**Daily News Summary - 1.12.2020**

**CULTURE**

**All towns can now apply to be the European Capital of Culture 2031, applications to be submitted as a region**

It was reported today in The Malta Independent that although every town across the Maltese islands has the opportunity to apply to become the European Capital of Culture 2031, the Valletta Cultural Agency (VCA) said that applications will be put forward to the European Commission (as a region rather than as individual localities. The VCA officially launched the process in preparation for the European Capital of Culture 2031 which it will be leading. Following Valletta 2018 European Capital of Culture (V18), a city in the Maltese islands will be named European Capital of Culture 2031, according to a schedule established by the European Commission. Meanwhile TVM yesterday reported that Maltese towns and villages will have the opportunity to apply for the title of European Capital of Culture 2031 following the inauguration yesterday of a preparatory process undertaken by the Valletta Cultural Agency.  
  
  
[*Malta-Independent:*](https://www.independent.com.mt) *"All towns can now apply to be the European Capital ..." page: 20 info: by Karl Azzopardi date: Tuesday, December 1, 2020*   
  
[*TVM-Malta:*](https://www.tvm.com.mt) *"L-Ahbarijiet..." info: 2020-11-30 20:00:00, 20:00:00, by Daphne Cassar date: Monday, November 30, 2020 8:00:00 PM CET*

**HEALTH**

**Moderna requests US, Europe vaccine approvals after full results**

Website timesofmalta.com yesterday reported that US firm Moderna said that yesterday it was ready to file requests for emergency authorization of its Covid-19 vaccine in the United States and Europe. Moderna have said that the vaccine a high efficacy estimated at 94.1%. Moderna CEO Stephane Bancel said that the company believed that the vaccine may change the course of this pandemic and help prevent severe disease, hospitalizations and death. American pharmaceutical Pfizer and Germany's BioNTech applied for similar approvals last week, and their vaccine could be greenlit in the US shortly after December 10. Local media today also reported that Health Minister Chris Fearne yesterday said that the first people to be vaccinated against Covid-19 in the first weeks of 2021 would be frontline workers and elderly people. Fearne said that these would be advising by a letter with an appointment in order to avoid queues and crowding at clinics. The vaccination will be provided free of charge and Malta has booked enough vaccines to cover the entire population during the first few months. Meanwhile, another four deaths were reported on Sunday, bringing the total number of deaths to 137. Another 121 new cases and 108 recoveries were recorded, resulting in 2,071 active cases.  
  
  
[*In-Nazzjon:*](https://netnews.com.mt) *"Il-vittmi f’pajjizna jitilghu ghal 137..." page: 1 date: Tuesday, December 1, 2020*   
  
[*L-Orizzont:*](https://www.inewsmalta.com) *"Fearne jindika li l-ewwel tilqim tal-Covid-19 b’appuntament / Fearne jindika ..." page: 2 date: Tuesday, December 1, 2020*   
  
[*Malta-Independent:*](https://www.independent.com.mt) *"121 new cases of Covid-19 reported / 121 new cases ..." page: 3 date: Tuesday, December 1, 2020*   
  
[*Malta-Times:*](https://www.timesofmalta.com) *First COVID vaccinations by appointment – Fearne / First COVID vaccinations by appointment – Fearne page: 5 info: by Sarah Carabott date: Tuesday, December 1, 2020*  
  
*Radio-Malta: "L-Ahbarijiet / L-Ahbarijiet..." info: 2020-11-30 18:00:00, 18:00:00, date: Monday, November 30, 2020 6:00:00 PM CET*   
  
[*timesofmalta.com:*](https://www.timesofmalta.com) *Moderna requests US, Europe vaccine approvals after full results / Moderna requests US, Europe vaccine approvals after full results date: Monday, November 30, 2020*

**MIGRATION**

**Court releases four migrants detained in ‘abusive’ policy**

Times of Malta reported today that during a court hearing yesterday the judge ordered the release of four migrants from detention centres, condemning the “abusive and farcical” policy under which they had been kept at closed centres “against their will” for 166 days. The plight of illegally detained migrants came to the fore again last week when four men filed urgent applications requesting immediate release. The court condemned the migrants’ detention and ordered their immediate release, stating that their continued detention lacked a legal basis. In reaction to the judgment Home Affairs Minister Byron Camilleri declared that the country was full up for irregular migrants and said the issue highlighted the difficult situation in which the authorities had found themselves when caring for migrants.  
  
