

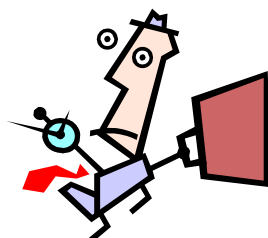


EYiE of Horus

Malta 1st - 8th September 2003



Epilepsy Youth in Europe: Bringing The Senses Together



INFORMATION BOOKLET

**Galaxy Hotel and Vacation Club
Depiro Street
Sliema SLM05, Malta.**

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The organisers would like to thank the following public and private instiutions for their sponsorship and support as without this, it would not have been possible hold this event in Malta.

HE the President of the Republic of Malta, Ministry of Education. Ministry of Youth Arts and Sports, EUPU, Ministry of Gozo, Heritage Malta, Caritas Malta, Galaxy Hotel Malta, University of Malta, Go Mobile, Consolidated Biscuits, General Soft Drinks Malta Ltd, Rokna Pizzeria, Veduta Pizzeria, Mdina Glass, Jolico Ltd Malta, Collis Williams Ltd, Gozo Channel Ltd, Marsovin Ltd, Malta Tourism Authority.

Introduction

Epilepsy is the most common neurological brain disorder, affecting over 1% of youths worldwide. Many advances have been made on its causes and several new medicines are now available which control seizures in over 80% of the population. Yet, in many countries, even in Europe, there is still social exclusion and discrimination, due to ignorance and stigma, which adversely affects the employment and education of these young persons. These issues must be tackled if these youths are to be socially included and lead more productive lives.

The **EYIE OF HORUS** youth exchange project aims to create an international forum of youths from 10 countries, that will be conducive to exploring:

- a. what it is like to be a youth with epilepsy in Europe;
- b. what it means to European society at large;
- c. how to tackle the multicultural social exclusion being experienced by these young people.

Why EYIE of Horus?

The theme selected has a very specific meaning for young persons with epilepsy. Due to their condition they often feel that they lack the full development of their inner potential, and are afraid to interact with the world around them as they feel different and the 'odd ones out'.

The title selected has a very specific meaning. The *Eyie of Horus* (which is also a typical Maltese image) is represented as a figure with **6 parts of an 'eye'**, which correspond to the **six senses** - touch, taste, hearing, thought, sight, smell. The 'eye' is the receptor of information, understanding the world around us. All these senses are very important if young persons with epilepsy are to develop their character better and these will be developed through workshops and cultural activities. These six senses will be linked and motivated, through six specific tools and related workshops and cultural activities held throughout the island during the exchange programme: **collection** of media material; **learning** about cultural differences; **exploration** of different communication methods through production workshops; **learning** how to work and gaining political and historical experience; **nurturing** individual potentials; **developing** a network. The results will then be disseminated through a website and at national and international meetings and conferences.

The aim of the youth exchange proposal is **to directly enhance the quality of life, educational and employment potential and the independence of young persons with epilepsy in Europe across 10 countries**, taking account of their expectations and of the greater contributions they could make to society, in terms of personal and social well-being (rather than the usual health care and medical treatments). During this exchange project, these youths, who despite their youth would have had epilepsy for several years, will themselves have the opportunity to express and share opinions, experiences and attitudes related to their condition. They would never have had such an opportunity to open up to peers, primarily due their isolated upbringing due to parental overprotection (the cotton wool syndrome) and social stigma.

This experience will help them to evaluate their current life options and develop their potential, which are mandatory steps if their social integration is to succeed. Through the interactive workshops the hidden potential of these young people will emerge and the project leaders will assist them in understanding, how, despite their differing cultural and national backgrounds, they have common needs and potential, which will assist them in improving their chances of leading a more fulfilling life. These youths will then wield a multiplier effect on their peers when they go back to their own country, through what they have experienced and the website and projects they would have planned during the exchange programme.

