



## **“A collective win for the voluntary sector” - The new Legal Notices for Public Collections and Charity Shops are published**

After months of consultation with the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector (MCVS) and voluntary organisations, the Office of the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations (OCVO) would like to announce that the amendments of the Legal Notices regarding Public Collections and Charity Shops have been approved and published. The previous Legal Notices have been repealed and the newly amended Legal Notices will come into force on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

In the words of the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations, Jesmond Saliba, this collaborative exercise that took place over the past few months, between the OCVO, the MCVS and all the major stakeholders within the voluntary sector shows that voluntarism in Malta is truly recognised as a fundamental pillar of Maltese society.

The Parliamentary Secretary for Sport, Recreation and Voluntary Organisations Clifton Grima stressed that this exercise showed how much the Government really looks at volunteering and voluntary organisations with such esteem. "Together with the Office of the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations, and the Council for the Voluntary Sector, the Government listened to what voluntary organisations had to say, so much so that today we are seeing new legislation, built on the ideas of the voluntary organisations themselves." The Parliamentary Secretary thanked all those involved and stressed that he looks forward to having a stronger and safeguarded voluntary sector.

In light of this important breakthrough, the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations Jesmond Saliba expressed his gratitude towards all stakeholders that have made it possible for these Legal Notices to be amended which now will truly reflect the needs of VOs in relation to public collections and charity shops. "It is truly exciting to see all stakeholders within the voluntary sector work cohesively to safeguard and strengthen the voluntary sector against those that want to take advantage of the vulnerability of this sector." Saliba also complimented the synergy between his Office and the MCVS and takes this opportunity to thank the Council for its cooperation and looks forward to continuing strengthening the relationship between both stakeholders.

Meanwhile, MCVS notes with satisfaction that following the intervention of the same Council earlier this year and the consultation with the sector, the regulations have been revised and will now address the concerns of the same sector, while guaranteeing transparency and accountability. This was possible after the work of the same Council in full collaboration with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations, Jesmond Saliba. This collaboration bodes well for the future in the ultimate interest of the same sector of volunteering.

With regards to Public Collections, whereas before VOs had to notify the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations prior to organising a public collection, now, with the new amendments, an enrolled and compliant VO can hold a public collection event without notifying the OCVO.

It was recognised by the majority of the VOs that when organising a public collection, it is important for administrators or collectors to have a tag listing the name and surname, identity card, passport-sized photo of the collector and name and VO number of the specific VO. However, it was agreed that this tag is to be issued by the VOs and not the OCVO. Notably, the validity of the tag has been amended from 6 months to 1 year.

The same concept was agreed upon for the public collection tins, where VOs are free to provide their collectors with sealed tins. These are then to be opened in front of at least two administrators without the need of having a warranted professional present during this process.

One of the most significant changes within the Charity Shops Legal Notice is that a charity shop has to have the words “charity shop” in both Maltese and English inside of the premises and not on the facade of the shop. Identical to the amendment in the Public Collections Legal Notice, tags are to be issued to the responsible persons inside the charity shop by the VO and not the OCVO.

The OCVO reiterates that these Legal Notices have been amended and constructed by the VOs themselves and therefore the ultimate goal of these Legal Notices is to safeguard and strengthen VOs and the voluntary sector in general.

It is undoubtedly the OCVO’s purpose, to stimulate the socio-economic element of VOs while ensuring that VOs have the necessary good governance tools to conserve the work done by thousands of administrators for the benefit of the Maltese and Gozitan people.

The new Legislations can be found at these links; <https://legislation.mt/eli/sl/492.4/mlt> (Legal Notice - Public Collections) and <https://legislation.mt/eli/sl/492.4/mlt> (Legal Notice - Charity Shops).