

MHRA IN THE NEWS

18 June 2009

MHRA at a meeting at the Ministry of Finance

MHRA attended a meeting called by the Ministry of Finance, Economy and Investment to outline the setting up of a common system of VAT. The meeting outlined the EU Council Directive mainly drawn to counter inter-member state VAT fraud. In the case of any sales to overseas clients located in other EU states whereby VAT is NOT charged to them on the basis that they will be paying VAT in their own country, then a new Recapitulative Statement must be completed besides the normal VAT return. I am not sure if this situation ever arises, perhaps with MICE clients abroad. Furthermore the local operator who is exempting the VAT to his overseas client must obtain and indicate the client's VAT number and is himself responsible for the genuineness of this VAT number. This is being done to ensure that any VAT inter-state exemptions are truly being consequently paid in the country of origin of the pre-exempted client.

The VAT Department is launching a campaign to encourage all VAT registered entities to submit and settle VAT returns and relevant payments electronically through their website. Certain incentives will also be extended when making such online transmissions and payments, notably an additional week's time limit for its submission. It is also their intention to gradually phase out altogether the current manual system.

22 June 09

Dr Shena Mitchell from Plymouth College at ITS

MHRA CEO accompanied Dr. Shena Mitchell, Marketing Director at Highbury College in Plymouth to a visit at Institute of Tourism Studies. The aim of Dr Mitchell was to explore areas of cooperation between Highbury College, MHRA and the Institute of Tourism studies. The visit by Dr. Shena Mitchell was possible with the assistance of the Grand Hotel Excelsior who is coordinating an exchange programme during summer for Highbury College students pursuing a Hospitality Career. Dr Mitchell was shown round the facilities of ITS and possible exchange of students and tutors was discussed during the brief visit.

Meeting with Finance Minister Tonio Fenech regarding MHRA proposal to adopt a reduced VAT rate for Restaurants

An MHRA delegation composed of MHRA president Mr Kevin DeCesare, George Micallef, Alex Bonello, Noel Debono, Joe Attard and MHRA CEO George Schembri et with Minister Tonio Fenech, and other officials from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Investment to make representation about the

adoption of a reduce VAT rate for restaurants. A study conducted by the Government of the Czech Republic on a similar proposal made by the Czech Hotels & Restaurants Association was handled to the Minister together with the proposals of the French government for the introduction of reduce VAT in France from 1st July and the experience of similar initiative in Greece. It was agreed that Government will conduct an impact assessment on adopting a reduced VAT rate for restaurants in Malta and Gozo and findings to be discussed with MHRA.

23 June 2009

Meeting with MTA Chief Executive Josef Formosa Gauci

Mr George Micallef led a small delegation from MHRA Council regarding the HOTREC proposal for the harmonization of Hotel Classification standards. The main aim of HOTREC proposal at EU Level is to have common definitions and labels, and to have a criteria for ascertaining the quality aspect of a property, HOTREC has proposed a 15 principle point criteria on which to propose the standards.

24 June 2009

MHRA Council meets Parliamentary Secretary Dr Mario DeMarco.

The MHRA Council led by President Mr Kevin DeCesare met with Dr DeMarco at the Ministry Boardroom to discuss the prevailing situation in the sector and other points of interest and concerns in the sector. Mr DeCesare highlighted the concerns of operators due to the drop in revenue caused by lower occupancies and lower room rates and the rising operation costs due to inflation and government induced increases in services such as energy rates, swimming pool fees, gas, OHSA unwarranted court citations. Mr DeCesare also mentioned the claim for an increase in copyright fees by PRS due to the artificial "inflation" figures being quoted by NSO caused by the increase in energy prices and others. Council members also brought the issue of cleanliness in tourism zones and noise pollution in major entertainment areas which was driving people away from such areas. Seat Capacity concerns for the coming winter were also expressed and discussed at length