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY 31ST AUGUST 2003 : DAY 1

Time	Activity	
Various	Arrival in Malta (all participants to take taxis transport from airport at own expense)	Hotel registration Distribution of tourist information material Welcome and Registration desk at hotel
18.00	Free time	
20.00	Welcome Maltese Night Buffet Reception at Galaxy Hotel With other invited Guests from Malta	Welcome to Malta by group leader from Malta Introduction by Trainer: Dr John Chaplin What is <i>EYIE of Horus</i> Youth exchange programme? Introduction to week's activities

MONDAY 1ST SEPTEMBER 2003 : DAY 2

Time	Activity	
09.00	Personal introductions	Who are we...where we come from...personal experiences using interactive games
	<i>Introductions on the main theme : Prof Chaplin</i> The <i>Eyie of Horus</i>	<i>A figure with 6 parts of an 'eye', which correspond to the six senses - touch, taste, hearing, thought, sight, smell. The 'eye' is the receptor of information, understanding the world around us. All these senses are very important if young persons with epilepsy are to develop their character better.</i> An explanation will be given of how these six senses will be linked and motivated, through six specific tools and activities during the exchange programme: collection of media material; learning about cultural differences; exploration of different communication methods; learning how to work; nurturing individual potentials; developing a network.
10.00	Role Playing and Theatre	John Chaplin and Marion Mueller
13.00	Lunch at hotel	
14.30	Maltese afternoon	Presentation of Malta by the Maltese group to include information about epilepsy in Malta. Organisation of Malta quiz in 4 teams consisting of members of at least 4 countries in each team
16.30	Swimming break	
18.30	Meeting in Hotel Lobby, Walk to St Julians	Sponsored Pizza/Pasta at Rokna Resturant, St Julians

TUESDAY 2ND SEPTEMBER 2003: DAY 3

Time	Activity	
08.15	Meeting in Hotel Lobby	Walk to Balluta Square
08.30	Departure to Caritas Malta premises in Floriana	Coach Pick up at Balluta Square
9.00	All: Presentation of theme: <i>How do NGOs work?</i>	Mr Godfrey Kenely, Invited speaker from Caritas Malta
10.00	Departure from Caritas Malta Premises Floriana	Walk to Valletta
11.00	Visit to Policy makers in Valletta All: Presentation of theme: <i>Influencing policy makers</i> Grandmaster's Palace, Valletta	Meeting with his Excellency HE Guido de Marco, President of Malta including Hon Jesmond Mugliett, Minister of Youth and Sports in Malta Visit around Grandmaster's Palace
12.00	Free time in Valletta	
14.00	Intercultural experiences (guide)	Cultural visits around sites related to Order of St John – the first mini European Union the Auberges in Valletta showing how the eight languages and cultures of the order (French, Italian, German, English, Portuguese, Castillian, Bavarian) worked together here in Malta St John's Cathedral, Upper Baracca
17.00	Return back to Hotel	
19.30	Dinner at hotel	Barbecue
21.00	Irish Dutch Evening	Presentation by the Irish and Dutch groups to include information about epilepsy in Ireland & Holland.

WEDNESDAY 3RD SEPTEMBER 2003: DAY 4

Time	Activity	
09.00	Presentation of theme: <i>Living with epilepsy</i>	What does it mean to live with Epilepsy In Europe? How can we deal with dealing with stigma and exclusion?
9.30	Invited speakers from local institutions who have integrated persons with epilepsy and other disabilities in society	Invited speaker from various NGOs involving youths with a disability in Malta Mr Joe Camilleri KNPD Dr Josie Muscat, Eden Foundation Mr Mario Dimech, Malta Caritas Epilepsy Association (To get video)
13.00	Lunch at hotel	+ invited guests
14.30	Break up into Workshops with different themes related to <i>living with epilepsy</i> (with at least 4 different countries represented in each workshop) Moderated by Prof Chaplin	1. Social inclusion: driving, drinking, sports 2. Talking about epilepsy: how to present yourself 3. Employment 4. Education
16.30	England Scottish afternoon	Presentation by the UK and Danish group to include information about epilepsy in their countries.
19.00	Free Evening	

THURSDAY 4TH SEPTEMBER 2003: DAY 5

Time	Activity	
7.30 SHARP	DAY trip to GOZO	Departure by Coach from Balluta Square at 7.30 am sharp
09.00	Cirkewwa Boat Trip to Gozo	On journey there: presentation of theme: <i>No man is an island</i> Moderated by Prof Chaplin
10.00	Visit to Ggantija Neolithic Temples Visit to Calypso Cave and other sites in Gozo	Visit to site where Ulysses was kept prisoner by Calypso for 7 years (Greek mythology);
13.00	Lunch at Xlendi	Sea Shells Resturant
14.00	Visit to Citadel, and Dwejra	Visits to sites which show how has small region like Gozo also has a long history and also many different cultures and has also tackled disability issues
17.00	Trip Back to Malta	On journey back : Summary of day's events Moderated by Prof Chaplin
20.00	Dinner at hotel	

