

## CHAMBER OF SMES CEO PRESENTS PROPOSAL TO TAKE UP CDC RECOMMENDATION TO REDUCE QUARANTINE PERIOD FOR 5 DAYS - FOR POSITIVE CASES ONLY - AT EMPLOYMENT BOARD

During today's meeting of the Employment Relations Board, where the CEO of the Chamber of SMEs is a Board Member, held with the participation of the Superintendence of Public Health, the Data Protection Commissioner and the CEO of the Health and Safety Authority, Ms Agius Mamo presented the Chamber's proposal to take up the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s latest recommendation to reduce quarantine.

The Chamber of SMEs CEO insisted that 'the Chamber is not seeking to do the work of the health authorities, however such important developments coming from a recognised institution like the CDC cannot be ignored. Recommendations by the CDC were taken up before by our country, based on the consideration that they were well studied and based on science. Given how negatively our economy and society are being affected by the difficult quarantine requirements, Malta cannot ignore such an important recommendation.'

During the Board meeting the Chamber of SMEs insisted that the level of disruption at the workplace and the grave side effects of the quarantine, require the rules to be revisited. The conditions of being isolated and locked inside are hard on anyone to bare and only to be kept if absolutely necessary.

### 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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The Chamber also warned that the system is risking a collapse since people, faced with the hard quarantine conditions, are increasingly not reporting their primary contacts when possible and are taking things into their own hands and catering for their illness in private without any official test.

During the meeting the Malta Chamber of SMEs also expressed its disagreement with the latest change in policy of not issuing a quarantine notice specifying all the individuals under quarantine and the duration of their quarantine. The Chamber emphasised that the system is confusing for employers and employees. Work out the increase in quarantine is far from easy carrying out the necessary checks and confirmations will increase the bureaucratic burden, in addition to giving space to abuse.

The Malta Chamber of SMEs therefore called on the health authorities to revisit the quarantine notification system. Regulations which are not implementable or enforceable must be changed.

Link to CDC recommendation: <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/s1227-isolation-quarantine-guidance.html>

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