MHRA Operators in Ghadira meet Officials

Mr Paul Miruzzi from the Government Property division, called all operators at Ghadira Bay to a meeting in the presence of Mr Frank Farrugia from Malta Tourism Authority, Mr Emanuel Martin from Lands Department and Mellieha Mayor Robert Cutajar, regarding operations on the Beach of Ghadira. Mr Miruzzi indicated that all operators with concession areas need to ensure that all sunbeds offered to the public are to be contained within the perimeter of the concession area and the encroachment is to be delineated ideally with the use of flap poles not higher than a meter and a half. Sports equipment was not allowed to occupy public land unless these are being used by patrons. It was clearly agreed that servicing of requests for sun-beds outside the encroachment area was permissible as long as these are

not placed in advance even if pre-booked. MHRA Chief Executive Mr George Schembri pointed out that application for permits for the use of motorised vehicle on the beach had been placed with MEPA but no indication when these will be given. It was also agreed to meet towards the end of the season for a post-mortem of summer and address issues prior to the start of the next season. Mr Cutajar indicated that soon the Mellieha Local Council will be approving a bye-law whereby barbecues, camping and caravanning at Ghadira will only be permitted on designated areas. MHRA CEO indicated that the bye-laws should also cover noise and light pollution and littering, the prohibition of dogs on the beach the lack of public conveniences in the area to be able to meet the demand of the large number of visitors to the area in peak summer.

01 July 2009

MCESD MEETS PRIME MINISTER

MCESD social partners were invited to a meeting by the Prime Minister for a presentation by the Permanent Secretary Mr Alfred Camilleri from the Ministry of Finance, Economy and Investment entitled 'An update on the economic and competitiveness developments in the Maltese Economy. In the introduction Mr Camilleri gave an overview of the International Economy and followed this by given the recent developments in the Tourism sector and labour market, Maltese Consumer and business confidence index, growth in GDP, fiscal deficit, Gross Debt and Inflation. Following the presentation various interventions were made by both the employer's bodies and the unions. Most mentioned the need for reform in the public sector to increase efficiency and reduce waste, the need to contain inflation Malta being the only country out of the 27 EU member states that was experiencing an inflation during a recession period, curb government induce costs, reform in social benefits to incentivise people to work and the need for accountability in the public sector expenditure.

02 July 2009

MHRA at MEUSAC Environment Sectorial Committee meeting.

Main item on the agenda was to discuss the Waste Framework Directive and the transposition and implementation of Directive 2008/98/EC. The main scope of the Directive is to reduce waste and move away from the ratio being tied with the GDP as otherwise as GDP grows so does the waste. The directive sets new recycling target: **by 2020 Members states must recycle 50% of their household waste and similar waste and 70% of their construction and demolition waste.**

A presentation was done by MEPA officials on the Directive and timeframes required to implement a sound strategy. The main concern by those representing the private sector was the lack of commitment by government to have a management scheme in place. The refund of ECO contribution to importers was the main factor holding progress on the adopting a scheme since obviously importers do not want to pay in the scheme before the ECO contribution has been refunded as otherwise they would be paying twice. Main contributors to the waste problem were those companies packaging food for supermarkets and plastic bottles. There was also the issue of illegal importers who were bypassing the eco contribution and therefore creating unfair competition. These free-riders were getting away with it due

to lack of enforcement. The issue of plastic bags was also mentioned and the need to move to bio-degradable bags. MHRA highlighted that hotels were willing to separate waste as long as the extra collections were neutral cost. The collection cost was already inbuilt in the price of the commodity by importers and therefore Hoteliers and Restaurateurs are not prepared to pay twice for the collection of separated waste.

MHRA attends meeting at St Paul's Bay Local Council

The arrangements for the Pedestrianization of the promenade in Bugibba during week-ends were discussed with the various authorities concerned whose support was necessary to ensure a smooth introduction of the scheme. It was agreed that the Local Council of St Paul's Bay coordinates the event.

MHRA meets PRS

A meeting was held at MHRA offices with PRS Malta representative Dr Kevin Dingli regarding the increase in copyright fees for Hotels and restaurants. MHRA contended that in the present negative economic climate PRS should not consider any increases highlighting the drop in occupancy and revenue being experienced by the hospitality sector. After a lengthy discussion Dr Dingle agreed to invite Mr Liam Donnelly from PRS head office in UK to come down and hold further discussion on the issue of the proposed increases in fees for 2009/2010.

