



## MALTA EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION

35/1, South Street, Valletta VLT 11, Malta.

Tel: (+356) 21 237585, 21 222992

Fax: (+356) 21 230227

E-mail: [mea@maltanet.net](mailto:mea@maltanet.net)

Web Site: <http://www.maltaemployers.com>

5<sup>th</sup> July 2006

### Media Release

## **MEA- Employers only interested in Port Reform if it results in Lower Costs**

The Malta Employers' Association called for an immediate solution to end any actions at the Freeport that are threatening a number of enterprises with work stoppages and industrial relations unrest. The Association expressed its view that the scope of any reform is to bring about positive change. In the case of port reform, positive change can only be measured in the extent to which the reform translates into better efficiency at reduced prices to the business community.

It has long been stated that port reform was crucial in improving competitiveness in Malta, and that the costs associated with the transport of cargo and raw materials were one of the reasons why Malta suffered a competitive disadvantage compared to other destinations. Therefore the reform in our ports should be an opportunity to remove inefficiencies to attract investment and generate productive jobs.

Government should stick to its stated objective to reduce costs by 25%. Otherwise the reform will be just a cosmetic exercise that will have no significant positive impact on business. The Association stated that competitiveness issues have to be addressed concretely and that employers' only interest in such measures is purely to increase productivity. It is worrying that measures that are aimed at improving competitiveness are being diluted to the point where they are being completely ineffective, if not counterproductive, the Association added.