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## **TEN YEARS OF SUCCESS – SUSTAINING THE FUTURE**

During a business event held today, the Malta Tourism Authority presented the end of year results for 2019, coinciding with the release by the National Office of Statistics of the figures for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December. The event also served to take a general overview of the past decade during which the Maltese Islands registered ten successive years of growth.

Figures presented revealed that during 2019, Malta attracted in excess of 2.75 million tourists, an increase of more than 5.9% or almost 155,000 more tourists than in the previous record year 2018. This is also a substantial jump over the 1.33 million tourist figure achieved in 2010 implying that, during this ten-year period, Malta has actually doubled its tourism intake.

Last year's result gains even more significance when compared to WTO estimates for Global and European tourism performance for 2019. Figures released in January indicate that during 2019, global tourism and inbound European tourism grew by 4% when compared to the previous year. This shows that, yet again, Maltese tourism results have surpassed global and regional performances and that Maltese tourism is no longer totally dependent on the overspill from other destinations but is growing on its own merits.

Figures for 2019 also show that the positive trend has not been limited solely to the headcount of tourists visiting the Maltese Islands, but spans a wide range of other metrics. For instance, overnight stays increased by 4% over 2018 to reach 19.3 million nights. Another way of interpreting this result is that the country had an average daily tourist population of almost 53,000 over and above residents and other non-tourist visitors. Average length of stay for tourists visiting Malta stood at 7 nights.

Meanwhile, expenditure by tourists visiting Malta exceeded 2.2 billion Euro, an impressive increase of circa 110 million Euro on the previous record high of 2.1 billion Euro recorded in 2018. Expenditure per capita is estimated to stand at 807 Euro per tourist during 2019 whilst expenditure per person per night amounted to approximately 115 Euro. When it comes to accommodation usage, over 1.7 million tourists, equivalent to 62% of total visitors opted to stay in hotel-type accommodation. Slightly more than one in every four tourists utilized private rented accommodation with the balance using non-rented lodging including stays with friends and relatives.

The increases in tourism volumes in 2019 came about as a result of growth across a wide selection of geographical source markets. Hungary generated the single highest percentage increase of 34% followed by Ireland with 30% and Spain with 17%. Tourism from France also increased by an impressive 12%. Long-haul tourism from Australia and the USA grew by about 9% and 7% respectively, while tourism from Poland, also up by 8%, exceeded the 100,000 mark for the first time. Tourism from Switzerland also increased by 7% while Netherlands' performance stood at +4%. Lower rates of growth were measured from the larger volume markets such as the UK and Italy. In line with the MTA's policy of diversifying Malta's marketing efforts, it is interesting to note that arrivals from countries grouped under the collective heading of "Others" increased by over 81,000 or +19%.

The MTA expressed its satisfaction at the results achieved, emphasising how the ten years of record tourism growth which are being celebrated today point to the successful and sustained efforts of all industry stakeholders who have worked together to enable the Maltese tourism industry to transform itself into a long-term success story.

The event was addressed by the Minister for Tourism and Consumer Protection, the Hon Julia Farrugia Portelli, MTA Chairman Dr Gavin Gulia, MTA CEO Mr. Johann Buttigieg, MTA Deputy CEO and Chief Marketing Officer Mr. Carlo Micallef, and MTA Deputy CEO and Chief Officer Strategic Development Mr. Leslie Vella.

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