

21<sup>st</sup> March 2023

## Media Release

### Ensuring the Skills for Future Competitiveness

The Malta Employers' Association rounded off its efforts related to its initiative entitled "Ensuring the Skills for Future Competitiveness" with a visit to the President of the Republic at San Anton Palace on 14<sup>th</sup> March.

The visit served to present HE Dr George Vella with the first copy of the MEA publication which reported on the various efforts undertaken by the Association during 2022 with the same theme. These included:

- a) desk research undertaken internally by the MEA permanent team;
- b) a series of working groups involving over 50 business stakeholders in four economic sectors held in June/July;
- c) a Stakeholders Session held at Parliament on 21 July with the participation of over 60 representatives of national entities.

The above initiatives led the MEA to make 13 key recommendations towards stimulating the availability of skills which are relevant to the labour market now and in the future. These concrete recommendations are elaborated upon in the MEA's latest publication which also serves as documented evidence of the Association's initiatives as well as to ensure lasting outcomes from its efforts and contributions made by business and National stakeholders' representatives.

In presenting the publication, MEA President Ms Joanne Bondin explained that "As far as future skills are concerned, the country needs a clear strategy with practical solutions where key stakeholders work together towards a common objective". She emphasised the importance of education and engagement with young people in order to give them the right skills and guidance for their future careers. She said it was important to promote careers as opposed to jobs because the more people believe they are fulfilling a specific purpose in their lives through their careers, the more they are able to take pride in what they do. This will encourage them to invest more in themselves towards the achievement of higher personal goals and satisfaction because they believe that their current job is a milestone in their long-term professional journey.

MEA Director General Joseph Farrugia maintained that while recruiting foreign workers was a convenient short-term measure to plug immediate shortages that employers were experiencing. He also underlined the need for a strategy that embraces innovation and digital skills as a means to alleviate an over-dependence on foreign talent. He said that the explosion of the Maltese population is creating problems and externalities which are posing risks to the country's sustainability and attractiveness.

HE Dr George Vella expressed his sincere appreciation for the MEA's latest efforts performed in fulfilment of its role to provide leadership, guidance and support to the business community.

The delegation led by Ms Joanne Bondin was further composed of MEA Council members, senior executives and collaborating stakeholders in the MEA project including Foundation for Transport and Identity Malta Agency.