



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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Media Release

MEA disagrees with GWU Proposal on Government Contracts

The Malta Employers' Association disagrees with the proposal put forward by the General Workers' Union calling on government to award contracts only to companies covered by a collective agreement. The Association said that employees should have a free choice whether to join a union or not, and one cannot generalise that non-unionised companies have inferior conditions of employment when compared to unionised ones.

However, the MEA agrees that conditions of employment should be safeguarded, and that government contracts should not be awarded to companies that offer substandard or illegal conditions of employment. The Association has voiced its concern on this issue many times and appeals for a level playing field between employers, as there are recurring occasions in public procurement where companies who offer decent working conditions lose out to others who may be resorting to illegal working practices. The Association insists on a level playing field among all companies, including between those who are unionised and those who are not, as long as labour laws are respected.

The MEA has recommended the setting up of a services charter to cover the security, cleaning and care working sectors, to ensure that any companies who are committed to comply with minimum conditions - including those who may be unionised - will be given preference if they are signatories of the Charter. The MEA expressed its regret that, although the Prime Minister and two ministers have publicly proclaimed their support for this initiative, the Association is still awaiting a feedback from the government so that the Charter can be finalised and implemented. It hoped that action is taken in the coming weeks in the interest of employees and law abiding companies.