



## **MALTA EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION**

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### **Media Release**

## **Maternity Leave paid by Employers works against Female Employment – MEA**

Following the outcome of the vote at the European Parliament which raises paid maternity leave to twenty weeks, the Malta Employers' Association is intensifying its efforts to transfer the cost of maternity leave to government. 'The decision made by the European Parliament is yet another demonstration that the EPs are detached from the realities of the business world, and are adding further burdens to employers in time of severe global competition. This situation is even worse in Malta, where, unlike the rest of Europe, maternity leave is paid by the employer at full pay. The extension of such leave to twenty weeks will work against the objective of raising female employment', the MEA said.

The Association added that female candidates of child bearing age will suffer from a serious disadvantage when they compete for the same jobs as male employees or older women. The MEA underscored the fact that employers also have to pay for accumulated leave during the maternity leave period. This means that in effect, the total paid absence from work will be of 22 weeks. The MEA reminded that, to date, government has not even honoured its budget proposal of three years ago to pay the fourteenth week of maternity leave. The budget measure stated clearly that the fourteenth week of maternity leave was to be paid by the government. However, the Department for Inland Revenue is interpreting this measure to mean that employers can only claim the N.I. of the fourteenth week.

Under these circumstances, Government should take measures to remove the burden of paid maternity leave from employers with immediate effect.