



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Employers' Associations within MCESD – the Malta Employers, the Malta Chamber, the Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association, and the Malta Chamber of SMSs – call for immediate withdrawal of ARUC sponsorship of children's football programme

The employers' associations within MCESD strongly condemn the decision to associate a children's football programme with the Authority for the Responsible Use of Cannabis.

This is a serious error of judgment.

Children's sport must represent discipline, health, self-control, ambition and clean living. It must never, under any circumstances, be linked to cannabis or to any authority associated with its use. Whether direct or indirect, the message is wrong, confusing and unacceptable.

No social objective can justify blurring the line between youth development and substances that should never be normalized in the minds of children. Sport must inspire young people to choose healthy lifestyles, not create associations that risk weakening that message.

For years, society worked hard to remove cigarettes and alcohol from sport because the principle was clear: harmful substances have no place in an environment meant to shape children's values and aspirations. The same principle must apply here. There can be no double standards.

Cannabis is not a symbol of health, discipline or performance. Football is. The two should never be placed in the same space, especially where children are involved.

This sponsorship should be dismantled immediately and replaced by support from entities that reflect the true values of youth sport and responsible social leadership.

Children deserve better. Parents deserve clarity. Sport deserves to remain clean.