

PRESS RELEASE

30th April 2020

3rd Chamber study confirms need for wider support and better guidance to business

This week, the Malta Chamber carried out a further survey amongst its members to gauge the opinions of business in the face of the continued economic stress and stagnation and the current extent of business support. The regularity of such surveys is aimed at ensuring that the Chamber is continuously updated with the real situation on the ground at all times during its discussions with the authorities on behalf of business.

The results of the latest survey confirmed the trends emerging from the previous two conducted in the past weeks. It is clear from the pattern of results that businesses need wider support and more realistic guidance from the authorities in order to avoid further redundancies.

The Chamber, in fact, has long called for a change in approach in providing wage support to businesses based on a criteria linked to loss in turnover rather than one based on NACE codes. Those businesses lying outside the set NACE codes in Annexes A and B are enduring grave difficulties at the moment whilst the authorities are hampered by a lack objective criteria on approving support.

The provision of direct financial support may be eased off with a gradual lifting of the lock-down measures under strict regulation and supervision. To this end, the Malta Chamber proposed a concrete exit-strategy to Government on how the economic lock-down could be eased out, in order to allow a gradual opening up of the economy. This measure would safeguard jobs and would be expected to start releasing the pressure from the public purse. A similar measure would also contribute to the restoration of a much needed feel good factor.

“When, and only when the green light is given from a national medical stand-point, should we start looking at easing the lockdown. However, once our Health Authorities tell us that it is safe to do so, we should start giving some clarity and guidance to our businesses in order for them to be able to plan ahead appropriately and tangibly” David Xuereb said.

Other proposals made in recent weeks by the Malta Chamber related to rents which continue to emerge as a grave concern for businesses which are experiencing zero or negative revenue situations. Such concerns continue to be strongly highlighted by members through the surveys and the Chamber reiterates its calls for clarity on the matter from the part of the authorities. Specifically, in recent weeks, the Chamber requested for rents payable to the Lands Authority and Malta Industrial Parks to be waived.

In the coming days the Chamber will utilise the feedback received from its grassroots in large, medium and small enterprises in its regular representations with the Authorities with a view to ensure that the country emerges from this unfortunate situation with least casualties possible.

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