing Authority (PPCD), the EU Affairs Directorate, as the Intermediary Body, and the Paying Authority (Ministry of Finance) for successful implementation of the programme.

In respect of measures funded under the RDP Guarantee section, the Department was responsible for the management and implementation of the various measures found in the 2004-2006 programme. This also necessitated numerous other tasks associated with the programme in its totality to be undertaken as well.

During 2007, the RRD continued in its development of the new programme for the 2007-2013 period. This involved the drafting and elaboration of a National Strategy Plan for Rural Development, continuous stakeholder consultation, the co-ordination of an ex-ante evaluation and an environmental strategic assessment, together with the fulfilment of the common monitoring and evaluation framework obligations. Under this new programme, the RRD will take the role of Managing Authority and, together with the Paying Agency of MRAE, shall see to the successful implementation of the funding programme under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

Implementation of Measures Funded through the EAGGF Guidance Fund (2004-2006)

During 2007, the Rural Development Department monitored the implementation of the projects contracted in 2006 under both Measure 3.1 – Investments in Agricultural Holdings and Measure 3.2 – Improving the Marketing and Processing of Agricultural Products. Moreover, the flow of payments continued as planned and as at the end December 2007, the Department had administered invoices amounting to €2,553,428.77 for Measure 3.1 with €2,519,860.17 of invoices being processed by Treasury and with €33,568.60 pending at their end. With regard to Measure 3.2, a total of €2,023,599.96 in invoices was processed by the RDD with €1,751,762.07 being processed by Treasury, and with €271,837.88 still pending at their end.

In November, an Audit was conducted on Measure 3.2 by Price Waterhouse Coopers on behalf of the Internal Audit Investigations Directorate, whereby both systems used by the Rural Development Department to implement the measure and pay final recipients selected were checked. A report on the findings is on the process of being finalised and presented by PWC.

Implementation of Rural Development Plan (2004-2006) Funded through the EAGGF Guarantee Fund

Implementation of Measures

With regard to Agri-environment measures, during January 2007, an Offer Letter was sent to respective beneficiaries of the rubble-wall sub-measure and the first payment pertaining to 2006 commitments was carried out. A total of €423,363.90 was disbursed to 699 beneficiaries.

Following administrative checks carried out in the previous year with respect to applications for the rubble wall sub-measure, applicants were asked to confirm commitments according to the outcome of the checks. Furthermore, previous applications for payment were processed and executed accordingly to confirmations of both administrative checks and on-the-spot controls. As part of the administrative procedures required for the implementation of the agri-environmental measures, risk analysis criteria were developed further, following co-ordination with the Control Unit and IACS, so as to be utilised during 2008 for the 2004-2006 commitments.

In addition, the applicants applying for the Organic Farming sub-measure were also notified of the amount of eligible aid with the total value of funds payable amounting to €6,540 for the 2006 call.

With regard to 2007 commitments, in respect to the Conservation of Autochthonous Species sub-measure, following corresponding administrative checks, payments amounting to €7,428 for the Maltese Ox were effected, whilst payments amounting to €3,787 for Holm Oaks were subsequently processed.

After meetings held in 2007 together with officials from the Department of Contracts, pending issues relating to six pre-accession beneficiaries from the pre-accession Rural Stewardship Scheme were tackled, but payment issues and scheme conclusion are still pending.

For the *Ad Hoc* Measure, in 2007 the Rural Development Department executed the payments pertaining to 2006 commitments amounting to €1,853,362.52 that were disbursed to 953 eligible beneficiaries. *Ad Hoc* applications were once again opened in 2007 with a total of 802 applications submitted for dry and/or irrigated land, plus another 310 applications pertaining to livestock breeders. In 2007, there was a total request for payments covering 1,550 Ha of dry land, 1,570 Ha of irrigated land and 25,912 livestock units.

With regard to the Meeting Standards measures, apart from the implementation of the first call for applications, in June 2007, an amendment to the measure as duly revised in the RDP 2004-2006 was duly submitted to the European Commission. Following Commission approval, another call for applications was launched in July in order to assist livestock breeders to undergo waste management investments required on their farms. Payments effected under this measure during 2007 amounted to €1,801,957.23 that was disbursed to 128 beneficiaries.

Successful implementation of the programme

As the Managing Authority, the Department is responsible for the successful implementation of the programme. With this aim, Technical Assistance funds were directed at a number of activities involving consultative and information seminars, commissioning of studies, programme evaluations and purchase of services for provision of technical consultancy. An agronomist was also recruited to provide continuous technical support. Such eligible expenditures enabled the implementation of the 2004-2006 plan and these aided the drawing of the new programme so as to be in line with prevailing EC Regulations. During 2007, payments executed in relation to the above-mentioned activities amounted to €213,087.20.

All Manuals of Procedures pertaining to the Rural Development Plan 2004-2006 measures were revised according to recommendations made by the Commission, the Paying Agency and various auditors respectively. The revision resulted in the amalgamation of all the measures into one single document that reflects the actual process followed in measure implementation and serves to ensure ongoing smooth implementation.

Reporting

Various reporting exercises were carried out by the Rural Development Department as requested by the EU regulatory framework and also on request of national competent authorities.

- An Annual Report was submitted as part of the obligations that the Managing Authority (PPCD) with regard to the Structural Funds Programme (EAGGF).

- Progress in implementing the 2004-2006 RD programme during 2006 was reported to the Commission through the Annual Progress Report. In accordance with Article 48 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/1999 this was first endorsed by the local Monitoring Committee prior to being submitted to Commission approval in June.
- The respective part of a report arising from reporting obligations on the controls and reductions/sanctions of aid applied by Member States under Art 69 of EC Regulation N° 817/2004 was also compiled.
- Other reporting requested by the Ministry, Secretariat and other entities was likewise executed.

Elaboration of the Rural Development Plan for Malta 2007-2013

The Rural Development Department was responsible for the programming, for the 77 million EAFRD allocated to Malta for the 2007-2013 period. This involved the development of a programme that not only addressed national weaknesses and capitalised on strengths, but also focused on stakeholders' concerns. Consequently, an extensive consultation process was embarked upon. Together with factual data and in line with other national strategies, the programme priorities and objectives were identified and firstly formulated into the National Strategy Plan for Rural Development. These were subsequently endorsed by the evaluators and translated into measures under each respective Axis in the new Rural Development Plan.

The consultation process with stakeholders was initiated in 2005 and continued well into 2007. Essentially, the RDD undertook several rounds of consultation with key stakeholders - from public departments and authorities, members of the business community for the private sector, as well as non-governmental organisations and entities from the non-profit sector - for the drafting of the programme. These continuous consultations and one-to-one stakeholder meetings provided the basis for the identification of the hierarchy of objectives for the forthcoming programming period. Following the outcomes of these various consultations, the National Strategy Plan for the period 2007-2013 was prepared in fulfilment of the obligations laid down in Articles 11 and 12 of Council Regulation 1698/2005 and the Community Strategic Guidelines for Rural Development. The final version was submitted to the Commission in February 2007.

In preparation for the new programming period, Rural Development representatives actively participated in the Commission Technical Meetings during which a new Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF) was being developed. The new CMEF was finally adopted in March 2007 and its parameters featured significantly in the Rural Development Programme that was being elaborated by the Department. In particular, the members of the Monitoring Committee for the Programming Period 2007-2013 were identified on the basis of wide representation advocated by Regulation 1698/2005. The baseline indicators against which the future progress of the programme in achieving targets will be measured, were calculated and provisions were taken for independent evaluators to establish targets for each individual measure and for the programme in its totality.

During the programming exercise the Rural Development Department constantly liaised with a number of other ministries and directorates to find common grounds on specific horizontal issues. The outcome of these discussions fed significantly into the programme and mainly involved the identification of the best state aid regime per measure, the determination of clear demarcation lines between funds, and the establishment of complementarity of RD measures with the Common Agricultural Policy, the European Social Fund, the European Regional Fund and the European Fisheries Fund.

Once specific criteria, objectives, aims, target groups and actions were identified, a set of measures were drafted under each specific Axis. This exercise involved extensive internal discussions, planning and co-ordination so as to ensure coherence with the objectives and priorities of each respective axis as well as reflect the provisions set out in the Regulations. As a result of ongoing input, axis measure changes resulted in the choice of 10 measures from Axis 1, 3 measures from Axis 2, 3 measures from Axis 3 and 3 measures from Axis 4. Financial allocations per Axis and measure were carried out reflecting both priorities and obligations with budget allocations of about 34% for Axis 1, 25% for Axis 2, about 33% to Axis 3, some 4% for Axis 4 and another 4% for Technical Assistance.

Amongst the novelties embodied in the new programme is the Leader Approach as a separate fourth Axis. The Rural Development Department carried out consultation meetings with foreign experts as to develop the Leader Programme necessary for the setting up of the Local Action Groups (LAGs). A number of Leader Promotional Campaigns and consultation meetings with various stakeholders have resulted in the identification of potential LAG representatives. The RDD, through the Ministry's initiative, has also been involved in the LEADERMED Project that was initiated in June 2005. The aim of the project is to disseminate the Leader programme in various Mediterranean regions by association with already established LAGs in the Apulia region.

As part of the programme and Council Regulation requirements, an ex ante evaluation and a Strategic Environmental Assessment of Malta's Rural Development Plan were implemented. This mandatory exercise comprised a detailed analysis of the strategy and of its objectives, the baseline, quantifiable objectives and target levels. The aim of this exercise was to improve the quality of the RDP, gather information, provide insight of stakeholders views, carry out necessary analysis and ensure that the policy objectives be delivered successfully. The overall assessment of the ex ante evaluation was that the wide selection of measures and aid intensities were well targeted and suitably posed at generating benefits to a wide array of potential beneficiaries.

The development of the Rural Development Plan necessitated an outline of the activities that the Managing Authority would be bound to undertake as demanded by the European regulatory framework to ensure fairness, transparency and effectiveness in fund usage. In this respect the programme contains provisions for the development of a communication strategy, for promotion of equality between men and women, as well as measures to avoid discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. Provision was also made for Technical Assistance operations in line with Article 66 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 setting parameters for utilisation of such funds.

With draft measures completed, a final public seminar was held on 13 July 2007. All representatives of public and private stakeholders were invited. Developments regarding work on the finalisation of Malta's Rural Development Programme were discussed. Ensuing points during final discussions were primarily positive and, to further complement this exercise and ensure transparency, an evaluation exercise by the Ex Ante Team was also carried out. A number of other informative seminars, which were organised in collaboration with other entities, were also effected so as to give prominence both to the programme and prospective funding opportunities.

Following the completion of the first draft of the Rural Development Plan for Malta 2007-2013, several consultations were held with the Paying Agency and other entities in order to discuss the implementation process, subsequently drafting of the Manual of Procedures for the all new measures and development of measure guidelines.

Throughout 2007, the Rural Development Department also had a number of bilateral meetings with the Commission's DG Agriculture to discuss and clarify a number of issues associated with the finalisation of the new programme. The first official submission of the Rural Development Plan 2007-2013 took place in September 2007. Consequently, the draft Rural Development Plan underwent two Commission inter-service consultations. A number of amendments to the Plan had to be carried out to take on board comments, provide further clarifications, address any queries and negotiate parameters within remits allowed by the regulations. Furthermore, a number of bilateral meetings with the Commission were held in May, June and November 2007. The Rural Development Plan was approved on 19 December 2007.

DR PHILIP VON BROCKDORFF
Permanent Secretary MRAE

Veterinary Affairs and Fisheries Division

VETERINARY AFFAIRS

INTRODUCTION

The Veterinary Affairs Section within the Veterinary Affairs and Fisheries Division continued with its activities to safeguard Veterinary Public Health and to contribute to the economically viable development of the Livestock Industry via the improvement of the legislative environment and through the employment of Veterinary knowledge, skills and resources in a cost effective and social manner.

The main areas of activity include inspections to assess control systems in the following fields: production of meat (beef, pork, sheep meat, poultry and game meat), milk, eggs fish and their respective products; animal feed stuffs (exclusion of contaminants, BSE controls); wholesale & distribution of all foodstuffs, animal and non-animal; wholesale and distribution of all veterinary medicinal; and control of animal welfare including on farms, transport and slaughtering.

The primary functions of the Division consist of:

- Drafting and implementing legislation in the area of veterinary public health, animal health and welfare, veterinary medicinal and animal feeding staff.
- Prevention and Control of animal diseases through implementation of the livestock identification programme, vaccinations, inspections and performing of diagnostic tests on animals and animal products.
- Issuance of approvals, certificates, licenses and registrations prescribed in law relating to veterinary public health, animal health and welfare.
- Research & Development of modern technologies and provision of advice to promote the efficiency and the quality of livestock production.

During 2007 an intensive upgrading programme was carried out within the Civil Abattoir. The main projects and issues tackled consisted of:

Bovine Slaughterline

- Reorganisation of Lairage
- Provision of veterinary facilities within Lairage
- Purchase of new Stunning Equipment
- Purchase of two hydraulic platforms
- Hygiene lock between clean and dirty areas.

Swine Slaughterline

- Reorganisation and extension of Lairage
- Creation of Lairage pens for sick or injured animals
- Ante mortem facilities
- Changing of stunning process to CO₂
- Full refurbishment of Burner and Dehairing equipment
- Changing of scolding tank
- Refurbishing of Tripery area.

Animal Welfare

- Improvement of unloading bays
- Improvement in the provision of water and feeding facilities within the Lairages.

Other Projects

- Complete refurbishing of the ring mains 35/82 degrees C water system
- Refurbishing of the tunnel leading from the dispatch area to the Cutting & Deboning Plant
- Procurement of a Meat Traceability System to be installed in 2008
- Refurbishment of the loading docks and dispatch areas
- Commissioning of the Cutting & Deboning plant
- Organisation of the ABP waste removal
- Provision of training for butchers by foreign experts.

SLAUGHTERING OF LIVESTOCK

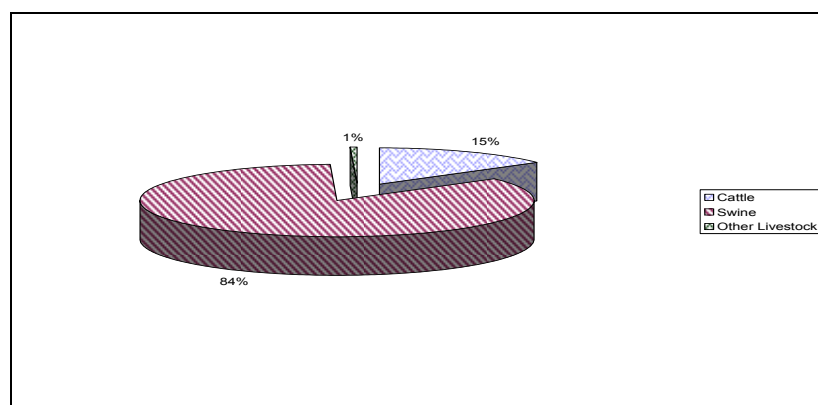
The number of livestock slaughtered in 2007 at the Civil Abattoir in both Malta and Gozo is as indicated hereunder:

| Cattle | Swine | Sheep | Lamb | Goats | Kids | Equines |
|--------|--------|-------|------|-------|------|---------|
| 4,562 | 94,290 | 23 | 3 | - | - | 298 |

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 |
|-----------|-----------|-------|------|-------|------|---------|
| 1,385,896 | 8,017,946 | 721 | 28 | - | - | 54,694 |

The total number of animals slaughtered this year was 99,176 heads weighing 9,459,285 kgs while for the same period last year there were 108,498 heads (9,655,994 kgs). In relation to 2006 figures, there was a reduction of 8.59% with respect to animals slaughtered and a decrease of 9.13% in heads weighing (Kg).



Distribution of Weight (kgs)

Swine Analysis

Tattooing during 2007 amounted to 118,036 (a 3.4% decrease over 2006). At present mortality stands at around 12.8%.

The market demand for this year shows a slight upward trend. Slaughter was 9% lower than that for 2006. The weight has also gone down from 8,217.6 M.tons to 8,018.1 M.tons. This downward trend was compensated with the importation of about 1,990 Metric tons of pork-meat for the period January to November.

The average carcass weight is 85 kgs. Production is in the region of 8,018.10 M.tons which is equivalent to about Lm5.45 million.

The replacement of gilts during the year was decreased by about 30.45% over 2006.

| Swine Slaughtering 2007 | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|
| | <i>Malta</i> | | <i>Gozo</i> | | <i>Totals</i> | |
| | <i>Qty</i> | <i>Wt./Kg</i> | <i>Qty</i> | <i>Wt./Kg</i> | <i>Qty</i> | <i>Wt./Kg</i> |
| Total | 94,289 | 8,018,101 | - | - | 94,289 | 8,018,101 |

| | Issue Gilts | Issue Boars | Piglets Tattooed | Trans of Fatt. |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Tattooing Malta | 1,559 | 122 | 110,714 | 840 |
| Tattooing Gozo | 44 | 1 | 7,322 | n.a |
| Total | 1,603 | 123 | 118,036 | 840 |

The balance of Boars as at the end of 2007 was 405 whilst the balance of Sows was 6,479.

| Tattooing Malta & Gozo 2007 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------|------------|--------------|--------------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------|
| <i>Jan</i> | <i>Feb</i> | <i>March</i> | <i>April</i> | <i>May</i> | <i>June</i> | <i>July</i> | <i>Aug</i> | <i>Sep</i> | <i>Oct</i> | <i>Nov</i> | <i>Dec</i> | <i>Total</i> |
| 9,572 | 9,581 | 11,536 | 10,973 | 12,364 | 8,866 | 9,924 | 10,549 | 9,119 | 10,364 | 8,585 | 6,603 | 118,036 |

Poultry Section

The Poultry Section has an active role within the regulation of the poultry industry in Malta. The main duties carried out by the Poultry Section are:

- registration of all hatching eggs and day-old chicks imported and distributed in Malta and Gozo;
- registration of point-of-lay pullets on laying hen farms;
- registration of all official slaughtering of broilers in approved poultry slaughtering plants;
- issuing of poultry 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 programmes;
- poultry welfare inspections, in conjunction with the Animal Welfare Section;
- assistance to poultry farmers when applying for schemes related to EU subsidies;
- checking and working of SMPPMA poultry subsidies, broilers and layers;
- attending meetings, both locally and abroad, 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. This is an ongoing process related to the control measures listed in the ORA.
- 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 and enforcing the implementation of Reg EC 1774/2002 (ABP).
- Participation at an Animal By-Products Working Group in Brussels.

- Participation in a conference regarding ABP in Spain and Denmark (also training in ABP with Danish veterinaries).

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, including other VAFD outpost workstations.

All workstations within the VAFD have a multitude and variety of occupations ranging from the high risk abattoirs, laboratory, maintenance people (boilers, hoists, electricians, fitters, etc) incinerators, farmers, field workers, middlemen, laboratory workers and office workers, so OH&S is an ongoing process. Other outstations within the VAFD are also being taken into account such as the San Luċjan premises where a meeting was held with staff concerned to discuss OH&S legal requirements, especially the requirement of an adequate Occupational Risk Assessment. Information and a fill-in ORA template were forwarded to San Luċjan personnel so that the process of Risk Assessment can be initiated.

During these inspections OH&S shortcomings are discussed on site with the responsible personnel, and where possible, immediate and adequate control measures are taken.

Legal Affairs

This Unit was responsible for drafting and ensuring the vetting and publication of a number of legal notices. Several legal notices have been published while a number of regulations are in the process of vetting or awaiting publication.

Other duties performed by the Unit are clearance of COREPER documents at request from EU Secretariat (review of Maltese text) as well as liaising with the Attorney General Agency on a number of pending Court cases.

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). For each consignment of live animals or of products of animal origin, a Common Veterinary Entry Document (CVED) is required.

As from July 2007 the Border Inspection Posts introduced the online notification and filling in of the CVED via the TRACES System.

The following tables 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 2007. No consignments of live animals were received at the Grand Harbour BIP during this period.

| Malta International Airport Border Inspection Post | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 2007 | | | |
| | <i>Total No. ⁽¹⁾</i> | <i>Rejected</i> | <i>Lab Tests ⁽²⁾</i> |
| HC-total | 295 | - | 3 |
| Ambient T° | - | - | - |
| Chilled | 295 | - | 3 |
| Frozen | - | - | - |
| NHC-total | 1 | - | - |
| Ambient T° | 1 | - | - |
| Chilled | - | - | - |
| Frozen | - | - | - |
| Total Products | 296 | - | 3 |
| U | - | - | - |
| E | - | - | - |
| O | 124 | - | - |
| Total Live Animals | 124 | - | - |

⁽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 laboratory tests carried out

| Malta Freeport Border Inspection Post | | | |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2007 | | | |
| | <i>Total No. ⁽¹⁾</i> | <i>Rejected ⁽²⁾</i> | <i>Lab Tests ⁽³⁾</i> |
| HC-total | 370 | 5 | 38 |
| Ambient T° | 165 | 3 | 17 |
| Chilled | 16 | - | - |
| Frozen | 189 | 2 | 21 |
| NHC-total | 174 | - | - |
| Ambient T° | 38 | - | - |
| Chilled | - | - | - |
| Frozen | 136 | - | - |
| Total Products | 544 | 5 | 38 |
| 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 NUTRITION UNIT

Inspections of Veterinary Pharmacies and Feed Establishments

During 2007 the Animal Nutrition Unit carried out eight inspections to feedmills and grain stores, and conducted eight on-farm investigations, following detection of residues in tissues at slaughter.

Following the Andrews Feeds (Malta) batch recall of Broiler Starter Crumbs Batch Nos 292xx and 298xx in November, the Unit carried out inspections on the twelve broiler farms which had submitted formal complaints to the feedmill. The aims of these inspections were to investigate on the symptoms, mortality rate and progression of the problems exhibited by broiler chicks after feeding from recalled batches; to investigate any possible use of VMPs along with the recalled feed; and to check if any post-mortems had been carried out by the farm veterinarians and if necroscopy results were available.

Registration of Veterinary Medicinal Products/Vetting of Trade Entries

In total, 43 new Veterinary Medicinal Products were registered by the Unit in 2007.

The Animal Nutrition Unit scrutinised and approved the following trade entries:

- *Veterinary Medicinal Products*: 553 entries
- *Animal Feed Preparations*: 170 entries
- *Diagnostic Reagents/kits and others*: 140 entries.

With the assistance of Maltapost personnel, four packages containing VMPs from third countries, which were bought via Internet, were sequestered by the Unit.

Twinning Project - Capacity Building at VAFD

Throughout 2007, the Animal Nutrition Unit was involved in a Twinning Project with the UK counterparts covering the areas of veterinary medicinal products and feeding stuffs. Assistance was extended to short-term experts in the following activities:

- Training of staff on principles of registration, placing on the market and distribution of veterinary medicinal products.
- Development of a register of all producers and dealers in veterinary medicinal products.
- Establishment of a system for recording adverse reactions to veterinary medicinal products.
- Development of an operating manual for veterinary medicinal products registration procedures.
- Training of staff on EU legislation, registration and regulation of animal feed manufacturers.
- Assisting animal feed manufacturers to develop and implement QA and HACCP systems.
- Development of standard operating procedures for the inspection of feed premises and veterinary medicinal product dealers.
- Development of guidance notes to the various stakeholders involved in the feeding stuff industry.

Organisation of Seminars

In 2007, the Unit was involved in the organisation of

- a six-day seminar on legislative requirements, QA and HACCP systems held between 9 and 16 April for the feed industry stakeholders including feedmillers, veterinarians and livestock producers;
- a one-day seminar for veterinary pharmacists on Pharmacovigilance and Post-Marketing Surveillance of VMPs held on 27 March 2007.

Official Meetings Abroad

- Two officers went on a study tour in the UK on the regulation of animal feed manufacturers (19 February - 2 March).
- Two officers visited VMD and EMEA in the UK to study the procedures for the regulation of veterinary medicinal products (24 September - 1 October).
- Three two-day official visits in Brussels for the Standing Committee for the Food Chain and Animal Health (Animal Nutrition) were attended in January, March and May 2007.

Drafting of Documents

With the assistance of the STEs from the twinning project, the Unit has drafted a number of standard operating procedures, checklists and guidance during the year. These documents were then compiled in an Operations Manual and contain exhaustive details on the standard operating procedures to be followed for the various official inspections in the sphere of responsibility of the Unit. Besides standardising the Unit's operations, these documents also serve to document the know-how and training acquired by the Unit in the last few years.

Three Instruction Notes on a Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down Community procedures for the establishment of residue limits of pharmacologically active

substances in foodstuffs of animal origin, and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 2377/90 were drafted for the Working Party of Veterinary Experts (Public health) meetings which were held in October and November 2007. An Explanatory Memorandum on the same topic was also prepared.

IACS

A total of 40 registers were distributed to registered farmers. The process consists of transferring all the information that is on the database in the register. A physical check is made to each farm to confirm that all information is accurate.

Bovine Slaughter

A total of 5,061 applications were received from 296 producers applying for the bovine slaughter throughout the year. 5,041 were confirmed to be slaughtered by the Vet responsible from the slaughter house and 20 were applications for fallen animals. These were automatically excluded. After validating 5,061 applications, it was found that 50 applications had irregularities. All applications were registered in the database.

| Bovine Slaughter Registration | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Males | Females | Total |
| Normal slaughter | 2,413 | 2,264 | 4,677 |
| Emergency slaughter | 121 | 256 | 377 |
| Total | 2,534 | 2,520 | 5,054 |

Premiums

- *Bovines*: During 2007 this Section processed 5,323 applications received in 2006 for the bovine premiums. A total amount of Lm136,261 (representing the 35% EU funds) was paid out to 296 beneficiaries. The remaining 65% from Malta funds are still pending. This amount was divided between slaughter premium (Lm63,398 for 288 beneficiaries) and special beef premium (Lm72,863 for 272 beneficiaries).
- *Pending premiums from 2005 (Top-up from Malta Funds)*: During the same year, the Section was authorised to pay the 70% pending premiums in respect of 2005 applications. This premium which had to be paid from Malta fund amounted to Lm271,332 and was given to 297 beneficiaries. This was divided between slaughter premium (Lm126,132 for 283 beneficiaries) and special beef premium (Lm145,200 for 258 beneficiaries).
- *Sheep*: 113 beneficiaries received Lm11,641, which consisted in 35% of the basic premium which is 16.8 euro/head, 35% of the supplementary aid which is 7 euro/head, and 35% of the 9,000 euros that was allocated for Malta as an additional aid.

Inspections

A total of 101 inspections were carried out during the year.

Ad Hoc applications

During the month of September, 177 'ruminant' full-time producers applied for the *Ad Hoc* measure intended to help full-time farmers.

Circulars

During the year, the Section issued a number of circulars, as shown in the following table:

| Month | Amount | Subject |
|----------|--------|-----------------------------------------|
| January | 380 | Slaughter application |
| May | 2,900 | Disposal of fallen animals ABP |
| Aug/Sept | 3,000 | Foot and Mouth |
| Oct/Nov | 46 | Irregularities re I&R |
| April | 400 | New system of slaughter (clean bovines) |
| Sept | 380 | Butcher Shops re ABP |

Meetings abroad

Two ABP meetings were attended in Denmark and Lithuania in May and September respectively.

CAP

This Section was involved in various meeting regarding the single payment scheme. During these meetings at the Government Farm, the main point on the agenda was how to allocate the premium entitlements to livestock farmers. After consulting with one of the short-term expert and evaluating the financial impact, it was decided that the financial year 2006 would be the best year to be used as the reference year.

ANIMAL HEALTH – RUMINANTS SECTION

During 2007, 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 (128 including the dormant premises) and 45 dairy premises in Gozo (50 including the dormant premises) were registered with the Veterinary Affairs and Fisheries Division during the year. 104 farms in Malta and 32 farms in Gozo were tested for Tuberculosis and 123 farms in Malta and 32 farms in Gozo were tested for Brucellosis.

| Testing on dairy farms - 2007 | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| | Tuberculosis | | Brucellosis | | |
| | Bovines | Caprines | Bovines | Caprines | Ovines |
| Malta | 5,635 | 287 | 5,666 | 1,207 | 440 |
| Gozo | 2,239 | - | 2,241 | - | - |
| Total | 7,874 | 287 | 7,907 | 1,207 | 440 |

Tuberculosis reactors

Five bovines gave a dubious result to the intradermal comparative skin test for Tuberculosis. These bovines were re-tested after eight weeks and resulted negative.

| Tuberculosis reactors on dairy farms -2007 | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| | <i>Total Bovines Tested</i> | <i>Dubious Result</i> | <i>Positive Result</i> |
| Malta | 5,635 | 5 | - |
| Gozo | 2,239 | - | - |

Brucella reactors

Three bovines in Malta and one bovine in Gozo gave a positive result to the Rose Bengal test (RBT). The animals were re-tested after about three weeks with the RBT and the blood sampled was also tested with the Complement Fixation confirmatory test (CFT). One bovine gave a positive result to the CFT and it was slaughtered.

| Brucella reactors on non-dairy farms | | |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| <i>Species</i> | <i>RBT Reactors</i> | <i>CFT Reactors</i> |
| Bovine | 4 | 1 |
| Caprine | - | - |
| Ovine | 1 | - |
| Total | 5 | 1 |

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 upon request by 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 5,760.

When a bovine or small ruminant loses one of its ear-tags, it must be retagged 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 2,008 (1,452 Malta; 556 Gozo) and 45 (44 Malta; 1 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 November 2007 was 11 caprines in Malta and 35 ovines (32 Malta; 3 Gozo).

