



# PRESS RELEASE

15<sup>th</sup> September 2017

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## Employer bodies clarify their position on Public Holidays issue

The electoral promise to compensate workers for public holidays that fall on a weekend continues to be of grave concern to GRTU, Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry, Malta Employers Association and the Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association. The four employer bodies confirm that in the past days they had held separate meetings with Minister Helena Dalli where they expressed their grave concern and continued opposition to this measure.

The opposition stems from the fact that the 4 employer organisations believe that Malta's current growth must not be taken for granted. Once additional benefits are granted to workers, they will be considered irrevocable irrespective of an economic slowdown which may threaten jobs.

The four organisations reiterate that they are in favour of family friendly measures and the improvement of quality of life for workers as long as they are economically viable.

Nevertheless, we must remain cognisant of the increased operating costs combined with the loss of productive days which are most detrimental to Malta's competitiveness and further economic growth. By definition, when there are 4 public holidays that fall on a week-end, the latter measure will cost employers around 2% of their total wage bill. This figure will rise to around 3 per cent or more in certain sectors, if the lost days are compensated for by overtime at a rate of 1.5 or at double rate.

Discussion on mitigating measures for this proposal still need to take place. Options for employers will have to go well beyond what has been suggested by government thus far. Real compensation to protect competitiveness must be given to companies ensuring the implementation of this measure is kept cost neutral.

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**END**