

CORONAVIRUS CAUSING BUSINESS DISRUPTIONS

Early logistical plans and awareness of the issue will save businesses unnecessary struggles

During the last weeks and days the amount of queries and issues raised that we received from members has been on the increase. These vary between wanting to keep a healthy work environment, to delays in getting the goods and materials needed due to the effect the coronavirus is having internationally.

Our members have also reported that customers have increased their shopping patterns in view of what is happening in Italy. As a Chamber of SMEs and from the information available to us we must underline that there is no cause for alarm, everyone should go about their life normally, taking the simple precautionary measures already made public.

In addition to this it is evident that the public is calling for all the necessary preparatory plans in terms of infrastructure and logistics as soon as possible. This is something that our members also want to see in order to avoid unnecessary delays and time wastage. Malta should be prepared for a worst-case scenario situation and the plans should be publicly announced to put everyone's mind at rest.

ABOUT MALTA CHAMBER OF SMES

Malta Chamber of SMEs (Formerly known as GRTU) is the largest social partner in Malta representing over 7,000 SMEs from over 90 different sectors. The SME Chamber has been established for over 70 years and its aim is of safeguarding the interest of businesses at large.

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Just yesterday port workers have requested better protection and until an agreement was reached about how this could be achieved, release of goods was delayed by a significant number of hours. As an SME Chamber we appreciate and understand the worries of the port workers, however such worries should be identified and mitigate ahead in order not to cause unnecessary confusion, alarm and delays. Being an island, Malta's entry and exit points are very easily identifiable and preventive action can be targeted.

From a business point of view we appeal for the awareness that the coronavirus has caused disruption on an international trade level. Most of the world's goods and materials come from China. Many goods that are imported from Europe still originate in China. China has suffered great disruption with some factories being closed until the worse is over and the country is not in a normal functioning state. This will inevitably cause delays for most imports to reach Malta.

It is therefore advisable for businesses to take this into consideration and to try and plan and adjust their workflows accordingly to mitigate the impact. Businesses should also make their clients aware for order delays they are likely to experience. This will avoid unnecessary tensions at a later stage.

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In the meantime the Malta Chamber for SMEs has also reproduced guidelines so that businesses and workers alike take care of their own health because that in itself is an important preventor. Such guidelines may be accessed from the following link: <http://bit.ly/32h7lkl>

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