Population

The animal population on dairy farms in Malta and Gozo during 2007 is as shown in the table below:

| Bovine dairy farm population | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| | <i>M1</i> | <i>M2</i> | <i>M3</i> | <i>F1</i> | <i>F2</i> | <i>F3</i> | <i>Total</i> |
| Malta | 1,150 | 782 | 340 | 1,658 | 1,652 | 5,176 | 10,758 |
| Gozo | 920 | 584 | 135 | 973 | 898 | 2,773 | 6,283 |
| Total | 2,070 | 1,366 | 475 | 2,631 | 2,550 | 7,949 | 17,041 |

M1/F1 – Male/Female bovines under one year

M2/F2 – Male/Female bovines between one and two years

M3/F3 – Male/Female bovines over two years

| Caprine dairy farm population | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | <i>Kids</i> | <i>Billy Goats</i> | <i>Goats</i> | <i>Total</i> |
| Malta | 310 | 38 | 801 | 1,149 |
| Gozo | 3 | - | 56 | 59 |
| Total | 313 | 38 | 857 | 1,208 |
| Ovine dairy farm population | | | | |
| | <i>Lambs</i> | <i>Rams</i> | <i>Ewes</i> | <i>Total</i> |
| Malta | 121 | 11 | 215 | 347 |
| Gozo | - | 2 | 9 | 11 |
| Total | 121 | 13 | 224 | 358 |

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 2,146 non-dairy farms were active during 2007, subdivided as follows:

| Number of non-dairy registered holdings | | | |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | <i>RUM</i> | <i>RUM-B</i> | <i>Total</i> |
| Malta | 1,292 | 251 | 1,543 |
| Gozo | 577 | 26 | 603 |
| Total | 1,869 | 277 | 2,146 |

Brucella Testing

Brucella testing was carried out on non-dairy farms in Malta and Gozo, as shown below:

| Brucellosis testing on non-dairy farms - 2007 | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| | <i>Bovines</i> | <i>Caprines</i> | <i>Ovines</i> |
| Malta | 721 | 3,965 | 9,492 |
| Gozo | - | 1,184 | 4,418 |
| Total | 721 | 5,149 | 13,910 |

Three sheep in Malta gave a positive reaction to the Rose Bengal Test (RBT). From these reactors, sheep gave a positive reaction to the Complement Fixation test (CFT) and was slaughtered.

Population

An estimate of the animal population on non-dairy farms in Malta and Gozo during 2007 is shown below:

| Bovine non-diary farm population | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| | M1 | M2 | M3 | F1 | F2 | F3 | Total |
| Malta | 554 | 785 | 272 | 144 | 185 | 333 | 2,273 |
| Gozo | 19 | 24 | 2 | 6 | 2 | 16 | 69 |
| Total | 573 | 809 | 274 | 150 | 187 | 349 | 2,342 |
| Caprine non-dairy farm population | | | | | | | |
| | <i>Kids</i> | <i>Billy Goats</i> | <i>Goats</i> | <i>Total</i> | | | |
| Malta | 905 | 286 | 2,611 | 3,802 | | | |
| Gozo | 100 | 73 | 1,042 | 1,215 | | | |
| Total | 1,005 | 359 | 3,653 | 5,017 | | | |
| Ovine non-dairy farm population | | | | | | | |
| | <i>Lambs</i> | <i>Rams</i> | <i>Ewes</i> | <i>Total</i> | | | |
| Malta | 1,798 | 291 | 5,763 | 7,852 | | | |
| Gozo | 118 | 153 | 3,549 | 3,820 | | | |
| Total | 1,916 | 444 | 9,312 | 11,672 | | | |

Cheeselet producers

The VVAFD 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. These producers will be inspected during 2008 and a HACCP system put in place. 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) | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-------|
| Ovines | Caprines | Total |
| 3,190 | 1,545 | 4,735 |

FOOD HEALTH AND DIAGNOSTICS

Introduction

The Food Health and Diagnostics Laboratory is responsible for ongoing testing of samples derived from animals under screening programmes to monitor and control disease in the local livestock and poultry population.

The laboratory also receives samples such as animal feeds, which are partly tested in-house and partly subcontracted to accredited EC labs for the necessary analyses. This monitors the intake parameter of farm animals to safeguard animal health from the dietary aspect at farm level.

Testing also extends to the post slaughter stage. Carcasses are tested for substances like antibiotics as well as microbiologically for quality control levels. Such and other measures are practised with the aim to ensure the release of safe food on the market.

The details of testing activities carried out during the twelve months covered by the report are given for each analytical section of the laboratory accordingly.

Serology Section

Brucella Testing

| Rose Bengal Test/Complement Fixation Test - Results for 2007 | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| RBT Results | Total RBT | Total CFT | RBT + / CFT - | RBT + / CFT + | RBT - / CFT + |
| Total | 24,347 | 100 | 7 | 3 | Nil |

Brucella Milk Ring Test

As part of the accreditation programme for dairy farms, the Food Health and Diagnostics Laboratory undertook a testing of all farms for Brucellosis. Milk from individual farm bulk tanks was sampled and tested by the Milk Ring Test. A total of 229 tests were conducted on bulk tank samples.

Disease Surveillance Plan

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.

Porcine Tests

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. All samples submitted and tested were also screened for classical swine fever by the ELISA kits technique. The total number of samples tested during 2007 was 231.

Blue Tongue

During the year, 179 serum samples were tested for Blue tongue using the ELISA technique. No clinical cases of the virus were reported from animals on farm. All samples tested resulted negative to BTV during 2007. In September, the laboratory participated in a BTV Ring trial led by the Institute for Animal Health, Pirbright. The serum samples were analysed and the results obtained and submitted to IAH earned the laboratory a further good mark for proficiency.

Avian Influenza

During the surveillance for Avian Influenza Virus in 2007, poultry farms were screened for Avian Influenza virus by IDEXX ELISA kits. A total of 709 poultry serological tests in 74 holdings were performed during 2007 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 | nil | 20 tracheal (mallards) |
| February | 38 domestic poultry | 14 cloacal (2 mallards, 2 dom. poultry, 10 wild birds) |
| April | 5 domestic poultry | nil |
| June | 19 mallards | nil |
| Total | 62 | 34 |

Enzootic Bovine Leucosis

MDP registered farms were screened for Enzootic Bovine Leucosis, according to EU Legislation 64/432 to map their extent of incidence of the BLV virus. For serological testing, herds were sampled during the routine Brucella surveillance programme. The initial part of the survey was done on bulk milk tanks to identify the positive herds. A total of 1,093 EBL tests (869 serum, 224 milk) were carried out in 2007. The second part of this survey is intended to identify the individual infected animals in the infected herds defined in the initial phase of bulk testing.

Parasitology

Faecal Parasites Tests

| Total | Species | | | | | Findings | | | | | |
|-----------|---------|-------|-------|---------|--------|----------|---------|----------|-------|-------|------|
| | Pigeons | Horse | Ducks | Poultry | Others | Cocci+ | Cocci++ | Cocci+++ | Worms | Mites | Neg. |
| 39 | 15 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 14 | 33 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 12 |

Note: Discrepancies in numbers arise in cases where different species of parasites are observed in the same sample.

Trichinella and Trichomonas

| | Trichinella | | Trichomonas (in racing pigeons) | | |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|---------------------------------|----------|----------|
| | Equine | Swine | | Positive | Negative |
| Total | 111 | 6,162 | Total | 6 | 7 |

All samples tested for Trichinella by the Digestive Method resulted negative. Analyses were temporarily suspended as both the sampling officer and the technician resigned. Testing is due to resume in 2008 as soon as these posts are filled in by qualified personnel.

Chemistry/Residue Analysis

Analysis of Sulfonamides (using Thin-Layer Chromatography)

During 2007, the following samples were screened for sulfonamide residues:

- National plan: 154 samples (including 16 poultry muscle, 2 bovine muscle, 2 swine muscle, 50 eggs, 80 bovine milk and 4 ovine/caprine milk).
- Imported products: 9 samples (including 2 corned beef, 1 poultry muscle, 3 bovine muscle and 3 lamb muscle).
- Survey: 12 swine kidney samples.
- Suspect: 10 bovine milk samples.

All samples were found to be compliant except one kidney sample in the survey analysis (non-compliant) and hence the kidney sample was sent abroad for confirmatory testing.

Analysis of veterinary drug residues and contaminants at the VAFD (Chemistry) Laboratory

| Substances analysed | Number of samples analysed | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | National Plan 2007 | Imported Products 2006 ⁽¹⁾ | Imported Products 2007 |
| Sulphonamides (screening by TLC) | 16 poultry muscle 2 bovine muscle 2 swine muscle 50 eggs 80 bovine milk 4 ovine/caprine milk | 1 corned beef 1 bovine muscle | 1 corned beef 1 poultry muscle 3 lamb muscle 2 bovine muscle |

(1) Indicates samples collected during 2006 and analysed during the first months of 2007.

| Substances analysed | Number of samples analysed | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| | Survey 2007 | Suspects 2007 |
| Sulphonamides (screening by TLC) | 12 swine kidneys | 10 bovine milk |

Residue Programme 2007

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 2006, new substances were included in the 2007 plan and some of the matrices were also modified; also two new analyses added are A3-Methyltestosterone for 2 S/U female and A3 – 16-OH Stanozolol for 2 samples of B/U, out of which one from farm.

The 2007 residue programme was submitted to the EU Commission, together with the results for residue analysis 2006, 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 year, as part of the 2007 national residue programme:

| Species/Matrix | Samples collected (National plan 2007) |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Bovine (slaughterhouse) | 51 |
| Swine (slaughterhouse) | 67 |
| Equine (slaughterhouse) | 9 |
| Bovine (on-farm) | 7 |
| Swine (on-farm) | 2 |
| Poultry (on-farm - broilers) | 20 |
| Poultry (slaughterhouses) | 181 |
| Fish (aquaculture) | 7 |
| Fish (wild fish) | 11 |
| Bovine milk | 300 |
| Ovine/Caprine milk | 10 |
| Eggs | 200 |
| Honey | 12 |

Residue Analysis by Contracted Laboratories

During 2006-7, 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 were sent to the contracted laboratories for residue tests which cannot, at present, be carried out locally. These included a total of 620 tests 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*: anthelmintics, coccidiostats, carbamates, pyrethroids, tranquillisers and beta-blockers, glucocorticoids, organochlorine pesticides, organophosphorus pesticides, hydrocarbons (PCBs, PAHs), dioxins, mycotoxins, malachite green, histamine, sulfonamides (confirmatory test).

Foreign laboratories were assessed according to their scope of accreditation, and wherever possible, accredited laboratories were utilised for the above-mentioned tests. Furthermore, for Group A substances and malachite green, foreign laboratories with methods already validated according to Commission Decision 2002/657/EC were given preference.

Results of tests carried out by contracted laboratories (national plan samples and confirmatory tests) are indicated in the following table. 91 National Plan samples and 84 national plan samples screened positive for antibiotic residues at the VAFD laboratory were sent to a laboratory in Italy for confirmatory testing.

| National Plan 2007 Analysis of veterinary drug residues and contaminants (contracted laboratories) | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| Substance analysed | Samples analysed | Samples to be analysed | No. of non-compliant results |
| Stilbenes | 12 | - | - |
| Steroids | 24 | 4 | - |
| Antithyroid agents | 1 | 1 | - |
| Zeranol | 7 | 2 | - |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|----|----|-----------------------------------|
| Beta-agonists | 12 | 1 | - |
| Nitrofurans metabolites | 79 | 13 | - |
| Chloramphenicol | 66 | 14 | - |
| Nitroimidazoles | 73 | 6 | - |
| Anthelmintics | 20 | 7 | - |
| Cocciostats | 34 | 10 | 1 (poultry liver for salinomycin) |
| Carbamates | 4 | 2 | - |
| Pyrethroids | 4 | 3 | - |
| Tranquillizers | 1 | - | - |
| Beta-blockers | 2 | - | - |
| Glucocorticoids | 4 | - | 1 (bovine muscle dexamethasone) |
| NSAIDs | 22 | 1 | - |
| Amitraz | 1 | - | - |
| Organochlorine pesticides | 36 | 6 | - |
| Organophosphorus pesticides | 3 | 3 | - |
| PCBs | 14 | - | - |
| PAHs | 5 | 1 | - |
| Dioxins | 6 | 1 | - |
| Heavy metals | 23 | 5 | - |
| Mycotoxins | 19 | 1 | - |
| Malachite green | 1 | - | - |

Bacteriology

Quality Control – Civil Abattoir Slaughterhouse

The equipment and other surfaces of the Civil Abattoir Slaughter houses were monitored for hygiene levels on a weekly basis. Contact plates were used to sample important surfaces which are important in ensuring that the marketable carcasses are not contaminated. The sampling and analyses were targeted at Total Bacterial Count and Coliforms.

Meat Quality on carcasses from the Civil Abattoir slaughter houses was also monitored by the FHDD laboratory on a weekly basis. As with Hygiene QC, meat samples were taken and tested for Total Bacterial Count as well as Coliforms. The following table gives figures of meat quality tests carried out in 2007:

| Civil Abattoir Meat QC Tests | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Bovine Slaughterhouse samples/tests | | Porcine Slaughterhouse samples/tests | |
| Total Count | Total Coliforms | Total Count | Total Coliforms |
| 315 | 315 | 185 | 185 |

BSE Rapid Testing

Table BSE1

| BSE Rapid Testing | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----|-----|----|----|-----|----|----|-----|-------|
| BS | BE | BF | CS | CE | CF | OS | OE | OF | Total |
| 2,288 | 174 | 194 | - | - | 171 | 22 | 5 | 154 | 3,008 |

B-bovine / O-ovine / C-caprine / S-Slaughter / E-Emergency / F-Fallen

Table BSE2 – Comparison on Bovine species

| | 2006 | 2007 |
|------------------|-------|-------|
| Health Slaughter | 2,469 | 2,288 |
| Emergency | 316 | 174 |
| Fallen | 217 | 194 |

Table BSE3 – Comparison on Caprine species

| | 2006 | 2007 |
|------------------|------|------|
| Health Slaughter | - | - |
| Emergency | 9 | - |
| Fallen | 315 | 171 |

Table BSE4 – Comparison on Ovine species

| | 2006 | 2007 |
|------------------|------|------|
| Health Slaughter | 34 | 22 |
| Emergency | 92 | 5 |
| Fallen | 633 | 154 |

All samples tested for BSE resulted negative.

The TSE laboratory has for the fifth consecutive year successfully participated in Ring Tests organised by the European Community. This year two sets of samples were received; one set covered BSE in bovines, which was tested in October; and the other covering scrapies in ovines and caprines, which were tested in November. As in the case of the BTV Ring Trial, the BSE and Scrapies Ring trials' results certified the proficiency of the FHDD Laboratory facilities and personnel.

Antibiotic Residues

Several animal product matrices were tested for antibiotic residues. The samples came from different sources, including the Civil Abattoir emergency slaughterhouse, BIPs, poultry and fish farms, as shown in the following table:

| Samples for Antibiotic Residues - 2007 | |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| | No. |
| Porcine - suspect | 154 |
| Porcine - National Plan | 21 |
| Bovine - suspect | 6 |
| Bovine - National Plan | 25 |
| Milk - Bovine - suspect | 11 |
| Milk - Bovine - National Plan | 238 |
| Milk - Caprine - National Plan | 10 |
| Equine - suspect | 12 |
| Equine - National Plan | 2 |
| Poultry - National Plan | 47 |
| Poultry - suspect | 10 |
| Poultry Feeds - suspect | 1 |
| Poultry Eggs - National Plan | 89 |
| Fish - National Plan | 6 |
| Fish - Survey | 3 |
| Fish Feeds | 11 |
| BIPs | 3 lamb, 3 beef, 2 fish, 1 mussel, 1 shrimp |

FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

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 2007 were 850,071 kg valued at Lm2,131,955. The average wholesale price works out at Lm2.50,8 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 2006-2007.

| Estimated Fish Landings 2006 - 2007 | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------|----------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|----------------------------------|-------|
| Estimated Quantity (Kg) | | Value | | | | Average Retail Price per Kg (Lm) | |
| | | Wholesale (Lm) | | Retail (Lm) | | | |
| 2006 | 2007 | 2006 | 2007 | 2006 | 2007 | 2006 | 2007 |
| 1,296,387 | 850,071 | 2,409,368 | 2,131,955 | 2,778,572 | 2,378,483 | 2.143 | 2.798 |

The actual landings recorded at the Wholesale Fish Market were 714,072 kg valued at Lm1,791,012.

Receipts from fish hawkers amounted to Lm1,492,838 whilst payments made to fishermen and *pitkala* were Lm1,469,806.

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. 3,784,449 kg of frozen fish worth Lm2,789,480, at an average price of Lm0.77,7 per kilo and 153,584 kg of fresh fish valued Lm304,517, at an average price of Lm1.98,3 were imported during 2007.

| Fish Imports 2006 - 2007 | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|---------------|---------|------------|---------|
| Frozen Fish | | | | Fresh Fish | | | |
| Quantity (Kg) | | Value (Lm) | | Quantity (Kg) | | Value (Lm) | |
| 2006 | 2007 | 2006 | 2007 | 2006 | 2007 | 2006 | 2007 |
| 1,960,992 | 3,784,449 | 2,408,978 | 2,789,480 | 17,868 | 153,584 | 77,386 | 304,517 |

331,899 kg in round weight of Blue Fin Tuna were caught by Malta fishermen. 126,726 kg of captured Blue Fin Tuna and Swordfish valued at Lm386,705, at an average price of Lm3.05,2 were exported to Japan and Italy, as shown in the following table:

| Captured Fish Exports 2006 -2007 | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Fish | Weight (Kg) | | Value (Lm) | |
| | 2006 | 2007 | 2006 | 2007 |
| Blue Fin Tuna | 180,537 | 104,065 | 485,482 | 301,904 |
| Swordfish | 58,179 | 22,661 | 189,975 | 84,801 |
| Albacore | 190 | - | 155 | - |
| Dott | 551 | 721 | 1,949 | 2,935 |
| Pilot Fish | 2,579 | - | 1,779 | - |
| Dolphin Fish | 23,823 | 1,594 | 17,989 | 1,764 |
| Others | 86 | 373 | 293 | 1,383 |
| Total | 265,945 | 129,414 | 697,622 | 392,787 |

Limited quantities of other species of fish were also exported during 2007.

EU-RELATED ACTIVITIES

- Co-ordination and assistance was extended to the EU Inspectors who visited the blue fin tuna activities in June and November 2007.
- A conference was organised locally for the Commission Inspectors and the other Member States between 20 and 23 March regarding the adoption of the new Bluefin Tuna Recovery Plan.
- Information on fisheries-related items was compiled and sent to the Commission within deadlines.
- Several memos on EC proposed legislation related to Fisheries were drafted and forwarded to the EU Affairs Directorate of MRAE.
- Instruction Notes were prepared for the meetings of the Weekly Working Parties, Coreper, Management Committee and AgriFish Council and sent to the Ministry's EU Directorate.

ICCAT

- Information on large pelagics was compiled and sent to the European Commission and to ICCAT as requested.
- Data included in the ICCAT certificates issued during 2007 for Maltese farmed blue fin tuna were inputted for further processing.
- Blue fin tuna local farms were continuously assisted by this Branch with their activities throughout 2007.

CAPTURE FISHERIES SECTION - MALTA CENTRE FOR FISHERIES SCIENCES (MCFS)

Introduction

As a new EU Member State, it is the obligation of Malta to conduct an annual National Fisheries Data Collection Programme (NFDCP). This scientific programme, under the responsibility of the MCFS, is in line with the EU Data Collection Regulations (DCR) EC1639/2001 and EC1581/2004. It started in January 2005 with an annual budget of around €500,000 (50% funded by the EC and 50% by Malta). Malta has enrolled in the activities of the minimum programme, covering the areas of fish capacity and effort, catch and landing statistics, discards, recreational fisheries, catch per unit effort, biological parameters, scientific surveys (MEDITS and Tuna Tagging) and economics of the fishing and processing industries. The programme contributes to a better knowledge of the main fishery resources of Malta from the biological, managerial, economical and social points of view. In this regard, three species are studied in detail: Bluefin Tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*), Swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) and Dolphin fish (*Coryphaena hippurus*). The MCFS is also responsible for the development and maintenance of the databases and information systems of the NFDCP.

The MCFS enjoys close collaboration with several local and international research institutes, namely the Istituto per l'Ambiente Marino Costiero (CNR) of Mazara del Vallo (Sicily), the University of Malta (Marine Ecology Research Group and, International Ocean Institute and Physical Oceanography Unit), the Insular Coastal Dynamics Institute and the Malta Council for Science and Technology, among others.

The MCFS represents Malta in the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) through active participation in the activities of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) of the GFCM and its sub-committees on stock assessment, statistics and information, marine environment and ecosystems and socio-economics, as well as, through participation with observer status, in scientific meetings of the ICCAT and those of the EU.

Research – Data Collection Regulation

Fishing Capacities (Module C)

All Maltese fishing vessels are registered in the Fishing Vessel Register of the Veterinary Affairs and Fisheries Division. The register is kept in a database which forms part of the MALTASTAT Information System. This database is correlated to other databases such as the ones concerning landings. Apart from other information, the Fishing Vessel Register database includes the following information related to each vessel: typology; registration number; age (age of the hull); dimensions [GT, length, width, draught]; engine power, type and age; ownership; health and safety equipment.

The information in the Vessels Register is updated daily.

Based on information supplied in the MALTASTAT system, Malta is able to segment the fleet of vessels according to the sub division set out in Appendix III (of the Regulation), at the requested precision level of the Regulation.

Data collected to meet the requirements of Regulation 2090/98 are covered exhaustively.

Fishing Effort (Module D)

The required data have been collected and include all the information requested. The data are available at the Malta Centre for Fisheries Sciences.

Data on effort are available by: species; vessel (over 10 metres); day; geographic area - division (according to level 3 of geographical disaggregating defined in Appendix I of the regulations); duration of trips in fishing days; gear used.

For a vessel over 10 metres (LOA) a survey approach was performed. For a vessel less than 10 metres (LOA,) the sampling scheme described in the National Programme was implemented.

Data on fishing effort, aggregated as required in Appendix III, V, VI and VIII of the DCR can be provided.

The logbook data collection scheme has not been fully implemented in Malta. Moreover, logbook information does not seem to be sufficient for the evaluation of the fishing effort for vessels over 10 metres, since the logbook is compulsory when vessels retain on board quantities exceeding 50 kg live-weight equivalent, and several times the catch does not exceed 50 kg per species in Malta. In this context, another methodology was implemented to collect effort data.

Due to insufficient information from logbooks, Malta carried out a survey to investigate the activity of the fleet and the gear used. This involved the vessels in the Maltese Fishing Vessel Register over 10 metres. The effort was determined through the combination of data from daily Fish market sales vouchers and data from the Fishing Gear and Activity Census.

The calculation of fishing effort is at present performed by use of standard data access tools (Excel, Microsoft Access), which are rather time-consuming and require considerable skills from the person performing the calculations. To facilitate this process, the Malta Centre for Fisheries Sciences already started and will continue to further develop the existing database system for effort data in 2008.

Catches and Landing (Module E)

The required data have been collected and include all the information requested. The data are available at MCFS. Data on commercial landings are available by: species; vessel (over 10 metres); day; geographic area - sub-area (according to level 2 of geographical disaggregation defined in Appendix I of the

Regulation) or for stocks mentioned in Appendix XII in the DCR, commercial landings can be disaggregated as indicated in that Appendix; gear employed.

Data on commercial landings can be provided by species, quarter and for each segment identified in Appendix III and, with regards to the geographical origin of the catches, at the level of geographical disaggregation 2 according to Appendix I (of the regulation). For the stocks mentioned in Appendix XII, commercial landings will be disaggregated as indicated in that Appendix. For vessels over 10 metres (LOA) a census approach was performed. For vessels less than 10 metres (LOA) the sampling scheme described in the National Programme was implemented.

Catch per unit Effort (Module F)

Malta has collected data on catch and effort since 2005. A time series can start to be built for these parameters both by species and by gear.

MEDITS trawl survey (Module G)

As part of the international Mediterranean Bottom Trawl Survey (MEDITS), an annual summer sampling survey was carried out in the Geographical Sub-Area 15 (GSA15) which includes the Maltese 25 Nautical Mile Fisheries Management Zone. This survey is performed in order to collect data on abundance and biological aspects of over 35 species of the priority MEDITS list, including fish, crustaceans and cephalopods. The vessel used was the Italian commercial fishing trawler *Sant'Anna* (LOA 33m; engine power 1,000 BHP).

Sampling using the MEDITS standard gear was performed at 45 selected stations at a depth ranging from 45 - 800 m. The number of valid hauls is 45, each one of them lasting for about 45 minutes. Towing speed was ca. 3 knots and the estimated distance covered in each trawl was about 3 km. The trawl net width was about 20m and 1m in height.

From each haul the catch was sorted into the MEDITS target species, the fish by-catch and the invertebrate by-catch. A minimum of 50 individuals from each of the 34 MEDITS target species from each station were retained. The biological parameters collected include total length, weight, sex, maturity stage and gonad weight. Both haul registration and processing of biological samples were accurately performed according to the MEDITS protocol.

All MEDITS data collected were inputted, checked and validated with the SEATRIM software. Data are currently stored in SEATRIM. SEATRIM software produces the necessary outputs (TA, TB and TC MEDITS files) that are sent and stored in the Regional MEDITS database.

In order to maximise the survey, apart from MEDITS parameters defined by the protocol, stomach contents of selected species and invertebrate by-catch were also collected and examined. Moreover, in all hauls a miniature data logger (MINILOG-TD), recording both temperature and depth, was mounted on the head rope of the gear.

Length and Age sampling (Module H)

Under the current DCR, Malta is obliged to report Length and Age data for three species: bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*), swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) and dolphin fish (*Coryphaena hippurus*). For both parameters, the required number of measurements is reported. Malta planned to measure the required number for both length and age.

Bluefin tuna and swordfish were sampled at the landing port and fish market respectively by field recorders/technicians. Length measurements were carried out and spines were collected for age reading.

Dolphin fish specimens were purchased and processed at the laboratory where extraction of otoliths was undertaken.

The reason for the shortfalls in age sampling of Bluefin tuna and especially swordfish was due to the unwillingness of fishermen to allow the extraction of the spines from the landed specimens since it damages the image of the product. Both bluefin tuna and swordfish were over-sampled for length due to availability of specimens at the fish market. Excess sampling did not incur extra expense and provides valuable data for stock assessments.

In 2007 Malta also conducted a survey on the amounts of discards in the trawling fleet.

Other biological sampling (Module I)

Malta has planned to collect growth, sex ratio and sexual maturity (fecundity is not mandatory for any of the three species sampled by Malta) throughout a three year-period and to report data in the technical report of 2007 when the updates will take place. All samples were collected from commercial catches as part of the market sampling programme. Length and weight parameters were collected concurrently whenever possible. Dolphin fish samples were analysed in the laboratory for these parameters. Bluefin tuna and swordfish are normally gutted at sea.

Data on bluefin tuna and swordfish length by sex were duly reported to ICCAT for their use in the respective stock assessment exercises.

Data on pelagic sharks was also sent to ICCAT as requested

Economic data by group of vessels

The parameters which were evaluated in the present pilot study of the economic situation of the fisheries sector were, in line with Appendix XVII of the Regulation, according to segmentation set out in Appendix III of the Regulation. The survey was designed in a similar way to other surveys prepared by other EU member states but was made relevant to the local context.

Besides the information required by Appendix XVII of the Regulation, information was also collected on the market where the catch is usually sold, details on home port, average days of activity for each particular technique (gear using hooks, pots and traps and fixed nets), number of trips per quarter and average distance to fishing grounds (in nautical miles), the best and worst fishing quarters, year of purchase of vessel, purchase price of vessel, purchase price of tonnage/kW, insured value of vessel, estimated market value of the vessel (excluding tonnage) and cost of insurance. The interviewees were also asked to list the issues facing the fishing industry which were of most concern to them, and what could be done to address them.

Although the Commission Regulation (No 1639/2001) requires a parameter estimating the financial position, where the financial position is defined as the ratio of internal (own) capital to external capital and is a determinant of the composition of the capital invested in fishing enterprises, this was not included in the questionnaire. A question on interest rate charges on loans was however included. It is expected that future surveys will include questions to estimate the financial position.

The sampling frame for the national programme for the collection of economic data was based on the fishing vessel register information recorded in MALTASTAT, (a reliable and efficient computerised fisheries statistics system, which includes a register/inventory of all fishing vessels), and on logbooks with information from catch and landings evaluation. The Maltese fishing fleet totals 2,252 vessels, with 2,074 vessels having a length of less than 10m, and 178 vessels having a length of more than 10m. In 2007 about 400 questionnaires were undertaken with direct interviews and all the vessels were questioned.

Databases

The integrated electronic database system for fisheries data MALTASTAT continued to be developed by the MCFS through the support of local and external expertise. MALTASTAT is not limited to a series of databases referring to the Fishing Vessel Register and Catch and Effort Statistics, but also includes other applications that are needed for monitoring and management of fisheries and fisheries resources. It also addresses all commitments related to data submission which Malta has as an EU Member State and as a member of FAO, GFCM and ICCAT. Currently, the MALTASTAT set of databases cover the domains listed below, some of which were specifically created to answer to the needs of the Data Collection Regulation. All other existing databases have been also adapted to process and aggregate data according to DCR requirements.

- National Management and Monitoring System with I/O interfacing protocols
- National Reference and Codification System with regional association
- Register of fishing vessels
- Operational Units Management Systems
- Catch and Effort database; logbook (vessels >10m)
- Catch and Effort database; sampling scheme (vessels <10m)
- Fisheries Economics database
- Recreational Fisheries database (to be further developed)
- Fish market sales voucher database (to be further developed)
- Biological survey database (to be further developed)
- Malta Centre for Fisheries Sciences Portal (to be further developed)
- MALTASTAT LAN Management and Control System (to be further developed).

Other databases developed outside the framework of MALTASTAT but which have been integrated into the system are: SEATRIM; database for trawl survey data (MEDITS); and National Fisheries and Ecosystem Information System (FEIS).

Concurrent sampling exercise

With the proposed shift in the EU data collection framework, from species-based to fishery-based sampling, an implementation study was carried out to test the feasibility of concurrent length frequency sampling at the Maltese fish market. This pilot study was carried out in October 2007.

