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Media Release

The Malta Employers' Association is celebrating its 50th Anniversary this year through a series of activities that signify the importance of the event as a reflection of the evolution of 50 years of industrial relations in Malta, through a period of rapid economic and social transformation. Throughout its history, MEA was always a part of this evolution, and a major participant in social dialogue.

During a press conference held at the MEA premises, the president of the Association, Mr. Arthur Muscat, highlighted the contemporary relevance of the Association as is evidenced by an ever increasing membership which today employ more than 35% of the Maltese labour force. He said that the Association is currently heavily engaged in discussions to implement changes to the Employment and Industrial Relations Act to address many problems that are arising in connection issues such as union recognition and a reform of the Industrial Tribunal. He said that these recommendations are even more significant and urgent given a recent court judgement that ruled that the Industrial Tribunal, as it is currently composed, is not respecting the Constitution. He added that the Association is always in touch with its members and offering valuable advice and information on matters related to employment. He said that the Association is paying particular attention to the needs of SMEs, and has set up a help desk to SMEs which is very proactive with the membership.

Mr. Joseph Farrugia, Director General said that the increased activity by the Association, and the resulting expansion in membership has made it necessary to undertake a corporate branding exercise - which has been concluded - and to upgrade the premises. Therefore one of the anniversary events is the inauguration of the extended premises which include state of the art facilities for training sessions, meetings and small conferences for use by both the Association and its members. He mentioned other activities that shall be organised in the coming months, including a national conference about the future labour market in Malta, a research project about social inclusion, and a mobile application for employers to have access to a human resources handbook which has more than twenty chapters on employment related issues. Mr. Farrugia said that the TV programme MEA, which is produced by the Association, has a good following by the general public and is accepted as a source of objective and factual information on employment and general economic matters.

Mr. Farrugia added that it is symbolic that the 50th Anniversary coincides with a year when the MEA has been awarded the National Enterprise Support Award. It is also extremely positive for the Association that the project: Strengthening the Business Environment through Active Social Dialogue has been shortlisted among many

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submissions across Europe and is one of three projects being considered for the prestigious European Enterprise Support Award in November. This is an achievement both to the Association and to Malta.

In conclusion, Mr. Muscat said that MEA looks towards its future with optimism. It has a wide membership base which is increasing from year to year, and a committed and motivated secretariat that is always available and proactive with the membership.