

(JUST)

From: (JUST)
Sent: jeudi 26 avril 2018 16:18
To: (JUST); (JUST)
Subject: FW: Meeting with the MT Ambassador/Flash

From: (JUST)
Sent: Thursday, April 26, 2018 3:25 PM
To: FONSECA MORILLO Francisco (JUST); JOUR-SCHROEDER Alexandra (JUST); (JUST); (JUST); (JUST)
Cc: CRABIT Emmanuel (JUST); (JUST); (JUST)
Subject: Meeting with the MT Ambassador/Flash

Summary

On Tuesday 24 April 2018, following a request from the MT PermRep a meeting took place in DG JUST. The meeting was attended by MT Ambassador Ms M. Bonicci and (JUST), legal advisor and from the COM by DDG JUST, F. Fonseca Morillo, Director JUST C, E. Crabit, (JUST) and (JUST). The meeting focused on issues mostly related to the European Semester: Anti Money Laundering (AML), corruption and the Citizenship by Investment Program. As regards corruption, DDG JUST made it clear from the beginning that this issue falls under the responsibility of DG HOME which the MT authorities should also meet. MT authorities enquired on the further intentions of COM after the publication of the MT Country report in early March.

In detail

MT Ambassador explained that she would like to understand the future intentions of the COM as regards the developments in the European Semester and to help COM avoiding misunderstandings as regards some issues which in view of the MT authorities were not very clearly presented in the Country Report: Anti Money Laundering (AML), the Citizenship by Investment Program and corruption. The Ambassador would also like the COM to help MT authorities to improve the situation in these areas by indicating with precise details which are the main remedies to the existing weaknesses. The questions raised were e.g. whether the COM considers that the institutional setting would need improvement or if the relevant services and the FIAU (Financial Intelligence Analysis Unit) in particular were understaffed. The MT authorities would also like to know when the report on national schemes granting EU citizenship to investors will be adopted and if it will be as a draft sent for comments to the Member States prior to publication.

The Ambassador also stated that perceptions as regards the situation in Malta could be misleading. She gave the example of FIAU which is exposed to constant media reporting. However, FIAU being under rules of strict confidentiality in order to effectively carry out its duties, is not able to defend itself against media criticism.

As regards the Citizenship by Investment Program, the Ambassador insisted that the main reason why MT wants to attract foreign investors is not the "price" they pay but the willingness of MT to attract highly qualified investors with entrepreneurial spirit who 'love Malta' and reside in the island with their families. She also stressed that this program is not the main driver of MT's economic growth.

The Ambassador then referred also to the gender gap pay which is mainly due to the fact that women enter the labour market after having left it for many years mainly for raising their children. For this reason they often occupy lower positions and therefore receive lower pay.

DDG while praising MT economic performance as already highlighted in the CR, responded that at this stage the work on the preparation of the CSRs (Country Specific Recommendations – to be adopted on 23 May 2018) is confidential. However, any recommendation will not come as a surprise to MT; all the issues (effectiveness of the justice system, AML, the Citizenship by Investment Program and corruption) are already analysed in the 2018 Country Report. Corruption falling under the responsibility of DG HOME, MT should meet with this DG.

As regards AML, OUT OF SCOPE

As regards the Citizenship by Investment Program, DDG stressed the importance of a close link with the MS concerned and of an effective residence. As agreed, MS will be consulted on the facts and the report under preparation by COM should be issued in some months.

As regards the efficiency of the justice system, OUT OF SCOPE

As regards the gender gap pay, OUT OF SCOPE

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