THE GOZO BUSINESS CHAMBER

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Press Release: The Gozo Business Chamber (GBC) notes the importance of the fast ferry service for Gozo

The Gozo Business Chamber would like to reiterate the importance of the introduction of a fast ferry service for Gozo. Though the Chamber maintains that the permanent link between Gozo and Malta remains the best option, the Chamber has always highlighted that Gozo should be connected through all the best options possible. Obviously this requires a wider vision and strategy for transport between the two islands, including the need to plan on the infrastructural limitations currently posed by the Mġarr harbour.

The fast ferry was part of the electoral manifesto of the present Government in 2017 whereby it was highlighted that with the introduction of this service people would travel between Gozo and the Grand Harbour in Valletta in less than forty five minutes. The target of this service was to offer a more comfortable service between the two islands for those who travel frequently between Gozo and Valletta, while reducing traffic significantly between the two islands (Partit Laburista, *L-Aqwa Żmien ta' Pajjiżna. Manifest Elettorali 2017*, p.56). The proposed hop on hop off conventional ferry service as indicated in the Request for Proposals document does not address this need.

To this end the Chamber calls for the Government to review its decision on the fast ferry service between the two islands. This was a service which was already offered in the past but which had been terminated. The fast ferry service would ensure futher connectivity and peace of mind to both commuters and other persons travelling between the two islands. A conventional ferry service would not address these needs.

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Stqarrija: Il-Kamra tan-Negozju għal Għawdex tinnota l-importanza ta' *fast ferry service* għal Għawdex

Il-Kamra tan-Negozju għal-Għawdex tixtieq terġa' ttenni l-importanza ta' servizz ta' *fast ferry* għal Għawdex. Għalkemm il-Kamra issostni li l-*permanent link* bejn iż-żewġ gżejjer tibqa' l-aħjar opzjoni, il-Kamra dejjem enfasizzat li Għawdex għandu jkun konness bl-aħjar mod possibli. Ovvjament dan jirrikjedi viżjoni wiesa' u strateġja għat-trasport bejn iż-żewġ gżejjer, inkluż il-bżonn ta' pjan li jindirizza l-limitazzjonijiet infrastrutturali tal-port tal-Imġarr.

Il-*fast ferry* kien parti mill-manifest elettorali tal-Gvern preżenti fl-2017 meta kien indikat li l-proġett tal-*fast ferry* bejn Għawdex u l-Belt għandu jkun mezz kif persuni jivvjaġġaw f'inqas minn 45 minuta bejn iż-żewġ gżejjer. Il-mira ta' dan is-servizz kien li joffri iktar kumdita għal dawk li jivvjaġġaw b'mod frekwenti bejn Għawdex u l-Belt Valletta, filwaqt li jnaqqas b'mod sinifikanti t-traffiku bejn iż-żewġ gżejjer (Partit Laburista, (Partit Laburista, *L-Aqwa Żmien ta' Pajjiżna. Manifest Elettorali 2017*, p.56) . Is-servizz hekk kif propost fid-dokument tar-*Request for Proposals*, jiġifieri ta' servizz konvenzjonali ta' trasport marittimu bejn iż-żewġ gżejjer ma jindirizzax dan il-bżonn.

Għal dan il-għan il-Kamra issejjaħ lil Gvern biex jirrevedi d-deċisjoni tiegħu fuq il-*fast ferry* bejn iż-żewġ gżejjer. Dan kien diġa servizz li kien offrut fil-passat imma li kien ġie terminat. Is-servizz tal-*fast ferry* jiżgura iktar konnettivita u serħan il-moħħ għal dawk li jivvjaġġaw bejn iż-żewġ gżejjer. Servizz konvenzjonali ta' trasport marittimu ma jindirizzax dawn il-bżonnijiet.