6th July 2017

**Media Release**

**Malta Employers’ Association backs Air Malta – claims Industrial Action by the Association of Airline Operations Controllers (AAOC) is Illegal.**

The Malta Employers’ Association has condemned the industrial action ordered by the Association of Airline Operations Controllers, and stated that the action goes against the provisions of Legal Notice 413 of 2016 on recognition of Trade Unions. The legal notice states that:

*‘Once a union is recognized as the sole collective bargaining union, no other union may intervene on a collective matter relating to the employees concerned with the employer, and conversely, no employer shall discuss collective matters relating to the employees’ concerned with a union other than the recognized union’.*

MEA is strongly of the opinion that the management of Air Malta should not be coerced to take back a legitimate recognition grated to GWU and give it instead to the AAOC. The Association added that it disagreed with the Director of Employment and Industrial Relations’ decision to give recognition to the AAOC, and that this case can set a dangerous precedent for other companies as it is inconceivable that union representation within a company can become fragmented in a manner that can make a place of work unmanageable. This decision risks putting Air Malta in a gratuitous simultaneous confrontation with two unions. The fact that the AAOC has the majority of employees in a department does not give it an automatic right to negotiate a collective agreement on their behalf. Union recognition should be based on a totality of company employees unless agreed between management and unions to consider categories. The legislation makes no mention that an employer is obliged to recognise collective bargaining units within a company.