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Metaphors used in the EU debate in Malta

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1. JOURNEY METAPHOR

CUL-DE-SAC, DEAD END

Sleeping with the enemy

Michael Falzon explains why there are still lingering doubts about Labour's position on the EU

Speaking to MLP supporters following the traditional May 1 demonstration, Alfred Sant said that as a result of Malta joining the EU, the PN government had led the country *into a dead end* resulting in an economic and social crisis. He then went on to add that the MLP is committed to get Malta out of this *cul-de-sac*. (...)

However, this time the notion that the people made a bad decision as they were tricked by the Government into joining the EU was even more emphasised than was normal in the last twelve months - to the extent of Malta's EU accession being referred to as a serious mistake, akin to the country being driven into a *dead end alley*. (...)

In other words, the MLP is convinced that they - the EU - are all out get at us and poor little Malta desperately needs someone to defend her: the MEPs elected from the MLP list of candidates. (...) Is the rest of the EU, therefore, the enemy threatening to swallow us up? (www.maltatoday.com.mt/2004/05/09/opinion3.html)

ROAD

09.05.2004 (Kurt Sansone)

Government has to roll up its sleeves and chart out a vision of where it wants to see this country in 10 years time. The same holds water for other political forces, private industry and civil society. Membership has opened a door and the road has only just begun.

<http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2004/05/09/e3.html>

Prime minister urges people to vote PN in Euro election (Malta Independent)
30.04.04

by Michael Carabott

Dr Gonzi replied to a question by The Malta Independent: "What could possibly be better for Malta than being part of the largest bloc in the European Parliament?"

He said that the EPP and the PN fundamentally believed in the same thing. "Both parties believe the secret to generating employment and investment is in expanding the EU. "We want to get the best out of the EU and our candidates, if elected, will concentrate on improving our economy, environment, tourism sector and our financial situation," said the PN leader.

The road was wide open, he said, and it was up to us to make the best use of it. "We are not sending our people there because we see the EU as an enemy, we are sending people there because we want them to get the best out of the Union for the overall good of the country," he said.

<http://www.independent.com.mt/news.asp?newsitemid=5442>

CROSSROADS

Malta is *at the juncture* where for the first time after many years and as they did at important junctures in their and the region's history, the Maltese can be protagonists in the events that are unfolding. But only if they are united and know what they want. The Maltese can for the first time actively participate in shaping the politics of peace and stability of the geopolitical environment in which they live. Will they do it? Will they rise to the occasion or will they divide and sub-divide on trivia? (<http://www.euro-movement.org.mt>) 13.05.2006

The Times , Thursday, March 6, 2003 (editorial)
(Crossroads – a subpublication of *The Times* ?)
We have reached the Crossroads

(...) the crossroads in this nation's history over whether it should join the EU or stay out.

Prime Minister Eddie Fenech Adami said this week: "I have personally always felt, together with my party, that Europe is where we belong and all our political activity has been geared to making the island a member of the EU."

PATH

While saying that the *path* to membership was not easy, the President of Malta paid tribute to all new members of the EU for having successfully undertaken the reforms required as part of the preparations for membership. He paid further tribute to the EU for serving as a catalyst and stimulating countries to embrace reform. (<http://www.dive.com/dive/portal/portal.jhtml?id=226106>)

I have argued here that EU membership gives Civil Society new *avenues* and opportunities. This will be essential for the acceleration of political change in this country and for the cultural change that must accompany it. It is difficult to envisage how the political parties with all their media might will be able to resist its onslaught and continue to impose their tyranny. <http://www.euro-movement.org.mt>

DESTINATION

European Union Accession: One Year On: Quo Vadis Malta?
by Joseph Muscat (15.05.05)

"Quo Vadis", a Latin phrase meaning "Where are you going?"

In Christian tradition, this phrase is attributed to St Peter. It is said that when the first Pontiff was fleeing for his life from Rome, he met Jesus. Peter asked him "Domine, quo vadis?", "Lord, where are you going?" The reply came: "To Rome to be crucified again."

Upon hearing this, Peter returned to Rome to be crucified upside down.

(...)

So, in popular imagery, the term “Quo Vadis” brings at best images of torture and at worst those of destruction. Not the best of omens I must say.

(...)This is no choice. This is the only way forward. Unless we want to find ourselves on the way back to Rome.

<http://www.independent.com.mt/news.asp?newsitemid=15870>

The Times , Friday, January 2, 2004

The year of realisation, Louis Deguara

“...2004 will be the year of realisation. The people’s decision on March 8, 2003, confirmed on April 12 of the same year, will come into full effect on May 1, 2004. Everybody agrees however that to reap a rich harvest, we have to work hard. *The point of arrival is the beginning, not the end. Membership is not an end but a means.* The door of opportunity will be open if we do our part.

(...) Things will never be the same again. We will either change our mentality or we will flounder. First of all we have to shed our parochialism. We have to evolve from confrontational politics and pull together. There will always be one role for the government and another for the opposition. But opposing for opposition’s sake or just to score political points will henceforth become increasingly evident as childish. I am confident that membership of Europe will have a salutary effect on the body politic.” 8

The Times , March 21, 2003

Mirror, mirror, on the wall – J.G. Vassallo

“He (Fenech Adami – my addition) has been the captain of a ship, listing heavily towards the *EU*, piloted by a subalteran who holds no elected, and making heavy water in the process.” 8

DIRECTION AND LACK OF DIRECTION

The Times , March 5, 2003

The EU’s ‘trustworthy’ certificate – Tonio Zarb

“Membership will provide us with the direction which will enable our country to grow economically, strengthen our infrastructure, protect our environment (...).” 12

The Times , March 4, 2003

You and the EU – Marisa Micallef Leyson

The Labour Party is trying to create an illusion. It is telling the electorate that there are two options ahead of us, EU membership or partnership. (...)

When you come to vote, you would have to decide on one thing: Do you believe we should *go down the membership road* or are you prepared to let Malta *drift aimlessly* along an unknown route?" 11

MEANS OF TRANSPORT

The Times , March 21, 2003

Mirror, mirror, on the wall – J.G. Vassallo

"He (Fenech Adami – my addition) has been the captain of a *ship*, listing heavily towards the EU, piloted by a subalteran who holds no elected, and making heavy water in the process." 8

The Malta Independent 6 March, 2003

Strong words and hecklers at IVA's last campaign meeting (Noel Grima) p. 23

(...)

"*Allternattiva's* Harry Vassallo said the EU is like a bus: we either get on or else we are doomed to see it passing by. We must grasp this chance: the biggest chance in our history.

Nobody else has ever invited us in before: we feel inferior to others, the result of colonialism. The EU countries are inviting us in, to sit around the table and take decisions together with them." 23

The Times , 21 March, 2003

Pro-EU Labourites facing 'moral dilemma' – Jesmond Bonello

"Dr Fenech Adami stressed that if on April 16, the Maltese prime minister is not present in Athens to sign the EU Accession Treaty, Malta would miss the boat for good.

'Can you imagine what would happen if the Maltese prime minister decides not to go to Athens...? I must emphasise that April 16 is the only chance for Malta to become a member of the EU...it is a 'take it or leave it' situation". 15

TICKET

"Malta's EU membership - How and Why?", speech by Edward Fenech-Adami, Prime Minister of Malta, and question and answer session at the European Policy Centre 25/09/2002

Mr Fenech-Adami said Malta's view of EU membership had been constant for many years and he himself had been voted into power on a *pro-EU ticket* in 1988. Now the country had closed most of the negotiating chapters for membership.
http://europa.eu.int/constitution/futurum/documents/speech/sp250902_en.htm

STEPS

The Hon Dr Edward Fenech-Adami, Prime Minister of Malta, addressed the latest in an EPC series of meetings with the new Member States on 25 September 2002, on the subject: "Malta's EU membership: How and Why?"(...)

The Prime Minister summed up the "how" of membership by insisting that Malta was fully committed to embracing the EU "acquis" in its entirety, without ducking any of its new responsibilities.

On the "why", he said that EU membership was a "*natural and logical*" next step for Malta, which shared the Union's aspirations. The majority of Malta's 400 000 citizens were absolutely convinced that the nation's future rested with the Union and would vote "yes" in a referendum after entry negotiations were completed.

The Times , March 4, 2003

EU membership would boost living standards
Natalino Fenech

"Prof. Bonnici said all studies carried out by the government and independent academies showed that Malta needed to make the leap into the higher economic bracket and the EU membership would give the island the required push." 7

The Malta Independent 6 March, 2003

EU membership is not the end but the beginning – UHM
Matthew Xuereb

"European Union membership is not the end but the beginning of a new era for Malta and its citizens, *Union Haddiema Maghqudin*, secretary general Gejtu Vella said yesterday. (...)

'Next Saturday we will not have a winner and a loser, but a winning country, which courageously took a step forward towards a better future,' Mr Vella said." 13

(advertisement in the paper – IVA: Membership of the European Union will give Malta a voice on the world stage. 17)

Maltatoday, 16 March, 2003

Harry Vassallo: The man of the moment

(...)

"Joining the EU would mean a leap forward of twenty years. To achieve the same level of progress we expect in the EU may take several lifetimes, should Malta remain out." 11

MOVEMENT

Europe's unjust laws (15.02.2004)

Joseph G Bonett

Ghajnsielem

It further stated that "in some parliaments, this will to proclaim man's autonomy in legislative texts has been expressed in the promulgation of unjust laws regarding abortion, euthanasia, medically-assisted procreation, the use of human embryos for medical research and the creation of a juridical framework for homo-sexual unions.

"These laws are contrary to Europe's Christian heritage, which has made it possible to become aware of the dignity of human life in a special way."

Such utterances in an important document of the Catholic Church should make us pensive – and re-evaluate our priorities, stances and commitments. I am not advocating *backing away* from membership – but to my mind the position espoused by those holding reservations on the negative outcomes emanating from the continent should not be discounted.

<http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2004/02/15/l4.html>

Maltatoday, 16 February 2003

People should see through – Julian Manduca interviews Joe Borg

"The choice is clear. If we opt out of EU membership, the central European countries will continue to advance. We will be at a standstill and effectively, in relative terms that means we will start sliding backwards." 11

The Times, Thursday, March 6, 2003 (editorial)
(Crossroads – a subpublication of *The Times* ?)

(a survey)

What They Had To Say

June 9, 2002, Joe Grima

"Small countries, cannot fight globalisation on their own. If there is something on which Dr. Sant is positively wrong, it is this. On its own Malta runs the risk of being carried away by the current without a safety net to hold us. The EU can be that safety net." 3

14.12.2003

And yes, to all those who refuse to believe that Malta could one fine day choose to walk out of the European Union, let us not be quite too sure about this.

If Europe fails to meet the expectations of us Maltese, then as all good Islanders do, we will swim upstream and do the unthinkable.
<http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2003/12/14/editorial.html>

2. MONSTER IMAGES

SODOMIZER/ RAPIST

To spank or to sodomise - Brincat and Bondi cross swords

What began as a simple expression voiced in Maltese terms, is fast turning into allegations of vulgar speech

On Sunday 9 June the MLP deputy leader, Dr Joe Brincat addressed the public in Gudja and during his speech, he voiced his opinion on the state of affairs concerning the EU – in plain Maltese language. "Nispicaw biz-zokk f'idejna....pero anke nispicaw biz-zokk fuq il-warrani.....iz-zokk nuzawh fuq il-warrani." These phrases formed part of his speech and immediately elicited giggles from members of the listening crowd, who immediately tuned to one track of the comments.

Incidentally in a column of Joe Brincat appearing on Thursday 13 June on L-Orizzont, the politician himself referred to this gaffe to which apparently several people had referred whilst in conversation with him.

He claimed that what he said had been in plain Maltese language, referring to a spanking with a stick and in no way had he meant to refer to anything remotely vulgar.

On Friday 14 June in his regular column to *The Times*, Lou Bondi stated that Joe Brincat had spoken in an extremely vulgar manner to say the least, and claimed that Brincat had said that "the European Union was trying to sodomise us" and that "According to the MLP deputy leader we should, as it were, turn around and sodomise Europe back."

When speaking to MaltaToday Dr Joe Brincat flatly denied,that he ever used the words "the European Union was trying to sodomise us", an expression used by Lou Bondi in his column to *The Times*.

Equally untrue, he said, is the statement made in the same article that the response should be "as it were, turn round and sodomise Europe back"

Dr Brincat said that both these statements are factually incorrect. "They are not my comment and as such are libellous, as they attribute to me words which I did not say." What Dr Brincat did say if we take the literal translation that we should use the stick to spank the bottom of those who are dealing on Malta's behalf with the E.U.

This translation still leaves a question to one's mind? If a spanking is required, who should dispense with it and who will be receiving it?
(<http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2002/0616/l6.html>)

BOGEYMAN

Labour candidates have often hit back at Nationalists for being 'yes men.' The general impression conveyed is that Labour's eight are best suited to defend Malta from the EU bogeyman. I ask Grech whether this is the correct attitude to adopt now that Malta is part of the EU's decision-making process.

