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### **Covid-19: Efforts by the local communication services operators**

To say we are living in a time of unprecedented change has become an understatement. The coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak knows no borders and is hitting developed and developing nations alike. It's an anxious time as the way we interact, work, shop and almost everything else has been dramatically altered.

This global public health emergency has highlighted the importance of uninterrupted telephone, internet, mail and delivery services. We are reliant on these essential services to keep updated, communicate with loved ones, consult our doctors and buy essential items. Educational institutions have rapidly adopted diverse technological tools to deliver their teaching online. Businesses that can do so, have shifted their workforce to work from home to keep their employees safe. All this has significantly increased the data traffic over broadband connections and have highlighted the importance of having robust and reliable networks.

More than ever before, telecommunication services are proving to be vital to every stratum of society. Malta constantly ranks amongst the top EU countries in the Digital Economy and Society Index published by the European Commission in terms of 'connectivity' thanks to ongoing investment in telecom networks and favoured by a regulatory system aimed at promoting competition in the market.

The Malta Communications Authority (MCA) welcomes the efforts being undertaken by the telecom operators, postal operators and online traders in their commitment to remain close to their customers, while ensuring the stability and quality of service and the safety of their workforce. It is particularly reassuring to note that telecommunications service providers have introduced several beneficial measures including:

- Providing people in key frontline professions with free mobile services.
- Providing consumers with free access to TV Premium channels or entertainment applications.
- Assisting customers stranded abroad by upgrading mobile services for free.
- Providing online guidance for customers to manage their services in an electronic way.



Postal operators that also continue to serve communities providing a vital services, particularly to many vulnerable people, have taken measures to safeguard the health of their staff and to the citizens to whom they deliver their services including:

- customers are not be required to sign for mail that normally requires a signature, instead the details of the customer are being logged in.
- customers and employees are required to follow social distancing during delivery of services, including when parcels do not physically fit into the postal mailbox.
- appropriate notice of alternative collection methods is being issued to customers who are not able to receive postal items at the door.

The MCA is keeping an ongoing dialogue with telecommunications and postal operators to ensure that citizens stay connected and adapt with ease during this extraordinary crises. The Authority is also in close cooperation with several ministries and other governmental bodies and with counterpart European national regulatory authorities to facilitate and support policies and decisions taken Maltese Government and the EU in dealing with this pandemic.

Citizens who have enquiries or face issues with their communication services are first advised to contact their service provider, and if their query remains unresolved, to contact the MCA by completing the Enquiry/Complaints form on [mca.org.mt](https://mca.org.mt), by sending an email on [customercare@mca.org.mt](mailto:customercare@mca.org.mt) or by calling us on 21336840.