

PRESS RELEASE

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Balanced Decisions Needed in Siting Healthy Investment Projects

The Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry believes in the merits of foreign direct investment as a key factor in Malta's path towards continued economic growth. To this end, it is satisfied to note the recent announcement of Jordanian investment in Malta in the field of Education which is one of the economic sectors identified for growth in the Chamber's Economic Vision document.

On the other hand, the Malta Chamber shares the reservations expressed in various quarters to the fact that the project is so far planned to take place on pristine agricultural land falling as an Outside Development Zone.

In its Economic Vision, the Malta Chamber expresses the view that "the undertaking of an urban regeneration programme should become Malta's strategic focus towards which the building and construction sector should be directed, channeling investment in regeneration as against the continued and unnecessary development of green field areas (recommendation 45)".

Moreover, the Malta Chamber believes that "It is imperative that decisions made today take into account the welfare of future generations (recommendation 47)".

Consequently, the Malta Chamber is of the firm belief that the project in question can provide the opportunity to retrofit and/or redevelop a building/area which has fallen in disuse. This approach would add value to a disused or undervalued area in the South, fulfilling the core aim of this project in the first place. This would also underline the value of sustainable use of land.

To this end, the Malta Chamber took note of the objections made by the Opposition by means of a press conference held on Wednesday and agrees that alternative sites be found for the project. It agrees with the suggestion to retrofit and redevelop disused sites as a worthy alternative location, such as the former St Luke's Hospital, or, if this has been designated for another project, a similar site.

On the other hand, it cannot agree with the suggestion made by the opposition to site the development on land designated for industrial purposes, such as the mentioned ex-Dowty factory, because this is in very short supply in Malta and therefore should not be considered for any other purpose.