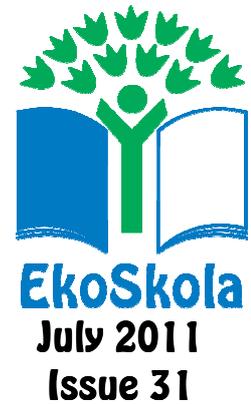


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Special Edition:

The 7th EkoSkola Parliamentary Session



The EkoSkola Parliament session is a yearly event aimed at providing students participating in the EkoSkola programme an opportunity to meet Members of Parliament and discuss with them their environmental concerns. This year's session, held on the 8th of June, was rendered more special as this year marks the Parliament's 90th anniversary of its foundation. Ninety students from 45 different schools accompanied by 19 Members of Parliament attended this seventh edition of the EkoSkola Parliament. During the session students shared their experience of Climate Change projects that they conducted in their community as part of the HSBC Eco-Schools Climate Initiative.

Following the reciting of the Opening Prayer by Martha Maria Mangani and



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Valletta VLT1000
<http://www.naturetrustmalta.org/>



Kelsey Fenech from St Thomas More College, Fgura Primary B, the Hon. Mr Speaker, Dr Michael Frendo, welcomed all those present and praised the students for their continuous commitment towards the environment. Prof Paul Pace, the National EkoSkola Co-ordinator, then introduced this year's theme. Hon. Mr Speaker then invited Owen Bonnici and Brandon Fenech from St Thomas More, Boys Secondary School, Paola, to read the EkoSkola Parliament Motion. At the end of the motion, permission was granted to table a copy of all the interventions presented by the students during the session.



The Hon Mr Speaker, Dr Michael Frendo and Prof Paul Pace, National EkoSkola Co-ordinator

After Maya Galea and Gabrielle Zarb from St Theresa College, Primary Sta Venera,

reported on their project **Better to light a Candle than to curse the Darkness**, the Hon. Dr Mario de Marco, Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism, the Environment and Culture, made his address. He invited the attendees to reflect about the environmental impact of their actions. Although everyone defines the environment from his/her perspective, the environment is what keeps us going. *"There are several things that we can do to safeguard it ... we just need to seek alternatives to our ways of life and actions."*



The Hon. Dr Mario de Marco, Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism, the Environment and Culture

Mariah Spiteri and Shaun Farrugia from Gozo College, Xewkija Primary, gave a summary of their school's project: **Informing the Community about Climate Change**. This was followed by an intervention made by



The Hon. Owen Bonnici, Opposition Spokesperson for Youth and Culture

the Hon. Owen Bonnici, Opposition Spokesperson for Youth & Culture. He compared the students' commitment towards the environment to the commitment our forefathers had towards our nation ... a commitment characterized by personal sacrifice. *"EkoSkola is generating a love towards our environment ... based on a vision that can be made possible only through an internal personal change"*.

Kieran Caruana and Timothy Farrugia from St Benedict College, Safi Primary, reported on their project entitled: **Recycled Greenhouse: a School Project for the Community**. This was followed by the presentation by Gerson Mifsud and Setera Farrugia, from St Margaret College, Kalkara Primary, about their school-community project: **Sustainable Garden**.



The Hon. George Pullicino, Minister for Resources and Rural Affairs

In his address, the Hon. George Pullicino, Minister for Resources and Rural Affairs, said that *"Through EkoSkola children are prompting politicians to be proactive and be on the frontline of our fight against the fear of change"*. On Hon. Pullicino's suggestion,



Observing a minute silence against animal cruelty and in support for those who work in animal welfare

Mr Speaker called for a minute silence against animal cruelty and in support for those who work in animal welfare ... following the appalling incidents of animal cruelty.

After Kelly Iles and Nicole Buttigieg from St Joseph School, Blata l-Bajda gave details of their project: **Enough for Everyone ... for all ages**, the Hon. Carmelo Abela, Opposition Spokesperson for Social Policy, addressed the House. While



The Hon. Carmelo Abela, Opposition Spokesperson for Social Policy

congratulating the students' commitment towards the climate change issue, he pointed out that "you are educating us as politicians and parents to respond to your concerns". He invited the House to commit to action on climate change without considering any other conflicting issues.

