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## Media Release

# MEA attends MCESD meeting under Protest

The Malta Employers' Association has decided to attend under protest the first MCESD meeting which is to be chaired by the recently appointed Chairman - Mr. John Bencini. The Association stated that it is evident that the manner in which the appointment was decided was not in conformity with Article 4 of the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development Act which clearly states that the appointment of the chairperson shall occur only after consultation with the member organisations within MCESD. 'The social partners were informed about the decision, but they were certainly not consulted', the MEA said.

The Association acknowledged that government had a prerogative to decide on the person to occupy the post once consultation takes place, but a better effort should have been made to select a person who has the backing of all social partners.

MEA stressed that it has absolutely no objection to having an MCESD Chairperson who hails from the workers' camp, or even from civil society, adding that it was incorrect to state that all previous chairpersons came from the employer camp. The Association said that it is not the person's background which is important for such a post, but his/her qualifications and credentials as a person who can facilitate constructive social dialogue, and who enjoys the respect and trust of all the social partners. It is difficult, and even unfair, to expect a person to get the social partners to reach consensus or to inspire a convergence of ideas when that person has been imposed on the member organisations. The Association also said that, as it had done in the past, it forwarded to the minister names which it believed would be ideal for MCESD chairmanship. Other organisations had also submitted names which would also have been acceptable to everybody. MEA concluded by saying that the social partners have always managed to reach consensus on the MCESD chairperson in the past, and that the Association has always had an extremely positive working relationship with previous chairpersons. It is expecting the current chairman to respect the integrity of the post, and that the manner in which this appointment was handled is not a reflection of the way in which social dialogue is going to be approached in future.