



THE MALTA CHAMBER

PRESS RELEASE

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The Malta Chamber appeals for dialogue and reasonableness not directives

The Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry feels compelled to remind unions that their counterparts in social dialogue on behalf of their members employed by the private sector are employers and employer bodies, not Government. This is in light with the directives issued by UHM to their members in response to the postponement of opening of schools, so far by a couple of days.

For the past two years there has been close cooperation between employers and their employees, whether unionised or otherwise. This collaboration has enabled so many to work from home, to adopt more flexible working hours, and to absent themselves from work at short notice for all sorts of reasons, ranging from quarantines to school closures. Solutions must be found on the basis of dialogue and not through the issue of unilateral directives. This approach is uncalled for.

The Malta Chamber invites unions to join employer bodies in the call to be extremely judicious in determining the appropriate duration of preventive quarantine periods, particularly when employees are fully vaccinated. This will ensure that disruptions to schools and workplaces are kept to a minimum. Where particular circumstances necessitate that children under 12 are kept at home, arrangements need to be made by the parents on a case-by-case basis, with their respective employers, as has happened countless times in the past two years.

The Malta Chamber appeals to the education authorities and unions representing educators to find workable solutions that, apart from minimising disruption in workplaces, prioritize the proper education of children which is of paramount importance. There is broad consensus that online schooling can never substitute face-to-face learning. We have to acknowledge that the current generation of students has already accumulated significant educational deficit over the last two years as a result of online schooling. The Malta Chamber reiterates that every effort is expected from all concerned so that students can return to school and resume proper education at the earliest possible.

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