

PRESS RELEASE

6th July 2018

Prime Minister Answers Malta Chamber Members' Questions

The Hon Prime Minister Dr Joseph Muscat took questions from members of the Malta Chamber during a dialogue session on 6th July. The dialogue session 'Question Time with the Prime Minister' offered members with a unique opportunity to voice their concerns to the Prime Minister who was accompanied by senior members of the cabinet of Ministers.

Welcoming the Prime Minister, Chamber President Mr Frank V. Farrugia noted how the Chamber prides itself with being centrally placed to continuously offer ideas and suggestions for the benefit and competitiveness of the country.

"Our proposals are always prompt, genuine, objective and meaningful and more often than not, we prefer to discuss them directly with you and your team, away from the cameras" Mr Farrugia said.

The President said that the dialogue session exposed the Prime Minister and his team to the issues being faced by the business community. Listing topics that were on the national agenda, he mentioned the traffic situation and the negative effects this was having on businesses, acute labour shortages, public holidays falling on a weekend, the introduction of carers leave, the importance of upgrading the island's infrastructure, the simplification of bureaucratic practices, the preservation of the country's reputation, abuse in free movement of goods as well as waste and other environmental challenges.

Mr Farrugia also mentioned the matter of energy tariffs for business, as he noted that Malta's businesses remain with amongst the highest commercial energy rates in Europe, to the detriment of competitiveness.

Tackling the issue of labour market shortages, Mr Farrugia thanked the Prime Minister for offering the Chamber the opportunity to voice its researched position and recommendations to the cabinet of Ministers in May. "We look forward to come again to present our proposals for the provision of a Logistics Park which could serve to generate further revenue and value-added to the country from existing infrastructure" he said.

Focusing on the Beverage Container Refund System (BCRS), the President said that the Chamber did not necessarily agree with the whole methodology proposed by the Authorities. "Recently, we came together with GreenPak Coop, Green MT and the GRTU with whom we have signed a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at presenting constructive feedback to government and recommending a viable alternative solution to the scheme set out in the consultation document. We, along with the other three organisations involved, firmly believe that industry and the private sector are capable of managing the system with improved efficiency and cost-effectiveness, whilst Government should limit its role to that of regulator" he concluded.

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