"This is not what Labour is saying. Whoever is elected is going there to do a job. We all have to participate, but there will be instances when the country's interest has to be safeguarded. This applies equally to the larger and smaller countries in varying degrees and depending on the issues at stake.

"Those elected should not go to the European Union with a preset mind that nothing is going to work or that everything is going to work perfectly. Whatever the case we should not make promises that we cannot honour."
<http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2004/05/30/interview.html>

ALIEN

European Union Accession: One Year On: Quo Vadis Malta?

by Joseph Muscat (15.05.05)

(...)

I was asked to focus on the gap that exists between the European Union and its citizens, in particular the citizens of our country. I must note that there seems to be consensus on the fact that the EU has a problem with communicating and that citizens have been constantly expressing their dissent by means of low turnouts in European Parliament elections and the temporary swings to exponents of extreme ideologies. At least we are out of the denial stage.

How do we bridge the gap? I have two suggestions and with your permission I will put them into practice right now:

1. We must all stop treating the EU as some sort of extra-terrestrial entity. (...)

<http://www.independent.com.mt/news.asp?newsitemid=15870>

2. HOUSE/ BUILDING/ HOME

We're all in (*The Malta Independent* 30.04.06)
by Daniela Xuereb

It is almost surreal... today Malta and nine other countries joined the European Union in the largest EU enlargement ever.

To many, 1 May 2004 will be associated with celebrations, and cheering the political party which made this dream come true.

We hope the majority of those celebrating last night, today and for the rest of the week have thought about how they will make the best of EU membership, and why they are celebrating... hopefully thinking about the abundant opportunities which lie ahead in an enlarged European Union.

(...)

"EU membership is the perfect occasion to say goodbye to the ghosts of the Soviet Union which are still alive in the old generation. Standing near the door through which I can peep at the EU, I am much less inclined to step away and much more eager to open the door and say hello to Europe," said Agne.

<http://www.independent.com.mt/news.asp?newsitemid=5462>

Huti Maltin u Ghawdxin...

Kurt Sansone speculates on what the Prime Minister might say during the meeting at the Independence celebrations at Floriana on Friday

The other scenario could see enlargement being postponed by a couple of months if not years. This would give Malta a breather, although it would be a great delusion after years of waiting on Europe's doorstep.

<http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2002/09/15/opinion.html>

The inclusion of candidate countries in this process is evidence of the trust and confidence that are crucial to the successful outcome both of the enlargement process as well as the construction of our future Europe.

http://europa.eu.int/constitution/futurum/documents/speech/cont171001_en.htm

Malta At The Crossroads Again

(Speech by Dr Harry Vassallo, Chairperson AD - The Green Party

To The Commonwealth Foundation, Visit of Commonwealth Fellows 15th March , 2002)

The opposition expresses the fear of some of the partners in our small business: that we are not prepared for such a leap, that the human and economic cost of adjustment to the new reality will be catastrophic, that we have done well so far by being different, by exploiting our uniqueness just beyond the borders of Europe,

membership will reduce us to the status of remote outpost. That the interface of a microstate with what promises to become the world's largest economic grouping is beyond our reach. The fear of fundamental change is not unreasonable. (....)

In all political considerations time is always the major constraint. There is a now or never element. EU enlargement is now. We stand on the threshold with the door open. (<http://www.alternattiva.org.mt/speeches.html#SELFACtstud>)

Kurt Sansone – speaks to Arnold Cassola (05.08.2001)

He (Arnold Cassola) stresses that if Malta freezes its application one more time the country will have to wait indefinitely to re-apply. Dr Cassola says that in EU corridors Malta is considered to be an unreliable country because of the internal indecision on EU membership.

<http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2001/0805/people.html>

The Times , March 4, 2003

The 'Yes' vote of a European Maltese

Dr. Mario de Marco

"On March 8 we will be voting so that a European Malta will take its rightful place in our *maison commune*, in our common European [home](#)." 60

The malta independent, 6 March 2003

Referendum campaign – last message from the leaders

Vote 'Yes' for a better and secure future

Eddie Fenech Adami

(...)

The choice before us is clear: do we want to be part of the European Union or do we want to detached from our natural home, a home of common values and aspirations?

The EU is a success story and has brought tremendous benefits to its citizens. (...)

Malta cannot get a better deal from the EU by remaining out of union, which is what those who oppose EU membership are saying. (...)

Can Malta afford to stay out? Absolutely not. European Union enlargement is an opportunity not to be missed. By joining the EU, Malta would be returning to its natural home, a home of common values and aspirations." 5

4. CLUB/ BELONGING

The Times , Thursday, March 6, 2003 (editorial)

(Crossroads – a subpublication of *The Times*)

We have reached the Crossroads

(...) the crossroads in this nation's history over whether it should join the EU or stay out.

Prime Minister Eddie Fenech Adami said this week: "I have personally always felt, together with my party, that Europe is where we belong and all our political activity has been geared to making the island a member of the EU."

Maltatoday, 02.03.03
The EU is just sexier p.13
Julian Manduca

(...) We have lived through several administrations and were never very impressed. Maltese society is so insular, our lives so dominated by political parties, everything is so dependent on who one knows, that it is sometimes difficult to breathe. We have been longing for a breath of fresh air and that is what I perceive the EU to be.

Staying out of the EU has some romantic connotations, but its appeal quickly disappears when one thinks of Maltese politicians trying to bring Malta's standards up to those of the EU without outside pressure. (...)

But we are prepared to overlook these as we know that Malta will face difficulties come what may - even with the partnership option - and we feel that somehow joining the EU will be exciting. And that is what it all boils down to in the end. Excitement. Change. Diversity. The EU option is just, somehow...sexier. Which other institution would choose a pot smoking, bisexual, eccentric dressing, rock and roll fanatic (Marco Cappato) as its European of the Year?

Joining the EU would put us on a par and in the same club as Spaniards, Latvians, Danes and Poles and we want to associate with these people. We see ourselves joining a club that is a mover and shaker in the international arena, even if we may not agree with the way it sometimes moves and shakes. (...)

At this point, Malta rejecting EU membership is simply unthinkable. If we don't join we might as well pack our bags... and the last one out... please close the door.

5. FAMILY

The Malta Independent 1 March 2003

Desperately needed quality leap
Published by Standard Publications Ltd.

"...The deal ably negotiated by government consists of a known and concrete package while, on the other hand, the No camp are simply offering people a wish list without any guarantees at all. In effect they are simply asking for a blank cheque.

(...) Membership will offer political anchorage as a member of the largest democratic family. Our rights will be further enhanced and our standard of living, as a member of the largest traditional block, will inevitably increase as will our chances of attracting foreign investment. (...) It is evident that there will be a quality leap in the state of the environment (...).

With the signing of the Treaty Malta is fully and unequivocally confirming its destiny as an important member of a *European family of nations*.
(<http://eu.alert.com.mt/page.asp?p=738&l=1&i=1336>)

President of Malta address EU Parliament
by Chris Galea, di-ve news

"Trust is not innate but must be earned"

STRASBOURG/ Malta (di-ve news) -- April 05, 2006 -- 1310CEST --The President of the Republic Dr. Edward Fenech Adami addressed the plenary session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg on Wednesday afternoon, in a first for Malta's Head of State since the country joined the EU.

Dr. Fenech Adami said that Malta looks at EU membership as a natural *home-coming* and that the country is proud to form part of *the family of nations* that is the EU with its spirit, cultural and humanistic heritage.

During his speech, he referred to the past year, saying that far from being an annus horribilis as many are claiming, the EU has successfully met the challenge of absorbing its widest enlargement ever in a smooth manner.

Life after membership, Dr. Fenech Adami went on to say, is not easy as it calls on decision-makers to take tough, often unpopular, decisions. However, such decisions are necessary irrespective of whether a country joins the EU or not.

With regards the European Constitutional Treaty, Malta's President said that the project appeared to have come too soon and too fast for the new member states. He added that it would have been wiser to give the project more time, not only until the new member states settled in but also until all the other countries adapted to the new realities of an enlarged EU.

Community institutions, he further said, do not lack initiatives and perseverance, but rather they lack in the amount of trust that people put in them.

The President of Malta went on to say that trust is also earned by showing that the EU is able to *give a voice to reason*, displaying a sense of balance and even-handedness in its policy-development, in its decision-making but also in its interaction with other players around the world.

He also expressed his conviction that small states, like Malta, have an important role to play in the EU, as it is not the size of the country that matters but the strength of the ideas and the clarity of the country's vision.

Dr. Fenech Adami applauded the initiatives taken by the EU with regards the Services Directive, the Energy Policy and the Maritime Policy, saying that the voice of reason is standing out in the way that the EU is taking on these challenges.

A challenge that is currently putting a harsh test on the capacity of a number of member states, including Malta, is the issue of irregular immigration, Dr. Fenech Adami went on. He added that the EP delegation had the occasion to witness the strain that is being put on Malta during their recent visit when they had the opportunity to talk to the asylum seekers directly.

(<http://www.di-ve.com/dive/portal/portal.jhtml?id=226106>) 27.04.06

The Times , March 6, 2003
Say yes to your children's future
Eddie Fenech Adami

"(...) The golden opportunity before us is to join a *European family* that owes its *birth* to the wars that ravaged our continent and that owes its success to the member states' unwavering commitment to the entrenched principles of solidarity and subsidiary.

It is a family that has seen tiny Luxembourg share the same decision-making powers as mighty Germany, a *family* that has embraced the distinct cultural identities of Britain and France, and a family whose successful aim has been to foster peace, prosperity and cooperation among members. (...)" 1 (continuation on page 60)

"It is now up to us to decide, though I am in no doubt as to where our destiny should lie.

(...)

Do we have an alternative to membership? Yes. We can stay out and be alone in a world where it is becoming ever more vital to belong to a *strong family*." 60

The Times , April 17, 2003
Beginning of a 'new era'

The European Movement yesterday described the signing of the EU accession treaty in Athens as "a historic moment in the history of our nation".

"April 16 will be set in the history books right alongside other historic dates, such as that of Independence in 1964," it said.

"With the signing of the treaty Malta is fully and unequivocally confirming its destiny as an important member of a European family of nations."

MARRIAGE

Maltatoday Sunday 08 May 2005
George E. Mangion p. 26
EU anniversary – euphoria or disillusionment?

Sceptics lament that Malta's Euro honeymoon seems to be well and truly over. Perhaps the bride does not look so enchanting now that the make up is gone and the false hair pieces have fallen. Some moan that disenchantment began to creep in with the unsavoury reality of having to get out of bed and buckle down to hard work. But this is not the fault of accession but of the excessive hype that the pro-EU apologists heaped on us two years ago. Manna was never going to fall from heaven but we can sense a feeling that bureaucrats in Brussels are watching us and doing their audits on what local politicians used to pour down on us. Gone are the days when the party spin doctors had a field day and their weave of make believe was so eagerly grasped by the party faithful.

(...) United, our resolve can see us through the narrow gates of the Euro club."

The Times , March, 4, 2003
Staying out means remaining a backwater

Martin Galea, managing director of Joinwell Ltd

"The decision to join the European Union is like the decision to *marry*. The heart and mind both play a part. You have to use both when coming to your decision. (...) 8

Spectacular! (Malta Independent – 01.05.06)

by Michael Carabott

Thousands of Maltese and foreigners crammed the bastions and the Grand Harbour waterfront to watch a truly impressive show, broadcast worldwide, that captivated everyone.

(...)

We are members of the EU. We might be on honeymoon for a few weeks, but the reality is that we are part of a 500 million strong family now. The political battle is over, nervousness is now useless, but optimism for the future and the need to grasp opportunities is still there. It is time to shape our own future.

<http://www.independent.com.mt/news.asp?newsitemid=5468>

PARTNERSHIP AND FULL MEMBERSHIP

The Times , Wednesday, March 12, 2003

Sant says he will negotiate partnership within 18 months (Ariadne Massa)

(interview with A. Sant)

"A new Labour government will respect the resounding majority of electorate who opted not to say yes to membership", he said (...).

- partnership

"The Labour Party is not promising heaven on earth. Instead, we are offering tailor-made proposals for new opportunities which will give a new injection of life to the economy," he said.

"Dr Sant said a new Labour government would offer 'a hand of friendship' to all those who had the national interest at heart and wanted to see the island stand on its two feet." 14

The Malta Independent, 4 March 2003

History in the making – Jurgen Balzan (AD deputy secretary general)

"(...) For the first time since Independence all Maltese citizens are called to decide which way the country must go. The choice is between being members of the European Union and staying out. The choice is between certainty and ambiguity.

Staying out of the EU will only bring with it isolation, instability and uncertainty. Partnership is a list of unrealistic wishes. (...)

This Saturday is a golden opportunity for Malta to join and participate in the birth of a new Europe.” 6

The Times , March 4, 2003

‘At least two years’ needed to conclude ‘partnership’ – Sant
Fiona Galea Debono

“The negotiation of a ‘partnership’ agreement with the EU would not be the ‘be-all-and-end-all’, he said, although Malta needed a “good tie” with the EU, as well as with other countries such as North America, Australia, Russia and North Africa. (...)

