

MEMORANDUM TO CABINET  
BY THE PRIME MINISTER

Setting up of a Broadcasting Station: Deutsche Welle

Following the decision taken on the 30th July, 1969 to the effect that Deutsche Welle be informed that the Government is interested in their proposal to operate a relay station in Malta and to provide the Government with a 500 Kw short/medium wave radio station but that it had certain reservations, mostly of a political and constitutional character to be made known after a formal request has been made, discussions were held with Dr. Johannes Gross, Deputy Director General of Deutsche Welle on the 4th August, 1969.

Deutsche Welle are asking for a licence for a period of twenty-five years. Their activities would be limited to the relaying of programmes in the German, Arabic, English and French languages broadcast from Germany in which no commercial advertising will be included. Deutsche Welle are bound by statute to respect the moral convictions and religious beliefs of their listeners; they would not, moreover, broadcast any material which may be construed as interference or intervention in the internal affairs of Malta or which might damage Malta's good relations with other Governments or nations. They would be prepared to submit periodically schedules of programmes and a summary of contents to the Government and to leave the responsibility for international frequency matters in the hands of the Government.

In return for the licence sought, Deutsche Welle are offering to construct at their own expense and hand over to the Government "for operation by the Broadcasting Authority" a 500 Kw radio station which would operate on short or medium wave. This station would be equipped also at their expense with studios of sufficient capacity for a full 24-hour programme schedule. Deutsche Welle are also prepared to send technical and programme advisers at no cost to the Government and to train Maltese personnel in the technical

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and journalistic fields at their Broadcasting Training Centre in Cologne.

From literature supplied by Deutsche Welle it transpires that it is the policy of the Corporation to set up a decentralised chain of transmitters in order to get nearer to the listener and so improve the volume and quality of its broadcasts. Its plans include relay stations for America, South West Europe, Asia and Africa, and one such station has in fact been set up. This is located at Kigala, Republic of Ruanda, under a licence contract signed in 1963. Under that agreement, the German Government pledged to supply the Ruandian Republic with a 50 Kw transmitter within the framework of development aid. Deutsche Welle accommodated the transmitter in its own buildings and operates it together with Ruandian personnel as Radio Ruanda.

In considering the proposal it would be relevant to keep in mind that fifteen foreign concerns have shown an interest to set up an overseas commercial broadcasting station in Malta and that a variety of inducements have been proposed e.g. the free provision of broadcasting equipment to the Government, a sharing of profits through shareholding or taxation and the provision of free airtime.

The attractiveness of the offer made by Deutsche Welle has therefore to be viewed against the background of these proposals, since basically the Government's interest lies in the obtainment of a broadcasting station and studio and the technical know-how for their operation free of charge and not in the proposed relay of foreign-originated programmes overseas. The attractiveness of the offer consequently is directly related to the intended use and operations of the station/studios. It will therefore be necessary to examine in depth the various possibilities e.g. the use of the station for overseas or local broadcasting on a commercial or non-commercial basis, its joint use for local and overseas broadcasting, etc.

Hon. Ministers may wish to consider the above and agree that:

- (a) Deutsche Welle be informed that the Government has no objection in principle to the proposal;
- (b) Deutsche Welle be asked to advise the Government on the question of the recurrent financial

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commitments it would have to assume to operate the station/studios and to submit details of the contract entered into with the Government of the Republic of Ruanda and a draft licence/agreement which, after consideration by the Government, <sup>might</sup> would serve as a basis for further negotiation in detail;

- (c) detailed examination be made, ~~preferably in consultation with the Broadcasting Authority,~~ of the possible use, management and operation of the station/studios.

12th August, 1969.

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