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## Media Release

### **SMEs National Forum 2021 to tackle the Journey Ahead for SMEs in the context of Green Growth**

For decades, delivering economic growth and sustainable development were seen as conflicting objectives that needed to be balanced for the benefit of humanity. As citizens become increasingly aware of irreversible damage our planet is facing, there is wider acceptance that we do not need to sacrifice our future for progress.

Businesses acting sustainably or ensuring greener processes in producing or delivering their services will be able to take advantage of changing consumer demand. This direction is being strongly backed by the European Green Deal, which is set to bring about a wave of new policy and an unprecedented financial commitment. This will bring extensive funding and support, but at the same time will require significant changes from businesses in a wide array of sectors, to significantly transform the way they operate.

Maltese authorities have taken on board these opportunities and committed to spend more than half of the budget allocated by the EU through the Recovery and Resilience Facility on green projects. As Malta seeks to push forward its green credentials in the context of post-pandemic regeneration, SMEs will be facing growing challenges and opportunities as they map their way forward.

In this context, this year's SMEs National Forum, organised by the SME Help Desk within the Malta Employers' Association in collaboration with the Ministry for the Economy and Industry and a number of other stakeholders, will focus on the journey ahead for SMEs in the context of green growth. The hybrid event will take place on Wednesday 3rd November 2021 at the New Dolmen Hotel, Qawra.

A number of high-profile speakers from the public and private sector will share their experience and vision on the theme. The themes being discussed include latest developments in tech and the green economy, the need for greener planning, and challenges in moving towards greener mobility.

Launching the event, Mr Joseph Farrugia, Director General of the Malta Employers' Association said that "the pressing environmental challenges which the world is facing, require a collective effort by authorities, businesses and consumers to develop a sustainable economic model that generates productive opportunities for Maltese citizens and, simultaneously enhances their well-being".

MEA President, Joanne Bondin added: "SMEs remain a major contributor to growth and employment and they will play a fundamental role in Malta's economic regeneration. Through this year's SME National Forum, we aim to better understand the realities facing smaller businesses in the context of green growth and the tools needed to transform the challenges ahead into opportunities for further success".

Registrations for the event, which is free of charge, are open on <https://forms.gle/dNTAnd8TTZRu3gp96>