



media release

Date: 6th March 2017

Ref: 15-2017

Conventions Malta voted as the Best Conventions Bureau in the United Kingdom

In less than two years since it was set up, Conventions Malta has managed to win another prestigious international recognition at the M&IT Industry Awards. After placing third among the top Convention Bureaux outside the UK last year, this year Conventions Malta improved its position and picked up the first prize by winning the Gold Award for Best Overseas Conventions Bureau. This achievement was announced on Friday 3rd March, during a gala evening ceremony held at Battersea Evolution in London.

Conventions Malta attained the highest position in this category from among six nominees that also included The Hague, Monaco, Canada, Dubai and Rotterdam. This is a prestigious award in the international meetings and conventions industry because it is companies and entities operating in the same industry to nominate and vote for the various categories. In addition to Convention Malta's success, two local companies - EC Meetings and Alpine Sterling DMC - were nominated for the top Destination Management Company award, with the former placing second in the category, winning the Silver Award for Best Destination Management Company.

The success achieved in London is considered very important. Conventions Malta is still in its infancy, working closely with operators in this industry to primarily attract more interest to Malta, and above all, facilitating the extremely important work of these same operators for their customers who choose Malta as a destination for their conferences. Last year Conventions Malta launched its 'Access All Areas' campaign based on the concept that anywhere can be made accessible. This concept is aimed at opening doors to all suitable places in the Maltese Islands, especially those having unique and authentic characteristics, putting our country at the forefront. Conventions Malta took the small size of the Maltese Islands, and transformed it into a positive asset to be highlighted rather than a weakness or deficiency; an opportunity to promote our islands as "the whole country is a venue" for the benefit of this industry. This is made clear in comments featured during various promotional activities organized by Conventions Malta in collaboration with local operators. International companies and decision makers in the area were impressed with all that the Maltese Islands can offer and the capabilities of those working in the sector.

Edward Zammit from Conventions Malta commented how "This recognition is another rung up the ladder that we climbed together with our industry partners, including Destination Management

Companies DMCs, hoteliers and other operators directly or indirectly providing services for conferences. We are expanding Malta's identity on the map of international M.I.C.E. (Meetings, Incentives, conferences and events)." He went on to say that "This sector will continue to grow in the coming years and will develop further by giving more autonomy to the industry, whilst increasing its contribution to the Maltese economy. This is a very competitive sector based on quality of product and service, innovation and creativity, versatility and above all, price. The Conventions Malta team will continue to intensify its work by improving existing incentives and creating new ones for this sector. We will also carry out studies through which we can identify where to invest for the benefit of this industry".

Paul Bugeja CEO of the Malta Tourism Authority expressed his satisfaction at this achievement by "Congratulating the entire Conventions Malta team in Malta as well as in the Authority overseas offices for this prestigious international success attained in such a short time. We must continue to work together with our stakeholders, enhancing the product that we offer to all delegates who choose Malta. We want to have more to offer, so we can better compete in a market that is so competitive but which can help us eliminate all the seasonality in tourism inflows to our country".

Commenting on this prestigious award, Minister for Tourism Dr. Edward Zammit Lewis stressed "that in 2014, Government felt the need to begin formulating a strategy to attract more conferences to Malta from the associations sector and give more attention to assisting operators. Latest figures clearly show that this objective is being achieved through the establishment of Conventions Malta; The number of associations choosing Malta for their conferences and meetings reached 15.1% of total in 2016, an increase of 5.4% over 2015 and 10.8% on 2014, and the highest since 2009. The M.I.C.E sector is becoming a valuable contributor to the Maltese economy particularly with the work that is being generated when conferences are being attracted to our country. Suffice it to say that this sector generated no less than €63 million in 2016. One should mention that in extraordinary cases where the Government attracted conferences such as CHOGM, Valletta Summit, European Leaders Summit and even the European Union presidency, these generate more revenue to the related sector. For example, in 2015 when we hosted the CHOGM and the Valletta Summit, it is estimated that there was an additional increase of around €9 million. With such events, Government and Conventions Malta are increasingly showcasing Malta to this industry, where despite the small size we are promoting the country's versatility and its abilities in hospitality and logistics. Thus the establishment of Conventions Malta is an important part of our policy, aimed at giving a vision for this industry that until two years ago, everyone considered as that sector that fills rooms in the shoulder months, but which we shall start to look at as another industry that creates more employment and is supportive of the country's economy", concluded Minister Edward Zammit Lewis.

The Conventions Malta promotional video may be downloaded from: <https://goo.gl/klpvpm>

