PRESS RELEASE

Lejlet Lapsi, Notte Gozitana promoting domestic and foreign tourism

With preparations for the major event in Gozo from Friday, May 22, to Sunday, May 24 – *Lejlet Lapsi, Notte Gozitana* – now in full swing, the Ministry for Gozo emphasises the importance of such events to act as a driver to foster higher levels of both domestic and foreign tourism.

The Hon. Giovanna Debono, Minister for Gozo, referred to the fact that for the first time this event is being advertised abroad through the initiative of her ministry: "Events like *Lejlet Lapsi, Notte Gozitana* are beneficial to Gozo since they raise the island's profile, and place it on the map as a distinct touristic and cultural destination both on a domestic as well as on an international level."

Minister Debono gave detailed information regarding the programme covering the event, which has now been finalised and will be distributed to the general public. Apart from being advertised through the local media, *Lejlet Lapsi – Notte Gozitana* is also being advertised on a Sicilian TV station through prime time spots. This initiative was upheld by some of the main accommodation establishments on the island who are offering various packages. The Italian station will also be sending one of their journalists to cover the event. Moreover, other publicity will be gained through the participation of the renowned Sicilian group *Moonlighters* who are engaged to participate during Saturday's programme.

The Minister added that this advertising is aimed to attract more tourists and visitors to Gozo not just during the event weekend, but long after Ascension Sunday, May 24, has passed. "Gozo has its attractions all the year round and not just as a summer retreat," Minister Debono stressed. "This is a message that is being communicated through our advertising and it is a message that is meant to strengthen our endeavours towards minimising the strong effects of seasonality on the Gozitan tourism industry. Moreover, this initiative is also intended to assist stakeholders in their efforts to confront the challenges posed by the current international financial crisis.'

Thanks to the co-operation of other entities, not only should travelling to Gozo be made much easier, but also general co-ordination and parking arrangements will be alleviated.

Those wishing to use public transport can benefit from extended trips from Valletta to Cirkewwa and back at €1.16 per person during the late hours on both Friday, May 22, and Saturday, May 23. Apart from extended trips from Victoria to various localities in Gozo and back throughout the weekend, there will also be a shuttle service between Mġarr and Victoria.

Free trips on Gozo ferry

Passengers travelling to Gozo by ferry on Friday, May 22, from noon to midnight will travel free. Even the fare for a car and driver has been reduced to €12. On Saturday passengers travelling from noon to midnight will pay €1.40 per person. The fare for a car and driver is reduced to €8.40.

A park and ride service from the outskirts of Victoria to the centre will operate during peak hours of the event. Efforts are also being made to ensure good traffic management and the general co-ordination of those who need to get around the island and especially Victoria.

'All is being done to make this an enjoyable experience for all those who are familiar with Gozo's charm as well as for those who will be tempted to cross over for the first time', the Minister concluded.

Those who wish to view the full programme for next weekend's events can visit www.gozoculture.com or www.gozo.gov.mt. For more information, call 2155-6125 or e-mail info@gozoculture.com.

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STQARRIJA GĦALL-ISTAMPA

Lejlet Lapsi, Notte Gozitana, tinkoraġġixxi t-turiżmu domestiku u barrani

Bit-tħejjijiet għall-avveniment kbir li se jittella' f'Għawdex bejn il-Ġimgħa, 22, u l-Ħadd, 24 ta' Mejju – *Lejlet Lapsi, Notte Gozitana* – jinsabu fl-aqwa tagħhom, il-Ministeru għal Għawdex jisħaq dwar l-importanza li attivitajiet simili għandhom iservu wkoll biex jintlaħqu livelli aktar għoljin fir-rigward tat-turiżmu domestiku u barrani.

Il-Ministru għal Għawdex, l-Onor. Giovanna Debono, irreferiet għal fatt li bis-saħħa ta' inizjattiva tal-Ministeru għal Għawdex, għall-ewwel darba dan l-avveniment qed jiġi rreklamat ukoll barra minn xtutna. "Avvenimenti bħal *Lejlet Lapsi, Notte Gozitana,* huma ta' ġid għal Għawdex għaliex jgħollu isem il-gżira u jpoġġuha fuq il-mappa bħala destinazzjoni distinta kemm fis-suq domestiku kif ukoll fi swieq barranin, fl-oqsma turistiċi u kulturali."

