



MEDIA RELEASE

MHRA Calls for Immediate Action

MHRA once again urges Government and all authorities concerned to take immediate and decisive action with regards to the basic and fundamental cleaning of public areas in tourist zones around Malta and Gozo. MHRA is greatly concerned by the apparent and unacceptable lack of this essential service and calls on all authorities concerned to address this problem with immediate effect.

It has become increasingly apparent in many key locations such as Paceville, Sliema front and Bugibba, as well as our beaches, that basic public cleaning services such as the removal of litter, emptying of bins and ground washing has become virtually non-existent. These and other popular areas are now suffering badly and are in a pitiful state reminiscent of a third world country rather than a modern European state. It is deplorable to stroll along our prime sites and promenades only to be faced by littered streets, overflowing bins, rampant weeds, broken pavements, gravel, dust and general filth, in the height of the summer season.

The responsible parties appointed specifically for these tasks and paid through public funds must be held accountable for their gross inefficiencies and negligence. This is nothing short of a disservice to our entire population and a squandering of taxpayers' money.

In recent years the current administration has championed the imposition of vast sweeping rules and regulations imposed on virtually every field of the private sector, in an attempt improve standards and quality. Hefty fines, loss of licenses and other harsh repercussions are faced by defaulters who fail to comply with these many Government induced obligations. But what is Government doing to get their own house in order? What internal control measures, productivity checks and enforcement are being practiced within their own ranks, leading to decisive disciplinary action with all those who disregard their assigned duties? The many new taxes and contributions being imposed by the authorities, together with constant increases in existing ones, surely should result in the visible improvement of our country's public areas and not in their constant deterioration.

Keeping our public areas clean is one of the most rudimentary functions of any Government. Those failing their obligations must be seriously reprimanded and the necessary remedial action must be taken with immediate effect to ensure that such a basic service to the nation is restored.

This must be supported by an overall drive by the public enforcement agencies such as wardens and police, to focus much more of their attention and energy on these vital matters. However Government must first set the example by undertaking a general cleanup and by assuring the public at large that the myriad workers employed specifically for these tasks are abiding by their duties. It would otherwise be irresponsible

to gratuitously dish out fines when the public services set up for the same purpose of keeping public areas clean are themselves not even functioning.

Without rules and regulations we would live in a very chaotic world. However, unless these same regulations are backed up by a fair, unbiased, regular and uniform approach with regards to enforcement, their effect will result in a counter-productive situation to the detriment of all. The priority of all enforcement officers should by definition be of a preventive nature. Wardens should conspicuously scout problematic streets preventing motorists from parking badly, rather than turning up after the harm has been done and happily issuing parking fines. Police should be strategically positioned in hazardous areas where their presence and influence will prevent drunk and disorderly behaviour, particularly with youngsters, rather than having to be called in after disruption of the peace, or even serious injury, has been committed. Bottle shops which are licensed to sell alcohol only until 21:00 must finally be forced to comply with this essential requirement, which in itself limits both littering and public annoyance.

Only through such an organised, systematic and most of all a genuine approach, can we ever hope to live in a clean and truly modern society.

MHRA insists with the authorities to start applying a decisive hand on these matters and to ensure that state resources are being truly and fully utilised as prescribed.

Friday 17th July, 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.