

12 October 2026

Forum Unions Maltin, the confederation of trade unions is issuing the following proposals for the 2027 Budget:

1. Energy subsidies

With the rise of fuel prices across the globe, energy subsidies are very important for Maltese workers and their families. For.U.M. requests that subsidies are maintained whilst the government addresses misuse and excessive use of fuel, electricity and water supplies.

2. Climate action

With the increase in the frequency of extreme weather conditions affecting our islands, we need co-ordinated protocols about the actions that shall be taken by all government services before, during and following extreme weather conditions. These protocols need to be communicated with affected entities and employees.

3. Flexible working arrangements

To introduce a formal provision for all employees to request flexible working arrangements, including remote working, flexitime, compressed working weeks and reduced working hours, subject to reasonable operational requirements.

4. Employee protection

To strengthen employment legislation to ensure that employees benefiting from remote or flexible working arrangements are not disadvantaged in relation to career progression, promotions, training opportunities or other employment conditions.

5. Work during retirement

A change to the current legislation is being proposed to allow individuals who have completed their required National Insurance (NI) contributions to access their pension immediately and seek alternative employment, without waiting until the age of 65. By modernizing the law, this proposal ensures workers can benefit from their hard-earned pensions sooner, while simultaneously expanding the labour market and providing employers with a larger pool of experienced workers

6. Capping of pensions

The capping of pensions irrespective of employees' maximum earnings prior to the pensionable age and their contributions has to be revised. Employees struggle to improve their work status to make ends meet, to support their families and to improve their lifestyles but this effort is not being recognised. On the other hand, the government is, from time to time, removing the capping for small groups of privileged employees. For.U.M. is requesting a national discussion on the capping mechanism.

7. Taxation on part-time employment

Increase the annual income eligible for the reduced 10% tax rate from €10,000 to €15,000 for part-time employees and from €12,000 to €20,000 for part-time self-employed individuals.

8. Tax exemption for youth

Introduce the proposed income tax exemption on the first €30,000 of annual earnings during the first three years of employment of young people, thereby supporting young people entering the labour market.

9. Working week reduction

For.U.M. proposes to gradually reduce the standard working week from 40 to 36 hours, without any loss of pay, over a three-year period. The implementation should begin within the public sector and be extended to the private sector through social dialogue. This reduction would improve work-life balance, increase productivity, promote gender equality, and enhance overall health and well being. A shorter working week would contribute to a healthier and more productive workforce aligned with EU norms.

10. Right to disconnect

For.U.M. has been a pioneer in bringing the right to disconnect to the national debate. Yet developments are stalled at national level even though this is a recurrent theme in European institutions. For.U.M. proposes a legislation to safeguard the 'free' time of employees and expects the government to lead by example as an employer in introducing it for its employees.

11. Psychosocial protection

Introduce measures addressing workplace stress, psychosocial risks and mental wellbeing, including preventive mechanisms, appropriate risk assessments and support systems for all employees.

12. Extending Paid Study leave

To extend the government-funded paid study leave ranging from two to ten days annually, depending on the level of study being undertaken. Consideration is to be given to extending comparable benefits across both the public and private sectors.

13. Upskilling and re-skilling

To strengthen the financial incentives and support schemes that encourage employees to pursue professional qualifications, continuous professional development and the acquisition of new skills.

14. Individual learning accounts

To introduce the proposed Individual Learning Accounts, providing government contributions of €500 annually for ten years, up to a maximum of €5,000, towards eligible education and accredited training.

15. Collective bargaining coverage

For.U.M. is requesting a discussion with trade unions on specific measures to raise the collective bargaining coverage. This is in line with the implementation of the directive (EU) 2022/2041 on Adequate Minimum Wages, which pledges to raise coverage in accordance with the EU target of 80%.

16. Industrial Tribunal

The Industrial Tribunal procedures require revision as the specified timing of procedures listed in the respective acts is far from being respected. Tribunal cases are sometimes taking longer than parallel cases in court. The appointments of chairpersons should be more transparent and needs to pass through MCESD. For.U.M. does not currently have a representative in the list of chairpersons. The tribunal should also be housed in a separate premises from the courts of justice to operate independently from the court schedules.

17. Free riders contribution

Whilst reaffirming our position against a mandatory trade union membership, we are proposing a mandatory contribution of free riders. Free riders, ie employees who are not members of the negotiating union should contribute through a fund used for education purposes, which is accessible to negotiating unions to sustain their educational purposes.

18. Registration of confederations

There is still no mechanism in place to register trade union confederations. The mechanism to register trade unions has been in place for decades but to-date there is still no legislative provision in place to register a confederation of trade unions. The lack of a legislative framework is affecting the confederation's operations.

19. Eligibility for schemes

For.U.M. and its affiliated Trade Union members are still not allowed to benefit from schemes issued by the government to companies or NGO's. Trade unions seem to be in no man's land when it comes to schemes despite their legal frameworks and registrations. The confederation has been requesting the inclusion of Trade Unions in schemes for several years.

20. Fair representation

For.U.M. is still not being represented in European fora in instances where the government chooses its representatives. In situations where two representatives of employees have to participate, For.U.M. is being left out without even the possibility to participate as an alternate. This means that the over 13 unions and over 16,000 members of the confederation do not have a voice in European fora as decided by the Maltese Government.