06 July 2009

MHRA – welcomes aim for Blue Flag Beach status at Ghadira

In a press release MHRA supported the Mellieha Local Council's initiatives being proposed to improve beach management at one of Malta's most popular beaches - Ghadira Bay. MHRA considered that the proposed bye-laws being put forward by the Mellieha Local Council was a step in the right direction which should result in an improved quality of beaches. During the Summer months Malta's beaches are prime sites attracting thousands of both locals and foreign visitors, rendering these sites focal points of activity and should be maintained at the highest possible of standards. It is important that appropriate measures are taken to safeguard these sites and to enforce the necessary regulations, as beaches tend to fall to abuse to the direct detriment of their users.

MHRA also welcomed the plans to regularise camping and caravanning activities in designated areas specifically set up for this purpose. The unrestrained use of car parks and coastline for camping and caravanning led to the proliferation of shanty towns with the resulting shabbiness in some prime coastal areas around the islands. Mellieha Local Council's bold step to control wild camping and caravanning and to establish designated areas for these activities was to be commended and supported. This should also allow campers to practice their pastime in a more appropriate environment equipped with proper facilities for an enriched experience, as enjoyed in other countries.

MHRA went on to strongly encourage similar initiatives by other Local Councils with similar problems in their respective localities. The upgrading and improvement of Malta and Gozo beaches and coastal areas

would be of great benefit to both the Maltese and tourists, who will enjoy a better quality of life through their enhanced experience.

07 July 2009

Malta Business Bureau presents MBB's Business Manifesto to Prime Minister

Mr George Micallef President of the Malta Business Bureau and also MHRA Council member lead a small delegation from MBB to present to the Prime Minister Dr Lawrence Gonzi, MBB Business Manifesto given to MEPs. Mr George Micallef highlighted some of the important aspects in the manifesto and the need for closer cooperation with the MEPs in some of the major issues that affect business due to Malta's EU membership.

MHRA discusses proposed Fire Safety Charter with Maltese authorities

MHRA brought together for the first even meeting, the main stakeholders concerned with fire safety issues in view of the proposed common Fire Safety Charter for Hotels throughout the 27 EU member states by the EU Commission. HOTREC had asked the EU commission to lead the discussion on this Charter and in turn it approached the Hotels & Catering Association of each member state to discuss the proposed Charter at National Level.

08 July 2009

MHRA at Tourism Zone Committee Meeting

Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism Dr Mario DeMarco chaired the meeting. MHRA tabled various issues highlighted by its members who need the attention and action by the authorities. Amongst the items discussed were the state of cleanliness and haphazard waste collection in Paceville, noise pollution in most tourism zones, uncontrolled littering at Ghadira Bay by barbeques; wild camping and caravanning on public land, lack of lighting on the road leading to Ramla Bay Hotel, need for interventions at Cirkewwa terminal and promenade leading from Cirkewwa to Marfa pier, and traffic congestion at St George's Bay and by Westin Hotel entrance.

5-Star Committee meeting at MHRA

Mr Julian Diacono chaired a meeting held for 5-star marketing Directors/Managers to discuss the level of occupancy in the 5 star hotels and the dumping of room rates which was eroding the sustainability of quality standards in the top hotels. Most expressed their concern regarding the drop in MICE business which was having an adverse effect on the hotels room revenue. It was felt that meetings should be held jointly with the Malta Tourism Authority and the National Carrier Air Malta to explore on holding joint initiatives to prompt more forcefully the islands' potential for MICE Business.