The concurrent length sampling exercise was carried out in at the Valletta Wholesale Fishmarket. This is the only fish market present in the Maltese Islands and only one auction is present for all the fleets. In total nine persons were involved in this exercise and these were split up into two groups. These two groups attended the market on alternate weeks. Each group was further split into two teams.

Sampling scheme 1A was adopted for concurrent length sampling in Malta. This sampling scheme addresses all species in each sampling operation (comprehensive concurrent sampling). All species groups are also covered, including landings of minor by catch species.

Sampling was carried out on weekdays only. The time available for sampling varied between half an hour to one hour. This is because the market opens at 3am and the sales start at 4am. Most of the fisheries were sampled since the market is relatively small. In the case of Malta it was pointless to focus only on one type of fishery since the quantities landed are very small.

The vessels sampled were chosen randomly. For each sample, the date, harbour, vessel registration number, flag of the vessel, geographical area of catch, the time window available for sampling, sampling duration and the number of species per group were recorded.

Total length or fork length was measured depending on the fish species. For cephalopods, mantle length was measured. When possible, the weight was also obtained.

This implementation study revealed that several limiting factors are present for concurrent length sampling. The major problem is the time window available for sampling and reluctance of fishers to co-operate in measurements of highly valuable species. Other problems are also present, but with method improvements, concurrent length sampling could be feasible. Within the time frame limits, it was still possible to obtain a significantly amount of data.

MEDSUMED (FAO SUB-REGIONAL PROJECT)

“Assessment and Monitoring of the Fishery Resources and the Ecosystems in the Straits of Sicily”

This Italian-funded FAO project was launched at the end of 2001. Four countries participate in this project: Italy, Libya, Malta and Tunisia. The Project aims to support scientific communities and countries in the development of a monitoring system for the studies of fisheries resources and ecosystems. The main objectives of the Project are to increase the scientific knowledge on the ecosystems of the project area, strengthen national and regional expertise, and develop scientific co-operation in order to promote the standardisation of the methodologies used in fisheries research.

MEDSUMED also finances two research survey programmes in Maltese waters: the Echosurveys (Ancheva and Juvenile) and the Ichthyoplankton survey. A new Pilot Study in the Maltese area has recently been approved to study the interactions of the fish stocks with the ecosystem. In 2007 a number of reports and scientific publications were produced.

MEDFISIS (FAO Sub-Regional Project)

“Mediterranean Fisheries Statistical and Information Systems”

The MEDFISIS project is a regional project assisting the countries in the Mediterranean region to improve national fishery statistics and information systems. Based on national efforts, MEDFISIS aims to develop a regional fisheries management information system in support of both the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and the countries participating in the project. The project is the responsible of the development of the national fishery statistical system, MaltaStat.

Both COPEMED and MEDSUMED FAO projects, together with MEDFISIS, have helped Malta prepare for future demanding challenges to manage marine resources in a responsible manner and using an “ecosystem approach”. They have contributed to the general knowledge on the state of the resources as well as to the training and participation of Maltese representatives/scientists to workshops, meetings, training courses and research surveys on various scientific subjects of concern for Malta. It is important for Malta to continue having support from these sub-regional projects of the FAO, in order to keep providing sound fisheries management, based in reliable scientific advice.

REDS (EU-DG Fisheries)

Sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources is considered a priority objective in both International and European Community levels. The stock assessment of Mediterranean deep-sea shrimp is one of the main problems found by EU (Annex A - Problem issues with respect to specific stocks: Mediterranean deep-sea shrimp). Both red shrimp, *Aristaeomorpha foliacea*, and rose shrimp, *Aristeus antennatus*, are species characterised by an high economical value, usually caught with deep trawling net. They represent a rare case of “mono-specific” fisheries in the Mediterranean Sea. Their intensive exploitation in the Western Mediterranean basin started at the end of fifties, thanks to the possibility to freeze the catch on board and to use antioxidants as catch preserving. Today most of traditional stocks has reached a full exploitation state and the few recently exploited stocks (located in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea: Ionian Greek Sea, Aegean Sea and South-Eastern Mediterranean Sea) show the first suffering signals.

International REDS project, financed by EU (Project ref FISH/2004/03-32) has the main aim to update knowledge on biology, population dynamics and state of exploitation of the two deep-sea Mediterranean shrimps. In 2007 a number of reports and scientific publications were produced.

Yelkouan Shearwater (EU-LIFE project)

The Yelkouan Shearwater Project is Malta's largest conservation initiative. It is important because the Maltese Islands are home to approximately 10% of the world's population of Yelkouan Shearwaters (*Puffinus yelkouan*).

The main aim of the project is to protect the birds at the largest breeding site, Rdum tal-Madonna, in the North of Malta. The Project will also improve this protected site for wildlife and visitors. At a national level, the aim is to increase breeding pairs by the end of the project in 2010 and to set an example for the management of other protected sites in Malta. One of the strengths of the project is that it is a partnership of four government authorities and three conservation organisations. The project is 50% funded by the EU Life Nature Fund. MEPA and HSBC are also supporting the project with financial contributions. This partnership approach is an innovative way of working in Malta and will ensure that the project aims are achieved and secure the long term future for the birds. In 2007 a number of reports and scientific publications were produced.

A project officer and a Technical officer were both actively involved in work related to the EU-LIFE Yelkouan shearwater project which was officially launched at the Red tower, Mellieħa on 26 March. The former spent over 150 hours on the project, whilst the latter, who had the task of producing a detailed report on Action 1 (identifying Maltese fishing grounds), logged over 160 hours.

The other actions for which MCFS is leading partner are Action E2 and Action C1. The former action requires that the project officer and a Birdlife Malta official liaise with the fishermen co-operatives in order to interact with the fishermen regarding seabird bycatch. For this reason, on 8 August, MCFS staff, BLM officials and a Bird bycatch expert from UK met with representatives from the co-ops at MCFS. During the meeting, two presentations about the project were delivered by the project manager and a member of Heritage Malta.

Later on in August, a small group of fishermen were approached by the co-ops themselves and pledged their support to the project by allowing BLM observers on board their vessels and also to collect data themselves against payment from the project's budget.

Action C1 has not yet started, but will do so as soon as there is enough data to evaluate.

The section is also actively involved as partner in most of the other actions of the project. Its staff interviewed a good number of fishermen as part of a project awareness exercise and assisted BLM in producing a seabird guide to fishermen.

PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL GROUPS

The MCFS also participates in various international planning and working groups and scientific projects, some of which are partially funded by the EC.

National Data Collection Programme

- In 2007, the following meetings were attended:
 - National Co-ordination meeting;
 - Regional co-ordination meeting for the Mediterranean;
 - Workshop on the use of fishermen to sample catches;
 - MEDITS co-ordination meeting;

- DCR - ICES planning group on commercial catches, catches and discards (PGCCDBS) and planning group for the Mediterranean (PGMED).
- The joint PGCCDBS/PGMED meeting was held in Malta and was organised by MCFS.

International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)

- In 2007 a meeting of ICCAT Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) was attended.

General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)

- During 2007, the following GFCM meetings were attended:
 - Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC);
 - Sub-Committee on Stock Assessment (SCSA);
 - Sub-Committee on Statistics and Information (SCSI);
 - Permanent Working Group on Stock Assessment Methodologies;
 - Workshop on Marine protected areas;
 - Workshop on GFCM task I data.

DATA SUBMISSIONS

- The following data requests were made from international organisations and the data was submitted accordingly:
 - DCR - Call for Capacity, Effort, Landings and Economic data (January 07)
 - DCR - Call for Discard data and landings by trawlers (November 07)
 - ICCAT - Task I & Task II forms 1 to 5 for tuna and swordfish (July 07)
 - ICCAT - Task I form 1 and 2 for pelagic sharks (July 07)
 - GFCM - Dolphinfin fishery (FAD) capacity, catch, effort and biological data (Dec 07).

EDUCATION, EXHIBITIONS AND MARINE LIFE CONSERVATION

Education Visits

- There was a steady demand for group visits from schools, local councils and other sectors, including a cultural tour on 28 January, when 290 members of the general public visited the centre. The other two most important tasks of the section were the EU-LIFE project and the Notice to mariners aimed at the conservation of wreck sites in Malta and Gozo.
- Guided tours for school children from years 4 and 5 Primary were held on Tuesdays and Thursdays, whilst the permanent exhibition was open for the general public on Wednesday mornings. The breakdown of the visits by category was as follows: primary school students (1,738); secondary school students (547); special groups (195); foreign visitors and students (208); general public (approx 610) – a total of 3,298.

Exhibitions

- The permanent exhibition used seven glass aquaria with various wild species of marine organisms and eight large hexagonal tanks holding cultured fish, sea-turtles and groupers. The octopus and sea-turtles were once again the favourite exhibits.
- The section continued to service the African cichlid aquarium display at the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment's reception by means of regular maintenance visits.
- The section manned stands for Earth garden at Ta' Qali in May, Ecofest at Sliema in June and *Fiera tal-ħut* at Marsaxlokk in July.

Educational Material, Media Productions, etc

- A number of posters were designed (in house) and printed to be used in fairs and exhibitions.

- Departmental staff delivered talks about the life history of sea horses and sea turtles respectively during the 1st Aquarium fair at *Ir-razzett tal-Ħbiberija* at Marsascula in February.
- Members of staff were interviewed by the producers of *X'qala l-baħar* and *Il-Ħadd Filgħodu* and by the producers of a Sunday morning show on the MCFS's involvement in the EU-LIFE yelkouan shearwater project.
- A number of press releases were published after the spawning success of the amberjacks. These were also followed by TV news service coverage and appearances in the popular TV programme *X'Qala l-Baħar*. Apart from the press releases there were also other newspaper articles on aquaculture research and the way forward for aquaculture in Malta.

VAFD Website

- A staff member attended SDO training on web applications.
- Meetings were held with MIIT officials in order to develop an e-service enabling teachers and students to book tours and download educational resources.

Conservation of Marine Life

- In April, the Section was requested to research and compile a list of important artificial reefs such as wrecks and to produce site plans for eleven of them. A conservation area of 200 m² around each wreck was plotted and published by means of Notice to mariners no 5 of 2008, entitled Conservation Area around Wrecks. The notice specifies that the areas are no-stopping zones to all vessels except for registered diving vessels after pre-notification to the AFM. All demersal fishing and spear fishing is prohibited. Only surface fishing is allowed, including trolling lines (*rixa*) and angling for pelagic fish.
- In May a staff member attended a course organised by the Institute for Environmental Studies, entitled Basic marine biology. It consisted of five sessions and included both lectures and fieldwork.
- In December the Section held a meeting with officers of the Nature Protection Unit (NPU) of MEPA in order to discuss the drawing up of a memorandum of understanding between the two sides. The meeting was cordial and very fruitful, with both entities recognising the need for such a document.

Students

Since MCFS is a monitoring and research institution several national and international tertiary education organisations seek to send students for training ships at MCFS. In 2007 the following students participated in the activities of the Capture fisheries section of MCFS as part of their studies:

- MSc student at the University of Malta – conducted her dissertation at MCFS titled Population ecology of the dolphinfish (*Coryphaena hippurus*)
- BSc (Hons) student at the University of Malta – conducted her dissertation at MCFS titled Study of Anthropogenic Litter as a Substratum for Epifaunal Colonisation in Deep Water Habitats around the Maltese Islands
- BSc (Hons) student at the University of Malta – conducted her dissertation at MCFS titled Distribution, Abundance & Feeding Biology of the Small Spotted Cat Shark *Scyliorhinus canicula* in the Central Mediterranean
- Laboratory Technician student from the MCAST
- 2 visiting students from the Junior college for one month
- 9 visiting postgraduate students in fisheries and aquaculture science, for two weeks from the University of Palermo, Italy
- a visiting student in management of aquaria for one month from Sparsholt College Hampshire, UK.

Aquaculture Water Quality Monitoring Programme

For 2007 contracts were made to conduct the aquaculture water quality monitoring programme as approved by the MEPA with the Malta Fish Farming (MFF), Azzopardi (AJD) and Pisciculture Marine Ltd (P2M) aquaculture operations.

During the year, 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 was updated in 2007. This included new quality assurance procedures such as good laboratory practice (GLP), new water analysis data sheets and certificates of analysis.

Reports for the 2006 water quality programme were also compiled.

AQUACULTURE

Aquaculture Operational Farms

Three farms were operational in 2007:

P2M Co Ltd
Malta Fish Farming Ltd
Fish and Fish Co Ltd

Capture Based Aquaculture – Bluefin Tuna

Five tuna fattening farms were operational in 2007:

AJD Tuna Ltd I + II - offshore
Fish and Fish Ltd - offshore
Malta Fish Farming Ltd – offshore
Mare Blu Tuna Farm Ltd – offshore
Ta' Matthew Fish Farms Ltd - offshore

Aquaculture Production

The total production of sea bass and sea bream was 1,170 tons in 2007. The total production for export and local sales had an estimated monetary value of Lm2.5 million.

Aquaculture Employment

In 2007, the aquaculture industry employed a total of 208 full-time workers and 98 part-time workers. These were employed in sea bream and sea bass farms as well as tuna fattening farms.

Fingerling Importation

A total of 5.3 million fingerlings were imported throughout the year from French and Italian hatcheries.

Activities at Fort San Lucjan VAFD Aquaculture Branch

- The Amberjack Contract between VAFD and Malta Fishfarming Ltd entered its second year and the marine hatchery was improved with investment in a new filtration system for the larval room.

- Within the agreement of the Amberjack Contract, sea bream cycles were carried out to test and improve techniques for larval rearing, specifically enrichments in diets for the larvae and juveniles.
- In July, fertilised amberjack eggs were harvested from the cages for the third consecutive year. The eggs were hatched and reared at the marine hatchery at Fort San Luċjan with the production of 10,000 fingerlings that were transported to the cages for experimental rearing.
- Along with the amberjack juveniles produced by the Amberjack Project, the marine hatchery produced 187,895 sea bream fingerlings.
- The Aquaculture Branch, along with research institutions of seven other countries, submitted an application for a project to deal with research in bluefin tuna breeding and rearing for the 7th Framework Programme. This project, with the name of SELFDOTT (Self-sustained Domestication of Bluefin tuna) was accepted by the EU and will deal with reproduction, larval rearing and nutrition of this species.

Various e-mails and discussions were held between Malta and Dr Constantinos Mylonas of Greece, Prof Hillel Gordin of Israel and Prof Chris Bridges of Germany during the proposal planning stage about possibilities of bringing a tuna spawning cage to Malta.

Malta will play an important role in this project where both the VAFD Aquaculture Branch and Malta Fishfarming Ltd will contribute to reproduction trials and egg collection from cages as well as a broodstock nutrition experiment.

- Vaccination trials were also held at the Fort San Luċjan vaccine experimental facility as per the contractual agreement between Schering Plough Aquaculture and VAFD. Fourteen trials were carried out throughout the year where *Vibrio* and *Pasteurella* vaccines were tested by immersion or injection.
- Collaboration was established with Nisshin Feeds Co Ltd of Japan for trials on enrichments of live feed within the marine hatchery and with Dr Luca Fortino of Acqua Azzurra SpA regarding amberjack juvenile health status.
- A new filtration system with Aquasystems UK for the whole water system of Fort San Luċjan was designed. This system will be put in place in time for the 2008 amberjack trials in June/July.
- A student from the Biology Department of the University of Malta carried out all her experimental work for her BSc thesis at Fort San Luċjan and was sponsored by the Amberjack Project.
- Various other students were hosted for short periods, namely a group of 20 students who came to Malta for a month from the University of Trapani in Sicily. Their visit was so that they gain experience in various types of work dealing with aquaculture and fisheries. A number of demonstrations and lectures were carried out during February for these students. There was also another visit by 16 French students from ISNAB - Higher Education Institute, Bordeaux, France.
- Meetings were held with Mr Charles Azzopardi of AJD Tuna Ltd re tuna spawning techniques and possibilities for a tuna spawning project in Malta.
- In April, Divemed and Malta Fishfarming Ltd combined their efforts to repair and maintain the seawater underwater pipeline that supplies Fort San Luċjan.

DR ANTHONY GRUPPETTA

Director General (Veterinary Regulations & Fisheries Conservation & Control)

SIMON SAMMUT

Director General (Veterinary Affairs and Fisheries – Administration & Operations)

Parks, Afforestation and Rural Conservation Unit

During this year, the Parks, Afforestation and Rural Conservation Unit increased its work momentum with particular attention to the extension of the National Park at Ta' Qali and finalisation of the Salina National Park. The whole Unit worked in synergy and strived not only to conserve the Maltese landscape but also in further developing areas of afforestation and recreation. During 2007 more than 23,000 trees, shrubs and plants, mainly indigenous and endemic species, were planted.

This was complemented with an extensive infrastructure, including ground preparation, water management and irrigation systems and the procurement of specialised equipment.

Work also continued on the rural conservation aspect, with the construction of more than 1,573 m³ of rubble wall and the collection of tons of illegally dumped material from around the countryside.

Mellieha – Foresta 2000

During May, the Foresta 2000 site in Mellieha site saw vandals destroying more than 3,000 trees, many of which were planted two to three years ago and were beginning to establish themselves after years of hard work maintaining them. During October, a national activity was organised with the aim of planting around 9,000 trees and with the possibility of reaching the 12,000 figure by the end of the year. The Unit was responsible for the planting of these, together with Birdlife officials, as well as their staking, watering and so on.

Throughout the past two years the Unit has undertaken the task of terracing the fields in Mellieha by repairing and constructing more than 990 m³ of rubble wall. Gates were fixed in different passages to control access by vehicles and campers. 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 and appropriate signs and notices were installed.

Salina National Park

Works at Salina National Park continued with the extension of further areas for planting of trees. More fields were added to the park and these were levelled and landscaped, with more tree planting session under the 34U campaign. More than 100 m³ of rubble wall were built, defining different terraces of planted areas and an informal walkway was established linking the new project to the afforestation site and the old part of Kennedy Grove.

Works in the main central area covering an area of more than 5,000 m² of land commenced in the end of October. Works include excavation of soil and rocks to form a reservoir and pump room in the main square, excavation and construction of cafeteria and toilets, formation of rubble walls, shifting of material, electrical installations and so on.

Ta' Qali

Extension to Formal Garden Entrance to Ta' Qali Park

Following the official launch of the extension project by the Minister for Rural Affairs and the Environment at the end of February 2007, PARC Unit personnel were immediately organised on site and construction work was initiated during the first week of March.

The basic principle behind the implementation of the project was to enlarge the formal garden area by almost double that of the previous one, create a pedestrian connection to the soft areas on the other side of the runway, better known as the kite area and eliminating altogether, through traffic from either end of the ex-runway. The entire project was constructed in a record eight-month period mainly by PARK Unit personnel, while outside labour support was only introduced towards the conclusion of the project, which was officially opened on 3 November 2007.

Main tree species that were planted on site include Olive Trees, Oak trees and Aleppo pine. Other flowering shrubs include Oleander, Bird of Paradise, Carissa and Poligala Myrtifolia.

Other works related to the implementation of the project included electrical works, ceramic tile fixing, pointing and plastering, steel works, rubble wall building and landscaping. Areas surrounding and related to the extended garden were also upgraded and embellished. New fences, pavements and traffic signs, including street markings were also introduced and upgraded were necessary.

Picnic Area

During 2007, the picnic area situated along the ex-runway at Ta' Qali was further embellished with the setting up of various tree clusters and picnic tables, to complement the existing ones. In all, five clusters of trees were introduced, with a total of 195 trees planted while 17 picnic tables were fixed on site around the said trees. Aleppo pine, Oak, Olive, Carob and Cypress trees make up the majority of trees planted there and which were donated by Bank of Valletta.

Other decorative trees, namely Ficus trees, which were previously planted in front of the older formal garden entrance, were transferred to this area and successfully re-planted in the picnic area. Other works included regular grass-cutting, trimming and watering during the dry summer season.

Regular general clean-ups were also carried out particularly on Monday mornings following the large crowds that visit the area during the weekends.

Recreational Mall

Approximately two kilometres of pavement were built alongside the mall area to give more protection to pedestrians. The area along the ex-runway, including areas such as the traffic islands, roundabouts and pavements, is maintained on a regular basis. Works include clearing of litter, grass cutting and mowing, replacing dead trees and so on. Regular maintenance includes ploughing, tree trimming, grass cutting and servicing of the garden infrastructure.

Xrobb I-Ghagin Nature Park

Work at Xrobb I-Ghagin continued with the planting and staking of over 5,000 trees and shrubs, and general maintenance of the area. Works included watering, grass cutting and rotary cultivating. In November an activity was organised together with Nature Trust, HSBC and EcoSkola, during which most of the trees and shrubs were planted. The Minister for Rural Affairs and the Environment and the Chief Executive Officer of HSBC attended and the general public also was invited to plant trees under the 34U campaign.

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 include: Żabbar, Chadwick Lakes, Buskett, Wied Mejxi – Swieqi, Wied Ghomor, Pinetum – Pietà, Sta Margerita Lines – Birgu, Fawwara – including renovation of ex-school for CHEER Research Centre.

Drum Collection

After the successful start in 2006, the Unit continued with its 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. 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. More than 50 tons of material collected from Attard, Gudja, Dingli, Ħal Far, Imriehel, Luqa Magħtab, Manikata, Marsa, Mgarr, Mistrà Bay and Rabat was transported to be shredded and exported as recycled steel.

DR PHILIP VON BROCKDORFF
Permanent Secretary MRAE

Corporate Services Directorate

In order to ensure proper governance of both financial and human resources, the Department of Corporate Services continued to consolidate its role to act as a back office for the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment and its line directorates and by carrying out effective monitoring and control of the divisions.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

This Section is responsible for the monitoring and administration of the financial aspect of the Ministry. During the year, 12,000 commitments were processed and over 21,000 payments were carried out, including payments of subsidies to beneficiaries under the SMPPMA scheme. Processing of payments is completed within the same day they are received. Financial reports giving an up-to-date financial picture of the sections and departments falling under the Ministry are created at regular intervals. These reports are invaluable for aiding the sections in the proper projections and utilisation of the Ministry funds.

The personnel within the Finance Section attended various courses throughout the year dealing with financial matters.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Staff Complement

At the end of 2007, the staff complement stood at 1,194. Vacancies were filled according to the requirements of the divisions/departments falling under the Ministry. During the year, the HR section continued and initiated procedures for the filling of various posts and positions. The Section processed recruitment, appointment, promotion and progression of personnel in various grades, as follows: 26 appointments, 15 recruitment, 67 terminations, 58 progressions, 7 promotions, 36 recruitment on contract and 35 terminations of contract employees.

Training

Several officers attended various training courses both locally and abroad on topics related with agriculture, fisheries, veterinary affairs and public policy.

Disciplinary Cases

Five disciplinary procedures were processed in terms of the Public Service Commission (Disciplinary Procedure) Regulations, 1999.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Transport

During 2007 action was taken to install and implement the new software Fleet Management System across the Ministry. This software was designed by MITTS in conjunction with the Ministry of Finance. In its initial stage, the software is being used for the issue of fuel – thus replacing the manual requisition forms.

Eventually, when fully functional, the software will give a clear picture about the use, expenditure, and history of each vehicle attached to the Ministry. This software will help the Department of Corporate Services to monitor all vehicles within the Ministry.

Procurement and Stores

With the transfer of the offices of the Department of Corporate Services in mind, action was taken throughout 2007 to decentralise the stores. With effect from June 2007, the DCS stores provided stationery items only to the Ministry Secretariats, Office of the Permanent Secretary, EU Affairs Directorate, Environment Policy and Initiatives Directorate and PARC Unit. This meant that the RAPA Division and VAF Division were allocated funds to purchase their own stationery items. The purchase of toners and ink cartridges is still centralised and these are procured directly by this Department.

Support

Personnel from within the Support Services Section took an active part in the relocation of the Department of Corporate Services from the premises at 14 Mikiel Anton Vassalli Street, Valletta to 173 St Christopher Street, Valletta. The Section was mainly involved in ICT networking, and transportation of furniture and other items from one premises to the other. As from August 2007, the Section has been offering support to all sections within the Department. Support included maintenance of equipment (air-conditioning, lift, ICT, etc), furniture and premises, cleaning services, etc.

Delegations Abroad

Various officers from across the Ministry attended meetings and seminars abroad organised by different organisations, but mostly in Brussels and Luxembourg related to Malta's commitments as an EU member.

In this regard, officers from the Rural Affairs and the Paying Agency Division attended Management Committee meetings on cereals, fruit and vegetables, direct payments and EU funds, wine and alcohol, trade mechanism and standing committees on agriculture and plant health, eggs, organic farming and fertilisers, promotion of agricultural products, EAGGF and rural development; officers from the Fisheries Division attended meetings dealing with bluefin tuna, fisheries products and aquaculture; while officers from the Veterinary Affairs Division attended meetings related to pig and beef meat, poultry meat, the food chain and animal health.

A visit was held at a slaughter house in Switzerland and an IPPC meeting on *The incinerator at the Civil Abattoir* was held in Austria. In these instances, Malta was represented by officers from the Environment Division.

Ministerial delegations attended European Council Meetings on the Environment and on Agriculture and Fisheries. The Minister and the Parliamentary Secretary led delegations for meetings on EU agricultural matters and FAO. The Minister also attended an Informal EU-Mediterranean Ministerial meeting and a meeting with Commissioner Stavros Dimas. The Parliamentary Secretary headed delegations dealing with the Export of Spring Potatoes, the CAP, Aides Memoires and a meeting organised by the World Organisation for Animal Health.

Moreover, ministerial delegations attended meetings related with climate change. These were held in Italy and in the United States of America. Various meetings related with climate change were held in Germany, USA, Belgium, and Austria and in Bali, Indonesia. These were attended by the Ambassador and other ministry officers. Ministerial delegations also attended meetings organised by non-EU organisations like CIHEAM and ICCAT.

Officers were also given the opportunity to enhance their expertise by attending courses and workshops held abroad. These included training projects organised under programmes such as Leonardo da Vinci, Inwaterman, INNOVA, Leader and other Twinning study visits.

REGISTRY SECTION

During 2007, the offices of the Department of Corporate Services were transferred from No 14 MA Vassalli Street, Valletta to No 173 St Christopher Street, Valletta.

One of the sections which required particular attention and good planning prior to the carrying out of a smooth transfer was the Registry Section. Even before the actual location of the new offices was known, staff at the Registry carried out an extensive and thorough exercise whereby all the files in the registry archives were examined and those which were considered as no longer required in circulation were set aside to be sent to a new archive for old files which was purposely set up at the San Ġakbu Stores, limits of Sta Luċia.

By the time this procedure was finalised, 221 boxes containing files no longer in daily use were transferred to the stores. The boxes were properly indexed and an *ad hoc* register drawn up so that if and when any of the files stored at San Ġakbu are required they would be easily retrieved.

Action was taken to furnish the Department with a state-of-the-art shifting archive where new file boxes were introduced, for the proper archiving of the files which were still required regularly. This new archive was set up at the new premises and has proved to be very user friendly and very appropriate for the Registry's present and future needs.

The transfer of the files from the previous premises, their distribution in their new containers and their storage in the new archives proceeded very smoothly and very swiftly and the Registry was able to resume its normal functions before the time originally planned to do so.

A new system concerning the delivery of mail to and from the various departments and units of the Ministry was introduced. This arrangement has facilitated the work for the Registry and has also speeded up the process of consigning correspondence to the various ministerial outposts. Further improvements will be implemented as and when the need arises to enhance the service provided by the Registry officials. With this in mind, the situation is constantly being kept under observation.

MAINTENANCE SECTION

In order to improve the corporate identity of the Ministry, it was decided that from 2007, the Maintenance Section would form part of the Department of Corporate Services.

The Maintenance Section carries out the normal day-to-day maintenance and repairs at the various sections of the Ministry as the need arises. Such works are namely carried out at the Ministry, the Department of Corporate Services, the National Agricultural Research and Development Centre – Għammieri, the Plant Biotechnology Centre, the Civil Abattoir, Extension Service Offices, the Pitkali Markets, the National Park at Ta' Qali and at Salina Park. The following major works were carried out during 2007:

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ministry | Embellishment of the Departmental stands for Echofest, the Malta International Fair, Christmas Village and World Food Day activities. |
| National Agriculture Research and Development Centre | Construction of new Single Payment Unit offices (First Phase). Demolition of dangerous offices at Garage area. Construction of new office block for Maintenance Section. Construction of Apiary observation tunnel. Construction of 60 – 5 section apiary boxes. Construction of 2 new security rooms and public toilets. Alterations to Rural Development offices. |

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Department of Corporate Services | Dismantling of offices for shifting to new premises Refurbishment of new premises. Construction of 22 shelving units, 12 vanity units and 1 Kitchen Unit. |
| Plant Health | Refurbishment of Director's office, kitchenette and toilet. Construction of new offices in laboratory area. Refurbishment of workers' room. |
| Buskett Gardens | Construction of approximately 619.74 cu. mtrs rubble walls and 95.25m ² of coping. |
| Pitkali Markets | General maintenance of Administration Block, hawkers platforms and Security Room. |
| Ta' Qali PARC Unit | Construction of boundary walls in the new extension of the National Park complete with the electrical installation of walkways and fountains. Electrical installation of new carpenters' workshop. General maintenance of runway street lighting system. Painting of subway network near University at tal-Qroqq. |

SECURITY SERVICES

The security offices across the Ministry are manned by six Security Officers, 27 Security Guards, 14 Acting Security Guards and 39 Watchmen. The security offices are located at the National Agriculture and Research Centre (Ghammieri), the Veterinary Affairs Division (Civil Abattoir), Pitkali Markets, Plant Biotechnology Centre, Fort Delimara, Ta' Qali National Park, Salina Park and San Ġakbu.

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.

During 2007, the EU Affairs Directorate continued to strive to fulfil its role as 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. The Funding Unit within the Directorate also monitored the ongoing implementation of all projects that are benefiting from EU co-funding. A particular challenge that was successfully met concerned the maximisation of utilisation of EU funds allocated to projects, arising from the fact that such funds are time-bound.

