



11th January 2021

The Malta Association of Public Health Medicine (MAPHM) unreservedly condemns the re-deployment of the Consultant responsible for leading the Public Health Response Team. This is a shocking development which came completely out of the blue and has obviously nothing to do with mapping out a National Strategy to secure EU funds since other public health specialists were already assigned to work on this.

This move demonstrates a lack of respect towards professionals and recklessness in decision-making. The role of the public health specialist is to provide the evidence base and data to allow for entities to consider options for policymaking. It is apparent that the Government's tactics are to punish and intimidate any health care professional carrying out their professional duties. This consultant was pivotal in the setting up and daily management of the COVID-19 Response Team and more so now, when we are handling the highest case counts to date and when strong leadership is so necessary. This move is being widely interpreted as an attempt to muzzle those professionals who value evidence-based approaches, integrity and who keep the health and safety of our country paramount.

We do not stand alone. MAPHM has been overwhelmed by support from the public and other professionals. The hundreds of people working within the COVID-19 Response Team over the last year are saddened, disappointed, and frustrated by this news. It is our families, friends and neighbours who will have to suffer the consequences of these decisions, when they end up in a hospital which is overcrowded and overwhelmed due to the Government's failure to support us in saving lives and protecting the public's health.

Dr. Sascha Reiff
President – MAPHM

Dr. Alexia Bezzina
Honorary Secretary - MAPHM

On behalf of the MAPHM Executive Committee:

Sascha Reiff, Sandra Buttigieg, Alexia Bezzina, Maya Podesta, Kathleen England, Mariella Borg Buontempo, Tanya Melillo, Daniel Cauchi, Jason Attard, Marika Borg, Graziella Rocco, Stefan Buttigieg