The report about St Benedict College, Zurrieq Primary's project: **Climate Challenge? Climb It!**, was read by Marienne Zammit and Andrea Bugeja. This intervention was followed by the address of the Hon. Dolores Cristina, Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family. She pointed out that the fact that this year's student

attendance was the highest ever is a sign of the students' interest

in environmental issues. "I am always interested and impressed by the students' creativity ... especially in the way schools opened to the community." She pointed out that the current National Curriculum Framework document is proposing the introduction of Education for Sustainable Development as a cross-curricular theme. She also thanked teachers and headteachers for supporting EkoSkola ... a programme that is extending the focus of education.



The Hon. Dolores Cristina, Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family



The Hon. Dr Justyne Caruana, Opposition Spokesperson for Family, Children and Persons with Disability

After Nicole Attard and Marija Scicluna from St Margaret College Girls' Secondary, Cospicua described their project: **A little thought for a better Community**, the Hon. Dr Justyne Caruana, Opposition spokesperson for Family, Children and Persons with Disability, made her address. She said that the EkoSkola programme is providing a voice for children that is clearly reaching members of parliament. "These children are today's citizens and they are giving us an example of active citizenship. They are the agents of change. We (MPs) should act on their concerns."

The Hon. Giovanna Debono, Minister for Gozo made her address after Nicole Debono and Matteo Piscopo from St Gorg Preca College, Floriana Primary described their project: **Promoting recycling to save the Planet**. She expressed her delight in meeting with EkoSkola students again. She pointed out that she had already met with student representatives from all EkoSkola schools in Gozo



*The Hon. Giovanna Debono,
Minister for Gozo*

in the environment ... and continue to draw our attention".

The final report about **Hooked on Energy** was read by Tiziana Bonavia and Marcella Bugeja from St Francis Secondary School, Sliema. This was followed by the address of the Hon. Dr Lawrence Gonzi, Prime Minister, who congratulated and appreciated the students' commitment to action. *"On these important themes for your careers and for your future, the Government and the Opposition will commit themselves; so that in the future you will find a better nation"*. Based on the premise that families deserve a good quality of life, the Prime Minister promised that he will be forwarding the copy of all the students' interventions to the Parliamentary Family Affairs



The Hon. Dr Lawrence Gonzi, Prime Minister

energy saving lighting. He then proposed the Motion for the approval of the House of Representatives. The Motion was unanimously adopted by all those present.

Once again the event proved to be a great experience for all those who attended. The EkoSkola Steering Committee would like to thank all those who made this experience possible particularly the Hon Mr Speaker, Dr Michael Frendo and his Office for granting us permission to use the premises.

This year's session was also reported in the media. You might want to watch the TVM news item on http://wwfw.youtube.com/watch?v=S8ACD_Mvbag&feature=related or Projectnews coverage of the event on:

<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=10150249611775559>

and had discussed how they are implementing Eco-Gozo targets. *"Their vision goes beyond the class and into the community. That is why we are supporting EkoSkola as a vehicle to achieving our Eco-Gozo vision"*.

The session continued with the report on the **Walking Bus Project** read by Darren Saliba and Kay Darmanin Farrell from St Gorg Preca College, Paola Primary A. The Hon Leo Brincat, Opposition spokesperson for the Environment, Sustainable Development & Climate Change, spoke next. He remarked that, unlike what happened in international debates about climate change, the student interventions evidenced a commitment to action. *"I have faith that you will be great leaders for tomorrow ... continue to generate interest*



*The Hon. Leo Brincat, Opposition
Spokesperson for the Environment,
Sustainable Development & Climate Change*

Committee. The Committee will then have the opportunity to analyse the reports, tease out relevant issues and implement them through national policies.

