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# gozo today

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## 2026 ELECTION PROPOSALS:

# Gozo Chamber calls for greater autonomy and innovation growth

LAURA CALLEJA

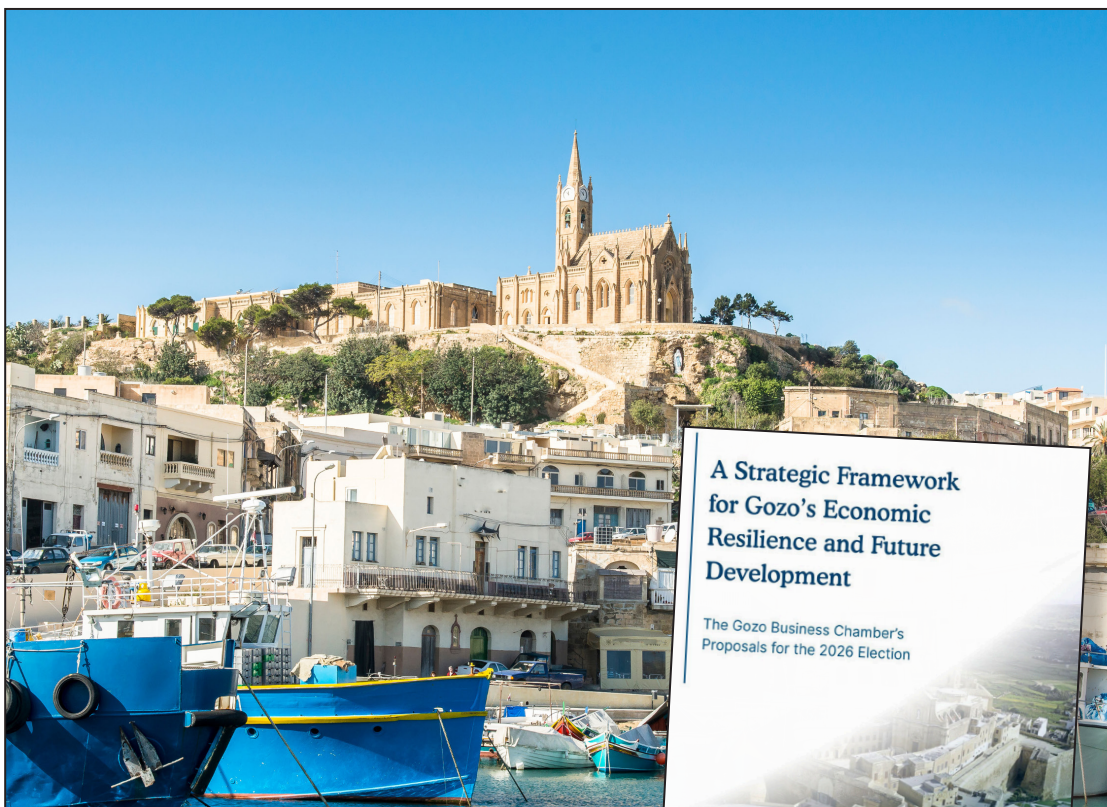
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THE Gozo Business Chamber has called for greater regional autonomy for Gozo, a long-term accessibility masterplan and a new innovation-driven economic model ahead of Malta's next general election, arguing that the island's future development requires a "decisive shift" in governance and planning.

In a policy document published on Tuesday, the Chamber said Gozo should be recognised as a distinct island region with its own socio-economic realities and structural challenges, warning against reducing the election campaign to a bidding war over promises for the island.

The business lobby identified three priorities for the next legislature: stronger regional governance, an integrated logistics and accessibility framework, and an economic diversification strategy focused on innovation, start-ups and higher value-added industries. Among the proposals, is a call for "clear and measurable steps" towards greater regional autonomy for Gozo.

The Chamber said that decisions affecting the island should be taken closer to the communi-



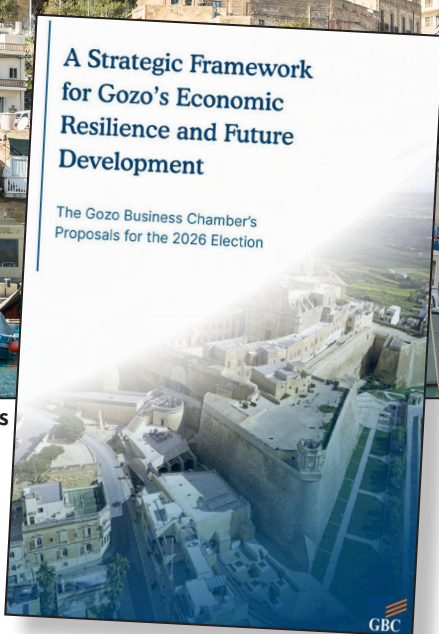
Among the proposals, is a call for clear and measurable steps towards greater regional autonomy for Gozo

ties and businesses impacted by them, describing this as a more responsive and accountable model of governance rather than "isolation or separation".

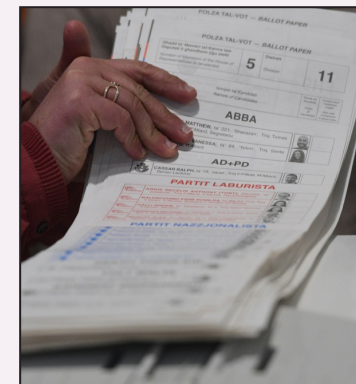
The Chamber also renewed calls for major infrastructure investment aimed at reducing Gozo's dependence on a single maritime corridor. It proposed

the development of a "Gozo Integrated Accessibility and Logistics Masterplan", including a logistics hub near the planned rural airfield, an expanded and "future-proofed" Mġarr Harbour, an alternative fast ferry landing site at Marsalforn and a second road

link to Mġarr Harbour, "preferably through a tunnel".



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## 13 candidates are vying for your vote in Gozo on 30 May

Find out which candidates are coming up in Gozo

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A total of 13 candidates are contesting District 13, which covers Gozo and Comino, in the 2026 general election on 30 May.

