

# PRESS RELEASE

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## Chamber Encouraged by Alitalia/Etihad Partnership and Offers Support towards a Successful Conclusion for all Stakeholders

The Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry welcomes developments relating to Air Malta and its strategic partnership with Alitalia/Etihad.

The Chamber has always underlined the strategic importance of Air Malta to our economy, not least the Tourism sector. Other sectors such as manufacturing amongst others are completely reliant on timely and reliable supply of components and raw materials for their competitive operation. Thus the national airline plays a pivotal role in this equation.

The Chamber recognizes the efforts and results of the difficult restructuring process to bring the airline's finances back in the black. However we must understand that challenges of competitiveness remain real, and these require further improvements in order to achieve complete viability.

The Chamber calls on all parties involved to put the national interest and the long-term interest of the airline as a foremost priority of all considerations in this sensitive matter of utmost long-term economic importance.

In this vein, the Malta Chamber is keen to offer all its help to assist in the relocation process of workers if this is at all required. The Chamber is confident that the current strong economic climate, coupled with the skills of the workers involved, will contribute towards a swift absorption in the labour market to the benefit of workers and private employers alike.

This strategic partnership is being regarded as a new beginning for Air Malta. The step announced yesterday is indeed the first in a long process that the Chamber hopes will come to a successful conclusion to lead to a more stable future for the national airline, in which Air Malta will find its place in the international aviation scene.

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