

Brincat Anna at Parlament-MT

From: CLAIRE BONELLO <drcbonello@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, 22 January 2019 13:56
To: Muscat Alexander at OPM; Brincat Anna at Parlament-MT
Subject: Kind request for public meeting of the Environment and Development Planning Committee to discuss and inform stakeholders and the public about developments regarding the St. George's peninsula and concession agreements which are being negotiated.

The Honourable Alexander Muscat

Chairman

Environment and Development Planning Committee

House of Parliament

Valletta

Honourable Muscat,

Re : Kind request for public meeting of the Environment and Development Planning Committee to discuss and inform stakeholders and the public about developments regarding the St. George's peninsula and concession agreements which are being negotiated.

I trust this email finds you well. I act on behalf of the following entities and communities:

Pembroke Local Council
Swieqi Local Council
St. Julian's Local Council
Din I-Art Helwa
Flimkien għal Ambjent Aħjar
Friends of the Earth (Malta)
Moviment Graffiti
BirdLife Malta
Żminijietna – Voice of the Left
Ramblers Association
Pembroke residents
St. Julians residents
Tal-lbragg residents
St Andrews Residents
Sliema residents
Gharghur residents

Bahar 'ic-Caghak residents

I refer to recent news reports and the sitting of the house committee during which the imminent concession of certain title, land and environmental rights are to be granted to the Corinthia group (IHI).

The scope, terms and conditions of any agreement or concession reached in this regard will have repercussions on all stakeholders, the public and the natural environment. These repercussions will be direct and contribute to their quality of life. In accordance with the Aarhus Convention signed and ratified by the Maltese Government, it is an established principle that early public participation when all options are still open, is a requisite when decisions of such magnitude are being made. This is the case especially when the mechanism being adopted is that of tiered-decision-making in a number of stages.

For the sake of transparency and informed participation, the public and affected stakeholders also need to be informed as to whether A Strategic Environmental Assessment or an Environmental Impact Assessment has been concluded - or indeed what other studies have been concluded. Although this is not a planning application, the draft agreement with the Corinthia group refers to reclamation of the seabed and lists other factors which would effectively render the necessity of obtaining planning permission as a "fait accompli". This fragmentation of the decision-making process is prejudicial to the whole concept of effective and meaningful public participation in the planning process - leading to a complete disenfranchisement of citizens from the possibility of affecting decisions which impact their health and wellbeing.

In light of the above you are kindly requested to convene a meeting of the Committee with the presence of the relevant ministers/bodies piloting or/and negotiating or/and involved in this concession for public information and scrutiny.

Since the signing of the agreement is imminent, the urgent convening of the meeting is greatly appreciated, so we would not be discussing a done deal.

Thanking you in advance for your kind cooperation

Yours sincerely

Claire Bonello LL.D