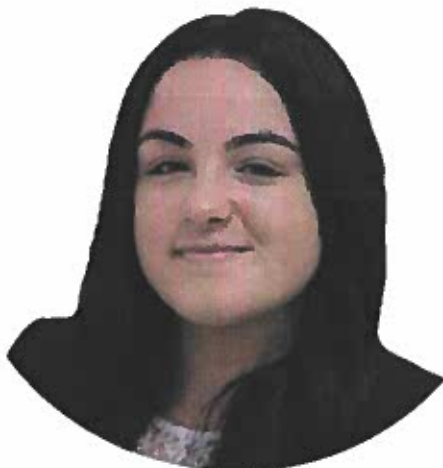


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## Spiteri Gingell 'no gospel' on management issues – Tonio Fenech on PAC testimony

Spiteri Gingell tried to hide his misgivings by shifting the attention onto the finance ministry - former minister Tonio Fenech



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by **Miriam Dalli**

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Former Enemalta CEO David Spiteri Gingell chose to turn the spotlight onto the Finance Ministry instead of taking responsibility for the operations of the fuel procurement committee under his chairmanship, former Finance Minister Tonio Fenech has claimed.

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Reacting to Spiteri Gingell's surprising comments during Monday's Public Accounts Committee, Fenech lambasted Spiteri Gingell for blaming him for his abrupt resignation when the former CEO "should have been answering questions on the committee's modus operandi".

"It was clear that Spiteri Gingell tried to hide his misgivings by shifting the attention onto the Ministry for Finance," Fenech told MaltaToday.

"He never declared whether he felt the FPC's operations were satisfying or not. He only had one simple question to answer but didn't."

Comparing Spiteri Gingell's hearing to another former chairman, Edmund Gatt Baldachino, Fenech noted that the latter had felt there was something which had to be improved within the fuel procurement committee and requested an audit to be carried out.

"Not the same could be said about Spiteri Gingell," Fenech commented.

Spiteri Gingell, who served as the state utility's CEO between July 2007 and June 2008, was the third witness to appear before the Public Accounts Committee discussing the Auditor General's findings into Enemalta's fuel procurement between 2008 and mid-2011.

But before the PAC members could start questioning him, Spiteri Gingell said he wanted to make a declaration: he revealed the clashes he had had with Tonio Fenech – both as parliamentary secretary in 2007 and finance minister in 2008 – while trying to carry out an overhaul of Enemalta's management infrastructure.

Spiteri Gingell was headhunted by former Investments Minister Austin Gatt to head Enemalta Corporation. Spiteri Gingell said he accepted on the premise that he would be allowed to do all it took to implement the necessary changes.

But as months passed, the former CEO complained that he could not implement change because "decisions were being taken from South Street [the Finance Ministry], who in their wisdom were not seeing the gravity of the problem".

The bone of contention lay in the management infrastructure that Spiteri Gingell wanted to strengthen, but which he claims found resistance from the Finance Ministry. Fenech in turn said that Spiteri Gingell's plan was to appoint 45 managers, which alone would have cost some €5.5 million. "This didn't even include the secretaries to assist the managers.

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