In this respect, the Directorate proactively followed through on its 2007 work plan placing particular emphasis on improving attendance at 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 and as effectively as possible.

The Directorate was as proactive as possible in ensuring adequate attendance at all meetings at EU fora, in the compilation of memoranda in respect of all proposals falling within the remit covered by this Ministry as well as assisting line divisions, departments and entities to cope with an increased number of audit missions originating both at EU and local levels.

The Directorate has continued to deal with an increasing number of infringements, particularly related to the environment. These concern non-compliance issues as well as bad transposition of the provisions of EU legislation. The Directorate continues to assist and guide its line divisions, departments and entities, as well as other implementing ministries, to ensure that such infringement cases are dealt with as expeditiously as possible. It should be noted that in some cases it is simply impossible to meet the provisions of EU legislation within the stipulated time frames in view of lack of adequate infrastructure and the required capacity. In cases, the solution lies with other ministries who would then have to carry out implementation actions to meet the relative requirements – the infringement would continue to progress until such a time as these actions would be successfully completed.

The EU Funds Unit

The Unit continued to monitor and provide active assistance and guidance to all 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. The Funds Manager continued to identify and resolve problems to ensure a smooth and timely implementation of these projects. A number of problems relating to resources within the Unit were resolved only towards the end of the year with the transfer of a Principal Officer to the Unit to provide support to the Manager, and to carry out the line function of verifying and processing payments related to such projects.

The Directorate also provided assistance to its line divisions and departments to set up the institutions required 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.

JOSEPH DE GIORGIO
Director (EU Affairs)

Environment Policy and Initiatives Directorate

Following its inception in 2005 and extensive works carried out over the ensuing years, the Environment Policy and Initiatives Directorate started reaping the fruit of its work.

ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION

The Directorate is responsible for drafting environmental regulation or reviewing environmental subsidiary legislation or amendments to existing regulations. Legislation is needed to transpose EU Directives, or national obligations with respect to environmental policy. Work included legal notices related to Eco Contribution, WEEE, Packaging and Packaging Waste, VOCs, etc.

EPID is working closely with MFIN and MEPA in the formulation of the refund mechanism on paid eco-contribution.

During 2007, 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 former IPSL employees within MEPA to help enforce the regulations.

EPID also sought interpretation on legal matters concerning the environment. This work included the interpretation of laws, regulations and contracts related to the environment. EPID conducted a verification exercise to ensure that environmental EU directives have been transposed into Maltese legislation in their entirety. This exercise, which is being carried out with the co-operation of the Translation and Law drafting unit (MJHA), will be continued during 2008.

Drafting of judicial acts relating to the environment has also been carried out. For this work, assistance from the Attorney General Agency was sought.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

A working Group on the recovery and recycling of packaging waste from the domestic and commercial sector was jointly appointed by the Ministries for Rural Affairs and the Environment and of Finance. The Working Group was entrusted with the responsibility to identify the options available for the management of packaging waste and determine the preferred options for collection. The MRAE's representatives were from EPID. Representatives of the Local Councils Association and the constituted bodies also form part of the working group. Discussions were well advanced and the details will be announced in 2008.

The EPID is also co-ordinating the revision of the Solid Waste Management Strategy for the Maltese Islands. The revised Strategy will also be issued for public consultation in 2008.

In March 2006, a task force, composed of representatives of MEPA and WasteServ and co-ordinated 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. Three TAIEX missions were also secured to compile this plan, which has been drafted and is awaiting public consultation.

EPID monitors, through continued liaison, the work carried out by WasteServ and MEPA on issues related to their respective responsibilities.

ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

As an ongoing education and awareness raising campaign targeted at the younger generation, the EPID, on behalf of the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment, entered into an agreement with an environmental NGO for the implementation of the Ekoskola Programme. This programme, specifically aimed at students of primary and secondary schools, seeks to disseminate environmental information and raise awareness on topical issues regarding the environment and sustainable development, through best practice environmental management.

On regular monitoring, those schools which are considered to have well implemented the environmental standards required by the programme are awarded a “green flag”, an internationally recognised eco-labelling, denoting the high environmental standard reached. Fifty-four schools (both public and private/church, or 25% of the national number of schools) have enrolled in this programme in the year 2006-07, an increase of 12 schools over the scholastic year 2005-06. One “green flag” has been awarded during the period under review, bringing the total of “green flags” to three.

A 24-month Framework agreement for Energy Auditing Consultancy Services for government offices was concluded with three economic operators. Government ministries were 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. Three energy audits were commissioned in 2007.

TWINNING PROJECT

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*. The project is run between the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment and the Austrian Federal Environment Agency Umweltbundesamt GmbH. 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 end in 2008, was divided into three components, that is, Waste-to-Energy, Construction and Demolition Waste and the Public Awareness Campaign.

The Waste-to-Energy component, carried out during 2006 and 2007, brought over various experts in the field to help in the training of Maltese personnel in this field. Technical working groups’ meetings on waste to energy were held. Different scenarios for waste-to-energy treatment techniques were investigated. MEPA and WasteServ benefited greatly during the licensing processes of the Sant’Antnin MRF and the Marsa abattoir thermal treatment facilities.

During 2007, the second component of the project, dealing with the formulation of a strategy for the long-term possibilities of reuse/recycling of construction and demolition wastes, was undertaken. Workshops on state of the art treatment, technical standards for reuse, recycling and the disposal of construction and demolition waste, were held.

A public awareness campaign about waste, including different PR activities and various *ad hoc* actions, was developed in 2007.

During 2008, work on the implementation of the recommendations shall follow. EPID and MSA are developing guidelines on deconstruction of buildings and on recycled materials.

CONSULTANCY SERVICES

The EPID has commissioned a series of studies to maintain track on various environmental issues. One particular example is an ongoing study on the feasibility of electrical transport systems for Malta. This study focuses on the infrastructure needed to implement electrical transportation in Malta. Some of the recommendations have been included in the financial estimates for 2008.

Other studies relate to CDM, general conditions of contracts, EU-funded tenders environment evaluation, salini project and others.

During 2007, the European Union agreed on a pact to slash greenhouse gas emissions by 20% till the year 2020. The MRAE was entrusted with the overriding aim of monitoring the environmental impact of projects availing themselves of EU funding for the programming period 2007-2013. Thus, a study was commissioned setting up a set of guidelines that would guarantee environmental awareness at the very early stages of the procurement process. It is expected that these guidelines will be accepted and adopted early in 2008.

During the third quarter 2007, the Ministry commissioned a study required to set the general environment performance conditions for all public procurement processes utilising EU funds. The MRAE is currently liaising with the Director General (Contracts) in drafting these regulations. The Ministry aims to adopt these guidelines early in 2008.

RELOCATION OF FARMS

Discussions were held with MEPA and the Ministry for Gozo to identify a suitable site for the relocation of 13 cattle farms situated within urban settlements in Gozo. The site will accommodate 13 cattle farms, a manure treatment facility and a fodder storage complex.

Discussions with MEPA and the Superintendent for Cultural Heritage were also held in order to prepare the terms of reference for the environmental assessment studies for the site in Malta earmarked for the relocation of cattle farms situated within urban settlements and sites of historical importance in Malta.

MANAGEMENT OF NATURE RESERVES

In 2007, the Government's policy in the management of sites of ecological importance with the assistance of environmental NGOs, was consolidated.

A new management agreement was entered into between MRAE, MEPA and Nature Trust Malta for the establishment and management of a Nature Park and Sustainable Development Centre, at the ex-Deutche Welle site in Xrobb l-Ghaġin, limits of Delimara.

This particular site in the south of Malta shall provide for, besides the conservation and rehabilitation of flora and fauna, educational and recreational activities for the community. Preliminary civil engineering, mechanical and electrical works have been completed and the ensuing works will be initiated early in 2008.

Similarly, the EPID is in the final stages of signing additional management agreements, on behalf of the Government, for other sites of ecological importance. Wied Ghollieqa Valley, in the vicinity of the University at tal-Qroqq is one such site. It has been designated as a special area of conservation (SAC) in view of the important habitat it provides to important species of flora and fauna, as well as a bird sanctuary. The site will be managed not only due to its conservation aspect but also in view of its relevance in environmental education.

A management agreement for the Majjistral Nature and History Park has also been recently signed. Preparatory planning work has been taken in hand, with the draft management plan issued for public

consultation. The works required on site include an extensive clean-up, establishment of visitors' management infrastructure, restoration of archaeological sites, habitats and rubble walls, amongst other.

All proposed intervention are in line with the relevant EU and national obligations and are aimed at enhancing the overall socio-economic potential of the site, including the added value for the tourism product, and the creation of new educational and recreational opportunities for the enjoyment of both Maltese and foreign visitors.

A project proposal for EU funding under the 2007–2013 structural funds programme has been submitted to secure and partly finance the project through ERDF funds. The total financing requirements for the project are estimated at over €5 million. Should EU funding be approved, it is expected to finance over €2.9 of the project. The Government and the private sector will be providing the matching sponsorship.

Another project funded by the EU-LIFE Programme is the Dwejra Heritage Park in Gozo. Not only is this the first LIFE project in Gozo, but it also integrates into the project the first marine conservation area and hence, protected by law. This project aims at restoring the flora, fauna and the natural habitat of the site (both marine and terrestrial), which has been designated as a SAC, and manage in an integrated and sustainable manner the anthropogenic activities of this popular tourist area. In the process, the project aims also at the conservation and protection of historical heritage.

During 2007, interpretation panels were installed on site complemented by a printed leaflet which is distributed to visitors. A temporary visitors' centre has been set up where visitors may view DVD productions on both the marine and terrestrial ecology of Dwejra. A website was also launched.

These agreements, together with others already in place, entail the constant monitoring of both MRAE and MEPA. Consequently, such agreements provide for the setting up of *ad hoc* management boards, roping in all stakeholders, to oversee and ensure that the provisions of the agreements, including the relative management plans, are adhered to and implemented accordingly. Hence, on a regular basis, the EPID co-ordinates and chairs these management boards aiming at taking those decisions and the resolution of any issues, for the guidance of the managers.

Besides the working relationship emanating from the foregoing initiatives, the Environment Policy and Initiatives Directorate strives to keep environmental NGOs 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.

In addition, a substantial part of the EPID's workload is dedicated to dealing with third party issues – construction regulations (launched in 2007), environmental permits, hunting and trapping, and so on.

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. In its role as a consultative committee, the NCSDD presented the final draft to Cabinet for its approval. The Strategy was approved in December 2007.

EU FUNDING

Community Initiatives

The year 2007 was a decisive year for the EU Life+ funding programme, both on the national and the EU level.

The beginning of 2007 marked lack of consensus between EU institutions regarding the implementation of the Life+ Programme. Basically the European Parliament would not accept the decentralisation of the Programme implementation. This impasse would have jeopardised environment funding for 2007, were it not for a series of reconciliation meetings held by the Commission. The relative Regulation was adopted in June 2007.

On the national level, Malta had to ensure that, in line with the provisions of the new programme and the relative negotiations carried out, it was capable of absorbing the national allocation. Hence, Malta had to ensure that enough proposals to cover the whole financial allocation were submitted to the Commission.

Consequently, the EPID acted as the driver behind the implementation of the Programme on the national level. A launching seminar was held in July 2007, for which the head of the EU Life Unit delivered the keynote speech. Throughout the months that followed, the EPID held consultation meetings with interested parties as well as co-ordinated and participated in the preparation of a number of proposals, which were ultimately submitted to the EU. Malta managed to fully cover its national allocation.

A total of over €5 million worth of environmental projects has in fact been submitted to the Commission. The project proposals submitted dealt mainly with the conservation/restoration of flora, fauna and habitats, relevant to the EU Wild Birds and Habitats Directives. Other proposals dealt with the information and educational aspects of other environments themes such as renewable energy and energy conservation. Project sites are well distributed over Malta with proposals for nature conservation both in the north and the south.

As with other EU funded projects, the EU constantly monitors the projects funded under the Life programme. Consequently, the EPID acts as the focal point, and hence the liaison, between the Commission monitoring teams and the beneficiary.

Structural Funds

During 2007, the EU Funds Manager assigned with the Environment Policy and Initiatives Directorate was responsible for the co-ordination, implementation and monitoring of projects that fall under the aegis of MRAE.

The EU Funds Manager worked in close liaison with those agencies that fall under the remit of the Ministry, mainly WasteServ and MEPA. Following a process of review with these agencies in the prioritisation of projects for the programming period ERDF 2007-2013 in line with ministerial objectives, a set of projects were chosen and prioritised for the programming period 2007-2013. The year 2007 could be deemed as the preparatory phase for these projects before actual contracting and implementation. The projects earmarked for implementation by these agencies are as follows:

MEPA

- Establishment of il-Majjistral Nature and History Park to Strengthen the Tourism Product
- Scheme to support enterprise in the environmental field
- Developing national environmental monitoring infrastructure and capacity
- Scientific surveys and compilation of management plans for Natura 2000 sites in the Maltese islands.

MEPA will avail itself of ERDF 2007-2013 and EAFRD funding for the implementation of the above mentioned projects. Il-Majjistral Nature and History Park was submitted for ERDF Funding in September 2007. The scheme will avail itself of ERDF funding during the first quarter 2008 (consultations and preparatory documents for the launch of the scheme took place in 2007); the management plans for Natura 2000 sites will commence in 2008.

WasteServ

- Rehabilitation of the Maghtab landfill
- Rehabilitation of the Qortin landfill
- Renewable Energy Technology Installation in Waste Management Facilities in Malta and Gozo
- Mechanical and Biological Treatment Plants for the remaining Municipal Solid Waste
- Development of a Family Park in the south of Malta.

WasteServ will avail itself of ERDF 2007-2013 and EAFRD funding for the implementation of the above mentioned projects. During 2007, WasteServ together with the Ministry have conducted various consultations with all stakeholders involved in preparing for the ERDF application for funding for the rehabilitation of the Maghtab landfill. WasteServ plans to submit an application for funding by the third quarter 2008. WasteServ also plans to submit a project for EAFRD funding for the development of a family park in the south of Malta.

PR AND COMMUNICATIONS

EPID 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.

DR ING CHRISTOPHER CIANTAR
Director (Environment Policy & Initiatives)

Information Management Unit

The Chief Information Officer was responsible for the provision of ICT services and the related infrastructure to assist the Ministry to function effectively and efficiently in line with Government ICT policy. The CIO consolidated the ICT planning within the Ministry and managed the overall ICT capital and operational budgets. The Ministry's IT allocation for 2007 was of Lm154,000. While core services were funded centrally, the CIO 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 2007. As expected, the CIO 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 Investment, Industry and Information Technology (MIIT), CITAC (Core IT Advisory Committee) and MITTS Ltd. Action was undertaken centrally for capacity building of Information Management Units in ministries.

BUSINESS AND BUDGETING PLAN

The Ministry's strengthened its thrust towards its holistic approach sharing the same core functionality. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform was having a considerable impact on the whole ICT business of the Ministry. During the last quarter of 2007, a contract for the development of the CAP Reform System to the value of €600,000 was awarded under an EU Twinning Agreement.

Earlier on, following feedback gathered from the Directors and Heads of Section, the ICT Capital and Operational Budgeting Plan for 2008 was drawn up and presented to CITAC.

BOARDS AND MEETINGS

The CIO represented the Ministry on the National Information Society Advisory Committee (NISCO) and sat regularly on the monthly CIO Council meetings. During the course of the year, the CIO 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 MEPA and WasteServ.

WEBSITES

In the course of 2007, the majority of the Ministry's websites were being actively updated and revamped. This was also necessitated because of the various changes in the Ministry's organisational set-up. Websites under revision included the Agriculture Division site, the Veterinary and Fisheries website and the Environment one. Work is actively in hand on various projects in this regard.

DATA CONSOLIDATION

Efforts kept going in line with Government's policy to consolidate all services that should result in considerable savings in cost of ownership. Early in 2007 the National Livestock Database server was moved from the Civil Abattoir to MITTS consolidated environment after connectivity to the Civil Abattoir

was enhanced and supplemented with redundancy line. Once connectivity to the PARK Unit and to the Pitkali Markets, both at Ta' Qali, is enhanced, the servers at both stations will also be moved to MITTS.

E-GOVERNMENT

In collaboration with the Ministry for Investment, Industry and Information Technology, after a detailed analysis of the Ministry's processes, a group of services was identified for deployment as part of the e-government initiative. The MRAE, through the CIO, endorsed the Alliance Agreement Programme for the provision of e-government services in relation to a group of services in a range of fields offered by the Ministry.

TELECOMS

Eights sections of the Ministry, namely Ministry HQ - Barriera Wharf, DCS – Valletta, Fisheries – San Luċjan, Veterinary Services – Civil Abattoir, PARK Unit – Ta' Qali, Pitkali – Ta' Qali, Rural Affairs – Government Farm, and Plant Health – Lija, were interconnected via VOIP. This enabled the Ministry to consolidate a “call logging” service on one central computer. This is expected to result in considerable savings of thousands of euros in telephony bills to the Ministry.

BIOMETRIC READERS AND CCTV

Towards the end of 2007, the contract for the supply and installation of biometric readers and the necessary software for time and attendance purposes throughout MRAE was awarded. As an early tender had to be dropped, it is expected that these will now be in place by mid 2008.

A number of CCTV cameras functioning on internet protocol (IP) have also been installed for security purposes at strategic areas across the Ministry. The set-up of a central CCTV control room is currently still being considered.

Solar photovoltaic cells were installed on the Ministry's roof at Barriera Wharf and real-time data from these panels is being reported on an LCD screen in the public reception area.

A number of multi-function printers have been leased with the aim of removing/replacing several desktop printers. These MF printers provide a multitude of facilities. This move should result in considerable cost saving related to the procurement of toner and repairs. Results obtained so far are being assessed and studied with the aim of removing the maximum possible number of desktop printers.

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 and the Malta Transport Authority (ADT).

THE OFFICE OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARY

The Office of the Permanent Secretary acts as a policy adviser 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 the development and co-ordination of various major projects.

Throughout 2007, the Office continued with the implementation of 'CY.RO.N.MED' (Cycle Route Network in the Mediterranean), a project which 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 ended in December 2007. The project dealt with the study of a Cycle Route Network in South Eastern Mediterranean countries and its final product was 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 results of the project included the promotion of urban mobility and cycle tourism inside the Archimed area as well as fostering international co-operation, dialogue and experience-exchange amongst the participating authorities to harmonise standards in the cycling infrastructures.

During the year, the Green Leader Initiative continued to focus on collecting paper for recycling, together with the recycling of batteries, printer toners and cartridges, and reusing envelopes. A number of staff members attended training sessions in waste separation. The process for conducting an energy audit of two of the ministerial buildings was initiated.

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 systems, infrastructure, procurement and funds management. The Unit also has a delegated role to represent the Ministry and the Malta Transport Authority on issues of Information Security, Information Asset Management, and Data Centre Management.

During 2007, preparatory work for the 2008 euro changeover was completed. The approach adopted involved a design, testing and data migration mechanism of almost all the information systems and e-services within the Ministry. The MUDR and ADT websites also required major redesign to implement technology enhancements necessary to be hosted on Government's new and more stringent website frameworks by the first quarter of 2008.

The eVERA website - Malta's Online Vehicle Licence Renewal system at www.licenzji-vetturi.gov.mt - confirmed itself once again as the largest e-Government service in Malta, and this even beyond its levels of

integration, complexity and the number of stakeholders involved. In 2007, this e-service alone catered for 67.6% of all the vehicle road licence renewals in Malta & Gozo with Lm7,890,635 of revenue from a total of Lm11,670,606. New interfaces were amongst the major enhancements of e-VERA, permitting VRTs and taxi meter calibration certificates to be entered electronically online.

Core IT systems were integrated with third party systems like the Controlled Vehicular Access (CVA) system in Valletta, to collect CVA-related upgrade fees and to provide refunds for Valletta Licence Disk holders. Enhancements to the interfaces of core systems were necessary to sustain new and more secure streamlined web-based components for vehicle inquiries and reports by other entities or systems, such as the Police, Customs, Joint Committees, CDR, LES, NAO and TCU by early 2008.

The MUDR VoIP project was completed to maximise the use of the current MAGNET infrastructure and reduce internal long-term telecommunication costs between MUDR and ADT, and, in future, with the rest of government sites on the MAGNET. All Autodesk software licences were upgraded to annual subscriptions, thus lowering total costs of ownership, and increasing administrative accountability and flexibility.

The Driving Licence System (DLS) was linked to the driving licence theory tests procedures with its implementation spanned on to Gozo. New e-services, planned to be completed in 2008, include e-REG (which offers car dealers the facility to register new vehicles on-line whilst submitting payments) and e-DLS (which offers citizens an online renewal facility for their driving licence).

Support Services and Financial Management

The objective of the Support Services and Financial Management Directorate (SSFMD) is to provide advisory, support, implementation and financial management services for all entities within the Ministry's responsibilities, ensuring sustainability and effectiveness in funding the strategic deliverables of the Ministry.

During 2007, the SSFMD dealt with some strategic issues such as the determination of the annual budget for 2008; the financial control of the budget for 2007, which resulted in savings of expenditure; the management of an internal contracting and procurement system; the implementation of a reform of its internal resources structure, maximising its use of ITC resources through the creation and management of a database on Parliamentary Questions and the introduction of data phones; as well as managing a flexible time system during summer hours, and effectively implementing the provisions of LN50/2007 on fixed-term contract employees.

As with previous years, the Directorate was very active in ensuring good financial management and an effective human resources development through maintaining a strong co-ordination with centralised government agencies such as the Treasury Department, the Ministry of Finance and the Office of the Prime Minister. This also included on-the-job training on the payment and ensuing claims of EU funds for them to be made in a professional and expeditious manner.

In 2007, in terms of the Directorate's human resources development three-year strategy, the Directorate nominated 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. Moreover, the SSFMD continued to maintain family-friendly and employee-social initiatives.

Other responsibilities of the SSFMD include:

- compiling information 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;
- compiling monthly, quarterly and annual reports for the Treasury Department and the Ministry of Finance, and maintaining information on Accruals Accounting; and
- ensuring that the legislation on Data Protection and Health and Safety is fully complied with across all the Ministry.

EU Affairs, Policy Development and Programme Implementation

EU Affairs Section

Instruction Notes were relayed in a timely manner, in preparation for Council meetings, to the Permanent Representation in Brussels, after obtaining clearance from the Permanent Secretary. Memoranda were regularly submitted, discussed and accepted during the various IMC meetings.

In most cases, the Technical Attaché covered meetings at Council, Coreper and other Commission Expert Groups, due to logistical and human resources constraints - as per established policy. Regular consultations with internal and external stakeholders were conducted for the formulation of the Instruction Notes for the Attaché to negotiate a position to the advantage of Malta's interests.

Contacts were established with Malta's counterparts in the other Member States, thus facilitating the need of co-operation for the access of information to be acted upon in real time and identify partners on various issues in support of Malta's position during the German and the Portuguese Presidencies. Preparations were also conducted for fruitful co-operation with the Slovenian Presidency in the field of the Trans-European Transport Network, and for the adoption of the Regulation for the granting of Community financial aid in the field of the TEN-T.

Various legislative drafts were presented for publication after vetting was concluded by the Office of the Attorney General, the most significant of which was the transposition of the 5th Motor Insurance Directive. Cabinet approved the accession of Malta as Member to the UNECE ADR Convention on the transportation of dangerous goods by road.

Malta participated actively during the meetings on the Green Paper - Towards a New Culture for Urban Mobility, related to the European Transport Policy, and which were held by the European Parliament in Brussels. The Green Paper was then published in the Official Journal in November 2007.

EU Fund Management Unit

The Manager responsible for this Unit has the express task of managing EU and Malta funds in the implementation of various capital projects under the Structural, Cohesion, Pre-Accession Funds and Urban Development.

Customer Care

The role of the MUDR Customer Care System is to monitor developments. Requests can be received, either directly at MUDR or through the Staffware Customer Care System or through ADT Freephone. Quarterly updates and an annual progress report are forwarded by the ADT to the MUDR Customer Care Unit.

The ADT website and Intranet, which form part of the Customer Care System, are also constantly monitored with the ultimate aim of ensuring a positive and efficient customer experience.

Policy Development

A number of policy issues were identified after Malta had acceded to the UNECE ADR Convention during the second quarter of 2007, relating to the conveyance of dangerous cargo by road transportation. Furthermore, procedures in conformity with the safety measures for the transportation of General Cargo, in consultation with road hauliers, were also identified and shall be formalised during 2008 when Malta would accede to the UNECE CMR Convention during the first quarter of 2008. Special focus shall be exercised for the issuance of the related Policies by end of 2008.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The Ministry for Urban Development and Roads is also responsible for the co-ordination of a series of urban development projects. The Ministry has been delegated this responsibility to respond to the exigencies of the ever-growing number of capital urban projects which call for the development, launching, management and monitoring of these urban regeneration projects.

For this reason, the Ministry has developed a Unit of professionals to deal with the various aspects of project development, management and planning for regeneration projects. The Unit is responsible both for the planning and development of policy, project briefs, tenders and launching processes of projects, and also for the administration and management of current projects and the monitoring of obligations set in the various contracts between the private and public sectors. The Unit therefore liaises with various government agencies as in the case of the Malta Environment and Planning Authority, the Malta Transport Authority, the Department of Land, the Office of the Attorney General, the Works Division, the Water Services Corporation and Enemalta Corporation to respect the benchmarks and parameters set. It also liaises with various consortia made up of private investors in the negotiating of tender submissions and deed obligations.

Policy and Strategic Development

The Projects Development and Co-ordination Unit (PDCU) developed a Transit Oriented Development Policy (2005-06), integrating both transport and regeneration as prescribed in the set objectives. The strategic policy is geared at sustainable transport and regeneration and covers the integration of capital projects, multi-modal transit systems and infrastructural projects. This strategy has been presented to the EU Commission in 2007 as part of the documentation for the Leipzig Charter. During 2007, the PDCU participated in the application of EU policy and directives in the realm of transport and urban development and the funding of research and pilot projects. The Unit also represented the Maltese Islands during the EU Urban Development Group meetings.

The Projects Development and Co-ordination Unit, together with the ADT, has developed and delivered two main projects under the Interreg and UrbAct projects. Under Interreg, the PAGUS project developed three pilot studies which focused on the Bus Rapid Transit System proposal for the Inner Harbour Area, the evaluation of the Park and Ride system at Floriana and a study for the Vertical Connection for preliminary studies and Brief development. Under the UrbAct Programme, the PDCU, together with the Valletta Local Council and the ADT delivered a full study and survey on alternative modes of transport systems and effects on the Capital City. At present, the PDCU is seeking new proposals, as part of its research and planning remit, to develop further the project ideas under its Strategic Policy for Transit Oriented Development.

Local Action Plans

The Unit has been responsible in 2007 for the compilation and development of two local Action Plans geared at the regeneration of two areas in the Maltese Islands, that is, Marsascala and Cottonera. The regeneration plans based on the principles of Transit Oriented Development and the Leipzig Charter direct regeneration strategy to a holistic and integrated approach, following International and European

benchmarking on the level of sustainable communities. Preliminary consultations have been underway on the “Marsascala – A Transit Village for a Sustainable Community” project, whereas internal consultations on the final draft for Cottonera are envisaged in mid-2008.

Manoel Island and Tigné Project

The most extensive project in area, investment and planning terms is the Manoel Island and Tigné project which is directed at the redevelopment of Tigné Point, the redevelopment of Manoel Island, the restoration of historical assets in the area, and the launching of new residential areas, tourism facilities and shopping malls. The development will be an attraction and dynamic development comparable with international benchmarks in urban planning.

The project is currently in the final phases on the Tigné side and the restoration phase for Manoel Island has been closed during 2007. The Manoel Island project phasing for redevelopment is currently underway according to the prescribed parameters in the deed obligations.

Cruise Liner Passenger Terminal Project

The Cruise Liner Terminal Project in Valletta and Floriana is the most rapidly developing project on the Island both in terms of investment and operations. In 2007, the project closed most of the final phases of its development and saw the opening of cultural and business facilities.

The forecast for the project is very positive with an expansion of its cruise liner activities beyond its footprint to extend the possibilities of mooring, home-porting facilities and related ancillary services. The PDCU is heavily involved, together with the ADT, in facilitating transport modes to and from the Terminal. The Unit is also in the final phases of negotiations with the relative consortium to resolve outstanding quay and financial issues.

Cottonera Waterfront Redevelopment Project

The Cottonera Waterfront Redevelopment Project has catalysed regeneration in the area of the Three Cities. The PDCU has spurred on the closure of the final phases of the project. Works on the hotel and the Cement Stores would commence in 2008.

Cottonera Waterfront Landscaping Project

The first phase of the project has now been completed and two artworks will be installed in the first term of 2008. The project has been developed during 2006-2007, and an extension is being planned over the Xatt ir-Risq area. This project will be dovetailed with the developments of the Cement Stores, the Santa Margherita Car Park and the Dock No 1 development.

Valletta Vertical Connection Project

The Valletta Vertical Connection was launched in 2006 with a Brief and Tender incorporating an approved Outline Development Permit. The negotiations and contract signing are currently underway and the winning consortium will be responsible for the phasing of the project development which will include lift systems and parking areas, with a full rehabilitation of the Lascaris and Landfront Ditch in Valletta.

Dock No 1 Regeneration Project

The Dock No 1 project was launched as a Brief and Tender during 2005-2006. The Outline Development Permit at the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA) is currently underway, including the

Environmental Impact Assessment and the historical and archaeological assessment of the area. The negotiations with the winning consortium, Gruppo Romegas, were in the final stages during 2007.

Schreiber Regeneration Project

The Schreiber Project will be launched with a Full Development Permit. The current phase includes an Environment Impact Assessment with the completion of consultations with stakeholders in the area and the issue of the Planning Permit.

Ta' Qali Exhibition and Convention Centre

The Ta' Qali Exhibition and Convention Centre was launched in 2007 with an Invitation for Submission of Proposals. Messrs MFCC were conducting negotiations with Government, and the Outline Development Application was being processed by MEPA during 2007.