  
[*Malta-Times:*](https://www.timesofmalta.com) *Court releases four migrants detained in ‘abusive’ policy / Court releases four migrants detained in ‘abusive’ policy page: 7 info: by Edwina Brincat date: Tuesday, December 1, 2020*

**RESEARCH, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION**

**Malta had one of worst R&D intensity rates in the EU in 2019**

The Malta Independent reported on Eurostat statistics which showed that in 2019 Malta had one of the worst research and development (R&D) intensity rates in the EU at 0.61%. In the EU the highest R&D intensity was recorded in Sweden, followed by Austria and Germany who all had R&D expenditure above 3% of GDP. Eigh member states recorded a R&D intensity below 1% of GDP. A total of €306 billion was spent on R&D in the EU in 2019 and the EU average as a percentage of GDP stood at 2.19 in the EU in 2019, compared with 2.18% in 2018.  
  
  
[*Malta-Independent:*](https://www.independent.com.mt) *"Malta had one of worst R&D intensity rates in the ..." page: 2 date: Tuesday, December 1, 2020*

**TAXATION**

**MEPs take united stand against EU’s proposal of common tax**

Times of Malta reported today that all Maltese MEPs are united in their resistance to the introduction of any tax harmonisation as the proposed tax amendments would be detrimental to the country and adversely affect Malta’s competitive edge. Nationalist MEP Roberta Metsola and Labour MEP Alfred Sant agreed that any consolidated common tax base would have a disproportionate impact on smaller economies like Malta’s. A webinar was organised yesterday by the European Parliament to shed light on the administrative, legal and political issues related to the stalled EU budget and Malta.  
  
  
[*Malta-Times:*](https://www.timesofmalta.com) *MEPs take united stand against EU’s proposal of common tax / MEPs take united stand against EU’s proposal of common tax page: 4 info: by Matthew Xuereb date: Tuesday, December 1, 2020*

**TRANSPORT**

**IM starts Grand Harbour Clean Air Project to cut cruise liner pollution by over 90%**

The Malta Independent, L-Orizzont and TVM reported on the start of the first phase of Grand Harbour Clean Air Project which is co-financed through the Connecting Europe Facility. The project will cut over 90% of the air pollution that cruise liners and Ro-Ro ships produce at the Grand Harbour cost and will cost €49.9 million in total. Infrastructure Malta secured €21.9 million of the €37 million required for the first phase of this project through EU funds. Infrastructure Malta is planning to complete the first phase of the GHCAP by 2023.  
  
  
[*L-Orizzont:*](https://www.inewsmalta.com) *"Sistema tal-elettriku ghall-cruise ships u Ro-Ros / Sistema tal-elettriku ghall-cruise ..." page: 4 date: Tuesday, December 1, 2020*   
  
[*Malta-Independent:*](https://www.independent.com.mt) *"IM starts Grand Harbour Clean Air Project to cut cruise ..." page: 5 date: Tuesday, December 1, 2020*   
  
*Radio-Malta: "L-Ahbarijiet / L-Ahbarijiet..." info: 2020-11-30 18:00:00, 18:00:00, date: Monday, November 30, 2020 6:00:00 PM CET*   
  
[*TVM-Malta:*](https://www.tvm.com.mt) *"L-Ahbarijiet..." info: 2020-11-30 20:00:00, 20:00:00, by Ruth Castillo date: Monday, November 30, 2020 8:00:00 PM CET*