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Creativity for energy

Federation of Building Contractors president **Angelo Xuereb** warns that Malta risks failing its energy objectives unless it acts fast.

Whereas the EU is talking about 20 per cent clean energy by 2020, better insulation and zero energy buildings as well as a reduction in overall energy consumption, Malta lags sorely behind.

Malta is not blessed with mountains, rivers or natural resources, but with natural elements which we take for granted. Moreover, Malta is missing out on a number of golden opportunities offered through EU grants and is also slow in reacting to the energy efficiency demands of modern-day Europe.

However, there are things which can be done, including a long-term national education campaign. The government needs to act fast, offering incentives and emphasising the need to move away from conventional, often obsolete thinking within this sphere, and adopt a more creative approach.

Action towards better energy efficiency must come on many levels: individual, professional, governmental and industrial. We talk about energy efficiency and clean renewable energy and how we can reduce energy consumption but, in reality, are we individually doing our best?

Although being an island puts us at somewhat of a disadvantage, being creative could be the solution to this limitation. Malta could benefit more from what is being offered by the EU and by its other neighbours.

The Maltese government, for example, could offer an attractive fixed rate for anyone wishing to

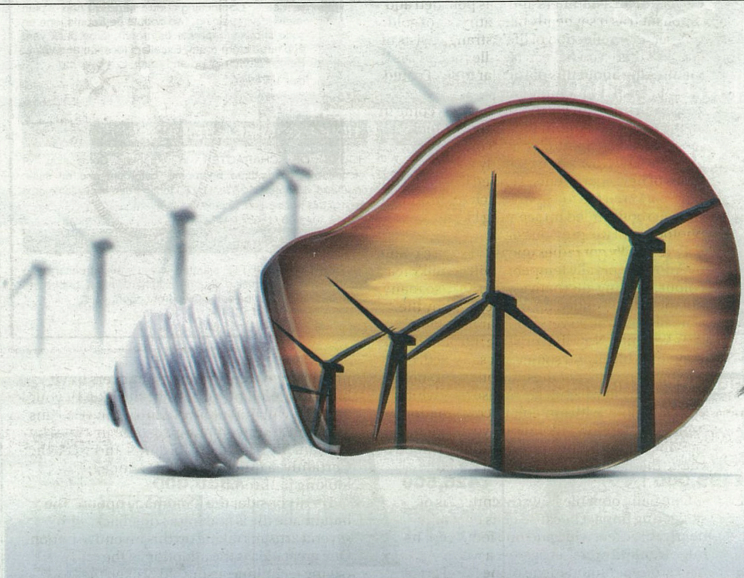
produce clean energy - in any form or concept - and sell it to the national grid. Undoubtedly, this would ensure a number of creative solutions that go beyond solar and wind energy.

Malta has to make the fullest possible use of EU incentives and, given our limitations, this too requires that we adopt a more creative approach. For example, one EU incentive offered is for sharing electricity.

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To benefit from this, the Maltese government could come to an agreement with another European country to use that country's territory to produce alternative clean energy. Although this power would be sold to the other country's network, it would still be considered by the EU as being produced locally.

Moreover, Malta needs to work to reduce its energy consumption. There are various ways of accomplishing this, and creativity and creative thinking is the key. One route is to focus on a revised way to build homes and offices.



We need to find solutions to our specific energy needs given the climate we have. These solutions have to be of an architectural nature. Architects should be well trained in designing energy-efficient buildings and act as consultants to clients.

Our efforts need to be multifaceted, and one cannot ignore the political aspect. Besides agreements and negotiations on a European and a wider international level, we need to look at domestic

energy policies related to energy use.

Dual electricity tariffs for day and night, for example, are one way the present legislation can help distribute better our energy consumption and, ultimately, bring more efficiency.

This generation has a major task ahead of it. The EU is doing a lot, but we too must play our part. We could start by having energy performance buildings and an energy performance nation.

The role of society and the public in general is equally important. We, as a nation, should be aware and educated. The government must invest more in educational campaigns and public relations.

It should also be clear in its fiscal incentives and liabilities for not performing. Malta cannot achieve this overnight, but we must turn words into action without further delays to leave a cleaner planet for future generations.



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