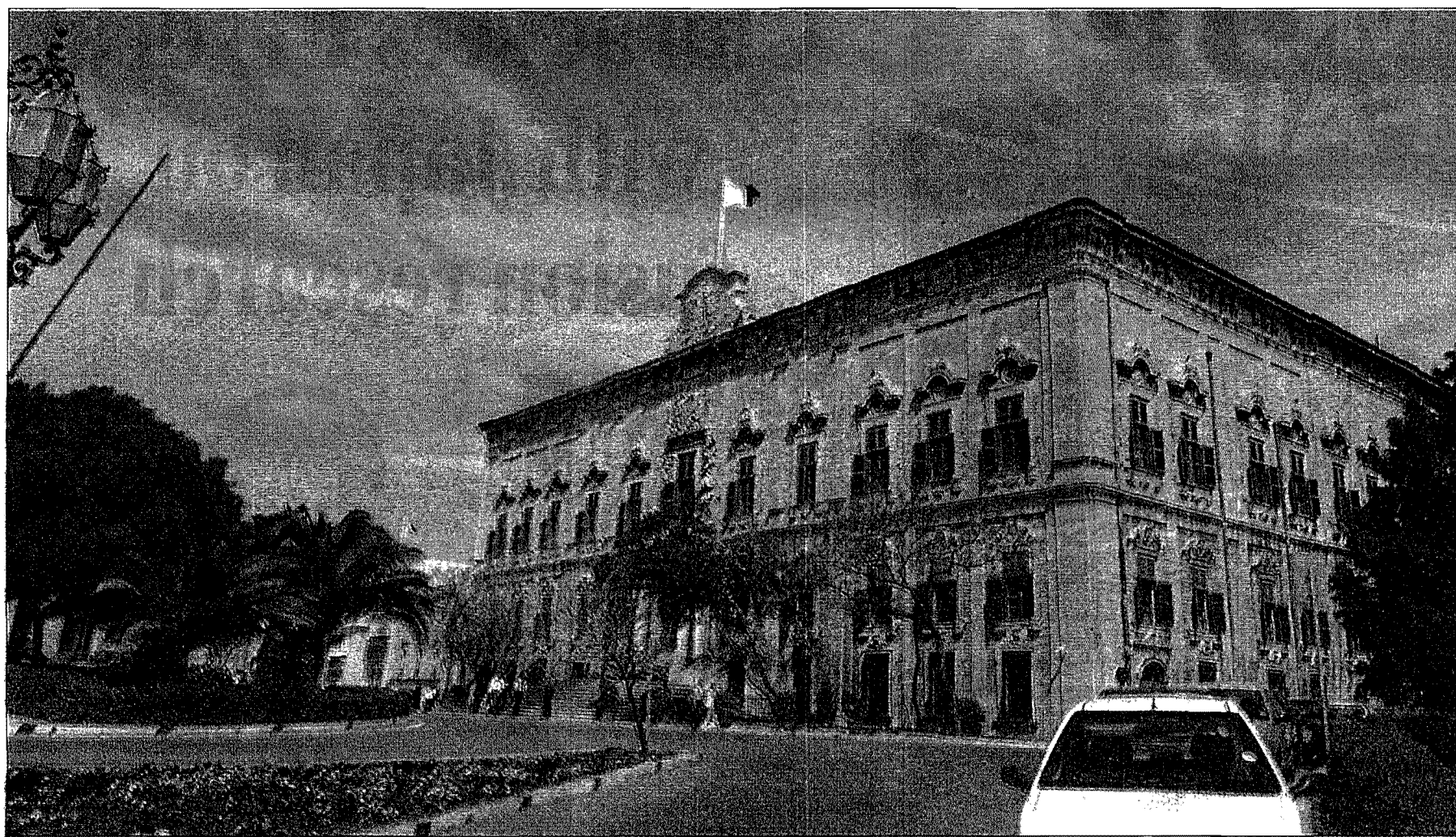


FEATURE



Auberge de Castille

Valletta Day

Valletta Day was marked yesterday. The occasion served to commemorate a city of significant historical, cultural, social, economic and commercial importance. Being a World Heritage Site, the city's cultural importance extends beyond our shores.

To commemorate the day, the Valletta Alive Foundation hosted a reception at the Malta Stock Exchange for members and other guests. Although it was formally launched some six weeks ago, the foundation already has an encouraging number of members.

In its first meetings, the foundation's board of governors has set out five priorities for its first 12 months of work.

