**Daily News Summary - 2.12.2020**

**ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS**

**The ECJ on contactless payments and consumers**

In an article on the Malta Independent, Vanessa Anne Gatt writes how in DenizBank AG v. Association for Consumer Information of Austria decided on the 11 November 2020, the European Court of Justice (ECJ), was asked to set out a preliminary ruling on a number of matters relating to the use of bank cards that are equipped, in particular, with near-field communication functionality (NFC functionality), commonly known as the ‘contactless payment’ function. In particular, the ECJ explained to what extent it was possible for payment service providers to unilaterally amend the terms and conditions applicable to contactless payments and to what extent Payment Service Providers could relieve themselves of responsibility for low-value unauthorised contactless payments.  
  
  
[*Malta-Independent:*](https://www.independent.com.mt) *"The ECJ on contactless payments and consumers / The ECJ ..." page: 8 info: by Vanessa Anne Gatt date: Wednesday, December 2, 2020*

**BOV making plans for possible loss of its US dollar banking**

The Times of Malta reported today the Bank of Valletta is drafting contingency plans in case it loses its final US dollar correspondent banking partner and hopes to reach a settlement in a major litigation case that has hamstrung it for years. Briefing the press yesterday, BOV chief executive Rick Hunkin said a number of alternative options to US dollar correspondent banking are being explored but conceded that these would not be straightforward.  
  
  
[*Malta-Times:*](https://www.timesofmalta.com) *BOV making plans for possible loss of its US dollar banking / BOV making plans for possible loss of its US dollar banking page: 1,2 info: by Ivan Martin date: Wednesday, December 2, 2020*

**GENDER EQUALITY**

**Insensitivity leads to impunity**

A Malta Today editorial says that indifferent ways, two recent developments have cast a spot­light on the ugly realities of domestic violence in Malta. The first was a report by the Council of Europe’s group of experts on domestic violence, GREVIO, which found that – while advances had been made, in terms of setting up structures to stem gender-based violence – the legal system still showed signs of ‘insensitivity’ towards victims: leading to repeat victimisation, and low levels of prosecutions and con­victions.  
  
  
[*Malta-Today:*](https://www.maltatoday.com.mt) *Insensitivity leads to impunity / Insensitivity leads to impunity page: 11 date: Wednesday, December 2, 2020*

**It’s simple: those who love you, would not lay a hand on you**

In an Oped article on Malta Today, MEP Josianne Cutajar wrote how in the first six months of 2020 alone, more than 600 cases of do­mestic violence were reported in Malta, a 15 per cent increase from the previous year. She asks: What are we doing to address the issue? What are we doing to make a change? We had just about concluded our New Year celebrations ear­lier this year, when we had been informed of another femicide in our society.  
  
  
[*Malta-Today:*](https://www.maltatoday.com.mt) *It’s simple: those who love you, would not lay a hand on you / It’s simple: those who love you, would not lay a hand on you page: 13 info: by Josianne Cutajar date: Wednesday, December 2, 2020*

**HEALTH**

**Vaccine for COVID-19: what we know so far**

Times of Malta article throws the spotlight on who will be eligible for the first batch of COVID-19 vaccinations? So far, it is the front-liners – including nurses, pharmacists, police and civil protection officials, who come into contact with the vulnerable – and persons aged over 80, who will be the first to be given an appointment for their vaccination. But this could still change and include more categories. Whether it will also include teachers – as the union of professional educators has insisted – and other vulnerable persons, with a Schedule V document, is yet to be seen.  
  
  
[*Malta-Times:*](https://www.timesofmalta.com) *Vaccine for COVID-19: what we know so far / Vaccine for COVID-19: what we know so far page: 4 info: by Fione Galea Debono date: Wednesday, December 2, 2020*

**Four more deaths bring Covid-19 death toll to 141**

Malta Today reported that two elderly women and two men have died while infected with Covid-19, the Health Ministry said on Tuesday, bringing the total death toll re­ported until noon yesterday to 141. The first case involved a 79-year-old woman who tested positive for coronavirus on 21 November and died at Mater Dei Hospital on 29 November. The death was announced yes­terday. Malta yesterday also registered 102 new Covid-19 cas­es and 83 recov­eries, bringing the total of active cases to 2,086.  
  
