

PRESS RELEASE

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Chamber of Commerce welcomes Government's efforts to implement Venice Commission recommendations

The Malta Chamber of Commerce welcomes the letter sent to the Council of Europe's Venice Commission yesterday by the Ministry for Justice, Equality and Governance outlining the Government's efforts to implement the recommendations made by the Commission to the Maltese Government in December 2018.

This document focuses amongst others, on the appointment mechanism of members of Judiciary, powers vested to the Prime Minister and persons of trust.

These were all themes listed in the Chamber's document titled "Ethical Business Calls for Change – a manifesto for Good Governance by the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry" published in January of this year. This document was meant to serve as a blueprint to guide the authorities to implement the necessary reforms.

In his first reactions to this letter, the President of the Malta Chamber Perit David Xuereb said that this is a step in the right direction, The Chamber is satisfied to note that a number of its recommendations have been taken on board by the Government.

"The Malta Chamber has always taken good governance matters with much resolve, and late last year appointed a high-level multidisciplinary team that worked incessantly to assist The Malta Chamber of Commerce present a manifesto on the subject to the new Prime Minister Robert Abela days after he was sworn in" said Perit David Xuereb. "We continue to take the matter very seriously because it is only with good governance can the Economic Vision we published in February become a reality"

The Malta Chamber welcomes the reform of the Permanent Commission Against Corruption (PCAC) which was not considered sufficiently independent of the executive and has limited powers in practice.

Another measure is related to reducing certain powers of appointment from the Prime Minister to cabinet ministers and increasing the powers currently vested to the President of the Republic.

One final reference should be made to the reforms relating to the appointment of persons of trust. The Chamber argued that persons of trust within private secretariats need to be drastically reduced and that minimum qualifications need to be included in the appointment regulations. The Chamber is satisfied to note that its proposal is partially being adopted by Government and the Chamber keeps on insisting that minimum qualifications for these roles are established.

The Chamber believes that the road to restoring reputation and our democratic credentials is still long and many more measures need to be recommended and implemented but it also acknowledges that in these difficult circumstances, the Government is still pushing to reform its Governance structures to restore our country's good name.

The Malta Chamber is of the opinion that good governance is not a matter to be addressed by Government alone, and is holding a webinar on the subject on 27 May aimed at creating more awareness on this crucial subject among the business community.

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