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## Media Release

### **MEA tells MEP candidates: ‘Bring the European Parliament closer to Global Economic Realities’**

The electoral campaign for the election of members in the European Parliament across the European Union should focus on spreading awareness about the relevance of the institution and its impact on the day to day lives of the average citizen. There is a widespread perception across Europe that the EU institutions are insensitive to the realities faced by enterprises and workers, leading to a sense of detachment by many citizens from the operations of the European Parliament, and a low turnout for these elections in many countries. Businesses feel the frustration of operating in an overly regulated environment, and, in spite of an improving situation in some EU countries, unemployment levels – particularly among youths - remain high in most economies.

The Malta Employers’ Association appeals to voters to select candidates – from whatever side of the political spectrum – who truly have the credentials to participate in MEP committees to promote the Maltese agenda. The elected representatives have a dual role of pushing towards making the EU as a whole more competitive, and safeguarding Maltese interests. With a representation of six MEPs and 22 different committees, the elected candidates will have to prioritise which committees are the most relevant for Malta. The Association believes that all six MEPs should coordinate their efforts to avoid duplication in order to participate in as many committees as possible.

A major challenge facing the EU is the sustainability of the European Social Model. The MEPs have to work towards changing a culture of entitlement to one of participation and contribution. The European Parliament has to come to terms with the fact that a sustainable Europe can only come about through a Competitive Europe. The fact that, over the past EP legislature, many EU countries had to face bailouts and/or resort to austerity measures is a clear sign of countries living beyond their means, where the value of production was persistently lower than that of consumption. In essence, this is what has led to an escalation of deficits and public debts to crisis levels in many countries, with the resulting need for painful fiscal consolidation.

The European Parliament needs to concentrate on measures to revive competitiveness in Europe, through a relaxation of excessive labour and other administrative regulations, and shifting its focus more towards generating labour demand. It is all well and good to encourage active labour market policies to stimulate labour supply, but there should be a corresponding effort at incentivising employers to offer more employment opportunities. The unemployed are not interested in

improving working conditions for those in employment at the cost of their exclusion from the labour market. This consideration should be the basis of a European employment strategy. MEPs need to be sensitive to the requirements of businesses, particularly SMEs, to enable them to generate productive jobs, through an industrial policy that incentivises entrepreneurship, R&D, and job creation.

The MEA also called on the Maltese MEPs to make themselves available for dialogue with the social partners during their tenure. Consultation with the social partners will empower MEPs to take more informed positions in the national interest on matters that may affect Malta directly, amongst them the proposal for an EU-wide financial tax, the working time directive and regional state aid. It is the role of the MEPs and the social partners to exchange views and information to ensure that Malta achieves maximum benefit from EU membership.