



# PRESS RELEASE

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## Union Membership should be a Free Choice – Malta Employers' Association, Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry, Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association

In a reaction to the Prime Minister's statement in parliament, where he encouraged a discussion about possibility of introducing an obligation for workers to be part of a union, and for all companies to be associated with an employer organisation, the Malta Employers' Association, the Malta Chamber of Commerce Enterprise and Industry and the Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association stressed that the decision to join a union or employer body should be left entirely up to the individual employee or company to decide.

They insisted that the right to freedom of association is enshrined in ILO directives, and the freedom of association implies also the freedom to disassociate oneself from either a trade union or employer organisation. Compulsory membership does not add to anyone's rights.

On the contrary it diminishes individual freedom by removing the right not to form part of any organisation. The bodies agreed that there should not be any barrier to keep anyone from exercising the right to associate, but ultimately the decision rests with the individual as a free choice. It is up to the organisations to keep themselves in tune with the needs of their target publics to increase their membership.

They added that, according to the trade unions' annual declarations to the Registrar of Trade Unions at the Department for Employment and Industrial Relations, Malta has among the highest rate of unionised employees in the EU. This is a clear indication that employees are not hindered in any way from becoming trade union members if they see value in such affiliation.

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**END**