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Eleanor Scerri
Skrivan tal-Kamra



OFFICE OF THE
ATTORNEY GENERAL
MALTA


ANNUAL REPORT 2023







OFFICE OF THE
ATTORNEY GENERAL
MALTA

ANNUAL REPORT
2023

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MISSION STATEMENT


The Office of the Attorney General is committed to carrying out its statutory responsibilities, duties, and functions effectively and efficiently and in the best interest of the administration of justice.

VISION STATEMENT

Providing quality prosecution service to the people of Malta.

VALUES

Justice | Independence | Fairness | Integrity | Professionalism





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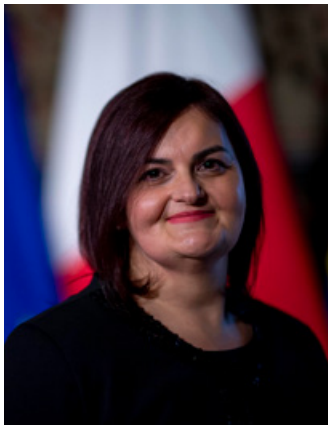
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FOREWORD

Throughout 2023, the Office continued to take more decisions to prosecute and conduct prosecutions related to additional offences from the Executive Police. This taking over of prosecutions aligns with the recommendations made in the Venice Commission Opinion of 2018 and the GRECO Fifth Evaluation Report. In substance, this means that during 2023, the Office was prosecuting the most serious offences taken over from the Police in accordance with the Prosecution of Offences (Transitory Provisions) Regulations, 2020 (Legal Notice 378 of 2020), which came into effect on 1st October 2020. Following the entry into force of the Prosecution of Offences (Transitory Provisions) (Amendment) Regulations, 2021 (Legal Notice 367 of 2021) on 1st October 2021, additional offences were taken over from the Police. Furthermore, as of 1st October 2022, the Office took over even further offences from the Police (Legal Notice 241 of 2022). Lastly, as of 1st October 2023, the Office also started prosecuting the offences included in the Prosecution of Offences (Transitory Provisions) (Amendment) Regulations, 2023 (Legal Notice 225 of 2023). The existent standard operating procedures concluded with the Police were revised to ensure the smooth running of the prosecutions taken over by the Office.

In 2023, the Office witnessed a drastic increase in the number of prosecutions conducted by its prosecutors. The taking over of prosecutions by the Office also led to higher-quality investigations and speedier resolutions when prosecuting highly complex cases, especially in the area of financial crime.

During the year under review, the Office filed sixty-two (62) bills of indictment, an unprecedented number as yet. This was a steep increase in the filing of bills of indictment when compared to the previous 10 years.

In 2023, the Office revised its Anti-Money Laundering Strategy document, which builds upon the Proceeds of Crime Act (Chapter 621 of the Laws of Malta) enacted in 2021 and the 2023 National Risk Assessment document. This document highlights the Office's commitment to the fight against the offence of money laundering, thus ensuring the effective prosecution of financial crime while depriving criminals of the proceeds of their criminal activities. The principal aim of this strategy document is to effectively ensure that:

1. investigations are translated into various types of prosecutions and convictions in line with Malta's risk profile;
2. better-quality investigations and prosecutions are conducted to effectively combat high-level and complex money laundering cases;
3. professional enablers who facilitate the offence of money laundering are likewise prosecuted;
4. the assets of the accused and the relative criminal proceeds are not dissipated during the proceedings so as to ensure their confiscation;
5. when criminals cannot be deprived of property through a conviction-based confiscation, such deprivation is achieved through non-conviction-based confiscation; and
6. the Office cooperates and coordinates its actions with those of other authorities, including foreign judicial authorities, involved in the fight against money laundering.

Capacity building continues to be an ongoing process at the Office. Efficiency and effectiveness are augmented by specialisation and training, the introduction of new systems and methods, the further digitisation of certain processes and, where necessary, the recruitment of additional staff. This continues to enhance further the reputation that the Office enjoys both locally and internationally.

The Office's methodology of keeping statistics was again enhanced and developed further. Additional detailed statistics related to the functions and duties falling within the remit of the Office are being kept.

In 2023, the Office recruited a training manager to ensure continuous and needs-based training for all the prosecutors and administrative staff. The year under review also saw the establishment of the new office of Head of Strategy and Initiatives, whose functions include implementing the Strategic and Operational Plan of the Office. Indeed, on 15th February 2023, the Strategic and Operational Plan of the Office of the Attorney General was launched. The plan, which spans a 5-year period, is the conclusion of the Structural Reform Support Services (SRSS) Project, which the Office had embarked on together with the European Commission and the World Bank. It identifies and pragmatically addresses the causes of the challenges faced by the Office while providing the latter with a practical roadmap of measures to maximise efficiency and effectiveness.

During this year, the Office also embarked on various projects. One major project involved the commencement of the implementation of the aforementioned Strategic and Operational Plan through the technical assistance offered by the European Commission and the Council of Europe, with the aim of promoting operational excellence within the Office. Other projects conducted by the Office during the period under review entailed hosting the Network of Public Prosecutors Conference in Malta and creating the criminal jurisprudence database for the Office.

The Office also participated in a number of reviews by international institutions, including that conducted by the European Commission and the Council of Europe.

Moreover, as a competent authority in terms of European Union (EU) legislation and international conventions, the Office has strived to maintain a high level of quality in the assistance provided to its counterparts.

During the year under review, the Office organised a number of conferences. On 14th March 2023, together with the British High Commission, the Office was involved in the organisation of the UK–Malta Bilateral Conference Law Enforcement and Judicial Cooperation under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement. Additionally, between 3rd and 5th May 2023, the Attorney General, who was the President of the Network of Public Prosecutors or equivalent institutions at the Supreme Judicial Courts of the Member States of the EU (NADAL Network) between May 2022 and May 2023, hosted the 14th NADAL Network Conference in Malta. The Nadal Network Conference was attended by ninety-six delegates, including Chief Prosecutors from thirty different European countries and four European institutions.

