



Prof. Serracino Inglott pgs 10-11

24 September 2006 – issue number 359

www.maltatoday.com.mt

MTA board shocked with tapping scare

Karl Schembri and Matthew Vella

MALTA TOURISM Authority board members were threatened with imprisonment and warned they could have their telephones tapped by the police as part of the investigation into the leak to the press of the chairman's draft letter to brand consultant Christian Sinding.

Convened last Friday afternoon by lawyer Joe Zammit Maempel, who was appointed by chairman Sam Mifsud to investigate the leak of the letter to admitting failure in the Brand Malta campaign, the board members were told that the police had the power to enquire with telephone companies about their phone calls if they are involved in the investigations.

Requesting a written sworn statement from each one of them declaring that they did not leak the letter, Zammit Maempel also told them that as government-appointed officials, leaking confidential information could lead to fines and imprisonment, adding that the police had the power to search the journalists' hard disks to trace correspondence.

Shocked by the meeting, board members reported the matter to Tourism Minister Francis Zammit Dimech, who confirmed to MaltaToday

that he was approached by a member who expressed his disgust at the way they were treated by Zammit Maempel.

The minister admitted that a board member who spoke to him had the impression that they could have their telephones tapped by the police but declared it would have been impossible for him to authorise any telephone tapping.

"I am not in a position to order any telephone tapping and I dissociate myself completely from any attempt to give the impression that there is this possibility," Zammit Dimech said. "If you ask me, this matter should be closed as soon as possible and not be left to escalate in this way."

The minister, who suggested Zammit Maempel to be appointed investigator, said yesterday that the MTA "should now focus on its core mission".

Contacted yesterday, Zammit Maempel confirmed that he was assigned by the chairman to investigate the leak and that he addressed the board members on Friday afternoon, but denied that the police were involved or that any telephone tapping had been carried out. He added that he was not just investigating board members.

The minister said that according to confidential information that had reached him, the leak did not originate from the MTA board but from the authority's management, though he later clarified that this could only happen in collusion with a board member. Both the MTA chairman and chief executive David Mifsud were abroad ▶ page 13

Government to take control over local enforcement

Karl Stagno-Navarra

GOVERNMENT IS set to take control over local enforcement, in an attempt to curb abuses that turned out to be a multi-million revenue-generator for local councils around the country.

The move follows comments made earlier this year by PN secretary-general Joe Saliba, who accused wardens of indiscriminate and heavy-handedness in local enforcement.

Speaking to MaltaToday, Parliamentary Secretary Carm Mifsud Bonnici explained that the move is intended to guarantee the general public a better safeguard against abuses by wardens and self-made sheriff-mayors.

While local enforcement is high on the disgruntlement list of regular opinion polls commissioned by the PN, government appears to be moving in on the issue, and is currently preparing a major overhaul to the legislation that in so far has left it powerless before local councils who have the say. ▶ page 13



MTA Chairman Sam Mifsud

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British High Commission reacts to criticism on prestigious scholarships

Kurt Sansone

THE LIST of people awarded a Chevening Scholarship is an interesting insight into the who's who of Malta's high society, but the British High Commission is set to change the current situation whereby a majority of students

benefiting from the bursary hail from influential families.

Reacting to an opinion article penned by MaltaToday columnist Anna Mallia last Sunday, British High Commissioner Nick Archer admits that the British Council does not get applicants from "a wide enough range of

backgrounds" for the Chevening Scholarships.

Mallia had expressed her concern at the trend that seems to have developed over recent years in the award of Chevening Scholarships to students hailing from well-connected, influential and political families. ▶ page 5

INSIDE: Free recipe

Controversial tactics on immigration reach EU borders agency

Matthew Vella

AN AFM major's report proposing controversial tactics to stop illegal immigration, such as confiscating fuel from incoming boats and turning them back to Libya, is believed to have reached Frontex, the EU borders agency, as part of a Maltese proposal.

The author of the report, maritime squadron commander Martin Cauchi Inglott, said he would not comment on the details of his paper which appeared in last Sunday's it-Torca. "I

cannot comment on operational details," Major Cauchi Inglott said, evidently upset that such a confidential report had been leaked to the press.

Armed Forces of Malta commander Carmel Vassallo also refused to comment on the paper, which is believed to be a mission proposal enjoying the backing of both France and Germany.

MaltaToday is informed Major Cauchi Inglott's proposal was an own-initiative report which did not carry any endorsement from army superiors. Brigadier Carmel

Vassallo refused to comment on this point.

The Office of the Prime Minister also skirted the issue of Cauchi Inglott's highly controversial proposals, such as the confiscation of fuel and motorboats aboard the main vessel, which could be contrary to international law.

Asked on the government's position on the report, the OPM's press officer said: "It's a pity that certain people, out of pure personal ambition, divulge the contents of internal discussion papers." ▶ page 8

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