FRIDAY 5TH SEPTEMBER 2003: DAY 6

Time	Activity	
09.00	Working with the media: Visit from persons who work in the media Radio/TV station in Malta	Learning how media works and how to make the most of media Fr Joe Borg, Director Campus FM
10.00	Theatre workshop	Marion Mueller and John Chaplin
13.00	Lunch at hotel	
14.30	Swedish Finnish Iceland afternoon	Presentation by the Swedish, Icelandic and Finish group to include information about epilepsy in Sweden, Iceland and Finland.
15.30	Free Time for Shopping Free evening	

SATURDAY 6TH SEPTEMBER 2003: DAY 7

Time	Activity	
09.00	Departure to Mdina	Coach Pick up from Balluta Square
09.30	inter cultural influences in buildings in Malta Visit to Mdina – Old Capital City (+ guide)	Visit to sites that show inter cultural influences in buildings in Malta: Catacombs from Arab times, Cathedral Museum from Medieval Times
12.30	Sponsored Lunch at Mdina	Pizza or Pasta at Veduta Resturant
14.30	Return to hotel	
16.00	Break up into Workshops with different themes related to culture (with at least 4 different countries represented in each workshop)	1. Language 2. Religion 3. Family structure 4. Leisure Time
17.00	All: results from workshop Moderated by Prof Chaplin	Presentation of practical outcomes from each workshop
19.00	French German Portugal Evening	Presentation by the Portugese and German groups to include information about epilepsy in Portugal & Germany.
20.00	Dinner at hotel	

SUNDAY 7TH SEPTEMBER 2003: DAY 8

Time	Activity	
09.00	All: Presentation of theme: <i>Evaluation of EYIE of Horus</i>	Moderated by Prof Chaplin
09.30	Break up into Workshops (with at least 4 different countries represented in each workshop Break up into workshops	Summarizing workshop and discussion: Final Evaluation using 6 tools: collection; learning; exploration; learning how to work; nurturing; developing
11.30	Results from workshop Moderated by Prof Chaplin	Presentation of practical outcomes from each workshop
13.00	Lunch at hotel	
14.30	What next?	Planning for future youth exchanges and workshops
19.00	Farewell Party	

8TH SEPTEMBER 2003: DAY 9

Time	Activity	
09.00-17.00	Departures during the day	

How did we came up with the idea of this youth exchange?

Epilepsy is the most common neurological brain disorder, affecting over 1% of youths worldwide. Many advances have been made on its causes and several new medicines available now ensure that the seizures are controlled in over 80% of the population. Yet, in many countries, even in Europe, there is still social exclusion and discrimination, due to ignorance and stigma, which adversely affects the employment and education of these young persons. These issues must be tackled, not only on a national but also an international level, if policy makers are to be influenced and these youths are encouraged to be socially included and lead more productive lives. One way of tackling this problem is by bringing together a critical mass of young persons with epilepsy throughout Europe. A Youth Exchange would thus be seen as being a chance to demonstrate that young people with epilepsy **are** capable of achieving something adventurous and interesting.

Motivation is also derived from the fact that the youth exchange will lead to the participants building up knowledge, understanding and mastery over the main issues facing young people with epilepsy in different cultures. The participants will build self-confidence, personal skills, an interest in participating in voluntary work and a better appreciation of European and International co-operation. The computer component to the project will offer a focus that will link the young people together and offer training that will increase their employability.

The **EYIE OF HORUS** young exchange project thus aims to create an international forum that will be conducive to exploring:

- a) developing a model for the involvement and participation of young people with epilepsy in European society;
- b) helping to cancel the stereotype of epilepsy; by learning how to tackle the multicultural social exclusion being experienced by these young people;
- c) encouraging the development of a new generation of leaders in the epilepsy movement ;
- d) leading to increased co-operation between Epilepsy Organisations of young people with epilepsy.

