



Fraktion der Europäischen Volkspartei (Christdemokraten) und europäischer Demokraten im Europäischen Parlament  
Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats in the European Parliament  
Groupe du Parti Populaire Européen (Démocrates-Chrétiens) et Démocrates Européens au Parlement européen

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## **Simon Busuttil welcomes AFM officers at European Parliament**

MEP Simon Busuttil welcomed members of the Armed Forces of Malta at the European Parliament in Brussels on Thursday.

The 43-strong AFM group included the army's band which was invited to Brussels to perform in the Tattoo Militaire International 2007 as part of the official activities of the 50th anniversary of the European Union at the prestigious Cinquintenaire Park in central Brussels.

On Dr Busuttil's initiative, the AFM officers were invited to visit the European Parliament and took the opportunity to tour the parliamentary chamber.

Addressing the group, Dr Busuttil explained the role of members of the European Parliament and their work as representatives of the Maltese people.

Referring to illegal immigration as a priority issue, Dr Busuttil thanked the Maltese army for its hard work in dealing with the influx of immigrants. He explained his work in putting Malta's plight on the European agenda.

He said that a number of initiatives were finally being taken at European level, such as the setting up of the FRONTEX agency, border patrols and the recently enacted European law setting up the Rapid Border Intervention Teams which can be deployed in emergency situations.

Dr Busuttil said that, on illegal immigration, one had to find a balance between a short-term policy to combat the flow of illegal immigration and a longer-term policy which helps the development of countries of origin.

*"This is a sensitive issue and I appeal to you to handle it with fairness and solidarity."* Dr Busuttil said.

Asked on immigrants working illegally in Malta, Dr Busuttil acknowledged that this was a problem both for immigrants themselves who were exploited but also for the country because this work remained undeclared. He said that the European Commission would soon be publishing a proposal for a new law to impose stiff penalties against employers who engaged workers illegally. He said that he looked forward to contribute actively to this new European law.

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