

The courts go green

Waylon Johnston



**Solar panels have been installed on the roof of the law courts in Valletta at a cost of €47,000 in a concerted effort to make the administration of justice a little gentler on the environment.
Photo: Matthew Mirabelli**

In an attempt to make the administration of justice a little gentler on the environment, measures have been taken to make the law courts in Valletta more energy efficient.

Over the past few months, solar panels have been installed on the roof, some windows have been replaced with higher insulation ones and the air-conditioning system has been replaced with one which is more eco-friendly.

The solar panels, of photovoltaic cells, were installed in December at a cost of €47,000 and in the first four months of the year the court building has already saved €1,700 on its energy bill, the equivalent of 6.5 per cent of total consumption.

The numbers, in fact, make apparent even the economic wisdom of going green seeing as, based on these figures, the courts face an average yearly electricity bill of some €80,000.

The system installed can produce a maximum of 15 kilowatts per hour, which is equal to 250 average 60 watt household light bulbs.

But the changes did not stop there. The administration offices, which sit at the top level of the building, are being lit via "solar tubes", which effectively are shafts that use natural light to illuminate buildings.

Moreover, the building's 40-year-old air-conditioning system, which used a chiller to distribute cool air to the different court rooms, has now been replaced by more efficient individual systems in every courtroom.

Double glazing has also been installed in the court house corridors, along with energy saving light bulbs, while a well beneath the court house has been cleaned and repaired to collect rain water for use in the building's bathrooms.

Justice Minister Carmelo Mifsud Bonnici, who announced the green makeover on the roof of the courthouse yesterday, said the courts were ahead of other governmental agencies and departments in becoming more environment friendly.

He said there was room for improvement and pointed out that the present recording systems which rely on tapes would be replaced with digital systems, which would save on the use of cassettes. However, he said, "old habits die hard" and the system would be replaced over time, courtroom by courtroom.

Comments

DVella(1 week, 1 day ago) 

Hmm . . . better late than never one supposes . . . what about all the other Government Buildings????

M Axisa(1 week, 1 day ago) 

This is indeed commendable. Let's hope other government agencies and departments follow suit
