

Business Today

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Financial sector up in arms over no consultation to bill

Karl Stagno-Navarra

The financial sector is up in arms with government over a bill that was apparently drafted without any consultation and allegedly carries with it a series of implications for family run businesses.

According to sources within the financial sector, the bill known as the 'Act to implement Budget measures for the financial year 2010 and other administrative measures' was apparently drafted by the Finance ministry without any consultation with professional bodies.

"We are seriously concerned about the implications of this Bill that will definitely have an effect on international business, not to also

ABBOZZ TA' LIĠI msejjaħ

ATT biex jimplementa Miżuri ta' l-Estimi Finanzjarji għall-2010 u miżuri amministrattivi oħra.

IL-PRESIDENT bil-parir u l-kunsens tal-Kamra tad-Deputati, imlaqqgħa f'dan il-Parlament, u bl-awtorità ta' l-istess, harrġ b'liġi dan li ġejj:-

1. It-titolu fil-qosor ta' dan l-Att huwa l-Att ta' l-2010 li jimplementa Miżuri ta' l-Estimi.

mention family run companies," said an experienced auditor and accountant.

Financial experts have pointed out that the Bill proposes changes to the taxation regime that regulates the transfer of shares and taxes shareholders on succession.

"The Bill could be seen as to upset the whole scope of the Malta Stock Exchange as it will stray businesses from listing on the exchange, given the proposal for including capital gains tax on the transfer of shares,"

another expert said, while adding that the Bill "possibly defeats the whole purpose of the Stock Exchange."

Meanwhile, a Finance Ministry spokesman told this paper that a number of clarification requests have been received by government over the Bill.

"We are looking into the issues raised and we can confirm that some meetings are currently being held with professional bodies to address their concerns," he concluded.

The draft bill that has raised eyebrows within the financial sector.

Malta-Spain to boost economic ties



King Juan Carlos I and Queen Sofia in Malta today

King Juan Carlos I and Queen Sofia of Spain will arrive in Malta today for a two day State visit, during which Malta and Spain are to boost economic and social ties. The Monarchs will be accompanied by Foreign minister Miguel Angel Moratinos who will sign a series of bilateral agreements with the Maltese government, putting to fruition months of negotiations between the two sides. One of the agreements is a memorandum of understanding on the establishment of a Malta-Spain joint committee on merchant shipping. Another agreement will be signed on cooperation between the Spanish Diplomatic School and Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies (MEDAC).

The two countries will also sign

an agreement on a cooperation programme in the areas of culture, education and science for the term 2009-2012. The first cultural agreement between Malta and Spain dates back to 1976, and since then, the ties regarding culture, education and science have grown. Another agreement will be signed on a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in the field of cultural heritage. A memorandum of understanding regarding archives between Malta and the Kingdom of Spain will also be signed. Both countries will also sign an accord on exchange programmes of language assistants between Malta and Spain. Last year Malta and Spain marked 40 years since establishing diplomatic relations

MCESD to be consulted on Budget implementation

Finance Minister Tonio Fenech announced yesterday that government has accepted a request to keep the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD) updated on the progress made during the year on the implementation of the Budget measures.

Speaking during a presentation of the 2009 progress report about the implementation of the Malta National Reform Programme 2008-2010, Minister Tonio Fenech said that government was satisfied with the progress achieved, and that it was able to contain job losses and create new jobs despite the negative results in tourism, manufacturing and trade.

Tonio Fenech stressed that jobs were the "definite focus" of next year's Budget, while referring to the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs - in terms of which the Malta reform programme was drawn up



The MCESD round table

"may have to be revised since the global economic downturn meant that Europe would not be able to attain the targets which the strategy established."

While stressing that economic recovery may be reached by mid next year, European economists were indicating a jobless recovery, "but this is something the Maltese government

disagrees with since it was committed to job creation," he said.

Tonio Fenech also spoke about other aspects of the reform programme that included the creation of a more business-friendly regulatory environment, the public transport reform, research and development, the Mepa reform and the provision of a secure, cost effective power supply.

EasyJet links Malta with Milan, Liverpool

EasyJet announced yesterday that it will be strengthening Malta's links with flights to Milan and Liverpool.

The Milan route will start on March 30, with three weekly flights and with a return fare of €53.98, while the Liverpool-Malta route will start as from June 13.

easyJet

Flights to Liverpool will be twice weekly with a return cost of 56.98 Sterling.

EasyJet announced last week that it had reached an agreement with SR Technics and will see

service all its aircraft in Malta, as from next year.

In a statement, EasyJet also announced new services between Stansted and Cagliari, Manchester and Helsinki, Paris and Helsinki, Paris and Catania, Paris and Agadir, Milan and Casablanca, Milan and Agadir and Milan-Porto.



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