Il-Ministru Debono tat informazzjoni dettaljata dwar il-programm li ġie ppreparat għal dan l-avveniment, li issa ġie finalizzat u ser jibda jitqassam fil-jiem li ġejjin. Minbarra li qed issir kampanja publiċitarja permezz ta' mezzi ta' komunikazzjoni fix-xena lokali, qed issir kampanja ta' reklamar fuq stazzjon televiżiv fi Sqallija. Uħud mill-istabbilimenti li joffru servizzi ta' akkomodazzjoni f'Għawdex, ikkollaboraw f'din l-inizjattiva u għamlu offerti vantaġġjużi għal din l-attività. L-istazzjon Taljan ser jibgħat ukoll ġurnalist biex isegwi dan l-avveniment f'Għawdex. Aktar pubbliċità hija mistennija permezz tal-parteċipazzjoni tal-grupp *Moonlighters*, li kull ma jmur qed iżid fil-popolarità, u li ser jieħdu sehem fl-attività tas-Sibt.

Il-Ministru kompliet tgħid li din il-kampanja publiċitarja, hija mmirata biex tattira numru akbar ta' viżitaturi lejn Għawdex mhux biss għal dan l-avveniment iżda ankè wara li Lapsi jkun għadda. 'Għawdex huwa attrazzjoni għal matul is-sena kollha u mhux biss fix-xhur tas-sajf', saħqet il-Ministru Debono. 'Dan hu l-

messaġġ li qegħdin nikkomunikaw permezz tal-kampanja publiċitarja u huwa messaġġ li hu intenzjonat li jsaħħaħ l-impenn tagħna biex intaffu dejjem aktar l-effetti negattivi ta' l-istaġjonalità fuq l-industrija turistika f'Għawdex. Fuq kollox din l-inizjattiva qed tittieħed ukoll fil-konfront ta' l-isfidi li qed jiġu kkreati mill-kriżi finanzjarja internazzjonali attwali'.

Grazzi għall-koperazzjoni minn għadd ta' entitajiet oħra, mhux biss l-ivvjaġġar lejn Għawdex għandu jkun aktar faċli, iżda wkoll il-koordinazzjoni u l-arranġamenti għall-parkeġġ huma maħsuba li jkunu aġevolati.

Dawk li jixtiequ jużaw it-trasport pubbliku jistgħu jgawdu minn żieda fil-vjaġġi mill-Belt saċ-Ċirkewwa u lura għall-prezz ta' €1.16 kull persuna fil-ħinijiet tard tal-Ġimgħa, 22, u tas-Sibt, 23 ta' Mejju. Barra żieda ta' vjaġġi mir-Rabat, Għawdex, lejn lokalitajiet oħra Għawdxin u lura, matul dawn il-jiem, se jkun hemm servizz kontinwu (*shuttle*) bejn l-Imġarr u r-Rabat.

Vjaġġi bla ħlas fuq il-vapur ta' Għawdex

Passiġġieri li jivvjaġġaw lejn Għawdex bil-baħar il-Gimgħa, 22 ta' Mejju, bejn nofsinhar u nofsillejl, se jagħmlu dan mingħajr ħlas. Ankè n-nol għal karozza u xufier tnaqqas għal €12. Is-Sibt, passiġġieri li jivvjaġġaw bejn nofsinhar u nofsillejl iħallsu €1.40 kull persuna waqt li n-nol għal karozza u xufier tnaqqas għal €8.40.

Servizz ta' *park and ride* minn imkejjen periferiċi tar-Rabat lejn iċ-ċentru se jkun offrut matul il-qofol tal-avveniment. Qed isir dak kollu possibbli biex jiġi żgurat l-aħjar ko-ordinazzjoni tat-traffiku u koordinament ġenerali għall-benefiċċju ta' dawk li se jżuru diversi postijiet madwar il-gżira, l-aktar fir-Rabat.

"Qed isir dak kollu meħtieġ biex dan l-avveniment joffri esperjenza unika kemm lil dawk li huma familjari mal-gżira ta' Għawdex kif ukoll għal dawk li ser ikunu mħajra jaqsmu lejn Għawdex għall-ewwel darba', temmet tgħid il-Ministru Debono.

Dawk li jixtiequ jaraw il-programm sħiħ ta' l-attivitajiet jistgħu jagħmlu dan billi jidħlu fuq is-siti elettroniċi www.gozoculture.com jew www.gozo.gov.mt. Aktar informazzjoni tista' tinkiseb ukoll mill-linja telefonika 2155-6125 jew imejl info@gozoculture.com.

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