One: Extending the membership base is considered vital if the objectives of the foundation are to be met. A sizeable membership base will give the foundation greater credibility and weight in its lobbying. The income generated from membership will enable the foundation to take initiatives in line with its declared objectives. Membership gives individuals, companies and organisations the opportunity to involve themselves and actively work with the foundation to improve our capital city.

Two: The foundation will actively lobby the government and the private sector to invest more to improve the city's building fabric and public spaces. The city is a symbol of Malta's identity and as such the quality of the buildings and spaces is a reflection of the country as a whole. The foundation recognises that there have been several tangible improvements to the city but much more needs to be done, especially when one considers the city's economic and social importance.

Three: To be able to lobby more effectively, the foundation will identify and prioritise the projects and initiatives which will benefit Valletta.

Four: The foundation believes that the historical, cultural and social value of the city warrants a greater sense of pride among the Mal-

John Ebejer

'Valletta is central to Malta's cultural tourism offer.'

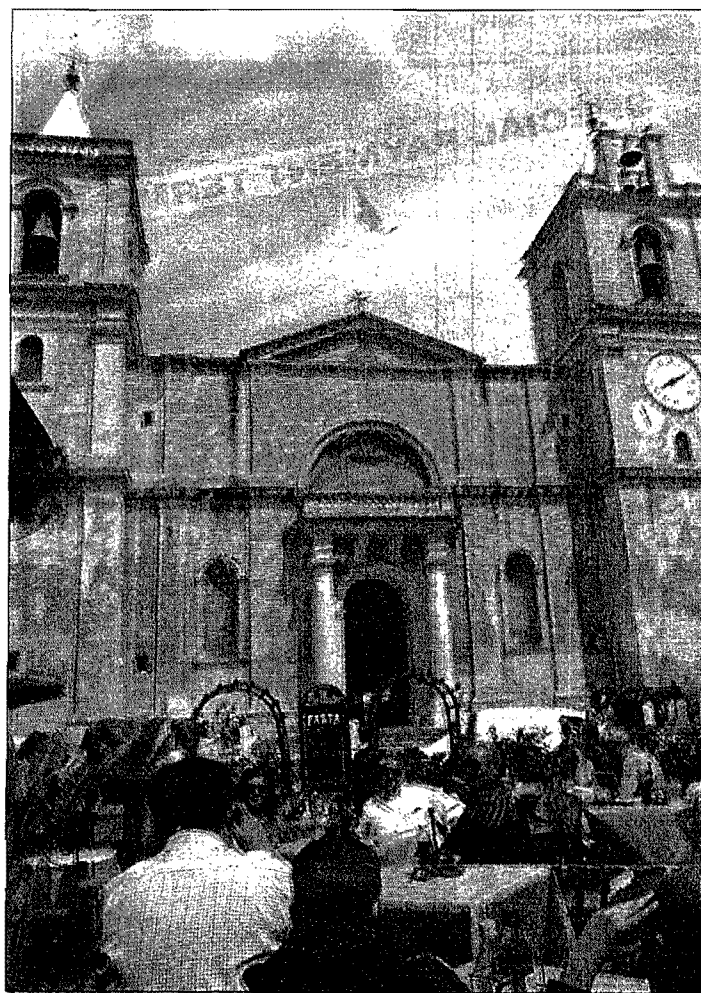
tense and others. Hence, raising awareness of the city's value will be a priority. Pride and awareness of what a city has to offer are pre-requisites for greater public and private sector investment in the city.

Five: Valletta is a crucial part of Malta's product offer. In the long term, our fortified historic cities, Valletta in particular, will provide one of the more important reasons for tourists to visit Malta. Buildings of architectural and historic interest, extensive fortifications, exceptional harbour views and a remarkable history make Valletta a unique city providing an exceptional visitor experience. It is not just a series of visitor attractions which happen to be within walking distance from each other – Valletta's main attraction is in its totality.

Valletta is central to Malta's cultural tourism offer. Although the city is already visited by some one million tourists a year, the city's full tourism potential has yet to be realised, in the sense that its marketing should present the city as a showcase of Malta's cultural heritage. This will benefit the overall tourism industry and Malta's economy.

The foundation is in the process of setting up sub-committees to better assist it in its work. The participation of members in these sub-committees is welcome. It is the intention of the foundation to keep members informed of activities and initiatives.

Mr Ebejer, an architect by profession, is secretary of the Valletta Alive Foundation.



St John's Co-Cathedral