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COVID-19 and the Maltese Workers, UHM (Malta)



The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting not only the Maltese population but everyone in the world, regardless of age, income or country. However, young people are likely to be particularly hard hit by the economic fallout of the crisis.

Crises fall hardest on the most vulnerable. Young people make up one such group, particularly when it comes to the social and economic impact of the virus pandemic. However, people are bracing themselves for restrictive measures to last until the end of summer despite Malta's

success in containing COVID-19, according to local newspaper survey.

The survey found that 44.9% of people are expecting the restrictive measures to stay in place until the end of summer, while 27.4% believe they will remain in force until the end of June. A smaller cohort (14.2%) were more pessimistic and expected the social distancing measures to last until the end of the year. A much smaller cohort was optimistic, anticipating that the restrictions will be lifted by the end of May. Women were more likely than men to expect restrictions to last until the end of summer (49.3% of women versus 40.4% of men), but men were almost twice as likely to believe restrictions will last until year's end (18.4% men versus 10% women).



Restrictions were introduced gradually as from the onset of the pandemic, locally. Until today schools remain closed, hundreds of shops are kept closed, public gatherings of more than three people are banned and the elderly and the vulnerable are asked to remain inside and go out only to buy essential items. All travel to and from the island also remains shut.

In the light of the COVID-19 crisis, now is a good time to heed advice from local authorities and take the opportunity to restructure and most importantly rebuild the systems we have in place. It is clear that all workers – irrespective of their employment arrangements – need to be able to access health care, stay at home when feeling unwell and not report to work when sick, and benefit from income support in case of a crisis-related reduction of working time or job loss.

In our diverse world, we need flexible ways of working, but this flexibility should not come at the expense of needed protections for workers. Let's hope that COVID-19 gives the world the wake-up call that it needs.



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