In 2023, the Office participated for the first time in the 40th Cambridge International Symposium on Economic Crime, where the Attorney General participated as a member in a panel discussion on non-conviction-based confiscation actions. The Office also participated as a full member at the International Association of Prosecutors' (IAP) 28th annual conference, which was held in London, United Kingdom, between the 24th and 27th September 2023. There, the Attorney General participated as a member in a panel discussion of the Heads of Prosecution Services.

In 2023, the Office also participated for the first time in the Deans Awards held by the Faculty of Laws of the University of Malta. During this event, the highest-achieving student in criminal law received a book reward from the Office.

The Office is committed to achieving better-quality prosecutions, building upon the experience gained, as well as continuing to deliver positive results and showcasing the Office with the respect it calls for, that is, in its role as a fundamental pillar of the rule of law.

Looking ahead, the Office will continue to implement its strategies as well as the projects embarked upon during 2023. In 2024, the Office will enter into the next phase of taking over the decisions to prosecute and the prosecutions of additional offences from the Police. To cater to this challenge, the necessary preparations for the takeover process will continue unhampered. It is evident from past experience that the staff at the Office are committed, determined in their work and always willing to meet the challenges faced by the Office.

Dr Victoria Buttigieg
Attorney General

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

The Office of the Attorney General can be traced back to 14th August 1832 when, by means of Proclamation No. VIII of that same year, issued by Governor Sir Frederick Cavendish Ponsonby, Robert Langslow was appointed as His Majesty's Attorney General of Malta. The Attorney General had the role of the legal adviser of the government and *ex officio* General Magistrate. Mr Langslow was assisted by Dr Emanuele Caruana and Dr Benedetto Bardon, who were appointed King's Counsels for the Island of Malta and its Dependencies, as well as by Dr Odoardo Dingli, who was appointed King's Counsel for the Island of Gozo. The Office was short-lived as, in 1838, in consequence of a report of a Royal Commission sent out to inquire into the judicial establishment of Malta, the British government abolished the Office altogether.

By means of Proclamation No. I of 1839, the Office of the Attorney General was replaced with the Office of the Crown Advocate. This Office immediately left its mark, as it was entrusted to draft the very controversial freedom of press legislation. Dr Giacomo Pantaleone Bruno served as Malta's first Crown Advocate (1839–1842), only to be followed by a string of brilliant and intelligent lawyers, such as Dr Antonio Micallef (1842–1853); Sir Adrian Dingli (1854–1880), who authored more than 200 pieces of legislation; Sir Giuseppe Carbone (1880–1894); Dr Alfredo Naudi (1895–1905); Sir Vincent Frendo Azzopardi (1905–1915); Sir Michelangelo Refalo (1915–1919); and Sir Arturo Mercieca (1919–1921).

Through the 1887 Letters Patent, which constituted a Council of Government, the Crown Advocate became involved in the government's political process. However, in 1921, following the advent of responsible government in Malta, the Office of the Crown Advocate acquired a dual role. The Office was renamed as Public Prosecutor and Treasury Counsel, with Major Victor Frendo Azzopardi being nominated as the first Public Prosecutor (1921–1928), followed by Sir Philip Pullicino (1928–1936). As the legal advisor of the Maltese government, the Public Prosecutor was entrusted with criminal law matters, while the Treasury Counsel was responsible for civil matters. The Office was also responsible for legislating on transferred matters.

In 1936, Governor Sir Charles Bonham-Carter redesignated the Office through the Attorney General (Constitution of) Office Ordinance (No. XXX). The Ordinance also sought to create new roles within the Office (i.e. that of the Deputy Attorney General and the Senior Counsel). The Attorney General absorbed the functions previously vested in predecessors, namely public prosecution and offering legal advice to the government. The designation of Assistant Attorney General was introduced by Act XXIV of 1956.

Sir Philip Pullicino (1936–1940), Dr Louis Naudi (1941–1955), Sir Anthony Mamo OBE QC (1955–1957) and Professor John J. Cremona (1957–1965) served as Attorney Generals within the redesignated Office up until Malta was granted independence.

In 1964, the political independence of the Attorney General was consolidated through the entrenchment of the Office in the Constitution of Malta. The Constitution provides that in the exercise of duties, the Attorney General has powers to institute, undertake, and discontinue criminal proceedings and is not subject to the direction or control of any other person or authority. Malta's supreme law also guarantees the Attorney General the security of tenure as provided to members of the judiciary.

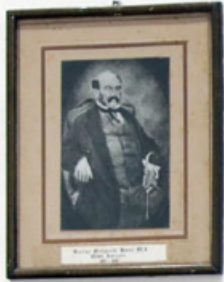
Under Legal Notice 46 of 1965, the designation Attorney General was changed to Crown Advocate General. Act XVIII of 1971 bestowed the same powers and privileges enjoyed by the Crown Advocate General to the Deputy Crown Advocate General, the Senior Crown Advocate General and the Crown Counsels. Dr Michele Tufigno (1965–1971) and Dr Edgar Mizzi (1971–1981) served as Malta's Crown Advocate Generals.

In 1974, the designation was again changed, as the Crown Advocate General became known as the Attorney General. In 1975, the Senior Crown Counsel and the Crown Counsel became known as the Senior Counsel for the Republic and the Counsel for the Republic, respectively. In 1988, under Act XVII, the Senior Counsel for the Republic became known as Assistant to the Attorney General. In 2004, the Office of the Attorney General became an agency of government endowed with legal personality.

The following lawyers served as Attorney Generals since 1971: Dr Edgar Mizzi (1971–1981), Dr Victor Borg Costanzi (1981–1983), Dr Joseph G. Borg (1983–1988), Dr Carmel Testa (1988–1989), Dr Anthony Borg Barthet (1989–2004), Dr Silvio Camilleri (2004–2010) and Dr Peter Grech (2010–2020).

In 2019, the dual role of the Attorney General as Public Prosecutor and Principal Legal Counsel to the Government came to an end when the Office of the State Advocate was constituted to be responsible for civil, constitutional and administrative law. The Office of the Attorney General became a specialised prosecution service.

