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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Gibraltar to get seven calls by new Royal Caribbean megaship**

Gibraltar Port will get a big boost to its cruise figures next year. Royal Caribbean International (RCI) has announced that its newest ship ANTHEM OF THE SEAS will call at Gibraltar seven times in 2015 during its inaugural season which sees it operating a series of Mediterranean cruises from Southampton. She will become the largest cruise ship ever to call here and while the smaller QUEEN MARY 2 has to anchor in the Bay because of her deep draft, ANTHEM will be able to dock alongside the Western Arm.

Currently under construction in Germany, ANTHEM is the second of two sisters, the first of which QUANTUM OF THE SEAS enters service this autumn. Both ships will become the third and fourth largest cruise ships in the world after RCI's ALLURE OF THE SEAS and OASIS OF THE SEAS. Each has a length of 348m, a beam of 41m and can carry a total of 4,905 passengers.

The Chief Minister, Hon Fabian Picardo MP, said "I am thrilled that Royal Caribbean has demonstrated its confidence in what Gibraltar has to offer as a cruise port and that it is able to provide the necessary infrastructure to handle such a large vessel. ANTHEM OF THE SEAS alone will bring over 34,000 passengers to Gibraltar, which will be a significant boost to our tourism industry." He further added that the Government was actively considering a number of options to increase the berthing capabilities of the Port to handle more large ships simultaneously.

Minister of Tourism and for the Port, Hon Neil Costa MP has also welcomed the news. "This news sends out a very strong signal to the cruise industry, if indeed one was needed, that Gibraltar is a serious player, able to efficiently handle big ships. Moving 5,000 passengers around Gibraltar's tourist sites and shopping centre will have to be carefully co-ordinated by local ground handlers".

ANTHEM OF THE SEAS is scheduled to call on 9 May, 23 June, 7 July, 21 July, 4 August, 18 August and 4 September 2015.