

EU funds will strengthen Maltese islands' fortifications

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The fortifications at Valletta, Vittoriosa, Mdina and the Ċittadella in Gozo will undergo much needed restoration works in the coming years through an injection of €32 million in EU funds. Photo: Darrin Zammit Lupi

The islands' fortifications, which have been under siege from the elements, will be restored in the coming years through an injection of €32 million in EU funds.

The fortified walls of Ċittadella in Gozo, Vittoriosa, Mdina and Valletta, are among those that will get the much-needed aid.

Tourism Parliamentary Secretary Mario de Marco, who spoke of the importance for the island to constantly "re-invent itself" in the light of tough competition, said Malta would be tapping into €120 million from the 2007-2013 EU budget in order to invest in the island's tourism sector.

Over €12 million were used from the previous 2004-2006 EU budget and successfully pumped into the industry, Chris Said, Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Public Dialogue, said.

Dr de Marco and Dr Said were addressing a press conference to announce how the money was spent and what new projects would benefit from the new funds.

The press conference was held at the Malta Aviation Museum, a voluntary organisation, which benefitted from funds to upgrade its premises.

A series of exciting projects should materialise and Qawra is one area which will benefit from over €12 million that will go towards an oceanarium, a marine archaeology museum, landscaping, the upgrade of Qawra Point, beneath Fra Ben, and the levelling of promenades.

A garigue heritage park is also planned for Pembroke and the area surrounding Corinthia San Ġorġ and the Radisson SAS Baypoint hotels will be upgraded.

About €8 million will be pumped into a visitors' centre for Ġgantija Temples in Gozo, a shelter and walkway for Tarxien Temples and the rehabilitation of St Paul's Catacombs, in Rabat, and a visitors' centre.

Another €10 million will be made available to help commercial enterprises that come up with projects linked to sustainable development, while €3.6 million will be channelled to human resources development, among others.

Dr Said listed the projects which benefitted from the last EU budget, including enhancing the diving sector in Gozo, modernising the Institute of Tourism Studies in Gozo and the paving in Mdina, among others.

On a personal note, Dr de Marco said he was of the opinion that the remains of the Gloster Gladiator fighter, housed at the War Museum, in Valletta, should be displayed at the Aviation Museum in Ta' Qali. He felt this could happen with the cooperation of Heritage Malta because it made more sense to have the Gladiator alongside the other two fighter aircraft - the Spitfire and the Hurricane - which defended Malta in World War II.

Comments

Joe Vella (11 hours, 24 minutes ago)

@ L. Galea

At this time in age Malta get more EU funds that it sends the other way.

I for one, cannot wait for the day that it will be the other way around as you are dishonestly suggesting in your comments.

No wonder the Maltese Electorate have no trust in the MLP and its' propoganda mouth pieces. The electorate is much wiser then individuals like you give him credit for.

L Galea (1 day, 10 hours ago)

Please remember that it is not eu funds, but our own money which we have been sending to the eu which it then gives us some of it back to use it as it deems fit with a lot of strings attached.

Please also remember that the money is given to us only when the project is finished and is found to be in compliance with all the conditions imposed by the eu.