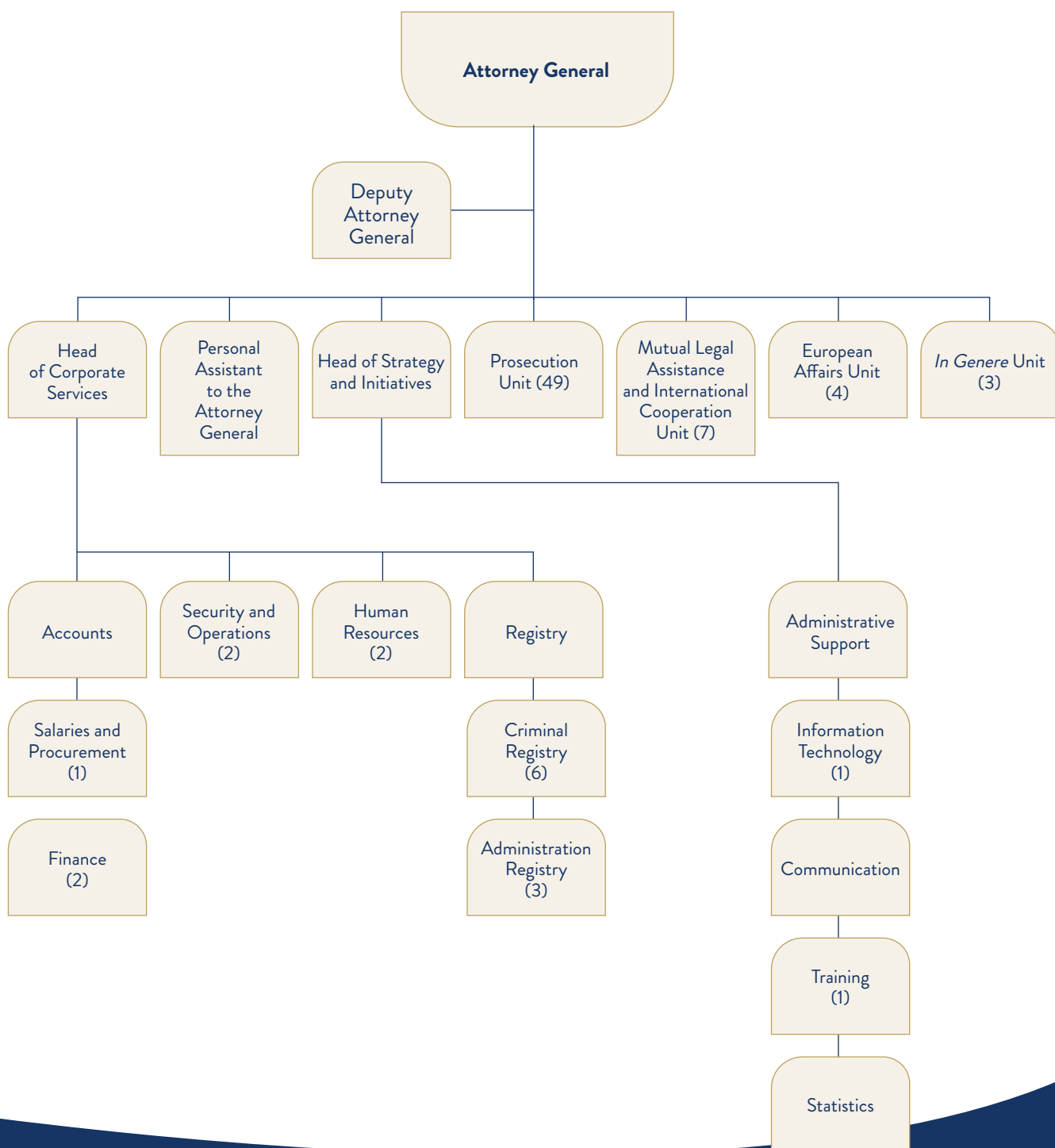
Dr Victoria Buttigieg (2020–present) is the first woman to be nominated as Attorney General and the first to head the Office in this specialised role of taking decisions to prosecute and conducting prosecutions before the Court of Magistrates.



STRUCTURE OF THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

In terms of the Attorney General Ordinance (Chapter 90 of the Laws of Malta), the Office of the Attorney General is established as a government agency consisting of two main sections: legal staff (prosecutors and legal procurators) and administrative staff.

Within the Office, prosecutors and legal procurators also adhere to the Office’s Code of Ethics applicable to their professional conduct.



PROSECUTION UNIT

The Prosecution Unit is the largest unit within the Office, with forty-seven (47) prosecutors and two (2) legal procurators.

The prosecutors within this unit handle a number of duties and are currently working with two concurrent systems of prosecutions: (a) prosecutions conducted by the Office and (b) prosecutions conducted by the Police.

The prosecutors assigned to conduct prosecutions at the Office are divided according to the offence. This assignment guarantees specialisation amongst the prosecutors, who are also given continuous training both in their area of specialisation as well as in the general field of criminal law. The prosecutors conducting prosecutions at the Office are involved from an early stage of the investigations. They are responsible for the decision to prosecute based on the case assigned to them, drafting charges against the accused, preparing the articles of the law or the bill of indictment, conducting the prosecution before the Court of Magistrates or the Criminal Court, and appearing before the Court of Criminal Appeal, as the case may be.

When it comes to prosecutions conducted by the Police, the prosecutors are responsible for overseeing the committal proceedings, indicating the articles of the law in terms of which the accused is to be found guilty and filing the bill of indictment as needed. The prosecutors also conduct the prosecution before the Criminal Court and appear before the Court of Criminal Appeal.

In those instances when the Court of Magistrates acts as a court of criminal judicature, the prosecutors analyse the acts of the proceedings and the decision given by the said court if the necessary note is filed by the Police. If appropriate, the prosecutors file an appeal before the Court of Criminal Appeal and follow the said appeal.

Prosecutors within this unit are also responsible for requesting the Criminal Court to issue monitoring, investigation and attachment orders.

This unit works closely with other entities, including the Police and the Asset Recovery Bureau.

