

media release

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MTA Welcomes Robust Growth in Tourist Arrivals and Expenditure for March 2017

Tourism performance indicators for March 2017 recorded robust growth for the third consecutive month this year. Double-digit growth rates were registered in the number of inbound visitors (+22.3%) and tourist expenditure (11.8%).

The number of inbound tourists (excluding overnight cruise passengers) in March 2017 was 140,922 featuring a significant increase of 25,403 tourists. Nights stayed by tourists registered an absolute increase of 54,209 or +6.8%. The average length of stay declined from 6.9 nights in March 2016 to 6.1 nights in March of this year. Substantial increases were registered by collective as well as private type accommodation establishments, with both achieving a growth rate of over 20%. Tourists spent €96.5 million, representing an increase of €10.2 million over March 2016.

Cumulative data for the period January to March 2017 show exceptional growth rates in inbound tourism performance with the number of inbound tourists increasing by 24.0% over the same period last year. The number of nights stayed by tourists reached 2.3 million, increasing by 11.1%. Tourist expenditure reached €237 million, 27.8 million more or +13.3% over same period last year.

Belgium registered the largest absolute increase of 10,750 more tourists compared to the same period last year, followed by Italy with 10,207 more tourists and Germany with 8,356 additional tourists. Significant growth in the number of inbound tourists were also recorded from Poland, France and Spain.

During the first three months of the year, holiday trips increased by 19.8% or 46,031 more tourists. Furthermore, tourists visiting Malta for business and professional reasons recorded a substantial increase of 49.4% or +14,368. Part of this increase can be attributed to Malta's first three months of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Slightly more than half of the additional tourists (53%) opted for a short stay of 1 to 3 nights. As a result, in the first quarter the average length of stay declined by nearly one night.

Seven out of ten additional tourists fall in the age bracket 0-44 years. The youngest age bracket 0 to 24 years recorded the highest percentage increase of 39%, closely followed by the age bracket 25 to 44 years with an increase of 36%.

The Malta Tourism Authority welcomes the record performance achieved in the first quarter of 2017 with satisfaction, in particular when considering the diversity in growth patterns which encompass a variety of source markets, age-groups and accommodation types. MTA CEO Paul Bugeja commented that *“These positive results are the outcome of the constant efforts by many stakeholders, both in the public and private sector, who do their utmost to promote the Maltese Islands as an attractive and accessible destination all-year-round.”*