These **six senses** will be linked and motivated, through **six** specific tools and related discussion workshops and cultural activities during the exchange programme, in order to concretise the learning process:

collection of media material from various national newspapers;

learning about cultural differences by visiting numerous intercultural sites of interest in Malta;

exploration of different communication methods;

learning how to work by visiting NGO offices in Malta;

nurturing individual potentials through interactive workshops with other youth NGOs in Malta;

developing a network of European epilepsy youth organisations

The theme of the project was chosen by the young participants themselves during an epilepsy weekly internet **chat room discussions**, on www.eyie.org where the youths explored together, what is hindering them in their everyday experiences related to work and further education. The differences in life style, evident from a comparison of the different cultures that are met during the chat sessions, highlighted the fact that many young people with epilepsy feel excluded and there is a need to examine more closely how young people with epilepsy can become more involved in society.

The process of discussion within a multinational group such as in this exchange programme will greatly encourage the exploration of different ideas and possibilities. It was agreed, during the chats, that too few young people with epilepsy seek help or advise from their fellow peers and remain isolated, afraid to talk about their condition, thus falling into the trap that thinking that they are alone and always the 'odd ones' out. Thus, they fall into the trap of thinking that they cannot influence society at large about misconceptions related to their condition. In addition the youths will explore, as an international group, what it is like to have epilepsy in Europe and what this means to society at large.

Through the stimulation of the '**six senses**' during the exchange programme, it is envisaged that these misconceptions will be challenged, tested and thus overcome by the young people themselves and it will help them to lead to more social and educational inclusion, and a greater societal openness about epilepsy when they return to their own country. A great deal of preparation work has been involved

- Setting up an internet web site for the project with access for all the partners. A chat room for each language was set up prior to the start of the project so that it is ready to use immediately the young people have collected their first material.
- Participants have been selected for the exchange and a reserve list drawn up.
- The exact requirements of the participants have been set out with instructions concerning how the material will be collected, how it will be put onto the internet and how to participate in the chat room sessions.
- Setting up youth meetings in each of the project countries during the lead up to the exchange in order to encourage motivation and plan the collection of materials and activities.

How YOU are involved.....

The project focuses initially on youths from all over Europe, who all have epilepsy or work with young people with epilepsy in their home country. Due their epilepsy, these young people have had to struggle through their educational systems and work opportunities. **EYIE of Horus** will help them to bring out the misapprehensions, expectations, and needs of these youths in order to identify the barriers that are keeping them back, using the six senses - touch, taste, hearing, thought, sight, smell. All these senses are very important if young persons with epilepsy are to develop their character better:

These young people have already been contacted and have begun preparing for this project themes for the last six months, using the chat sessions. Planning meetings have been held in Germany, Sweden, UK, France, Holland, Portugal, Ireland, Malta and Iceland in order to explain how the Youth Exchange could work and he discuss the wishes and needs of the young people in participating. Material concerning the themes and activities of the project has started to be collected and posted on the internet (www.eyie.org). The partner associations are already discussing the material that will be used to present the main themes. Partners and participants are being encouraged to collect more material. Each week prior to the youth exchange a chat room session will be set up to discuss the materials being collected, the issues and the themes being raised. Each week a different theme will be raised and participants will be encouraged to collect more material and to search for material that illustrates the sub-themes being discussed.

They will then learn about how they can develop their potential, learn how to influence policy makers, and thus realise that their life can be improved. These youths will then have a multiplier effect though what they have experienced and projects planned, on their peers when they go back to their own country. A follow-up continuous evaluation of the outcomes of the exchange will be monitored for 24 months following the activities in order to note progress and plan future activities. The website will be updated with the outcomes from the sessions, with concrete hints so that other groups might be encouraged to use the activities used. The results will also be disseminated at national and international congresses, newsletters, through press releases, and magazines aimed at youths in the various countries

Which objectives should you achieve?

The objective of this seven-day **EYIE OF HORUS** young exchange project thus aims to create an international forum that will be conducive to exploring:

- developing a model for the involvement and participation of young people with epilepsy in European society;
- helping to cancel the stereotype of epilepsy; by learning how to tackle the multicultural social exclusion being experienced by these young people;

- encouraging the development of a new generation of leaders in the epilepsy movement ;
- leading to increased co-operation between Epilepsy Organisations of young people with epilepsy.

The objectives of the exchange project **Eyie of Horus**, will thus create a new and high quality YOUTH exchange programme by exploring the theme of exclusion in Europe due to a medical condition, in this case epilepsy; what it is like to be a youth with epilepsy in Europe and what this means to society at large.

