

# PRESS RELEASE

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## The Malta Chamber calls on Government to immediately launch a set of assistance measures for companies

In the current evolving situation, The Malta Chamber calls on Government to immediately and without any further delay launch a set of measures to assist companies in Malta weather the initial storm which the pandemic is bringing onto the Maltese Economy.

The Chamber calls on Government as it has done already in previous days and during meetings with the Prime Minister and Minister for the Economy to assist companies with initial cash flow situations which are arising or will arise. This can be done by:

- 1) Introducing tax breaks or tax deferrals (in the form of corporate, VAT or excise duties) for companies;
- 2) Delay payments of commercial utility bills;
- 3) That Government launches extensive discussions with the major commercial banks in Malta to either suspend commercial loan repayments for those segments affected or that Government offers to act as a guarantor for private enterprise through, for example, the involvement of the Malta Development Bank or any other entities;
- 4) Any late payments owed to private enterprises involved in public procurement contracts should be paid without any further delay;
- 5) That a national emergency fund is established to offer state aid to companies which are already facing difficulties in terms of liquidity such as English Language Teaching, hospitality, restaurants and all food and beverage suppliers to these segments amongst others.
- 6) That some form of assistance to companies similar to the ones offered during the 2008/09 economic crisis and 2011 Libyan crisis should be offered to companies which will not be able to retain their employees on a 40-hour week if the situation persists. This is important in order for companies to retain the employees for the foreseeable future.

The Chamber also calls on Government to push for a concerted effort at European Union level with the President of the Commission committing itself to establish a so called Corona Response Investment Initiative to the tune of €25 billion to offer assistance to EU member states in relation to their public health system, vulnerable groups and SMEs.

In case, the situation worsens the Government, should be able to tap into these funds to maintain the economy going. The response for COVID-19 cannot be a national prerogative. No single country has the necessary resources to deal with this pandemic on its own. This requires an effort on an international scale.

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