

# Epilogue

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It is a great honour to me and the company which I represent to have played an important role in staging the seminar on Tourism in Gozo, during which the papers contained in this book were presented.

The Gozo seminar was the first major activity that Löwenbräu has organised with organisations in the public sector. We sincerely hope that our collaboration with the University of Malta and the Ministry for Gozo will promote scholarship and practical improvements in our society.

This effort is only the beginning of much wider cooperation in the future. In fact we intend to make this seminar an annual event. Every year, a topic of general interest will be chosen, and scholars, practitioners and others interested in the subject will be invited to participate.

This is not just a public relations exercise but it is the Company's belief that private business should have a social role. This participation by Löwenbräu Malta Ltd reflects the Company's commitment to contribute to the well-being and further development of the community of which we form part.

This year we have chosen tourism as the subject of the seminar, because this sector is a very important one in the economy of the Maltese islands. Last year more than one million visitors came to our shores. Earnings from tourism form a large proportion of the country's foreign exchange earnings from trade. Tourism also creates considerable employment in Malta and Gozo.

Parallel with tourism development, the country's infrastructure has

been improved and upgraded. This is an on-going process which is of prime importance for the provision of a good quality tourism product. Inevitably, this development has had a major impact on the environment, which is an area that has to be considered when analysing the effect of tourism on a particular country.

Another aspect of tourism which we need to look into is its impact on our social and cultural heritage.

The idea of the organisers in holding this seminar was to bring together scholars, policy makers, managers and others involved in the tourism sector, to share ideas and to inform themselves on the economic, environmental, social and cultural aspects of tourism in Gozo. We strongly believe that this cross-fertilisation of ideas is beneficial to the tourism sector itself and to the people who operate in it.

I would like to thank the Minister for Gozo, the Hon. Dr. Anton Tabone and Professor Lino Briguglio of the Gozo Centre of the University of Malta, for their continued backing and for their enthusiasm in making the seminar possible, and in producing this book with the proceedings of the seminar.

I hope that the papers included in this book do not only make interesting reading to scholars and practitioners involved in tourism but also contribute to the promotion of sustainable tourism.