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Media Release

Inclusion of senior workers is an opportunity and a strategic advantage for Malta, stakeholders say

MEA groups all national stakeholders at its National Round Table Forum for a multi-disciplinary discussion focusing on Adapting our Labour Market to an Ageing Population

Extending work beyond retirement age on a voluntary basis provides opportunities in today's tight labour market. Moreover, it provides a strategic advantage for the Maltese socio-economic development, as it leverages the wealth of experience and skills accumulated by older workers. Stakeholders from both the public and private sector recognised the potential of an ageing workforce as an opportunity to build a more resilient and inclusive labour market that benefits both individuals, employers and society at large.

These key messages emerged from a National Round Table Forum hosted by the Malta Employers Association in the run-up to the SME Week, which focused on Adapting our Labour Market to an Ageing Population.

Joanne Bondin, President of the MEA called on stakeholders to rethink the role of silver employment in Malta's future. "Promoting silver employment is not just a necessity but a strategic advantage. Senior workers offer a different set of skills, mentorship, and institutional memory, while reducing the dependency on foreign labour. The ageing workforce is not a challenge to overcome but an opportunity to embrace, building a stronger and more resilient labour market", she argued.

Kevin J Borg, Director General of the Malta Employers Association, shared several proposals which the MEA recently put forward to incentivise work beyond retirement age on a voluntary basis. These include flexible work options, such as part-time roles, job sharing, and telecommuting. He also emphasised the need to discourage early retirement; addressing fiscal anomalies to make work pay for older workers; promote lifelong learning; recognising informal and non-formal learning and implementing workplace adaptations to better suit an ageing workforce.

Various speakers highlighted the necessity of adapting to significant shifts in required skills within the labour market, emphasizing that both employers and employees must be proactive to remain competitive and foster sustainable economic growth, particularly through life-long learning. A cultural shift regarding ageing in the workforce was called for, with an emphasis on life-long learning and the promotion of a proactive health mindset from an early stage to ensure long-term productivity. Support for business owners wishing to remain active is critical, necessitating policies that accommodate a multi-generational workforce.

Concluding the National Round Table Forum, MEA Consultant Joseph Farrugia called for a cultural shift that encourages individuals to remain in the workforce. “This necessitates a variety of initiatives, including an intergenerational approach in full view of the rights and perspectives of different age groups and the promotion of work as integral to personal well-being, while providing career guidance to support workers who wish to remain active but their jobs are not conducive for older workers”.

The discussions and insights shared at the National Round Table Forum will feed into a publication which the Malta Employers Association will be publishing in the months ahead. This event was hosted in collaboration with the Ministry for the Economy, Enterprise and Strategic Projects, with the support of the National Statistics Office (NSO), Active Ageing & Community Care, the Family Business Office, the National Skills Council, JobsPlus, and Identità.