Minister launches Medicines Authority activity stand

Addressing a press conference at the Malta Life Sciences Centre, which is to host the new premises of the Medicines Authority, Minister for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties Helena Dalli commended the Malta Medicines Authority for its involvement in the Medical School Conference which will be held between 3 and 5 December.

Minister Dalli stated that this conference represents a good platform where professional relationships can be strengthened, as well as providing an excellent opportunity for scientific networking.

The theme of the Medicines Authority Activity Stand is 'Medicines: Safety and Access'. Minister Dalli emphasised how the safety of medicines is a well-established priority area for the Medicines Authority, where safe production standards and the safe usage of medicinal products still remain one of the chief concerns of the Medicines Authority.

Minister Dalli spoke about the Medicines Authority's achievements in increasing the accessibility of medicinal products. This is being done in joint collaboration with the consumer entity, MCCAA, and has provided a number of demonstrable benefits for the consumer, such as the numerous price reductions of medicines announced over the past 24 months.

Dr Dalli said that, as a result of third-country inspections in the area of EU Good Manufacturing Practice, which the Authority carried out in a short span of time, ten of these inspections resulted in an income of over

Helena Dalli

€200,000 from outside Europe.

Dr Dalli also stated that the decision to relocate the Medicines Authority to the Malta Life Sciences Centre is an example of active listening, since the relocation was taken following a recommendation by the relevant stakeholders and with the support of the Ministry for Social Dialogue.

"The strategic and scientific environment of the Malta Life Science Centre provides the Authority with a workplace comparable to that of other European agencies in other European countries," added Dr Dalli.

The press conference also marked the introduction of a new corporate image and branding for the Medicines Authority.

Accompanied by the Medicines Authority Chairman Professor Anthony Serracino Inglott, Dr Dalli was shown around the new floors of the Life Science Centre.

The Malta Philharmonic Orchestra performs 20-year-old's Stabat Mater

The much-awaited Mdina Cathedral Contemporary Art Biennale 2015 was officially launched last evening with Euchar Gravina's *Stabat Mater*, performed by the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra and conducted by Christopher Muscat.

The concert forms part of the special jury prize awarded to Euchar Gravina as the recipient of the APS Bank 2012 National Music Competition. The international jury was fascinated by the work presented by Mr Gravina and were further impressed when they found out that he was only 17 years old at the time of entry.

Furthermore, Gravina's *Stabat Mater* will be released as an album after having been professionally recorded by Studio 7 under the GEGA New label.

"I still remember being informed about the prize very clearly. It is an honour to have my work interpreted by the MPO at the Mdina Cathedral in front of so many dignitaries and guests - a feeling that I cannot describe. This was an exceptional experience which I will treasure for the rest my life. As an artist, I would like to thank APS Bank for their continuous contribution to culture and strong belief in local talent," said Mr Gravina.

APS Bank Chairman, EP Delia said that "Euchar Gravina's *Stabat Mater* may be considered 'unique' from several perspectives. It is the final composition of a three-year cycle presenting the works submitted for the APS Bank 2012 Competition for Maltese Composers. This concert complements other initiatives which APS Bank has supported throughout 2015."

The premiere of Euchar Gravina's *Stabat Mater*, held under the patronage of His Lordship Mgr Mario Grech, Bishop of Gozo, also included the participation of soprano Andriana Yordanova and the *Coro Bel Canto* directed by Hermann Farrugia Frantz.

Simon Busuttil joins MPs from around world to sign Vancouver Declaration on Diabetes

Members of Parliament from more than 60 countries met in Vancouver to discuss the human, social and economic cost of diabetes. At the end of the conference, they adopted a declaration calling on tougher action against the epidemic that affects some 440 million people around the world.

"If diabetes was a country, it would be the country with the third-largest population in the world," one speaker told the Vancouver conference. In Malta, diabetes afflicts some 10 per cent of the population, whereas countless others are not yet aware that they are diabetic and still need to test themselves. "We owe it to people with diabetes to give them the best treatment possible and to help prevent it in other cases," PN Leader Simon Busuttil told the conference in Vancouver.

The Vancouver Declaration commits signatories to prioritise the United National Global Health Targets for diabetes to improve prevention, diagnosis and treatment in order to reduce the number of people with diabetes and the expensive and unnecessary complications and early deaths of those with the condition.

The parliamentarians were brought together by the International Diabetes Federation (IDF). MPs Clyde Puli (PN) and Godfrey Farrugia (PL) also participated in the conference. Dr Farrugia presented a country report on the state of play in Malta on diabetes.

15,000 Maltese patients treated in hospitals in England in last 40 years – President

Malta is commemorating the 40th anniversary of the UK-Malta reciprocal health agreement which gives hope to so many Maltese people via treatment in London hospitals, President Marie Louise Coleiro Preca said on Tuesday night.

Speaking at a reception organised by the Malta High Commission to celebrate the event, Dr Coleiro Preca said that earlier this year, the Malta Community Chest Fund was established as a Foundation, with the aim of continuing to provide financial and material assistance, as well as professional support, to people in need, in order to improve quality of life and care of individuals and society in general.

"This year, I also launched the President's Trust with the aim of supporting vulnerable young people who are unemployed or struggling at school, and are at risk of social exclusion.

"The UK-Malta bilateral health agreement has saved many lives of Maltese citizens and provided a better quality of life, at a time when people are most vulnerable. Since 1975, it is estimated that around 15,000 Maltese patients have benefited from this agreement.

"My heartfelt gratitude goes to you, the many doctors, specialists and health care teams that provide brilliant treatment and care in the UK to our dear Maltese patients.

"I am sure you appreciate that, while treatment is being offered for free, patients travelling to the UK encounter difficulties, for example to fund travel for anyone accompanying them. I have seen first-hand the trauma these people go through, some travelling to the UK for the first time, some experiencing language barriers, the need for accommodation, sometimes over a long period of time, and others not being able to cope with the situation.

"Besides supporting patients going abroad for treatment, the Malta Community Chest Fund provides financial, material and professional support to people experiencing difficulties because of severe chronic illness, including cancer, as well as to people with disability, people in poverty, unemployed or having no resources.

"It is through the spirit of solidarity that we can support patients and their families in their moment of need," the President said.

MATTHEW AQUILINA

On the 20th anniversary of your tragic and mysterious disappearance together with the other passengers of the **Piper Lance 9H-ABU**

We miss you so much dearest Matthew,
love Mama, Papa,
Daniel & Adrienne, Gillian & Alfio,
Emma, Sophie, Luisa, Anna, Nino,
Mattia, Luca, Nanna, Nannu, family and friends.

Please remember Matthew in your thoughts and prayers.