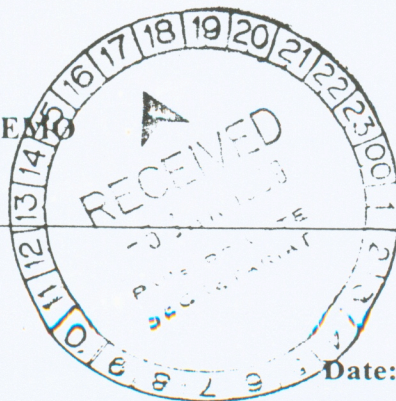


MEMO



To: Prime Minister

Date: 5th January 1999

From: Parliamentary Secretary
in the Office of the Prime Minister

Setting up of Film Commission

A Film Commission exists in nearly every country, large city or region as can be seen from the attached indexes which are only partial (Annex 1). Malta is in fact the only country in Europe and North Africa which does not have a Film Commission. The basic aims of a Film Commission are:

- * to promote - both locally but especially overseas - a particular place as a filming location for film, television and commercial productions;
- * to set up an office handling queries from film producers, so as to generate business from such enquiries and eventually, liase between the producers and local authorities with a view on cutting down bureaucracy for producers.

Malta is at present not being actively sold as a location "per se". Malta Film Facilities advertises its services but does not advertise the country as such. Obviously, it is principally interested in achieving business for its facilities but business can also be generated independently of the facilities at MFF. This would be the aim of the Film Commission.

Notwithstanding the lack of active promotion Malta is generally known as a good location and the fact that at present two major feature films are in the start up process attests to this. However, we mostly rely on the "old boy network" which basically consists of word of mouth information passed between the location managers who are in charge of identifying possible locations to propose to a producer.

The aim of the Film Commissioner could be not only to actively canvass location managers worldwide but also to actively promote our locations at fairs, through Internet, in publications etc.

Film producers who decide on Malta shoots outside MFF facilities usually turn to DOI or NTOM for assistance with permits, transportation and general assistance. A minor film will expect to involve the Police, Customs, Civil Protection, Maritime Authority, Roads and Transport, Health, MIA, Enemalta, Telemalta, NTOM and Local Councils.

The producers want to save time on the shoot and expect to get maximum assistance on cutting down a red tape, ensure speedy approval of permits and have a central base to act as information centre. This will be provided by the Film Commission.

The Film Commission "per se" is not revenue generating but it is well known that film making can potentially leave hundreds of thousands of liri in the local economy. Considering the projected investment which is being proposed (see Annex 2) the initiative is well worth it.

The Film Commission is actually a Film Commissioner and I am proposing that Mr Winston Azzopardi be appointed to fill the post on a contract basis. Mr Azzopardi has worked on major productions both locally and abroad, has extensive contacts in the film world and is well versed in the subject. A detailed c.v. is available if required.

All the Commissioner would require is a full time secretary and the go ahead to employ part time assistants to do the chasing and liasing when a production is in the buy. Office space would be provided by Government and it is proposed that the Commission be set up within the auspices of the DOI but would liase with this Office, especially in the initial stages.

I am also attaching at Annex 3 a short run through of what a film production involves. At Annex 4 I attach a proposal which was being discussed at MDC during the previous administration.

I would appreciate your decision on the matter as soon as possible since the only worldwide location fair is scheduled for the second week of February and it would be ideal if we could participate.



Austin Gatt