



**HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR**  
**Office of the Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs,**  
**Public Transport and the Port**  
**Suite 631, Europort**  
**Gibraltar**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **MICE FORUM: GIB EXPLORES POTENTIAL AS HIGH QUALITY TOURIST DESTINATION**

Gibraltar's potential as a leading MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions) destination in Europe was highlighted this week during a 'Meet and Talk Forum' at Mackintosh Hall for a group of employees from local transport operators, hotels, Gibraltar Tourist Board and the Finance Centre.

MICE is an emerging type of specialised excellent-quality services tourism which requires meticulous professional planning and coordination by the suppliers and buyers of such services. It is aimed at professional associations, trade organisations and other special interest groups.

Successful MICE locations are considered "higher category destinations" within the global tourist industry.

During the workshop, sector experts Gibraltarian Mercedes Cid de la Paz who runs the 'Meet and Talk Forum' and US businesswoman Rachelle Jailer Valladares, lectured on valuable practical and theoretical information about the various aspects that need to be covered to ensure an effective MICE strategy.

Apart from the financial benefits it can yield, as it supplements conventional tourism spending, becoming a recognized venue for MICE events can positively enhance the international image of territories, for instance Monaco and Malta, which have built up a solid reputation in the sector.

The course dealt with many detailed technical features of MICE methodology including the attitude to marketing that needs to be considered in the organisation of these events.

The notion of getting to know a client's requirements and following up initial contacts, the correct organisation of familiarization visits, venue selections and the importance of fluid communications from an initial approach to when an event actually takes place, were strongly emphasized. Both Mercedes and Rachelle noted that the practical application of a common sense approach to business relations, were also of "massive importance."

Gibraltar has many strengths in this field and there is no reason why it cannot establish itself as a perfect venue to provide these services to small to mid-size meetings and incentive groups, Rachelle declared. 'Incentives' is the term used for employee rewards by a company or institution for targets met or exceeded, or a job well done.

They also stressed that while it is advantageous for Gibraltar to participate at the World Travel Market and FITUR, there should be an active presence at international MICE shows such as EIBTM, Meetings and IMEX, stressing that it is a wholly separate strand of tourism to the leisure industry.

"Gibraltar has world class stand-alone venues and excellent food. All it needs to do is get into the mind-set of MICE, understand that this sector is different to the leisure and travel industry, and come together as a team to deliver the product," they said.

"MICE is about group effort; Monaco and Malta have been very successful and Gibraltar can very well compete. The venues are there, the great restaurants, cleanliness has vastly improved and hotel upgrading is also important."

Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port Neil Costa, at whose initiative these series of lectures have been organised, welcomed the positive effects the 'Meet and Talk Forum' was having on industry professionals.

Mr Costa said: "The GSLP/Liberal Government is constantly striving to improve the tourist product and open up new revenue streams with new initiatives to complement and enhance the very solid tourist offer which Gibraltar already offers.

"It gives me great personal satisfaction to see how successful and well received these conferences are proving to be. We want to place Gibraltar on the map as a MICE destination and will continue to support the tourist sector in its expansion of quality services and as a key area of our economy."