Dr Sant said EU membership would threaten Malta’s maritime register, which had been built over years and generated substantial employment.

From the educational point of view, membership would be *a burden* on the university due to an influx of foreign students, reducing the chances of Maltese to attend without paying fees or facing other restrictions, he maintained.” 4

The Times , March 4, 2003

You and the EU – Marisa Micallef Leyson

The Labour Party is trying to create an illusion. It is telling the electorate that there are two options ahead of us, EU membership or *partnership*. (...)

When you come to vote, you would have to decide on one thing: Do you believe we should go down the membership road or are you prepared to let Malta drift aimlessly along an unknown route?” 11

The Malta Independent 3 March 2003

The waltz of the shadows

(...)

“Several others organisations and structures were, one after the other, joining the Yes campaign in the run up to Saturday’s consultative referendum, Dr Sant noted.

‘I describe it as the waltz of the shadows,’ Dr Sant said. There was no doubt, he continued that the Yes campaign would leave no stone unturned in order to manipulate facts and confuse public opinion. (...)

Democratic deficit

Dr Sant accused the pro-membership side of spreading lies, talking about pie in the sky, and embarking on an incessant brainwashing campaign. (...)

Partnership

Dr Sant expressed his conviction that, in the forthcoming general election, the people would opt for the Partnership policy as proposed by the MLP. He said that, when it was in office between 1996 and 1998, the Labour administration and the EU had agreed on a road map which would have led to a partnership deal. Switzerland was undertaking a similar exercise, he recalled. However, while Switzerland managed to bring its deal to a conclusion, Malta did not because of the change of government in 1998.” 28

Maltatoday, 23 March 2003, p. 13

A guarantee that we will not get in

(...)

Dr Alfred Sant said the electorate would be given the possibility of choosing between partnership and 'full' membership as negotiated by the government. The time frame remains unclear, but it is obvious that we would have missed the boat by then.

The proposal is akin to the situation of a gigolo who agrees to marriage, but at the very last moment suggests an open relationship with the option of marriage should the need arise.

Needless to say such an arrangement is not only surreal, but also selfish and one-sided.

The leader of the Opposition is attempting to achieve a middle-of-the-road solution, but it is no solution at all.

It offers nothing in the way of certainty other than the guarantee that Malta's membership bid will be lost – albeit for the foreseeable future. (...)

What the leader of the opposition is proposing is an unthinkable alternative that will leave us out in the cold.

Not being in the EU now would spell disaster.

Disaster will come in the form of economic stagnation and the shock wave that will follow when all the work carried out in the accession drive has to be redrawn and erased. (...)"

The Malta Independent, 6 March, p.4

Referendum campaign – last message from the leaders

Malta's European way forward: partnership – Alfred Sant

"The real choice facing us is not to say yes or no to full membership of the European Union. It is to decide on the best relationship with the European Union – one that allows us to build a better future for Malta's families. (...)

The choice facing Malta is between partnership and full membership of the European Union.

Partnership covers a contractual arrangement, different from membership, that carries mutual benefits and obligations. (...)

But why is partnership superior to full membership?

Mainly for this reason: that while partnership allows for a flexible implementation of EU rules, membership implies the full assumption by Malta of all EU rules and regulations. Which is natural: when you join a club, you must accept all the rules of the club. (...)

Truly, the full application to Malta of EU rules will create huge new burdens and costs, without providing equivalent new opportunities.

Partnership is the best choice for Malta, because it retains flexibility in the way by which we apply EU rules. It keeps open all windows of opportunity for Malta, while affirming confidence in the ability of our nation to manage its own affairs."

The Times , March 4, 2003

Pregnancy and the European Union – Lino Spiteri

(...)

“There is no choice available between the “full” membership and, by implication, some ‘other’ form of membership. (...)

A very able EU bureaucrat, a fellow Socialist, took me aside as soon as the meeting ended. “I hope you don’t mind me correcting you”, he told me, “but there is no such thing as ‘full’ membership. There is only membership and associate membership. Membership is like pregnancy – you either are, or you aren’t.” 14

The Times , March 6, 2003

AD hopeful of yes vote – George Cini

“Malta should not be a guinea pig in a ‘partnership’ experiment but should join other European nations as their equals in decision-making, the chairman of Alternattiva Demokratika, Harry Vassallo, said yesterday. (...)

...Dr Vassallo said AD was confident that the Maltese would choose a place in Europe’s premier division rather than a place in the second division. “ 5

Malta Independent, 5 March, 2003, p. 8

(letter?)

From the inside – Leon Zawadzki, Msida

“...Many people, including politicians, say that they do not understand the concept of partnership. Are they living in cuckoo-land or what? Maybe I can explain. EU membership is like being married. Before the marriage you have the engagement, which is when you lay down the rules and regulations . if you agree, you get married. That’s it. You’re in. But you must bear in mind that the dominant partner may change the rules and regulations after the marriage. No divorce is possible. Now with partnership, it’s like two people moving in and living together: Initially, no rules and regulations, these are made up as you go along, to the common good of both partners. If you don’t agree to the rules etc. you can walk out and start again. Nobody gets hurt.”

Budget day and plan B

We are at a crucial period in our history. By 2004 we can either be EU members or retire to limbo.

The limbo or plan B scenario is no plan at all.

The limbo or plan B strategy is something projected by the Labour party. It has no frills to it other than the simple message that it offers to stay out and build on a partnership agreement with the EU.

The same as the EU has formulated with Arab nations and developing countries.
<http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2002/11/24/editorial.html>

BIG BROTHER

From the great defender of makku's sovereignty, Labour now rushes to report the government to the "big brother" in Brussels whenever it drags its feet on any of those - hitherto - costly, bureaucratic, burdensome and useless maze of straightjacket EU laws.

<http://www.timesofmalta.com/core/article.php?id=259431> 25.04.07

CATERER AND PROTECTOR

In such an eventuality, Dr Busuttil continues, the Amsterdam Treaty would have to apply, which would pose a difficulty because it only caters for five new EU members.
<http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2002/0203/people.html> 03.02.2002

The Times , March 3, 2003

PN accuses "No" camp of lack of ethics – Jesmond Bonello

"Ivan Bartolo, a Labour councillor (...) who voted in favour of the EU in a resolution at Mosta council, said he would continue to support Labour principles. He said that all the democratic parties in Europe and most European trade unions were in favour of the membership.

'How can I accept that my party uses the EU to instill fear in the workers when the EU protects and safeguards the rights of European workers?'" p. 1

Malta Today 01 February 2004 – issue number 221.

Pp. 12-13 Defending the ordinary folk – interview (Kurt Sansone) with Joseph Muscat

"We need to change systems that may have worked for some time in the last 16 years but are now rusty. We need to change our post-colonial mentality. Many people look at the EU as if the queen was coming back to Malta; instead of milking funds from the queen we will be milking funds from the EU. This is not the case and this is a mentality we have to change." (12)

The Times , March 3, 2003

Our children need EU citizenship

Gorg Grech, who operates in the retail, leisure, catering and real estate industries, in Malta, Britain and Croatia (...) speaks to *The Times* (...). "Once Malta is safe inside the Union, any problems we may have with democracy (...) would automatically be the problems of the European Union as a whole." 8

"Maltese mothers will do anything and everything to make the lives of their children better than their own, and this is what they must understand: EU citizenship is the

best gift they can give to their children. It will keep them safe, It will give them a future to look forward to, instead of one of uncertainty.

As a parent, I have this to say: membership of the European Union is essential to safeguard the future of those who are younger than we are.” 8

6. LIFE AND DESTINY

Historic day for our nation

Date:16/04/2003

The signing of the EU accession treaty in Athens today marks a historic moment in the history of our nation. The 16th of April 2003 will be set in the history books right alongside other historic dates such as that of Independence in 1964.

With the signing of the Treaty Malta is fully and unequivocally confirming its destiny as an important member of a European family of nations. Today is however not the end of a process but rather the beginning of a new era for our nation. From this moment onwards Malta will have an even more important role to play both as a European as well as a Mediterranean country. Given the possibility to fully participate in the most important European institutions, Malta can now have a greater influence both on its own destiny as well as on that of the Mediterranean region. It is now up to us to make full use of the possibilities.

The signing of the Treaty in Athens should also mark the *dawn of a new era* of consensual politics in our country. The issue of EU membership which for too long was used for partisan purposes should now for the platform for unprecedented unity. The choice for EU membership was not a choice for one political party or another but rather it was a choice for the nation. With this in mind the issue of EU membership should not remain an issue of confrontation but rather should now form the basis of constructive discussion between all the social and political bodies of the country. The discussion must now centre on how we can make EU membership a success for Malta.

The signing of the Treaty is the culmination of a strenuous effort made by a large number of people and organisations *to steer Malta towards the path of European integration*. The European Movement (Malta) is proud to have played a consistent and constructive role in fulfilling Malta's European destiny.

(<http://eu.alert.com.mt/page.asp?p=738&l=1&i=1336>) 08.05.06

Malta-EU Information Centre (MIC): Conference on The Future of European: Convergence or Divergence: An Overview of the Positions of the EU Member States
By Dr Roderick Pace

18/10/2001

Consonant with the history of European integration, at the centre of this discussion lies the fate of the nation-state in Europe.

http://europe.eu.int/constitution/futurum/documents/contrib/cont181001_5_en.htm

The Times , March 5, 2003

We have nothing to fear – John Bonello, chairman and senior partner of PricewaterhouseCoopers in Malta (...)

“I firmly believe that the *destiny* of this country lies in the heart of Europe, and not at its periphery, nor at any other periphery. (...)

Europe is changing. By next year, very few of Europe’s countries will be left out of the European Union. Of those, most are standing in line to join. (...) We cannot afford to be left alone in an economic wilderness.” 8

In competition and consumer rights, Europe will provide opportunities and *new horizons*, as in the cultural and educational camp, where Europe has so much to offer.

<http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2003/12/14/editorial.html>

The Times , January 1, 2004

Malta in 2004

Francis Zammit Dimech

“In 2004, Malta will receive close to Lm24 million through the Italy-Malta protocol and through Eu membership. It will be the first year when EU funds start to be channelled towards needed projects.

On the night of April 30, I would aim for a vantage point close to Grand Harbour to follow and participate in celebrations reaching their climax at midnight. A new era will have begun. Malta will be part of a 25-member European Union.

In September we will celebrate our 40th birthday since Independence. The two events are linked since EU membership is the ultimate way of strengthening our own sovereignty. *Life begins at 40!*” p.8

The Times , March 3, 2003

PN accuses “No” camp of lack of ethics – Jesmond Bonello

“Television personality Lou Bondi said he was very confident that after next Saturday’s referendum a ‘new European state’ *would be born*. He described Malta’s EU membership as a natural process after Malta fought for its independence in 1964.” 5

7. PAIN

(05.08.2001)

Arnold Cassola (Green Party)

"We either face short term pain and experience long term gain or else restructure at our own pace and remain out of the block. The latter option would mean no funds would be available to help us in the restructuring process," Dr Cassola insists.

<http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2001/0805/people.html>

8. CONTAINER METAPHORS

Maltatoday, 09 March, 2003, p. 20

National Industrial Policy launched

Prosperity in change: the way forward

Economic Services Minister Josef Bonnici officially launched Malta's National Industrial Policy this week. (...)

Benefits of EU membership

"Emphasizing that EU membership is the key to a more prosperous future, Profs. Bonnici said that suggested alternatives come from a defeatist outlook that wrongly believes that Malta's producers are incapable of surviving, let alone thriving, in competitive settings that reward productivity improvements and industrial excellence. Bonnici contends that it is only EU membership that will truly release Malta's producers from the constraints of a small market and limited resources. It alone would bring about the necessary EU funding to achieve ends that are otherwise out of reach. (...)

In addition, Malta would remain barred from participation in EU decisions that strongly impact most aspects of the economy. Outside the EU, Malta would be increasingly disadvantaged as more European countries join the EU, they will rapidly reap the benefits of membership further diluting whatever advantage Malta can obtain from a free-trade agreement with the EU.

He adds that EU membership is also the centrepiece of the Government's aim to develop Malta as a hub for regional activity in trade, industry and commerce. (...) 20

KMB's half-hour speech

The claim, made on Sunday by Il-Mument that former premier Karmenu Mifsud Bonnici went to the Labour Party's first meetings behind closed doors and made a speech lasting between half a hour and three quarters of an hour, has not been denied. (...)

Moreover, it must promise to bring Malta *out of the EU* as soon as it regains the support of the majority of the people and finds itself in power. (...)

To join or not to join the EU was never a fundamental issue of the Labour Party: it became so these past years, more by chance than by ideology. If anything, as has been stressed time and again by the Nationalist Party, one would have expected the Labour Party to be more eager than the Nationalist's to join Europe, considering the prevalence of social democratic traditions and rights of workers *inside the EU*.

Had the Nationalist Party been true to its name, and nationalistically opposed to joining the EU, Labour would most probably have been all for joining. (...)