10 July 2009

Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism calls to a meeting MHRA 3-Star Hotel Committee

Dr DeMarco acknowledged that the 3 Star sectors were the most affected by the current economic situation being more dependent on tour operator generated business. He remarked that he would like to see the sector adopt a concerted approach to promote their establishments for the individual travelers using the internet to plan their holidays. He encourages the sector to make use of the various initiatives offered by government such as the MTA scheme of matching cost of marketing initiatives taken advantage by individual establishments, reduced interest rate for refurbishment programmes, use of Training Aid Framework to encourage training of staff and a host of other opportunities to upgrade the quality of the 3-Star Hotels sector. Dr DeMarco indicated that the Malta Tourism Authority would be holding a number of seminars to bring to the attention of the operators in the sector the various opportunities that exist to further their business.

14 July 2009

Meeting of the Hotels Engineers Committee at Grand Hotel Excelsior

The Chairman of the Hotels Engineers Committee, Mr Joe Restall expressed his wish to have a presentation from each representative regarding best practices in order to share such practices for the benefit of the sector. It was important to find ways and means to keep operational costs down to maintain the sector's competitiveness in view of the economic downturn being experienced in tourism. He felt it was important to work together since the competition was at an International level and not local and unless the destination sought ways how to curb costs from rising it will lose its market share.

The committee discussed at length the problems associated with the new energy tariffs and the importance of exploring ways how to keep consumption down to reduce energy bills. Concern was expressed regarding the lack of sensitivity towards the industry's initiatives in reducing the demand of energy by government. The application of full charges on water production by hotels through individual reverse osmosis plants was one example. Committee members discussed other options available to reduce energy costs such as energy saving device, water spray system for air-cooled air-conditioning systems, the growing availability of LED light fittings, direct purchasing and use of preferred suppliers for a growing number of environment friendly equipment.

17 July 2009

MHRA Calls for Immediate Action

MHRA issued a press release calling on 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 expressed its concern by the apparent and unacceptable lack of attention to this essential service and calls on all authorities to address the problem with immediate effect.

MHRA explained that it was increasingly apparent that in many key locations such as Paceville, Sliema front and Bugibba, as well as our beaches, the basic public cleaning services such as the removal of litter, emptying of bins and ground washing had become virtually non-existent. These and other popular areas were suffering badly and were in a pitiful state reminiscent of a third world country rather than a modern European state. It was deplorable to stroll along Malta's 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.

MHRA considered that the responsible parties appointed specifically for these tasks and paid through public funds must be held accountable for their gross inefficiencies and negligence. This was nothing short of a disservice to the island's population and a squandering of taxpayers' money. In recent years the current administration had championed the imposition of vast sweeping rules and regulations imposed on virtually every field of the private sector, in an attempt to improve standards and quality. Hefty fines, loss of licenses and other harsh repercussions were faced by defaulters who fail to comply with these many Government induced obligations. MHRA asked what was Government doing to get their own house in order? What internal control measures, productivity checks and enforcement were 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.

MHRA considered that keeping public areas clean was 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.

MHRA also touched upon the need for a drive by the public enforcement agencies such as wardens and police, to focus much more of their attention and energy on these vital matters. 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 were 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.

MHRA pointed out that without rules and regulations one would be living in a very chaotic world. However, unless the 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 were 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.

MHRA insisted in the press release that the authorities should start applying a decisive hand on the matter mentioned in the press release to ensure that state resources were being truly and fully utilised as prescribed.

21 July 2009

MHRA meets PRS representative from UK

MHRA Council members met with Mr Liam Donnelly from PRS UK to continue the discussion on the proposed increases in copyright fees for Hotels and Restaurants for the year 2009-10. Mr DeCesare once again reiterated that the proposed increases come at a time when the sector is experiencing substantial monthly drops in occupancy and room rates. Mr DeCesare pointed out that the inflation rate being experienced by the island was government created by the increase in energy utility costs. The utility costs included capital expenditure that Enemalta requires to cover to build a new plant to scrap the Marsa plant in view of the EU directives on emission levels. The sector's revenue and earnings were down considerable and Mr DeCesare envisaged closure of a number of hotels during the coming winter since the situation was not sustainable.

