

## **SME CHAMBER WELCOMES SOME VISIBILITY WHILE CRITICISING INEXISTENT CONSULTATION**

### **ANXIOUS FOR BUSINESSES FACING THE DIFFICULT COMING WEEKS AND MONTHS**

The Malta Chamber of SMEs welcomes visibility for some sectors, which gives businesses the ability to plan and organise themselves properly. This is an essential need in view of the current uncertainty businesses are facing and added lack of visibility is none other than unjust in an already stressful situation.

On the other hand however what was communicated this morning is clearly a manifestation of the breakdown of Social Dialogue as to how such decisions are reached with complete disregard of Social Partners and the process of consultation.

It is evident that adequate consultation could have ironed our grey areas in what was communicated and also led to a more sensible economic plan.

Even though everyone appreciates the delicate situation at the moment and in principle we agree with the staggered re-opening, one cannot but feel a great level of worry and anguish at how businesses will continue to survive this extra stretch.

The level of necessary economic damage that businesses which are still closed are suffering lands them in the worst lag of the Covid suffering.

#### **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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After a full year of hardship businesses started 2021 with big hopes, yet great fragility, and being closed during a time when business should be recovering is very hard to endure.

The SME Chamber is extremely worried and questions how businesses will be able to survive yet another stretch with the big losses they are suffering. It is evident that the basic Covid support measures, while still very necessary are far from enough to bridge the gap towards the recovery of various sectors.

Some sectors have reached a very critical level and unless helped more will not make it into the recovery stage. The SME Chamber is already in advanced discussions with a number of Ministries for the hardest hit sectors on this front.

The SME Chamber expresses solidarity with the business community who will be awaiting to open in the next weeks and those whose date of reopening is still uncertain. The Malta Chamber of SMEs also expresses solidarity with their employees who are going through a very hard time together with these businesses.

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