

Can the Commission specify whether it is possible to use works of art to pay off debts to the European Union, as is the case in the Member States when undertakings or individuals contract debts with their national exchequers, whether regulations exist to cover such an eventuality, and whether it is legally empowered to deposit such works of art in national museums in the Member States?

**Answer given by Mr Monti on behalf of the Commission**

*(4 December 1998)*

The Commission is collecting the information it needs to answer the question. It will communicate its findings as soon as possible.

(1999/C 135/163)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-2889/98**

**by Bernard Lehideux (PPE) to the Commission**

*(28 September 1998)*

*Subject:* Possible resumption of EU accession negotiations with Malta following the change of government there

Mr Eddie Fenech Adami's National Party has just won the early elections held on 5 September in Malta.

This is the third term of office as prime minister for Mr Adami, who has always expressed his intention of bringing Malta into the European Union. He was the originator of Malta's membership application, subsequently shelved by the Labour government of Mr Alfred Sant which came to power in 1996.

The new prime minister seems to wish to relaunch Malta's application for membership of the European Union.

1. What procedures will the new Maltese prime minister have to follow in order to resubmit his country's application?
2. When might such an application result in Malta's accession to the European Union?

**Answer given by Mr van den Broek on behalf of the Commission**

*(3 November 1998)*

1. The new Maltese Vice Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs met the Austrian Foreign Minister in Vienna on 14 September 1998 and officially presented a request for the reactivation of Malta's application for Union membership.
2. At the General Affairs Council of 5 October 1998 the Council asked the Commission to present an update of the 1993 opinion on Malta's request for Union membership. It should be recalled that any decisions concerning accession negotiations with Malta are for the Council to take.