22 July 2009

MHRA meets Paceville operators

MHRA President Mr Kevin DeCesare called a meeting of representatives from Paceville area to discuss how to address the deplorable state of Paceville. Mr DeCesare highlighted the problems of cleanliness and littering in the area due to lack of enforcement and round the clock cleaning during the peak summer season. Binge drinking in the street was also unchecked in spite of the law enacted forbidding drinking in the street and the sale of alcohol to minors. A list was drawn and agreement was reached to call for a meeting with Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism Dr Mario DeMarco in the shortest possible time to ask for concert intervention from Government to address the shortcomings in the area.

23 July 2009

MHRA Council meets with Economist Dr. Gordon Cordina

Following the publication of the pre-budget document by Government, it was agreed at MCESD that the constituted bodies draw up points to submit as pre-budget submission to Government. In order to have a more focused document of the submissions it was agreed to appoint an economist to draw up in a coherent document the proposals of each constituted body and Dr Gordon Cordina proposed and invited to work on such a document. Dr Cordina was given a comprehensive overview of the prevailing performance of the sector and a list of proposals that would help the sector in riding the negative downturn that tourism was experiencing world-wide.

30 July 2009

MHRA 5-Star Hotels Committee meet with MTA marketing Directors.

Marketing people from the 5 Star hotels sector meet with Malta Tourism Authority CEO Mr Josef Formosa Gauci and the local and overseas directors of MTA to discuss the prevailing situation of tourism in the main core markets of the Maltese islands. The discussion centred mainly on the seat capacity available to access the island for the winter ahead and next summer, the marketing plans being drawn by MTA for its 2010 budget, and the trends that are occurring in the tourism industry. Various ideas were discussed to address Malta's particular situation with regards to routes, marketing possibilities and budgetary constraints.

03 Aug 2009

MHRA Paceville committee meets DeMarco

On the request of the MHRA Paceville committee Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism organised a meeting inviting officials from the Ministry for Tourism, Malta Tourism Authority enforcement officials and Product Directorate, the Police, representative from the Ministry for Rural Resources and Affairs and St Julians Local Council to take part in the discussion. MHRA President Mr Kevin DeCesare outlined the various points that the committee would like to have addressed in order to improve the situation in the area. The representatives from the various entities also gave their views and input on possible solutions and eventually it was agreed to set up three distinct task forces to address, the problems associated with the students that come to learn English, the problems associated with the sale of alcohol from bottle-shops and problems with cleanliness and waste collection.

11 Aug 2009

Employers Bodies meet with Dr Gordon Cordina

MHRA President and CEO attended a meeting at the Chamber together with representatives from the Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise and the Malta Employers Association to be given a glance at a first draft of the proposed document for pre-budget discussions with Government. Seven main areas were identified which cover the Cost of Living Increase (COLA), Price inflation, Deployment of Human Resources, Fiscal and financial planning, social Cohesion, better regulations and Gozo. During the reading of the draft document several alterations were suggested by those present and it was agreed to meet again once the alterations are inserted in the document for approval.

Meeting with FELTOM

As a result of the meeting with the earlier meeting in the month with MHRA Paceville committee, Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism Dr Mario DeMarco called a meeting with FELTOM and other English Language schools operators to discuss the problems raised in regards to English Language students. Police Superintendent for St Julians/Paceville area was also invite to the meeting since certain concerns were of public order nature and only the police had the vested authority to address such issues. Following the discussion it was agreed to meet again on a regular basis to address the problems that were raised in the meetings held so far.

16 Aug 2009

MHRA regarding controlled parking scheme

MHRA came out with a strong press release against the negative impact that the proposed controlled parking schemes would have in prime commercial areas. MHRA considered the scheme as ill-thought and which will impede tourists' mobility. MHRA based these concerns so as to protect the viability of many businesses including restaurants and hotels, and to respect their fundamental right to retain free and easy access to their establishments.

MHRA continued that such a scheme rather than alleviating an already difficult parking situation in major commercial areas, the introduction of residents' parking zones on such a scale would worsen the

viability of business. Moreover, the allocated timings for most areas were considered unreasonable and would definitely create problems for all motorists who need to visit a particular area for whatever reason, including visiting friends and family who reside in these same areas.

