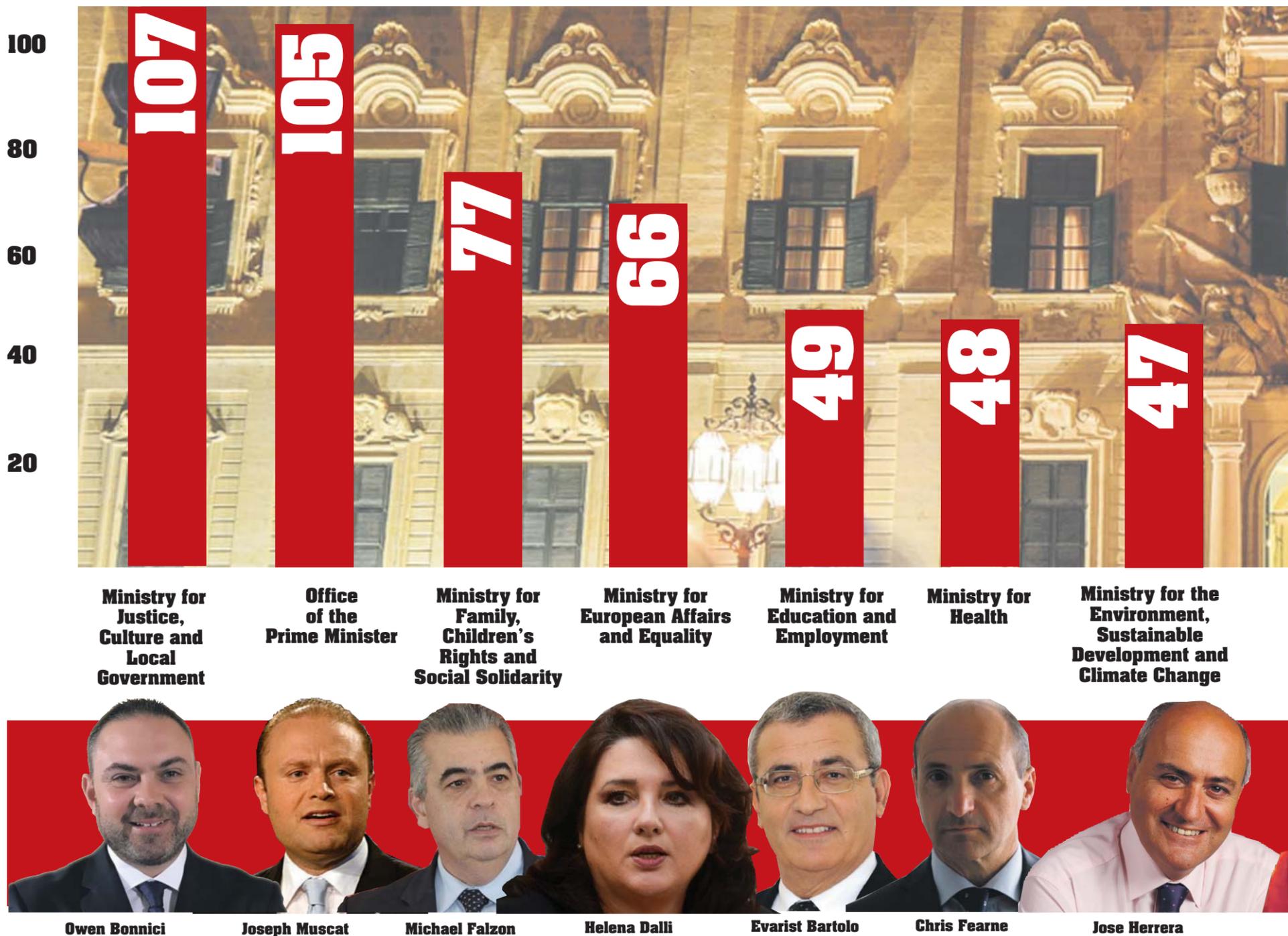


News



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The request asked for job titles, contract types, financial packages, a brief description of daily duties, date of appointment and, where a post is high enough, their names.

While the global sum received totals 683 people in such positions, this is not the full picture. In every response to the Freedom of Information requests, this newsroom was essentially told "that since appointments on Boards are publicly available through the Government Gazette and/or websites, this information is excluded from the scope of the Act." As such, the replies did not include members of government boards and these have not included in the overall figure.