The Labour Party is fielding five candidates, three of whom are ministers: Health Minister Jo Etienne Abela, Gozo and Planning Minister Clint Camilleri, and Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights Minister Anton Refalo, as well as Abigail Camilleri, who was

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# What's happening in Gozo

MAY 15 @ 09:00 - 12:00

## OASI Foundation Bazaar Orienti's Plaza Republic Street, Il-Belt Victoria, Malta

Join us this May at the Oasi Foundation Volunteers Bazaar and support a truly meaningful cause. Discover a wide variety of items including clothing, household goods, soft toys, bric-a-brac, ornaments, bedding, and curtains—all available at great value. Every purchase helps make a difference, so come along, browse, and contribute to a good cause while finding something special to take home.

MAY 15 @ 10:00 - 13:00

## The Essence of Gozo – Land and Sea

Arthall Gozo 8, triq Agius de Soldanis, Il-Belt Victoria, Malta

This exhibition by artist Jane Birchall, is a reflection on the spiritual and elemental nature of Gozo, exploring the dialogue between its rugged coastline, rural village life, and the surrounding Mediterranean Sea. Through sculptural ceramics and acrylic paintings. Layered textures echo erosion and time, while references to tradition speak to heritage and resilience. A statement installation highlights the growing impact of global and industrial debris on Gozo's fragile natural beauty, inviting reflection on preservation, responsibility, and the changing landscape.

MAY 16 @ 09:00 - 12:00

## Shema - Lejl Imdawwal mill-Ewkaristija Bishop's Curia Republic Street, Il-Belt Victoria, Gozo, Malta

Join us for an interactive exhibition on the history and development of the Mystery of the Eucharist in the life of the Church, hosted at the underground halls of the Bishop's Curia in Victoria. Through historical displays, multimedia presentations, sacred art, and reflective experiences, visitors will journey through the rich tradition of the Eucharist and discover its central place in Christian faith and worship throughout the centuries. This unique exhibition invites people of all

ages to explore the spiritual, historical, and cultural significance of the Eucharist in an engaging and inspiring setting. Visits on other days and at other times require an appointment.



MAY 16 @ 18:30 - 19:30

## St. Anthony of Padova - Opening of The Feast St Anthony of Padua Convent Triq Sant' Antnin, Għajnsielem, Gozo, Malta

The feast celebrations begin in the evening with the traditional ringing of bells accompanied by the recitation of the Rosary at 6:30 pm. At 7:00 pm, a solemn Mass is celebrated, led by Fr. Marcello Ghirlanda OFM. During this Mass, the statue of Saint Anthony is ceremoniously unveiled and placed in its niche, marking the formal opening of

the feast. The liturgy includes a homily and concludes with the singing of hymns and popular devotions in honour of Saint Anthony, setting a devotional tone for the days ahead.

MAY 17 @ 09:00 - 13:00

## Xewkija Cycling Event Xewkija Square Triq il-Knisja, Ix-Xewkija, Gozo, Malta

Join us for a lively and engaging cycling-themed community event designed to bring families together for a memorable and activity-filled experience. This vibrant gathering offers something for everyone, with a variety of attractions that encourage fun, creativity, and active participation. Visitors can enjoy colorful bouncy castles, including a playful panda-themed inflatable area, as well as an exciting "floor is lava" wrecking ball game that adds an element of challenge and entertainment. A dedicated face and hand painting station provides a creative outlet, while a specially designed bike fun area invites participants to bring their bicycles and enjoy riding in a safe and controlled setting. The event promotes



a welcoming and festive atmosphere, supported by bright visuals and dynamic imagery of children navigating small cycling ramps. Emphasis is placed on providing a secure, traffic-free environment suitable for all ages, ensuring that families can relax and participate with confidence. Above all, the initiative celebrates community spirit, encouraging everyone to come together, connect, and enjoy quality time while supporting local efforts organised by the local council.

MAY 18 @ 12:30 - 17:30

## Gozo Cats: Artistic Exhibition Chrysalis Studio Viviani Court, Mġarr Road, Ix-Xewkija

Join us for an exploration of the quiet presence of cats within the Gozitan landscape. This exhibition brings together a collection of works by local artists, including photography, painting, and mixed media, each reflecting the unique relationship between the island and its feline inhabitants. From fleeting encounters in village streets to intimate portrayals of character and form, the exhibition invites visitors to observe, reflect, and connect with these familiar companions.

Part of this exhibition also supports a local cat sanctuary (CSAF), with selected works and initiatives contributing to ongoing care efforts. The exhibition is open every Sunday afternoon, offering a calm and welcoming space for art, conversation, and community.

MAY 19 @ 10:00 - 11:00

## Karaoke Party Dar San Guzepp Triq L-Imgarr, Għajnsielem

Allegrija Foundation is thrilled to continue its year-long journey of spreading music, joy, and meaningful connection through karaoke sessions across Gozo. Each week, we visit a different elderly residence,

creating heartwarming moments where residents and the community can come together, sing, and share in the happiness that music brings. Proudly sponsored by The Melita Foundation, this

initiative welcomes everyone to join in the fun—whether you'd like to participate, volunteer, or simply learn more. Come and be part of helping us spread smiles, one song at a time.

MAY 22 @ 14:00 - 16:30

## Artistic Foundation in Body Art Chrysalis Studio Viviani Court, Mġarr Road, Ix-Xewkija

This 10-session course offers a structured artistic and conceptual foundation for individuals interested in body art. Body art is here

approached as a visual discipline rooted in drawing, tonal structure, composition, and material awareness.

The course strengthens artistic literacy and prepares participants with: drawing discipline, tonal and shading control, composition create in a paragraph, understanding directional workflow, foundational awareness of tools and other technicalities. By focusing on artistic preparation and conceptual clarity, the course aims to bridge the gap between general art training and the specific demands of body art.

MAY 22 @ 19:30 - 23:00

## Summer of Culture Triq Il-Kardinal Alessandro Franchi Il-Fontana, Gozo, Malta

Join us for a musical and cultural experience for the entire family! Enjoy an evening filled with traditional sounds, vibrant performances, and the rich flavors of our heritage.

The event will feature the participation of the Kantera group together with other renowned singers, bringing lively music and entertainment for all ages. Throughout the event, we will proudly promote the beloved gelat tan-nanna, celebrating this traditional treat and the stories behind it. Families, friends, and visitors are invited to come together to enjoy great music, authentic culture, and a warm community atmosphere.



