



MEDIA RELEASE

Establishing guidelines for Standards in Product Development

In recent talks with Government, MHRA has again insisted on the need for more decisive action with regards to general cleanliness and the upgrading of our national infrastructure. This has been the subject of repeated discussions between the MHRA and the Authorities on many occasions.

MHRA urges Government to set as a foremost priority the overall enhancement of public areas, notably touristic areas such as Sliema, St. Julian's, the St. Paul's Bay area, Mellieha, Marsaxlokk and Marsascala.

A set of rigorous guidelines must be established identifying standards for the general cleanliness and upkeep of public areas, the completion of works schedules, the paving of walkways, street furniture and lighting on promenades, as well as for kiosks and street vendors. One example would be the area from St Julians all the way to San Maison which should be of uniform design including standard railings, lighting fittings and benches amongst other things. This should result in a neat and aesthetically pleasing appearance to public areas and should exude a harmonised Mediterranean character. The Valletta and Vittoriosa waterfronts are valid examples where such principles were successfully applied.

MHRA is convinced that having guidelines that define the required standards will be well met by the private sector, which will remedy any inconsistencies in terms of planning of their outdoor areas. However Local Councils, wardens, the police force and all Government agencies must also do their part to ensure that their resources are properly administered, which is evidently not the case at the moment. In recent years the private sector has made huge efforts to meet a range of new guidelines and regulations imposed by the EU, resulting in considerable improvement of their affairs. Ironically however, the public sector, which by its very nature should enforce and maintain these standards and regulations, falls well short of obtaining the desired results out of its own organisations. This is evident in the present poor state, shabby and untidy appearance of many areas around Malta and Gozo. In times of economic difficulties and limited funds one would expect Government to fully maximise on its resources through the increased productivity of its workers, a better internal organisation and the application of greater discipline within its own departments.

Considering the warm climate that Malta enjoys for a good part of the year, and the outdoor lifestyle of both locals and tourists alike, our outdoor product is a crucial element of our daily experience. MHRA has repeatedly stressed the point with the authorities that it is pointless imposing high standards on hotels if they remain surrounded by shabbiness, it is pointless to regulate restaurants if they are faced with uneven pavements and it is equally pointless to regulate traffic and vehicles if they constantly plunge into potholes.

It is truly time we start taking Product Malta seriously by emulating our larger European neighbours, not only in terms of private initiatives but also through the proper application of existing state resources.

Monday, 23 February 2009

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 or call (356) 21 318133.