

BirdLife Malta appoints new Executive Director

Title

BirdLife Malta has announced its appointment of Mr Paul Debono as the organisation's new Executive Director. A dedicated environmentalist who was previously Greenpeace Mediterranean's Executive Director (2001-2005) as well as being an active volunteer of BirdLife Malta, Mr Debono holds a degree in Accountancy from the University of Hull. Mr Debono was born to Maltese and German parents in Malta in 1966, has lived in several countries including Switzerland, Denmark and the United Kingdom and has been based back in Malta since 1990. Prior to joining BirdLife Malta as Executive Director, he was the General Manager of a German IT company based in Malta. Speaking at today's press conference in Valetta, Mr. Debono said he was "honoured to be a part of the highly professional team at BirdLife Malta, which has grown significantly over the last few years." He also told press that the organisation was committed to raising the standards of scientific research which is central to BirdLife's conservation work. "Our illegal hunting surveillance will continue to be one of our top priorities and we hope to see significant increases in the law enforcement efforts against these illegal activities that threaten not only Malta's but also Europe's avifauna". Under outgoing Executive Director Tolga Temuge (2006-2010), BirdLife Malta had been the only Maltese entity so far to secure EU funds under the LIFE funding scheme, resulting in 500,000 Euros entering the Maltese economy and being spent on nature conservation locally. Mr Temuge spoke at the press conference of his experience in Malta: "The country's environment will only be properly protected when the politicians realise that what they see as political challenges can actually become opportunities. By maintaining status quo for their personal political interest, whether it is on spring hunting or illegal occupation of the countryside, they are actually harming Malta's tourism economy and causing severe damage to what is left of the islands fragile ecosystem." BirdLife Malta, established in 1962, is Malta's oldest environmental NGO. It will celebrate its 50th anniversary next year. Mr Debono is the organisation's third director. www.birdlifemalta.org
