

ADDRESS BY THE HON. CHRIS SAID, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC DIALOGUE AND INFORMATION, DURING THE HALF-DAY SEMINAR “SAY EU AND ... ACTION” – WORKSHOP ON FLEXICURITY, ORGANISED BY THE FORUM MALTA FL-EWROPA AND FONDAZZJONI TEMI ZAMMIT - MEDITERRANEAN CONFERENCE CENTRE, VALLETTA – 18 June 2008

Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nowadays businesses are under increasing pressure to adapt. Change has become a pressing necessity for any commercial entity that wants to remain relevant in today's fast-changing business environment; businesses have to find ways on how to handle and organise CHANGE.

Incorporating the future in today's decisions is taken as a GIVEN, the question is: how far in the future? And how reliably can we predict it? Although we shall be discussing SECURITY, we all know that the real issue is: RISK. The global market is posing more risks and the future is becoming increasingly unpredictable. It's all about change, changes that have become the order of the day. We can only manage or hedge against risks, but we surely cannot rule out its effects.

Staying in the market requires continuous efforts to effectively streamline production processes and practices. Processes that comprise the set-up of capital formation and practices that are related to human capital. Nowadays we are looking out for employment security rather than job security. That is how the concept of flexicurity came about. This term highlights the need to be flexible enough to embrace change, thus providing security against the risk of running out of business or losing employment. The subject is employment and not unemployment. Securing employment implies the determination to equip ourselves and to encourage multi-skilling so as to ensure flexibility.

Flexicurity is a new way of looking at flexibility and security in work. It promotes a combination of flexible labour markets with a high level of employment and income security.

Flexicurity is more about creating employment opportunities and less about job protection. The focus of flexicurity is to give people career opportunities and differs a lot from the traditional mentality of a job for life. Flexicurity is about a career path and is not limited to a particular job in life. It helps to mitigate the fear of losing a job because the emphasis is on progressing and getting better employment opportunities.

At Member State level, flexicurity can provide the right framework for a process to establish national objectives towards adaptation and change in the area of employment, productivity, flexibility and security.

It is not easy to replace the notion of job security with a new culture of flexibility. Flexicurity represents a means whereby employees and their employers can adapt better to insecurities associated with the global markets. Education and the emphasis on life-long learning are vital to realising the benefits of flexicurity.

Through effective public dialogue, Government believes that, in order to ensure that flexicurity delivers benefits to all; the active involvement of the social partners is a key factor.

The concept of Flexicurity was already discussed in depth at a meeting of the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development which was held on the 6th June.

The social partners agreed on the way forward. A number of proposals by MCESD will be given to the Government.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ms Beata Zaborowska from the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of the European Union for being with us today. Ms Lucy Pace Gouder and Minister John Dalli for their contribution. Last but not least a word of thanks to *Forum Malta fl-Ewropa* and *Fondazzjoni Temi Zammit* the organizers of this seminar. Thank you.

DOI – 18.06.2008