



2nd November, 2009

MEP shares Malta's EU experience in Iceland

MEP Simon Busuttil was on a two-day visit to Iceland on the invitation of the Centre for Small States Studies of the University of Iceland.

During a public discussion organized by the Centre in Reykjavik, Dr Busuttil delivered a lecture on "The Influence of a Small New EU Member State".

The meeting was also addressed by Professor Roderick Pace from the University of Malta who was invited to speak on Malta's adaptation to EU membership. Both speakers also led a discussion with students of European Studies at the University of Iceland on Malta's membership experience.

During his stay in Reykjavik, Busuttil discussed Malta's experience before and after membership with a group of Members of Parliament from the Icelandic House of Representatives, the Althingi, from the Social Democratic Alliance, the Independence Party and the new political formation known as *The Movement*.

Other meetings were organised with the Director of European Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture and with the Icelandic Federation of Industries and representatives of the Confederation of Icelandic Employers.

A meeting was also held with the leaders of Iceland's "Yes" Campaign.

Iceland is already a member of the European Economic Area (EEA) and highly integrated in the EU's internal market. As an EEA member, most EU laws apply to Iceland.

Nevertheless, public opinion in Iceland is deeply split on EU membership with the leading Opposition party, the centre-right Independence Party taking a stand against membership. Of the other parties, the Social Democrats, currently in Government, are the most favourable to membership and their Government lodged an EU membership application last July. Business organizations are in favour of Iceland's EU membership.

The Icelandic side was very interested in the way in which Malta's membership negotiations unfolded as well as in the information campaign that was conducted in Malta ahead of the EU referendum. The challenge posed by membership to Iceland's fisheries and agricultural sectors also featured prominently.

.....

Office of Simon Busuttil MEP

Kevin Mizzi in Valletta: (356) 21228585