



Media Release

17th February, 2013

GTA Annual General Meeting

The Gozo Tourism Association held its 14th Annual General Meeting on Friday, 15th February 2013 at the Citadel Cinema in Victoria.

The Agenda of the Annual General meeting included an address by the Chairman of the Association, Mr Paul Scicluna, the Administrative report by the Chief Executive Officer, Mr Joe Muscat, and the Financial report by the Treasurer, Mr Mark Busuttil. The meeting was also addressed by the Hon Minister for Gozo, Hon. Giovanna Debono, the Hon Dr Mario de Marco, Minister for Tourism, Culture & the Environment, Dr Gavin Gulia, LP Spokesman for Tourism, and Dr. Anton Refalo LP Spokesman for Gozo. Mr. Simon Grech Head of Unit, Commercial Management Department Banif Bank Malta, the official GTA's sponsors, also delivered a presentation. Mr. Frank Spiteri from HWS gave members present an outline of the GTA Booking Portal, which will be launched at the end of March.

In his opening address the GTA Chairman Mr, Paul Scicluna said that although during 2012 foreign tourist arrivals showed an increase on 2011, a decrease in the domestic arrivals was also registered. Mr Scicluna stressed the fact that the authorities concerned need to address the particular challenges faced by the Gozitan tourism sector particularly in strengthening tourism niches and specialised niches that can attract more tourists in the lean and shoulder months as well as opening horizons to other markets. In his welcome speech, Mr Scicluna mentioned accessibility to the Island and he stated that GTA is in favour of more accessibility especially by an airlink, as well as incentive schemes for the Domestic market, and the introduction of seasonal fares by Gozo Channel. The GTA chairman stated that the Association will continue with its lobby for the collating of accommodation statistics for this important accommodation sector on Gozo. Mr. Scicluna stated that the regionality and rurality of Gozo should be taken into consideration when schemes for touristic improvements are launched.

The GTA's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Joe Muscat delivered a presentation on the administration of the Association during 2012. He gave an overview of the Gozitan touristic performance during last year. During his presentation Mr Muscat gave a detailed report of the work and initiatives undertaken by the association during course of the past year 2012.

Labour Party Spokesman for Tourism Dr Gavin Gulia also addressed the AGM and said that this is the third opportunity for him to address the Annual General Meeting of the Gozo Tourism Association. Whilst acknowledging the fact that a lot has been done by the present administration in order to enjoy the record increases registered during 2012, however Dr Gulia insisted that the results for Gozo lacks much to be desired. He also stated that the slight increases registered in Gozo on foreign arrivals, coupled with increases in water & electricity as well as other increases in operating costs are not helping towards a sustainable and profitable situation for the Gozitan tourism sector. Dr. Gulia referred to the Labour Party electoral proposals which include a cruise liner terminal on Gozo as well as the cut of

25% on the energy bills.

The conference was also addressed by the Minister for Tourism, Culture and Environment, Mario de Marco. He said that in recent years the Government had been committed to the policy of responsible tourism based on an investment product, accessibility and effective promotion, with four record years out of the last five for visitors to the islands.

Minister de Marco also pointed out that the Tourism Policy (2012-2016) recognises the tourism potential of Gozo with a specific and extensive section on the island, because the Government proposes that Gozo deserves initiatives that focus on its unique elements. The Minister concluded that the Government is committed to undertake the proposed Tourism Policy to offer direction for the tourism sector for the coming years, so that the islands continue to build on the positive results of recent years.

The Annual General Meeting was also addressed by Dr. Anton Refalo Labour Spokesman for Gozo. Dr. Refalo mentioned the drawbacks brought about by the closure of the Xlendi Road as well as the implementation of the Marsalforn and Xlendi Masterplan. He explained the Labour Party electoral proposals that were drafted for the Gozitan tourism sector while he stressed the need to tackle the Bed & breakfast and host families accommodation on Gozo. The Labour Party spokesman for Gozo stated that a future Labour Government will continue collaborating with the Gozo Tourism Association for the benefit of the Gozitan tourism.

The Minister for Gozo, Giovanna Debono, said that the Ministry for Gozo had given its support to the GTA over the past years, with the results now there to see in strengthening the tourism sector in Gozo. The Minister explained how over the years several of the initiatives undertaken by the Ministry had resulted in Gozo being established as a destination that has particular characteristics to further enhance the tourism product of the island. These include the promotion of diving on the island in all seasons, as well as the various infrastructure projects and the implementation of the eco-Gozo action plan.

The Minister continued that the ongoing collaboration between the Ministry for Gozo, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment and other bodies such as the GTA and the MTA have resulted in strengthening Gozo as a rural tourism destination.

During this AGM the GTA council for 2013 was formed and is made up of the following members: Busuttil Mark (St. Andrews Divers Cove), Fritzsche Sven (Kempinski Hotel San Lawrenz), Gatt Ludgard (Tamarisk Properties), Loporto Mario (Gozo Village Holidays), Mercieca Joseph (Country Terrace Restaurant), Muscat Sammut Joseph (Down Town Hotel), Rapa Joe (Ta Salvina Restaurant), Scicluna Paul (Gozo Farmhouses), Spiteri Pauline (Mario's Rent a car), Spiteri Philip (Il-kartell Restaurant), and Veranneman Amand (Chez Amand).

Other distinguished guests present for the Annual General Meeting, included, Mr. Josef Formosa Gauci, MTA CEO, Mr. Manuel Tabone, Director Tourism and Economic Development MGOZ, Ms. Marie Josette Vella Magro, Gozo Branch Manager Banif Bank, Mr. Marcel Bonnici Manager Gozo & Malta Northern Region ETC, Mr. Andrew Agius Muscat MHRA CEO, Mr. Michael Grech GBC President, Mr. Paul Curmi and Mr. Julian Dimech, Chairman and CEO of Gozo Channel respectively, Ministry for Gozo and Malta Tourism Authority officials, other guests and GTA members from the various sectors of the Gozitan Tourism Industry.

Joe Muscat
CEO
Gozo Tourism Association