## Did you know?

Ta' Sannat lies in the south of the island of Gozo. The name is probably derived from that of an Arabic-Greek family that moved to Gozo from Sicily. Ta' Sannat is best known for the Ta' Cenc plateau on the edge of the village and its spectacular Ta' Cenc cliffs, the highest cliffs in Gozo. The plateau is typical Maltese garigue rich in flora and fauna. It is also the site of a number of prehistoric remains, including sparse remnants of L-Imramma Temple and three dolmens (made up of, a roughly shaped horizontal limestone slab supported on three sides by blocks of stone standing on end). The plateau overlooks the Hanzira valley, a natural gorge with steep rocky sides separating Ta' Sannat from the village of ix-Xewkija, of which there are excellent views.

# 3,245 licensed vehicles registered in first quarter of 2026 - NSO

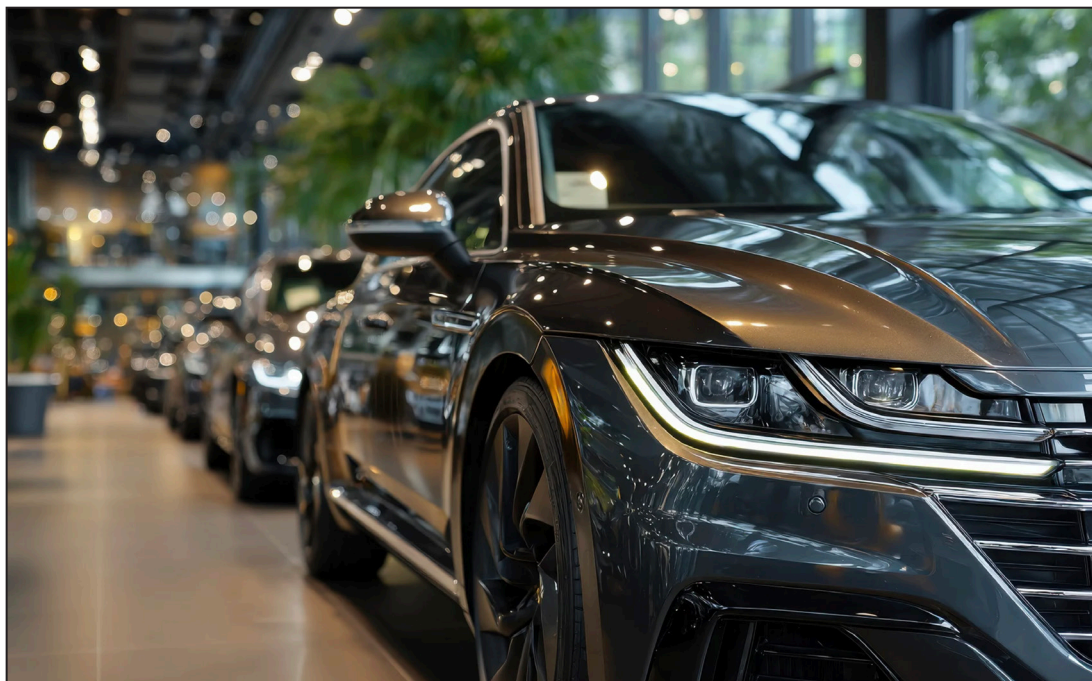
MOTOR vehicle stock in Malta and Gozo continued to grow in the first quarter of 2026, increasing by 3,245 licensed vehicles over the previous quarter, according to figures by the National Statistics Office (NSO).

Figures show that the stock of licensed motor vehicles in Malta rose at an average net rate of 36 vehicles per day during the period, reflecting steady growth in registrations.

The majority of newly licensed vehicles were passenger cars, totaling 3,699 units or 65.1 per cent of all new registrations. Motorcycles, including e-bikes and PA-bikes, accounted for 1,197 units or 21.1% of the total.

In terms of fuel type, petrol-powered vehicles remained dominant at 57.9%, followed by diesel at 33.8%. Electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles represented a smaller but growing share at 5.1%.

The data also shows contin-



Figures show that the stock of licensed motor vehicles in Malta rose at an average net rate of 36 vehicles per day during the period, reflecting steady growth in registrations

ued expansion in alternative propulsion systems compared to the previous quarter. Plug-in hybrid (diesel-electric) vehicles increased by 4.9%, mild hybrid

(petrol-electric) vehicles by 4.8%, and fully electric vehicles by 3.7%. The figures were published through the national statistical framework by National

Statistics Office Malta, which regularly monitors transport trends, vehicle ownership, and energy transition indicators across the country.

## Residents call for equal enforcement on public space abuse

RESIDENTS and civil society groups have called for consistent and equal enforcement of public space and noise regulations across Malta and Gozo.

The group has called for new on-the-spot fines, arguing they should not apply only to tourists but to all offenders, including businesses and residents.

The statement responds to the government's announcement of immediate penalties for littering and noise disturbances by visitors, saying the same enforcement standards must also apply to ongoing issues affecting communities across Malta. The groups argue that residents are facing increasing pressure on public spaces due to the spread of illegally placed tables and chairs, A-frame signage, kiosks, and the commercial use of pavements, beaches, and open areas. They say these practices are contributing to the gradual obstruction and degradation of shared urban and coastal environments.

They also raised concerns over noise pollution, particularly amplified music from commercial premises operating late into the night, which they say often exceeds permitted levels and disrupts residential areas. "The signatories said enforcement must be applied consistently, warning against what they described as selective application of regulations," the group said. They argued that if immediate penalties are justified for tourists, then businesses operating in breach of planning, licensing, and environmental rules should face the same urgency and standards. The statement called for the immediate removal of illegal structures and obstructions from public spaces, as well as stronger enforcement against breaches related to outdoor commercial activity and noise control. It also stressed that fines must be substantial enough to deter repeated violations rather than be treated as routine operating costs.

The appeal was signed by Bizzzejjed Group, Flimkien għal Ambjent Aħjar, Marsaskala Residents Network, Marsaxlokk Heritage, Moviment Grafitti, Pembroke Residents, Residenti-Beltin, Sliema Residents Association, St Paul's Bay Residents, Swieqi Pressure Group, and Tuna Artna Lura.

## Gozo candidates for the 2026 general election come from five parties

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elected in the 2022 general election through the gender mechanism, and George Paul Camilleri.

