



**MEDIA RELEASE**

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The Gozo Tourism Association welcomes with interest the Electoral Proposals for Gozo presented by the Nationalist Party compiled in a specific and distinct Electoral Programme for Gozo. This in itself reflects the fact that Gozo is not being treated simply as an electoral district, but an island region meriting the need of different measures to mitigate its constraints.

These specific proposals for Gozo are also concrete steps in the devolution of the Island of Gozo's governance. The entrenchment of a declaration in the constitution that Gozo is an Island Region will be opening up new possibilities and opportunities especially within the European Union context. It will be the key for future socio-economic development in our little Island.

The Gozo Tourism Association has always be in favour of regional governance, and the Association appreciates that the PN Electoral Programme for Gozo is promising the setting up of a regional council for Gozo. This regional structure should be the beginning of a decentralisation evolution process, which would at the same time support and expand sustainable regional development. It will also enhance self responsibility of the region of Gozo, as a level of political co-ordination, and which also strengthens the self steering abilities of the sister Island, including that of the Ministry for Gozo.

The Gozo Tourism Association believes that connectivity is the key to touristic success for Gozo. In this respect, the Association positively notes the proposals listed in the Electoral Programme for Gozo concerning connectivity. The promise of the immediate setting up of a Fast Ferry Service between Malta and Gozo will not only compliment the present Mgarr-Cirkewwa ferry route, and reduce the travelling time to both the Gozitans and visitors between Malta and Gozo, but it will entice visiting cruise liner passengers to also visit Gozo.

These proposals for Gozo caters also directly for the tourism industry through various measures that are aimed to entice investment in new services, mitigate seasonality and improve the profitability of the Gozitan Touristic Establishments. Furthermore there are proposals that are aimed to improve the infrastructe on the island in order to upgrade the Gozitan Touristic offer.

Finally the Gozo Tourism Association would like to point out that all electoral promises being put forward by the two major parties and especially those regarding Gozo, should be sustainable, offering long term solutions, and not simply goodies for election time.

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**Gozo Tourism Association**