

PRESS RELEASE

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The Malta Chamber Cautions Against EU Law Which Threatens the Competitiveness of the Maltese Logistics Industry

The Malta Chamber is following with concern the developments regarding the EU's mobility package, and is monitoring closely through the Brussels Office of the Malta Business Bureau – its EU-policy arm.

Of particular interest to Chamber members is the setting of onerous and unnecessary requirements on haulage companies by the Package to bring their trucks back to base every eight weeks. In essence, this translates to 6 times every calendar year which multiplied by the 5 days each time spends at sea each time it returns back to Malta means 30 days of productivity per truck.

“Placing such requirements on haulage companies is incredibly burdensome for companies based in countries which are geographically disconnected from the Single Market and at the periphery of Europe,” stated Malta Chamber President, David Xuereb. “This measure would penalise Maltese operators unfairly with disproportionate costs. It is most unfortunate that such a measure was created with ulterior protectionist motives in mind, rather than the environment or the actual benefit of drivers”, said Perit Xuereb.

Contrary to how this matter is being wrongly portrayed in the media, the Chamber and its members have no objection whatsoever with the proposed requirements in the same law for rest periods for drivers. Indeed, rest periods of drivers are already in place and are surely not the reason why the Chamber is objecting to this EU proposal. Workers' rights must be fully safeguarded but must not be used as an excuse to take decisions that are illogical or depart from the principles of better regulation and fair competition in the Single Market.

It is more than clear to the Malta Chamber that such a measure would 'unnecessarily' create massive barriers for haulage companies to providing their services on the continent, making the Single Market much harder to access, with consequential effect on Maltese industry competitiveness and employment.

This is not to mention the so-called 3-7-4 “cabotage” rule which allows every truck a maximum of seven days to make up to three pick-ups or drop-offs after which they must leave the country and not return before four days. Protectionism of local truckers against foreign truckers would seem to be the reason behind this rule which again penalises operators from a small economy like Malta with typically a larger number of small consignments to make per trip.

Consequently, the Chamber reaffirms therefore that the European Institutions, without exception, take into account the different realities of each Member State when enacting legislation and that the different challenges imposed on operators from all corners of the EU in enjoying the benefits of the Single Market. Furthermore, it is imperative that legislation is not drafted with a “one size fits all” approach and that it considers the particular specificities of all Member States including those on the peripheral boundaries of the EU, such as Malta's.

The Malta Chamber is ready to provide all necessary assistance to our haulage companies, also through the Malta Business Bureau's Brussels office in order to rectify this unfortunate consequence of poor legislation which unfortunately obstructs rather than enables the proper function of the European Single Market.

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