Key statistics concerning prosecution by the Office of the Attorney General
(1st January 2023–31st December 2023):

01/01/2023 - 31/12/2023

Sent to be prosecuted by the Court of Magistrates	246
Bills of indictment	62
Counterorders	3
Counterorders and articles	30

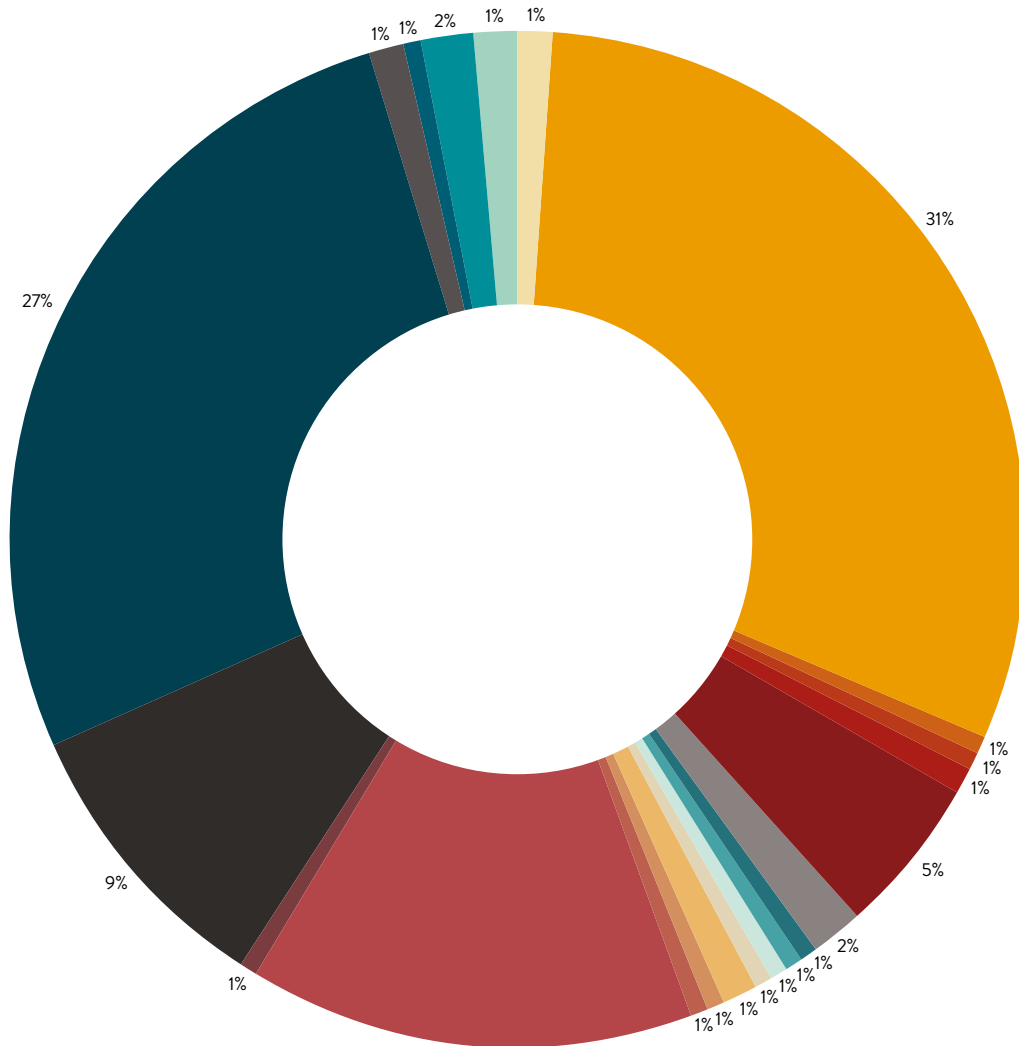
The above cases include cases that were arraigned by the Police and the Office of the Attorney General.

General Totals for 2023

General Total

	Total			
Juries	11		11	11
	Total Registered	of which	Appealed by the AGO	75
Appeals (Inferior Jurisdiction)	432		75	
	Total			
Appeals (Superior Jurisdiction)	20			20
<i>Preliminary pleas appeals</i>			14	
<i>Jury appeals</i>			6	
Total				106

Prosecutions Key Statistics 2023



- Acts of Terrorism
- Aggravated theft
- Aggravated theft + Arson
- Aggravated theft + Grievous Bodily Harm
- Attempted theft
- Arson
- Attempted Homicide
- Attempted Homicide + Fear of Violence
- Homicide + Attempted Homicide + Grievous Bodily Harm
- Involuntary Homicide
- Bribery
- Computer Misuse
- Fraud
- Fraud + Misappropriation + Computer Misuse
- Grievous Bodily Harm
- Grievous Bodily Harm with Arms Proper
- Money Laundering
- Sexual Offences
- Fear of Violence
- Trading in Influence
- Trading in Influence + Fraud
- Wilful Damage to Cultural Property

MUTUAL LEGAL ASSISTANCE AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION UNIT

The Mutual Legal Assistance and International Cooperation Unit is composed of seven (7) prosecutors.

The prosecutors within this unit handle all requests made regarding EU legislation and international conventions. These requests include European Investigation Orders and requests for mutual legal assistance, the hearing of witness testimony, the service of criminal judicial acts, and the enforcement of criminal penalties.

This unit is responsible for assisting the Police in the drafting and vetting of outgoing European Investigation Orders and requests for mutual legal assistance. Prosecutors within this unit also assist the Police in extradition requests and European arrest warrants.

Prosecutors within this unit assist the prosecutors within the Prosecution Unit when it comes to matters involving cross-border elements.

Like in other units, these prosecutors receive specialised training and participate in webinars, working groups, and conferences, particularly involving mutual legal assistance and international cooperation. As part of their training, prosecutors also give presentations to other prosecutors about this specialised area of criminal law.

Throughout 2023, this unit handled the following requests:

	Received	Transmitted
European Investigation Order	405	68
Mutual legal assistance	81	108

***IN GENERE* UNIT**

The *In Genere* Unit is a specialised unit tasked with examining and vetting all magisterial inquiries transmitted to the Office according to the provisions of the Criminal Code (Chapter 9 of the Laws of Malta).

