



NEWSLETTER

VALLETTA ALIVE FOUNDATION

www.vallettaalivefoundation.org

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**Annual General Meeting
26th February 2010**

**The Fifth Year
February 2009 – February 2010**

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Diskors mic-Chairman, Valletta Alive Foundation, Is-Sur Alfred Zahra

Fis-sena tal-2018, belt jew regjun f'Malta ser ikunu l-Belt Kapitali Ewropea. Ahna fiducjuzi li din tkun il-Belt Valletta. Is-sentejn ta' qabel ukoll huma importanti: fl-2016 il-Belt taghlaq 450 sena; fl-2017 Malta jkollha l-Presidenza ta' l-Unjoni Ewropea. Dawn huma dati importanti illi jehtieg li nippreparaw ghalihom minn issa. Jehtieg nippreparaw ghalihom bhalha pajjiz, kif ukoll bhala belt.

Ninnotaw b'sodisfazzjon illi l-gvern hu konxju ta' dan u waqqaf kumitat apposta – il-VAF kellu laqgħa mac-Chairman ta' dan il-kumitat.

Dawn l-avvenimenti ma jehtigux biss preparazzjoni tal-program imma iktar minn hekk jehtiegu thejjija ta' l-infrastruttura, speċjalment il-wirt mibni tal-ilbliet storici. F'dan il-kuntest, il-progetti li qed jitwettqu għall-Belt Valletta huma ta' importanza straordinarja. Kollna kuntenti hafna bid-decizjoni li ha il-gvern fuq il-progett ta' Bieb il-Belt għax dan ifisser illi fl-ahhar dan il-progett ser jitwettaq.

Il-VAF wara s-success li kellha f'Ottubru 2008 bis-seminar 'Valletta 450', se torganizza seminar ieħor fejn ikun hemm lok għal diskussjoni fuq 'l fejn miexja il-Belt Valletta fid-dawl ta' dawn it-tappep importanti.

Il-Valletta Alive Foundation, bhal snin ohra ta' qabilha, kien il-vuci li semmett lehinha sabiex il-belt kapitali taghna timxi aktar 'l quddiem f'dak li jirrigwarda l-kultura, in-negozju u l-hajja in generali tar-residenti u vizitaturi taghha. Il-Gvern u l-Kunsill tal-Belt qed jahdmu id f'id biex il-kaptiali ta' pajjizna terga tiehu d-dinjita` ta' belt barokka u ta' patrimonju kulturali mondjali. Il-progetti ta' tisbiih tal-Belt Valletta bdew jigu esegwiti u diga` qed tidher id-differenza. Ricenti fost dawn insemmu Pjazza San Gorg u r-ripavementar it-toroq ancillari taghha, Triq Merkanti, Biaggio Steps, il-lift tal-Barrakka, Victoria Gate, is-swar majjestuzi, tindif ta' faccati u ohrajn. Dawn kollha jaghtu dehra isbah lill-belt kapitali taghna li tghin u tinfluwxixxi fuq il-hajja kummercjali u kulturali taghha. B'dana kollu, dan it-tibdil u l-progetti holqu tnaqqis fil-facilitajiet ta' parkegg li johloq inkonvenjent kemm ghax-xerrejja, neguzjanti u residenti wkoll, ghalkemm il-Park and Ride u CVA taffew xi ftit minn din il-problema. Il-Fundazzjoni VAF tkellmet diversi drabi fuq din il-problema ma' l-awtoritajiet u korpi kostitwiti sabiex tinstab soluzzjoni viabbli sabiex l-Belt tibqa' wahda mic-centri kummercjali ewlenija ta' Malta. Dan mhux biss, imma sabiex il-hajja fil-Belt, speccjalment filghaxijiet, tqum fuq taghha u tigbed aktar nies lejha.

Is-sena li ghaddiet, kellna sensiela ta' laqghat ma' korpi kostitwiti u Ministri sabiex niddiskutu fuq is-sitwazzjoni li tinsab fiha il-Belt taghna. Laqgha mportanti fost dawn saret f'Marzu 2009 mal-Onorevoli Prim Ministru Dr. Gonzi fuq is-sitwazzjoni estetika tal-Belt, il-parkegg u l-progetti ta' tisbi. Dwar il-parkegg, enfasizzajna mal-Prim Ministru illi il-parkegg gewwa l-Belt naqas u ser ikompli jonqos. Ghalkemm giet mtaffija bis-servizz ta' Park and Ride, xorta tinhass il-problema ta' parkegg kemm ghax-xerrejja, kif ukoll ghar-residenti.

Laqgha ohra li saret kienet mal-Kunsill Lokali tal-Belt Valletta fuq il-progett Friends of Valletta.

Fuq l-livell socjali, il-VAF organizzat ikliet f'Jannar, Marzu u f'Awissu b'success ghal-membri u l-hbieb f'restoranti fil-Belt u l-Barrakka ta' Fuq. Dawn l-okkazzjonijiet socjali jghinu sabiex il-membri jiltaqghu flimkien fuq livell aktar legger.

Il-Fondazzjoni taghmel dan kollu bl-ghajnuna tal-membri tal-Governors' Board u l-Officers taghha li jiltaqghu regolarjament kull xahar u kull gimgha rispettivament.