The Nationalist Party has put forward five candidates: PN leader Alex Borg, Norma Camilleri, Beppe Galea, Luke Said, and Frank-Anthony Tabone.

ADPD – The Green Party is represented by Luke Joe Caruana, while Momentum



First row (PL): Anton Refalo, Clint Camilleri, Jo Etienne Abela, Abigail Camilleri and George Paul Camilleri  
Second row (PN): Alex Borg, Luke Said, Norma Camilleri, Frank-Anthony Tabone and Beppe Galea  
Third row: Luke Joe Caruana (ADPD), Carmel Asciak (Momentum) and Paul Salomone (Ahwa Maltin)

has nominated Carmel Asciak.

Ahwa Maltin will be repre-

sented by Paul Salomone.

District 13 elects five members to Malta's House of

Representatives under the single transferable vote system.

# PN pledges dedicated EU fund for Gozo

NATIONALIST Party leader Alex Borg has pledged a dedicated EU fund for Gozo, a 400-bed hospital, and expanded ferry ports.

He made the announcements at an EPP-backed conference organised by MEP Peter Agius, where he also spoke about agricultural funding reform and the need to redirect EU money directly to farmers.

"Gozo should not remain an afterthought. It should not remain a symbol of Malta's periphery but be on the same level as Malta," he said, highlighting that under the current system, EU funds destined for Gozo are limited by a broader Malta allocation, meaning there is no guarantee the island will receive the same amount from one funding package to the next.

He said a PN government would push for a dedicated funding package for the Gozitan region, giving the island greater certainty about its EU income.

On agriculture, Borg said Malta was among the lowest recipients of Pillar One EU agricultural funds, those that go directly to farmers, compared to other EU member states.

He pointed out that most of Malta's agricultural EU money currently falls under Pillar Two,

which is allocated to the government before being disbursed. He said a PN government would lobby within the European Commission and Parliament to redirect agricultural funds towards Pillar One, putting money directly in farmers' hands.

He added that electricity meter charges for farmers would be scrapped entirely, and that electricity bills for the agricultural sector would fall by an average of 15%.

On the hospital, Borg said Gozitans had been waiting years for a serious investment in the Gozo General Hospital. He pledged a 400-bed facility and investment in a helipad, saying the absence of one created serious complications in emergencies for patients and their families.

Borg also said the ports of Mgarr and Cirkewwa needed urgent expansion, not only to handle growing demand, describing Mgarr as having become "almost a symbol of chaos but also because expanding the fleet to five ferries would be impossible without first investing in port infrastructure.

He said a new passenger vessel and a dedicated cargo ferry would be introduced in the first legislature of a PN government, with the cargo ferry serving the Grand Harbour and eventually



Nationalist Party leader Alex Borg pledged a dedicated EU fund for Gozo, a 400-bed hospital, and expanded ferry ports at an EPP-backed conference

extending to the Freeport, easing traffic on Malta's roads.

He also said the new ferries would include a dedicated calming room for neurodivergent passengers, particularly children with conditions such as ADHD, dyslexia, and autism, who he said often panicked on board and ended up avoiding the crossing altogether.

On EU funding for the ferry

fleet, Borg said Malta was failing to make use of available funds such as Horizon, Connecting Europe, and other funds that other island regions across Europe were already drawing on to build cleaner fleets.

Borg also committed to building a breakwater in Marsalforn, saying that without it, the investment already made in the promenade was being undone season

after season by storm damage. He pledged investment in 150 kilometres of arterial and principal roads across Gozo throughout the legislature, not just in the run-up to an election.

He closed by saying he believed Gozo's future should be written by Gozitans themselves, and that, as a Gozitan prime minister, he would make Gozo one of his highest priorities.

## The chamber proposes formally designating Gozo as an island hub for innovation, investment and start-ups

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While stopping short of endorsing a Malta-Gozo tunnel project, the Chamber said a permanent link between the islands should remain as a long-term strategic option and warned against releasing land earmarked for such infrastructure to other forms of development.

The document frames accessibility as more than a transport issue, arguing that it directly affects business continuity, labour mobility, freight reliability, tourism and emergency preparedness.

On the economy, the Chamber said Gozo could no longer rely solely on expanding traditional sectors and instead needed growth that was "higher value-added" and less dependent on land consumption.

The Chamber proposed formally designating Gozo as an "Island Hub for Innovation,

Investment and Start-Ups", backed by targeted incentives and streamlined investment processes.

Suggested priority sectors include artificial intelligence-enabled services, cybersecurity, green technologies, medtech, unmanned aerial vehicle applications and specialised aviation services.

The Chamber also called for the existing Gozo Innovation Hub to be transformed into the centrepiece of the island's diversification strategy, serving as a platform for start-ups, investors and collaboration between government, businesses and educational institutions.

In addition, it proposed an integrated "Gozo Enterprise One-Stop Hub" to centralise support services for businesses and investors, while urging policymakers to strengthen entrepreneurship and financial literacy education from an ear-



ly age.

The Chamber said its proposals should be viewed as inter-

connected elements of a single development model aimed at improving resilience, retain-

ing young talent and reducing Gozo's dependence on a narrow economic base.

# Robert Abela proposes air taxi between Malta and Gozo

PRIME Minister Robert Abela has pledged an air taxi between Malta and Gozo to increase connectivity between the islands.

Speaking in Nationalist Party leader Alex Borg's home district of Xaghra, Gozo, the prime minister reiterated a number of PL proposals targeting Gozo.

Abela said that a PL government would make the Gozo Fast Ferry service free for all Maltese and Gozitans who choose to travel without their cars, adding that the Tallinja On Demand service would be implemented in Gozo.

Addressing infrastructure, Abela proposed a €45 million investment into an interconnector connecting Malta to Gozo, ensuring the island has a secure electricity supply. He also pointed out that within the next three years the PL is projected to have completed their programme of 100 new residential streets in Gozo.

Abela announced a robotic pharmacy for a new chemotherapy service in Gozo's General Hospital, allowing Gozitan

patients to receive treatment without having to go to Malta.

Every Gozitan business that invests in upskilling or reskilling their workers will be awarded €1,000 per worker under a PL government, Abela added.

Abela reiterated his intention to modernize every school in Gozo by the end of their legislature, adding that a PL government will build a centre for art, design, and creativity in Gozo in an effort to strengthen the island's strong cultural identity.