Thus you, the participants should be able to:

- Research and collate youth themes on epilepsy and society from the media and from interviews.
- Describe themes related to aspects of epilepsy that could be included in future YOUTH projects and be aware of national / cultural differences across Europe.
- Identify appropriate presentation methods related to the audience and content of the material to be presented.
- Present information about the social aspects of epilepsy in a clear way appropriate to a youth audience.
- List the main areas of the YOUTH Programme and develop multi-national YOUTH programme project ideas.
- Explain the YOUTH Programme youth exchange theme and the objectives and Actions of the YOUTH programme
- Collaborate with participants from other countries in developing YOUTH programme projects.

Intercultural dimension

Intercultural learning is built into the learning process that the youth exchange will promote and through the very nature of the participants. We will be exploring the theme of exclusion for people with epilepsy in different countries in Europe and in order to understand this process texts on exclusion in general will be used as a conceptual base. This will heighten awareness of the group to issues of exclusion as applies to other (e.g. racial) excluded groups.

The group will be divided in teams that will interact with respect to workshops, role playing, games, visits around the island, each group consisting of members from at least 4 different countries. There will be numerous visits around Malta to sites that highlight the intercultural influence on the island e.g. Grandmaster's Palace (eight langue of the Order), Roman House, Catacombs, Mdina Cathedral, Neolithic Temples. We will also visit numerous residential homes for person with disabilities in Malta e.g. Dar Nazareth, Eden Foundation.

There will also be visits to policy makers at various Ministries and NGO premises in order to under how mutual understanding, tolerance and intercultural learning can be advanced through policy decisions and implementation on a practical level. Visits to media outlets e.g. radio and TV stations are also included in order to show how the media can be influenced to project positive images of disabilities and different cultures.

As an objective for our seminar we hope to be able to generate YOUTH programme project ideas that could include the Mediterranean countries, particularly to the south of the Mediterranean. We have already made contact with epilepsy groups in Morocco, Tunisia, Israel and Turkey to inform them about the youth exchange. The contact with the African Mediterranean counties will be further strengthened by an international epilepsy congress to take place in Lisbon in October 2003. The results of the **EYiE of Horus** project will be a poster topic for the conference and it is intended that this will lead to the possibility of future

youth exchange with Africa where we will be able to work more directly on fighting racism and stigma.

What activities have we planned?

The youth exchange will be divided into three different activities .

A. Production Workshop activities

B. Leisure / sports events.

C. Political and historical awareness activities.

There will also be a special day will have an evening theme drawn from different partner countries.

Each participant will undertake to be responsible for the collection of material on an aspect of exclusion in relation to epilepsy/disability. All respondents will be responsible for the presentation of this topic during the event within a small group. Cross national groups will be encouraged so that each workshop group is composed of participants from at least four different countries

A. Production workshop activities

The main emphasis will be on completing the discussions started in the preparation phase of the project. The focus will be on achieving results in terms of enlightened discussions concerning the main themes within lifestyle choices. These results will be made more concrete by putting the transcripts of the discussions onto the internet and preparing them for publication so that other people can participate and as a permanent record.

The timetable for the discussion days will be a short presentation on the topic selected then workshops in the sub-groups. The group will be divided into four sub-groups of 10 people who will discuss the same theme each morning. Each workshop group will be composed of members from at least 4 countries. At the start of day the groups will review material about epilepsy and discuss the main themes developed in the chat rooms and in the workbook. The results of the workshops will then be presented to the other groups put onto the internet. The trainer Prof Chaplin will moderate the sessions and be able to bring out the most of the young persons.

B. Leisure and sports activities

Several leisure activities will be available – swimming, visits to cultural sites. Again sub-groups will be composed of participants from at least four countries. Individuals from the participants will be encouraged to lead the groups where possible.

C. Political and historical awareness activities

We have planned visits to the Department of Youth and Sports in the Ministry of Education and in the Ministry of Health in order to speak with the policy makers and civil servants concerning the issues raised in the discussion workshops. This will encourage self-esteem and an understanding of how government works. It will also offer the opportunity to influence policy makers. This will be a major objective for the group and help to increase motivation, clarity of argument and co-operation between the different language groups. We will also visit several important NGOs in Malta e.g. Caritas Malta, Eden Foundation and visit sites of interest e.g. Grandmaster's Palace, in order to appreciate how the different cultures of the 8 *langue* of the Knights of St John were integrated and to understand how the Order functioned.

