

# Update

ISSUE 787  
15 FEBRUARY 2024



Press Conference held on 5<sup>th</sup> February

## An Unprecedented Exercise in Social Dialogue

The Malta Employers' Association has long been throwing a spotlight on the rapid demographic changes that the country is experiencing. In 2017, the Association issued a position paper – [Malta's Demographic Challenges](#) that called for a holistic strategy to address the increase in population, and its socio economic impact on Maltese society. At the time, although the issue was not a priority on the political agenda, the Association was stressing that an economic model that linked economic growth to population increases had to be supported to minimise the friction that can be created through rising demographic trends. Many of the issues raised at the time are being experienced today. For example, the paper mentions that there had to be sufficient investment in health services to cater for a population we predicted would increase to more than 70k, including tourists. In 2024 - just seven years later - we are hearing that Malta may need another hospital. This paper was presented and discussed at MCESD, and also in conferences organised by both major political parties.

### The MEA Secretariat:

*Director General*  
Joseph Farrugia

*Consultant*  
Kevin J Borg

*Consultant*  
Kirsten Cutajar Miller

*Lawyer*  
Dr Charlotte Camilleri

*SME Helpdesk Executive*  
Anton Vella

*EU Projects Coordinator*  
Kurt Cortis

*Office Administrator*  
Dorianne Azzopardi Cilia

*Receptionist*  
Graziella Galea

© UPDATE is prepared and circulated by:  
**MALTA EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION**  
35/1, South Street,  
Valletta VLT 1100, Malta  
t: (+356) 21237585, 21222992  
[www.maltaemployers.com](http://www.maltaemployers.com)

**MEEA** HR  
HANDBOOK

**MEAINDEX**  
The online toolbox for business entrepreneurs



Event held in July 2023



Joanne Bondin, MEA President



Joseph Farrugia, Director General

In July 2023, the Association organised another major event, this time in the Parliament building. We felt that another demographic trend that needs to be focused upon is the declining fertility rate in Malta, which is one of the lowest in the world. This is a multifaceted issue which cannot be addressed by one organisation, due to its complexity. Therefore we involved as many stakeholders as possible to provide their own insights and specialisations on the matter, and what remedies – if at all – are necessary to reverse the trend, a trend which is also being experienced by many developed economies. To this effect, under the auspices of the Speaker of the House, Dr. Angelo Farrugia, the conference attracted contributions and presentations by 32 speakers

which included employer organisations, unions, civil society representatives, youth organisations, economists, sociologists, women organisations, speakers from Government, Opposition and Partit, ADPD; and the Church. We are also grateful to have been joined by the President Emeritus Marie Louise Coleiro Preca who delivered a contribution that was simultaneously passionate and rational about the topic. These different perspectives on such a critical issue for Maltese society have resulted in a social dialogue event which is unprecedented in Malta, and MEA is proud to have been at the centre of it.

The event was a highly productive one to the extent that it was immediately felt that the proceedings, which were recorded, were of such high quality that they should be compiled in a publication to serve as a basis for further research and actions. Parliament volunteered to print publication and on the 5<sup>th</sup> February the book was launched at a [press conference](#) held at parliament which was addressed by the Speaker, members of Government and the Opposition and the President and Director General of MEA. A small reception was also organised for the speakers as a token of gratitude for their contributions. [Link](#) to DOI's press release.





This publication is now available both as a hard copy, and [online](#). An English version will be also available. We encourage you to read through it to have a better understanding of the implications of a low birth rate, together with the fact that the population is passing through a phase of rapid expansion due to the influx of foreign employees, and the fact that out of an average of 4000 births in Malta, only 2500 were born to Maltese families. On the other hand, births to foreign residents increased from 246 in 2007 to 1260 in 2022.

MEA will be at the forefront of further activities and research in the near future, and will continue to bring together the relevant stakeholders and make policy recommendations that work in the best interest of our society.



*Reception with stakeholders*