

# conference report

## 4<sup>th</sup> Mediterranean Tourism Forum (MTF), St. Julian, Malta

The 4<sup>th</sup> Mediterranean Tourism Forum (MTF) held in Malta, with a thousand participants from 32 countries around the world, was organized by the Mediterranean Tourism Foundation at the Hilton Hotel at the tourist center of St. Julian. About 1,000 participants from all over the world were brought together by the common interest in the future of tourism as the "strongest bridge" for achieving peace and security, for strengthening the Mediterranean BRAND and for the pursuit of common action, especially cultural manifestations.



Valletta, the capital of Malta, UNESCO World Heritage city since 1980 and European Capital of Culture 2018



Authentic Malta, traditional fishing village Marsaxlokk, a popular tourist destination



Gala Dinner, welcoming the Maltese knights



The luxurious Hilton Hotel's conference center

After a very impressive opening ceremony, the Forum was opened by its Patron Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, President of Malta. On that occasion she stressed the importance of tourism in achieving peace and security in the Mediterranean. She is convinced that the Mediterranean has all the potential to create a safe space in which dialogue and cooperation can flourish. "Mediterranean has the potential to be the place



Participants of the 4<sup>th</sup> Forum at Reception at the Presidential Palace

in which the diversity of our cultures can be further nurtured for the enrichment of business and people. It is a gift that we owe to our future generations, to our nations and to the world. Peace, in all its complexity, must be our business" she said. Hereby, Malta sent a message about the importance of tourism as a promoter of Mediterranean economic development, peace and stability.



Panel discussion

Topics of the Forum were mostly oriented towards the technological future of tourism: the techniques of creating a good mood of guests, the adaptation of technical support to the contemporary guest, the creation of virtual reality that leads the guests through

the history of the destination, the transformation of the eureka in euros, and the new trends in tourism. The first day of the Forum was divided into several educational sections such as gastro trends and presentations of world chefs.

The Forum was held from 16<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> of March, few days after the end of ITB, the world's largest tourist trade show. Many of the global messages from Berlin were in the context of discussions and the message of the Mediterranean Tourism Forum. The main message was that, although the world is burdened by economic crises, terrorism and wars, tourism is growing and "blooming". Unfortunately, not in every country of the Mediterranean region. Unlike Berlin (ITB), Malta is focusing on the future of tourism in the Mediterranean, which is currently "living several faces": the most beautiful tourist part of the world, rich natural resources, unrepeatable cultural heritage and tradition, as well as the other part of Mediterranean with huge political, economic and social differences. The toughest burden of some countries in the region is terrorism and millions of refugees among which illegal refugees represent the major problem. However, the message of UNWTO reads that "tourism is the power that can change the world through dialogue and cooperation", which is also believed by tourist experts, government representatives and politicians as well.

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