

media release

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Malta Tourism Authority's enhanced marketing efforts in Eastern Europe achieving positive results.

The Malta Tourism Authority has intensified its presence in Eastern Europe over the past months, as part of its ongoing efforts to achieve further growth and greater diversification and this has already registered positive results. 2016 was a very successful year for the Maltese Islands from countries such as Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia and the first few months of 2017 have also continued on this positive trend. The MTA's main target segments for tourists from these countries were sun and sea, active holidays, weddings, English language learning, city breaks and LGBTI.

Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary all registered increases during 2016 when compared to 2015, with the Polish market becoming the fifth largest incoming market for the Maltese Islands. This growth continued throughout the first four months of 2017, with an increase of 66% in inbound visitors from the Polish market when compared to the same period last year. The Czech market increased by 72%, while Hungarian inbound visitors in 2017 also increased by 7% compared to the period January to April 2016.

The MTA carried out several joint marketing campaigns with the main tour operators and with the airlines flying to Malta, as well as several road shows throughout the main Polish cities. In order to promote charter flights from Bratislava in Slovakia, a poster campaign was carried out in conjunction with Tip Travel. Hungarian campaigns, in conjunction with Wizz Air and Ryanair, were carried out to provide the Maltese Islands with more exposure, such as poster and tram campaigns in Budapest. A tram campaign was also run in Prague as well as several joint campaigns with CSA Airlines.

The MTA organised a number of joint television campaigns across the various market, such as the TV campaign with Fischer, one of the top Czech tour operators. At the end of May, the National Czech TV station, CT1, began screening a 13 episode long series based on the Maltese Islands and a variety of aspects, such as gastronomy, religious tourism as well as many others. In Poland, a TV campaign with Trade and Travel, one of the top tour operators. A documentary promoting Gozo as a unique and distinct destination aired on TV2, which is one of Hungary's major stations.

MTA CEO, Mr. Paul Bugeja said that *“The positive results achieved in these markets have helped us in our efforts to improve diversification of source markets and address the issue of seasonality. The MTA believes that there is further room for more growth from these markets, particularly in the winter months. With an increased presence and improved connectivity, we are confident that the number of visitors from Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and Czechia will continue to grow in the coming years.”* Mr. Bugeja concluded by thanking all the stakeholders who have made this possible, including the airlines, the Malta International Airport, tour operators, MTA representatives and members of the travel trade who believed in the long term potential of these markets.

Notes to the editor

Wizz Air and Ryan Air operate flights to Malta from Warsaw, Gdansk, Wroclaw, Poznan, Krakow and Katowice airport is also connected to Malta. Between these six airports, the Maltese Islands are served with 15 weekly flights.

The Maltese Islands are connected to Prague through Air Malta and Czech Airlines (CSA Airlines), which fly 5 times a week between them.

Budapest is connected to Malta via 7 weekly flights operated by Wizz Air and Ryanair.

A summer charter operation is taking place between Bratislava, Slovakia and Malta.

Links to footage

TV2 Link: A 23 minute video clip promoting Gozo as a unique and distinct destination recently screened on TV2 one of the main TV stations in Hungary

<http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ivysilani/1061958448-postrehy-odjinud/416236100061056-malta-ocima-petra-voldana> CT1 Czech National TV episode on 17 June focusing on the history of our buses and their evolvement during the years.

<http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ivysilani/1061958448-postrehy-odjinud/416236100061055-malta-ocima-petra-voldana> CT1 Czech National TV episode on 10 June promoting Religious Tourism

<http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ivysilani/1061958448-postrehy-odjinud/416236100061054-malta-ocima-petra-voldana> CT1 Czech National TV episode on 03 June promoting the Maltese Luzzu and traditional boat building.

<http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ivysilani/1061958448-postrehy-odjinud/416236100061053-malta-ocima-petra-voldana/> CT1 Czech National TV episode on 27 May promoting the Maltese Cross and other historic aspects.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OiHpxIJXM1M> A 5 minute video clip promoting the Maltese Islands in the Polish market



