



## **EU approves €112 million for the period 2007-13 to help Malta create more and better jobs**

*Valletta (Malta), 18<sup>th</sup> July 2007 – The European Commission has made another significant step to help Malta reap the full benefits of EU membership by launching the Maltese programme to promote employment. The programme is co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Maltese Government. Receiving EUR 112 million in EU funding - 85% of the total amount - the programme aims to keep people equipped with the skills they need to find a job and to stay in work throughout their professional life. The ESF provides over EUR 10 billion a year across the EU as a whole. At the end of the new funding period 2007-2013, the EU will have contributed some EUR 75 billion to the 27 Member States. This represents more than 10% of the total budget of the European Union.*

Representing the European Commission at the launch event in Valletta, Peter Stub Jorgensen, Director at DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, welcomed the adoption, highlighting the tremendous impact such sustained investments will have on developing a more mature labour market. He said “The ESF strengthens Europe's capacity to create good jobs and equip workers with the right skills to fill them in line with the EU's Lisbon objectives for growth and jobs. These objectives must be put into practice at national level”. The Hon. Prime Minister of Malta, Dr. Lawrence Gonzi, a key speaker at the event, confirmed the Maltese Government's strong commitment to the EU's strategy for Growth and Jobs so that Malta can enjoy the full benefits of EU membership.

The priorities for Malta's programme are to improve people's education and skills; to invest in the employability and adaptability of the workforce; to promote an equal and inclusive labour market; and to strengthen the institutional and administrative capacity of the government so that it can provide better public services.

Areas where the Maltese Government will take concrete action include:

- Lifelong learning systems and strategies in companies and training for workers to adapt better to changes on the labour market;
- Strong employment services;
- Self employment and business start-ups;
- Increased participation in education and training throughout working life;
- Employment in research and innovation

During the day-long event, a number of workshop sessions were held to allow participants and key labour market stakeholders evaluate how best to utilise the funds to create better jobs. As in the previous programming period (2000-2006), the ESF will support employment by helping people improve their education and skills and increase their job prospects. New elements of the 2007-2013 programming

period include the simplification of rules so the responsibilities of Member States, regions, and the Commission are more clearly defined. In addition, funding will now concentrate on areas where it will have the greatest impact.

Other speakers at the event included the Chairperson of the event, Dr. Godwin Grima, Principal Permanent Secretary and Head of the Public Service; as well as the Chairman of the National Strategic Reference Framework Steering Committee, the Hon. Tonio Fenech, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Finance.

### **Background on the European Social Fund**

The European Social Fund, created in 1957, is the European Union's main financial instrument for investing in people. It focuses on five key areas:

- helping workers and companies adapt to a constantly changing economy;
- increasing access to employment and participation in the labour market
- improving training and skills - both for individuals, and through better education and training systems;
- reinforcing the social inclusion of disadvantaged people and combating discrimination in the labour market.
- promoting partnerships for reform in the fields of employment and inclusion, for example between employers, trade unions and non-governmental organisations.

Member States and regions draw up their own ESF Operational Programmes so they can respond to the real needs "on the ground". During the period 2007-2013, the European Social Fund will spend over EUR 10 billion per year across all Member States.

### **For more information, see:**

<http://ec.europa.eu/esf>

Examples of ESF projects funded in Malta:

<http://mfss.gov.mt/esf/>

### **For press queries, please contact:**

Mr Edward DEMICOLI, European Commission Representation in Malta, tel: +356 21 344891, e-mail: [edward.demicoli@ec.europa.eu](mailto:edward.demicoli@ec.europa.eu)

GlobalCom PR-Network Partner – Malta, CREDAL Business Consulting Ltd, Tel: +356 21342704