



**Restored and returned:** Three volumes of a national treasure – ‘Hortus Romanus’, a priceless collection of botanical engravings published between 1772 and 1793 – were returned to the National Library yesterday following a €9,000 restoration project carried out with the help of the Lions Club, which took it upon itself to spearhead the financing, through sponsors, of the restoration work. The National Library holds seven volumes of the collection and it is believed that no library in the world holds all eight. The other four volumes held by the library have already been restored  
*Photo Shirley Spiteri*

## BWSC contract

# Nationalist MP ‘sees nothing wrong in witnesses being summoned’ to PAC

FRANCESCA VELLA

In the latest development in the Delimara power station extension public procurement controversy, Nationalist MP Franco Debono has said he sees nothing wrong in witnesses being summoned before the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) to give evidence in its debate on the auditor general’s report.

And although government MPs on the Committee have refused PAC Chairman Labour MP Charles Mangion’s insistence that witnesses be summoned to answer the Committee’s questions, Dr Debono feels there

could be cause to summon even more witnesses than those being requested by the chair.

Speaking to this newspaper, Dr Debono said, “The auditor general presented a good and detailed report on the power station extension contract, and he enjoys the confidence and trust of both sides of the House. He is an officer of the House and his office must be respected by all. In fact, my comments in Parliament earlier this year on the issue were in line with and based upon the auditor’s findings.

*Continues on page 2*

# Sexual health policy to be published on Friday

STEPHEN CALLEJA

The much-awaited sexual health policy will see the light of day on Friday, *The Malta Independent on Sunday* has learnt.

After a number of postponements, ever since the government first indicated that there was an “urgent” need for such a policy 10 years ago, Health Minister Joe Cassar has brought all the stakeholders together to “put everything together”, sources told this newspaper.

“What will be presented on Friday is a policy, not a strategy,” sources said. “The strategy will be drawn up after the policy is discussed and accepted.”

Over the years, there have been a number of failed attempts to formulate a policy on this controversial subject, still considered to be taboo in certain quarters. At one point, former Social Policy Minister John Dalli had described it as a “hot potato” when he was questioned about the policy during a press conference.

On several occasions, there was talk that the policy had been finally drawn up, but there was always some issue that ultimately kept the government back from publishing it.

Now it seems that all the obstacles have been overcome and even the Church has apparently accepted that the matter cannot continue to be postponed, considering the way society has evolved over the past years.

At one point, there were reports that every mention of the word

“condoms” had been removed from one of the drafts.

The latest statistics show that up to 75 per cent of the Maltese have never used a condom, which offers protection against sexually transmitted diseases. Seventy per cent of the 14,000 people who visited the genito-urinary clinic at Boffa Hospital between 2000 and 2008 said they had never used condoms.

The World Health Organisation estimates that Malta could have a potential 13,000 people who suffer from STDs each year.

Every year for more than a decade, more than 200 Maltese girls gave birth before they were 20. At more or less five per cent of the total number of births per year, the average is among the highest in the European Union.

The sexual health policy to be published on Friday will cover all possible areas – education, health (mental and physical), cultural perspectives, social issues and the role of the media, among other subjects.

*scalleja@independent.com.mt*

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