

PRESS RELEASE

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First LGBT+ Tourism Summit to take place in Malta

International experts will discuss market developments, new marketing strategies and the economic prospects for the LGBT travel segment – The Malta Tourism Authority is collaborating with ITB Berlin, the host of the first LGBT+ Tourism Summit from 22 to 23 November 2018

Berlin, 12 November 2018 – Excellent prospects for the travel industry: from 22 to 23 November 2018 in Malta the first LGBT+ Tourism Summit will discuss the opportunities and challenges offered by gay and lesbian travel. International experts will present the latest survey findings, information on current LGBT online marketing trends, illustrate how prospects for business in LGBT+ tourism are developing, and highlight examples of best practices. Discussion rounds will also examine which factors play an important role in the LGBT tourism market.

Ahead of the LGBT+ Tourism Summit Rika Jean-François, CSR officer at ITB Berlin, explained how the market has shifted: "With the LGBT+ community becoming more visible and gaining broader public acceptance, interest in the LGBT+ travel market has increased. LGBT travel has become one of the industry's fastest-growing markets worldwide and with an estimated 23 million LGBT customers Europe is an extremely important source market."

On 22 November the Maltese tourism minister Dr. Konrad Mizzi will kick off the LGBT+ Tourism Summit with a press conference, followed by a reception at the Palace Hotel. Prime Minister of Malta Dr. Joseph Muscat will officially open the conference on 23 November. Opening the agenda, Carlo Micallef, deputy CEO and marketing head of the Malta Tourism Authority, will introduce the Mediterranean island as an ideal destination for LGBT tourists. Afterwards, Dr. Stephan Gellrich, an executive coach and senior expert at Accenture Consulting, will highlight the economic importance of this market.

Peter Jordan of GenCTraveller, Amsterdam, will provide a comprehensive overview of the LGBT tourism market with data from the latest LGBT surveys. In his role as a tourism analyst he has authored the global report on LGBT tourism for the World Tourism Organization of the United Nations (UNWTO) together with the IGLTA, as well as the current manual on LGBT travel in Europe for the European Travel Commission (ETC). Tom Roth, president of Community Marketing & Insights, San Francisco, and an LGBT research partner of ITB Berlin, will present tourism research findings, case studies and best practices. Jaume Vidal of Visit Barcelona will highlight how marketing LGBT destinations can function successfully. Afterwards, representing IGLTA USA, LoAnn Halden will speak about the work of this leading LGBT travel association. A panel discussion chaired by Tom Roth will follow, at which Peter Jordan, Jaume Vidal, LoAnn Halden and Rika Jean-François will answer questions from the audience about which factors are important for destinations like Malta in order to successfully conquer the LGBT tourism market.

The second part of the conference will deal mainly with marketing aspects. Among the speakers will be Rika Jean-François and Thomas Bömkes, the two representatives responsible for the LGBT Travel segment at ITB Berlin, who will talk about the importance of the segment's presence at the World's Leading Travel Trade Show. Matt Skallerud of Pink Banana Media, New York, will have information and valuable tips for marketing LGBT travel online in 2019. Two other examples of best practices will highlight successful hotel and event marketing business models. Philip Ibrahim of Accor Germany, will talk about the Pink Pillow marketing initiative of Visit Berlin, and Frédéric Boutry of Visit Brussels will underline how important culture, sport and party events are for the LGBT segment. Taking Malta as an example, the



Official Partner Country ITB Berlin 2019



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conference will conclude with Philip Ibrahim, Frédéric Boutry and Rika Jean-François discussing which criteria play an important role for LGBT+ customers' travel choices. At the subsequent networking session experts and conference attendees will have ample opportunity to discuss topics in depth and establish new contacts.

Malta is Europe's friendliest destination for LGBT travellers

With its vibrant LGBT scene, Malta ranks among Europe's friendliest destinations for LGBT travellers. One reason is that in recent years LGBT issues have gained a high level of cultural acceptance in all parts of society. Another positive aspect is the law amendments recently passed by the Maltese government. This year, Malta once again tops the rankings of the ILGA Europe Rainbow Map and Index for 2018, which examines the human rights situation of LGBT people in 49 countries throughout Europe.

With an overall rating of 91 per cent, Malta has achieved the highest standards in LGBT rights for the third year running and also widened the gap on other European countries. It is way ahead of Belgium, in second place with 79 per cent, and Norway, which is in third with 78 per cent.

The first LGBT+ Tourism Summit, which is due to take place from 22 to 23 November 2018, is supported by the Malta Tourism Authority, ITB Berlin and the IGLTA.

LGBT travel at ITB Berlin: www.itb-berlin.com/LGBT.

About ITB Berlin and the ITB Berlin Convention

ITB Berlin 2019 will be taking place from Wednesday, 6 to Sunday, 10 March, and from Wednesday to Friday will be open to trade visitors only. ITB Berlin is the World's Leading Travel Trade Show. In 2018 a total of 10,000 companies and organisations from 186 countries exhibited their products and services to around 170,000 visitors, including 110,000 trade visitors. Parallel with the show the ITB Berlin Convention, the largest event of its kind, will be held from Wednesday, 6 to Saturday, 9 March 2019. Admission to the ITB Berlin Convention is free for trade visitors and exhibitors. For more information please visit www.itb-berlin.com, www.itb-convention.com and the [ITB Social Media Newsroom](#).

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