



MALTA EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION

35/1, South Street, Valletta VLT 1100, Malta.

Tel: (+356) 21 237585, 21 222992

Fax: (+356) 21 230227

E-mail: admin@maltaemployers.com

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

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Press Release

Malta Employers' Association: Government's vision for Grand Harbour will Generate Jobs and Investment

The Malta Employers' Association described the consultative document for the regeneration of the Grand Harbour as one which is holistic in its approach and carries the necessary vision to transform the Grand Harbour area into one of international interest. The MEA urged government to forge ahead with the necessary legislative changes that are indispensable to enable government to implement the projects mentioned.

The impact of these projects will definitely result in giving the Harbour the attention it deserves, and will generate employment and wealth in the Southern area of Malta. The implementation of the projects will require coordination between various ministries, and the setting up of a specific organisation for such an ambitious venture should be instrumental in harmonising the activities involved and speed their accomplishment. The Association is also satisfied that the projects respect the environmental and historical character of the harbour, yet aim to retain its industrial character that has, since the dawn of civilization, been a constant feature of the harbour. Throughout the ages, the harbour has always been a source of economic and social activity for the Maltese people and served to build Malta's cosmopolitan identity.

As an initial reaction to the document, the Association made some recommendations that are meant to augment the 20 initiatives announced by government.

1. Firstly, the strategy can also incorporate the rehabilitation of Fort St. Elmo, which is in a serious state of neglect. Besides being an integral part of the History of the Harbour, Fort St. Elmo has tremendous cultural and tourism potential. In previous position statements, MEA had recommended turning the fort into an international diplomatic centre.
2. The final strategic document should also include projections for transport infrastructure in the Grand Harbour region. The projects will result in considerable activity and the fast and

efficient movement of persons between different areas of the harbour will be an essential element in sustaining the economic viability of many of the projects.

3. The government's vision rightly stresses on the conservation of the historical heritage which makes the area of unique interest to any visitor to Malta. This can be enhanced if resources (possibly EU funding) are allocated to archeological excavation of some areas of the harbour. A maritime history spanning thousands of years should unearth artifacts that will generate even more interest in the uniqueness of the harbour, and contribute to its economic potential.
4. It is also recommended to incorporate the plans for Dock no.1 in the final plan, since it is an integral feature of the harbour.
5. MEA would also like to integrate its proposal for a Marine pageant as part of the vision for the Grand Harbour. The celebration of Malta's rich maritime history with replicas of sea faring vessels from its past could be an attraction that attracts international attention. Further details of this proposal are available in MEA's website.
6. It is required to prioritise the projects and to formulate a time plan to specify and coordinate their implementation. Such a plan should also include manpower projections for the jobs that will be generated in various sectors of the economy.

The Association concluded by stating that the 20 projects are like parts of a mosaic whose compatibility design a complete picture of the future of the harbour. Together with the development of Smart City in Ricasoli in the coming years the area will be subject to strong economic regeneration which will be of benefit to all Maltese.