

PRESS RELEASE

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Malta Chamber and Malta Business Bureau present Priority Issues to the European Parliament of Enterprises

Speaking at the European Parliament of Enterprise 2016, on 13th October, Malta Chamber Vice President Mr Tonio Casapinta said that the ultimate priority for Economic success lies in having a labour force which is well equipped with Digital as well as Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) skills.

A delegation from the Malta Chamber and the Malta Business Bureau were at the European Parliament in Brussels where the EPE 2016 discussed Trade, the Single Market, Skills and sustainability.

Mr Casapinta said that as countries compete not only with each other, but also in a global economy, whoever hosts the best skills, has a comparative advantage on the rest in terms of productivity and innovation.

He said that the EU Skills Agenda rightly addresses many issues dealing with education and training with initiatives that aim to shape the European labour market of the future. "Institutional collaboration and societal engagement are the key to address the challenging issues ahead of us" he said.

"Enterprises also have a role to play. Through quality apprenticeships, our youth can benefit from a smooth transition between school and the world of work. On the job, experience should become further integrated in the educational process as wide as possible and it is this that the Malta Chamber of Commerce is actively committed to doing" he noted.

The Vice President said that Europe needed to attract as many high skilled workers from third countries as possible, through facilitation of the entry process. "The revision of the Blue Card Directive is a right approach, yet the flexibility of national schemes should be retained" Mr Casapinta concluded.

Addressing the EPE, Dr John Vassallo President of the Malta Business Bureau said that in spite of the European Single Market, online cross-border sales remain substantially low when taking into account the expectations and the great potential that a single market of 500 million consumers offers.

"By their very nature, businesses are always looking to increase their sales capacity. For their own survival they need to grow. In my view, traders' decision not to sell cross-border – even through a digital age – is not motivated by discriminatory practices on consumer's nationality or residence, but due to well thought business considerations" he said.

Dr Vassallo argued that while Single Market fragmentations remained, traders and particularly SMEs, experienced reduced confidence to engage in cross-border economic activity due to having to comply with various national rules.

"While fragmentations remain, the Commission's proposal for an obligation to sell will not have the desired effect of boosting online cross-border sales. In the meantime, and in view of the current proposal for a Regulation, the right for traders not to be obliged to deliver cross-border should be safeguarded" Dr Vassallo claimed.

Organised by EUROCHAMBRES, the European Parliament of Enterprises(EPE), brings together over 750 business men and women, from 45 European countries who get a chance to 'become' Members of the European Parliament for one day, debating and voting on some of the most crucial topics currently at the heart of the political debate.

Two thirds of entrepreneurs at the EPE voted that Brexit was certainly going to harm their business. A UK entrepreneur openly declared that he was relocating to another European country in order to remain in the EU.

The delegation also included Malta Chamber Council member Mr Charles Zahra and Director General Kevin J. Borg, as well as Malta Business Bureau Directors Kyle Borg and Malcolm Jones.

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