If elected, a PL government would ensure that all funds raised from the eco-contribution paid by those visiting Gozo would be reinvested into Gozo itself, Abela explained.

The prime minister pleaded with every citizen to vote in the upcoming general election, which he described as "the hardest election the party has ever faced."

He warned people not to believe information circulating online through social media and surveys, insisting that every weapon possible is being



Prime Minister Robert Abela reiterated a number of PL proposals targeting Gozo (Photo: James Bianchi/MaltaToday)

used against the PL.

"A hundred proposals are waiting for you, all that's left is your vote," Abela said. "All of

this can only happen if you vote for every single PL candidate on 30 May."

The event was also addressed

by PL candidates Rosianne Cutajar and Deo Debattista, with the latter calling Robert Abela "an angel."

## Momentum candidate says Gozitans want 'practical solutions for the challenges they face every day'

MOMENTUM campaigns in Gozo, pledging stronger focus on governance, environment, and quality of life.

Momentum continued its nationwide outreach with a day of campaign activities in Gozo, where party leader Arnold Cassola and Gozo candidate Carmel Asciak met residents across several localities to discuss key community concerns.

The visit formed part of the party's ongoing engagement efforts across Malta, with discussions in Gozo focusing on transport connectivity, overdevelopment, and opportunities for young people and families.

Momentum leader Arnold Cassola said the country's political system needs to move away from what he described as entrenched partisan approaches, arguing that Gozo requires policies centred on sustainability, accountability,

and community wellbeing.

"Gozo deserves serious and honest politics that puts people and communities before partisan interests," Cassola said. He criticised both major parties, saying they promote an economic model that risks affecting Gozo's environment and identity, while reiterating Momentum's commitment to offering an alternative approach based on integrity and sustainability.

Momentum candidate for Gozo Carmel Asciak said residents expressed concerns about everyday challenges including connectivity and limited opportunities for younger generations.

"Gozitans want practical solutions for the challenges they face every day," Asciak said. "From connectivity and overdevelopment to better opportunities for young people and families, Momentum is



The capital of Gozo, Victoria during the summer (Photo: James Bianchi/MaltaToday)

listening closely."

The party said the visit included meetings and informal

discussions with residents and thanked participants for their engagement, adding that it

will continue its campaign activities as part of its broader national outreach effort.

# Updated Micro Invest scheme introduces targeted support for employee wage increases

THE Ministry for the Economy, Enterprise and Strategic Projects has announced a revised Micro Invest scheme that links state support directly to wage increases for employees, with the programme set to run from 2026 to 2030.

The updated framework expands eligibility to include small businesses, self-employed individuals, and for the first time, social enterprises.

The scheme introduces a targeted fiscal top-up for companies that implement salary increases in 2026 and 2027. It applies to employees who have been continuously employed with the same employer for more than four years and who receive annual pay in-

creases of at least 3%.

Under the new structure, eligible businesses will receive a maximum annual benefit per employee of €780 for enterprises based in Malta and €1,020 for those operating in Gozo, reflecting differentiated support across the islands of Malta.

Minister for the Economy, Enterprise and Strategic Projects Silvio Schembri said the scheme is designed to ensure economic growth translates into improved conditions for workers while supporting business investment and retention.

He said small and medium-sized enterprises account for around 90% of businesses in Malta and



Minister for the Economy, Enterprise and Strategic Projects Silvio Schembri said the scheme is designed to ensure economic growth translates into improved conditions for workers while supporting business investment and retention

remain a key source of employment and income. He added that the wage-linked mechanism is intended to encourage firms to retain staff while increasing productivity.

The programme will be administered by Malta Enterprise. Chief

Executive Officer George Gregory said the updated scheme reflects evolving business needs and builds on previous uptake levels.

According to Malta Enterprise, more than 14,000 applications have been approved over the past three years, with over €140 million

in assistance provided to businesses across Malta and Gozo.

Officials said the redesigned scheme places stronger emphasis on wage growth as part of a broader effort to support sustainable business development and employee retention.

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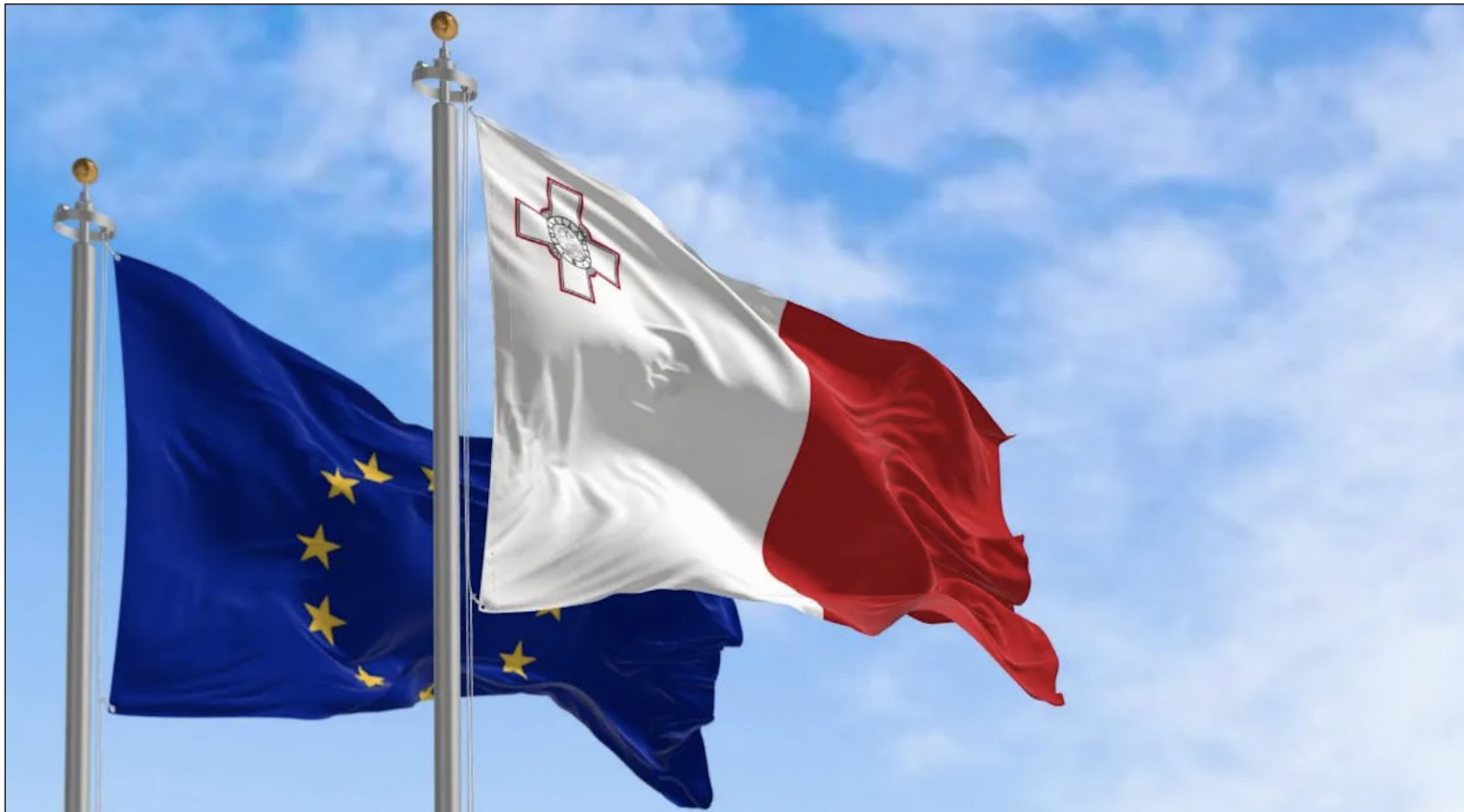
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# Raising Gozo's profile on the European and International stage