Minn hawn nixtieq niringrazzja lilkom il-membri tal-VAF ghas-support taghkom, kif ukoll ghall shabi tal-kumitat. Inheggigkom li thajru membri godda li jinkitbu maghna ghaliex b'hekk biss nistghu nsemmghu lehinna u naghmlu l-gid lill-Belt li tant inhobbu.

**Secretary's Report
submitted and approved in the AGM of 26th February 2010**

1. Valletta projects

VAF is pleased to note that in this legislature government is giving greater priority to Valletta. Projects which are long overdue have been taken in hand. These projects include City Gate, the bus terminus, Fort St. Elmo, Biaggio Steps and Barracca Lifts. There is also the fortifications restoration project as well as repaving of Valletta streets. The pedestrianisation programme initiated with Merchants Street in 2007 is being extended in other streets in Valletta. St. George's Square being the most important part of this programme.

VAF has lobbied on these and other projects for years. Meetings were organised with ministers including a meeting with the Prime Minister in March 2009. The usefulness of informal social encounters with decision makers should not be underestimated. The extent to which VAF lobbying influenced government decisions cannot be determined but VAF has said its say so that Valletta is given the attention and priority it truly deserves.

2 City Gate project

The Foundation has taken a clear stand in favour of the Piano project. VAF is concerned that any wavering or excessive delay in the implementation, will mean that the project will not happen and that Malta will spend several more decades with the ruins of the opera house at its entrance.

3 Accessibility to Valletta

VAF has on a number of occasions expressed its concern relating to parking availability in Valletta. This is of concern to workers and shoppers as well as to Valletta residents. Whilst fully supporting the extension of pedestrianisation, the loss of parking needs to be addressed by providing viable alternatives. The Park and Ride and CVA provides partial solutions but they are not enough to compensate for the loss of parking within Valletta. VAF has made proposals to Government on this issue.

VAF supported an initiative relating to parking and accessibility namely the Valletta Business Community Joint Committee. This Committee made a number of proposals to the Ministry of Information, Transport and Communications. These include the extension of park and ride area; adjustment to the current CVA to encourage further parking space circulation; lifting of CVA daily charges to commence by 1500 hours and

the installation of vertical lifts from the two harbour areas. These proposals are supported by VAF.

The Foundation has also given its feedback to government on aspects of the City Gate project which raise concern particularly the discontinuance of the road over the current gateway.

4 Events in Valletta

The attention being given by government to Valletta also extends to events with Notte Magica in October and Citta Magica in January. There was also a week-long of activities in December as part of the launching of St. Georges square pedestrianisation. Over Christmas various cultural events were organised by MCCA in Valletta.

Subject to resource constraints, VAF will encourage and support the staging of activities by the central government, the local council or other agencies in Valletta.

5 Streets Alive/Saturday Late Shopping

After organising, BOV Streets Alive for three consecutive years, (2006 – 2008), this year it was decided not to organise the event. The main reason is that there was no major sponsor to support it as there was in previous years. We tried the formula of engaging a company to organise the event allowing it to generate income from sponsorships. This arrangement did not succeed primarily because of difficulties to find sponsors at a time when the recession was most acutely felt.

On the other hand, VAF organised Valletta Late Shopping on four Saturdays leading up to Christmas. We approached shop owners and asked them for a commitment to open till 9.00pm and to contribute 100 Euros for marketing. Catering outlets were also approached to contribute the 100 Euros. Our commitment to them was that every euro received will be spent on adverts i.e. that VAF will not pocket any of the money.

Over 40 retail and catering outlets participated – well beyond VAF's expectations. After the event, VAF sent out a letter to participating shops and catering outlets thanking them and giving them a breakdown of the expenses. We are pleased to say that VAF received very positive feedback on this initiative.

The idea has been developed to combine Streets Alive with Saturday Late Shopping into a single event – Valletta Streets Alive. The dates have been set and VAF are currently trying to source funds. Apart from private sources, we are also considering applying for funds from the Good Causes Fund and the Malta Arts Fund.

6 Valletta group

VAF developed the idea of establishing a sort of Friends of Valletta group. This group will provide tangible recognition of a person's affiliation to Valletta (birth, residency, public office, philanthropic, sport or honorary service in areas which include economic, social, environmental, cultural, political or cultural contribution to Valletta). There will be a one time donation upon joining to cover expenses. Members of this group will be presented with a unique badge as well as a certificate endorsed by the Valletta Local Council.

VAF sought the support of the Local Council because, for this group to become permanent, it needs to be owned and supported by the Council, although not necessarily by means of finance. Implementation has been delayed as difficulties raised by the Council still need to be resolved.

7 Social events

VAF organised three social events in March and August 2009 and January 2010 in Valletta restaurants and at the Upper Baracca. These are occasions where members can meet on a more informal basis. As for past years, these dinners were a success.

8 Other information

It was the intention of VAF to organise a seminar on culture relating to Valletta similar to Valletta 450 held in October 2008. It was decided to postpone first to clarify the Valletta's position re capital of Culture 2018 and to avoid conflicting with the consultation process which is ongoing on the national cultural policy.

The VAF website is still operational but it is not being adequately updated. This past year just one newsletter was issued.

The Board of governors meets once a month whereas VAF officials meet every week.

Articles/opinion pieces by VAF are featured in the printed media on topics related to Valletta. In particular, opinion pieces on the City gate project were featured.