

PRESS RELEASE

St. Maarten, 13.09.2015

Seatrade Europe: Port St. Maarten Ranked 5th in the World as a Cruise Transit Port

September 13, 2015 – It was revealed at Seatrade Europe Cruise & River Convention, that Port St. Maarten is ranked number five (5) in the World as a Cruise Transit Port. In 2014, the country’s national port received 2,001.996 cruise passengers for the first time ever. 2014 also marked 50 years St. Maarten as a cruise destination under the theme “Reinventing Cruise St. Maarten.

A delegation from Port St. Maarten headed by Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mark Mingo, returned over the weekend from Hamburg, Germany, where they attended the aforementioned conference.

Port St. Maarten Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mark Mingo, on Sunday announced that St. Maarten as a cruise destination is leading, and as part of the theme “Reinventing Cruise St. Maarten,” the port will continue to strategically invest and work with local stakeholders and cruise partners to keep the destination in this leading position.

“It is very important that we continue to invest in the development of the destination and the product. Port St. Maarten in the past years has invested heavily into infrastructure, but more product development is needed as well as maintenance of existing buildings that provide services and products to locals and visitors to enhance the total experience. A place looking rundown is not attractive and will play into the cruise passengers surveys which determines cruise line itineraries.

“In order to maintain our ranking of 5th in the world as a cruise transit port, continued investments are required in various areas including new tours. By making these necessary investments, we can achieve the position of 1st in the world as a cruise transit port. Port St. Maarten also needs to continue to diversify its revenue base. Offering fueling services is one area, and this is already being pursued by ports in Europe such as Hamburg. In order to increase shareholder return and investments, we have to look into the possibilities and at developments. Cruise lines are building vessels that are more environmentally friendly and will be using dual fuels such as LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas). Port St. Maarten will continue to execute its 2019 Strategic Business Plan that would further enhance internal processes for a more effective operations. This is part and parcel of our audit umbrella and we will do this in conjunction with stakeholders.

“There are destinations within the Region and across the world that Port St. Maarten and the country overall has to compete with on a daily basis, and therefore we need to be at the top of our game to maintain what we have achieved over the years with the help and diligence of all stakeholders and partners.

“More partnering and alignment with stakeholder plans is part of moving forward in 2016 and beyond. We have to continue to look ahead and plan strategically. The establishment of the St. Maarten Tourism Authority is key. We need to synchronize our approach as stakeholders where tourism product and development is concerned. A right balance has to be found between cruise and stay-over, as repeat cruise visitors have gone up or more than doubled. These are passengers who keep coming back, but may stay onboard the vessel, hence why we need to diversify the shopping product mix and experience by offering new tours which also includes culture/heritage.

“The contribution of crew members is also a huge contributor to the country’s gross domestic product, and we must not forget them. In October the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association will present their new report on the economic impact of cruise on destinations.

“During the conference we learnt a lot from industry experts and editors about the opening up of Cuba, and the overall message was ‘partnering with Cuba’ is a must when looking at joint promotions and product development. Cuba is being marketed as part of the Caribbean, but promotes Cuba. A similar approach is needed, destination St. Maarten needs to re-vamp and re-invent its approach and a tourism authority is critical at this juncture in our national development where synchronization of marketing processes are required,” Port St. Maarten CEO Mark Mingo concluded.

Seatrade Europe brought together industry decision makers and insiders to discuss and set new trends, and network.

The world’s fastest growing source market to support it, the cruise industry in Europe has taken its place in the mainstream of the leisure sector. Industry peers and experts at Seatrade Europe debated the opportunities and challenges that go with the aforementioned status during the two and half days of high-level conference, covering a broad spectrum of topics from September 9-11.

In Europe, the market has grown by an impressive 44 per cent since 2008 where a total of 6.4 million guests from Europe went on board in European ports in 2014. The sales volume was 40.2 billion Euros, and the number of jobs have increased to 349,000.

Seatrade Europe brought together approximately 250 exhibitors from 50 nations with their products, services and innovations.



For further questions, please contact: comments@portofstmaarten.com