**Angele Xerri Agius,**  
EU, International  
Affairs and Policy  
Coordination  
Directorate

IN an increasingly interconnected world, Gozo cannot afford to be a passive observer. Its voice must be heard at European and on the international level. However, too often, smaller regions are treated as afterthoughts in policymaking frameworks, designed with continental realities in mind. Therefore, Gozo's challenges — double insularity, limited connectivity, small market size — are not anomalies. They are shared by island and peripheral regions across the continent. Nonetheless, for small island

regions like Gozo, decisions taken in Brussels or Strasbourg are not distant debates; they shape daily life, from the cost of goods and transport links to economic opportunity and climate resilience. Thus, the difference lies in whether these realities are acknowledged early enough in the policy process to make a meaningful difference.

This is where strategic engagement becomes essential. Within the Ministry for Gozo and Planning, the EU, International Affairs and Policy Coordination Directorate (EU-IAPCD) plays a role that is both technical and deeply political in the best sense of the word: it ensures that Gozo is present where decisions are shaped, not merely where they are implemented. Representation is not a symbolic exercise; it is the difference between adapting to policy and helping design it.

Participation in European networks such as the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), the Greening the Islands Foundation, EU Regions Week, and the European Regions Research and Innova-

tion Network (ERRIN) is not about ticking diplomatic boxes. These platforms are where alliances are built, common positions are forged, and influence is exercised. They allow regions like Gozo to speak collectively, amplifying concerns that might otherwise be too easily overlooked.

Consider the role of the CPMR in particular. It operates as both a think tank and an advocacy platform, translating regional concerns into concrete policy proposals. Through joint position papers and direct engagement with EU institutions, it shapes debates on funding, connectivity, and development strategies. For Gozo, being part of this conversation means standing alongside regions that understand the practical implications of geography — where a missed ferry or a delayed shipment is not an inconvenience but a structural constraint.

But influence does not happen by accident. Every intervention at a European forum is underpinned by meticulous preparation: policy analysis, strategic briefs, and carefully crafted positions that align immediate

concerns with long-term development goals. This behind-the-scenes work ensures that when Gozo speaks, it does so with clarity and credibility — and, crucially, that it is heard.

Equally important is anticipation. Monitoring emerging EU policies allows Gozo to engage early, shaping discussions before they harden into decisions. In a system as complex as the European Union, timing is often as important as substance. Reacting late means negotiating from a position of disadvantage; engaging early creates space to influence outcomes.

The recent Political Bureau meeting of the CPMR in Nicosia underscored this reality. Discussions on connectivity, the EU budget, and the future strategy for islands are not distant policy themes — they are central to Gozo's future. By contributing to the CPMR's policy position on transport, particularly in advocating for stronger allocation of Connecting Europe Facility funds to civilian transport, the Ministry ensured that island realities were reflected in the broader European conversation.

This kind of engagement matters because policy is never neutral. A transport framework designed without considering islands risks reinforcing isolation. A funding model that ignores scale can inadvertently penalise smaller regions. A climate strategy that overlooks territorial diversity may fail those most exposed to environmental change.

The metaphor is simple but accurate: European policies cannot be one-size-fits-all. Giving every region the same shoes without checking if they fit does not create fairness — it creates imbalance. For Gozo, the path forward is clear. Continued, active participation in European and international networks is not optional; it is essential.

It is how the island safeguards its interests, contributes to collective solutions, and ensures that its realities are understood rather than assumed. In the end, the measure of effective representation is not visibility alone, but impact. Gozo's voice must not only be present — it must help shape the conversation.

The new camps will take place in Fgura from 29 June to 4 July, and in Gozo from 6 to 8 July, continuing a project that has become a structured and strategic point in the international expansion of the Milan Junior Camp programme



## Milan Camp returns to Gozo for a third time

AC Milan is proud to announce the return of the Milan Camp to Malta in 2026, reaffirming its commitment to youth football development and its strong connection with the local community. Following the success of the 2024 and 2025 editions which involved more than 200 young players, the Club has renewed its collaboration with G&C Football Management, a key partner in the growth of Maltese football. The new camps will take place in Fgura from 29 June to 4 July, and in Gozo from 6 to 8 July, continuing a project that has become a structured and strategic point in the international expansion of the Milan Junior Camp programme.

The camps are open to boys and girls aged 5 to 17, who will train according to AC Milan's technical methodology. The programme is designed to develop both individual and collective skills, contribute to raising the overall quality of the local football movement and help identify promising young talents. Participants will be guided by an official AC

Milan coach supported by a qualified team. Technical coordination will be ensured by a Technical Director holding a UEFA A/Pro licence and boasting extensive experience in the Club's youth and international programmes. The staff will also include a specialist goalkeeping coach and UEFA-licensed coaches dedicated to applying the AC Milan Method.