Dr Mario DeMarco idea to allow tourists residing in Sliema and using a hired car to be allowed to use residents parking, is supported by MHRA. It is only logical to grant these temporary residents such privileges. However these same conditions must be applied equally in every locality where similar parking problems are faced, rather than discriminating against tourists residing outside Sliema.

Howwever MHRA still contended that Government should immediately intervene in this awkward and ill-founded regulation, to ensure that a sound and holistic plan is drawn up for each particular area. In any case it would be inconceivable for any such scheme to be applied unless it is preceded by a real and concrete plan to create additional and sufficient parking space to cater for each areas' needs. This must be based not only on the parking requirements of residents, but also on the business and tourist requirements of each location, who form an integral and equally important part of every locality. Only following such a thoughtful and constructive approach, matched by the necessary remedial action, can such far sweeping parking legislation should be considered.

17 Aug 2009

MHRA Council meets Dr Gordon Cordina

MHRA Council was invited to attend a meeting with Dr Gordon Cordina to comment on the proposed document that had been drawn on behalf of the constituted bodies that sit round the MCESD table. Several amendments were requested during the reading of the draft and agreed that with the proposed changes MHRA Council had no problem in endorsing the document.

19 Aug 2009

MHRA and MBB CEOs meet with Malta Standards Authority top officials.

In conjunction with the Malta Business Bureau CEO, MHRA CEO held a meeting with the Chairman of the Malta Standards Authority Ing Francis E Farrugia and Head of Standardisation Mr Francis P Farrugia regarding the EU recently published feasibility studies (comprising 11 individual reports) on service standardisation with the context of the Commission mandate M/371. There are 3 projects in the pipeline affecting the hospitality industry were the Accessibility in transport and tourism services; Welcome and Reception services and CHES – CEN Horizontal European Services Standardisation Strategy. The aim of the meeting was to obtain an understanding of the governance structure of CEN and how trade associations are represented in (what voting rights they have etc) the standards-formulation processes; to get to know to what extent is the MSA participating and feeding in the reflection process launched by the European Commission on the revision of the European standardisation system; learn which CEN committees Malta is actively participating in; obtain an updated on MSA's participation (if any) at ISO particularly within ISO Technical Committee 228 on "Tourism and related Services"; how to enhance a two-way flow of information exchange on current and prospective ISO-led standards affecting the hospitality industry and scoping out, if viable, a consultation/information exercise managed by MBB in conjunction with the MSA with MHRA members. Mr Farrugia proposed that MHRA & MBB identify an area on which Malta could lead through the setting up of a technical committee. MBB CEO Mr Joseph Tanti proposed that MBB & MSA can conduct a study on the cost benefit of Standards within a sector economy. Mr Farrugia indicated that MSA on the 15th September is organising a seminar regarding a

SME Standardization Toolkit and how Standards can help SMEs run business more efficiently. During the discussion MSA indicated that they have also Standards for Language schools operators. EF is the only one certificate under these standards. Mr Farrugia agreed to send a soft copy of the standards and the fees for accreditation to MHRA. Ing Farrugia indicated that MSA will be hosting an international conference in June 2010 related to Tourism. It was agreed that MSA will keep MHRA and MBB adjourned on the progress of this conference.

