

SME CHAMBER SLAMS GOVERNMENT'S DISCRIMINATORY APPROACH

Tourism vessel operators have been very hardly hit by COVID, like any other tourism dependent sector.

Other sectors in the tourism industry have benefitted from the basic wage supplement, complete waiver of 2020 and 2021 license fees and even the consumption boosting vouchers. This was all necessary for their survival.

The tourism vessel sector is completely tourism dependent. While on the one hand they have been given some basic help that is passed on immediately to their employees in the form of the wage supplement, the government ends up taking much much more from them by still requesting them to pay tens of thousands of euros in licensing to Transport Malta to operate.

The government is adopting a very unfair and discriminatory approach depending on which entity is regulating the sector. Operators falling under MTA had their mind put at rest from the very beginning that they would not be asked to pay fees and licenses while they continue suffering lack of business due to the effects of the pandemic. To the contrary these operators have been pleading with the authorities for months and not only have licenses not been waived or reduced but they have also incurred fines for late payments.

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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Irrespective of the regulatory authority this is one government and no such discrimination can be tolerated. The Prime Minister has frequently said that no business will be left on its own. The Malta Chamber of SMEs is making it clear that the government's requirements for payments, requirements which are ill-fitting during COVID times, are threatening their survival.

This matter is currently in front of the Prime Minister and the Minister responsible for Transport Malta. The Chamber of SMEs does not exclude taking further action to safeguard the survival of its members should this situation not improve.

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