This unit is currently composed of three (3) prosecutors.

The prosecutors within this unit draft notes of renvoi as necessary and are also responsible for filing applications in terms of Article 550A of Chapter 9 to ensure that magisterial inquiries are concluded timeously.

If the conclusion of a magisterial inquiry requires the filing of charges by the Police, then prosecutors within this unit liaise with the Police to ensure that such charges are filed. If the filing of the charges falls within the remit of the Office, the prosecutors within this unit ensure that a prosecutor from the Prosecution Unit is assigned to file such charges.

The unit is also responsible for authorising the issue of copies of the conclusions of a magisterial inquiry under the provisions of the Criminal Code.

The following are the statistics concerning the number of magisterial inquiries vetted:

In Genere	
From January 2023	Amount
Total magisterial inquiries received	824
Notes of renvoi	119
Applications filed in terms of Article 550A of Chapter 9	705

EUROPEAN AFFAIRS UNIT

The European Affairs Unit is composed of four (4) prosecutors.

The prosecutors within this unit handle, *inter alia*, requests relating to the transfer of court proceedings, transfers of sentenced prisoners, European supervision orders, and probation and alternative sanctions. The prosecutors also cover the notification of foreign convictions to third-country states in terms of Article 22 of the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters.

The prosecutors within this unit also compile questionnaires emanating from EU and Council of Europe institutions, as well as those from other international fora, such as the United Nations and the Commonwealth of Nations.

The prosecutors regularly participate in EU, Council of Europe and other institutions' meetings, conferences, webinars and working groups, both physically and virtually. This also includes attending meetings and seminars relating to EU and Council of Europe matters, both in Malta and abroad.

One of the prosecutors within this unit is also designated as a contact for the European Judicial Network (EJN) covering EU framework directives and is responsible for updating the *fiches espagnoles* on the EJN website.

Since 2020, one of the prosecutors within this unit has been nominated as a Joint Investigation Team expert and is also responsible for updating the *fiches espagnoles* relating to Malta.

Apart from EU affairs, the prosecutors are also responsible for legal drafting and research within the Office, as well as representing the Attorney General in several local boards and committees. One of the prosecutors within this unit also delivers presentations to other prosecutors on a number of criminal law topics. One of this unit's prosecutors served as reviewing expert in a United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) evaluation on corruption in El Salvador.

Statistics for 2023

Participation in meetings (both virtual and physical)	103
Participation in meetings abroad	198
Questionnaires completed	83
Legal research effected	86
Notifications effected in terms of Article 22 of the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters	7
Presentations delivered to prosecutors and police personnel	7
Transfer of proceedings requests processed (FD 2008/909/JHA)	4
Transfer of sentenced prisoners requests processed	8
Applications of the principle of mutual recognition to judgements and probation decisions (FD 2008/947/JHA)	6
Applications of the principle of mutual recognition to decisions on supervision measures as an alternative to provisional detention (FD 2009/829/JHA)	1
Training sessions received	52



CORPORATE SERVICES UNIT

The Corporate Services Unit incorporates the Administration, Human Resources, Finances, Operations and General Support functions of the Attorney General. The administration is currently composed of eighteen (18) officers working on finances, procurement, human resources, operations and paralegal work.

The corporate services are composed of the:

- Accounts;
- Security and Operations;
- Human Resources; and
- Registry branches.

ACCOUNTS

1. The Accounts section is managed by a senior manager who administers the budget for the Office. As of January 2022, the Accounts section has been using a new software, Indigo, for calculating salaries.
2. Within the Procurement section, the procurement manager is responsible for designing and implementing procurement processes, leading to the establishment of a contract for the purchase of supplies, services and works in full accordance with the National Procurement Regulations and other related circulars as may be necessary. Such circulars may include instructions from the Department of Contracts or other entities, such as the Green Procurement Section. The procurement cycle is triggered by raising a request form, which shows details like who is making the request, what is required and a basic estimate for purchasing the said solution. In turn, the Procurement section ensures that finances are available for such purchases. Once this is established, the procurement activity pertaining to the threshold is organised based on the estimate. Such procurement activities may take the shape of a collection of quotes or publications for tender offers.



SECURITY AND OPERATIONS

Personnel and documentation security is of utmost importance in our daily operations. Thus, during the year under review, a report was compiled by security experts to address any shortcomings and beef up current measures. Furthermore, administration officers regularly attend courses on health and safety issues, first aid, and firefighting.

Other operations include ensuring that all equipment at our office is fully operational and serviced through maintenance agreements and that everything is fully functional and running efficiently.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The Human Resources Branch manages the Human Resources function of the Office. Throughout the year, this branch caters for the issuance of external and internal vacancies and keeps appropriate records of all employees. It also deals with various returns, reports and queries from the Office of the Prime Minister, as well as parliamentary questions regarding capacity building. For the past months, the Human Resources Branch has been active in engaging new lawyers to perform prosecution duties as per the Venice Commission's recommendations.

REGISTRIES

The Office has two registry sections: the Criminal Registry and the Administration Registry.

The Criminal Registry manages files related to criminal proceedings and thus has a close working relationship with the courts. The officers working in this registry must be vigilant to ensure that deadlines and time frames stipulated by law are strictly adhered to.

The Administration Registry deals with general files relating to administration, procurement, operations and finance. Files in the Administration Registry are kept for 30 years, following which they are moved to the National Archives.



STRATEGY AND INITIATIVES UNIT

EMPOWERING JUSTICE: A DEDICATED STRATEGY AND INITIATIVES UNIT AT THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

In November 2023, the Office of the Attorney General saw the creation of a Strategy and Initiatives Unit, whose main aim is to implement the 5-year strategic plan for the Office launched earlier this year under the auspices of the European Commission (Directorate-General [DG] Reform) and the World Bank. A complementary project was, in fact, finalised on 31st October 2023. Undoubtedly, the unit will ensure that the action plan's activities maintain a unified direction. The plan provides a roadmap for decision-making and for identifying opportunities to enhance the efficiency of the Office of the Attorney General. By analysing existing workflows, processes and systems, the unit can recommend improvements and innovations that lead to cost savings, streamlined operations and better resource utilisation.