But in five years' time, this will be forgotten and the EU membership will be part of reality, accepted just as breathing is. Who will heed then the call of the nostalgics for the 1980s retro look? <http://www.doi.gov.mt/EN/commentaries/2003/07/ind30.asp>

The Times, March 3, 2003

Grab the opportunity – Matty Cremona

“All change is difficult. One either goes backwards or forwards. That is the sum of it. My belief is that membership will push forward but *staying out* will drive us backwards. The world changes, so we have to change with it. I would not feel safe sitting *outside* the EU. (...) In the end, membership of the EU will mean a better and safer life for the Maltese. This is a fundamental life choice.” 48

The Times, March 6, 2003

There is only one choice – Edward Bencini

“I shall vote yes, secondly, because our children deserve better than being left *out in the cold*. Europe guarantees the cutting edge of opportunity for our children, with countless openings for them to reap the harvest of their education (...).” 21

The Times March 5, 2003

“People have a choice whether they want to form part of the new EU with 25 member states or to stay *out in the cold*”, he (Fenech Adami – my addition, MP) said. 5

The Times, March 6, 2003

Our bread and butter – Melvyn Mifsud

“Our bread and butter depends on Europe. Remaining *out* may signify isolation.” 191

The Times, March 6, 2003

Say yes to your children's future

Eddie Fenech Adami

“It is now up to us to decide, though I am in no doubt as to where our destiny should lie.

(...)

Do we have an alternative to membership? Yes. We can stay *out* and be alone in a world where it is becoming ever more vital to belong to a strong family.” 60

The Times, March 6, 2003

This time, do not postpone the future, Austin Gatt

(about the withdrawal of application 1996)

"The damage to our European future was massive. While Malta lay frozen out of Europe, four other countries jumped the queue. (...)

On Saturday you will vote to put Lm81 million of EU funds into Malta, for more rights, a better quality of life and for a seat at Europe's decision-making tables." 17

Editorial

And yes, to all those who refuse to believe that Malta could one fine day choose to walk out of the European Union, let us not be quite too sure about this.

If Europe fails to meet the expectations of us Maltese, then as all good Islanders do, we will swim upstream and do the unthinkable.

<http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2003/12/14/editorial.html>

The Times, Thursday, March 6, 2003 (editorial)

(Crossroads – a subpublication of *The Times* ?)

We have reached the Crossroads

(...) the crossroads in this nation's history over whether it should join the EU or *stay out*.

Prime Minister Eddie Fenech Adami said this week: "I have personally always felt, together with my party, that Europe is where we belong and all our political activity has been geared to making the island a member of the EU."

The Times, Thursday, March 6, 2003 (editorial)

(Crossroads – a subpublication of *The Times* ?)

(a survey)

What They Had To Say

December 8, 2002 – Joe Pirotta

"The question is straightforward: Do you want to be an EU member which means carrying the burdens as well as taking the advantages of membership along the lines of being negotiated? Or do you want to *stay out*? Full stop. You cannot ask people to vote on partnership idea which is shapeless and based on wishful thinking." 3

9. FACTORY

(Dr Mifsud Bonnici

Maltese Labour Party - former Prime Minister of Malta

Speech to the Second Congress for Democracy - Westminster, 9 July 1999)

What we will lose if we were not to join the European Union – and I hope we will not – is that we will not participate in the *growth of the Union*, which is a *factory* which produces tons of directives and tons of regulations.

<http://www.congressfordemocracy.org.uk/bonnici%20speech.html>

MACHINE

"When negotiations started in earnest in February 2000 Malta entered the Brussels 'bureaucratic machine'. Once the process got going, the EU's only intention was and still is, to prepare for Malta's accession treaty," Dr Busuttil replies. <http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2002/0203/people.html> (03.02.2002)

10. PHYSICAL FORCES

The Times , March 4, 2003

EU membership would *boost* living standards

Natalino Fenech

"Prof. Bonnici said all studies carried out by the government and independent academies showed that Malta needed to make the leap into the higher economic bracket and the EU membership would give the island *the required push*." 7

PRESSURE

From the great defender of makku's sovereignty, Labour now rushes to report the government to the "big brother" in Brussels whenever it drags its feet on any of those - hitherto - costly, bureaucratic, burdensome and useless maze of straightjacket EU laws. <http://www.timesofmalta.com/core/article.php?id=259431> 25.04.07

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The Times , March 4, 2003

'At least two years' needed to conclude 'partnership' – Sant

Fiona Galea Debono

"The negotiation of a 'partnership' agreement with the EU would not be the 'be-all-and-end-all', he said, although Malta needed a "good tie" with the EU, as well as with other countries such as North America, Australia, Russia and North Africa. (...)

Dr Sant said EU membership would threaten Malta's maritime register, which had been built over years and generated substantial employment.

From the educational point of view, membership would be a *burden* on the university due to an influx of foreign students, reducing the chances of Maltese to attend without paying fees or facing other restrictions, he maintained.” 4

Maltatoday, 23 March 2003, p. 11

Laws from Brussels can be defied

(...) Tony Abela

Abela opposes EU membership for a variety of reasons:

“Politically Malta the first microstate ever to join the EU would be *overwhelmed* by the structures which lead to the most important decisions of the EU.”

“Secondly, the EU is clearly evolving into a federal state and this can be confirmed by the draft Convention of Giscard D’Estaing.

“And thirdly we have not taken the bull by the horns but by its tail: unless Parliament decides to amend as much as 40 percent of the Constitution, Malta can never fall in line with what the EU really wants.”

“The Constitution’s sections on the parliament, the courts, the executive and the interpretation clause would have to be changed for Malta to function properly within the EU. (...)”

11. PANACEA (and other positive images)

Europe, two years later

Two years ago people overwhelmingly endorsed the European project. Euphoria was running high. Many people believed in Europe as the panacea for the country’s economic ills. Some remained highly suspicious others reserved judgment. With the passage of time people started to draw a more realistic picture.
<http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2006/04/30/editorial.html>

HEAVEN ON EARTH

The Times March 5, 2003

GWU plans ‘damage-control’ campaign in case of yes vote

(General Workers Union; general secretary, Tony Zarb)

“He (Zarb) said that although people were being promised heaven on earth with EU membership, the reality was that Europe was losing its social conscience. Poverty in the EU was on the increase, the number of homeless was growing and there were 15 million unemployed. The Maltese did not want this Europe.” 6

12. (THIRD) DIVISION

The road to Europe should also focus on the fact that our identity will not be tarnished if we do become members. (...)

No one has lost their language, their culture, their traditions or their right to govern.

This is essential, because one of the main pillars for the eurosceptic camp is that European Union accession will lead to relegating Malta to *third division*.

Contradicting this argument is proof that in Europe we can be as Maltese as we have ever been, that is: calculating, parasitic, adaptive, flexible, ambitious and self-centred.

<http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2001/1111/editorial.html>

The Times, March 6, 2003

AD hopeful of yes vote – George Cini

“Malta should not be a guinea pig in a ‘partnership’ experiment but should join other European nations as their equals in decision-making, the chairman of Alternattiva Demokratika, Harry Vassallo, said yesterday. (...)

...Dr Vassallo said AD was confident that the Maltese would choose a place in Europe’s *premier division* rather than a place in the *second division*. “ 5

13. SMALLNESS, INSULARITY, PERIPHERY

For our sins for being Islanders we are meant to suffer insularity. This European Union thing may not change things as fast as we would have imagined. The infatuation with everything Brussels is also making it worse. We badly need to look beyond, but as long as we remain Islanders we have little choice. (Malta Today 26 September, 2004).

Feeling a citizen of the world gives a sense of liberation from the claustrophobia of living in a minuscule and over populated island surrounded by sea. It is a pity that some people armed with no-entry signs are desperately trying to block our way towards the future... <http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2001/0408/opinion.html>

It’s the song as well as the singer – Louis Deguara (Health Minister)

“It is the march of history. Globalisation has made the nation state irrelevant and the small nation state even more so. The 19th and first half of the 20th century was the heyday of the nation state. In the 21st century the world will be organised politically and economically in blocks. Another wave of applicants will transform the EU into One Europe. We should be proud to take part in this millennial transformation. (...)

Enhanced sovereignty – Europe means nations deciding together. Small nation states especially, outside the union, will have to succumb to the effects of decisions made in their absence. Economic decisions mostly. The economy: greater investments – We are joining the largest market in the world and it will grow further in the future. Staying out will mean loss of advantages to our East Europe competitors who will steal a march on us. (...)

Vote 'No' and make Malta the laughing stock of Europe. We will be seen as indecisive people. Remember we have switched off once. It took a lot of convincing to persuade Europe to let us switch on again (...).

The 'Yes' vote has gathered irresistible momentum during the weeks of the campaign. But we should not err by being complacent and hesitate to pick up the mature fruit." 6

Desperately needed quality leap
Published by Standard Publications Ltd.

"Yet another reality consists in the fact that entry will help open up our country and overcome our sense of isolation. This will apply even culturally because, by coming into more and more contact with people from Europe, Malta will inevitably become more Europeanised. This amounts to a bigger appreciation of all the values upon which Europe is built. The cardinal European values are solidarity, tolerance, consumer protection, protection of minority rights and standards in all services offered. These are targets we have traditionally been unable to achieve on our own and it is silly to even imagine that by remaining as we are we will reach them. (...) Europe remains our best chance to achieve the quality leap so desperately needed. It would be a pity if this golden chance were thrown away." 7

30/03/2004 - The Effects of EU Membership on Malta's Political System
The Effects of EU Membership on Malta's Political System
By Dr Roderick Pace

Educational programmes catering for the exchange of youths and students give the younger generation an added opportunity to study overseas. *These programmes help in overcoming the insular often verging on the ghetto mentality that is often manifest in key sectors of our society and to strengthen a more cosmopolitan outlook.*

(<http://www.euro-movement.org.mt>) 13.05.2006

Maltatoday, 09 March 2003

Foreign press fears a 'no' vote

(...)

Denis Barnett from the Agence France-Press reports from scene of 15, 000 PN supporters at the Luxol grounds hearing Prime Minister Fenech Adami accusing the Labour Party of scaremongering, for saying "Malta's identity would be overrun by EU giants like France and Germany," and for basing their campaign 'on fear of the unknown' in a fearly divisive campaign.

"A few kilometres away in the Floriana quarter of the capital, an ebullient Labour Party leader Alfred Sant told a noisily defiant rally the government was misleading voters. He said the Maltese should "keep our destiny in our own hands" through partnership with the EU. Brussels' 'one-size-fits-all' policies do not suit Malta, he added. (...)

Maltatoday, 30 March 2003, p. 8

Between the devil and the deep blue sea

Carmello Vassallo shares his thoughts about the forthcoming election with Kurt Sansone – photo

PN not working to attract MLP voters

Photo

Alfred Sant's scaremongering, that we will be swallowed, that we are like whitebait...10-11

Mr Speaker: I cannot understand how the opposition, when and where it suits them best, say that Malta is the small fish (makku) compared to the giant whale (balena), and when it suits them, they look up to America. As if we could ever do what America is doing, and take measures to provide that same assistance that America provides. Mr Speaker, the opposition has to decide whether Malta is the small fish or the big fish, and not jump from one side of the fence to the other. (unofficial translation; original at: <http://parliament.gov.mt/file.aspx?f=1479>)

The Labour Party's argument that Malta will be insignificant within the Council of Ministers is absolute nonsense. Labour leader Alfred Sant said that Malta would be like "a white bait among whales" once it joins the EU because it will only have three votes out of 342. This argument, however, can be applied to any country. What power do Germany or Britain have on their own with only 29 votes each out of 342 votes? What about Sweden and Austria with 10 votes each or Hungary and the Czech Republic with 12 votes each?

(*Independent on Sunday* : 17 December 2000,
<http://www.doi.gov.mt/en/commentaries/2000/12/ind17.asp>)

Denis Barnett from the Agence France-Press reports from the scene of 15,000 PN supporters at the Luxol grounds hearing Prime Minister Fenech Adami accusing the Labour Party of scaremongering, for saying "Malta's identity would be overrun by EU giants like France and Germany," and for basing their campaign 'on fear of the unknown' in a bitterly divisive campaign.

<http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2003/03/09/t2.html>

The predominantly Catholic nation of 400,000 people that is squeezed onto a rock in the Mediterranean south of Italy joined the EU last year.

(http://www.redorbit.com/news/health/336680/married_to_the_eu_but_malta_says_no_to_divorce/)

"It is something that we might have to do and I hope to transcend our small island mentality. Malta will send five representatives who need to cover at least 17 committees. This is no small task. Let us make it very clear we are not going there as a single Maltese bloc but despite our political differences and opposing stands we will be taking on various issues, there may be instances where we would have to work

together if the national interest is at stake.”
<http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2004/05/30/interview.html> (interview with L. Grech)

“Malta, the size of a small town in Europe, will be standing next to giants, sharing the same experiences and making its own contribution, whatever the cynics, in Malta and abroad, may think of the island. We will be leaving behind those still caught in a time warp.” (*The Times* , April 28, 2003)

In my opinion the Nationalists could have negotiated a better membership agreement, especially when you consider that we are a tiny island on our own on the periphery of the continent. <http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2004/03/14/interview.html> (24.05.2008)

The new European Union should be a union of equal partners. Some time ago, there was a tendency to discuss the core Europe consisting of France and Germany. Enlargement is re-focusing Europe on to other states that may geographically lie on the periphery of the European map.
<http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2004/06/06/opinion6.html> (27.05.08)

And what is it that Sharon objects to in the EU?

