

PRESS RELEASE

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Port St. Maarten becomes Diamond Member of CLIA at Seatrade Europe Cruise Conference

September 11, 2015 – Port St. Maarten became a Diamond member of Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) while at Seatrade Europe Cruise & River Cruise Convention in Hamburg, Germany. The conference started on Wednesday.

Port St. Maarten Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mark Mingo, on Friday from Hamburg, said he would like to thank CLIA President Cindy D’Aoust for accepting Port St. Maarten into the organization.

CLIA was established in 1975, and is the world’s largest cruise industry trade association, providing a unified voice and leading authority of the global cruise community.

The association supports policies and practices that foster a safe, secure, healthy and sustainable cruise ship environment and is dedicated to promote the cruise travel experience.

The world’s largest cruise sector association represents the interests of 60+ member cruise lines that represent more than 90 per cent of the global cruise capacity and serve more than 22 million passengers; 275 executive partners; and 13,500 global travel agency members that include the largest agencies, hosts, franchises and consortia and represent more than 50,000 individual travel agents.

“Port of St. Maarten together with CLIA has launched its new Re-inventing programme. It is not just a sticker of re-branding, however a strategic approach to aggressively conquer market share working with CLIA’s over 13,000 global travel agency members, and numbers talk.

“Cruise lines executives and partners also discussed the situation with Cuba opening up. They don’t really have a clue on what is happening there. It is simple, Cuba is coming up and we better be prepared and step up our own game. There is a lot of talk, but we need innovative solutions to keep us ahead.

“At the end of the day it is inevitable and St. Maarten/St. Martin, has to step their game up collectively with a strategy to combat the change while enhancing our inland experience. We are strong advocates in engaging in solutions to strengthen our market position together, however we must pool together to develop new products on the island and not cannibalized the current business environment.

“After speaking with European stakeholders it was advisable that St. Maarten must be part of the Cuba development. The Dutch Ambassador of Cuba has approached Port St. Maarten with respect to advice on Cuban development in regards to possible collaborations which may give a strategic advantage comparing to the other Caribbean islands.” CEO Port St. Maarten Mark Mingo disclosed.

Mingo added that St. Maarten has underestimated Europe. “Reality check, stop wasting resources on declining and risk markets, remember the Brazilian currency has devalued by half, and cruise lines are pulling out in seek of emerging markets with new things to do, and we as a country must tap into this. Our strategic theme for the 21st annual FCCA conference was Reinventing cruise St. Maarten and it is what we have to do to maintain the current market share.

“Cruise destinations will have to take an aggressive approach if they want to survive an ever-changing industry, but I am very upbeat. Virgin Cruises represented by Richard Branson at the conference is preparing a new approach. St. Maarten understands this new approach however as destination we must do more. As discussed during state of the industry the sustainable success is dependent on private sector participation which is at an all-time low. Criticism is easy but put your money where your mouth is, because in the end we all have something to lose,” CEO Mingo concluded.

Seatrade Europe brings together 250 exhibitors from 50 nations with their products, services and innovations, and runs from 9 to 11 September.



PHOTO CUTLINE: Port St. Maarten CEO Mark Mingo (left) meeting with cruise line executives from Pullmantur Cruises discussing opportunities and business for St. Maarten.

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