

PRESS RELEASE

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'It is time to open the economy further, and for people to return to work, in a safe and responsible way' Chamber President

'It is time to open the economy further, and for people to return to work, in a safe and responsible way' said the President of The Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry Perit David Xuereb today, as he cautioned that mixed messages were resulting in confusion.

Mr Xuereb underlined The Malta Chamber's view that the three principles which are to be considered when taking decisions are physical health, economic health and mental health. The Malta Chamber, strongly supports the further strengthening of all three factors, stressing that one cannot look at economic health of a nation alone.

As the situation has evolved, societies need to learn to live with COVID-19. It is not realistic to pursue aims of close to zero COVID-19 cases without a widely available vaccine.

"We have to stop focussing on ridding Malta of the virus in the shortest space of time and consider that we need to learn to live with COVID-19 until a vaccine is found. This means social distancing and hygiene remain highly important, and vulnerable people must continue to be protected" Perit Xuereb said.

With the realities of the current situation, it is time to reopen businesses and the economy, keeping in mind the importance of being ready and prepared to cater for the safety of employees.

"Steps towards opening the economy further need to be actioned, and this needs to happen as quickly as possible...we need to do this with the utmost professionalism and responsibility, so that all key principles are taken care of and we continue to ensure that the number of infected remains low," Perit Xuereb said.

"We should not open at all costs. Confidence must be re-introduced into the economy responsibly and in a way that respects all safety standards."

On the risk assessments that employers must carry out before re-introducing staff to their workspaces, Perit Xuereb said requirements for employers must be communicated clearly and quickly so that they are as prepared as possible.

"We need to return to work, and those who are scared should only be if their employer is not prepared to provide for safe work environment.

"Let's go to work, let's give all we can, maybe a little bit more than before, so that hopefully we can lift ourselves from this situation safely, quickly and sustainably – not just on a business level, but a personal level and a national level" Mr Xuereb concluded.

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