

## Paris chancery is the government's costliest lease

A snip at €194,422, the chancery representing Malta on the Champs Elysée is the government's costliest lease this year, figures given in Parliament show.

Charles Mangion (PL) asked the same question to all ministers: he wanted to know what their ministry would be paying for leases this year.

The Paris chancery lease is the same as that for last year, but a note tacked to the list says that "no increase in rent is expected. However, if any increase is applied it will be due to the price indexation not due to a direct increase in rent".

Besides, the chancery, Malta also pays €67,620 for the ambassador's residence and €1,819 for a garage.

The next expensive item the foreign ministry pays is the embassy cum chancery in Rome (€144,179).

Next come, in descending order, the sums of money to be spent this year: €136,000 for the residence of the ambassador in Geneva, which seems to double as a chancery; the chancery in New Delhi (€76,123), the Permanent Representative in Brussels (€72,796), the residence in Lisbon (€71,790), the embassy in Beijing (€68,219), the consular offices in Moscow (€68,082), and the chancery in Madrid (€58,932).

Also, the same ministry pays €58,051 rent for the building housing the Directorate Financial management.

In reply to the same question, Prime Minister Gonzi replied his ministry pays €126,042 to Mizzi Estates for offices of the Medicines Authority. It also pays €64,554 for offices in Attard Buildings for the Management Efficiency Unit and €63,475 for a building in St Christopher Street, Valletta for the use of the Superintendence for Cultural Heritage; €47,574 for the use of Lower Valletta Buildings in South Street by the Internal Auditing and Investigation Department; €38,435 for the use by Patrimonju Malta of two buildings in Mrieħel and €38,232 for garages used by Mepa in Valletta Road, Żurrieq.

Minister Austin Gatt said that his highest rent is €78,408 for the lease of offices at Pinto Wharf by the Malta Communications Authority followed by €41,981 for two floors in a property in Valley Road, Birkirkara for the use of Transport Malta, followed by €27,795 for renting two levels at Transcontinental House, Zachary Street, Valletta used by MITC.

Minister Carm Mifsud Bonnici's list, while not containing any high rents except that for the Data Protection Commissioner at Airways House, Sliema (€20,970), lists the leases for many police stations. The highest (€245.89) is that of the police station in Luqa, followed by Żurrieq (€189.84), Żebbuġ (Malta) (€151.40), and St Julian's (€104.82).

Minister Giovanna Debono said her highest expense is the lease of the Downtown Hotel in Victoria for which she is paying €62,900 a year.

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