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DR ARNOLD CASSOLA (right), international affairs spokesman of *Alternativa Demokratika*, introducing members of the executive committee of the Federation of the European Greens to President Tabone, on whom they paid a courtesy call at San Anton Palace yesterday morning. The delegation, which includes Euro MPs Brigitte Ernst and Marie Christine Aulas, is in Malta on a fact-finding mission. On Friday they met a delegation from AD led by its chairman, Dr Wenzu Mintoff. Their talks centred on further collaboration between the two sides, local councils, the electoral system and the media

Diver dead, two missing off Qawra

by Joanne Cocks

SANDRO CARUANA, a 26-year-old doctor from Sliema, died tragically while diving off Qawra Point yesterday afternoon.

Another two divers, Dr Franklin Polidano of Msida and Drydocks worker Michael Camilleri of Sliema are still missing.

The three divers, aged between 20 and 30, went diving with another two off Ta' Fra Ben at around 3.30 p.m. carrying 15-litre cylinders.

But the three never surfaced and the other two divers, Julian Muscat and Warren Scicluna, reported the case to the police at around 5 p.m.

Members of the police rescue team, the Armed Forces and the St John Ambulance Brigade started a search which took them 300 metres out from shore and in waters 35 metres deep.

Dr Caruana's corpse surfaced at around 5.20 p.m. and his body was identified at 7.10 p.m.



ARMED FORCES personnel returning yesterday evening after a fruitless search for the two missing divers

The circumstances of the tragedy were not immediately known but sources said the divers could have been caught in a cave, around which the search was also centred.

The search was called off at 7.15 p.m. but will resume this morning.

On site at Qawra were Assistant Police Commissioner Maurice Borg and Superintendent Angelo Farrugia.

Lm5 million optic fibre submarine cable between Malta and Sicily

by a Staff Reporter

AN OPTIC FIBRE submarine cable between Malta and Sicily is expected to be installed next year, Communications Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said yesterday.

The Lm5 million contract was signed in Rome on Friday between Telemalta Corporation, Iritel, the entity responsible for telecommunications in Italy and the Italian supply company Maristel.

The signing ceremony was presided over by Dr Zammit Dimech who stopped in Rome on his way from Buenos Aires, where he attended the first World Telecommunications Development Conference.

Project expenses for the submarine cable will be shared between Telemalta and Iritel and will cover all the equipment and training of Telemalta personnel.

The cable is being laid between St George's Bay and Catania: a length of 240 km. It will then also be connected to the focal point of international submarine cables at Palermo.

Dr Zammit Dimech said the cable project between the two countries "is an integral part of Malta's plans to modernise its telecommunications facilities".

Through the project the national fully-digital network will be linked with the international digital system.

Present capacity between Malta and Italy consists of a 600-channel analogue link between Naxxar and Monte Lauro and a submarine link between Malta and Pozzallo which has been in operation - although its use has been limited - since 1955.

The new system will provide more than 7,000 digital voice quality telephone circuits, with a better quality of international transmission facilities.

It will also make possible clear transmission of data and various services that will be made available and can be upgraded whenever necessary.

Maristel, represented in Malta by the Gasan Group, is an experienced company in this field. It was selected following a joint international call for tenders by Telemalta and Iritel from cable suppliers last year.

The laying of the equipment starts in three months' time and by then the cable would have been built and a marine survey carried out.

Dr Zammit Dimech added that besides the submarine cable project, plans are being drawn up for the setting up of a second international telephone exchange which is expected to start operating by the end of next year. The new exchange will integrate the facility known as Signalling No 7, serving as a platform for the eventual introduction of new services.

A new satellite Intelsat Standard A earth station is also planned and will be in operation in 1996, enabling the overall upgrading of Malta's satellite communication facilities.

Dr Zammit Dimech also referred to his participation at the World Telecommunication Development Conference organised by the International Telecommunications Union.

He said the conference was of strategic importance to Malta as it was presented as a role model of rapid telecommunications infrastructural development. Malta was featured prominently in two important documents presented to the conference as guidance tools.

Malta, which will also be hosting the second conference in 1988, has a permanent seat on the telecommunications advisory board which is a major contributor to the conference.

Malta may be in EU by 1996 - Klepsch

MEMBERSHIP negotiations between Malta and the European Union should not take long to complete, the president of the European Parliament, Dr Egon Klepsch, said yesterday.

The main points have already been discussed and there is no real opposition to accepting Malta as a member, he said before leaving yesterday after a short visit.

But Dr Klepsch, who said that Malta may already be a member before the 1996 intergovernmental conference on institutional change, excluded the possibility that it would attend the conference as an observer.

He conceded however that if a decision would have been taken on Malta's membership by then, some special status may be arranged for it to attend.

Foreign Minister Guido de Marco said last month that Malta was hoping to become a member before 1996. Failing completion of the negotiations - which the government believes should start without any further delay - Malta could ask to attend as an observer.

Dr Klepsch, who came to Malta on Friday to be made a Companion of Honour in the National Order of Merit by President Tabone, also met the prime minister and addressed the students' mini-European assembly organised by the National Student Travel Foundation in Valletta.

Before leaving yesterday he presented the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Dr Lawrence Gonzi, with a medal of the European Parliament.



DR EGON KLEPSCH entering the hall at the Police Academy in Fort St Elmo, Valletta, on Friday to deliver the keynote address during the fifth session of the NSTF Mini-European Assembly. Professor Josef Bonnici, Parliamentary Secretary for Finance and a member of the Maltese delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, chaired the session. Also on the panel were two other members of the delegation, Dr Joe Psaila Savona and Mr Richard Muscat, Youth Minister Michael Frendo and NSTF secretary general Francis Stivala. The team from De La Salle College, representing Poland, presented the report on: "The Process of Priority in view of the new EU Enlargement"; and the team from the University Foundation Studies course, representing Italy, presented the resolution.

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