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Media Release

MEAL makes recommendations for a faster processing of Applications to Employ Third Country Nationals in Malta

Following a well-attended seminar about the employment of foreign workers on the 16th March 2016, which involved the participation of officials from the Employment and Training Corporation, Identity Malta and the Police Department, the Malta Employers' Association drew up a position paper with recommendations on how to expedite applications for third country nationals to work in Malta.

The position paper includes numerous proposals based on five major objectives:

1. To reduce the average processing time to an average 4 weeks
2. To establish a one stop shop for processing of work permits
3. To remove repetition of work in extension of VISAs
4. To simplify the labour market test to employ foreign employees
5. To minimise the administrative burden on employer and employees

The seminar and the resulting [position paper](#) is in response to concerns by employers in many sectors of the economy about labour shortages. The Association said that over the past decade, there has been a consistent trend of an increased demand for labour which is being matched by a surge in female participation, later exit from the labour force, and an influx of foreign workers. Recent figures by ETC place the figure of foreign employees in Malta - from the EU and Third Country Nationals (TCNs) - at 27k, which would translate at approximately 13% of the total labour force. This represents a dramatic change over the years as the corresponding percentage a decade ago would have been in the region of 5%.

Employers in general find that the process of engaging TCNs is too bureaucratic and is hindering them from accessing much needed human resources to achieve their organisational objectives. Although Identity Malta projects itself as being a one stop shop for employing foreign employees, the experience of many companies shows otherwise as they still have to consult with numerous government departments to be able to source foreign human resources.

The Association said that in a country where economic growth depends on an increase in both demand and supply of labour, the management of a cosmopolitan labour force is a requisite for economic expansion, which implies being selective in the skills that are imported, safeguarding the security of our country and maximising efficiency and output of the labour force. The MEAL added

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that its recommendations will make it easier for many TCNs to be employed legally.

The Association further added that in respect of the employment of irregular immigrants, it supports the setting up of job brokerage offices as proposed by government to regularise the employment of migrant workers as a means of providing decent, regulated work for these persons. The Association has consistently condemned exploitation of workers, both Maltese and non-Maltese and urges all companies to behave ethically in their obligations as employers.