PRESS RELEASE ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

This morning, Prime Minister Joseph Muscat and Education Minister Evarist Bartolo launched a consultation call on a number of educational proposals with the aim of empowering schools, democratising the system and increasing the rights and obligations of parents.

From a substantive point of view, the new package of legislation is intended to modernise our legislation to cater for developments and to better address the challenges in the education sector in a simpler and less paternalistic way. Amongst the issues addressed are the following:

- The role and function of the education central authorities and other entities and commissions established by law;
- The rights and obligations of parents in the provision of education to their children;
- Students’ rights and increased student involvement;
- The promotion of civic involvement, employability and active citizenship;
- The better functioning and management of State Schools and Colleges;
- The regulation of the teaching profession and other education providers in all sectors;
- The better coordination of all actors and stakeholders involved in the educational sector, and the involvement of social partners;
- The rationalisation of resources; and
- The reduction of bureaucracy and inefficiency.

From a regulatory aspect, the main change being proposed is the enactment of separate pieces of legislation to regulate the different players in the educational system. It is being proposed that the University of Malta, MCAST, the Council for the Teaching Profession (which will become the Educators’ Council) and the National Commission for Further and Higher Education be governed by a stand-alone Act. It is being proposed that the new Education Act deal solely with the main principles underpinning education in Malta and state schools. Moreover, the new Education Regulatory Act will deal with regulatory aspects, in particular ensuring that quality in education is safeguarded and also subjecting state schools to quality surveillance.
Minister Evarist Bartolo said that the top-down approach to education will change with these proposals. “In a world where it’s always more flat and horizontal in terms of authority, this legislation will allow the education system to give a real voice to all those involved in education, especially students.”

Prime Minister Joseph Muscat said this is courageous step for Government to “democratise” the education structures and increase the involvement of stakeholders. This means more autonomy to the educators who can enact the right measures and policies which fit their realities.

The full documentation can be accessed on www.education.gov.mt. The consultation period is currently open and closes on 7 October 2016.