Ta' Qali Crafts Village Project

The Ta' Qali Crafts Village was launched following the publication of the Full Development Permit in July 2007. The project tender has been developed with finite detailed plans and phasing with a combined project which will see the rehabilitation of the whole extent of the area earmarked for the village, new infrastructure and roads, public areas landscaping and embellishment, and the redevelopment of the various tenants.

TRANSPORT AND ROADS

Network Infrastructure Directorate

The Network Infrastructure Directorate (NID) continued to implement the Residential Roads Construction Programme, whilst various major road infrastructure projects co-financed under the European Union's Cohesion and European Regional Development funds were successfully completed. Traffic Management Schemes were improved during road construction works. In addition, works continued on the planning and design of the upgrade of the Trans-European Transport Road Network. The Directorate also identified 11 potential road projects which could be partially financed by the European Union between 2007 and 2013.

Residential Roads Construction Programme

The Residential Roads Construction Programme was launched in August 2006 with a specific target of completion by end 2008. The total roads to be constructed are 468.

European Union Cohesion and Structural Funds (Programming Period 2004-2006)

St Paul's Bay Bypass

The project involved the redesign of the geometrical layout of junctions and the reconstruction of 2.7km of dual lane road carriageway.

Hal Far Road Phase III

This project included the reconstruction of 3.2 km of road linking the Peace Laboratory with the Freeport Terminal, with a three metre-wide footpath serving as a combined pedestrian and cycle track. A stormwater system and a street lighting system were also implemented along the whole route of the newly-reconstructed road. In addition, rubble walls were constructed on both sides of the road.

Civil Aviation Avenue, Luqa

This project included the reconstruction of 0.6 km of road, and the installation of WSC mains and service ducts.

Mġarr Road, Għajnsielem

Works on Mġarr Road, Għajnsielem, included the redesign of the Heliport and Chambray Junctions and the widening of the road. A number of stormwater collection chambers and two water reservoirs were also constructed. The water gathered would be utilised to irrigate the area.

Manwel Dimech Bridge

The reconstruction of the Manwel Dimech Bridge had been split into two main phases. The first phase consists in the reconstruction of the Eastern viaduct (carriageway from St Julians to Valletta) and the second phase includes the reconstruction of the Western viaduct (carriageway from Valletta to St Julians). The structure of the bridge is designed for an eighty-year life span.

The Maintenance Unit of the NID carried out various maintenance works on Malta's arterial and distributor road network. Works included major patching (rideability) works in various areas. The Unit also carried out inspections on trenching works being carried out by third parties to ensure that permit conditions were being adhered to.

European Union Cohesion and Structural Funds (Programming Period 2007-2013)

The Directorate identified eleven potential road projects which could be partially financed by the European Union between 2007 and 2013.

Public Transport Directorate

The Public Transport Directorate (PTD) continued to liaise with the various public transport sectors and the other ADT Directorates to provide a sustainable, efficient and safe public transport means of travel.

The Scheduled Bus Service Sector introduced the following new trips and routes:

- extension of the Junior College-University network of services to the Mater Dei Hospital;
- two new Express Routes from Żurriq and Mosta to Valletta;
- three new routes to Mater Dei (560 – Għarghur and Naxxar, 450 – Ċirkewwa, and 675 – St Andrews);
- route No 58 from Mosta was diverted to cater for the University and Mater Dei;
- the evening operating hours of the University/Mater Dei routes to all towns and villages in Malta were extended to service the needs of Mater Dei visitors and employees;
- the operating times and frequency of Route 75 from Valletta to cater for Mater Dei were extended;
- route No 81 from Valletta has been extended to cater for tourists wishing to visit Dingli Cliffs;
- a new route No 82 to cater for Rabat residents residing at Għar Barka was introduced;
- the operating hours of route No 645 (Sliema – Ċirkewwa) were extended both during the morning and in the evening;
- the operating hours of routes between Sliema and Buġibba were extended further to cater for increased demand during the night time;
- a temporary service (Route 164) between the Village (Swieqi) and Spinola was introduced;
- route No 65 between San Ġwann and Sliema was extended to cater for seasonal demand;
- a new route was introduced to service the new extension of the Park and Ride in Blata l-Bajda.

Other works relating to the Scheduled Bus Service included: record-keeping and strict monitoring of low-floor buses; the placing of ten new bus shelters; the placing of bus schedules on all bus shelters and on main

and outlying termini, and the dissemination of information to passengers through the introduction of a free weekly newspaper distributed on buses.

The Directorate is negotiating with the ATP a holistic reform of the scheduled bus service. The Directorate also held several meetings with the red minibus service operators to improve the service provided by this sector. Following the introduction of a Code of Conduct for taxi drivers and owners in Malta and Gozo, regular meetings were held with the White Taxi Services Amalgamated to monitor and enforce regulations. Discussions continued to be held with the Horse-Driven Cab Sector in order to introduce a Code of Conduct for horse cab owners. Discussions were also held with the representatives of the coaches involved in the unscheduled services to help owners renew their coach fleet. All motor hearses have been replaced by new models and a Code of Conduct was introduced. Discussions were held to revise the existing tariff of fares of motor hearses.

The Directorate has also held several meetings with the Gozo Bus Owners Association to implement a radical reform in the public transport services in Gozo.

The enforcement section of the PTD carried out roadside inspections relating to the weights, dimensions and equipment regulations, inspections of dangerous goods vehicles, and emission testing. The section also carried out enforcement work related to public transport, particularly on services affecting the tourist industry and school transport.

Licensing and Testing Directorate

The e-Vera, the on-line Vehicle Licence Renewal System, was extended to have VRT passed test certificates also transmitted on-line to the Licensing and Testing Directorate (LTD).

The Registration Tax Act as applicable to classic, vintage and veteran vehicles was reviewed and changed.

The Directorate conducted training courses to increase the teaching capability of driving instructors. A certificate of professional competence for public transport passenger drivers was introduced. In addition, the Driving Licensing System was enhanced, upgraded and made more secure. New legislation was enacted to change the validity period of the driving licence for persons over 70 years of age from two to five years.

The Directorate also implemented the necessary infrastructure for the card issuing of the digital tachograph in Malta. The technical unit of the Directorate established the standards to conduct the single vehicle type approval tests for locally-built vehicles. Furthermore, evaluations and inspections of second-hand vehicles imported from EU countries were carried out.

Transport Strategy Directorate

The Transport Strategy Directorate (TSD) continued to participate in a number of EU funded projects which included: SUPREME, CITUM, Cyromed, and Pagus Interreg 3C Innotrans. The Valletta Transport Strategy continued to be implemented through the operation of a free Park and Ride service in Blata l-Bajda, the extension of the pedestrian area in Valletta, the introduction of a Controlled Vehicular Access System in Valletta, and the introduction of electric minicabs in the City.

The Research and Planning Unit of the Directorate maintains a statistics and information database. In particular, during 2007, the Unit assisted MEPA and the Malta Resources Authority (MRA) in the projections of transport emissions in relation to a number of EU Directives. The Unit continued to develop its spatial geographical information related to transport.

The Traffic Management Unit assesses and monitors permanent and temporary traffic management schemes on streets and during road works. The Unit also focuses on the implementation of minor transport

projects which are targeted at improving road safety and traffic efficiency. In addition, the Unit liaises continuously with the Malta Police, the local councils, MEPA, government entities and the general public to ensure that transportation issues on a national and local level are given a holistic dimension. The Unit manages temporary traffic management schemes during road works on a local level, and is responsible for the service of reserved parking for persons with a disability. Furthermore, the Unit collects traffic and pedestrian data; conducts workshops for road contractors and on road safety education for children, and established the Cycling Proficiency Test. The Unit also has the responsibility for the continuous monitoring and maintenance of traffic light hardware installations.

Corporate Services Directorate

This Directorate provides services to the Malta Transport Authority in the financial, information technology and administration areas.

VINCE CASSAR
Permanent Secretary, MUDR

**Ministry for the Family
and Social Solidarity**

The image features a minimalist, abstract design. The background is a light beige color. On the right side, there are several overlapping, organic shapes in shades of blue and teal. The text 'Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity' is centered in the upper left quadrant in a bold, orange-red font.

Social Security Division

The Social Security Division 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. The Division 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 2007 reached Lm245,687,715. This expenditure reflects an increase of Lm12,214,293 over the previous year.

LEGISLATION

Increases in the rates of Social Security benefits and contributions as had previously been announced in the Budget Speech for 2007 were proportionately tied to the Lm1.75 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. With effect from January of the year under review persons in part-time employment were also given the option to pay a pro-rata Social Security Contribution rate of 10% of their income from their part-time employment instead of 10% of the National Minimum Wage.

Act XXXII of 2007 published on the 31 December 2007 carried the majority of the amendments to the Social Security Act as a result of the new measures introduced during 2007 as announced by Government.

Legal notices were also published to put into effect the various benefit rate increases to reflect the cost of living award, the implementation of the Invalidity Pension reform and Impairment Tables and the smoothing of certain thresholds as a result of the euro changeover effective from the 1 January 2008.

The Administrative Scheme regulating the new Energy Benefit was launched by the Minister on the 19 April 2007 and was published in the Government Gazette of 20 April 2007.

NEW SOCIAL SECURITY MEASURES

As a result of the 2007 Budget speech a number of initiatives in social security were announced by Government. In fact during the year under review, the Social Security Division introduced the following measures.

Energy Benefit

This benefit replaced the actual Electricity Rebate system. Refund through a payment voucher system given on the surcharge and water and electricity meters according to the typical consumption of water and electricity of family was established. The new system requires periodical estimates according to the number of members (being the dependant members considered for entitlement to a social assistance) in the household and the typical consumption of such household according to standard rates established by the National Statistics Office.

Persons in receipt of Unemployment and Social Assistance (including single parents), an Age Pension or persons in receipt of Special Unemployment Benefit automatically benefited without the need to apply. Other persons, such as persons in receipt of a Child or Supplementary Allowance or a Disability Pension and whose household income is less than Lm3,268 per annum also qualified and were required to apply for such a benefit. Approximately 29,000 persons qualified for such benefit.

The Energy Benefit was also payable on humanitarian grounds to families where:

- a member of the household has a medical condition which justifies excessive use of water and electricity; and
- the members of the household are permanently resident in Malta; and
- the household income, calculated in accordance with Part VII of the Second Schedule of the Social Security Act (Cap. 318) would entitle the head of the household or his/her spouse, as the case may be, to a Disabled Child Allowance.

Disability Pension

Another measure introduced during 2007 was with respect to persons receiving a non-contributory disability pension. As a result of this new measure in the calculation of the income of the disabled person for the purposes of establishing a right to such pension, for the first five years of marriage, no consideration would be made of the income and/or capital of the disabled person's spouse.

Social Assistance Careers

The Social Assistance to carers of elderly relatives which was previously payable only to female applicants was extended to male relatives.

Supplementary Allowance

The percentage rates in the establishment of the supplementary allowance were increased as follows:

Married – from 1/75% to 2% (max of Lm3.08p/wk)

Single – from 1.25% to 1.5% (max of Lm1.73p/wk)

Work Friendly Measures

Further to the foregoing, in its endeavour to generate employment, in 2007 Malta introduced three changes in the Social Security Act, namely:

Change in the computation system of social security contributions on part-time employment

Up till 31st December 2006, part-time employees working more than eight hours per week, regardless of the amount earned, were obliged to pay a minimum contribution of Lm5.79 per week which was equivalent to 10% of the then national minimum wage. In view of this, several people who wished to work were

dissuaded from doing so. Therefore, with effect from 1 January 2007, social security contributions due by employees working eight hours a week or more was adjusted to 10% of what they earn from such work, with this pro-rata rate of contribution giving contributor a pro-rata entitlement to contributory benefits. This measure helps to alleviate the burden on workers and to strengthen the part-time work sector, a labour market sector that is predominantly resorted to by women as their principal form of employment.

Changes to the contributory widows'/ widowers' pension

Up till 31st December 2006, a widow/widower who did not have children below the age of 16 years or unemployed children below the age of 18 years would lose pension entitlement if earnings derived from work exceeded the national minimum wage. These provisions compelled widows/widowers to reduce their working hours or to stay away from employment so as not to forfeit their pension.

As from 1st January 2007, a widow or widower with children under the age of 21 years (up from 16/18 years) who are not in gainful employment shall continue to be entitled to a widow/widower's pension at the fixed rate of this pension notwithstanding the fact that they earn more than the minimum wage.

Similarly a widow/widower who remarries shall retain fixed rate pension entitlement in the first five years of re-marriage.

Insurability – Host families

From January 2007, persons acting as host families to students could, if their sole income was from the hosting of such students, opt whether such income is to be considered for the purposes of insurability under the terms of the Social Security Act.

CONTRIBUTORY SCHEME

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 2007 in terms of the Social Security Act (Cap 318) amounted to Lm206,168,287. This reflects an increase of Lm3,791,447 over the previous year. These figures are broken down in detail in the following table:

| Contributions and Enforcement | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Type of Contributions | 2006 Lm | 2007 Lm | (+) or (-) Lm |
| Class I: Contributions in respect of Private industry | 90,113,367 | 91,253,666 | (+) 1,140,299 |
| Class I: Contributions in respect of Government Employees | 31,096,536 | 31,530,759 | (+) 434,223 |
| Class II: Contributions by Self- Employed persons | 13,625,399 | 14,614,133 | (+) 988,734 |
| Further Contributions | 123,887 | 70,449 | (-) 53,438 |
| State Contribution | 67,417,651 | 68,699,280 | (+) 1,281,629 |
| Total | 202,376,840 | 206,168,287 | (+) 3,791,447 |

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 2007, 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 35,638 contribution histories whilst they also verified another 57,705 ledger sheets. During the year, the Gozo Branch managed again to issue the annual reviews of Supplementary Allowance claims on time. The total number of Supplementary Allowance, claims reviewed amounted to 29,789.

Claims for short-term benefits dealt with during 2007, as compared with 2006, are shown hereunder:

| Type of Benefit | Number of Claims | | | Type of Medical Certificate | 2006 | 2007 | (+ or -) |
|------------------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| | 2006 | 2007 | (+) or (-) | | | | |
| Sickness Benefit | 123,316 | 106,440 | (-) 16,876 | First/Final (less than 4 days) | 76,653 | 76,788 | 135 |
| Unemployment Benefit | 18,732 | 18,514 | (-) 218 | First/Final (4 to 6 days) | 27,822 | 29,016 | 1,194 |
| Special Unemployment Benefit | 1,241 | 959 | (-) 282 | First (open) | 18,841 | 18,804 | (-) 37 |
| Injury Benefit | 4,249 | 4,235 | (-) 14 | Intermediate | 92,561 | 100,718 | 8,157 |
| Marriage Grant | 3,311 | 3,404 | 93 | Final | 15,793 | 15,810 | 17 |
| Total | 150,849 | 133,552 | (-) 17,297 | Total | 231,670 | 241,136 | 9,466 |

The Energy Benefit Section

A new section was established under the Gozo Branch to deal with the Energy Benefit. During the year in question, three Clerical officers were trained at the Division's head office in Malta for eventual transfer to Gozo. On 5 October 2007 the new unit began functioning in Gozo.

Children's Allowances and Other Family Benefits

During 2007, the Division reviewed all cases of Child Allowance that were in payment up to end of June 2007, with a view to establish the new Child Allowance Benefit rates for the year starting July 2007. The number of households in receipt of children allowance benefit was 31,951 at 31 December 2007, as compared to 34,354 households on 31 December 2006.

In view of the pronounced Budgetary measures effecting Children Allowance for 2008, the Division had to carry out the keying in and authorisation of applications for those who prior to 1 January 2008 had not been entitled to Children Allowance as their income exceeded Lm10,270.

The following tables give an overview of the family allowances in payment at the end of 2007 compared to 2006 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 2006 and 2007.

| Type of Benefit | Number of Families | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|------------------|
| | 2006 | 2007 | (+) or (-) |
| Child Allowance only: | | | |
| - One eligible child | 17,265 | 16,228 | (-) 1,037 |
| - Two eligible children | 12,871 | 11,830 | (-) 1,041 |
| - Three eligible children | 3,364 | 3,094 | (-) 270 |
| - Four or more eligible children | 854 | 799 | (-) 55 |
| Total | 34,354 | 31,951 | (-) 2,403 |

| Type of Benefit | 2006 | 2007 | (+) or (-) |
|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Disabled Child Allowance | 646 | 682 | 36 |
| Maternity Benefit | 2,497 | 2,629 | 132 |
| Total | 3,143 | 3,311 | 168 |

Contributory Pensions

The following table shows the number of persons in receipt of a Contributory Pension at the end of 2007. Here the upward trend in the number of pensioners, especially the new retirees, continued. An increase of almost 2.7% was recorded in the number of retirement pensioners.

The maximum pensionable income for Social Security purposes was again increased by the cost of living allowance to reach the amount of Lm7,049.

During the period under review, the pensions section was also engaged in an exercise to carry out revisions of various pensioners according to new collective agreements that came into effect during the said year. The number of pensioners that benefited as a result of the above mentioned exercise amounted to 13,037 with an expenditure of Lm1,289,266.05.

Moreover, the staff at the pensions section continued with the exercise of data cleansing to improve the database of the Social Security Division.

| Type of Benefit | Number of Claims | | |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------|---------------|--------------|
| | 2006 | 2007 | (+) or (-) |
| Retirement Pension | 8,844 | 9,159 | 315 |
| Increased Retirement Pension | 2,308 | 2,321 | 13 |
| National Minimum Retirement Pension | 8,688 | 8,118 | (-) 570 |
| Decreased National Minimum Pension | 129 | 130 | 1 |
| Increased National Minimum Ret. Pension | 2,325 | 2,489 | 164 |
| Two-Thirds Pension | 22,642 | 24,765 | 2,123 |
| Invalidity Pension | 1,821 | 1,619 | (-) 202 |
| Increased Invalidity Pension | 336 | 312 | (-) 24 |
| National Minimum Invalidity Pension | 7,307 | 7,059 | (-) 248 |
| Decreased National Minimum Pension | 27 | 24 | (-) 3 |
| Widow's Pension with Service Pension | 1,061 | 972 | (-) 89 |
| National Minimum Widow's Pension | 8,330 | 8,488 | 158 |
| Early Survivor's Pension | 1,894 | 1,876 | (-) 18 |
| Survivor's Pension | 4,213 | 4,498 | 285 |
| Disablement Pension | 373 | 361 | (-) 12 |
| Orphan's Allowance | 14 | 11 | (-) 3 |
| Total | 70,312 | 72,202 | 1,890 |

Invalidity Pension Reform

During 2007, amendments to social security legislation, passed through Parliament in the latter part of 2006, became effective from the 1 July 2007. These amendments to legislation practically result in a total reform of the invalidity pension system. The major elements of the reform include amongst others:

- **Change in the application format** – to include more medical data and further responsibility on the part of the claimant to prove his/her case. It is important that the client be made more responsible to provide the medical information to substantiate his claim rather than the current system where the Directorate takes on the responsibility to prove whether a client satisfies the medical criteria for Invalidity pension entitlement or otherwise.
- **Change the current medical panel system** – the new medical review team is composed of two medical practitioners engaged by the Social Security Directorate General to advise on the medical aspects of the case in line with the newly adopted Impairment Tables.
- **Establish specific medical criteria for the award of benefits** – this has been achieved by establishing “Impairment Tables” that provide the basic guidelines under which that Medical Review Team decides on work-related impairment for Invalidity pension.

The tables consist of a number of system-based tables that contain specific sets of criteria classified into levels of impairment relating to that body system. These allow ratings to be assigned in proportion to the severity of the impact of medical impairments on functional work capacity.

Also other changes to the system have been made such as a minimum period of sickness benefit introduced before the payment of an invalidity pension. The proposed waiting period is six months from the first social security medical certificate submitted by the applicant. During this waiting period the applicant will in the majority of cases still be entitled to normal sickness benefits. Such waiting period will not be applicable in the sudden severely or terminally ill.

The number of Invalidity Pension cases assessed and reviewed under the new system which became operative in September, amounted to 612 up to the end of the year. From this amount there were 302 new cases, while 310 were cases that had to be reviewed by the medical board.

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 1.35% over the previous year mainly in the Old Age pension beneficiaries, as shown in the table below.

| Type of Pension/Allowance | Beneficiaries | | |
|----------------------------|---------------|--------------|------------|
| | end 2006 | end 2007 | (+) or (-) |
| Old Age | 4,818 | 4,885 | 67 |
| Visually Impaired | 153 | 165 | 12 |
| Mentally/Severely Disabled | 2,194 | 2,237 | 43 |
| Carer's | 251 | 229 | (-) 22 |
| Total | 7,416 | 7,516 | 100 |

Assistances

Non-Contributory Benefits are granted to heads of household who are incapable of work, persons registered as unemployed, to carers of a relative on a full-time basis; to single unmarried parents, to aged persons who could not qualify to a contributory pension, to drug addicts undergoing a rehabilitation programme, to disabled persons and to persons who suffer from a chronic illness. There are also benefits in kind such as the issue of free medical aid. All these assistances are subject to a means test.

As from 2007 bachelors and widowers have become entitled to Carer's Social Assistance (SAF). This assistance has previously been only awarded to spinsters and widows. The number of claims by male applicants during 2007 was 89, of which 45 have been in payment.

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 0.11% mainly in Social Assistance.

During 2007, the Division carried out 8,103 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 8,030 were found to be eligible and were awarded Free Medical Aid accordingly. There were also 501 applications for the waiving off of the Matsec Examination Fees, of which 484 were accepted. Furthermore there were 79 applications for exemption from the payment of Social Security Contributions.

| Type of Assistance | Beneficiaries | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|---------------|------------|
| | end 2006 | end 2007 | (+) or (-) |
| Unemployment assistance | 6,074 | 5,762 | (-) 312 |
| Social assistance * | 10,350 | 10,770 | 420 |
| Sickness assistance | 14,631 | 14,712 | 81 |
| Milk Grant | 133 | 149 | 16 |
| Leprosy assistance | 57 | 57 | - |
| Tuberculosis assistance | 24 | 20 | (-) 4 |
| Supplementary allowance | 29,918 | 29,789 | (-) 129 |
| Total | 61,187 | 61,259 | 72 |

* Social Assistance means SA/SAF/SUP/DAD

Electricity Rebates

As from 2007 the criteria for Electricity Rebates have been replaced with the introduction of the Energy Benefit. Persons in receipt of social assistance, unemployment assistance, special unemployment benefit,

age pension, carer's social assistance, carer's pension, and single unmarried persons have become automatically entitled to this benefit. Those persons in receipt of children allowance, supplementary allowance and disability pension whose income did not exceed Lm3,268 became entitled to this assistance. Also those families, who as a result of the illness of a member in the household, had an excessive consumption of water and electricity, became also entitled after their claim was confirmed by the Energy Benefit Board. The Energy Benefit Board had received 166 applications in 2007. Of these 79 cases were upheld, 73 rejected and 14 cases pending for further information. The Energy Board held nine meetings in 2007. The assistance is issued as vouchers entitling claimants to a deduction in Surcharge, Meter charges and water consumption. The number of beneficiaries that enjoyed this benefit during 2007 amounted to 29,005 with an expenditure of Lm911,259.94.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

In the field of International Relations, the Social Security Division has placed the necessary infrastructure within the Division by establishing the International Relations Unit (IRU) in 2004 to fully meet its responsibilities evolving from its commitments arising from the various bilateral agreements and from Malta's membership to the EU. During 2007 this Unit completed a number of remarkable tasks, amongst which the following:

- 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 is conducted by the University of Ghent in Belgium, and is co-financed by the EU. Following this seminar, the IRU was asked to make its contribution in the compiling of the 2007 trESS Annual Report.
- The IRU continued evolving the area of applicable legislation, which 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, and with the competent institutions in all the EU Member States. The IRU was also represented in a conference on this area in the Netherlands in December.
- A higher level of awareness necessitates information that is continually updated. The IRU continued to provide information and to disseminate it as widely as possible. To this end, the IRU was involved in sessions of in-house training to District Managers and employees within the various entities of the Ministry. The presentations featured aspects of the EU Social Security Regulation and Bilateral Agreements and the initiative being taken on a structured e-Form Management System. Various presentations were also delivered on the international obligations of the Division, in particular to EURES advisors from other Member States who were present during a job fair organised by the Employment and Training Corporation.
- The field of Social Security has a more concrete scope when seen in a wider perspective. IRU staff members have actively participated in several meetings held abroad, covering a wide spectrum of social security related issues. Thus, through its active participation, the issues and concerns of Malta as a Member State of the EU were voiced. During the year under review, the IRU has participated in three *ad hoc* groups (Pensions, Legislation Applicable and Unemployment) in line with the Work Programme of the Administrative Commission on Social Security for Migrant Workers on Electronic Data Exchange. Moreover, the IRU continued to attend regularly and participate in meetings of the Administrative Commission and the Social Questions Working Party. The main theme of these meetings focused on the necessary measures to be taken by the Administrative Commission when EU Regulation 883/2004 becomes applicable.
- In line with its business plan, the IRU embarked on an ambitious initiative with the implementation of Phase One of the e-Form Management System which will be the first step towards a fully integrated

web-based system. Co-financed by the MFSS and the EU, the system will provide an integrated e-Form registration and administration system. The e-Forms are the standard EU application form used in the Social Security field. Phase One's implementation included the system analysis and data flow of the current manual system followed by the documentation and user acceptance testing. The system will facilitate the reorganisation of the Division's handling of e-Forms, the drive of electronic exchange and improve the overall presentation and service. IRU staff members actively participated in sessions held with the contracting company and specifically gave advice on how to devise a common approach to problems encountered with the filling of applications and identified the mandatory items requested on the e-Forms.

- Since Malta's accession to the EU, the IRU has continued to exercise the co-ordination of social security while at the same time is in the process of reviewing existing domestic legislation to ensure that there is no conflicting interpretation. As examples, the IRU is conducting high level meetings on topics relating to the Transfer of Pension Rights and the Portability Directive. The IRU continues to identify conflicting legislation and collaborate extensively in obtaining advice from EU experts on the suggested course of action.
- On the operational side, the IRU 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 Division has a bilateral agreement and other third countries. This year these claims almost amounted to 1,000, and can be categorised as per table below. Furthermore, the front desk office dealt with over 5,000 queries with the majority received on the IRU's generic e-mail address. The IRU continued and finalised the reassessments dating back from 2002 of all Maltese payment abroad contributory pensions as committed in its Business Plan.
- The IRU prepared a proposal for a European Social Fund project on childcare subsidy. This project falls within Strategic Theme 3 of Malta's National Reform Programme and contributes towards this theme by addressing the difference in employment rates between men and women; increasing the female participation rate by 7% up to 41% by 2010, and also towards Measure M03.4 – Promote family-friendly measures of the NRP by '... facilitating the provision of childcare'.
- The various bilateral agreements Malta has with other countries were supervised and administered by the IRU. Various communications between the IRU and the contracting parties were carried out this year in particular to announce the new requirements following the legislative changes in the Maltese Invalidity Pension scheme, as well as following the visit to Australia by the Maltese Prime Minister to find a possible way which would be more beneficial for Australian pensioners living in Malta, such as returned migrants.
- During the year under review Malta also had to submit two reports to the Council of Europe, one in connection with the European Social Charter and another related to the Revised European Social Charter. The first report contained replies and clarifications by Malta to the Conclusions XVIII-1 Volume 1 Chapter 11. These replies included information pertaining to Malta's Policy on Full Employment, Trade Union Rights and Activities, Collective Bargaining, and the Right to Social Security. The second report pertained to Malta's first Report on the Revised European Social Charter and dealt with the period January 2005 to December 2006. This report highlighted the various employment schemes and services available in Malta, equality of treatment vis-à-vis employment, vocational guidance and training, and on the rights of persons with a disability to social integration and participation in the life of the community.

The following table shows the incoming and outgoing applications, by contracting state and by type of pension:

| | Incoming 2007 | Outgoing 2007 |
|------------|------------------|------------------|
| EU: | | |
| Retirement | 98 | 90 |
| Invalidity | 13 | 25 |
| Survivors | 13 | 4 |
| Australia: | | |
| Retirement | 315 | 120 |
| Invalidity | 46 | 57 |
| Survivors | 42 | 10 |
| Canada: | | |
| Retirement | 45 | 83 |
| Invalidity | 0 | 7 |
| Survivors | 2 | 3 |
| Others: | | |
| Retirement | 5 | 0 |
| Invalidity | 0 | 0 |
| Survivors | 1 | 0 |

APPEALS TO THE UMPIRE

The following table shows how the number of appeals that were up for one or more hearings during 2007 were dealt with, as compared with the same figures for 2006.

