

Louis Grech, 43 Flat 3, South Street, Valletta, Tel/Fax: +356 21231464

Web: <http://www.louisgrech.eu> email: [louis.grech@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:louis.grech@europarl.europa.eu)

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## ***Welcome***

This is the first issue of **e-bulletin**, which I hope will keep you posted on my work in the European Parliament and help you learn more about what your representatives are doing in Brussels. It is one way in which I would like to communicate better with my constituents, and hopefully it will also spur you to let me know how I can help you.

## ***Not just a change in name***

Some of you may have noticed the change in the name of the Socialist Group in the Parliament. The Group has now adopted the name S&D – Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats.

The S&D Group has set an ambitious agenda for the Seventh Legislature of the Parliament. Campaigning for social justice, leading the economic recovery, reforming financial markets, fighting climate change, championing equality and creating a stronger and more democratic Europe - this is the agenda of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament for the next five years.

***Working in Europe for Everyone in Malta***

SOLVIT Malta Centre:

Mr Mark Xerri

Tel: 25690329

[solvit.malta@gov.mt](mailto:solvit.malta@gov.mt)

[Click here](#)



“The EU needs to bet on itself” said Prime Minister Zapatero on 20 January, when he kicked off the Spanish Presidency. Reducing EU energy dependency, promoting e-commerce among Member States, developing an electric car industry and improving university quality were the four priorities stressed by Zapatero in a debate on policy priorities for Spain's EU presidency. Political group leaders welcomed the plan to prioritise recovery from the economic crisis, but not all agreed on the specific measures proposed.

## *Professional Qualifications*

Some Maltese professionals might not be aware that the EU has been doing some sterling work on the issue of mutual recognition of professional qualifications, which is, of course, a matter that is of great interest to most of them. This is particularly so for those professionals, increasing in number, who wish to be able to relocate to other parts of the EU and carry their professional qualifications with them.

The EU already has a Directive that provides for this, but it is well known that some national governments have been dragging their feet in ensuring compliance with the provisions of the Directive. One must also admit that there are issues which sometimes make the mutual recognition of professional qualifications problematic across borders.

The Parliament has been working on a recast of the Directive, and I have actively participated in the discussion on it within IMCO through PQs and interventions. You may follow some of the arguments and expert advice we have received by going to the IMCO page on this web-site.

I'd love to hear from any Maltese professionals who want to contribute to the debate. More than that, however, I would encourage any professionals who have had problems getting their qualifications recognized in other EU states to use SOLVIT. We have a SOLVIT contact point in Malta. The contact details are given in the box above.



## *John Dalli's Nomination*

On 14 January, I participated in the Parliament's hearing concerning the nomination of Mr John Dalli as Commissioner Designate responsible for health and consumer protection.

The IMCO Bureau, of which I am a member as Vice-Chairman, is one of two committees responsible for evaluating and deciding whether to give Dalli the green light or not. I was accordingly one of the three S&D members and the only Maltese MEP chosen to put forward a question to the Commissioner Designate.

I asked Mr Dalli two questions: the main one pertained to the need for a Europe-wide collective redress mechanism for consumers. In my question I made reference to the recent VAT on car registration issue in Malta. The supplementary question referred to the proper dissemination of information citizens and consumers. I firmly stressed on the need for consumer empowerment to be put at the top of the European agenda.

Subsequent to his positive reply regarding collective consumer redress, the S&D Group welcomed Mr Dalli's commitment to this principle and to ensure the coordination of consumer policy within the Commission. It also welcomed the clear distinction between advertising and information delivered to the consumer.

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