  
[*Malta-Today:*](https://www.maltatoday.com.mt) *Four more deaths bring Covid-19 death toll to 141 / Four more deaths bring Covid-19 death toll to 141 page: 2 info: by Kurt Sansone date: Wednesday, December 2, 2020*

**Over 50 direct connections were lost due to the pandemic**

TVM reported that if Malta is to benefit from the eventual post-COVID-19 recovery, it will be crucial for the island to restore or replace the significant number of direct air connections lost during the pandemic, according to a policy note prepared by the Central Bank of Malta. In 2005, Malta had 84 direct air connections but this had improved drastically by 2019 to 125. However, COVID-19 dealt air connectivity a significant blow: in 2020, over 50 direct connections were lost, with just around 70 remaining active. Those dropped included connections to large hubs such as Doha and Dubai, hindering indirect connectivity offered by these hubs, particularly to Asia and Australia. The policy note stressed that policymakers should strive to retain and improve connectivity to large hubs.  
  
  
[*TVM-Malta:*](https://www.tvm.com.mt) *"Over 50 direct connections were lost due to the pandemic ..." info: L-ahbarijiet, 2020-12-01 04:40:00, 00:01:02, by Fiorella Pace date: Tuesday, December 1, 2020 4:40:00 AM CET*

**European regulator to meet on 29 December to decide on first virus vaccine**

In a syndicated article from AFP, the Malta Independent reported the European Medicines Agency will convene a meeting on December 29 to decide if there is enough data about the safety and efficacy of the Covid-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech for it to be approved, the European regulator said on Tuesday. The agency also said it could decide as early as January 12 whether to approve a rival Covid-19 vaccine developed by Moderna Inc.  
  
  
[*Malta-Independent:*](https://www.independent.com.mt) *"European regulator to meet on 29 December to decide on ..." page: 3 date: Wednesday, December 2, 2020*

**INSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS**

**European Parliament approves 'right to disconnect' report**

Maltatoday.com.mt reported the European Parliament has approved a report calling for the right to digitally disconnect. The report was compiled by Labour MEP Alex Agius Saliba. The right to switch off, sometimes called the ‘right to disconnect’, refers to a worker’s right to be able to disconnect from work and refrain from engaging in work-related electronic communications, such as emails or other messages, during non-work hours. This concept has developed as a result of advancements in communication technologies and its impact on people’s daily lives.  
  
  
[*Maltatoday.com.mt:*](https://www.maltatoday.com.mt) *"European Parliament approves 'right to disconnect' report / European Parliament ..." info: by Karl Azzopardi date: Tuesday, December 1, 2020*

**Casa pushes for EU-coordinated state aid to media houses**

The Times of Malta reported that MEP David Casa has insisted that the European Commission should make a proposal for a transparent and unbiased mechanism that would be used for the allocation of state-aid for media houses across Europe. He said that the amounts and the recipients of such funding should be made public and constantly reviewed. Casa made his appeal during a meeting with the Vice-President of the European Commission for Values and Transparency, Vera Jourova, and the European Commissioner for the Internal Market, Thierry Breton.  
  
  
[*Malta-Times:*](https://www.timesofmalta.com) *Casa pushes for EU-coordinated state aid to media houses / Casa pushes for EU-coordinated state aid to media houses page: 5 date: Wednesday, December 2, 2020*

**JUSTICE**

**Rule of law, for the others**

In his weekly Oped article on the Malta Independent, Peter Agius said this last week brought a pot of mixed feelings on Malta’s journey through the European project. On the one hand we learnt of the impending arrival of the Pfizer/biontech vaccine to our shores thanks to the timely action by the European Union. That is a case of Europe acting assertively where needed. On theother hand, on Thursday the European Parliament voted a resolution condemning Poland on its abortion laws supposedly basing itself on rule of law motivations.  
  
  
[*Malta-Independent:*](https://www.independent.com.mt) *"Rule of law, for the others / Rule of law, ..." page: 20 info: by Peter Agius date: Wednesday, December 2, 2020*

**MEMBER STATES - INTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**Shady ‘person of trust’ appointments**

The Times of Malta editorial says the appointment of persons of trust, or political appointees, by cabinet ministers and parliamentary secretaries is a long-standing practice. One can hardly argue against politicians in government wanting people whom they can trust blindly to occupy certain positions, especially in their private secretariats. Regrettably, by time, this position has been increasingly abused. It is now clear that, rather than to ensure the highest level of trust possible, such appointments are made to curry favours, give unjustified ‘promotions’ – read handsome remuneration packages – to friends and, as more recent events have shown, even to serve as henchmen.  
  
  
[*Malta-Times:*](https://www.timesofmalta.com) *Shady ‘person of trust’ appointments / Shady ‘person of trust’ appointments page: 13 date: Wednesday, December 2, 2020*