"I'm in favour of a lot of what the EU has to offer, what I'm against is the political (federalist) integration of the member states," she replies. "Malta's so small that, if the EU follows its current trend and winds up as a huge federal state, then we will be nothing more than a sub-regional province.

"Our national status will be removed and we will end up with no power or influence, far removed from the centre of power. At the moment we may be a small nation, but we are, at least, a nation, with the ability to enact our own laws, regulations and foreign policy." <http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2001/1028/people.html> (27.05.08)

(Waiting for Europe - the long march to emancipation

Matthew Vella leaves no stone unturned in underlining the aspirations of that very small but anxious libertarian core of Maltese voters)

One of the fundamental aspects of the administration's conservatism is that its disdain for certain 'European' values and other civil rights such as divorce and gay marriage exceeds its enthusiasm for EU membership and the unbridled free market. The result is a two-speed political discourse which creates friction the faster Malta integrates into the European mainland: the more this island opens itself up to the cultural exports pouring in from the Western world, the greater that feeling grew of being constrained by the overtones of a national, religious discourse.
<http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2004/05/09/e4.html>)

The Malta Independent 6 March, 2003

Strong words and hecklers at IVA's last campaign meeting (Noel Grima) p. 23
(...)

"*Allternattiva's* Harry Vassallo said the EU is like a bus: we either get on or else we are doomed to see it passing by. We must grasp this chance: the biggest chance in our history.

Nobody else has ever invited us in before: we feel inferior to others, the result of colonialism. The EU countries are inviting us in, to sit around the table and take decisions together with them." 23

The Times , March, 4, 2003

Staying out means remaining a backwater
Martin Galea, managing director of Joinwell Ltd

"The decision to join the European Union is like the decision to marry. The heart and mind both play a part. You have to use both when coming to your decision. (...)

By staying out of the European Union, I fear that we will remain a backwater, ignored, bypassed, and *insular*. I find this far more frightening than any one of the scare stories being promoted by the 'no' lobby." 8

The Times , March 6, 2003

Our bread and butter – Melvyn Mifsud

"Our bread and butter depends on Europe. Remaining out may signify *isolation*." 191

The Times , Thursday, March 6, 2003 (editorial)
(Crossroads – a subpublication of *the Times*)

(a survey)

What They Had To Say

November 12, 2000 – Karmenu Mifsud Bonnici

"One of the natural consequences of membership will be that Malta's independence will be lost – particularly because it is so small. Malta will become no more than a local council. The prime minister will become the equivalent of a major." p. 3

September 8, 2001 – Alfred Mifsud

"Whether you call it Switzerland of the Mediterranean or not, the concept is a viable one. I have nothing against the EU, and, in fact, I think it is very positive for political development of Europe. But for a small country like ours, the present rules of the EU do not make membership the best option." P. 3

June 9, 2002, Joe Grima

"Small countries, cannot fight globalisation on their own. If there is something on which Dr. Sant is positively wrong, it is this. On its own Malta runs the risk of being carried away by the current without a safety net to hold us. The EU can be that safety net." 3

The Times , March 5, 2003

We have nothing to fear – John Bonello, chairman and senior partner of PricewaterhouseCoopers in Malta (...)

"I firmly believe that the destiny of this country lies *in the heart of Europe*, and not at its *periphery*, nor at any other *periphery*. (...)

Europe is changing. By next year, very few of Europe's countries will be left out of the European Union. Of those, most are standing in line to join. (...) We cannot afford to be left alone in an economic wilderness." 8

SMALLNESS AND FEDERAL STATE

Sharon: the CNI's rolling stone

And what is it that Sharon objects to in the EU?

"I'm in favour of a lot of what the EU has to offer, what I'm against is the political (federalist) integration of the member states," she replies. "Malta's so small that, if the EU follows its current trend and winds up as a huge federal state, then we will be nothing more than a sub-regional province.

"Our national status will be removed and we will end up with no power or influence, far removed from the centre of power. At the moment we may be a small nation, but we are, at least, a nation, with the ability to enact our own laws, regulations and foreign policy."

<http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2001/1028/people.html>

IDENTITY

The new nationalism

James Debono talks of a new breed of nationalists and counsels some warnings

A new breed of Nationalists is alive and kicking. The Campaign for National Independence, a self styled Nationalist movement combines socialist discourse of the Albanian type with right-wing discourse of the Little-Englander and Austrian Freedom Party varieties. Recently they went as far as publicising the declaration of a Swiss right-wing group, which denounced the European Union for being the extension of the Socialist International!

Its trump card is the defence of the traditional Maltese way of life, allegedly threatened by an influx of foreigners and a more Europeanised and liberal mentality. KMB's unforgettable remark about the European Union and AIDS symbolises such a mentality!

On the other camp one also finds the "old nationalists" who view European Union membership in the same way Enrico Mizzi viewed unification with Italy, ie, as a sort of racial promotion for the Maltese! Others like the Prime Minister make the absurd

claim that the Maltese have the mission to reconvert the continent back to its Latin-Christian roots! These ignore the reality of a secularised and multicultural Europe enshrined in the European Charter of Fundamental Rights.
<http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2001/0408/opinion.html>

The Malta Independent, 25 March 2003
PN electoral manifesto launched
Growing in Europe – Noel Grima – p. 9-10

(...) The electoral manifesto is in four parts.

1. Protecting basic values

Joining the EU will mean beginning a new page in our history but this will be in continuity with our past as a European country. (...)

d. Jobs

EU membership will open the way for further investment.” 9
10

The Times, March 3, 2003

Grab the opportunity – Matty Cremona

“ I see membership of the European Union as an affirmation of what we are: European.

Being part of the EU will make it so much more interesting to be Maltese. (...)

All change is difficult. One either goes backwards or forwards. That is the sum of it. My belief is that membership will push forward but staying out will drive us backwards. The world changes, so we have to change with it.

I would not feel safe sitting outside the EU. (...) At this point, we are either Malta in Europe or Malta in Africa. The world is dividing into blocs and there is no room for piggies-in-the-middle. (...)

In the end, membership of the EU will mean a better and safer life for the Maltese. This is a fundamental life choice.” 48

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<http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2001/0408/opinion.html>

The Malta Independent Saturday, 1 March, 2003

Civil society has been marginalised by the European Union debate – Noel Grima

(...) Prof. Baldacchino (...) said this was a space that civil society allowed the political parties to steal from it.

Malta has the culture of saints and politics has followed the same ritual, although on a subtler level. The 'saint' is the one who gives you, who promises you, a refuge in times of stress – the key to heaven. (...)

Reverting to English, Prof. Baldacchino made other points. There is an absence of a national identity in Malta. It has been very difficult to find anything that we can really call 'national'. We do not even agree on a national day, so we had to have five." 5

The Malta Independent 3 March 2003

Various personalities address the crowds at Ta'Qali

"Lou Bondi, analyst and TV programme host: Saturday is the most important day for Malta since Independence. At Independence, the Maltese State was born. Next Saturday, the Maltese State in Europe will be born." 4

CHANGING GEOGRAPHY

Malta can strengthen EU's southern region 30.04.06
by Christopher Sultana

(...)

Outlining a few of the considerations that will make an impact on the road ahead, Mr Gallimore said that on a global level, it is important to absorb the reality of the changes taking place from tomorrow.

"Europe is not across the water any longer but it is here in Malta. Membership is not just opening borders but opening minds to the reality of the new situation. Membership can be considered as a new beginning for Malta. All the ingredients are there, including the new horizons and opportunities which will provide renewed initiative. Change is progressive and requires patience and determination. It has borne fruit for many member states and will surely be the case for Malta," said Mr Gallimore.

<http://www.independent.com.mt/news.asp?newsitemid=5460>

14. SWITZERLAND IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

New Statesman, 3 January 1959

A New Plan for Malta – Dom Mintoff

"Although the news of the failure of the London talks on a new constitution for Malta was received here with deep regret, it came as a shock to nobody. The result was a foregone conclusion. A deep gulf still separates the Conservative British government from the Maltese leaders. (...)

So far, Malta has thrown up no patriotic terrorist organisation. Indeed the disturbances of the past have all been spontaneous and unorganised. They have been the steam escaping from the safety-valve of the boiling economic and political

situation. To shut the valve and jam it tight might for a short time prevent the unsightly and embarrassing diffusion of vapour and deaden the hissing warning of danger but it will certainly bring us nearer to the peril of a sudden explosion.

This is exactly what Mr Lennox-Boyd has been asked to do by his Conservative colleagues. In reply to our request for independence he wrote in his own hand on Sunday, 30 November 1958.

I am not prepared to start discussions with a fixed date for independence or with a view to fixing a date. I cannot therefore see how we can progress at a further talk unless you are able to tell me your delegation recognises what I have said as representing the considered view of HMG, and in the full knowledge of this are prepared in good faith to enter into discussions for an interim constitutional agreement. I must also be sure that you understand that such a constitution will make no provision for or indeed reference to any final solutions.

(...) 8

Deliverance could only come to us in one way: the neutralisation of Malta as a free port with our freedom guaranteed by the Security Council of the United Nations. Fortunately for us a precedent exists – the case of Trieste immediately after the war. We would pledge ourselves never to make any military or other warlike alliance with any bloc or state. We would solemnly undertake to repair the merchant or naval shipping of any nation. As a denuclearised zone with a stable free society we would rapidly develop into a little Switzerland in the heart of the Mediterranean – a haven of peace and rest for weary, disarmed tourists. (...) We have the skill, the manpower and the social capital on which to build a new Malta, the bridgehead of industry and commerce between the continent of Europe and the Arab nations. (...)” Dom Mintoff

Thomas Isler from the Swiss Neue Zürcher Zeitung, based in Zurich, writes about Malta's "eternal back and forth with the European Union." Talking to a Labour Party supporter, he is offered an analogy that brings back memories of an old catchphrase:

"The sugar bag is Malta. Switzerland is represented as a cigarette box. And the table cloth on which both lie, that is the European Union.

"Mario Camenzuli, bar man in the restaurant of the Labour party in Valletta, strikes down with a flat hand on the European Union flag: 'If Malta joins the EU,' he warns, 'it will have to accommodate foreign armies. We'll lose our sovereignty and all economic progress.' Camenzuli lowers the voice, points to the cigarette box and says, Malta must go the 'intelligent way' to Switzerland. Malta must remain independent and neutral, a friend to all countries. Malta must become a Switzerland of the Mediterranean." <http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2003/03/09/t2.html>

"Dr Sant believes in what, in the business, we call trigger messages - repeat ad nauseam and it will stick. (...) His favourite is that Malta will fare better under a Switzerland in the Mediterranean pie in the sky regime." <http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2001/0202/editorial.html>)

Independent : 06th July, 2000

At 84, Dom Mintoff still has the ability not just to mesmerise listeners with his own peculiar method of speaking and reasoning but also to make and unmake the very edifices he had a hand in building.

Two years ago, with a speech totalling some seven and a half hours, he brought down the same government he had contributed to elect.

On Tuesday he did it again and did more than that. In a way he has now brought down the whole pack of cards constituted by the 1987 constitutional amendments, as part of his pulling down the whole Alfred Sant edifice of 'Switzerland in the Mediterranean'. Not bad for a pensioner!

To understand the background, one has to go back a bit.

On Sunday, 13 October 1996, the Sunday Times carried an interview which Laurence Grech and Anthony Montanaro had with Dr Alfred Sant.

They asked him: "The 'Switzerland in the Mediterranean' idea was first thought up by Mr Mintoff in the late Fifties. But geopolitics have changed since then, so why bring up the slogan again, unless you mean something else by it?"

Dr Sant answered: "Frankly, I do not care who thought up the idea of 'Switzerland in the Mediterranean' first. My argument is: does it apply to Malta now? Yes, it does. How does it apply to Malta? It applies in the sense that we need to be a positive influence in the central Mediterranean area in the interest of the Maltese, in the interest of the Europeans, in the interest of other Mediterranean countries.

"We believe that the best way by which we can contribute to central Mediterranean peace and stability is by removing all perceptions that Malta could be a sort of threat either to the North or to the South.

"Our concept of security is political and diplomatic in nature, not military. And then, from that point of view, we believe that Malta's neutrality is the best contribution – in the interests of the Europeans, the Mediterranean countries and of the Maltese – we could give to ensuring that stability. So that neither does the North perceive Malta as a source of threat and instability to it, nor does the South of the Mediterranean, and that's how the 'Switzerland in the Mediterranean' concept comes in. It's a concept that, in broad brushstrokes of course, implies that Malta will remain neutral - unattached to any kind of security system that is perceived or that whose reality is that it's creating blocs within the Mediterranean, a frontier between North and South.