The training pathway will place particular emphasis on technical development, tactical understanding and age-appropriate physical preparation, alongside the transmission of the Club's core values – respect, passion, team spirit and determination – with the aim of strengthening both a sense of belonging and ties to the local community. The renewal of the project for 2026 underlines the shared desire to deliver a high-level educational experience and make a tangible contribution to the future of football in Malta.

Daniele Massaro, Brand Ambassador of AC Milan, commented: "The return of the

Milan Camp project in Malta in 2026 is a concrete sign of the continuity and solidity of the work we are carrying out in this area. The previous editions showed us just how much enthusiasm and passion there is among young Maltese players. With Milan Camp, we want to offer not only a high-level technical experience, but also to pass on the values that have always defined our Club. Investing in young people and in coach education means making a real contribution to the growth and future of local football."

Claude Chetcuti and Giuseppe Cristaldi, partners at G&C Football Management, added: "We are delighted to bring the Milan Camp to Malta once again. This collaboration will offer young Maltese players an international-level training experience, while also supporting the development of local coaches through a shared methodology. Together, we will build even stronger foundations for the future of football in Malta."



# 100 years of Turandot – Public dialogue at Il-Ħaġar

THE creatives behind The Classique Foundation's new production of Giacomo Puccini's Turandot,

which will be staged at Teatru Astra on Saturday 30 May 2026, will share insights into this masterpiece during a public dialogue to be held at Il-Ħaġar Museum on Saturday 16 May at 11:00, a fortnight before the opera night.

The speakers on the panel will be the production's musical director Joseph Debrincat, artistic director Salvo Dolce, choirmaster and répétiteur Francis Camilleri, and designer Matteo Capobianco. The

moderator will be George P. Cassar.

Admission to this public dialogue is free, but seat reservations are recommended. To reserve your seat, please send an email to [events@heartofgozo.org.mt](mailto:events@heartofgozo.org.mt).

This production of Turandot is being staged to celebrate the centenary of its world premiere on 25 April 1926 at Teatro alla Scala.

*The very last few tickets for the opera night on 30 May 2026 are available at: <https://teatruastra.org.mt/events/2026/turandot>.*





— INSIGHTS —

## PUCCINI'S TURANDOT

*Public Dialogue*

**Joseph Debrincat** (*Musical Director*)

**Francis Camilleri** (*Choirmaster and Répétiteur*)

**Matteo Capobianco** (*Designer*)

**Salvo Dolce** (*Director*)

**George P. Cassar** (*Moderator*)

MNARJA PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY

# BIG BAND ADVENTURES



SPECIAL GUEST SINGERS  
SYNCHRONISED FIREWORKS

**CONDUCTED BY**  
**MRO JOSEPH GRECH**

**11.06.2026**  
**AT 9.00PM**

LOCATION  
ST PETER & ST PAUL'S SQUARE,  
NADUR



Athletes from 30 countries arrived for a weekend built together with world championship racing in mind, and an even stronger emphasis on open participation in a setting like no other

# Gozo get-together for the 2026 XTERRA Trail Run World Championship

THE 17th XTERRA Trail Run World Championship brought the global trail running community to Gozo on May 9, 2026, for the culmination of the XTERRA Trail Run World Series along the cliff-top edges of Malta's island of adventure.

Athletes from 30 countries arrived for a weekend built together with world championship racing in mind, and an even stronger emphasis on open participation in a setting like no other. France and Germany brought the largest international contingents, while runners also qualified and travelled from Italy, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Costa Rica, Colombia, South Africa, China, Hong Kong, Japan, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, French Polynesia, and beyond.

World Championship titles were awarded across the 50K Trail Marathon and 21K Trail Half Marathon. French athletes Severine Guerif and Benjamin Berkoukchi swept the overall Trail Half Marathon wins, while

Sebastien Carabin of Belgium and Malta-based Jemima Farley, originally from the UK, topped the Trail Marathon. From 19-year-old Yiu Yiu of Hong Kong to 79-year-old Eric Winkelmann of Switzerland, age-group champions across the field earned their place in XTERRA history, with the full list soon to be added to the official XTERRA Trail Run Champions archive.

## Built Around Gozo

Local crews, volunteers, partners, international staff, builders, technicians, and the XTERRA Malta team worked together to create a venue built for a full experience. Opening ceremonies, awards, food, drinks, music, exhibits, shopping, and lounge areas all came together to give athletes, families, supporters, and locals a place to gather.

Our Lady of Loreto Parish Church rising above Ghajnsielem all became part of the weekend. The island gave the championship something different from its previous homes at Kualoa Ranch, Maui, Sugarloaf Mountain, and

## XTERRA TRAIL RUN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Gozo Island, Malta  
May 9th, 2026

### Trail Marathon

Trail Run



51K

1200m

Trail Run World Series



Air Temp.  
22°

111 Race Participants

80 Male

31 Female

### Heroes of the day



Fastest Uphill

CARABIN Sebastien

00:03:13



Fastest Flat

CARABIN Sebastien

00:01:51

Snowdonia, with ancient paths, exposed coastlines, wild valleys, limestone tracks, sandy sections, and villages that carry centuries of life. The Ġgantija temples, among the oldest freestanding stone structures in the world, added another layer of history to a route already tied closely to land and sea.

Jemima Farley said it best: "There really is just something special about the opportunity to race around an entire island." On Saturday, runners followed the cliffs above the Mediterranean, passed through villages, returned to the coast, and finished with families, supporters, and local crowds waiting for them.

## Around the Island, Around the World

The Open Trail Marathon, Open Trail Half Marathon, 12K Trail Run, and Friday's Community Coffee Run opened the trails to every kind of runner. Mikaela Borg, a Maltese resident and 30-34 age division World Champion, keeps the memory close by saying, "XTERRA Gozo has a

special place in my heart." Race Director Nathan Farrugia added, "Gozo is the perfect playground for nature-loving people."

The final images from the weekend show athletes looking out over the cliffs, supporters holding signs, runners laughing together and families relaxing in handcrafted lounge areas. Highlights from the weekend can be found on XTERRA Trail Run Instagram, as the XTERRA Trail Run World Series carries on toward its next stop with dreams of 2027 forming through their footsteps.

