**Unplanned Development on land and sea**

**October 2016**

The Association for Consumer Rights (ACR) fully supports other NGOs who care for the health of residents, the preservation of the environment and the sustainability of a good quality of life for Maltese citizens. The constant building activities without proper measures to ensure control of dust and noise pollution are not being enforced . The health and quality of life of the residents is being jeopardized. Moreover, different governments are more concerned with the economic gains from the construction of high rise buildings in urban areas which are ruining the traditional beauty and value of our towns and villages, while damaging policies have continued unabated to pave the way for more buildings threatening the countryside, impacting negatively on agriculture and biodiversity.  
  
Traffic is getting out of control and will continue to do so even more without a proper comprehensive strategy and adequate funding sources for its success. This is costing the nation €274 million a year\* in terms of lost productivity and ill health due to toxic emissions - contributing to the increase of health conditions, such lung infections, heart problems, cancer and strokes – as well as taking us ever further from our 2020 Climate Change targets.  
  
Malta will soon look like a concrete jungle with scattered high rise buildings with no character, no identity, nothing unique to offer to tourists. Are our historical buildings also under threat!. Is there an impact assessment that should be the basis of a proper planning policy, as we have seen for example in London in its derelict areas like the Isle of Dogs where Canary Wharf was developed, limiting only that area for high rise buildings and not scattering them all over historical places. We owe it to the future generations to ensure that they will be able to enjoy the Malta we have enjoyed.

The sea surrounding our islands are also under threat. ACR urges the Government to set up Surveillance Officers to ensure that our shores and sea are free from pollutants and greasy sludges which are resulting from fish-farms which need to be properly regulated with strong law enforcement measures and snctions. There is no price for the deterioration of the tourism industry. Authorities have ignored the many complaints from environmentalists, society and swimmers for years now, as far back as 2005. Possibly due to greed, the fish-farm owners have expanded the fish farms to more than the permitted sizes, besides being set up too close to the seashore. This should be checked and enforcement measures carried out quickly. Malta depends on its sea, sun and environment for its survival. We do not want to scare tourists away as that would mean an end to one of the Islands’ most attractive assets and the loss of one of its most important income resources.

\*Refer to page 59 of The External Costs of Passenger and Commercial Vehicle use in Malta : <https://ec.europa.eu/malta/sites/malta/files/docs/body/study_on_traffic_online.pdf>