In his concluding speech, the Hon Mr Speaker, Dr Michael Frendo, commended the students for their level of preparation and the practical solutions they proposed. Following EkoSkola's commitment to action, he also promised that he will be approaching the Clerk of the House of Representatives to reduce energy consumption by switching off the Parliamentary Chamber when not in use and to change the Chamber's lighting to

Motion about EkoSkola presented to the House of Representatives



Mr. Speaker,

On behalf of my fellow students I wish to thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak again with our country's members of Parliament. We participate in an international programme which is spread over fifty countries, involving more than eleven million school children. The EkoSkola programme has locally been in vigour for the past nine years. Initially six schools started participating – now the total adds to one hundred and six schools, that is, over sixty percent of schools participating in this programme. Nineteen of them received the prestigious Green Flag, a clear sign of the hard work invested in improving the quality of life in our schools.

Every EkoSkola Parliament session is a special occasion for us. Yet, this year, it is even more so because Parliament is celebrating ninety years of service. Parliament is made of a group of deputies elected by the people to represent them, and thus has the power to legislate, that is, draw up, change and remove laws. It is then the judiciary, namely the courts, that apply the law on behalf of the state. The government, known as the executive, has the authority and responsibility to lead our country. Over these ninety years the Parliament has had an important role in the development of our country: from a colony to an independent country in 1964, then to a Republic in 1974 and a state in the European Union in 2004.

During these last seven years, we spoke to you about our contributions as citizens. During these years, we asked you to support our efforts in improving the quality of life in our country. We aired our opinions about important documents concerning the environment, we gave suggestions on how you could improve sustainable development and encouraged you to work together against Climate Change. It also appears that there were times when our ideas were the basis of laws passed by this Parliament. For this reason we feel that our contribution is adding to the glorious history of the Maltese Parliament.

This year, as part of the HSBC Eco-Schools Climate Initiative project, some schools received funding to undertake projects both in and with the community, mainly to instill awareness and responsibility towards Climate Change. We know that we did not cause this problem but we still feel that we need to do something for a better future. For this reason, we are again counting on you - as our representatives - to give us your support to reduce this problem in order to put our minds at rest about our future. I ask your permission, Mr Speaker, on behalf of my fellow students, to present a copy of all the interventions which will be made today on the table of Parliament.



The schools participating in the parliamentary session were:

- De La Salle Junior School
- De La Salle College secondary school
- Gozo College, Nadur Primary
- Gozo College, Qala Primary
- Gozo College, Sannat Primary
- Gozo College, Boys Secondary School, Victoria
- Gozo College, Xewkija Primary
- Maria Regina College, Mosta Primary A
- Maria Regina College, Mosta Boys' Secondary (Zokrija)
- Maria Regina College, Sta Venera Primary C
- San Andrea School, Mgarr
- San Anton School, Mgarr
- St. Augustine College, Pieta
- St. Benedict College, Kirkop Primary C
- St. Benedict College, Kirkop Boys' Secondary
- St. Benedict College, Mqabba Primary School C
- St. Benedict College, Qrendi Primary School C
- St. Benedict College, Safi Primary School C
- St. Benedict College, Tarxien Girls' Secondary
- St. Benedict College, Zurrieq Primary School C
- St. Clare College, Gzira Primary School C
- St. Clare College, Gzira Boys' Secondary School
- St. Clare College, San Gwann Primary B
- St. Edward's College, Cospicua
- St. Francis Secondary, Sliema
- St. Francis School, B'Kara
- St. Francis School, Cospicua
- St. Gorg Preca College, Floriana Primary
- St. Gorg Preca College, Hamrun Boys' Junior Lyceum
- St. Gorg Preca College, Paola Primary A
- St. Ignatius College, Zebbug Primary C
- St. Ignatius College, Siggiewi Primary
- St. Joseph School, Blata I-Bajda
- St. Joseph, Mater Boni Consilii School, Paola
- St. Margaret College, Cospicua Girls' Secondary School
- St. Margaret College, Kalkara Primary
- St. Margaret College, Xghajra Primary
- St. Michael School, St Venera
- St. Nicholas College, Rabat Girls' Secondary School
- St. Patricks Salesian School, Sliema
- St. Theresa College, B'Kara Primary C
- St. Thomas More College, Fgura Primary B
- St. Thomas More College, Paola Boys' Secondary School
- St. Thomas More College, Zejtun Primary A
- Stella Maris School, Balzan

If you would like to contribute to this newsletter please contact Prof Paul Pace, National EkoSkola Co-ordinator, on paul.j.pace@um.edu.mt