



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Harming Tourism**

MHRA is most concerned regarding the recent serious incident in Paceville involving security personnel and two Italian tourists. Unfortunately this is not the first such incident experienced in Paceville. It is obvious that this type of incidents have not been addressed soon enough despite concerns expressed by the authorities following similar incidents last year which had a far tragic ending. If action is not taken as soon as possible any further episodes of this nature can have a detriment impact of our tourism industry.

The fact that both security guards were not even licensed as required by law, only adds to the gravity of the prevailing situation with regards security personnel. It is more than obvious that such incidents instantly translate into a PR disaster for Malta, which is often ironically referred to as a safe and friendly destination. Such an occurrence can undermine months of marketing and promotional efforts within the country of origin of the victims, with long lasting and costly repercussions. It is unbelievable that the operators in the leisure sector do not realise the harm they are bestowing upon themselves in employing persons without the necessary professional training that such positions require to carry out their duties well. All this is caused by the ignorance and lack of professionalism of such individuals.

MHRA calls on the relevant authorities to put in place proper legislation once and for all to ensure that all 'security personnel' are properly trained and licensed before they are allowed to be engaged in such duties. This in turn must be backed up by regular inspections and enforcement ensuring that all establishments only engage such recognised security officers. The security sector at large must be formally regularised and a number of requirements imposed such as the wearing of uniforms and name tags and regular disciplinary training or otherwise the license is revoked.

In the current economic climate Malta really cannot afford to risk damaging its touristic reputation through the aggressive and thoughtless behaviour of a few individuals.

It is clear that while enforcement in a number of areas within establishment is a constant and serious process, other areas have been left to their own devices with very little or no control from the competent authorities.

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**Tuesday, 09 February 2010**

**About MHRA**

The MHRA has been established since 1958 and today represents 70% of all hotels in Malta and 35% of all restaurants, collectively representing an investment of over Euros 1.1 billion and employing in excess of 20,000 people. For the past 50 years the MHRA has represented the interest of hoteliers and restaurateurs on the Island acting as a lobby group to ensure that the policy decisions taken on the Island are in line with what the tourism industry needs to flourish. For more information about the MHRA visit [www.mhra.org.mt](http://www.mhra.org.mt) or call (356) 21 318133. The MHRA is also a member of HOTREC and an Associate member of World Tourism Organisation