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2 February 2006

Subject

Almost 17,000 votes for the Malta euro coin set

PRESS RELEASE ISSUED JOINTLY WITH THE NATIONAL EURO CHANGEOVER COMMITTEE (NECC)

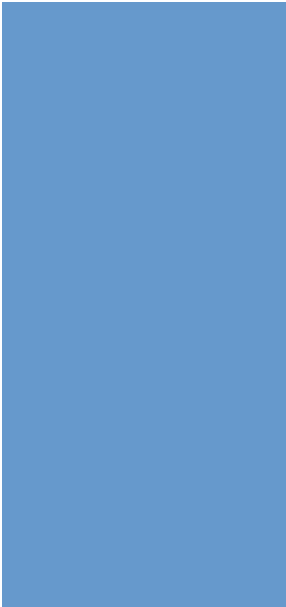
"The fact that in a short span of time almost 17,000 persons felt they should participate in the decision making process of choosing the face to our new currency is indeed very encouraging. This was a unique process which has showed that the people are already feeling a sense of belonging towards the euro. This is also the first time we are changing the currency in 35 years and it is certainly set to be a change for good. I am very satisfied with the fact that we have managed to mobilise several thousands of people in just over 10 days. In the past the number of people who gave feedback on the themes for the designs of coins was indeed very limited,"
Parliamentary Secretary Tonio Fenech.

The Central Bank of Malta and the National Euro Changeover Committee (NECC) are today announcing the results of the public consultation process for the selection of the designs of the Maltese euro coin set. Two weeks ago the public was presented with 12 options divided into four themes and asked to choose the three preferred options from different themes to appear on the national side of the euro coins.

Addressing a press conference, the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Finance Tonio Fenech, together with the Governor of the Central Bank of Malta, Michael C. Bonello, and the Chairman of the NECC Joseph F. X. Zahra, announced that 16,835 unique valid votes were received over the two week period during which the public consultation process was open. Only one vote per telephone number was counted and thousands of additional votes from mobile or fixed lines that had already registered their vote were not taken into consideration. The three most popular options from three out of the four themes presented to the public are the following: Baptism of Christ (Renaissance Malta)-3498 votes; Coat of Arms (Maltese Identity)-2742 votes and the Mnajdra Temple Altar (Prehistoric Malta)-1872 votes. The Fort St Angelo option (Renaissance Malta) got 2037 votes, which is the third most popular option, but it is not being included as one of the three chosen options since it forms part of the same theme as the Baptism of Christ option which was the most popular option among the public. The three options which will be submitted to the designer for the actual designs of the coins are the Baptism of Christ, the Coat of Arms and the Mnajdra Temple Altar, which are the three most popular options from three different themes.

Over the past two weeks the public were also given the opportunity to suggest other options by sending an SMS to a separate number. The most popular suggestion by the public was by far the proposal to put the Maltese Cross on the face of the euro coin set followed by the suggestion to include the face of Dun Karm on the Maltese euro coin set. The Steering Committee for the Adoption of the Euro is actively considering including the Maltese Cross with the three other options chosen for the face of the Maltese euro coin set.

Mr Fenech said he was surprised by the attention, public discussion and media debate created by this process: "I must admit the feedback is indeed very encouraging and the number of unique votes received has surpassed our expectations. It is indicating that the public are keen to follow the preparations for the euro changeover process entrusted to the National Euro Changeover Committee. This was the first activity to be launched in this process and I must say we are delighted with its outcome."



The chosen options will now be passed on to a designer for the design of a number of options. The second phase, which will take place later on in 2006, will be a similar national consultation process during which the public will be asked to choose the actual designs for the euro coin set. In common with several other EU Member States, the Maltese euro coins will have three different designs: one for the one and two euro coins, one for the fifty, twenty and ten cent coins and one for the five, two and one cent coins.

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