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Fighting spirit

One would not readily link traditional karate with financial services, but Franco Azzopardi, partner at MGI Malta proudly displays his certificates as accountant and auditor in his Fgura office side by side with his qualifications in the ancient Japanese sport.

Mr Azzopardi has just graduated Master of Science in Finance from the University of Leicester, specialising in corporate finance. He followed his three-year course while also continuing to hone his skills in karate.

Mr Azzopardi is a fourth dan blackbelt and last year competed in the European Championships of Traditional Karate, placing fourth with another member of the MGI team, Omar Azzopardi. He also serves as chairman of the Malta Sports Council.

"Karate has helped strengthen in me the values of duty, rectitude and honesty," Mr Azzopardi said, adding that his training helped him in the areas of strategy, precision, control and discipline.

His specialisation in corporate finance was itself part of a strategy to enable MGI Malta to become more active in merger business in Europe.

"There isn't much merger-related business in Malta, but there is a boom in Europe, especially in the UK, and we plan to participate in it through our association with UK companies," Mr Azzopardi said.

The latest specialised assignment related to corporate finance entrusted to MGI Malta was a financial due diligence on Maltacom requested by a large Dubai corporation. The MGI team, lead by Mr Azzopardi and supported by MGI Birmingham, worked closely with representatives from UBS Investment Bank, Linklaters and GVTH, a leading law firm which was responsible for the legal due diligence.

Mr Azzopardi worked for Deloitte (at that time, Deloitte Haskins and Sells), in Malta, Rome and Turin. He also gained experience in Financial Due Diligence work carried out for SKF (Sweden), and special purpose investigations for Microsoft Corporation. He was at that time promoted to manager status.

In 1990, he joined George Farrugia, then a sole practitioner to set up MGI Malta.

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