"In the Eighties, due to Nationalist propaganda, the Labour administration in Malta was perceived in certain European countries as having become a threat to them, because they saw it as being a part of the Libyan system – it was not really, but that's how they perceived it.

"Under this present administration, in the Nineties, quite a number of North African administrations, and not just Libya, perceive that Malta could become a source of threat to them, through its Nato connections, for instance. So, either the North or the South of the Mediterranean perceives Malta as a sort of threat. This has got to stop.

"Our perceptions of security and stability are political and diplomatic in scope, not military, because a military definition of the Maltese situation is clearly counterproductive and highly unsuited to the Maltese context."

Tuesday's long interview was Dom's reply to that. Long memories, no doubt, long-term views too.

On Tuesday, Mr Mintoff brought down Dr Sant's house like a pack of cards. The 'Switzerland in the Mediterranean' concept is now obsolete, no longer valid. It was valid, says Mr Mintoff now, when there were two blocs in the world, facing each other eyeball to eyeball. That is not valid today. So while Dr Sant was belabouring the concept, the man who originated the whole concept had meanwhile moved on, leaving Dr Sant holding the baby. The same goes for Alfred Mifsud and his 'fuller and more complete' concept.

(...)

One final point: the concept 'Switzerland in the Mediterranean', now declared as obsolete by its creator, has, in Dr Sant's hands, become a slogan. But in politics, as against brand names in marketing, the slogan must contain a message. It cannot be a brand-name which goes nowhere beyond its name. What does 'Switzerland in the Mediterranean' mean in today's world?

If the Labour Party wants to keep this as a concept, not just as a slogan, it must now prove Dom Mintoff wrong and the concept still valid in a world which has moved on. Replying to Mr Mintoff by calling him obsolete does beg the question. Does the fact that the historical context has changed remove the validity of the concept or can the concept stand on its own without the substratum of the historical context? And if the context is without a historical basis, can it be strong enough to serve as the basis for a whole political programme?

<http://www.doi.gov.mt/en/commentaries/2000/07/ind06.asp>

To contest or not contest an election

Mr Mifsud goes on to explain that the current membership model, where applicant countries are required to adhere to the *Acquis Communautaire*, is not suitable for Malta. "If the EU changes its 'one size fits all' arrangement then it will be a more sensible option for Malta," he argues.

"As a country we do not have the same motivations as Eastern European countries and Cyprus. Their prime motivation is political because of their history. Malta has no political motivation to join the EU, on the contrary being a small island with a small economy, I believe we can survive better on the global stage by carving out our own niche."

(...)

Mr Mifsud says that Malta should have other priorities, which first and foremost include getting its own house in order.

Explaining the concepts of the 'Swiss model', he explains that it does not integrate the country politically thus leaving a number of options open. He specifies that the 'Swiss model' is different from the arrangements Iceland and Norway have. Under Labour's option the length of time before certain measures are introduced is negotiable.

What will it take for him to favour membership, I ask.

"I feel that the EU will eventually be disappointed by the current model it is proposing and when and if that happens permitting more flexible arrangements, I can see Malta becoming a member."

(...)

What if the Labour Party is elected?

"The 'Swiss model' is not an irreversible step. It is a half road to membership and any government coming after can pursue membership. A referendum is thus not required. On the other hand, EU membership cannot be reversed. It is a political decision that will change the country's historical and political course radically. That is why a referendum is required."

(...)

He then criticises those who say that if Malta loses the first bus to membership, then membership would be lost forever. Mr Mifsud stresses the importance of putting the economy on solid ground. "If we manage to create a strong economy we will have no problem in joining the EU, even if we do not make it in the first wave. Norway and Switzerland, both with strong economies, will have no problem being accepted by the EU even after the next enlargement. Why should Malta be different if it manages to create a wealthy economy?" <http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2001/1125/people.html>

The Times, Thursday, March 6, 2003 (editorial)

(Crossroads – a subpublication of *The Times* ?)

(a survey)

What They Had To Say

September 8, 2001 – Alfred Mifsud

"Whether you call it Switzerland of the Mediterranean or not, the concept is a viable one. I have nothing against the EU, and, in fact, I think it is very positive for political development of Europe. But for a small country like ours, the present rules of the EU do not make membership the best option." P. 3

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There can be a deeper conclusion to come to: Mr Mintoff is now making the same analysis which Dr Fenech Adami has been making these past years: that the neutrality concept introduced into the Constitution in 1987 is obsolete because that was stipulated at a time when the world was divided into two blocs; and that not only is there no problem with the EU membership issue because it does not go against the neutrality concept, but also the whole neutrality concept in the Constitution has to be understood in its historical context. If it is not relevant nowadays, its validity is not as absolute as Dr Sant makes it sound.

Now, not only has Dr Fenech Adami said so, but Dom Mintoff too. The 1987 negotiations did not involve Mr Mintoff directly, since he had already resigned as prime minister then, but there was no doubt that he was still the power behind Dr Karmenu Mifsud Bonnici. We now have the situation that, of the politicians who took part in the 1987 negotiations from the Labour side, Dom Mintoff has said that the neutrality concept is relative and Lino Spiteri has since spoken in favour of EU membership. It is only Dr Mifsud Bonnici who is still against EU membership and holding tight to a neutrality concept which has now been declared by his mentor as obsolete.

One final point: the concept 'Switzerland in the Mediterranean', now declared as obsolete by its creator, has, in Dr Sant's hands, become a slogan. But in politics, as against brand names in marketing, the slogan must contain a message. It cannot be a brand-name which goes nowhere beyond its name. What does 'Switzerland in the Mediterranean' mean in today's world?

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<http://www.doi.gov.mt/EN/commentaries/2000/07/ind06.asp>

IRELAND

He (Busuttil) prefers to draw parallels with Ireland. "Ireland manifests an insular island mentality, is a strong Catholic country and neutral. These are characteristics, which are similar to the Maltese context. But I must stress that each country has its own specific scenario."

<http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2002/0203/people.html>

15. MEMBERSHIP IS BREAD/ FOOD

Half-baked (conventionalized metaphor- my addition, MP) membership or real alternative? The European Economic Area countries are incurring massive costs to enjoy EU membership which approximate, up to EUR500 million a year. Of course we are talking about Iceland and its energy reserves in geyser power, Norway's oil reserves and Switzerland's banking haven.
<http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2003/02/23/people.html>

The Times, March 6, 2003

Our bread and butter – Melvyn Mifsud

“Our bread and butter depends on Europe. Remaining out may signify isolation.” 191

MEMBERSHIP IS A LIQUID

The Times, March 6, 2003

This time, do not postpone the future, Austin Gatt

(about the *withdrawal of application* 1996)

“The damage to our European future was massive. While *Malta lay frozen* out of Europe, four other countries jumped the queue. (...)

On Saturday you will vote to put Lm81 million of EU funds into Malta, for more rights, a better quality of life and for a seat at Europe's decision-making tables.” 17 (result for cause: the application was frozen – *Malta lay frozen*)

The Times, April 16, 2003

Labour has only itself to blame

“The Malta Labour Party has only itself to blame for its three successive electoral defeats – in September 1998, in the referendum of March 8 and the general election of April 12.

One of the main reasons for the electorate's decision to vote for a change of government in September 1998 was its dissatisfaction with the MLP's decision to freeze Malta's EU application. It did this when other countries, such as Cyprus, were surging ahead in their negotiations with Brussels.”

“What promise has PM Gonzi broken by defrosting what Hon Alfred Sant had put in the freezer more than ten years ago and reactivating Malta's membership in Partnership for Peace?”

<http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20080331/localpfp-protests-as-malta-marks-freedom-day>

16. PERSON

The Times March 5, 2003

'He (Fenech Adami) said the EU had been born out of a vision of three great Christians who led Germany, Italy and France after the war. They wanted peace and strove to eliminate cruelty.'

"People have a choice whether they want to form part of the new EU with 25 member states or to stay out in the cold", he said. 5

The Times March 5, 2003

GWU plans 'damage-control' campaign in case of yes vote

(General Workers Union; general secretary, Tony Zarb)

"He (Zarb) said that although people were being promised heaven on earth with EU membership, the reality was that Europe was losing its *social conscience*. Poverty in the EU was on the increase, the number of homeless was growing and there were 15 million unemployed. The Maltese did not want this Europe." 6

17. EUROPEAN VISION/ DREAM

The Times , March 6, 2003

There is only one choice – Edward Bencini

" The EU is now about to grow with the adhesion of a further 10 countries. All these countries have sought to become members of the EU not just because of the clear economic benefits they stand to gain but equally so because of their desire to share the human values of the European family.

I shall vote yes, secondly, because our children deserve better than being left out in the cold. Europe guarantees the cutting edge of opportunity for our children, with countless openings for them to reap the harvest of their education (...)

I shall vote yes, thirdly, because I believe in the *European vision*. A *vision of Europe* as a powerful force for peace and humanity worldwide. (...)" 21

PM flies off to Athens to fulfil EU dream: "The dream we've all had for several years is finally translated into reality. I think all of us are extremely satisfied. It's no longer a case of whether we will make it or not. It's certain. This is a historic event for our country," he (Prime Minister Eddie Fenech Adami) said. (*The Times* , April 16, 2003, quotation marks in the original)

The Times March 5, 2003

'He (Fenech Adami) said the EU had been born out of a vision of three great Christians who led Germany, Italy and France after the war. They wanted peace and strove to eliminate cruelty.'

"People have a choice whether they want to form part of the new EU with 25 member states or to stay out in the cold", he said. 5

Maltatoday, 23 March 2003, p. 3

PN electoral programme – a pledge to make Malta a European state – Matthew Vella

"The PN's electoral programme purports to take Malta towards crowning of the EU dream. The 2003 general election programme outlines the EU accession process, a 13-year long history of preparations, restructuring and negotiations."

18. COLONIALISM

maltatoday, 23 February 2003

Mintoff urges Maltese to be vigilant – by Marika Azzopardi p. 8

'One of the biggest rights is that we can make our own laws and not allow others to dictate theirs to us.' He insisted with EU accession, Malta would be handing over this right to foreigners.

Maltatoday, 16 March 2003

Mintoff wishes to join MLP in united front against EU

"What is the next government going to do when it has to obey the orders coming from Brussels for five whole years? The first thing you have to tell yourselves is that you must not vote for the Nationalists," Mintoff roared.

No vote for PN

Calling the PN 'traitors' for selling Malta to the European Union, Mintoff called on his public to vote for the party that would keep Malta independent.

(...)

KM's warm-up

In his initial speech, Karmenu Mifsud Bonnici said that despite the fact that the majority of the electorate had not voted for the treason of the country, Malta still faced another danger. (...) 03

The Malta Independent 6 March, 2003

Sant claims referendum campaign was marred by 'democratic deficit' – Noel Grima

(...)

"We are already European: we do not need to enter the EU to become European. (...) With EU membership we will have to obey Brussels in everything: as in Roman times, we will be under the yoke."¹⁸

The Times , April 21, 2003

(citing Alfred Sant)

Henry Frendo: European Integration: whose partisanship?

Through such "partisanship", it seems, the Maltese want "to go back to the situation that prevailed in these islands in the days of Monroy, of the Knights of St. John, or of the British". Although he concedes that "the EU is not Monroy", he is saddened by the fact that Malta's membership of the EU will mark a "return to the politics of colonialism", as a result of which we Maltese would give up "our independence and freedom".

If this refers to my recent writings, what I have held is that "the Maltese have time and again seen their future as best secured if integrated or federated as part of a larger whole, while retaining as much local autonomy and as distinct an individuality as possible." ("The Referendum Election", TMIS magazine, 6 April 2003, p. 20)." ⁸

The Malta Independent, 4 March, 2003

Yes for EU membership means a government for life – Tony Zarb, p. 28

(...)

"Mr Zarb stressed that, unlike other governments, the EU cannot be changed, adding that if Malta joined the EU the country would be under a European government."

The Malta Independent, 5 March 2003

Malta is not for sale, says Alfred Sant

"In a Labour Party activity last night leader Alfred Sant insisted that Malta was not for sale and achieved more when it was led by the Maltese." ⁵

19. DISASTER

The Times , March 21, 2003

'God forbid were Malta to join the EU' – Sant
Natalino Fenech

"Alfred Sant yesterday underlined his opposition to Malta joining the EU, telling a press conference: 'God forbid were Malta to join the EU.'"

Dr Sant said EU membership 'would spell an economic and social disaster.'

The EU is not in your interest – GWU
Matthew Xuereb p. 12

Salvu Sammut – president of GWU said: "If we join now we will be committing suicide. The EU is not good for us. We will see people begging for money near ATMs and people sleeping in cardboard boxes."

"Malta's EU membership - How and Why?", speech by Edward Fenech-Adami, Prime Minister of Malta, and question and answer session at the European Policy Centre

20. UTOPIAS/DYSTOPIAS

Wide Angle
Flickering candles

Lino Spiteri

The candles on the cake to commemorate the beginning of Malta's third year as a member of the European Union will not light up much dark. The mood is at best quiet, at worst outright sullen. It is not that those who were in favour of membership have begun to regret it. More that there is too widespread a feeling that things have not gone as swimmingly as expected.

