
GOVERNMENT PROPERTY DIVISION

Joint Office

INTRODUCTION

The Joint Office forms part of the Government Property Division under the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs. The roles of the Joint Office are:

- a) Managing and administering the immovable estate transferred to Government by the Ecclesiastical Authorities in terms of the Ecclesiastical Entities (Properties) Act, Chap. 358;
- b) Validating and verifying the data being transferred to it by the ecclesiastical entities. The scope is to determine the exact value of all the properties transferred so that the necessary adjustments will be made to the original amount of Lm28,067,000 which the Government issued in Bonds in terms of the 1991 Agreement with the Ecclesiastical Authorities.
- c) On completion of the above processes, the Joint Office has to register at the Land Registry all the properties which it administers, as well as those retained by the Ecclesiastical Entities.

Property Administration and Alienations:

In the year 2007, the following properties were alienated:

As per 1996 Scheme	1
As per 2002 Initiative or original deed	383
As per Tenders/Exchange/Direct Disposal/Conversion	<u>50</u>
Total	<u>434</u>

Plots of land were transferred to Enemalta Corporation for the construction of substations and properties were transferred to the Housing Authority for social housing projects.

The Department also received and processed requests for the recognition of emphyteutae and tenants in their respective properties.

2002 Initiative

By the end of the year, the Joint Office had received 5191 applications for the redemption of ground rent and for the purchase of leased premises. This resulted from the announcement made by Government in the Budget Speech for the year 2002, that the government was putting on the market all the properties being administered by the Joint Office and which are either resident-occupied or used as a summer residence.

Of the 4279 applications processed so far, 776 applications were invalid and a further 3173 applicants were informed of the amount of redemption or of the selling price, as determined by established criteria and 330 applicants were given an interim reply. With a view of

hastening the process, the Joint Office farms out to architects in private practice, the valuation of certain properties.

Agriculture Leases Scheme

The Joint Office is also processing applications received by February 2001 in terms of a scheme, whereby persons occupying government-owned land for agricultural purposes without title, were given the opportunity to regularize their position.

Reconciliation, Verification and Registration

Transfer of Information on Properties

During the year 2007, the transfer of information from the Church Administrative Offices to the Joint Office regarding properties transferred to the Government by the Church continued at a steady pace. Up to the end of this year, 24,483 forms concerning properties listed in Annex 8 of the Church/State Agreement, were forwarded to the Joint Office by the Ecclesiastical Entities.

It is to be noted, however, that a large number of correction forms had to be raised or confirmed regarding this information, which corrections, have to be approved by the Control Committee in terms of Section 4 (2) of the Agreement. These corrections entail additions of properties inadvertently left out of the Annexes to the Agreement, deletion of others that were erroneously included, and correction to the capitalized amounts of properties.

In the year 2007, the Control Committee approved 854 of the above mentioned corrections. The Committee also signed 333 property forms, thus confirming the final amount due to the Ecclesiastical Entities in respect of the properties concerned.

During 2007, the Joint Office continued on the embarkation of the strategy to reconcile the values of properties previously owned by the 99 different Ecclesiastical Entities. In fact, during this year the Joint Office has verified and determined the exact value of the properties transferred to the Government of another 4 such Entities, bringing the total of reconciled entities at 51.

Registration of Properties

The Department continued with the registration of property with the Land Registry in terms of Chap 358. During the year under review, 567 properties were registered. The related work entailed the drawing up of relative plans. This brought the total number of properties registered as on 31 December 2007 to 11,119.

The following table shows the number of properties which were registered during the past three years

Year	2005	2006	2007
Registered Properties	731	877	567

Administration

Revenue Collection

Besides the collection of rent of leased properties, the Department identified properties available for disposal in terms of the Disposal of Government Land Act.

The following table shows the comparative figure of revenue collected during the past three years:

	2005	2006	2007
	Lm	Lm	Lm
Rent	511,702	513,211	608,104
Sales	1,836,297	4,653,995	2,128,942
Total	2,347,999	5,167,206	2,737,046

56% of the amount of rent collected during year 2007 consisted of arrears. This was the result of an ongoing enforcement exercise undertaken by the Department in conjunction with the Land Department.

The Control Committee

The Control Committee is a body set up in terms of Article 17 of the 1991 Agreement between the Holy See and the Government of Malta. Two members of the Committee are nominated by the Holy See and two members are nominated by the Government of Malta. Chairmanship of meetings is by rotation. The present members representing the Government of Malta were nominated in January 2002.

The functions of the Control Committee are the promotion and monitoring of the correct and timely application of the provisions of the above-mentioned Agreement with particular reference to the approval of corrections to the Annexes; and the alienation of property and in particular to bonds that have to be issued to the Foundation for Church Schools.

By Legal Notice No. 161/2007 Lm4,438,400 in Government Stock was issued to the Foundation for Church Schools in respect of property alienated in the previous year.

Co-Ordination with the Estate Management Department and the Land Department

The amalgamation of the Joint Office within the Government Property Division continued to be strengthened when, on the 6th November 2007, the Joint Office officially moved from Floriana to premises in Marsamxetto Road, Valletta near the Auberge de Bavière where the Land Department and the Estate Management Departments are situated. The co-ordination and related co-operation of the Joint Office with the latter two Departments falling under the same Division is essential for uniformity in adopting common policies of the Division.

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