

## **PETITION REGARDING THE LOSS OF QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THE MALTESE**

**We, the Maltese and Gozitan Citizens and Residents of this country, protest about:**

- The **unrestrained building taking place in Malta** that politicians, with lack of vision and total short-sightedness are considering progress. This is resulting in villages being ruined by the construction of **ugly buildings** in their cores, with an upheaval for the inhabitants and pressure on the infrastructure. **The quality of our lives is deteriorating**, to the point that in every area of Malta houses architectural and historic value are constantly being demolished. New apartment blocks are being built without considering the need for light and air or density of population, while commercial developments are destroying the peace of residential areas. Overnight, people find themselves living in a building site and having to spend a long time living with **unacceptable levels of noise and dust**, as well as damage to their homes, danger to their health and sometimes even to their lives. This is contributing to many health problems, including **the highest rate of asthma among children** in Mediterranean countries.
- The proposition that land of **ecological and archaeological value is to be used for the development of golf courses** and other construction for the benefit of the few and a loss for the whole country. **More virgin land is now earmarked for development**, further reducing what little countryside we have. Public access to the countryside and foreshore is being blocked. This not only ruins our landscapes and enjoyment thereof but **threatens rare species of flora and fauna (biodiversity) and destroys our natural resources**.
- The **pollution of the sea** and uncontrolled spread of fish farms that are having negative effects on the sea-life as well as impact on our precious water resources; reduction of the recreational value of the beaches and all this with bad effects on tourism.
- **Tourism**, the mainstay of the economy, **is suffering** during the general degradation of our surroundings, so much that job losses in this sector as well as closure of related establishments are on the increase.

**For this reason, we are demanding:**

- There should not **even be a consideration of construction outside the Development Zones**. Other developments should be subject to a serious study on the sustainable construction needs of the nation.
- **Village and town cores** which reflect our cultural heritage and way of life **should be protected from development and rehabilitated**. Gradual dismantling of outdated rent laws has to commence.
- **MEPA and its personnel should REALLY be autonomous and accountable**. MEPA regulations should be reviewed to give the citizen his full rights of information, representation and protection.
- A law on total **transparency in the finances of political parties** and limits to the amount of donations that one can make to the same parties should be passed.
- The necessary investment should be made to ensure **enforcement of all laws regarding development and the environment**. There should also be an annual report on such law enforcement.
- It should be recognised that the **environment is a national problem/issue** and does not belong to partisan politics. All political parties should unite on the environmental front and take widespread positive steps to the benefit of the public in general.

It is a fact that difficult decisions need to be taken and that these result in a loss of votes for any governing party. Therefore, we ask that the environment is removed from the political scene and is treated as a national subject.

Such a mature decision can only foster trust in the political class and will be a huge step forward in the quality of life and the local political scene.

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BICREF, BirdLife Malta, Flimkien ghal-Abmbjent Ahjar, Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna, Friends of the Earth, Gaia Foundation, Graffiti, Insalvaw il-Wied ta' Kalkara, Island Sanctuary Association, Kumitat għall-Harsien Rurali ta' Ghajn Tuffieha, Malta Geographical Society, MOAM, NatureTrust, Qui si-San Residents' Association, Ramblers Association, Save Wied Garnaw Action Group, The Archaeological Society

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