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Media Release

Government should not employ additional LSAs – MEEA

The Malta Employers' Association urged Government not to give in to pressure by the MUT to employ additional Learning Support Assistants (LSAs). The Association said that the number of LSAs in schools has mushroomed beyond control over the years and the criteria for increasing this number should be based on whether there is actually a need for more LSAs, and whether they are affordable given the state of public finances. If the supply of qualified LSAs exceeds the demand, then we should simply stop producing them. This is the reason why the Association is proposing setting up an employability index for courses, as obtaining a qualification is not an automatic right to a related job.

The Association expressed its concern that public sector employment is again on the increase, and said that it would be next to impossible to reach fiscal targets unless government payroll is kept in check. The MEEA said that although it might be inevitable to boost manpower in areas where human resources are short of requirements, government should re-allocate its labour force to increase efficiencies, rather than resorting to additional recruitment.

MEEA also disagrees with the MUT's intransigent stand on school hours. The statement made by the Minister of Finance to consider different options to extend school hours is reasonable as there is a growing need for longer school hours to respond to changing requirements of families and also the educational needs of children. The Association agrees that all efforts should be made to leave teachers' hours unaffected, but the purely sectorial interests of the union should not be a stumbling block which works against the interests of the rest of society.