PRESS RELEASE

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Teachers to be exposed to the realities of industry in second edition of voluntary programme

Welcoming guests to the Malta Chamber, Deputy President Marisa Xuereb said that it was clearly obvious that those countries which were not investing enough in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM subjects), would eventually fall behind in terms of competitiveness.

Ms Xuereb, was welcoming teachers and participating companies to the launch of the second edition of the 'GO4Industry - Teacher Internship Programme', which is aimed at exposing teachers of science subjects in secondary schools, to the opportunities and technologies in Malta's private sector. In turn, the programme helps teachers become more knowledgeable and better positioned to guide their students towards their future careers.

"Research, Development and Innovation are some of the key requisites for businesses to remain relevant and competitive in the long-term. For companies to be innovative and carry out R&D, we need enough people with the right skills and knowledge, together with a long-term economic strategy which is based on STEM that actively supports R&D and innovation" Ms Xuereb said.

The Deputy President said that the main issues being faced by businesses at the moment and in the foreseeable future were those related to the shortages of labour, with most companies having vacancies they were unable to fill, translating into loss of business, loss of career opportunities, and loss of economic growth for the country as a whole.

"We desperately need to find solutions for this issue – both short-term solutions and longer-term solutions. Educators are our partners in the longer-term solutions. And we see teachers of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics – STEM subjects – in particular, as key partners in addressing these challenges" Xuereb said.

Quoting the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), Ms Xuereb said that it was estimated that by 2025 approximately 26% of all jobs would be in high-level occupations in science, engineering, healthcare, business and teaching. This was further supported by research among Chamber members who said that in the future, they would be requiring employees with certain technical and industry-specific skill sets which were currently in short supply.

"We are here today as a result of our forward-looking approach to achieve a sustainable environment where the labour market adequately meets the needs of the economy, and the jobs we create constantly improve the quality of life of our people – and our teachers have a key role to play in achieving these goals" Ms Xuereb noted.

"The influence of teachers on their students is considerable, through the inspirational role that teachers can have in young people's lives. We rely on these teachers to pass on the insight they gain through their experiences in industry to their students. These interactions are

essential in order to eradicate misconceptions and educate everyone on the exciting opportunities in Malta's industry today" the Deputy President concluded.

The second edition of the 'GO4Industry - Teacher Internship Programme' is the result of a voluntary collaboration between leading companies and sciences teachers in secondary schools. It is organised by the Ministry for Education and Employment together with the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry.

The launch was also addressed by Mr Stephen Cachia Director General at the Ministry for Education and Employment, and featured a panel discussion with the participation of Mr James Magro – Biology teacher and intern at Simonds Farsons Cisk PLC; Ms Mariella Galea – Learning and Devlopment and Performance Manager, Simonds Farsons Cisk PLC; Mr Andre Fenech – Head of Policy Development, Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry; and Mr Gaetano Bugeja – Director, Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes.

Certificates of participation in the first edition of 'GO4Industry - Teacher Internship Programme' were also distributed during the event.

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