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13th May 2005

Media Release

Working Time Developments – MEA expresses disappointment

The Malta Employers' Association expressed itself against the decision of the European Parliament to remove the opt out clause from the working time directive. It also expressed its disappointment at the fact that not all the Maltese MEPs voted to retain the opt out. The MEA said on an issue affecting our labour market when there was consensus between the social partners, it would have been expected that the Maltese MEP's would reflect the concerns of employers and unions and also speak with one voice.

The Association said that it will continue with its lobbying efforts – with the local EU members of Parliament, Government and EU institutions - to try to reverse this decision. It is high time that the EU parliament considers the effect of global competition on job creation in Europe, and that European enterprise is in dire need of a level playing field with the other global competitors if the goals of the Lisbon Agenda are to be achieved.

In Malta, it is known that in many cases, employees who will not be able to work extra hours because of the limit on overtime will seek to increase their income by working part time with other companies. When this happens, it is detrimental to the employer and also goes against the objectives that the working time directive has set for itself, since employees will be working longer hours nonetheless.

The MEA said that there are a few, but major companies in Malta that will be negatively affected by this outcome if it is implemented. Government should join countries like the UK, Poland and Slovakia to form a blocking minority that stands a good chance of preventing the elimination of the opt-out.