

Speech by the Hon. John Dalli, Minister for Social Policy at the workshop on Flexicurity organised by the 'Forum Malta fl-Ewropa' – Mediterranean Conference Centre, Valletta – 18th June 2008

Today we are talking of a new word made of up of two: flexibility and security, and for me, this is also showing the way we are thinking. We are thinking on reconciling – reconciling the future necessities with the stock of ethics in human relationships, and here what we are trying to do is to reconcile the two things, because one can think and say that in the present situation with globalisation we have to be flexible and adaptable in order to be productive.

That would send us completely into a situation were we forget the other concept – human relationships.

We are here to put our heads together and see were the benefits are. The benefits are in these two things that coexist.

We cannot be traditional and do not address the present situation; and on the other hand we cannot rush on the relationship mechanism that exist today in our society for the sake of flexibility. Flexibility is being brought about by globalisation – globalisation is changing Europe's economy and the way we used to do things in the past and consequently is pushing prices up, of all imaginable commodities, now including food. These new phenomena which we are seeing are changing our economy with certain speed.

It's useless to put our heads in the sand. We have to take it and we have to adapt to it, and here is where flexibility comes in. We have to be flexible to ensure we provide job security.

The pressures for flexibility are not only coming from efficiency but there are also the pressures deriving from social perspective – work family balance - which is also very important for the Maltese economy. We need the female input in our economy.

We must enhance female participation in the Maltese economy and at the same time keeping our traditional family values.

We also have to envelope flexibility with the concept of security because unsecure people are not productive. People do not only need to know where they are but also where are they going.

In my view flexibility has to have a national aspect as well such as in the social pact, because I believe the security part has to be overlaid by a national policy.

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