



MEA proposes Shutdown between the 19th and 24th March

The Malta Employers' Association is calling for an urgent MCESD meeting to discuss a proposal to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 virus. In essence, the MEA is saying that schools and most workplaces will be closed between the 19th and the 24th March.

The Association explained that: 'As the 19th March is a Public holiday, all work places, including schools, will also close down on the Friday 20th, together with Monday 22nd and Tuesday 23rd March. This will imply a six day continuous break with only 3 days taken from optional leave'. MEA added that many companies were already bridging on the Friday 20th March.

MEA said that this measure could significantly slow the spread of the virus if people are encouraged to stay indoors as much as possible during this period. Although there will be an impact on businesses the short term negative effect will certainly be offset by fewer longer term disruptions due to the containment of the virus, and there will be three less optional leave days for the rest of the year, which would have been taken on the 20th, 23rd and 24th March. Teachers may compensate for the loss of school hours through longer days during the half day period in June. Hotels will remain open with reduced staff, which is already happening anyway. Essential public services - hospitals, police - will operate as usual. The Association pointed to many advantages of this proposals, among them less long-term disruptions; transferring productive days to periods with more stability; containment of the virus by having less interaction between people; that public authorities will be in a better position to monitor the status of the virus if more persons stay indoors; and that parents will be able to stay with their children during this period.

The Association said that if this suspension of activity will effectively slow the virus from spreading, it will be a positive move with minimum sacrifice spread among all social partners.

12th March 2020