XTERRA extends its thanks to VisitMalta, the Ministry for Gozo and Planning, VisitGozo, Grenade, Oshee, Garmin, Cisk 00, X-Tribe, and Vistage Malta for their support, along with Minister for Gozo and Planning Clint Camilleri, Malta Tourism Authority CEO Carlo Micallef, the XTERRA Malta team, local crews, volunteers, and international staff whose work helped create a historic and culturally rich championship get-together in Gozo.

# Sunset Shearwater boat trips return to Gozo for summer

NATURE lovers and curious travellers are being invited to experience one of the Maltese Islands' most magical wildlife spectacles as BirdLife Malta brings back its popular Shearwater Boat Trips for summer 2026.

Taking place on selected evenings in June and July, the sunset excursions sail along the spectacular Ta' Ċenċ Cliffs in Gozo, offering passengers a rare opportunity to witness hundreds of Scopoli's Shearwaters gathering at sea before returning to their cliffside nests after sunset.

Often overlooked by visitors, this natural event is considered one of Malta's most remarkable wildlife experiences, combining dramatic coastal scenery, golden-hour views and unforgettable birdwatching moments.

Departing from the Ċirkewwa Comino Ferry Jetty, the trips take guests across calm evening waters towards the towering Ta' Ċenċ coastline, one of Gozo's most iconic natural landmarks.

As dusk approaches, flocks of Scopoli's Shearwaters, locally



Departing from the Ċirkewwa Comino Ferry Jetty, the trips take guests across calm evening waters towards the towering Ta' Ċenċ coastline, one of Gozo's most iconic natural landmarks

known as "Ċief", can be seen rafting together on the sea surface before flying back to their nesting sites hidden within the cliffs. The sight and sound of the birds gliding across the darkening

sky creates a truly atmospheric experience for photographers, families and nature enthusiasts alike. The trips are designed to be relaxed and accessible, making them ideal for visitors look-

ing to explore a different side of Malta beyond beaches and historic sites.

#### Boat trip dates

The sunset excursions will take

place on the following dates:

- 11, 18 and 19 June 2026
- 9, 16 and 17 July 2026

Passengers are asked to arrive at 6:30pm for a 7pm departure. Boats are expected to return to Ċirkewwa at approximately 9pm.

#### Ticket prices

Adults: €20

Children aged 12 and under: €10

Places are limited on each trip and bookings are being accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

Tickets must be booked online in advance.

After booking, passengers will receive an automatic confirmation email, which should be presented on the day of the trip.

Visitors planning a summer holiday in Malta or Gozo are encouraged to reserve early, as the excursions regularly attract strong interest from both locals and tourists seeking memorable eco-tourism experiences.

# President marks official visit to the Gozo sites of the Malta Biennale 2026

PRESIDENT of Malta, Myriam Spiteri Debono, made an official visit to the three Gozo sites where the international exhibition of the Malta Biennale is being held, specifically to the Cultural Centre at Ċittadella, Ġgantija Archaeological Park and Ta' Kola Windmill in Xaghra.

The President of Malta has given her patronage to the second edition of the contemporary art platform, thereby sealing her support from the inaugural edition, which was launched in 2024. Malta Biennale 2026 runs till May 29th, at 11 Heritage Malta historical sites and museums across Malta and Gozo. This marks the second official visit by the President of Malta who, last month, toured the Grand Master's Palace in Valletta and the Birgu Old Armoury in Vittoriosa.

The President was accompanied by the President of the Malta Biennale 2026 and Chairman of Heritage Malta, Mario Cutajar, together with the members of

the core team. During the visit, the President was given an overview of the artists exhibiting their work in the Gozo sites, together with an explanation of how the selected works dialogue with the collections and with the history of place, thereby bridging the past and the present, and connecting cultural heritage with contemporary art.

There are over 130 artists participating in the Malta Biennale 2026 through the international exhibition, which has been curated by Artistic Director Rosa Martínez, and through the national and thematic pavilions which can be experienced at Fort St Elmo, the Birgu Old Armoury and at MUŻA, the National Community Art Museum.

The exhibitions are accompanied by a strong public programme, which includes a series of satellite events that activate this year's Biennale sites and locations further, by engaging with myriad and diverse audiences of all ages



The President was accompanied by the President of the Malta Biennale 2026 and Chairman of Heritage Malta, Mario Cutajar

and backgrounds. The full schedule of exhibitions, participating artists, pavilions, events in the public programme and satellite events can be accessed via [malta-biennale.art](http://malta-biennale.art).

The official closing ceremony of the Malta Biennale 2026 will be held at Fort St Elmo, in Valletta.

During the ceremony, the final recipient of the Maltese Falcon – the Malta Biennale People's Choice award – will be announced. The voting for the award took place across a whole month and closed last Sunday.

Tickets for the Biennale are available for purchase via the

website, from where visitors can also download the official Guidebook for free, in order to aid and enhance their visit, and purchase the Malta Biennale 2026 Catalogue, which is a comprehensive resumé of all the artists, pavilions and events that have formed part of this year's edition.

## Wild fennel and hazelnut pesto



*Earthy, aromatic, and deeply Mediterranean, this wild fennel and hazelnut pesto is one of the recipes from Daniel Pisani's new book, The Mediterranean Island Kitchen, capturing island simplicity, seasonal foraging and the nourishing flavours of traditional vegetarian cooking*

### INGREDIENTS

200g roasted hazelnuts  
100ml olive oil  
80g wild fennel (if not available, you may use fennel bulb fronds)  
Juice of half a lemon  
1/2 tsp sea salt

### METHOD

1. Start by boiling the wild fennel in salted water for around 10 minutes.
2. Drain the fennel and rinse with cold water.
3. Leave the fennel in a bowl of water for around 2 hours to soften it, but this step is optional.
4. In a blender or food processor blend all the ingredients together to produce a smooth pesto.
5. Store some jars of this in the freezer to use later or keep up to a week in the fridge.
6. Use this as a dip with some bread or as a sauce for pasta!



GOVERNMENT OF MALTA  
MINISTRY FOR GOZO  
AND PLANNING

# Spring

TIME

## IN GOZO

10 APRIL - 14 JUNE 2026



FOR PROGRAMME  
SCAN QR CODE