It is pertinent to point out that during the period in review, a Benefit Fraud Board was set up with the aim to decide on cases investigated and brought up by the Benefit Fraud Investigation Directorate. The Board consists of the Director General, Director Benefits, a lawyer, Assistant Heads dealing with benefits and also section heads that attend the Umpire's sittings.

| Appeals | 2006 | 2007 |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| A. No of Appeals for hearing: | | |
| (i) Brought forward from previous year | 216 | 412 |
| (ii) Lodged during the year | <u>831</u> = | <u>909</u> = |
| | 1,047 | 1,321 |
| B. No. of Appeals settled: | | |
| (i) Decided against appellant | 287 | 288 |
| (ii) Decided in favour of appellant | 73 | 44 |
| (iii) Withdrawn by appellant | 268 | 353 |
| (iv) Cancelled | <u>7</u> = | <u>13</u> = |
| | 635 | 698 |
| No. of Appeals still outstanding at end year | 412 | 623 |

PAYMENTS

During 2007, the Department had to account for a total expenditure of Lm316,121,429. 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 2007. This table comprises the contributory and the non-contributory benefits issued by the Department.

| Type of Benefit | 2006 | 2007 | (+) or (-) |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| | Lm | Lm | Lm |
| Pensions in respect of Retirement | 103,494,986 | 112,539,906 | 9,044,920 |
| Pensions in respect of Invalidity | 16,116,076 | 15,893,929 | (-) 222,147 |
| Pensions in respect of Widowhood | 37,185,613 | 38,654,047 | 1,468,434 |
| Pensions in respect of Industrial Injuries | 738,687 | 810,312 | 71,625 |
| Pensions in respect of unemployment | 1,188,981 | 997,423 | (-) 191,558 |
| Children's Allowance | 13,307,291 | 12,511,983 | (-) 795,308 |
| Maternity Benefit | 714,163 | 789,961 | 75,798 |
| Sickness Benefit | 2,253,910 | 2,673,505 | 419,595 |
| Orphan's Allowance | 22,208 | 17,564 | (-) 4,644 |
| Marriage Grant | 299,793 | 303,578 | 3,785 |
| Re-Marriage Gratuity | 9,796 | 49,774 | 39,978 |
| Bonus | 11,988,886 | 12,325,906 | 337,020 |
| Total (i) | 187,320,390 | 197,567,888 | 10,247,498 |
| Pensions in respect of Age/Visually Impaired | 7,293,529 | 7,543,997 | 250,468 |
| Pensions in respect of Disability | 3,684,097 | 3,837,880 | 153,783 |
| Social Assistance | 22,753,030 | 23,664,736 | 911,706 |
| Medical Assistance | 6,499,703 | 6,753,754 | 254,051 |
| Handicapped Child Allowance | 171,882 | 171,638 | (-) 244 |
| Bonus | 3,288,761 | 3,345,593 | 56,832 |
| Supplementary Assistance | 2,462,030 | 2,802,229 | 340,199 |
| Total (ii) | 46,153,032 | 48,119,827 | 1,966,795 |
| Grand Total (i) + (ii) | 233,473,422 | 245,687,715 | 12,214,293 |

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 Division. During the year a number of software updates were released.

A major enhancement that took place during 2007 was the euro changeover. All data on the SABS was converted from Maltese Lira to Euro. This exercise was successfully carried out by MITTS whilst all testing was conducted by the staff of this Division.

Although the euro changeover engaged the resources of MITTS and the Social Security personnel, both entities co-operated to produce the software that is being used now for the Energy Benefit section. Furthermore, minor enhancements to the SABS software were also carried out to facilitate assessment of the Contributory Pensions and the Supplementary Allowance.

The IRU implemented Phase One of the e-Form Management System which will be the first step towards a fully integrated web based system. The system will facilitate the reorganization of the DSS handling of e-Forms, the drive of electronic exchange and improvement to the overall presentation and service.

During 2007, Children Allowance and Supplementary Allowance applications had been put online so that clients who held an e-Id could apply without having the need to call personally at the District Offices to submit such applications.

CUSTOMER CARE AND DISTRICT OFFICES

There are 24 district offices in Malta situated in the localities of Balzan, B'Kara, Vittoriosa, Fgura, Hamrun, Luqa, Marsa, Mosta, Msida, Naxxar, Paola, Qormi, Rabat, Sliema, St Paul's Bay, San Gwann, Siggiewi, 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.

Training for personnel at District Offices is an on-going process. During the year 2007 an intensive training programme was organised 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 SDO.

Following a call for applications for the filling of vacant positions of District Managers, eight Managers were appointed in such post. These appointments coupled with the training afforded to personnel, consolidates further our position in enhancing the service to our clients.

Furthermore, we have embarked on an ambitious programme to improve the accessibility of our district offices where necessary. However, this entails heavy capital investment and we have to take the opportunity when it arises to acquire accessible premises. In the meantime, we pay home visits to immobile clients requesting our services and who have nobody to look after them.

In addition new premises have been finalised at Qawra to house the district office replacing the one at St. Paul's Bay. This new district office at Qawra will be launched in due course. Structural works are also well in progress on the project at Old Mint Street, housing Valletta District Office and the Customer Care office of the Social Security Division. These two offices will form part of a complex set up on the lines of Access at Vittoriosa, thus providing a holistic service to the family.

During 2007, 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 Divisions' presence in this area is increased in the future.

STAFF

During 2007 the staff complement of the Department of Social Security decreased by eight when compared to the complement on 31 December, 2006, including those members of staff seconded from IPSL, as shown in the following table.

| | 31.12.2006 | 31.12.2007 |
|-------------------------|------------|------------|
| General Service Grades | 242 | 240 |
| Industrial/Messengerial | 67 | 63 |
| IPSL | 21 | 19 |
| Total | 330 | 322 |

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, 67 in the General Services Grade and three in the Industrial/Messengerial Grade were performing duties at the Social Security Department in Gozo.

JOSEPH CAMILLERI
Director General (Social Security)

Department for Social Welfare Standards

INTRODUCTION

The main thrust for the Department for Social Welfare Standards during 2007 was the consolidation of its regulatory role and the strengthening of its Central Authority functions. Among the most significant developments, one should mention the provisional registration of child day care facilities and the successful implementation of the improvement grant scheme, as well as the designation of the Department as the Central Authority for Foster Care.

Moreover the Department has also been preparing the groundwork for major developments that are expected to take place in 2008. Worthy of note are the formulation of the Standards for Residential Child Care and the Codes of Conduct and Practice for social service workers and employers.

CHILD DAY CARE SERVICES

Provisional Registration of Child Day Care Facilities

The first ever provisional registration of child day care facilities took place on 6 March 2007, during a ceremony held at the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity.

When granting provisional registration to a facility, the Department for Social Welfare Standards confirms that a facility would have the potential to become compliant with the National Standards for Child Day Care. The process of provisional registration entails that the Welfare Services Assessment Unit conducts an assessment of the facility and the service and after consultation with the providers themselves draws up an improvement action plan, outlining the improvements that the facility would need to implement in order to become compliant with the established standards, and sets timeframes for implementation.

The criteria for provisional registration are the following:

- the person managing the service demonstrates that he/she is fit and competent to deliver a child day care service;
- the premises are, or can within a short timeframe become, suitable and safe for children;
- there is no significant risk for children, and that any other risks can be eliminated within an established timescale;
- there are no substantiated records or reports where serious complaints have been lodged against the facility;
- there is a commitment to adopt an approach, method, and programme of activities which is conducive to the development of children under the age of three years;
- the person responsible is in a position to improve the facility to the levels established by set requirements and standards;
- there are clear indications that the service provider would be in a position to fulfil the child day care requirements and meet the standards established in the Standards for Child Day Care Facilities, published in July 2006.

During 2007 a total of 33 facilities were granted provisional registration by the Department for Social Welfare Standards as shown in the following table. It is anticipated that other new and existing facilities will join this growing list during 2008.

| Registered Child Day Care Facilities – December 2007 | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Name of Facility</i> | <i>Locality</i> |
| Barney's Playschool and Daycare Centre | Fgura |
| Child Jesus Edu-Care Centre | Mellieha |
| Chiswick House School | Swatar |
| Fleurette School of Montessori | Kappara |
| Flutterby | Pembroke |
| Happy Kidz | Sliema |
| Il-Passju | Hal Far |
| Jack and Jill's Day Centre | Burmarrad |
| Kaell's Child Care Centre | Msida |
| Kid's Haven | San Ġwann |
| Kidstart Childcare and Development Centre | Santa Venera |
| Little Tots | Balzan |
| Maria Ġuzzeppina Curmi Day Care Centre | Żejtun |
| Mickey's Child Day Care Centre | Hamrun |
| Minnie's Child Day Care Centre | Żejtun |
| Neverland | Mellieha |
| Niki's Nursery School | Sliema |
| San Andrea School | Żebbiegh |
| San Anton Day Care Centre | Mġarr |
| Sharon's Nursery | Fgura |
| Smartkids Day Care Facility and Family Support Centre | Birkirkara |
| Smartkids Day Centre and Family Support | Vittoriosa |
| St Cecilia Kindergarten | Attard |
| St Cecilia Kindergarten | Tarxien |
| St Joseph Day Care Centre | Żejtun |
| St Paula Childcare/Playcentre | Żebbuġ |
| Stepping Stones Child Care Centre | Fgura |
| Tender Loving Care Child Care Centre | Marsasala |
| The Daycare Centre and Nursery School | Mosta |
| Tinkerbell Nursery | Fgura |
| Tiny Tots | Żurrieq |
| Victoria Nursery School | San Pawl tat-Tarġa |
| Westin Kids Club | St. Julian's |

Improvement Grant Scheme

The Improvement Grant Scheme for Child Day Care Facilities was announced in the Budget Speech for 2006 and entered into force on 1 August 2006 after being published in the Government Gazette. This scheme was intended to grant financial assistance to existing child day care facilities so that these would improve their service with the aim of becoming more compliant with the Standards for Child Day Care Facilities as issued by the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity (MFSS) in July 2006. The Department for Social Welfare Standards was entrusted to administer the scheme.

The Welfare Services Assessment Unit within the Department assessed the applicant facilities against the said standards and an improvement action plan was drawn up for each facility. Bilateral meetings between representatives of the Department, led by the Director, and the management of the respective facilities were held to discuss the contents of the improvement action plans. Where applicable, the improvement action plans were amended according to the outcome of the meetings and a final version was issued by the 6th March 2007.

On 6 March 2007 Certificates of Provisional Registration were issued to 26 child day care facilities, while a contract of agreement in respect of the improvement grant scheme was signed with 23 facilities. One home-based facility was eligible for a maximum grant of Lm800 while the remaining 22 centre-based facilities were eligible for a maximum grant of Lm3,000 each.

Throughout the duration of the scheme, and especially whilst improvements were being carried out at the facilities, the Department for Social Welfare Standards provided continuous support, assistance and advice as required. All improvement works were completed by the end of November 2007 and the Welfare Services Assessment Unit conducted verification visits to certify that the works had been carried out as agreed in the improvement action plan.

By the end of the scheme, on 31 December 2007 the total amount of Lm66,778.25 had been reimbursed to 23 child day care facilities.

Suitability of Premises

The Welfare Services Assessment Unit of the Department for Social Welfare Standards also conducts site visits to prospective child day care facilities to assess the suitability of new premises. Through this process, it is ensured that the facility would have the potential to comply with the standards, and service providers are assisted from the very initial stages of their operation.

During 2007, a total of 25 site visits were carried out by the Welfare Services Assessment Unit.

Campaign on Benefits of Quality Child Care and Freephone 80074903

The 80074903 Child Care Freephone was initially launched in January 2007 as part of a national campaign promoting the benefits of quality childcare. This campaign, which was managed by the Employment and Training Corporation and part financed by the European Social Fund of the European Union, came to an end in mid-2007.

The Department for Social Welfare Standards contributed extensively to this campaign by providing expertise in the areas of regulation, standards and quality childcare and by providing timely and accurate information to the project leaders during the campaign. The Department was also involved in publicity events and was responsible to set up the Child Care national helpline, an integral part of this campaign. Following the end of the campaign, the Department for Social Welfare Standards decided to retain the Freephone so as to continue providing the general public with useful information.

Between August and December 2007, the Department for Social Welfare Standards received 123 phone calls on the 80074903 Child Care Freephone. Many people requested details of provisionally registered child day care facilities in the vicinity of their locality, while many others requested information about government-operated child day care facilities. A number of complaints as well as queries from people wishing to open a child day care facility were also received.

Parents Questionnaire

To further pursue dialogue and consultation with service users as stated in the Department's mission statement, a comprehensive questionnaire was drafted and sent to a number of parents who make use of child day care services. The purpose of this questionnaire was to analyse parents' awareness of the Standards for Child Day Care Facilities and to receive feedback on their perceptions vis-à-vis the facilities' compliance with the said standards.

The response rate to this questionnaire was 21%, however when assessing whether this questionnaire achieved its stated aims, one also has to take into consideration that up to 200 copies of an abridged version of the Standards for Child Day Care Facilities have been disseminated to the general public.

A detailed analysis of the results will be issued by the Research and Standard Development Unit of the Department. Further studies of this type are required.

Tax Deductions to Parents of Children Attending Child Day Care Facilities

During 2007, as part of the Budget measures for 2007, the Inland Revenue Department requested the assistance of the Department for Social Welfare Standards to implement a scheme whereby parents of children who attend provisionally registered child day care facilities would be entitled to a deduction against their taxable income. This deduction is equivalent to the fees paid in child day care services up to a maximum of Lm400 for each child.

This initiative is also applicable to employers who pay child day care fees on behalf of their employees. Such employers would be entitled for a deduction against their taxable amount up to a maximum of Lm400 per child.

Complaints Procedure

A complaints procedure and a complaints form were drawn up and made available on the Department's website in late 2007. The aim of this procedure is to enable service providers, service users and all stakeholders to forward to the department any complaints about the provision of child day care services. In this way the Department for Social Welfare Standards would seek to ensure the best interests of all concerned, above all, the best interest of children. It is planned that this complaints procedure would be extended to other care sectors, such as foster care and adoptions.

CENTRAL AUTHORITY FUNCTIONS

The Department for Social Welfare Standards is the designated Central Authority for Malta in the field of International Child Abduction, Intercountry Adoption and Foster Care. This designation has been assigned in terms of the local legislation and the international conventions mentioned below:

- The Child Abduction and Custody Act (Chapter 410 of the Laws of Malta)
- The Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of the International Child Abduction
- The Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption
- The Civil Code provisions for adoption (Civil Code Chapter 16 Title III)
- The Foster Care Act (Chapter 491 of the Laws of Malta).

International Child Abduction

During 2007 the Office in charge of international child abduction cases dealt with the following cases:

Child Abduction Cases

| | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| Cases brought forward from 2006 | 9 |
| New cases received in 2007 | 9 |
| Cases decided and closed | 7 |
| Cases carried forward to 2008 | 11 |

The central authorities with whom the Department for Social Welfare Standards has collaborated in 2007 were those of England and Wales, Turkey, Slovakia, Hungary, Germany and the United States of America.

Adoption

Caseload

During the year, 32 Maltese couples finalised the adoption process from overseas and adopted a total of 37 children. The latter were adopted as follows: one from Cambodia, six from Ethiopia, two from Guatemala, one from Kazakhstan, two from Pakistan and 25 from the Russian Federation.

Further details about the status of Adoption Cases in 2007 are given in the following table:

| Status of Adoption Cases | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| New Applicants | 52 |
| Applicants who have completed the preparatory course | 49 |
| Home Study Reports completed and recommended by the Adoption and Fostering Panel for approval | 48 |
| Prospective Adoptive Parents waiting for the matching of children | 138 |
| Home Study Reports put on hold by applicants | 29 |
| Applications yet to satisfy conditions of eligibility | 13 |
| New applicants yet to undergo the preparatory course and whose Home Study Report is yet to be initiated | 47 |
| Post Adoption Reports compiled | 180 |
| Search for natural Family Cases | 8 |
| Cases Completed | 76 |

Transfer of Adoption Services

The transfer of adoption service delivery to *Aġenzija Appoġġ* commenced in 2007. As with the transfer of other services previously offered by this Department, the transfer of adoption services was necessary to achieve full separation between the service delivery and regulatory functions.

The necessary administrative training required for the performance of this role was provided to *Appoġġ* staff by the Adoption Unit of the Department for Social Welfare Standards and following a period of job shadowing, the former were in a position to assume the duties previously performed by this Department.

In December 2007 all prospective adoptive parents and adoptive parents were informed of the pending transfer of adoption services. The former were also requested to inform the Department whether they were still interested to proceed with the adoption process and the details of the applicants who have submitted a positive reply were passed on to *Appoġġ* for further processing.

Adoption Administration Act

The Adoption Administration Act, which was published in the Government Gazette of 16 November 2007 as Bill 111, is intended to make provision for the administration of adoption proceedings as well as to make consequential amendments to the Civil Code. It is expected that the Department for Social Welfare Standards will retain its role of Central Authority while adoption service delivery duties will be assumed by accredited agencies.

Waiver of Authentication Fees

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs sought this Department's collaboration in connection with a waiver of authentication fees in respect of documents required for the adoption of children from foreign countries. This initiative was undertaken to ease the financial and other burdens faced by prospective adoptive parents during the adoption process.

The waiver of authentication fees in respect of adoption documents came into force with the publication of Legal Notice 233 of 2007. To be eligible for this waiver, parents must seek prior authorisation from the Department for Social Welfare Standards as the Maltese Central Authority for Inter-country Adoption.

Foster Care

The Foster Care Act (Chapter 491 of the Laws of Malta) was enacted by Parliament and came into force on 16 November 2007.

In accordance with Article 6 of the same act, the Department for Social Welfare Standards was designated to act as Central Authority. The functions of the Central Authority include:

- Receiving applications for accreditation from organisations interested to offer foster care services
- Granting, refusing or revoking accreditation to organisations in accordance to established criteria
- Receiving and investigating any complaints made against accredited foster care agencies
- Receiving requests from foreign foster carers who wish to be recognised as foster carers
- Receiving applications to accredit organisations who wish to carry out cross-border foster care
- Taking any measures it deems necessary if a foster care placement is in breach of the provisions of the Foster Care Act.

A set of criteria for accreditation were drafted and adopted by the Department for Social Welfare Standards, while an application form was formulated and made available on the department's website.

By the end of 2007, the Fostering Unit within *Agenzija Appoġġ* was the sole entity to submit an application for accreditation.

RESEARCH AND STANDARD DEVELOPMENT

Codes of Conduct

In September 2006, the Code of Conduct and Practice for Social Service Workers and the Code of Conduct and Practice for Employers of Social Service Workers were launched for consultation by the Minister for the Family and Social Solidarity.

A public consultation process was then carried out by the Research and Standard Development Unit. This consultation included a national conference, two other seminars that were specifically intended to reach stakeholders who had difficulties in providing their feedback, as well as the distribution of a questionnaire, aimed at collecting feedback from a broad spectrum of stakeholders.

In March 2007, a detailed report that delved into the major concerns and suggestions put forward during the consultation process was drawn up and presented to the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity. On the basis of the findings of the consultation process, the final version of the Codes of Conduct and Practice was drawn up between June and July 2007.

The final version of the codes will be published and launched in January 2008.

National Standards for Residential Child Care

The drafting of the National Standards for Residential Childcare, which was initiated in 2006, reached a peak in the first six months of 2007, when a first draft of the standards in Maltese was completed. The working group that was set up to develop these standards also identified a list of issues that were considered to be crucial for the successful implementation of the standards, and a memorandum outlining these issues and including the first draft of the standards themselves, was submitted to the Ministry.

Following endorsement by the Ministry, the Research and Standard Development Unit within the Department for Social Welfare Standards embarked on the preparation of an English version of the standards, and both documents were eventually prepared for publication.

The publication of the standards in the form of a consultation document is expected to take place in early 2008 and an intensive consultation process would then ensue. On the basis of this consultation document, the Department for Social Welfare Standards is planning to conduct pilot assessments as a precursor to the registration and licensing of residential child care homes.

Policies and Procedures for Residential and Foster Care

Throughout 2007, a second working group continued to work on the draft Policies and Procedures for Residential and Foster Care. The aim of this working group is to provide managers working in residential and foster care as well as carers with outline policies and procedures that could be adopted and elaborated upon by the individual homes.

The working group was composed of representatives of various stakeholders, including the Director, the Co-ordinator (Welfare Services Assessment) and the Research and Standard Development Officer on behalf of the Department for Social Welfare Standards.

Close collaboration was also maintained with the working group involved in the drafting of the National Standards for Residential Child Care. The policies and procedures are expected to be launched for public consultation in early 2008.

Domestic Violence

The Department for Social Welfare Standards was also approached by the Commission on Domestic Violence to participate in consultation meetings regarding the drawing up of standards of care for children residing in shelters for victims of domestic violence. A number of meetings were held with the Chairperson and other board members to discuss the best way to proceed on the development of these standards.

EU FUNDING

ERDF Aid Scheme for Child Care Facilities

In October 2007, the Department for Social Welfare Standards was approached with the possibility of implementing an aid scheme for child day care facilities with funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). This aid scheme would be part of a wider initiative undertaken by various public sector entities in support of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) operating in areas that fall within their remit.

With assistance from the Policy Development and Programme Implementation Directorate within MFSS, the Department for Social Welfare Standards has formulated a specific proposal complete with eligibility and selection criteria. In December 2007, the Department's proposal was presented to the Monitoring Committee for approval.

The implementation of this scheme is expected to commence in 2008. It is hoped that through ERDF funding, the Department will contribute to the creation of additional quality child care places in the Maltese islands.

Mapping of the Social Welfare Workforce

The possibility of seeking funding from the European Social Fund (ESF) to conduct a comprehensive mapping exercise of the social welfare workforce and draw up national occupational standards had been explored in previous years. In 2007, the Department has continued to pursue this opportunity and to this effect has started to prepare a formal application as required by the Managing Authority (PPCD, OPM).

It is envisaged that the project will contribute to the setting up of National Occupational Standards (NOS) and the regulation of the social welfare workforce. Another aim of the project would be to provide training to current employees and active volunteers so that these would attain the minimum qualification levels required by such standards. To achieve these aims the Department will conduct a comprehensive workforce mapping exercise, which will be followed up by the drafting of the standards and a gap analysis

exercise to determine training requirements. Training programmes will subsequently be drafted and implemented accordingly.

By regulating the workforce and ensuring that all persons employed in the social welfare sector are suitably qualified, the project will be most beneficial to the end user. At the same time by providing significant training opportunities, the project will increase the employability and open new career paths for workers and active volunteers in the care sector as well as also provide recognition of their skills qualifications and competencies.

The project will also help Malta to harmonise with internationally established occupational standards at the vocational level and thus enhance the mobility of the social care workforce. This exercise is being conducted in collaboration with the Malta Qualifications Council.

ESF Project on Subsidies for Child Care

Throughout 2007 the Department collaborated closely with the Directorate General Social Security in the formulation of a project proposal for an ESF project aimed at providing subsidies to parents who send their children to child care facilities. This would be linked with employment, especially females entering the workforce for the first time.

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND TRAINING

Capacity Building

Throughout 2007, four staff members, namely a senior social worker, a social worker, a general hand and a labourer reached retirement age, while another general hand assumed new duties within another ministry.

In the context of these developments as well as the changing function of the Department, a capacity building exercise was drawn up and submitted to the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity for consideration. It is expected that a number of new posts and positions be approved and filled throughout 2008.

The overall aim is to have a lean structure with a highly trained and specialised workforce, with competences in those areas that fall under the Department's responsibilities.

Recruitment of Legal Officer

In the first months of 2007, the Department's legal officer assumed a new position within the MFSS and as a result the post of legal officer within the Department became vacant. A new legal officer was recruited in October 2007. Due acknowledgement should be given to the Office of the Attorney General from where the Department obtained legal counsel while the post of legal officer was vacant.

Continuous Professional Development

Following the successful completion of the first comprehensive in-house training programme, which was carried out between late 2004 and early 2006, a training needs analysis for a second programme of staff continuous professional development was carried out early in 2007. As a result of this analysis, a detailed training proposal was submitted to SDO while other contacts were established with the University of Malta.

Between June and August 2007, Dr Valerie Sollars, then Senior Lecturer in Early Childhood Education at the University of Malta, delivered a training programme aimed at improving staff members' performance during assessment of child day care facilities with particular emphasis on enhancing observation skills with regard to the Care, Learning and Play standard.

The second in-house training programme is expected to be completed in early 2008.

Overseas Training Course

Three staff members of the Department proceeded with their online course in Regulation, Inspection and Improvement run by the Anglia Ruskin University of Cambridge.

By January 2007, the three staff members had gained pass grades in the first two modules of the Certificate Stage, and throughout 2007 they proceeded with the third and fourth modules at Diploma Level. It is expected that on successful completion of the second year the staff members concerned will complete their studies at Master's level in 2008.

Leonardo da Vinci Project

Between June 2005 and November 2006 the Department for Social Welfare Standards benefited from funding from the Leonardo da Vinci programme to implement ten practice placements of departmental staff members with two regulatory entities in Scotland.

The project *Introducing Regulation of Social Welfare Services* helped the staff members of the Department to acquire valuable experience and useful resources to adapt themselves to their new role as Welfare Assessors. Staff members have also obtained a greater understanding of the issues involved and a more confident approach to the duties of assessment.

The project was brought to an end in January 2007 when a final report was submitted to the Leonardo da Vinci National Agency. Funding from the Leonardo da Vinci programme amounted to Lm4,590, that is, circa 50% of the total cost.

Industrial Action by Social Workers

In the last quarter of 2007, the social work staff complement of the Department followed directives by the Union *Haddiema Maghqudin* to take industrial action. Social workers were ordered not to serve members of the public who visit the Department, not to use other means of communication while they are at work, and later to refrain from conducting home visits.

As a result of these directives, the operations of this Department were severely affected and certain timeframes, particularly with regard to the transfer of Adoption services to *Agenzija Appogg*, had to be reconsidered. It is augured that with the resolution of this dispute in early 2008 the Department would revert to its regular operations and perform pending responsibilities without undue delay. This situation highlights the need to establish a formal structure for welfare assessment with the engagement of assessors from all areas of social policy and practice.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Transport Resources

In 2007, the Department for Social Welfare Standards purchased a general-use vehicle to substitute another car that the Department had been leasing. This purchase strengthened the transport resources available for the Department's operations and contributed to an effort to keep the recurrent expenditure on transport in the lowest possible level.

Towards the end of the year, the Department for Social Welfare Standards has also implemented the Fleet Management System – an information system developed by the Ministry of Finance and MITTS to ensure better management of the transport resources available to ministries and departments. This system provides instant updates on a vehicle's fuel consumption and servicing requirement and is hence a useful tool for better management and precise record keeping.

The Department also assists other departments and entities such the Office of the Commissioner for Children in their transport needs.

Euro Changeover

Euro changeover preparations have been ongoing throughout 2007. Although the Department for Social Welfare Standards has not been considered among the most strategic departments in terms of euro changeover preparation, the Department's Euro Project Manager has provided timely updates to the Euro Changeover Plan, participated in training and information sessions organised by the National Euro Changeover Committee or the Ministry of Finance and disseminated relevant euro changeover updates to departmental staff. In addition, two information sessions on euro changeover were delivered to staff members in November 2007.

Update of Website

Constant collaboration between the Administrative Office of this Department and the Information Management Unit within the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity ensured that, throughout 2007, the Department's website www.welfarestandards.gov.mt was kept constantly updated. From the feedback received at this Department, it is apparent that the Child Day Care Services section of the website has been the most sought after by the general public.

In this context the Department's website serves to create awareness on the regulatory functions of the department, to disseminate the established standards and provide a forum to address complaints from the general public.

Quality Service Charter

In the first quarter of 2007, the Department for Social Welfare Standards approached the Charter Support Unit (CSU) within the Office of the Prime Minister to explore the possibility of drawing up a Quality Service Charter for the assessment function of the Department. A series of meetings were subsequently held between the two parties and two project managers were appointed by CSU to work on this Department's Quality Service Charter.

The project managers appointed by CSU held other meetings with departmental staff members as well as other stakeholders and towards the end of 2007 submitted a comprehensive report on their findings, with recommendations for improvements.

The process to charter the Assessment function of the Department for Social Welfare Standards is expected to continue in 2008.

Data Protection Audit

A Data Protection Audit at the Department for Social Welfare Standards was conducted by MITTS on behalf of the Data Protection Unit within the Office of the Prime Minister. The audit entailed an investigation of all aspects of the Department's activities and the extent to which these are affected by the provisions of the Data Protection Act.

An audit report was submitted to the Department in September 2007. This report analysed the Department's level of compliance with the Data Protection Act, identified gaps and specified corrective measures where necessary.

Further action on this matter is expected to take place in 2008.

OTHER MATTERS

Assessment of Hosting Families

Throughout 2007 the Department for Social Welfare Standards has continued to conduct assessment visits of Maltese families who host children from the Russian Federation. Several meetings were also held with representatives of the International Charity Society to review the procedure that had been agreed in previous years and to insist on the timely submission of relevant lists of children and families.

Further work needs to be carried out to establish a clear legal and administrative framework for those children who stay in Malta for a prolonged period of time.

THE WAY FORWARD

In 2008, the Department for Social Welfare Standards is expected to gather pace and assume further regulatory responsibilities. In order to do this, two measures are essential. The first is the drafting and introduction of new legislation to give the Department a legal framework. The second is the creation of a robust assessment and inspectorate function, with the concomitant creation of formal positions of assessor together with their engagement and specialist training.

Another challenge would be to assume the full responsibilities of its central authority functions, in line with its local and international obligations.

The implementation and managing of EU funded projects will also be a major challenge, though active preparation and staff members' commitment will prove to be valuable assets.

The Department will also continue to invest in its human and other resources in order to fulfil its duties and responsibilities in the most effective and efficient manner.

DR KENNETH GRECH
Director (Social Welfare Standards)

Department of Social Housing

The Department is set up as follows:

- 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

The number of applications on the waiting list by the end of December 2007 was 3,291. During the period under review the Department provided alternative accommodation to 119 families. These were all accommodated in government-owned units. Out of these, 92 were accommodated in existing government units and 27 were accommodated in newly-built units financed by the Housing Authority (18 units were provided by the Authority during 2007). In addition 56 tenants were recognised as tenants in government-owned units.

REQUISITION ORDERS SECTION

During 2007, 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 the pace of derequisitioning was accelerated. 4,114 requisition orders were removed from premises which had been under requisition for a number of years. The Department also derequisitioned 5,589 government properties as these requisition orders had no basis at law. In addition, the section carried out works on the biennial rent revision. This involved computation of rent subsidy to 1,797 tenants of government-owned premises. During the latter half of the year, the Department approved the execution of 49 evictions from government-owned units. These involve the forcible retrieval of keys from illegal occupants of existing housing units. By the end of the year five such evictions had been executed.

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 4,184 inspections during 2007. 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 continued to gear itself up for the formal amalgamation with the Housing Authority which is planned to take place in 2008. In early 2007, the rest of the Department moved to new premises in Triq Maçerata Floriana and within the same premises as the Customer Care of the Housing Authority.