That is due to a mix of foolishness and the fate of expectations.

The foolishness was evident in the final stage of the campaign for membership. Too many of the main proposers, and practically the Nationalist Party and the government as a whole, hyped up the positives of membership beyond the merest dash of sense. Nationalist spinners competed with the silliness of the Switzerland-in-the-Med Labour metaphor with further silliness of their own.

They projected EU membership as a cure for all ills, rather than the better way forward, on balance. The imagery was of a quack selling mysterious bottles which would guarantee health, virility, hair growth, and sweet-smelling perspiration. That raised and fattened expectations.

Expectations are easy to fuel but far more difficult to satisfy to the full extent. It is a basic truth that realisation is not really a triplet to anticipation and expectation. That is true in most circumstances. *Projecting accession as a means whereby we could all start living off the fat of Euroland was a recipe for probable disappointment.*

That recipe was compounded by insufficient general knowledge that the net benefits of being part of the EU take time to come through, and do so as a process. Too many people were led to boost their belief that membership was some form of Big Bang: Malta joins the EU and - lo! - a new paradise on earth is created.

Those of us - like this columnist - who argued the net case for membership while also warning against hyperbole were applauded, and their views exploited, insofar as the we-in-favour bit was concerned. The warnings against creating bubbles of expectation were cynically ignored. Two years on, the foolishness is continuing.

The government and the Nationalist Party beat the drum of the amount of funds - €805 million - that Malta should be receiving under the EU's 2007-13 budget. A tidy sum which, no doubt, if actually and wisely spent, should change much of the physical face of Malta. To give the impression that such EU fat of the land is what membership is all about simply continues to demonstrate that the same government that took Malta into the EU has become the worst enemy of membership.

(...)

Flickering candles? Why bother to light them at all?
<http://www.timesofmalta.com/core/article.php?id=222530>

Malta Today, Sunday 02 March, 2003

EU offers Opportunity to grab the bull by the horns

Alternativa Demokratika's secretary general Stephen Cachia is not at all impressed with the MLP's stand on the referendum. Julian Manduca met up with him to get his views on the coming weeks

(...)

"It is very clear that the EU is not *heaven on earth*, nobody from AD has ever claimed that. EU accession is a clear opportunity for Malta to grab the bull by its horns and start tackling many of its problems, with EU financial and technical help."

"The EU sets targets that many of us who were active in the political and socio-environmental fields believed that would never have achieved in our lifetime." (...)

"It is important the EU creates a situation where power moves away from the politicians, and towards civil society and citizens, in order to put pressure on politicians to achieve EU targets." 12

The Times, March 5, 2003

Alfred Sant, Prosy points (23)

"Retaining control over our affairs so that we can guide them forward according to our circumstances, in order to build a better future, is no pipedream.

It is the only realistic way forward. No blueprints copied from Brussels or elsewhere, can fit our circumstances. Those who have lost faith in our ability to run our affairs tell us that only by joining the European Union can we progress further.

They betray, as they say so, deep feelings of insecurity and inferiority." 8

Saturday, April 03, 2004

Joe Borg on future of the European Union
by Staff Reporter

I believe in a European Union of peoples and states that is close to, and responsive to, the needs and aspirations of its citizens; a union that is stable and prosperous and that radiates that stability and prosperity beyond its shores; a union built on the principles of solidarity and sustainability that is an economic powerhouse, a beacon of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, and that is able to act effectively for the common good as a cohesive political unit and legal entity on the world stage.

I am of the view that although the creation of variable geometries within the enlarged European Union is not a desirable alternative to European integration, forms of enhanced cooperation should not be excluded in principle so long as they take place in the framework of the Union's institutions in line with the *acquis*, and that they stay open to all member states that wish to join at a later date.

<http://www.independent.com.mt/news.asp?newsitemid=4949>

Maltatoday Sunday 08 May 2005

George E. Mangion p. 26

EU anniversary – euphoria or disillusionment?

"We still hear the echo of the *iva* movement promising social and economic bonanza just days before the EU membership referendum. Equally the eurosceptics had loaded us with visions of demonic feats should we say yes to membership.

Now that we have lived the first year since membership, there seems to be a convergence of the euro sceptic group towards accepting the will of the electorate.

(...) Can EU membership act as a catalyst and to reform the over manning and duplicity of efforts in ministries and government agencies? Certainly a tall order but returning to the EU anniversary, some say, it is not fair to be despondent.

One year is too short a period for the spouses to start complaining that the honeymoon was ephemeral. (...)

21. PLANT

Prime minister urges people to vote PN in Euro election (Malta Independent)
30.04.04

by Michael Carabott

“

“We will have a Europe that is being united after thousands of years of conflict. And that is all the more special when we consider that some of the countries who are about to join were, 15 years ago, behind the iron curtain,” said Dr Gonzi.

He reiterated that the PN and the EPP believe that EU expansion is the best way to progress. “And that is why we chose the slogan Yes, growing together within the EU (Iva Nikbru fl-Ewropa).”

“We have a lot to offer the EU and they know that. There was Maltese input in the drafting of the EPP manifesto,” added PN Secretary-General Joe Saliba. He said the EPP had constantly drafted manifestos for each election whereas the European Socialists had only done so for this particular election. Mr Saliba concluded by saying (at midday yesterday) that the seeds for EU membership had been sown by former PM George Borg Olivier 36 years ago, in 1964. “And now, that seed is set to flower in precisely 36 hours time,” he concluded.

<http://www.independent.com.mt/news.asp?newsitemid=5442>

The Malta Independent, 10 May 2004

EP elections

EU membership already bearing fruit

(...)

Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi also addressed the gathering, explaining that Malta's new EU membership is showing positive results. 3

Further Topics

22. IMMIGRATION

Keywords: plight

EU leaders snub Malta's immigration plight

Karl Stagno-Navarra

As Maltese patrol boats continued with their relentless efforts to cope with numerous boats laden with irregular migrants, the European Council that met in Brussels this week conveniently omitted any specific reference to Malta's dramatic plight. <http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2007/06/24/t18.html> (08.07.07)

600 migrants die in Mediterranean each year
By MaltaMedia News
Jun 12, 2007

Around 600 illegal immigrants die every year in a bid to cross the Mediterranean Sea from Libya to southern European coasts, said Malta's Home Affairs and Justice Minister Tonio Borg while addressing European Union (EU) Interior Ministers conference on Tuesday.

The Minister pointed out that since the beginning of 2007, Malta has saved 315 shipwrecked immigrants attempting to enter Europe by sea, 250 of whom were taken on board Maltese ships in a fortnight.

While criticizing the present state of affairs, Dr Borg added that "It is unbelievable that on the doorstep of Europe we are having this tragic situation and not enough is being done."

Malta has urged the other 26 EU member states for the setting up of a burden-sharing system under which illegal migrants rescued or intercepted by EU ships outside of European waters would be taken in by the bloc's countries. http://www.maltamedia.com/artman2/publish/eu/article_2250.shtml

23. DIVORCE

Yet in private, debate in Malta is alive on the topic of divorce. All around separations have become a reality of Maltese society. In 2003 alone, over 550 separation cases were pending in front of the Maltese and Gozitan Court of Magistrates. That same year, there were over 125 cases of separation and 150 cases of annulment. Many lament a coherent, unifying force that can spearhead such change in legislation. That flame of hope was lit when Alfred Sant, as Prime Minister-to-be in 1996, said he would be setting up a commission to delve within the legal and social parameters of introducing divorce. That commission was never set up. (...)

"We need to understand the real life situations of people who find themselves in these circumstances and explore all possible policy and legal solutions. But we all need to be clear that divorce changes the definition of marriage once and for all from "till death do us part" to "till we decide otherwise". (...)

But Bezzina and Zammit are not only for the introduction of divorce. (...) Zammit mainly blames the Catholic Church for the state of affairs on the Maltese islands: **"Mostly it is the interference of the Church. Then there is the problem of losing votes for the big politicians who are afraid to introduce such laws because in elections only a small difference in votes can win or lose an election."**

This fear of losing votes, which Zammit calls intolerant and a 'product of frustration', is well-known factor. In 2002, when the Employment and Industrial Relations Act was

being drawn up, the Malta Gay Rights Movement drew attention to the fact that sexual orientation was not going to be included as a basis of discrimination on the workplace, within the EIRA. <http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2004/05/09/e4.html>

News • May 09 2004

Married to the EU, but Malta says no to divorce

Posted on: Wednesday, 21 December 2005, 08:36 CST

By Robin Pomeroy

ANNULMENTS AND SEPARATIONS (...)

"Close to one third of the island is either separated or about to be, or is sleeping round with some other partners," Bezzina says.

Malta's unhappily married couples have three options if they want to live apart.

Like Bezzina, they can just do it, having children with another partner but remaining married to the first; they can apply for a religious or secular annulment -- in which they have to prove before a tribunal that the marriage never really existed or was based on a fraudulent premise; or they can get what Malta calls a "separation".

With separation, a legal ruling establishes practical details such as the division of property and rights to see children, but the couples remain officially married -- meaning they cannot remarry and, the law actually states, must remain faithful.

"One can but smile when the judge warns the couple: 'Listen: you are now legally separated but that does not mean you can have a partner or have sex with anybody else,' -- when the new partner is waiting outside so they can go off together hand-in-hand," said Bezzina. (...)

CHASTITY BELTS

The government, which says there are 400 applications for separation every year, denies the system is hypocritical.

"We're not issuing chastity belts from the state. We have no satellite detectors to see who's entering whose house," says Mifsud Bonnici. "Adultery isn't a crime.

"If someone wants to have an extra-marital affair it's not the state's problem, it's his problem."

For Bezzina, Malta's ban on divorce and abortion -- which means women determined to terminate pregnancies discreetly travel to Italy or Britain -- shows it is a country "infested, manipulated and monopolized by the Catholic Church."

He admits that almost no one in Malta would vote to legalize abortion, but says both abortion and divorce should be available as a matter of right.

Bezzina's political party faces an almost impossible struggle against Malta's entrenched two-party system and a youth that is disaffected with politics.

On the streets of Paceville, up the coast from Valletta, drunken young men loudly chat up girls who totter from vodka bar to "fun pub" in skimpy clothes that belie the island's conservative nature.

"They don't care what the Catholic Curia (Church administration) is saying. However they don't care about politics either so I cannot tell you that we have support there," says Bezzina.

He sees a glimmer of hope for his liberal agenda in the EU where he believes Malta may be forced to change its position on divorce and abortion under human rights laws.

Malta included a clause in its EU accession treaty that excludes it from any future EU rules on abortion and Mifsud Bonnici dismisses Bezzina's threat since the European Union does not usually impose rules on internal social matters.

"Emmy thinks (divorce) can be challenged at an EU level. I don't know how that could be, but lawyers are very innovative."

Source: REUTERS
(http://www.redorbit.com/news/health/336680/married_to_the_eu_but_malta_says_no_to_divorce/)

Numbers, pigs & divorcees

I just have a feeling that this is going to be a great year. It couldn't be better, could it? I promised myself that the year would start without any reference to Uncle Bertie, until I got to know that Albert Mizzi OBE had a court marshal deliver a garnishee order on Harry Vassallo because the man had not paid him a Lm300 fine on damages for libel. Legal expenses and garnishee order costs have totalled to Lm678. This publishing house will be covering the costs of this garnishee order from its libel fund.

The marshal delivered the order on the 2 January, 2007 – what better way to extend the feeling of solidarity and mutual respect for one's Christian brothers and sisters than on New Year's? I have always appreciated Uncle Bertie's soft side.

So my first resolution of the year has simply gone up in smoke.

My first topic of the year is about pigs. And for once, it is really all about the animals and not the human form.

A little diskette has been doing the rounds, finding itself in a number of newsrooms, which contained a shameful description of how in Malta we treat live animals that

finally get butchered and land on our plates. I am no vegetarian, but when you see what these animals go through, it makes you want to be vegan.

Of course Frans Agius, the indomitable junior minister responsible for agriculture and fisheries, knows all about vegans and pigs. Mr Agius has of course taken his time to respond to the horrendous revelations. He was probably busy digesting his pork fillets.

His affable and much liked public relations man, Mr Randolph Spiteri, probably thinks that investigative reportage that focuses on squealing pigs must be a global plot to oust the Nationalist government. After years in power, everyone becomes slightly paranoid.

The diskette reveals that the treatment meted out to our animals are in gross violation of several European Union directives. Of course Malta's permanent representative and cabinet attendee 'Is-Sur' Richard Cachia Caruana cannot possibly know what is happening to Maltese pigs and their dear piglets. The last place he will be found monitoring is a pigsty – not exactly his cup of tea. He is after all more concerned with the bigger picture, whatever that could be.

I am sure Frans Agius (or Mr Lapsus as he is affectionately known), who has left such an indelible mark on agriculture and fisheries in Malta, will use his action-orientated policy to address this problem.