At the end of the youth exchange a presentation to the public will be made together with a meeting with the press and a press release.

Your Hosts: The Malta Epilepsy Association

The Malta Epilepsy Association was founded in 1996 as a non profit voluntary organisation to help persons with epilepsy to enjoy an improved quality of life. The aims include:

- To improve the public image of the person with epilepsy;
- To enhance the self-image, self-confidence and self-reliance of people with epilepsy;
- To stifle local discrimination of people with epilepsy and minimise the social consequences brought about by epilepsy;
- To counsel and educate persons with epilepsy and their families or their legal guardian/s on coming to terms with, and adapting to epilepsy
- To present the interests, rights, needs, grievances and problems of persons with epilepsy to the notice of policy makers;
- To promote the exchange of information with other organisations;
- To co-operate with other persons wishing to form other organisations for the welfare of persons with epilepsy and/or their families or their legal guardians; and,
- To encourage and promote research.

These aims are met through monthly meetings for all members and meetings every two weeks of the committee, as well as regular press releases, media, TV and radio interviews and lobbying with policy makers. A Youth Committee was set up in 2000 within the general Association. The aim of this branch is to bring youths in Malta and Gozo who have epilepsy together and organise informal meetings for them, such as bowling, cinema, pizza night etc. This will encourage them to be more socially inclusive, learn how to interact with peers and help address some of the feelings of isolation and '*I do not fit in with the norm*' problems associated with youths with epilepsy. The Malta Epilepsy Association is a member of the International Bureau for Epilepsy (an international NGO representing people with epilepsy and the social aspects of epilepsy in over 80 countries). It is also registered with Caritas Malta, the National Commission of Persons with Disability (KNPD) Malta and is a member of the Federation of Organisations for Persons with Disability (Malta). It has organised two National conferences on Epilepsy in 2001 and 2003, each attended by over 250 persons.



Housekeeping rules for EYiE of Horus

Travel

Arrival

Malta International Airport is in Gudja which is in the South of Malta, around 13 kms from Sliema. Flight details are enclosed as we have them for all participants. Please note that some of you will be arriving on the same flight so it might be a good idea to get a taxi together to the hotel (make yourself known to each other before).

White taxi stands are right outside the arrival lounge. Each taxi costs Lm8 per car from Gudja to Sliema so share as it will be cheaper. There is an official taxi booth so use that and agree on the price before you leave. Pay the fare at the taxi ticket booth in the arrivals lounge. You will receive a ticket showing the destination and fare paid. You hand the ticket to the driver at the end of your journey. Tell the taxi driver to take you the **Galaxy Hotel and Vacation Club Depiro Street Sliema SLM05**. It should take around 20 to 25 minutes to arrive.

Any complaints should be addressed to the Public Transport Authority, Tel: (00356) 21438475.

Departure

Later, when you are here, we shall be making arrangements for when you depart for taxi sharing too. Flight enquires may be made on Telephone (356) 21249600 or 21697800. Schedules are also available on the Internet at www.maltairport.com.

Reimbursement of expenses

May I stress that you have to keep ALL YOUR TRAVEL RECEIPTS AND TICKETS otherwise we will not be reimbursed and thus cannot refund you. You can appreciate that the EU only has given us 24 euros per day per person (including accommodation and food) so we have had to do miracles with such limited budgets.

Reimbursement of 70% of air ticket and other travel expenses will be done after you have returned and sent us the original air ticket stubs back with a copy of the invoice showing the price of the ticket (preferably in Euros). Bring your exact bank details with you so there are no delays.