A number of posts are expected to be filled by persons of trust, such as Chiefs of Staff and communications coordinators, but others raise some questions, such as customer care officers or a security guard at the Addolorata Cemetery.

The ministries with the highest number of people employed in positions of trust, as persons of trust, consultants, direct appointees and politically appointed persons were the Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government, and the Office of the Prime Minister, with respectively 107 and 105 persons employed in such positions.

Unique positions

A number of unique positions are also noted in the lists provided by the various ministries. As an example, one of the people listed under the Ministry of Health is a Security Guard/General Service at the Addolorata Cemetery. His job is to investigate disturbances, report any occurrences to his/her su-

perior, to patrol the premises, to prevent and detect signs of intrusion and ensure security of doors, windows, gates and equipment, and to warn persons of rule infractions or violations, and apprehend or evict violators from premises, using force when necessary. The job carries a salary scale 15 attached (maximum €15,700).

Another example is a maintenance officer tasked with coordinating, assisting and inspecting maintenance works in the Ministry for Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity, as well as the Parliamentary Secretariat, and transporting people with disability as directed by said Parliamentary Secretariat, in addition to messenger duties.

Another example of an interesting position listed is that of a maintenance/crane and forklift operator (hard standing facility) at the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department.

A number of other well-known individuals were in certain positions as at October 2017, according to the data provided by the various ministries.

Among them are Zabbar Mayor Marc Vella Bonnici, whose Facebook profile lists him as the Labour Party's International Secretary who is also, according to the information provided, a policy consultant for the Energy and Water Management Ministry.

Malta Development Association boss Sandro Chetcuti is a policy consultant at the Transport and Infrastructure Ministry, Ronnie Pellegrini - Helena Dalli's former Chief of Staff - is now a consultant for the Justice Ministry, and Charlon Gouder is a policy consultant for the Environment Ministry. Dr Yana Mintoff Bland is a part-time consultant with the Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity Ministry, whose job includes

coordinating partnerships with the Parliamentary Secretariat for Local Government, and the NGO called Economists in Action regarding a particular programme called *Ghaqal id-Dar għall Hajja ahjar*.

In addition, a recent Parliamentary Question posed to the Ministry for Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity, asking for details regarding consultants, revealed a few other people who were, for some reason, not on the list provided to this newsroom through the FOI request.

Silvio Scerri is one such person.

Persons of trust v positions of trust

In August 2016, a new policy was drawn up separating the definitions of person of trust and position of trust. This document reads: "Engagement on a trust basis will primarily be classified in terms of whether the individual concerned is being engaged from outside or within the Public Administration. "Individuals engaged from outside the Public Administration will henceforth be termed as 'Persons of Trust'. The duration of the contract shall be either of one year renewable yearly, or for a three-year period renewable for a further period of three years. Ministries may engage such individuals on a full or part-time basis.

"New requests by line ministries for engagement on a Person of Trust basis as Advisors and other specific positions (managerial, technical and/or ancillary functions) invariably require the approval of the Prime Minister. Such requests are to be submitted by the line Permanent Secretary, as endorsed by the respective Minister, and subsequently referred to the Principal Per-

manent Secretary, attn. Director (Management Support), OPM.

"Conversely, Public Officers/Employees engaged on a trust basis will be deemed as occupying a 'Position of Trust' and shall be regulated by a related three-year, renewable contract," the policy document read. "New requests by line ministries for engagement in Positions of Trust invariably require the approval of the Principal Permanent Secretary. Such requests are to be submitted by the line Permanent Secretary, as endorsed by the respective Minister, attn. Director (Management Support)."

Office of the Prime Minister

In most of the government's responses, the salaries were given in terms of salary scales, and this newsroom took this to mean the official schedule of grades, using that information to provide a rough conversion in order for the public to better understand the salary.

The 105 persons at the Office of the Prime Minister, and entities, authorities etc. falling under its remit, include prominent well known members in the Office of the Prime Minister as persons of trust/direct appointments.

Keith Schembri, the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff, is on salary scale 2 (around €41,300), and also receives an allowance of 25% of Salary Scale 7 (Scale 7 as a total, is a maximum of €26,600) in lieu of overtime, a €4,600 transport allowance per annum, a free phone, an additional €2,000 allowance per annum, and a 175 litre maximum fuel entitlement per month. Kurt Farrugia, government's Head of Communications, is on salary scale 3 (€37,900) with additional perks. Other persons listed include Alexander Craus - Head of Govern-