

'Confidential' documents on Konrad Mizzi projects leaked to Yorgen Fenech

Mizzi urged Fenech to 'delete Whatsapp' after losing phone

National Government Crime Konrad Mizzi

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Yorgen Fenech (inset) was given the inside track on various projects and initiatives spearheaded by Konrad Mizzi.

Prominent businessman Yorgen Fenech was given privileged access to confidential documents and correspondence for at least three projects and ventures spearheaded by former energy minister Konrad Mizzi.

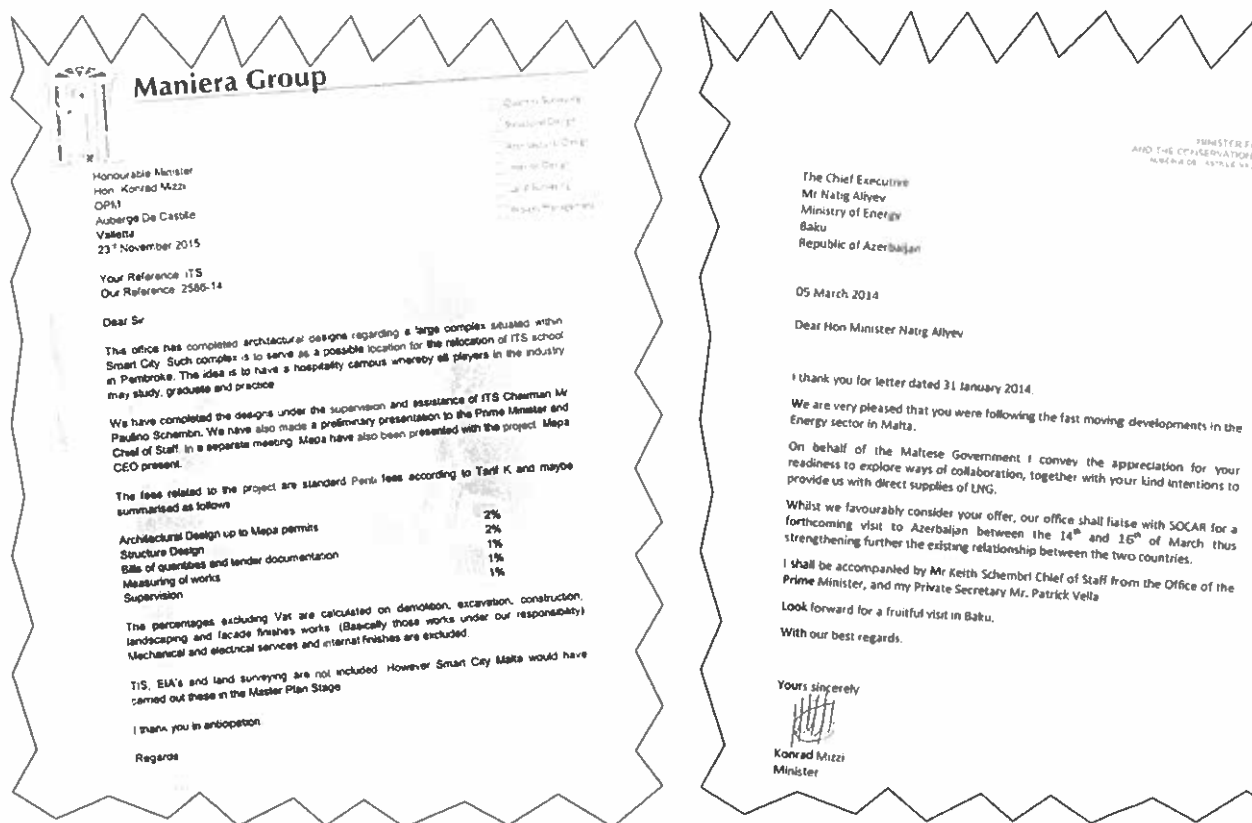
The blatant tipping off about government plans even led Fenech to draft an agreement to take a €5 million cut to help a foreign company win a planned tender for the relocation of the ITS campus and hotel at Smart City.

Fenech was also privy to documents marked as “confidential” addressed to Mizzi in 2013 about the potential privatisation of Enemalta's petroleum division.

This included an “interim presentation” about the proposed privatisation dated July 2013, at a time when Enemalta was assessing a bid put in by a consortium led by Fenech to build and run a new power station.

Fenech, who has since been charged in connection with Daphne Caruana Galizia's murder, was also given the inside track on plans by Azerbaijan's government to strengthen its ties with Malta, particularly in the energy sector.