Accommodation

1. Rooms have been allocated to you through the hotel management. Room allocations cannot be changed. Your costs will be covered by EYIE of Horus on a half board basis for 7 nights. Those staying extra nights will have to pay the difference directly to the hotel on departure at these rates:
single room : Lm18
double room : Lm12.50 per person
triple apartment : Lm12 per person
2. Please respect your room mates requests and avoid loud noise, or being messy in the room.
3. Please note that **NO SMOKING** is allowed in any of the hotel rooms or in any of the conference rooms. There are smoking areas e.g. bar, near pool, lobby where you may smoke
4. Meals at the hotel as per attached programme are covered **BUT ALL the DRINKS are extra**. So each time you order a drink in the hotel restaurant during a meal (even water) you have to sign of it personally giving your room number and full name so you can settle the bill when you leave.
5. As we informed you, we shall be distributing bottles of water we have had donated. These may be used in the rooms and in the conference room but NOT in the restaurant. All other meals/food drinks you have outside the programme have to be settled personally, including any drinks/food present in the hotel mini bars in your room. Please note that generally tap water is safe to drink throughout the Maltese Islands, but it might taste chlorinated to you as it is made from reverse osmosis plants.
6. Please do not waste water. There are no rivers or lakes on Malta and it is very expensive.
7. Breakfast at the hotel is from 07.30 to 10.00, lunch 12.30 to 14.00 and dinner from 19.00 to 21.30. We have managed to obtain some sponsorship so nearly all the meals will be covered except for perhaps 3 occasions in the evening.
8. Transport on trips (including boat trip to Gozo) and museum entrances are also covered thanks to the Education Department and Heritage Malta but you have to pay for the airport transfers.

General information

Malta

Malta is the largest island in the Maltese archipelago, consisting of Malta, Gozo and Comino. The longest distance on the island, from the south-east to the north-west is some 27kms; its widest point, east to west, is 14.5kms. Malta has neither rivers nor mountains, but is characterised by a series of low, flat-topped hills with terraced fields on their slopes. Malta's coastline is well indented with harbours, bays, creeks, several sandy beaches and rocky coves.

Malta is the more urban and cosmopolitan of the islands. It has every amenity from modern residential and commercial areas to a vibrant nightlife and numerous leisure options. While the Grand Harbour area and a most of the central-eastern region are built up, the countryside to the North is rugged and sparsely populated. Valletta, is the capital of the Republic of Malta. Sliema is in what is known as the North Harbour area and is one of Malta's top residential and tourist stops. It is only 1 km from St Julians/ Paceville, the mecca of Malta's nightlife.

Time Difference

Malta is on Central European Time (CET), which is 1 hour ahead of GMT in winter and 2 hours ahead between the last Sunday in March and the last Sunday in October. Malta is 6 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time (EST) in winter and 7 hours ahead between the last Sunday in March and the last Sunday in October.

Currency, Credit Cards & Banks

The Maltese Pound (Lm) or Lira is divided into 100 cents. One Maltese lira is approximately equivalent to 2.3 euros or 1.58 sterling or 16 Danish Kroner or 21 Swedish Kroner. International bankcards are accepted and foreign currency is easily exchanged. Banks, Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) and exchange bureaux can be found all over the Islands. . Many hotels and larger shops and restaurants can exchange currency but the exchange rates offered by hotels, restaurants and shops are generally inferior to those available at banks. Most hotels and restaurants, as well as many shops, accept Access, American Express, Carte Blanche, Diners Club International, Mastercard and Visa. The closest bank to the Galaxy hotel is the Bank of Valletta at the top of Balluta Square.

Banks Opening times Summer Hours

Monday to Thursday (08.00 - 14.00) Friday (08.00 - 15.30) Saturday (08.15-12.30)

Exchange Bureaux

The Strand, Sliema Monday to Saturday (09.00- 14.00 & 15.00 - 19.00)

St. George's, Paceville Monday to Friday (10.00 - 15.00 p.m. & 16.30- 22.00)

Malta International Airport open 24 hours a day, daily

Health Issues

Malta has an excellent health service. Hospitals are modern and supported by a regional network of health centres. Travellers do not normally require certificates of vaccination or insulation to enter the Maltese Islands. It is advisable to take out a personal medical insurance policy. Malta has reciprocal health agreements with Australia and the United Kingdom. Nationals of these countries, visiting the Islands for no longer than one month, are entitled to free medical and hospital care in both Malta and Gozo. Visitors receiving special medical treatment should bring a medical prescription or a letter of introduction from their family doctor, in case they need to purchase particular medicines. The main Public Hospital in Malta is St. Luke's Hospital, St Luke's Road, G'Mangia.Tel: 21241251.

