

12<sup>th</sup> July 2022

## Media Release

### **Government statement on Work-Life Balance Measures need more Clarity - MEA**

The Malta Employers' Association stated that, although it appreciated the fact that government, up till now, has generally stuck to the minimum entitlements of the Work-Life Balance Directive to cause minimum disruption to workplaces, the costs of these measures will still be carried by employers from 2024 onwards. The Directive does not state that expenses related to work-life balance measures should be borne by employers. In fact, in many EU Member States it is government that pays for such social benefits. The cost to employers is not limited to payment for these benefits, but also the disruption and expenses incurred in replacing absent employees. The recommendations forwarded to government jointly by employer bodies have been largely ignored, including the one where it was proposed to eliminate the transferability of parental leave in the interest of achieving a better gender balance. As things stand, there is the option that this entitlement will be shifted on female employees. It will also be difficult for employers to administer such leave.

The Association also expressed its reservations about the repeated emphasis, during the press conference, that this is 'only the beginning'. Government should state exactly what its medium and long-term plans are in this regard so that employers will be forewarned and may plan accordingly. Vague statements only give rise to speculation and uncertainty which are, of course, detrimental to investment and initiative. They also raise expectations during a period when many companies are struggling to regain lost business due to the pandemic, and are also assailed by inflationary and labour-market pressures which are unprecedented during the past forty years.