The unit will also play a critical role in identifying and addressing challenges that the Office of the Attorney General may face. It will also enable the Office to proactively develop new initiatives and projects aimed at improving its services and operations, including programmes aimed at enhancing the staff's professional development, technology integration and public outreach efforts.

With the appointment of a director to head the unit and the recruitment of dedicated staff in the near future, the unit will also monitor and evaluate the performance of various programmes and initiatives within the Office. Adhering to established key performance indicators (KPIs) and regularly assessing progress will also ensure that the Office remains on track to achieve its strategic objectives according to the established strategic plan.

Facilitating coordination and communication within the organisation will also be a priority of this unit. The Office seeks to adopt a data-driven approach to make more informed choices and track the impact of its actions over time, both in the short term and, more importantly, in the long term. To this end, IT infrastructure and data analysis will inform any decision-making processes.

In an ever-evolving legal landscape, it is essential that the Office of the Attorney General is adaptable. Continuous training needs will thus be a priority for all staff members, both legal and non-legal. The implementation of the strategic plan will further guarantee that the organisation is responsive to changes in laws, regulations or societal needs, ensuring that it remains effective and relevant while reflecting the community it serves.

By having a unit focused on strategy and initiatives, the Office can better demonstrate its commitment to transparency and accountability. This is essential for building public trust and confidence in the legal system, especially in the criminal justice system.

Last but not least, the creation of a Strategy and Initiatives Unit at the Office of the Attorney General is essential for long-term planning, efficient operations, problem-solving, and continuous improvement. It ensures that the Office can adapt to changing circumstances, remain accountable to the public and work towards its mission of providing a first-class prosecution service to the people of Malta.





PREMISES

Admiralty House (*id-Dar tal-Ammiraljat*), formerly known as Palazzo Don Raimondo and Casa Miari, is a Baroque palace in South Street, Valletta. It was built in 1569, after the Great Siege, as two private residences commissioned by Fra Jean de Soubiran dit Arafat, a knight of the Order of St John.

The properties were passed down to a knight, François le Petit de la Guerche, and following his death in 1663, they were taken over by the Treasury of the Order of St John. After 1668, the houses were leased to several knights of the Order.

In the 1760s, the houses were leased to Fra Raimondo de Sousa y Silva, a wealthy Portuguese knight, who decided to rebuild the houses into a single residence to their present format. Thereafter, the building became known as Palazzo Don Raimondo after Fra Raimondo de Sousa y Silva. The reconstruction was completed in 1763 and is attributed to Andrea Belli, the same architect who redesigned Auberge de Castille.

Fra Raimondo de Sousa y Silva died in 1782, and for some years, the house was divided into several apartments. Eventually, the building was converted back to a single residence and was again let out to several knights. The palace was known by various names throughout its history, depending on its occupants, including Maison Arafat, Casa de Guerche and Maison Fleurigny. In the late 18th and early 19th century, it was known as Casa Miari after Fra Antonio Miari di Belluno, who lived in the palace during the last years of the Order of St John from 1795 to 1798. He was Secretary to Grand Master Ferdinand von Hompesch.

In the late 18th century, during the French occupation of Malta, the government offered the building to Bishop Vincenzo Labini as a seminary. Due to the Maltese uprising against the French, these plans were never implemented. The façade was originally decorated with the coats of arms of the Order and Grand Master Manuel Pinto da Fonseca, but these were defaced following orders by Napoleon.

In 1800, Malta became a British protectorate, and Civil Commissioner Alexander Ball occupied the house. Between August 1802 and June 1803, the palace was rented out to Alexander Macaulay, Secretary to the Civil Commissioner. In 1808, the palace received Louis Philippe, Duke of Orléans and Louis Charles, Count of Beaujolais. On 29th May 1808, Louis Charles died of tuberculosis and was buried at St John's Co-Cathedral in Valletta.

In 1821, when Malta was already a Crown Colony, the building was officially leased to the naval authorities as the official residence of the Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Fleet, thus receiving the name Admiralty House. The building received various personalities as residents or guests, including Lord Mountbatten, Winston Churchill, King George V and Queen Elizabeth II. The building was eventually handed over to the Government of Malta in 1961.

On 7th May 1974, the building was restored to house the National Museum of Fine Arts. In 2018, the National Museum of Fine Arts was moved from Admiralty House to Auberge d'Italie and renamed MUŻA (an acronym for the Maltese name *Mużew Nazzjonali tal-Arti*).

Admiralty House is a Grade 1 monument listed on the National Inventory of the Cultural Property of the Maltese Islands. The building consists of halls built around a central courtyard and has two floors above ground, along with a basement. The building has a monumental free-standing staircase, said to be one of the finest in Malta. The staircase might have been influenced by those found at Auberge de Castille in Valletta.





PROJECTS

THE BUSINESS REORGANISATION OF THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL – IMPLEMENTATION

The year 2023 saw the Office of the Attorney General transition from one Technical Support Instrument (TSI) project to another in its efforts at continued organisational and operational excellence. The first TSI project, which was carried out in collaboration with the World Bank, was entitled “Business Reorganisation of the Office of the Attorney General and the Office of the State Advocate of Malta”. Launched in 2021, the project was successfully brought to completion in February 2023 with the presentation of a 5-year Strategic and Operational Plan aimed at increasing public confidence in the Office of the Attorney General through eight clustered activities addressing:

- organisational development;
- professional development; and
- service delivery.

This action plan formed the basis of a new TSI project, “Implementing the Business Reorganisation Action Plan of the Office of the Attorney General and the Office of the State Advocate in Malta”, which was launched in October 2023 in collaboration with the Transversal Challenges and Multilateral Projects Task Force within the Council of Europe. Building on the work carried out in the previous project, the outcomes to be achieved over the coming 2 years include:

- the adoption of internal strategies, such as a new public relations strategy; the introduction of new tools, such as case weighting methodologies; and the setting up of efficiency benchmarks that will assist in the institutional and administrative reorganisation of the Office;
- the adoption of a communication strategy for the Office aimed at improving public trust and transparency;
- the improved capacity of the Office of the Attorney General to provide training opportunities to its legal and administrative personnel at various points in their engagement with the agency; and
- supporting the Office in building the data structures needed for strategic and operational purposes, performance assessments, and overall improvement in its efficiency.