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

The following describes 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 2007:

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cospicua (St John Str) Phase II | During 2007 all works were completed except for minor snags. The units are expected to be allocated primarily to evictees from Phase III of St Helen's Gate project in early 2008. |
| Floriana (Argotti Str/Lion Str) | During 2007, problems with the contractor came to a head after it resulted that the concrete of some of the roofs was of poor quality and required replacement. As a result the Contracts Department was requested to terminate the contract and works have remained in suspension until a new tender for the completion of outstanding works is issued and awarded. |
| Valletta (91 Merchants Str) | During 2007, structural works on the rehabilitation of 91 Merchants Street into four units were completed but finishing works were still in hand. |

Construction of Housing Units (Flats & Maisonettes)

The following units were completed in 2007:

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------|------------------------|----------|
| Qawra (N/S in Qawra Rd) Blks 1-6 | 40 units | Kirkop (Valletta Road) | 10 units |
| Mriehel (Ta' Calleja) Plots 5, 6 | 6 units | | |

The following works were still in hand:

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------|----------|
| Mġarr maisonettes/flats | 67 units | Żebbuġ (Triq l-Indipendenza) | 12 units |
| Kalkara (Triq il-Kapuċċini) | 20 units | Mrieħel (Ta' Calleja) Plot 11 | 3 units |
| Naxxar (Triq is-Soghda) Blk H, I | 14 units | M'Scala (Tal-Ġebel l-Abjad) | 20 units |

Replacement of Dangerous Roofs

During 2007, works continued on the ongoing programme for the replacement of dangerous roofs in housing units in various localities. Tenders were issued for the following:

HT 2007/006

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Blk B3, Flat 9, Triq id-Dawr, Mosta | Block 8, No 2, Triq il-Miġja tal-Papa, Senglea |
| Blk 3, Flat 1, Triq l-Gheriexem, Rabat | 60/4, Old Mint Street, Valletta |
| Door A, Flat 3, Telghat Raħal Ġdid, Paola | Blk 10, Door 12, Flat 2, Triq Ljun, Bormla |
| 83B, Tal-Borg Street, Paola | Blk B, Flat 6, Rinella HE, Kalkara |
| Blk A1, Flat 6, Qasam Bini tal-Gvern, Fgura | |

HT 2007/019

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Block E, Door 2, Flat 7, Ġħajn Qajjet, Rabat | Block D, Door 6, Flat 6, Ġħajn Qajjet, Rabat |
| 116, Triq il-Palazz l-Antik tal-Gvernatur, Birgu | 82, Cathnick, Triq Ħal Bajjada, Rabat |
| 143, Flat 3, Triq il-Punent, Valletta | Edward Flats, Flat 4, Triq l-Isptar Navali, Kalkara |
| Residual Block, Flat 3, Triq Wiġi Rosato, Bormla | Blk A, Flat 8, Ġħajn Qajjet, Rabat |
| No 3, Telghet Spencer, Street B, Marsa | 39, Triq San Ġorg, Birgu |
| 124, Flat 2, St Christopher Street, Valletta | 72, Triq id-Dahla ta' San Tumas, Żejtun |
| 40, Triq Cesalpina, Ta' Paris HE, B'Kara | |

HT 2007/020

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 201, Flat C, Triq Marina, Msida | Blk 16E, Flat 4, Triq il-Gendus, Bormla |
| Blk A, Flat 7, Triq Giovanni Barbara, Ħamrun | 60A, Triq San Ġuzepp, Paola |
| 8, Labour Avenue, Ġħaxaq | No 122, Triq San Duminku, Valletta |
| Blk 1, No 13, Triq il-Palazz l-Antik tal-Gvern, Birgu | No 60, Flat 7, Hospital Str, Valletta |

HT 2007/027

140, St Nicholas Street, Valletta

Public Gardens Programme

During 2007, the Department continued to develop public gardens in co-ordination with various local councils. Works on the following projects were completed during the year:

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Dingli (Phase 3) | M'Xlokk (HE) |
| Mellieħa (Ta' Pennellu) | Mosta (Ta' Mliit HE) |
| Kerċem (HOS) | Ta' Ġiomi (HE) |

Works were practically completed on the following project:

Luqa (Ħal-Farruġ)

Works were also taken in hand on the following projects:

Vittoriosa (Tal-ħawli) HE

Pembroke Project

Works on Pembroke continued during 2007 and the following projects were continued:

| | |
|--------------------|----------|
| Pembroke Blk A1-A4 | 64 units |
|--------------------|----------|

The following project was completed:

| | |
|------------------------------|---------|
| Pembroke Maisonettes D55-D62 | 8 units |
|------------------------------|---------|

Installation of Lifts Programme

During 2007, installation of lifts was completed in the following:

Msida (Valley Road Phase IIIB) 5 lifts

A tender was also prepared and issued for the following:

Cospicua (St John Street) Blk 3 7 lifts

External Plastering Programme

In 2007 works were completed on the following sites:

HT 2006/015

Qasam Bini tal-Gvern, Block 2, Siggiewi
Qasam Bini tal-Gvern, Block 3, Siggiewi

Binja Hesri, Entrance D, Siggiewi
Binja Hesri, Entrance G, Siggiewi

Replacement of Wooden Balconies

In 2007 tenders were issued for the following works:

HT 2007/042

186, Flat 5, Republic Str, Valletta

186, Flat 6, Republic Street, Valletta

HT 2007/043

22, Flat 5, Misrah Sant'Iermu, Valletta
131, Flat 6, Triq San Pawl, Valletta

18, Triq San Tumas, Floriana

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 2007 the total number of jobs in the Tenement Repairs Database was 43,114, of which 3,072 were entered in 2007 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 2007.
- *Co-ordination with the Machinery & Manpower Unit in carrying out works* – As a result of the certified requests, 1,484 jobs to be carried out by the Unit were approved in 2007.
- *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 2007 and 1,007 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 2007 was 1,628. 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 2007:

- 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)

Corporate Services Directorate

The Directorate of Corporate Services of the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity provided support services in human resources and financial management and planning to all the departments, directorates, 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.

The Directorate monitored the management of funds of the Ministry and submitted a regular monthly Financial Management Report to the Ministry of Finance. It was also responsible for the drawing up of budgetary proposals for 2008.

The Directorate's Contracts and Procurement Section issued several quotations and tenders for recurrent and capital items. It was also 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, metal, batteries and toners/cartridges, and the installation of energy saving lighting and solar systems. A photovoltaic unit was installed and studies have been initiated regarding the introduction of 'power factor correction units' and the possible utilisation of wind energy.

The Directorate 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 OPM and the Treasury including quarterly Accrual Accounting reports;
- Recruiting casual substitute clerks, granting of qualification allowances and implementing a common policy to officers on reduced hours;
- Implementing measures in accordance with OPM directions to bring about flexibility arrangements such as flexitime and teleworking;
- Following up of progressions and promotions of staff and the drawing up of the relative letters of progressions;
- Preparation of 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 whenever employees commence or terminate their employment;
- Continued the conversion of the manual records system to a computerised one;
- Processing, updating and administration of salaries of all employees;
- Updating of records, procedures and policies to conform with the Data Protection Act;
- Preparation of all documents related to travel abroad;
- Responsibility for the Health and Safety function of the Ministry; and
- Implementation of LN51/2007 regarding contracts of service for a fixed term regulations.

The Directorate of Corporate Services facilitated the transfer of the Adult Training Centres from the Department to the Foundation for Social Welfare Services.

The Directorate's Projects and Maintenance Section provided refurbishment works and provided maintenance support to the Ministry (including the departments, directorates, organisations, Social Security District Offices and Refugee Open Centres/Homes within the Ministry).

Regarding training, the Directorate of Corporate Services continued to organise training courses for all employees within 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 which was established late in 2005 continued to strengthen its operations during 2007. During this year, the Directorate experienced a high turnover of staff, with the engagement of a new Assistant Director to replace the previous Assistant Director who retired, and the engagement of four new Benefit Fraud and Investigation Inspectors who replaced the previous team of four Inspectors who resigned. Notwithstanding this, the Directorate continued to focus its resources on investigating all reports of alleged abuse in Social Security benefits.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

As in the previous year the Directorate continued to receive reports on alleged social benefit fraud from two main sources, the general public and the Social Security Division. The general public submits mostly anonymous reports that are received by phone, including the free-phone (80072345), through e-mails, through letters and other media. The staff at the Social Security Division submits a substantial number of Requests for Investigation on the template that has been provided to them by the Directorate. 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 Social Security Division. This data which is obtained from the local financial institutions is used to investigate and make recommendations to the Social Security Division 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.

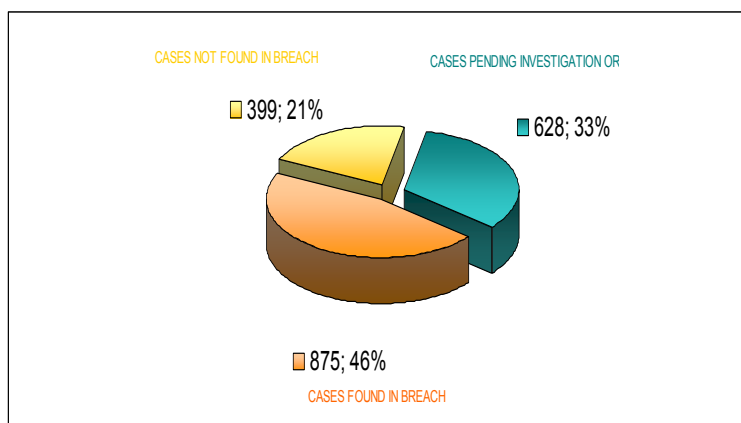
CO-ORDINATION

During the year the Directorate continued to co-ordinate 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) continued to chair two committees that facilitate co-ordination with a number of government departments/entities.

OPERATIONS

During 2007, the Benefit Fraud and Investigation Directorate conducted, through its Inspectorate, 1,782 on-site inspections. The introduction of the CVA system in Valletta during the year impinged on the number of on-the-spot investigations that the Directorate used to effect at short notice. The CVA has also substantially increased the vulnerability of staff members to physical risks.

From these inspections and from other investigations conducted by the Directorate, 1,444 cases were successfully concluded.



The Directorate recommended to the Social Security Division that 1,045 cases, which were found to be in breach of the provisions of the Social Security Act, be suspended and that any resulting overpayments be collected. By the end of the year the Directorate had received feedback from the Social Security Division on 875 cases. Action on these cases resulted in the suspension of a total of 982 social benefits as a number of these cases had more than one benefit in payment, as specified in the table below. Feedback from the Social Security Division on the remaining 170 cases, which involve 267 social benefits, was still pending by the end of the year. The estimated annual savings for 2007, collated from the feedback received from the Social Security Division, totalled Lm1,494,998.

| Suspended Benefits | |
|---------------------------------------------|------------|
| Invalidity Pension | 3 |
| Supplementary Allowance | 43 |
| Child Allowance | 14 |
| Sickness Assistance | 442 |
| Social Assistance | 188 |
| Unemployment Assistance | 138 |
| Age Pension | 79 |
| Social Assistance – Single Unmarried Parent | 45 |
| Social Assistance Carers | 13 |
| Carer's Pension | 7 |
| Sickness Benefit | 2 |
| Pension for the Visually Impaired | 1 |
| Special Unemployment Benefit | 6 |
| Social Assistance Board | 1 |
| Total | 982 |

CONCLUSION

During the period 2006-2007 the Benefit Fraud and Investigation Directorate concluded investigations on 2,372 cases of alleged social benefit fraud and it is estimated that the combined operations of the Directorate resulted in an estimated Lm3,000,601 in savings. During the same period the Directorate, acting on the experience gained during its operations, recommended several amendments to the Social Security Act (Cap 318). The Directorate also identified and brought to the attention of the competent authorities data on non-performing overpayments that are recorded on the SABS system.

During the last quarter of 2007 the Directorate obtained approval and initiated action to issue a fresh call for applications for the engagement of additional Benefit Fraud and Investigation Inspectors. This approved increase in human resources is expected to further strengthen the operations of the Directorate in its fight against abuse in social benefits.

RAYMOND MUSCAT

Director (Benefit Fraud & Investigation)

Policy Development and Programme Implementation Directorate

During 2007, the Policy Development and Programme Implementation Directorate continued to focus upon its key areas of responsibility namely the development of policies, overseeing the implementation of measures and initiatives falling under the remit of the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity (MFSS), and spearheading and co-ordinating social inclusion matters. Moreover, during 2007, the Directorate was also assigned the responsibility for the co-ordination of those projects falling under the remit of MFSS that are co-financed by the EU Structural Funds for the 2007-2013 programming period.

In view of its responsibilities, during 2007 the Directorate embarked upon the following key tasks:

- the drafting of a National Alcohol Policy which provides a comprehensive framework to address alcohol consumption from all respects;
- drawing up of a light update of the National Action Plan on Social Inclusion (2006-2008) so as to monitor the progress registered in the various measures and initiatives included in the NAP (2004-06). Such an exercise helps to take stock of the national position vis-à-vis various vulnerable groups who are at risk of poverty and social exclusion;
- co-ordinating the consultation process on the EU's Social Reality document and the drafting of Malta's reactions in this regard;
- overseeing developments to simplify burdensome procedures across the Ministry and drawing up the necessary monitoring reports regarding better regulation measures;
- the drafting of Malta's position in terms of social welfare issues as expressed in various European documents to ensure that the Ministry's views on social welfare issues are accurately reflected;
- drawing up responses to various questionnaires focusing on social protection issues;
- 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 ensuring that the social welfare positions expressed in various national and European documents conform with the Ministry's position and that the Ministry's views are accurately reflected;
- overseeing the translation of the National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion (2006-2008) into Maltese, the subsequent graphic designing of the document and its printing in both the Maltese and English languages;
- through its Customer Care Co-ordinator, the Directorate continued to provide explanations to the queries raised by the general public regarding matters pertaining to the remit of the Ministry; and
- developing capacity building in the sphere of EU structural funding processes and procedures. As part of its new responsibilities in the area of structural funding, the Directorate has actively sought to secure better prospects for EU funding across Ministry. Through its EU Fund Manager, the Directorate serves as the driving force to encourage and support all entities working within MFSS as well as others working in the area of social policy to make the best use of EU funding.

Besides the tasks outlined above, during 2006 the Directorate was also significantly involved in such *ad hoc* tasks as:

- the development of a single means testing mechanism to be adopted across Government;
- the drawing up of a preliminary report highlighting proposed amendments to the Social Security Act;
- surveying MFSS employees' family care responsibilities; and
- the public consultation exercise concerning the draft National Drug Policy.

During 2007, the Directorate persevered in its commitment to promote collaboration and networking among all stakeholders in the area of social inclusion. In this regard, the Directorate organised two key activities namely:

- a one-day national consultation conference on 26 January 2007 with the aim of bringing together people working with various vulnerable groups to give them the opportunity to share views, discuss concerns and make their suggestions and recommendations so as to enhance the effectiveness of policies, strategies and initiatives in the area of social inclusion;
- an EU Peer Review on 12 and 13 June 2007 focusing on children and family services offered by ACCESS in the Cottonera region, an activity which attracted participants from seven EU Member States. This initiative provided Malta with the opportunity to share examples of good practice and to gauge national achievements against those of peer countries.

The Customer Care Management office that also falls within the remit of the Directorate and which is responsible for seeing to the general public's queries as well as monitoring the Service Standards of all departments within the Ministry, dealt with a total of 950 web contact forms and processed all the 388 cases which were received through the Customer Care System during 2007. Moreover, the Customer Care Co-ordinator dealt also with all e-mails received through the MFSS generic e-mail address info.mfss@gov.mt.

As part of its ongoing commitment to develop its human resources with a view to enhance output, the Policy Development and Programme Implementation Directorate's staff attended the following training programmes and seminars:

- *The Integration of Third Country Nationals*, seminar organised by SOS Malta, (6 February)
- Job shadowing experience in the area of social inclusion at the Work and Pensions Office, London (February)
- *Euro Changeover for Vulnerable Groups* seminar organised by the National Euro Changeover Committee (15 March)
- *Introductory Course to the European Union*, organised by the Staff Development Organisation (SDO) (April)
- *Induction Training Programme*, organised by PPCD and SDO (11 - 26 April)
- *Ms Outlook Express 2003*, SDO (18 - 19 June)
- EU Funding Seminar: *Education & Training - Exploring Funding Opportunities* by Forum Malta fl-Ewropa (July)
- Information Session on the drawing up of application forms pertaining to the European Social Fund (ESF) organised by PPCD (July and August)
- Information Session on the drawing up of application forms pertaining to the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) organised by PPCD (August)
- SDO Training on MS Access 2003 (October)
- Seminar on the *Employment challenges and Opportunities for persons experiencing social exclusion and poverty* organised by EAPN Malta (October)
- SDO Training on MS Outlook 2003 (October)
- Designing and Maintaining websites using FrontPage by SDO (October)
- Seminar on the *Millennium Development Goals* organised by the National Platform of Maltese NGDOs (October)
- Mosaic Training (the six grounds of discrimination) organised by the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (November)
- Seminar on *Irregular Immigrants and the Maltese Labour Market* organised in December 2007 by the Centre for Labour Studies with the support of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

During 2007, the Directorate continued to ensure that it was always duly represented by a member of staff in both national and European conferences and technical meetings focusing on various social policy issues mainly those concerning social protection, social inclusion, equality and irregular immigration.

During 2007, the Directorate was duly represented at the following conferences and technical meetings:

- *Joining Forces for a Social Europe*, (Nuremberg, February 2007)
- NCPE 3rd Annual Conference organised by NCPE (February 2007)
- National Conference on EU Funding organised by Paragon Limited, Malta (March, 2007)
- *Making Lisbon a Success*. The National Reform Programme organised by the Malta Business Bureau in collaboration with the Ministry for Competitiveness, Malta (April 2007)
- *Equality and Disability: the way forward* organised by the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality, Malta (April 2007)
- *Demographic Change as Opportunity: The Economic Potential of the Elderly*, (Berlin, April 2007)
- 6th European meeting regarding “*People Living in Poverty*”, (Brussels, May 2007)
- *The European Social Fund and Progress 2007-2008*, (Eipa-Cefass Conference, Milan, May 2007)
- *Social Services of General Interest*, Brussels (June 2007)
- *Active Inclusion: Minimum income schemes and the integration of people excluded from the labour market*, Brussels (June 2007)
- Forum on Social Services of General Interest in Lisbon (September 2007)
- Conference on 50 years of equal treatment legislation (Brussels, October 2007)
- *The Interrelation between Physical and Mental Health: Launch of the Wellness Programme* organised by the Richmond Foundation (10 October 2007)
- Forum on Child Poverty in Brussels (October 2007)
- EU Social Protection Committee meetings (Brussels)
- PROGRESS meetings in Brussels
- EU Peer Review on Substandard Housing, Paris (September 2007)
- Peer Review on Structural Funds, National Action Plans and NGOs in Cordoba, (October 2007)
- *The Paths of Sustainability and the Reform of Pensions Systems in Lisbon* (November 2007)
- *Theories, Reforms and Outcomes in European Educational Systems* organised by the University of Malta (November 2007).

During 2007, the Directorate spared no effort to continue to keep abreast with developments in various areas of social policy and social welfare both on a national as well as on a European level, to consolidate its consultation and networking commitment in the area of social policy in general and social inclusion in particular, and to build expertise in the area of EU structural funding (2007-2013).

DR MARISA SCERRI

Director (Policy Development & Programme Implementation)

EU and International Affairs Directorate

INTERNATIONAL POLICY ISSUES

During 2007, the EU and International Affairs Directorate was very active in the delivery of its mission statement, or else co-ordinating EU and other international social policy matters falling under the responsibility of the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity and co-ordinating the formulation of the Ministry's position on policies proposed by the EU.

In the period under review, the Directorate prepared 14 explanatory memoranda outlining Malta's position on new EU proposals and communications in respect of issues where MFSS is the implementing Ministry. These were presented in and approved by the Inter-Ministerial Committee for EU Affairs. In this context, the Directorate actively participated in all the eight IMC meetings held during 2007.

The Directorate also contributed to the drafting of another 21 explanatory memoranda on new EU proposals and communications in respect of issues where MFSS is a participating Ministry. Furthermore, the Directorate drafted or co-ordinated the drafting of a total of 57 instruction notes for delegates attending the Social Questions Working Party meetings (SQWP) and COREPER I meetings.

In addition to this, the Directorate also drafted 50 background notes and speaking notes for Ministers and other top government officials attending the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO) Council of Minister meetings held on 22 February 2007, 30 May 2007 and 5 December 2007 respectively. Another 16 background notes and speaking notes were drafted for Ministers and other government top officials attending the: (a) Informal meeting of Ministers for Gender Equality and Family Affairs in Germany on the 15-16 May 2007; (b) Informal Meeting of Ministers of Employment and Social Affairs in Portugal on the 6 July 2007; and (c) Informal Meeting of Ministers for Gender Equality in Portugal on the 4 October 2007.

The Directorate was also very active in a number of EU-related issues which the Ministry was involved in during 2007. The most prominent ones were:

- Council Directive 2000/43/EC implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of social or ethnic origin and Council Directive 2000/78/EC establishing the general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation which were fully transposed in April 2007;
- Council Directive 2002/73/EC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training, and promotion and working conditions and Council Directive 2004/113/EC implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services which are expected to be fully transposed during 2008;
- the discussion and negotiations on the proposed Directive on minimum requirements for enhancing worker mobility by improving the acquisition and preservation of supplementary pension rights;
- the discussion and negotiations on the proposed Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down the procedure for implementing Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 on the co-ordination of social security systems;
- issues related to sexual and reproductive health and rights including women empowerment and other equality matters;
- social inclusion issues and matters related to the European Social Model including the Social Reality Stocktaking, the Renewed Social Agenda and the Alliance for the Families;

- issues related to flexicurity and other employment-related matters; and
- issues related to the Lisbon Agenda, Single Market Review and the Integrated Guidelines.

The Directorate was also very active in the area of integration and migration and it also represents the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity in the Inter-Ministerial Forum for Legal Migration.

The Directorate co-ordinated the Ministry action, ensuring timely and effective response in connection with the receipt of several EU-related correspondence, reports, questionnaires, and other documentation. It also co-ordinated the participation of ministry officials in a total of 154 EU conferences, meetings, and other similar events abroad.

The Director (EU & International Affairs) as Senior Programming Officer for projects financed under the EU Pre-Accession Funds and the EU Transition Facility Funds actively contributed as well in the running of a Twinning Project and two Service Contracts funded under the Transition Facility for 2004 and 2005. The Twinning Project and one of the service contracts were completed during 2007 while the other service contract is expected to be completed in 2008. A total of €283,200 was allocated for these projects. Another EU Funded Twinning Project under the Transition Facility for 2004 with an allocation of €180,000 was completed in 2006 while another €170,000 was allocated for a Twinning Project under the Transition Facility for 2006 which is due to start in 2008.

ESF & EQUAL – STRUCTURAL FUNDS (2004-2006)

During 2007, the Directorate (through its ESF Unit) continued to perform its duties as Intermediate Body (IB) for the Managing Authority (Planning and Priorities Coordination Division – OPM) in connection with the European Social Fund and as National Support Structure (NSS) for the Equal Community Initiative.

During 2007, four new ESF projects were approved for funding following the Third Call for applications. Thus the total number of ESF projects for which this Unit was responsible as ESF IB during the period under review went up to 49. Of these, 10 projects fall under MFSS (including five projects run by Voluntary Organisations) while another 39 projects fall under other ministries. Furthermore, the Unit was also responsible as EQUAL NSS for another six EQUAL projects, of which four fall under MFSS and two under other ministries. There were a total of 29 ESF and EQUAL projects which terminated their training activities during 2007.

The ESF Unit continued to play a pivotal role in the processing of the invoices related to the running of all the above-mentioned projects. A total of €2,588,116 was invoiced under the ESF while another €531,690 was invoiced under the EQUAL Community Initiative Programme. This enabled the payment of services and products related to these projects amounting to €2,868,241 under the ESF and €770,343 under the EQUAL Programme.

The ESF Unit also conducted a total of 20 Article 4 Documentary Spot Checks and two follow-up Spot Checks. Furthermore it also conducted 48 Training Spot Checks and was involved in four Statements of Expenditure by Measure, in April, July, October and December 2007.

The ESF Unit was also very active in making the necessary preparations for the implementation of Action 3 of the EQUAL Community Initiative Programme – the Mainstreaming process. For this purpose an EQUAL Mainstreaming Steering Group was established towards the end of 2007, under the Chairmanship of the Director for EU & International Affairs, to oversee the implementation of this important obligation under this programme during 2008.

MARK MUSU'

Director (EU & International Affairs)

**Ministry of
Foreign Affairs**

Foreign Affairs

DIRECTORATE GENERAL – EUROPEAN AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

European matters have been the backbone of this Directorate's work throughout 2007. In line with the Strategic Objectives of Malta's Foreign Policy, efforts focused on making a success of European Union membership and on what this membership can give, as added value, to Malta and its citizens, by taking into account Malta's particular interest and peculiarities and ensuring that matters of national interest are kept on the EU Agenda.

The Directorate General was horizontally responsible for *Forum Malta fl-Ewropa*, set up to address the post-accession scenario and ensuring that civil society remains engaged on EU issues and in the decision-making process. The Directorate General was also responsible for the organisation and participation of Consultative Meetings on European Affairs (COMEU), which served as a consultative process between that the Ministry had with the social partners who are represented at the Malta Council of Economic and Social Development (MCESD). The Forum's three main areas of operation were:

- The Dissemination of Information on EU policies and EU-related Developments
- The Facilitation of Consultation with Stakeholders on EU-related Issues
- Support and Awareness with Regard to Access to EU Funding Opportunities.

Officials from this Directorate General participated in a number of Council formation meetings, with the Director General being actively involved in the pre-General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) briefing sessions, held prior to the actual meeting in Brussels for the Heads of Foreign Missions in Malta; the latter also accompanied the Minister to these monthly Brussels meetings.

EUROPEAN AFFAIRS DIRECTORATE

This Directorate pursued objectives aimed at ensuring strong and stable relations with countries of the European region including Member States of the European Union, Member States of the European Economic Area and other European countries with a European perspective – states involved in the process of EU membership or structured *approchement*. This Directorate was also responsible to oversee Malta's participation in European non-EU structures and processes, namely within the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

During 2007, officials of this Directorate participated in the monthly meetings of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) Working Groups of COSCE (Council of Europe and OSCE) and COWEB (Western Balkans). Briefs were prepared for the monthly meetings of the EU General Affairs and External Relations, the EU Council meetings and EU Summits.

Documentation consisting of country profiles was also prepared by this Directorate in view of various Ministerial and Parliamentary level official visits to Malta from, Italy, the UK, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Lithuania and Portugal, as well as in connection with a number of visits relating to presentation of credentials and farewell calls by Ambassadors accredited to Malta. Officials from the Directorate accompanied and assisted Malta Ambassadors with regard to the presentation of their Letters of Credence in respect of accreditation to Romania, Montenegro, and Bulgaria.; country profiles of Italy,

Slovenia, Lithuania and the FYR of Macedonia; assistance was also afforded to the Chairman of the Foreign and European Affairs Committee with regard to outgoing and incoming official working visits.

The Directorate co-ordinated matters with regard to the submission of statements and country briefs with the Office of The President and the Office of the Prime Minister regarding the State Visit to Malta by the President of Hungary and the Federal President of Germany which took place respectively in June 2007 and November 2007, as well as with the Office of the President in connection with the State Visit to Cyprus by the President of Malta in June 2007. The Directorate also co-ordinated matters with the Office of the Prime Minister with regard to the Prime Minister's official visits to Portugal and to the State of the Vatican City, and in respect of the meeting held with the German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

In its efforts to strengthen the bilateral juridical framework, during the period under consideration, the Directorate liaised and co-ordinated the negotiations and conclusion of the following bilateral agreements:

| State | Agreement and date of signature |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Italy | XII Executive Programme on Co-operation in Cultural Matters, Signed: 1 February 2007 |
| Italy | Italo-Maltese Cultural and Educational Agreement, Signed: 19 December 2007 |
| Italy | Joint Declaration Establishing Regular Consultations on Economic Co-operation between Malta and Italy, Signed: 19 December 2007 |
| Romania | Co-operation Agreement on Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Substances and Organised Crime, Signed: 12 June 2007 |
| Switzerland | Framework Agreement between the Swiss Federal Council and Malta concerning the implementation of the Swiss-Maltese Co-operation Programme to reduce Economic and Social disparities within the enlarged European Union, (Swiss financial contribution to Malta of 1.8 million euro), Signed: 20 December 2007 |

In addition to the above, the Bilateral Programme of Co-operation in the Fields of Science, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport between the Government of Malta and the Government of the Czech Republic was extended for one year to cover 2008, following an exchange of Notes Verbales.

With regard to OSCE, the Directorate was involved in the preparations in connection with Malta's participation at the 15th OSCE Ministerial Council meeting held in Madrid on 29-30 November 2007, which was headed by the Ambassador of Malta to the OSCE and during which a statement was delivered by Malta. An official from the Directorate formed part of the Delegation of Malta.

GENERAL AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE DIRECTORATE

The objectives of this Directorate are to promote Malta's interests in international commerce; to formulate and promote Malta's positions on the various European issues; to prepare for Ministerial participation at the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC); and to promote Maltese culture and identity abroad.

During 2007, the General Affairs and International Trade Directorate was responsible for ensuring that Malta's positions and interests are safeguarded within European fora. This Directorate covered general European affairs which included enlargement, the constitutional reform, the future of Europe, inter-institutional issues, external trade and general European policy questions. In this context, this Directorate played a significant role in assessing, formulating and preparing positions of Malta for the Intergovernmental Conference on the Lisbon Treaty.

The Directorate was also responsible for the legal transposition of the legislative instruments of which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the lead Ministry. In this capacity the Directorate also monitored the pipeline *acquis* and subsequently drew up the necessary memoranda for the eventual approval by the Minister and the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC).