Times of Malta is informed this included correspondence in March 2014 between Mizzi and Azerbaijan's energy minister about the Azeri government's “kind intentions” to directly supply Malta with LNG.



Both these letters addressed to Konrad Mizzi made their way into Fenech's possession.

The correspondence discussed a planned visit by Mizzi to Azerbaijan, accompanied by prime minister Joseph Muscat's then chief of staff Keith Schembri.

A month after the visit, Mizzi ordered Enemalta to explore hedging agreements with Azerbaijan's state-owned energy company Socar.

The National Audit Office had slammed the lack of transparency behind the hedging deal.

Fenech's arrest in November 2019 on suspicions of complicity in journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia's murder led to the resignation of Muscat, Mizzi and Schembri from the government.

Public in the dark, Fenech enlightened

At the time of the March 2014 correspondence given to Fenech, the public had largely been kept in the dark about the government's plans to cosy up to Azerbaijan.

The government was only forced to disclose its plans after it was revealed how the former prime minister, accompanied by Schembri and Mizzi, secretly flew to Azerbaijan in

December 2014 for direct negotiations with Azeri president Ilham Alijev.



The December 2014 trip to Azerbaijan led by then prime minister Joseph Muscat was carried out under a veil of secrecy.

Alijev's two daughters would later park millions of euros in Malta at the now defunct Pilatus Bank.

Suspicious that Mizzi could have been trading in influence are further compounded by the fact that Fenech was handed over detailed 2015 government plans for the relocation of the ITS campus from St Julian's to Smart City.

Mizzi did not respond to a Times of Malta request for comment about whether he was the one leaking information to Fenech.

The plans reveal intentions for the new Smart City campus to include a 270-bed hotel, one of the core businesses of Tumas Group, the business conglomerate Fenech used to run.

Fenech was given complete access to the plans, which cost taxpayers €500,000 thanks to a direct order given by Mizzi's ministry.

Targeted €5m Smart City hotel tender cut

The documents given to Fenech even included a letter and cost breakdown addressed to Mizzi by the architecture firm contracted to draw up the Smart City hotel plans.

Sources privy to Fenech's correspondence with third parties say the murder suspect told associates that the Smart City campus project would be put up for an €80 million tender.

Fenech even drew up a draft project development agreement to act as a consultant for an international infrastructure company that he tipped off about the planned tender.

The agreement said the Smart City contract was expected to be awarded between September and December 2018.



The area that was earmarked for the new ITS Smart City campus.

Fenech's targeted cut for helping the company win the tender was to be €5 million, according to the draft document.

The business magnate's lawyers did not respond to questions by Times of Malta on whether Mizzi was the one leaking information to their client.

The lawyers said Fenech has never been involved in any of the undertakings in question.

Around the time of the planned tender, Times of Malta and Reuters revealed Mizzi's and Schembri plans in 2015 to receive up to €2 million per year from 17 Black, an offshore company owned by Fenech.

The Smart City campus plans appear to have since been put on the backburner.

Despite a reshuffle by Muscat in 2016 that saw Mizzi's energy portfolio removed in response to the Panama Papers scandal, the former prime minister kept Mizzi in charge of the government's all powerful privatisation entity Projects Malta right up until his resignation in November 2019.

Projects Malta has been at the centre of multiple "public-private partnerships" that have been mired in corruption allegations, including the Vitals Global Healthcare scandal.

'Delete Whatsapp'

Mizzi was questioned by police last year over his Whatsapp messages with Fenech in 2019.

Sources say Mizzi urged the 17 Black owner to "delete Whatsapp" after Fenech lost his phone during a January 2019 trip to Miami.

Fenech assured the then-minister the phone had been remotely wiped, sources privy to the exchanges say.



Konrad Mizzi heading in for police interrogation.

The messages expose the extremely close relationship Mizzi enjoyed with Fenech.

Sources say the messages are littered with kisses and “miss you” sent by the minister to Fenech.

Mizzi even sent Fenech links to articles showing how he had dropped various libel cases, including against Times of Malta, that would have led to difficult questions on the witness stand about his planned Panama dealings with the 17 Black owner.

Fenech expressed his agreement with the libel cases being dropped.

Prime Minister Robert Abela kicked Mizzi out of the Labour Party last year after Times of Malta exposed how Fenech had taken a cut on Enemalta’s Montenegro wind farm deal, in yet another project spearheaded by the former energy minister.

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Fenech had offered to blow the lid on government corruption upon his arrest for suspected complicity in the Caruana Galizia murder case, in a failed bid for clemency on the murder charges.

Fenech has yet to offer up any concrete details about the alleged corruption.

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