In order to support and oversee the implementation of the overall action plan over the coming years, the new position of Head of Strategy and Initiatives was created. This solidifies the efforts being made by the Office of the Attorney General to perform its mandate to the highest levels of efficiency, furthering its commitment to strive for improved public trust and accountability.

NADAL MEETING MALTA – MAY 2023

Between 3rd and 5th May 2023, the Office of the Attorney General had the honour of hosting the 14th Conference of the Network of Public Prosecutors or equivalent institutions at the Supreme Judicial Courts of the Member States of the EU – the NADAL Network. The main aim of this network is to bring together heads of prosecution agencies from all over Europe. Members of the EU enjoy full membership in the NADAL Network, while other European countries hold either observer or partner status. The conference was also attended by representatives from European institutions, namely Eurojust, the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) and the European Judicial Training Network (EJTN), which are also key actors in the sphere of European criminal law. Representatives of the IAP were also present and participated in this event.

During this two-day conference, the heads of the different Member States discussed and debated relevant topics of criminal law. The main topics chosen for the Malta meeting included data protection, the fight against financial crime and environmental criminal law. The future of the NADAL Network and changes to the NADAL Network Articles of Associations were also discussed at length to reflect the current reality of the network. The participants also enjoyed a social and networking programme, including a visit to the historic Fort St Angelo and the medieval city of Mdina.



BUILDING A COMPREHENSIVE JURISPRUDENCE DATABASE: A RESOURCE FOR PROSECUTORS

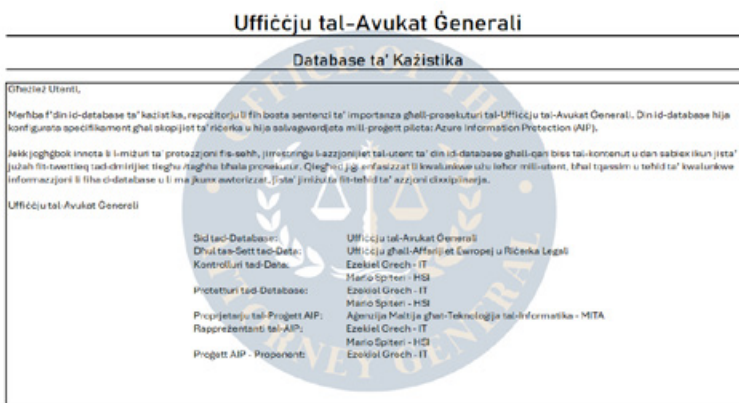
In the early months of 2023, the European Affairs Unit within the Office of the Attorney General embarked on an ambitious jurisprudence project with a singular goal: to create a comprehensive database of judgements that played a pivotal role in shaping Maltese criminal law. This research has resulted in the assembly of a valuable resource that is set to become an indispensable tool for prosecutors who navigate the intricate landscape of Maltese criminal jurisprudence.

The core of this project entailed an exhaustive analysis of the judgements delivered by the Courts of Criminal Jurisdiction between 2001 and 2010. Approximately 1,300 judgements were meticulously reviewed to ensure that the database encompasses a comprehensive spectrum of decisions that proved instrumental in Maltese criminal law.

For ease of access and reference, whenever possible, the selected judgements were thoughtfully organised in accordance with the relevant articles of the Criminal Code or special laws. Such classification efforts will ensure that prosecutors can quickly locate precedents and decisions pertinent to their specific cases. Each entry in the database is enriched with comprehensive details, including a synopsis and extracts, providing a concise yet insightful overview of the judgement.

The database stands as a significant leap forward in simplifying the legal research process for prosecutors. It consolidates a wealth of legal knowledge into a single, user-friendly online document, enabling prosecutors to expedite their research, gain access to key rulings, and facilitate their oral and written pleadings. The database significantly streamlines the process of finding and referencing relevant judgements for cases, thus saving precious time and effort.

In conclusion, the development of this jurisprudence database is a remarkable achievement for all prosecutors working within the Office. It not only represents a substantial step towards the consolidation of essential legal knowledge but also exemplifies the power of digital tools in enhancing legal practice. By making this extensive repository of criminal judgements available, this project undoubtedly empowers prosecutors in their pursuit of justice and excellence in their practice in accordance with the values advocated by the Office.





Income & Expenditure Account

Entity:	Office of the Attorney General	Remark:	N/A
Period:	December 2023		
Submitted By:	Steve Aquilina		
Submitted On:	05/01/2024 08:38		

TOTAL OWN GENERATED REVENUE	December 2023 (YTD)	Forecast for Year ending 2023
Income generated from own operations	9,116	9,116
Other operating income	0	0
Bank interest receivable	0	0
Total own generated revenue (i)	9,116	9,116

GRANTS AND OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS - RECURRENT	December 2023 (YTD)	Forecast for Year ending 2023
Parliamentary Appropriation - Government Subvention receivable for Recurrent Expenditure (i)	5,800,000	5,800,000
Other contributions from other public administration	365,125	365,125
Donations receivable from sponsorships	0	0
EU Grants receivable to cover Recurrent Expenditure featuring under 'Total Expenses' below	0	0
Other Grants receivable	0	0
Total Grants and Other contributions (ii)	6,165,125	6,165,125

a. TOTAL INCOME [i + ii]	6,174,241	6,174,241
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TOTAL EXPENSES	December 2023 (YTD)	Forecast for Year ending 2023
Salaries and wages	2,533,693	2,533,693
Bonus and income supplement	44,079	44,079
Social Security Contributions	214,284	214,284
Allowances	2,027,587	2,027,587
Overtime	2,644	2,644
Utilities	23,613	23,613
Material and Supplies	25,496	25,496
Repair and Upkeep	18,324	18,324
Rent	17,400	17,400
International memberships	9,436	9,436
Office Services	53,120	53,120
Transport	3,108	3,108
Travel	48,340	48,340
Information services	7,533	7,533
Contractual services	259,713	259,713
Professional services	14,005	14,005
Training	20,082	20,082
Hospitality	117,240	117,240
Incidental expenses	26,297	26,297
Bank interest payable	1,823	1,823
Bad debts written off	0	0