This Directorate promoted Malta as supporting the European Union in its enlargement policy and participated in the monthly Council Working Party on Enlargement and Countries Negotiating Accession to the EU in order to follow up on Malta's position in this field and to ascertain that Malta's interests are being put forward.

Furthermore, the Directorate - which is also responsible for international trade - vetted various Instruction Notes and Memoranda on all major Community trade decisions, prepared by the relevant ministries, prior to submitting these for the approval of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Directorate also provided the necessary input by way of briefs and papers on the current state of play at the World Trade Organisation/Doha Development Agenda negotiations.

Complementary to this function, this Directorate promoted Malta's commercial and cultural interests abroad. In the course of 2007, the Directorate organised various commercial delegations - these included a business delegation to China in May 2007 (in conjunction with the official visit by the Minister of Foreign Affairs), business delegations which travelled with the President on his State visit to Cyprus and on the official visit to Algeria in June and in September 2007 respectively.

As part of its efforts to promote Maltese commercial interests, the Directorate was involved in the conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding on co-operation between Malta and the Republic of Korea, signed on 1 December 2007. The Memorandum covered co-operation in the maritime and economic sectors including the provision of financial assistance to IMLI, ship repair, port management and ship registration.

The Directorate was also involved in the visit to Italy in December 2007 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. During this visit a Joint Declaration establishing regular consultations on economic, commercial, industrial and financial co-operation between Malta and Italy was signed on 19 December 2007.

Malta's commercial potential will be showcased in the International Expo to be held in Zaragoza between 14 June and 14 September 2008. In this context, in 2007 the Directorate commenced preparations for Malta's participation in the said Zaragoza Expo – over a hundred countries are expected to take part in this Expo.

Throughout the year under review, the Cultural Diplomacy Unit within this Directorate was in regular contact with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment (MEYE), the Ministry for Tourism and Culture (MTAC), the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA), the Malta Council of Culture and the Arts (MCCA) and other local organisations directly or indirectly involved in the cultural sector. The aim of such contacts was to enhance the promotion of Maltese culture overseas. In this regard, this Unit was also of continuous service to Malta's missions abroad and assisted in several cultural initiatives.

In 2007 a new Agreement between Malta and Italy relating to Cultural and Educational Co-operation was signed. The new Agreement updates the framework currently provided by the 1967 Agreement and builds upon it to reflect the realities of today, most particularly providing financial cover for continued Italian financial support to MEDAC. In November 2007, Malta and the Czech Republic extended the Bilateral Programme of Co-operation in the fields of Science, Culture, Youth and Sports for another year (2008).

During the past year, the Directorate continued to fulfil its objective related to the workings of the Sanctions Monitoring Board, with the Director General, European and Economic Affairs assuming the responsibility of Chairman. This Directorate regularly monitored sanctions imposed by both the United Nations Security Council level and the European Union. In 2007 these included, in particular, further sanctions being proposed against Iran. An official of this Directorate, who acts as the Board secretary, attended regularly the Council Working Parties on sanctions. The Directorate was also represented at the UN/US Financial Workshop which was held in Lisbon in November 2007 in order to keep abreast with developments in this area.

DIRECTORATE GENERAL - POLITICAL

From a general perspective, the Directorate General focused 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). These efforts included the preparation of positions for interventions at the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC), Coreper, PSC and relevant working group meetings. Input was 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

During 2007, the Global Issues Directorate continued with its 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 Atomic Energy Agency, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Hague Convention on Private International Law.

The Directorate co-ordinated the visit by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs to New York to attend the 62nd United Nations General Assembly in September 2007. It was also involved in the preparations for the meetings of the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers and the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) which were held in New York in September 2007.

The Directorate was responsible for preparing the necessary documentation in respect of the participation by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting held in Kampala, Uganda in November 2007. The Directorate also assisted the Minister of Foreign Affairs in his capacity as Chairman of the Steering Committee of the *Commonwealth Connects Programme*.

Six Training Programmes were held under the Malta/Commonwealth Third Country Programmes in the following areas:

- Management of Coastal Recreational Tourism
- Banking and Finance in Small States
- Insurance Regulation and Supervision
- Contemporary Diplomacy
- Port Operations Management
- Legal Framework for Information and Communication Technologies.

Special and particular focus was given to addressing the international aspects of illegal immigration, with the Directorate being actively involved in pursuing Malta's interest 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 pursued.

In October 2007, in line with one of the Strategic Objectives of Malta's Foreign Policy, the Minister of Foreign Affairs launched Malta's Overseas Development Policy. The Policy seeks to address poverty through development, targeting specific action areas such as climate change, ICT for development and democratisation. It focuses on certain countries such as island-states, the countries in sub-Saharan and the Horn of Africa, the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Also in the area of development, the Directorate organised Malta's participation in the European Development Days held in Lisbon, Portugal on 6-9 November.

The Directorate was actively involved in the preparatory process leading to Malta's participation in the second EU-Africa Summit held in Lisbon, Portugal in December, ensuring that Malta's interests were adequately reflected in the position negotiated by the EU on behalf of Member States.

The Directorate worked in co-ordination with Malta's missions/embassies abroad and the Malta Maritime Authority in the successful election of Malta to the Council of the International Maritime Organisation.

Officials from the Directorate regularly attended ten CFSP Working Group meetings held in Brussels, apart from participating in various international meetings/conferences. The Working Groups attended by this Directorate are as follows: CONUN (United Nations), CODUN (Disarmament), CONOP (Non-Proliferation), COMAR (Law of the Sea), COHOM (Human Rights), COARM (Arms Control), COAFR (Africa), COJUR/ICC (Jurists Working Group dealing with the International Criminal Court), COTER (Terrorism), HLWG on Migration and Development.

In 2007, a number of Maltese officials participated in election observations missions held by the European Union in Mauritania, Sierra Leone, Guatemala and Togo. Training was also given to a number of Maltese election observers in order to be better equipped to conduct their election observation duties more effectively.

During the year, 56 refugees were transferred from Malta to various countries, namely, the United States (28), Lithuania (6), Ireland (10) and Portugal (12).

The following Conventions, Agreements and Protocols were signed, acceded to or ratified by Malta during 2007:

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Accessions | |
| 8 May | European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR) Geneva 30 September 1957 |
| 15 November | Convention on Nuclear Safety adopted on 17 June 1994 |
| 21 December | Convention on the Contract of International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR) signed in Geneva on 19 May 1956, as amended by the CMR Protocol signed in Geneva on 5 July 1978 |
| Agreements | |
| 1 October | Memorandum of Understanding on the Resettlement of a Group of Refugees between Malta and Portugal |
| Ratifications | |
| 2 October | Revised ACP-EU Partnership Agreement |
| 2 October | Internal Agreement amending the Internal Agreement of 18 September 2000 on measures to be taken and procedures to be followed for the implementation of the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement |
| 2 October | Internal Agreement on the financing of Community aid under the multi-annual financial framework for the period 2008 to 2013 in accordance with the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement and on the allocation of financial assistance for the Overseas Countries and Territories to which part four of the EC Treaty applies |
| Signatures | |
| 6 February | Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearances |
| 28 March | Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol adopted by the 61 st UNGA on 13 December 2006 |

EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND MEDITERRANEAN AFFAIRS DIRECTORATE

Malta's relations with non-European countries and its position on a number of international political issues have been co-ordinated by the Directorate. Such positions were also expressed, where appropriate, at the EU level within the relevant Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) structures during the German and Portuguese Presidencies.

Directorate Officers participated in Capitals-formation meetings of the following Working Groups: COMAG (Mashrek/Maghreb), COMEM (Middle East and Gulf), COMEP (Middle East Peace Process), COEST (Easter Europe), COASI (Asia), COTRA (Transatlantic – USA & Canada) and COLAT (Latin America) contributing to common positions and reflecting Malta's national interests and political realities.

Active participation in regional fora and initiatives of direct relevance to the Mediterranean region, namely the Euro-Mediterranean Process, the European Neighbourhood Policy, the Western Mediterranean (5+5) Dialogue and the Med Forum was also ensured together with timely contributions to the largely thematic approach of the Mediterranean agenda adopted by these fora.

In consonance with the Ministry's strategic objective of strengthening bilateral relations, particularly with neighbouring countries, the Directorate continued to actively nurture Malta's external relations on a wider bilateral level while ensuring focus on matters of direct relevance and importance to Malta's policies. The Directorate was involved in the compilation of the necessary documentation for outgoing and incoming ministerial visits. Official visits by the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the United States, China, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Saudi Arabia underscore a focused attention on countries with a high political relevance to Malta. These high-level visits also reflect the enhanced political profile the Ministry is seeking to carve in its ongoing diplomatic performance, also in order to maximise economic benefits.

Malta's initiative on and rationale to establishing a structured political dialogue with enhanced visibility between the EU and the Arab League has been strongly promoted within the EU and the AL structures. The initiative gained substantial momentum through the outcome of a successful Senior Officials Meeting between the EU and the AL. Malta's participation achieved the desired goal that confirmed the political will and necessity of holding an EU-AL ministerial meeting that will discuss global issues of mutual interest and concern.

The Directorate continued to follow closely the developments in the long-standing Middle East conflict and contributed to the formulation of policy stances through effective participation in the pertinent Council structures. In the wake of the Annapolis Peace Conference, Malta pledged US\$1 million as a contribution to Palestinian State-building during the Paris Donors' Conference held on 17 December.

The Parliamentary dimension of diplomacy in the Mediterranean registered an important development through the setting up in Malta of the General Secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean with the first plenary session taking place in Malta – an acknowledgement of Malta's long-standing firm belief and practical contribution to the process of security and co-operation in the Mediterranean. The Directorate assisted the Office of the House of Representatives in the realisation of this pan-Mediterranean project.

As ongoing projects are implemented, new regional initiatives are created: the French proposal for establishing a project-based Mediterranean Union incorporating the participation by all littoral Mediterranean States to serve as a co-operation engine that will implement practical projects to address modern challenges like climate change, water scarcity, renewable energy sources etc, has been closely followed by the Directorate with a view to ensure that Malta may be both a contributor to and a beneficiary from this novel proposal that will likely see its launching during 2008.

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 |
|--------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Algeria | 11 September | MoU on political consultations between the ministries of Foreign Affairs |
| China, People's Republic | 11 September | MoU on visa abolition for Diplomatic/Service passport holders |
| Korea, Republic of | 18 December | Mutual visa exemption for Diplomatic/Service passport holders |
| Libyan Jamahirija | 1 December | MoU – visa abolition for Diplomatic/Service passport holders |
| | 14 February | MoU on co-operation in the field of cultural heritage |

| | | |
|---------|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | 14 February | MoU on political consultations between the ministries of Foreign Affairs |
| | 2 April | MoU on standardisation and metrology |
| Tunisia | 31 May | Administration Co-operation Agreement in the field of Justice |
| USA | 16 March | Agreement concerning co-operation to suppress the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery, systems and related materials by sea |
| | 29 November | Agreement with the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in the context of the Globe Programme |

PROTOCOL AND CONSULAR DIRECTORATE

Protocol

Visits

During 2007, the Directorate was responsible for assisting in the preparatory organisational work and in the implementation of visits to Malta by foreign dignitaries, notably two State Visits - H.E. Laszlo Soloyom, President of the Republic of Hungary and H.E. Prof. Horst Kohler, President of the Federal Republic of Germany – as well as the official visit to Malta by the President of the European Commission, H.E. José Manuel Durão Barroso, and the President of the European Central Bank H.E. Mr Jean Claude Trichet.

A number of dignitaries also paid official visits to Malta; these included, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Cyprus - H.E. Yiorgos Lillikas, Jordan - H.E. Mr Abdelelah Al-Khatib, Greece - H.E. Theodora Bakoyannis, Slovenia - H.E. Prof Dimitrij Rupel, Spain - H.E. Mr Miguel Angel Moratinos and South Africa - the Hon Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma; the Deputy Prime Minister of the United Kingdom - the Hon John Prescott; H.E. Franco Frattini, Vice-President of the European Commission and Commissioner responsible for Justice, Freedom and Security; the EU Commissioners responsible for: Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, H.E. Dr Joseph Borg; H.E., Information Society and Media, Ms Vivienne Reding; Transport, H.E. Mr Jacques Barrot; Energy, Mr Andris Piebalgs; Consumer Protection, H. E. Ms Meglena Kuneva; Economics and Monetary Affairs, H.E. Mr Joaquin Almunia; Health, H.E. Mr Markos Kyprianou.

Other Ministers who visited Malta were the Minister of the Interior of Slovenia - H.E. Mr Dragutin Mate; The Hon. Sigmar Gabriel, the Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety in Germany and the Hon John Nasasira, the Minister of Works and Transport of Uganda.

Visits by high-level officials included H.E. Dr Joao Mira Gomes, Secretary of State for Defence and Sea Affairs of Portugal; H.E. Mr Peter Altmaier, the Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of the Interior of Germany; Hon Vittorio Craxi, the Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Italy; Mr Ali Abani, the Director of Consular Affairs of Libya; Mr Marek Belka, the Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Europe; Mr Gilles Briatta, the DG European Affairs of France.

Parliamentary delegations included those led by the Hon Noel Kinsella, Speaker of the Senate of Canada, Senator Hon Paul Calvert, President of the Australian Senate, the Hon John Aquilina, Leader of the House of NSW Parliament, Sydney and the Hon Barry Collier, MP for State seat of Miranda, Australia. Other delegations included that led by Mr Lech Walesa, Former President of Poland and Dr Ivan Lo Bello, the President of Confindustria Sicilia.

The Directorate assisted during private visits by H.E. Mr George Maxwell Richards, the President of Trinidad and Tobago; H.E. Mr Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the Prime Minister of Kuwait; the former French President H.E. Valéry Giscard d'Estaing; Ms Anita Perry, the First Lady of Texas; HRH Princess Benedikte of Denmark.

In addition to the above, the Directorate organised visits for Honorary Consuls visiting Malta and programmes for routine visits, first call and farewell calls by non-resident Ambassadors. The Directorate

also co-ordinated the visit to Malta by 40 non-resident Ambassadors in connection with the programme of the exchange of New Year's Greetings.

The Directorate also assisted the National Festivities Committee in State functions and National Days' events.

Accreditations

This Directorate sought and obtained the *agrément*s for the following Malta Ambassadors: Mr Frank Galea, non-resident Ambassador to the Republic of Montenegro; Dr John Paul Grech, non-resident Ambassador to the Republic of Poland; Dr Mark Miggiani, non-resident Ambassador to Algeria; Mr Giovanni Miceli, Ambassador to Egypt; Dr Richard Vella Laurenti, Ambassador to the Hellenic Republic; Mr Godwin Montanaro, Ambassador to Qatar.

The Directorate sought and obtained the *agrément* of the following foreign Ambassadors: Mr Jerzy Chmielewski, non-resident Ambassador to the Republic of Poland; Dr Caroline Gudenus, resident Ambassador of the Republic of Austria; Ms Murugesan Manimekalai, non-resident Ambassador of the Republic of India; Ms Asha Dvitiyananda, non-resident Ambassador of the Kingdom of Thailand; Mr Kim Joong-jae, non-resident Ambassador of the Republic of Korea; Dr Chem Widhya, non-resident Ambassador of the Kingdom of Cambodia; Ms María Isabel Vicandi Plaza, resident Ambassador of the Kingdom of Spain; Mr Răzvan Victor Rusu, non-Resident Ambassador of the Republic of Romania; Mr Walid Ali Alkhobaizi, non-resident Ambassador of the State of Kuwait; and Mr Hemantha Warnakulasuriya, non-resident High Commissioner of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

During the past year, this Directorate received and processed a total of 26 requests for foreign accreditation to Malta from the following countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Cyprus, El Salvador, Georgia, Holy See, India, Jordan, the Democratic People's Socialist Republic of Korea, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Mexico, Montenegro, Namibia, New Zealand, Oman, Peru, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Thailand and Uruguay.

Credentials

Out of the above 26 requests, the following Ambassadors and High Commissioners presented their credentials to the President of Malta: Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, El Salvador, Georgia, Holy See, the Democratic People's Socialist Republic of Korea, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Namibia, New Zealand and Uruguay.

Honorary Consuls

During the year a number of nominations for consular posts were considered by this Directorate, with Letters of Commission and *Exequaturs* being issued to: Mrs Dinesh Shrestha, Honorary Consul in Nepal; Mr Andras Sugar, Honorary Consul in Hungary; Mr Gerald J Wirth, Honorary Consul in The Bahamas; Mr Vicko Batinica, Honorary Consul in Croatia; Mr Jose Francisco Lisboa, Honorary Consul in Portugal; Sir Brooke Charles Boothby, Honorary Consul in Wales; Mr Tom Kelly, Honorary Consul in Northern Ireland; Mr Marin Hili, Honorary Consul of Latvia; Mrs Marie-Louise Scerri Montaldo, Honorary Vice-Consul of Brazil; Mr Martin Testaferrata Moroni Viani, Honorary Consul General of San Marino; Mr Mark F Gollcher, Honorary Consul of Sweden; Mr Mark Anthony Lowell, Honorary Consul General of Switzerland.

Diplomatic Clearances

During the year under review, the Directorate processed clearances for visiting 53 naval vessels from the United Kingdom, France, Spain, Germany, United States of America, Greece, Denmark, Sweden, Morocco, Tunisia, Ireland and India. Further, the Directorate processed diplomatic clearances for 412

military aircrafts to overfly and/or land in Malta during the same period. The aircrafts came from the following countries: Italy, United States of America, France, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Serbia, Germany, Russian Federation, Greece, Mozambique, Spain, United Arab Emirates, Oman, United Kingdom, Canada, Uruguay, Brazil, Ethiopia, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Kazakhstan, Portugal, Botswana, Turkey, Sudan, South Africa, Poland, Morocco, Sweden, Egypt, Philippines, Syria, Ireland, Chile, Belgium, Tanzania, Slovenia, Malawi, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Slovakia, India, Ukraine, Israel, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Djibouti, Montenegro, Burkina Faso, Czech Republic, Austria, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast and Iran.

This Directorate also accredited eight defence attachés from the following countries: Poland, Germany, Romania, Greece, Spain, USA, France and Turkey.

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 claims for VAT refund, in conjunction with the VAT Department for reimbursement, as well as processed requests for duty free entitlements on the particular purchases.

Certificates of Identity issued for this period: 120 certificates for Diplomats, 33 certificates for Administrative Staff, five certificates for Honorary Consuls abroad, three certificates for Honorary Consuls in Malta, 11 certificates for staff working in International Organisations.

The Directorate also processed requests for exempt person stamps (EP stamps), a number of requests for the issuance/renewal of road and driving licences, requests for the issuance of CD/DMS/TF plates and requests for the issuance/renewal of ID certificates to members of the diplomatic corps and technical staff.

Government Gazette

The Directorate compiled the list of diplomatic and administrative staff, employed at the diplomatic and consular missions in Malta, in pursuance to the provisions of section 8 of the Diplomatic Immunities and Privileges Act, 1966. The latest list was published in April 2007.

The Directorate is also responsible for updating *Malta's Diplomatic and Consular Representation Book* and the publication *Diplomatic and Consular Representation in Malta*.

Other Services

This Directorate processed a number of requests for Maltese nationals to receive decorations by the following countries – Italy, France, Russian Federation, Ukraine and Sovereign Military Order of Malta.

The Directorate also processed some 834 requests for VIP and Ministerial Lounge facilities at the Malta International Airport, as well as handled queries and requests. Furthermore, it also transmitted a number of national day messages from The President of Malta to various Heads of State and vice versa. This Directorate regularly attended the Consular and Protocol meetings held in Brussels.

Consular

Consular Assistance

The Directorate on a regular basis gives consular assistance to Maltese nationals in distress while they are abroad. Cases involve injury, theft, loss of travel documents, arrest and detention by foreign authorities. Assistance is, wherever possible, co-ordinated with our missions and honorary consulates.

Authentications

The Office of Authentication was opened to the public on a daily basis. A total of 17,132 documents/certificates were authenticated during the year under review resulting in the collection of Lm98,431 in revenue.

Scholarships

The following countries offered scholarships to Maltese students: Belgium (indefinite number), China (indefinite number), Greece (3), Italy (indefinite number), Indonesia (indefinite number), Germany (indefinite number), Ireland (indefinite number), Singapore (indefinite number), UK (indefinite number). MEDAC offered 15 scholarships and IMLI offered an indefinite amount.

Visas

During the year, 453 visa applications of Maltese nationals were processed through our missions in Rome, Tripoli and London. 64 documents to be legalised abroad were also processed mainly through our missions in Rome and Tripoli.

Illegal Migration

This Directorate acted as an effective liaison between Immigration Police and the embassies of 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 2007, travel documents were processed through this Directorate concerning 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, Syria and Togo.

Letters of Request

The Directorate was responsible for the transmission of judicial documents concerning foreign as well as Maltese interests involved in legal processes being conducted in foreign jurisdictions.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT UNIT

Resources

2007 saw the recruitment of four IT Support Officers at the Information Management Unit. This recruitment was crucial for the day-to-day operations of the Unit and needless to say, a number of important projects carried out in 2007 would not have been possible without the additional resource supply.

International Connectivity Project

The Information Management Unit connected four new embassies to the MAGNET. These embassies are Strasbourg, Tripoli, Riyadh, and the Moscow consulate. These embassies were provided with new hardware and Voice over Internet Protocol telephony.

Embassy Relocation

In 2007, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had two embassy relocations: the Permanent Representation to the EU and the Embassy of Malta in France. The migration of the Permanent Representation to the EU was a major project which started in 2006 while the actual migration of the Mission took place in February 2007. The Unit took an active role in the co-ordination of all IT and telephony related issues. The move also

entailed the relocation of two major EU network connections which the Unit, in consultation with the EU Commission, migrated successfully. The Unit was also responsible for the co-ordination of all security related works/installations that were needed.

The Embassy of Malta in France was also relocated to new premises. As the number of staff involved is minimal, the actual move itself did not have a major impact on the day-to-day operations of the Embassy. The site visit also included the decommissioning of an old server. As part of Government's drive for consolidation, the Embassy today shares storage space from Malta.

Maintenance

One of the main challenges of the Information Management Unit is to constantly keep up to date all of the Ministry's missions and consular posts. Due to the lack of IT personnel within the embassies, the Unit relies totally on technology. In its day-to-day role, the Unit maintains all outposts remotely by use of specialised tools and software. However, in 2007 it was felt that the High Commission of Malta in the UK, the Embassy of Malta in Germany and in Austria required more in-depth maintenance than is usually carried out. A site visit was hence planned to these sites. The maintenance programme of the High Commission and the Embassy in Berlin went through a major overhaul, which included the decommissioning of servers and the installation of new ones.

Schengen - Visa Management System

Further enhancements to the Visa Management System were carried out to ensure that this system is in line with Schengen requirements. In preparation for Schengen membership, the Unit carried out a number of hands-on training sessions to all officials carrying out visa-related duties. In tandem with these training sessions, during the months of October and November, the Unit carried out a mass deployment exercise of the Visa Management System to all Malta's missions and consular posts. This exercise was a success and thus enabled the smooth transition of all processes in line with Schengen requirements on 21 December 2007.

VISION was one of the Visa Management System's major enhancements. VISION is a consultation matrix wherein information on visa applicants is exchanged with other Schengen partners. The Unit participated actively in all meetings at EU level and carried out the necessary requirements to meet the required criteria. August and December were dominated with various testing sessions with other Schengen states and all such testing was carried out successfully.

Schengen Evaluations

In preparation for Schengen membership, Malta had to undergo a Schengen evaluation which took place in Tripoli. This evaluation played a very important part in Malta's accession process. The evaluation took place in early September 2007. The Unit played an active role in this evaluation, and in May 2007 the Visa Management System was installed at the Embassy and staff members were duly trained. Yet another training session was carried out in July 2007 to ensure that all staff members were up to the expected Schengen levels.

Information Security

Information Security is one of the major roles falling under the Unit's jurisdiction. 2007 was an active year where security is concerned. A number of site visits were carried out to various embassies to ensure that the level of security within each Embassy is in line with EU norms and in line with Schengen regulations where visa sections are concerned. A good percentage of these security arrangements were funded by EU Funding.

The Unit continued to deal with all security clearance vetting of the Ministry's personnel both in Malta and in missions abroad.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs houses two sub-registries for EU classified information. The Unit is hence responsible for the security upkeep of these registries. In 2007, the Unit facilitated four security inspections which were carried out by the National Security Authority both in Malta and in Brussels.

Participation of Meetings

The Unit participated actively in meetings at EU level such as the VIS Working Group, the VISA/VISION Working Group, and the electronic communications working group COTEL/COMLEC. The Unit also participated in a TAIEX conference on Security for Border Controls in Lithuania and various other IT-related conferences held in Malta.

Training

Apart from the massive training programme on the use of the Visa Management System and other visa related procedures, the Unit was also responsible for another training programme related to document examination. This training programme was carried out in collaboration with the Malta Police Force. The first training programme took place at our Embassy in Libya for all Maltese officials and locally engaged personnel working on visa related issues. This programme formed part of the training preparations for the Schengen evaluation which took place in September. Further training sessions were carried out in Malta for other Ministry personnel. Members of the Police Force also participated in these training sessions. At the end of each course each official was presented with a certificate of attendance. Further similar training is envisaged in 2008.

Website

The Ministry website was enhanced during 2007 to give it a fresh and new look. The website is constantly being updated to ensure that relevant and current information is always uploaded.

CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTORATE

Human Resources

The strengthening of the Ministry's management structure continued to be strengthened with the recruitment of personnel to serve in the Ministry's various Directorates and Units.

Staff recruitment was initiated and finalised for the Central Visa Unit, the Information Management Unit, the *Forum Malta fl-Ewropa* as well as the recruitment of Second Secretaries.

New calls for applications for the position of Civil Society Co-ordinator, Research Analysts and Funding Support Co-ordinator were also finalised to be issued due to resignation of incumbents in these positions.

In order to ensure that the necessary staff complement is sustained, casual clerks were engaged to replace those that were on unpaid leave under the various categories. As part of the Ministry's programme to implement family-friendly measures, the Ministry's staff continued to take the opportunities offered by these measures. Staff continued to work flexi-hours and during the year under review, four officers took this opportunity, mostly in the Directorate Corporate Services itself.

Training

During 2007, the Directorate organised a number of in-house training sessions, particularly in the areas of visa issuance and Schengen *acquis*. In-house training was also given to the new Second Secretaries recruited during the year.

The Staff Development Organisation courses were also offered to Ministry staff, with some 20 officers participating in various courses on IT applications, European Affairs and Personal Development Programmes.

Refurbishing Works

Throughout the year under review, the Ministry continued with its programme of refurbishing and the general upkeep of Head Office and other offices. The premises at Republic Street had three of its four floors completely refurbished to house the Central Visa Unit, the Information Management Unit, the *Forum Malta fl-Ewropa*, the Commission for the Zaragoza Expo 2008 and the COMNET-IT Unit.

The solar panels which were installed on the roof of the Ministry were connected to the electricity supply of the Ministry. This is part of the Ministry's Green programme and to reduce the load from electricity consumption. Energy saving lamps were used to replace normal halogen lamps to further save on energy consumption.

Financial Management

With the aim of increasing the Ministry's capacity of financial management and control, the Electronic Cash Management Program continued. Unfortunately, due to situations beyond our control, the implementation of this program had to be delayed.

SCHENGEN IMPLEMENTATION UNIT

From a general perspective, the Schengen Implementation Unit focused its efforts on three primary objectives, the identification of premises for the setting up of the Central Visa Unit; the Schengen Evaluation held in Tripoli on August 28-30, as well as the call for applications for the various posts within the Central Visa Unit.

Following the identification of premises in Pjazza San Kalcidonju, Floriana in 2006, the Unit was in constant contact with the Building & Engineering Department of the Ministry of Resources & Infrastructure for the publication of the Internal Civil/Repair & Finishing Works Tender. The tender, published in the Government Gazette on 4 May had been awarded to Central Power Installations. Works started at the premises in the beginning of October 2007 and are expected to be completed by mid-February 2008.

In April, the Head of the Schengen Implementation Unit participated in the 3rd High Level Meeting of the Ministry wherein Maltese Ambassadors and High Commissioners were briefed on the Schengen *acquis* and Malta's new visa policy.

Following the Consular Co-operation Agreements signed with Austria in May 2004, and with Italy in October 2005, the Schengen Implementation Unit started negotiations in July with the *Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperación* in Spain for further representation in 2008 by the Spanish Consulates in Latin America and in the Philippines.

In August, the Schengen Implementation Unit attended the Schengen Evaluation of the visa issuance procedures in the Consulate of Malta in Tripoli. The report of this last of the Schengen Evaluation visits prior to Schengen membership, had concluded that Malta's Consular Section in Tripoli was in a position to

implement the Schengen *acquis* in full. It was also noted that the Schengen Implementation Unit had demonstrated capability to comply with the relevant Common Consular Instructions/Schengen requirements as attested by the result of the evaluation of its Embassy in Tunis in 2006 and in Tripoli in 2007, following that of Moscow.

In order to ensure proper functioning of Malta's visa issuance procedures, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also set up the Central Visa Unit (CVU). This Unit is Malta's central authority in this regard, and its function is to process visa requests via the Visa Management System, which together with networking facilitation between all of Malta's diplomatic missions and consular posts, will play a key role in application and authorisation procedures.

In June 2007, staff recruitment got underway with the call for applications from public officers for the posts of Head, Deputy Head, Visa Monitoring Officers, a Procurement Archives and Information Officer, and a Secretary.

In October, the Schengen Implementation Unit was instrumental in securing larger premises for the Consulate of Malta in Moscow. This followed the need for Malta's Consulate to be larger so as to be able to accommodate the large number of visa applicants in the Russian Federation, as was highlighted in the results of the Schengen evaluation in 2006. The Unit was also instrumental in the negotiations which will lead to the establishment of Consulates of Malta in Istanbul and in Benghazi.

It is pertinent to add that, as in previous years and regularly since 2003, the Head of the Schengen Implementation Unit attended the monthly Visa Working Party Meetings in Brussels.

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