Emergency numbers are

191 Police

196 Ambulance

199 Fire Brigade

Pharmacies are found throughout the Islands and are open during normal shopping hours ie 09.00 to 13.00 and then 16.00 to 19.00. On Sundays, chemists open on a roster from 09.00 until 12.30 in Malta. Check the local Sunday newspapers for details of the roster. The closest pharmacies to the Galaxy Hotel are Samuel's Pharmacy in Depiro Street (round the corner to the main entrance) or Balluta Pharmacy in Balluta Square.

Electricity

The electrical supply is 240 volts, 50 hertz. The three-pin rectangular plug system is used, as in Britain. Adapters are very easy to find.

Shop Hours

Commercial centres and shops are usually easily accessible by public or private transport. Shops are normally open between 09.00 and 13.00 and between 16.00 and 19.00. Shops are normally closed on Sundays and Public Holidays. The main shopping areas are around the Ferries in Sliema (Plaza Shopping Centre – take any bus going to Valletta) and Valletta. Maltese prices vary depending on how much you want to spend.

In the area where you will be staying there is a large variety of prices e.g. a McDonalds Big Mac meal costs LM1.95, Pizza Hut gigantic pizza (3-4 persons sharing) LM5, coca-cola LM0.50-0.70, or posh restaurants that will cost around LM15 per head for a 3 course meal. Souvenirs also vary from LM1 to LM20. Then we have all the usual clothes shops e.g. M&S, BHS, Next, Dorothy Perkins, Zara, Benetton etc which are about the same prices as in UK or Italy.

Swimming & Sunbathing

The Maltese coastal waters are generally clean and safe for swimming as there are no tides. Some bays are exposed to north and north-easterly winds which do produce some strong undercurrents at times. The sea temperature averages around 22.8 degrees centigrade in summer.

The Maltese Archipelago lies virtually at the centre of the Mediterranean and has a latitude more southerly than that of northern Tunisia. You are therefore advised to take precautions to ensure you avoid over exposure to the sun. Even in winter it is advisable to wear a suitable factor sunscreen for your skin type. This is all the more important if you are out walking, or taking part in water sports. A sun hat of some sort is a must. If you are sunbathing, it is advisable to avoid the strongest sunlight between the hours of 11.00 and 15.00 in peak summer months.

Telecommunications & Internet

Local and international telephone calls can be made from hotel rooms at extra charge. Most hotels also offer fax and Internet access. Maltacom provides round the clock international telecommunication, telex, fax and Internet access at its offices in St. George's Bay, St. Julian's.

Coin and card operated telephone boxes can be found all over Malta and Gozo. New communication technologies are widely available. Local mobile phone companies (*go mobile* and *vodafone*) have agreements with the major international operators. Nevertheless, it is recommended that you ask your operator for details before you leave your country of origin. There is also an internet room at the Galaxy hotel (at extra cost) and there are also several Internet Cafés in the Sliema and St Julians Areas.

Useful Telephone Numbers

00	International Code
356	Direct Dialling Code (Malta)
1182	Directory Enquiries
1152	Overseas Operator
195	Time Check

Religion & Worship

Most Maltese are Catholic, but other religious denominations are also represented. There are small Anglican, Church of Scotland, Greek Orthodox, Jewish, Methodists and Muslim communities. Church services held by the various Denominations.

Travelling around and Buses

In Malta, driving is on the right (like the British system) SO BE CAREFUL WHEN CROSSING THE ROAD. Public transport is efficient and reasonably priced. The main bus terminus in Malta is in Valletta, just outside the City Gate. Malta buses are orange and show the route number on the front. Malta bus routes leave from and go to Valletta. All buses to Valletta pass through its suburb town, Floriana. In towns and villages, the bus terminus is generally found on or near the main square. From here, buses go to practically every corner of the Island. The average length of a bus trip in Malta is 20 to 30 minutes: the longest trip takes 50 minutes.

The closest bus stops to the Galaxy Hotel are by the Our Lady of Carmel Parish Church in St Julians (near Balluta Square). Most frequent numbers are 62 and 67. Buses cost 15 cents. Have exact change ready because drivers complain. Buses travelling in direction to Valletta are the bus stop opposite the church. (Some buses stop in Sliema so check with the driver first). Bus stop on the pavement by the side of the church go to the north of the island i.e. St Julians, St Paul's Bay, Mellieha bay. For more details visit the Public Transport Authority website www.atp.com.mt.