20 Aug 09

MHRA meets discusses noise pollution and bottle-shops

MHRA CEO Mr George Schembri attended a meeting convened at the Ministry for Tourism to discuss together with representatives from the Ministry, the Police, Director and Licensing Director from the Commerce division, MTA enforcement Director and senior officer, how to address noise pollution and the rampant sale of alcohol from bottle-shops in the Paceville area. The two main laws that dealt with these two specific issues are Chapter 10 of the Police Act and the Trading Licences Regulations of 2006. It was felt that the police act serves well the noise pollution problem and what was required was more commitment from the Police to enforce the law as is in the Act. With regards the sale of alcohol the were treated under clause 52.24 which reads "Retail of sale of food in specialised stores selling predominantly bread, cakes, flour confectionery and sugar confectionery" This is then qualified under the third schedule under the unrestricted business hours clauses. Clause 52.25 permits the "Retail of sale of food & beverages in specialised stores selling predominantly alcoholic and other beverages up to 11.00pm". However in LN 186 of 2007 which amended the main law clause 13 was added to qualify that "No alcohol may be sold or served from commercial premises, which are licensed as a confectionary under these regulations between 9.00pm and 8.00am of the following day." The qualification given here i.e. 'Confectionary' falls under permit 52.24 while the sale of alcohol falls under 52.25 and here lies the confusion. Most outlets want to be licensed fewer than 52.24 so that they can remain open 24hours while the sales of alcohol are only permitted fewer than 52.25. However the amended clauses prohibiting the sale of alcohol after 9.00pm refers to 52.24. It was agreed that Dr Jesmond Schembri looks at these two clauses to see how these can be amend to remove the anomaly.

21 Aug 2009

MHRA meets Chamber regarding proposed increase in landfill tipping fees.

MHRA President Mr Kevin DeCesare accompanied by the MHRA CEO MR George Schembri meet with Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise President Ms Helga Ellul and Director General Kevin Borg to discuss the stand that needs to be taken with Government regarding the proposed increase of landfill tipping fees to come into effect on the 1st October 2009. Mr DeCesare indicated that MHRA had already prepared a letter to Minister George Pullicino and being copied to the Prime Minister Dr Lawrence Gonzi and Parliamentary Secretary Dr Mario DeMarco in which strong objections were expressed in this regard. It was highlighted that the increase would be passed on to Hoteliers and restaurateurs for collection of waste and would mean further increases in operational costs to hotel at a time when the hospitality sector is passing through the worst period in occupancy and revenue in the last two decades. Ms Helga Ellul expressed the same sentiments with regards their members and that she will propose to

her council to write a similar letter to that of MHRA, to the Minister George Pullicino and the Prime Minister Dr Lawrence Gonzi.

25 Aug 2009

MHRA at Tourism Zone Committee Meeting

Once again MHRA CEO Mr George Schembri submitted a long list of points which highlight areas that need urgent intervention due to their impact on the Tourism product. Amongst the areas mentioned were the late evening noise pollution from beach barbecue revellers, lack of public order in Golden Sand Bay area, concern regarding the loss of car parking bays on the upgrading of the road adjacent to Corinthia Marina Hotel, study on traffic management around the Portomaso round-about since this was creating traffic bottleneck all the way down Church Street, more after hours cleaning in Valletta and thorough washing of Merchant street ground paving, and better upkeep of Triton fountain since the recent cleanup left much to be desired and could be a source of respiratory infections from the airborne water spray of the fountain. Mr Schembri also indicated the need for intervention on Marfa jetty since this was in a bad state, cleaning of Sliema waterfront rain culverts before the rain season starts, general cleanup of soft beds and washing of promenade at the stand and more street sweeping in the inner core of the town of Sliema. Mr Schembri was asked to refer comments sent in by Gozitan members to the Minister for Gozo. GRTU highlight the need of more police presence in Paceville. Dr DeMarco indicated that he was encouraging other local council to emulate the pedestrianisation of promenades introduced in Bugibba and Paceville at week-ends during the summer months. He noted that the frequency of waste collection in Paceville was working well and leaving the desired effect. Dr DeMarco recommended that MRRA have a person nominated to work with MTA Tourism Zone Officers to prepare a schedule for winter maintenance. Mr Alex Fenech from FELTOM requested that ADT look into increasing the frequency of route bus 645 since many passengers were being left stranded on this route due to the high increase in visitors and students in the area of Sliema/St Julians.

MTA CEO MR Josef Formosa Gauci meets with operators in the 4-Star category of Hotels

Similar to what was done with the marketing directors/managers in the 5-star sector, Mr Josef Formosa Gauci invited the operators in the 4 –star and 3-star category of hotels to a workshop to meet with MTA marketing people and overseas Directors. During the workshop the overseas Directors gave an overview of the market situation in their respective areas within Europe while the MTA marketing team presented the plans they were putting forward for consideration for 2010. Mr Formosa Gauci encourages operators to put in place their own marketing strategy to ride along MTA proposals so that they can obtain the maximum benefit from the money spent. He also reminded those present that MTA offer to match euro for euro any innovative advertising or marketing done in an individual hotel.

