

# PRESS RELEASE

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## The Malta Chamber of Commerce happy with first steps towards Economic and Social normality to support National Resilience

On such an important day as Workers' Day, the Malta Chamber welcomes the latest announcements by Government to relax the economic lockdown, predominantly measures affecting non-essential retail. This is a first step in what hopefully will lead us to a new normal in the near future and allows us to start regaining economic traction in order to save as many livelihoods as we can.

The Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry welcomes today's initial lifting of economic lockdown measures particularly those affecting non-essential retail as announced during a press conference this morning.

The Malta Chamber had been calling for said easing of measures for the past two weeks and even submitted detailed proposals to the Authorities to facilitate this process after hearing the reasoned views and opinions of its members. It also made strong suggestions towards this end at an MCESD meeting held earlier this week and underlined its position further in a statement which it issued only yesterday.

"A structured tapering of the lockdown is the logical way forward as the country now looks forward to kickstarting economic activity, for the benefit of all society. This is a time for discipline and maturity. With everyone's cooperation we can resume business activity gradually with minimal risk to employees and customers alike. Let's ensure that this is only the first step back towards normality, and that the country will not need to backtrack on this very important step" said David Xuereb.

All the data and surveys carried out amongst the Chamber membership over the last 7 weeks showed that besides the need to extend the assistance schemes to as many sectors as possible, entrepreneurs needed guidance from the authorities to start planning the eventual re-opening of their operations.

The Chamber now looks forward to the guidelines which will be published by the country's public health authorities in order to guide retail operators in following all the rules which will be published by the same authorities.

Coupled with the relaxation of these measures for non-essential retail, Government needs to expand the assistance measures being offered to include sectors which were not covered by the second stimulus package in order to safeguard operators from making the ultimate sacrifice of either making people redundant or closing their businesses.

As Malta's foremost support for businesses, the Chamber remains committed to provide guidance and support to the Authorities. It appeals for the co-operation of all involved so that today's announcement will be the first in a series of steps which will bring the country back to normality without unnecessary delays or hiccups.

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