

26<sup>th</sup> July 2020

## **Media Release**

### **MEA appeals to authorities to stop mass events with immediate effect.**

The Malta Employers' Association stated that authorising mass events like parties and feast marches is ridiculous and risks reversing all the gains made against the spread of the Covid virus in Malta.

The Association said that there can be no winners if there is a surge in cases brought about by mass events. Besides the obvious impact and dangers posed to public health, many employers and employees have made tremendous sacrifices in the battle against COVID - lost productivity, reduced pay packet, working flexibly, mandatory quarantine for vulnerable groups among others. Most companies have coped by digging into internal reserves to avoid declaring redundancies, but they will not hold out if there is a second wave, especially if it is of our own making by surrendering in to pressures by some lobbies for their short term interests. Hundreds of millions of taxpayers' money which have been used to keep the economy afloat and reduce the number of affected persons will have been spent in vain. If schools remain closed in September due to the virus, there will be chaos in the labour market.

The Association added that even the tourism industry stands to lose from a sustained spike in cases, as the recovery will take much longer than anticipated. We would have capriciously given up the advantage of promoting ourselves as a safe and family friendly destination to appease the myopic interests of a few operators.

MEA stressed that we if revert to the situation that prevailed in April of this year, thousands will lose their job, and government cannot say that mass gatherings are being allowed due to pressure from employer bodies, since most employers are definitely against taking such unnecessary risks. It exhorted government to act responsibly by taking immediate action to stop this nonsense with immediate effect to avoid what can escalate into a social and economic tragedy.