The fact that the media is doing the dirty job of exposing these realities is of little interest to the politicians – thank God their voters aren't pigs. This is the year of the election, and anything that would distract voters from the sacred mission of electing valuable politicians would definitely be considered a sacrilege.

If there is one subject that surely continues to prove that this government is out of synch with a changing society, it has to be the obscene decision to threaten to block an EU initiative to introduce changes to divorce procedures unless the island is legally assured such measures will not be applicable to it.

The Prime Minister is acting like an archbishop when he should not. If this Prime Minister expects to be applauded for such a stand, then he must take us for fools.

This is 2007. And Maltese society is not what you, Premier Gonzi, wish to think it is. Maltese society is best exemplified by that obese aggressive male in a four-wheel drive who lives with his unmarried partner, with three children that are not his, and who on Sunday would take a drink at the Nationalist Party club, chewing on a hamburger and chips under the deadpan stare of Nationalist leaders, framed for posterity.

It was bad enough we had an archbishop by the same name who excommunicated anyone who wished to be a Labourite. That was 45 years ago. Now the nanny state is telling us how to conduct our lives and worse, dictating to 500 million citizens that divorce procedures will be blocked across European borders.

So the man from Marsaskala elected Prime Minister after being practically handpicked by yet another anti-divorce crusader, Eddie Fenech Adami, has chosen to block the harmonisation of a legal formula that would simplify the lives of millions of European citizens.

I am confident that Gonzi thinks that by constructing a Berlin wall around Malta he will preserve our Christian values, best exemplified by our rampant tax evasion, our nepotistic society, our lack of altruism and our inherent habit of destroying our landscape.

Gonzi has not yet realised his obligation to the state and to the Church. Living together for the rest of your life with your spouse whom you cannot bear to even look at, or do not love, is what Gonzi basically wishes us to do.

Of course, the time is not too distant when one will have to recount the shameful fast-track Church annulments for the privileged, whilst common folk battle and suffer before a tortuous process as they get robbed of their chance to remarry or start a new life.

Is it the Nationalist middle class that does not understand Dr Gonzi and his cabinet?

No, start understanding whom you represent Dr Gonzi. There is not one Maltese family that has not experienced a break-up in the family. There are politicians from both sides of the divide who are separated and who live with new partners. They would love to remarry and to regularise their lives. Many would love to normalise their own position, but they do not have the guts to even stand up and speak their minds.

And yet, we should embrace those politicians and political parties who profess that this is the way forward. The Labour party remains unusually unclear about the matter, unwilling to lose any of its Catholic support.

Only the Greens have taken the plunge and one would hope that they will take it further.

I thought *The Times* was taking a stand on the matter, until one of their managing directors and a former leader of Moviment IVA jumped into this duck pond and starting spluttering all about and hit out at Alternattiva, stating: "The government's stand gives totally the lie to all those who during the 2003 general elections campaigns had advocated that Malta would no longer remain a sovereign state; and that precisely the laws on abortion, divorce and God knows what other emotional issues would be introduced into Malta without our consent."

Good lord! This is the same Austin Bencini who with his uncharismatic stance had been specifically chosen by Eddie Fenech Adami and Richard Cachia Caruana to head IVA. It was like asking Valeria Marini to head the invasion forces in Iraq.

And this is the same man I singularly campaigned to have removed as head of IVA and to replace (for my sins) with someone more colourful and slightly more charismatic – Joanna Drake.

This is the man who I objected to, when he would move across arguments that had nothing to do with the liberal Europe many of us dream of. The shocking statement by Bencini in his Times, unravels a political leaning that is one-sided. We did not become European citizens to guarantee the Nationalist Party's vision of life. And if that is the case, Austin Bencini with all his intellect and knowledge of European affairs, should be reminded that when the Government of Malta declared before accession that the inclusion of abortion would not be binding on Malta – there was not a whisper of divorce.

And Bencini could add one more note to that, that the Maltese declaration was nothing but a political gimmick since it does not bind the European Union in any way. And for a lawyer the likes of Dr Bencini to wrongly state that the Maltese government does not recognise divorce, is surely incorrect. Austin, the Maltese government recognises divorce for anyone who has obtained a divorce abroad. If Austin wishes me to mention the dozens of bigwigs who have remarried after having their foreign divorce recognised in Malta, I will.

The new head of the National Statistics Office Gordon Cordina has, in a not very eloquent manner, changed the numbers of those sacred statistics. For years consecutive finance ministers have delivered layers of prose declaring their achievements.

I hope no one blames us if we declare our utter confusion. Gordon has now declared that this is all fairly above board. So next time Alfred Sant appears with a declaration that the stats are wrong can we not shoot him down? And if Gonzi suggests that our

economy is booming then we should just refer him back to Gordon, who flashed out his new figures and simply detonate the false impressions on growth, investment and what not?

And finally Uncle Bertie OBE. Harry Vassallo, who is no longer an opinion writer in this newspaper, had penned the following in an article on *Maltatoday* over the Brussels embassy deal: "What struck me in the Brussels deal was Mr Mizzi's presence. I found it very ironic that he was involved in a property purchase which the government defends as a solid long term investment. Mr Mizzi has made better investments for himself. His home in St Julian's is not his property. It is probably his best investment. Without putting a penny towards acquiring title, he has enjoyed its unobstructed sea views for decades. The rent for one year is less than his chauffeur's salary for a few weeks."

What happened later was a libel case. But Bertie Mizzi did not sue Harry Vassallo for libel over this telling description, but over another statement in the article concerning the purchase of Boeings by the national airline, headed back in the 80s by Mizzi himself. Vassallo was sued over what he was led to understand from a TVM interview with Uncle Bertie. As editor I had also understood what Vassallo had understood, but then in a court of law it is not what you understand or comprehend.

Uncle Bertie wants his pound of flesh. That's okay I guess, more so when you think that this millionaire and property magnate (and according to Edgar Mizzi's much acclaimed revisionist history of recent Malta, a Mintoffian collaborator), continues to live in the home in St Julian's that does not belong to him, and that as Vassallo had rightly said, costs in rent less than his chauffeur's salary for a few weeks.

And finally the boastful declaration by Lawrence Gonzi that we are experiencing Lm1million a day in investment needs careful scrutiny. Needless to say, we should respond to this by saying "pull the other one, Wenz", or better still, simply quote what Lino Spiteri had to say in *The Times* about this amazing announcement. (<http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2007/01/07/opinion.html>)

Saturday, 16th May 2009

Think-tank proposes divorce law

Cohabitation 'does not provide stability of marriage'

Kurt Sansone

Divorce legislation has become an urgent necessity and laws to regularise cohabiting couples are no substitute, according to a report drawn up by an independent think-tank.

Describing the situation of broken marriages as a "deep malaise", the report, penned by Martin Scicluna for the Today Public Policy Institute, suggests the introduction of divorce legislation to grant legally separated couples the right to re-marry.

The institute, which has produced influential reports on Mepa reform, immigration, climate change and energy, proposes a divorce law based on the Irish model. This stipulates that couples would be able to file for divorce after having been separated for at least four years.

To avoid acrimonious court battles the report suggests the "no-fault" remedy, whereby neither spouse would be required to prove fault or marital misconduct on the part of the other. This means that divorce would be granted on the grounds that a marriage is "irretrievably broken down".

The report insists that in every case a judicial process must take place to avoid abuse and ensure the marriage has really broken down.

It is the first report of its kind to argue the case for divorce since 1998 when a government commission set up by then Prime Minister Alfred Sant had suggested the introduction of divorce legislation.

The new report says that in 1995 broken marriages accounted for almost three per cent of all marriages. The figure shot up to almost seven per cent 10 years later.

It estimates that the number of failed marriages will exceed 35,000 or over 17 per cent of marriages by 2015.

"What the figures show... are the trends in society and the looming social pressure-points which an enlightened government can no longer ignore," Mr Scicluna writes.

He says that existing legislation, which caters for annulment and divorces obtained in a foreign court, already allows people bound in marriage to re-marry.

The other legal avenue is separation, which however prohibits the individuals from re-marrying.

"We have legal remedies equivalent to divorce in every respect except one - the right to re-marry," the report says of separated couples who do not qualify for annulment or cannot obtain a divorce from abroad.

In a detailed exposition of the arguments in favour and against divorce legislation, the author also dedicates a whole chapter to examining the roles of the Church and the state on the matter.

He argues that the issue should not be a "doctrinal struggle" but an "earnest endeavour by people of good-will to find a just and practical solution to an urgent problem".

Legislators have to acknowledge that religious faith is a private matter and the principle of the separation of civil and religious authority is among the most important characterisations of a liberal democracy.

The primary concern and responsibility of members of Parliament should be the "well-being of all the individuals within society".

Aware of the cross-party consensus to regularise the position of cohabiting couples, which also finds support in Church quarters, the report cautions against adopting this solution at the expense of divorce.

"It would be tempting to suppose that introducing safeguards in the law on cohabiting couples would provide the solution, however. The reasons for introducing this type of legislation are well-intentioned, but misplaced," the report says.

It argues that cohabitation does not provide the "stability" that marriage does and making it a "necessity" would be "incompatible" with encouraging marriage.

"This would be the finger-in-the-dyke improvisation, which simply satisfies those unwilling to accept the deep malaise of broken marriages in Malta and the need to encourage the stability and social order which marriage provides. Re-marriage after legal separation would do so."

The report chastises those who say divorce is based solely on the selfish happiness of those who wish to end a failed marriage.

"Such an argument ignores completely the traumatic anguish and pain of those whose marriages break down, often in spite of repeated attempts to save the marriage. The plight of these people is a legitimate concern of the State."
Broken marriages

Census year: 1995
Annulled/divorce: 978
Legally separated: 4,120
Total: 5,098

Census year: 2005
Annulled/divorce: 2,309
Legally separated: 11,045
Total: 13,354

Source: National Statistics Office.
The long divorce debate

1975: A Labour government introduces civil marriage but not divorce. However, Maltese courts can recognise a divorce obtained abroad.

1984: The Labour Party's women's section approves a motion for the introduction of divorce and seeks to present it at the party's annual general conference. It is withdrawn after pressure from the party's leadership not to aggravate the situation with the Church that was already tense because of the Church schools dispute.

1989: The newly set-up party Alternattiva Demokratika makes divorce a central plank of its political programme and includes the proposal in every electoral manifesto since then.

1996: Former Labour MP Joe Brincat, who at the time was estranged from his party, presents a private member's Bill for the introduction of divorce for couples that have been separated for five years. The Bill is never discussed.

1998: The Commission for the Future of the Family set up by Prime Minister Alfred Sant proposes the introduction of divorce through a parliamentary free-vote. No Bill is ever presented as the government faces mounting internal pressure on the matter.

2008: Labour's newly elected leader Joseph Muscat says he will take it on himself to introduce a Private Member's Bill on divorce once his party is in government and Minister John Dalli tells *The Times* it is about time the country starts a serious discussion on the matter.
<http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20090516/local/think-tank-proposes-divorce-law>

Miscellaneous

Labour's new Euroman

"EU membership was never a matter of principle. This is the problem with Maltese politics in general. We are in the habit of turning politics into a theology. Everything we think of, or propose, becomes a point of principle. This is wrong. It is fundamentalism, as dangerous as politico-religious fanaticism."

He does agree that many people understood the EU issue as being a point of principle. "That is a problem but let us not forget that when Dom Mintoff proposed integration in the fifties and did not succeed, he didn't say, 'I will continue proposing integration'. The party looked ahead. Policy evolved and eventually after independence the Labour Party worked to rid Malta of the British military presence in 1979."

Mr Bartolo believes that the party has a hard task to try and convince those who feel the EU was a matter of principle, to accept the new reality.

"We have to persuade them. Throughout political controversies, positions are oversimplified and reduced to black and white scenarios. The choice was not between peace with the EU and membership and all out war and staying out. That wasn't the choice, although in caricatures it appeared so. The MLP's position, which was ironically vindicated when Malta signed the Accession Treaty with references to partnerships with neighbouring European countries, was never black or white.

"We proposed not to tie ourselves with what we believed were measures and structures that could harm us but we still proposed a close relationship with the EU. However, the choice was never ideological."

Mr Bartolo talks of the changed circumstances and is apprehensive of the way membership was portrayed as being a guarantee for prosperity. "Membership offers no guarantee, it offers a possibility. And like everything else a possibility has to be taken and worked for."

<http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/2003/08/17/interview.html>

The Times, Friday, January 2, 2004 Aborting the future, Harry Vassallo

"In 2004 the PN will conduct a campaign of slow political abortion to prevent AD from giving Malta a more complete representation in the European parliament. The

abortions that are going on are of pluralism in Malta and of the birth of a truly European culture in these islands.” 8

The Times , March, 3, 2003

(at the bottom of the page: www.on.org.mt) – ad

Small Businesses

“EU membership is the kiss of life to small businesses, which both thrive in, and contribute to, the economic growth fueled by being a part of the world’s most powerful economic bloc.” 17