MHRA supports GREENPAK awards to VISET establishments

MHRA was the instigator in pushing forward a waste separation project at VISET Valetta waterfront with the catering members and retail outlets. The project was launched in December 2009 with the support of Green Dot Malta operators of the GreenPak scheme. Staff within the catering establishments at

the Valletta Waterfront were all trained and encouraged to separate waste into different waste streams. Green Dot Malta supplied separate bins for different types of waste, including plastic, metal, cardboard and glass at these establishments, which replaced the 'single' waste bins previously in use. The materials are now being collected separately and sent for recycling. The amounts of main materials collected during the last nine months totalled over 60 tones of glass, 7 tones of cardboard, more than 3 tones of plastic, and 2 tones of metal. These were sent away for recycling.

To celebrate the success of the first stage of the project, certificates of merit were awarded to the best three performing outlets. Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism, Dr Mario DeMarco was invited to hand out the certificate of merit during a short ceremony held in the main area at the waterfront and these were [Agenda Bookshop](#); [Casanova](#) and [QBar](#).



John Portelli, CEO of VISET Malta plc, together with the best three performing outlets during the award ceremony held at Valletta Waterfront.

The introduction of waste separation has a beneficial environmental effect in the sense that it is reducing CO2 emissions. As less material was being disposed in the organic waste stream, VISET decided to reduce their twice daily collection of 20 skips to once daily collection of 14 skips. This translates in a direct environmental saving with regards to less traffic on the roads and less CO2 emissions.

Mr Kevin DeCesare, MHRA President said that MHRA has been lobbying quite strongly over the years in favour of sustainable tourism and would like its members support initiatives that will benefit the Maltese islands' environment which is so essential for the continuous development of the islands' tourism. When MHRA approached VISET management with the idea of a project aimed to support waste separation by the catering and retail establishments at the Valletta Waterfront, these were most receptive. Thanks to the professionalism of all catering and retail establishments, VBISET management and Green Dot Malta, the project was a success and MHRA thank all for their contribution. VISET has now decided to continue waste separation at the Valletta Waterfront on a permanent basis.

26 Aug 2009

MHRA & Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Investments meet Dr Gordon Cordina

Representatives from MHRA and MCCEI met at the Chamber to review final draft of the constituted bodies' budget proposals for Government. Main discussion centred around the preamble to the document which needed to make clear that the recommendations in the document must be taken on board by Government in total and not adopt those that suits it and drop the others. It was agreed that MCESD Chairman Sonny Portelli passes on the document to the Prime Minister and invited Government for an MCESD meeting to give its views on the recommendations in the document.

27 Aug 2009

MHRA CEO meets St Julians Local Council Member re Paceville issues

MHRA CEO Mr George Schembri met with Mr Karl Gouder from St Julians Local Council to discuss issues raised during the last Tourism Zone Committee meeting with Parliamentary Secretary Dr Mario DeMarco. The main focus was the traffic enforcement in St Julians/Paceville area and it was suggested that the Local Council should draw a three year plan with the enforcement provider and police.

Mr Angelo Xuereb address MHRA Council

Leading entrepreneur, Mr Angelo Xuereb made a presentation about his thoughts and ideas to increase the parking capacities in the suburbs of Valletta to ease the parking problems that will be created once the Valletta entrance project is taken in hand. Mr Angelo through various slides showed how the whole area in front of Valletta entrance and extending to St Pabilus church on one side and the inland revenue buildings on the other side could be re-developed to accommodate a underground multi-storey car-park, parking bays for public transport and craft centre in the ditch area which would be easily accessible for cruise liners passengers. The Ravelin fortifications will be re-excavated and resorted to their original state and will form part of the Valletta rehabilitation exercise.

George Schembri

MHRA