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Media Release

### **MEA highlights anti employer bias in Parliamentary session on Persons with Disability**

The Malta Employers' Association stated that this week's debate in parliament about the employment of disabled persons was strongly biased against employers and gave the impression that many companies actively resist employing persons with disability, which is not the case. The number of disabled persons in employment, given as 1450, excludes so many unregistered but employed disabled persons. Many employers have complained that they are not even in a position to know if they are complaint with the law because they are not entitled to information about who is actually a registered disabled person within their labour force. There have been cases whereby companies who asked about their compliance on this matter were told that they already have registered disabled persons among their workforce without their knowing it.

The fact is that, irrespective of the number of disabled persons in the country, currently there are just 550 actively looking for a job. This was stated in parliament. Is it being proposed that the additional 19k who are officially disabled and of working age should start registering as unemployed?

The Malta Employers' Association fully supports constructive and realistic measures to increase the number of employed disabled persons, in spite of the difficulties that may be encountered by many enterprises. MEA has even forwarded a position paper, with concrete proposals, on how to increase the number of disabled persons in employment and also how to make the regulations more enforceable. MEA has been in contact with the Employment and Training Corporation for the past six months to organize an information session whereby a number of queries by employers about the proposed measures will be clarified, but unfortunately to this date many questions remain unanswered. The Association insists that employers have a right to obtain replies to their concerns before government starts imposing fines for alleged non compliance. After all, the objective of the bill is not simply revenue collection, but a more challenging one which is the employment of disabled persons.