



## Malta report for FEG 2019

On February 20<sup>th</sup> of this year we held our AGM in which a new council was elected, for the sake of continuity several members were re-elected and some were allocated new tasks.

During the winter period a session of CPD was organised together with the Tourism Authority, attendance is a condition for the renewal of the license.

A Spaniard who had been reported several times to the authorities for organising free tours without being licensed as a guide in Malta, with the help of a clever lawyer managed to get a local license based on him having obtained a guide's license in Spain. The aftermath of it all resulted in the establishment of a regular pattern of meetings between MTA, ITS and MUTG where all topics linked to the training and licensing of guides are discussed. MUTG also obtained for the first time in its 39-year history observer status at examinations. Standards were agreed of examination of candidates.

In March ITS organised a 2-day international seminar where a good number of issues were discussed involving tour guiding, several members actively participated and a session of the seminar was moderated by our President.

As an increased number of illegal guides was perceived, we insisted regularly with the enforcement authority to step up patrols and reported a good number of infringements with photo evidence. However due to a new head and ongoing reorganisation and recruitment we noticed very little effect on the ground, after several months of insisting on personal meetings we were finally received in September. It resulted in a much more evident presence of patrols so much that now guides are complaining that they are stopped so frequently. Unfortunately, with reference to privacy rules, the authority does not provide any information on catch rates or successful prosecutions.

A number of educational and social activities for our members were organised and more are planned for the near future. A milestone achieved is the first course at Malta University for guides on Food Tourism, which will also qualify for credits of the future Masters level course in tourist guiding currently being prepared.

Currently we are working with MTA and ITS on identifying problem areas of language knowledge to tailor language courses for guides to fill the gaps and also to prevent the occurrence of illegal guiding by group leaders of tourists from those areas with the excuse that there are no guides.

For next year, our 40<sup>th</sup> year, we have planned seminars for members to educate themselves in the field of marketing in view of imminent law changes, and to discuss the various aspects of health and safety of tourist guides/guiding.