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TOTAL EXPENSES (continued)	December 2023 (YTD)	Forecast for Year ending
Increase in provision for bad debts	0	0
Decrease in provision for bad debts	0	0
Other Provisions	0	0
Depreciation charge	365,125	365,125
Other recurrent expenditure funded through EU Grants	0	0
Other Expenditure	18,523	18,523
b. Total Expenditure	5,851,465	5,851,465
Surplus / (Deficit) before tax [a - b]	322,776	322,776
Tax Expense	December 2023 (YTD)	Forecast for Year ending 2023
Tax expense	0	0
Net surplus / (Deficit) for the period	322,776	322,776

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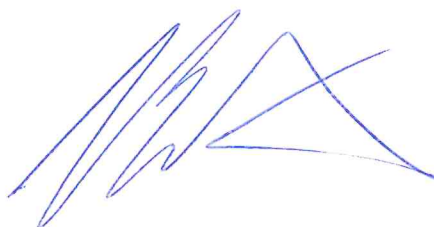
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NON-EBU Statement of Financial Position

Entity:	Office of the Attorney General	Remark:	N/A
Period:	December 2023		
Submitted By:	Steve Aquilina		
Submitted On:	05/01/2024 08:37		

Balance Sheet

Current Assets	Actual figures at end of December 2023	Projected Position at year end 2023
Cash at bank and in hand	415,321	415,321
Amounts owed from Government (within 1 Year)	0	0
Stocks	0	0
Gross trade debtors	108	108
Less: Impairment (minus)	0	0
Prepayments	15,679	15,679
Taxation (CA)	0	0
Other Debtors (within 1 Year)	1,725	1,725
Investment in short-term securities (within 1 Year)	0	0
Other current assets	0	0
a. Total Current Assets	432,833	432,833

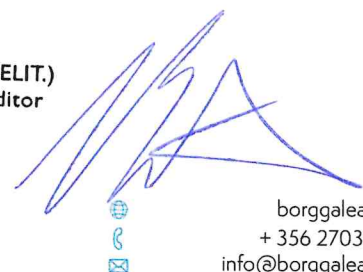
Non-Current Assets	Actual figures at end of December 2023	Projected Position at year end 2023
Land and buildings	1,305,142	1,305,142
Infrastructure, plant and equipment	1,185,789	1,185,789
Intangible assets	1,571	1,571
Other non-financial assets	0	0
Amounts owed from Government (after more than 1 Year)	0	0
Other Debtors (after more than 1 Year)	160	160
Investment in long-term securities (after more than 1 Year)	0	0
Holding of shares and other equity	0	0
Other financial assets	0	0
b. Total Non-Current Assets	2,492,662	2,492,662

c. Total Assets [a + b]	2,925,495	2,925,495
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Borg Galea Audit Ltd (C79290) a limited liability company duly registered in Malta. Centris Business Gateway, Borg Galea & Associates, Level 4W, Triq is-Salib ta' L-Imriehel, Central Business District, Zone 3, Birkirkara CBD3020

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Current Liabilities	Actual figures at end of December 2023	Projected Position at year end 2023
Amounts owed to Government (within 1 Year)	1,256	1,256
Trade payables (within 1 Year)	190	190
Accruals	37,841	37,841
Taxation (CL)	0	0
Deferred Income	2,492,502	2,492,502
Deferred Government Grants (within 1 Year)	0	0
Other payables (within 1 Year)	0	0
Short-term borrowings	0	0
Current portion of long-term borrowings	0	0
Short-term provisions	0	0
Employee benefits (CL)	0	0
d. Total Current Liabilities	2,531,789	2,531,789

Non-Current Liabilities	Actual figures at end of December 2023	Projected Position at year end 2023
Amounts owed to Government (after more than 1 Year)	0	0
Other long-term payables	0	0
Long-term borrowings	0	0
Deferred Government Grants (after more than 1 Year)	0	0
Long-term provisions	0	0
Employee benefits (NCL)	0	0
e. Total Non-Current Liabilities	0	0

f. Total Liabilities [d + e]	2,531,789	2,531,789
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g. Total Assets - Total Liabilities (c - f)	393,706	393,706
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CAPITAL AND RESERVES	Actual figures at end of December 2023	Projected Position at year end 2023
Capital	0	0
Accumulated Surplus Reserve b/f	70,930	70,930
Surplus/Deficit	322,776	322,776
Other Reserves	0	0
h. Total Capital and Reserves	393,706	393,706

Other Information

Securities	Actual figures at end of December 2023	Projected Position at year end 2023
Acquisition of short-term securities (Less than 1 year)	0	0
Sale of short-term securities	0	0
Acquisition of long-term securities (Greater than 1 year)	0	0
Sale of long-term securities	0	0

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Shares and Equity	Actual figures at end of December 2023	Projected Position at year end 2023
Acquisition of shares and other equity	0	0
Sale of shares and other equity	0	0

Parliamentary Appropriation	Actual figures at end of December 2023	Projected Position at year end 2023
Parliamentary Appropriation - Government Subvention received for Capital Expenditure (I)	32,971	32,971

EU Grants	Actual figures at end of December 2023	Projected Position at year end 2023
EU Grants received to cover Capital Expenditure (I)	0	0
Other foreign grants received, not featuring under Part A and not featuring in Financial Estimates (I)	0	0
Capital Expenditure funded through EU Grants (E)	0	0

Fixed Capital Assets	Actual figures at end of December 2023	Projected Position at year end 2023
Capital expenditure financed from financial estimates	32,971	32,971
Capital expenditure NOT financed from financial estimates	0	0
Disposal of fixed capital assets	0	0

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