

Bahrain joins Cruise Arabia Alliance

Announcement cements regional commitment to cruise industry in the GCC

DOHA, QATAR, December 8, 2015 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In a further show of regional collaboration, Bahrain became the latest country to confirm its commitment to the Cruise Arabia Alliance, which now has membership from Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Qatar and Oman. The 6-member alliance encourages its members to share best practices and ensure a region-wide level

of service and standards offered to both the cruise lines and their passengers.

The news was shared with delegates on the second day of the Seatrade Middle East Cruise Forum, which was held in Doha, Qatar from 7-8 December 2015 and hosted by Qatar Tourism Authority (QTA). The announcement came at a timely point when the Kingdom of Bahrain also announced it would be complementing the 2015/2106 cruise season with 68,000 passengers and 32 calls from various prestigious cruise lines.

“

QTA is committed to providing at least 6,000 rooms on cruise ships for the 2022 FIFA World Cup competition
*Mr Hassan Al Ibrahim, QTA
Tourism Chief*

The Fourm's Host, Qatar Tourism Authority, also had positive news to share with an announcement that Qatar is expecting a three-fold increase in passengers next season. 30 cruise ships bringing up to 50,000 passengers will call in Doha between October 2016 and April 2017 - up from the eight

calls scheduled this season.

Speaking to delegates, Mr Hassan Al Ibrahim, QTA's Chief Tourism Development Officer, said: "Qatar places huge importance on the cruise industry, both to diversify the tourism sector and Qatar's overall economy. There are long-term plans to upgrade the country's infrastructure, all of which will enable us to tap into the potential of cruise tourism by developing Qatar's ports.

"We are building our infrastructure and human capital; we have a new destination brand that consolidates the industry's efforts to attract more visitors; and, we are diversifying and enhancing the products and services across the entire industry.

"For our part, QTA is working with partners across the public and private sectors, to plan, regulate, develop and promote the tourism sector, with the aim of achieving growth that is both exponential and sustainable."

He added: "QTA is committed to providing at least 6,000 rooms on cruise ships for the 2022 FIFA World Cup competition - in the redeveloped Doha Port – reinforcing cruise tourism as one of our most



exciting and enduring legacies.”

The Forum confirmed that, within less than a decade, the Arabian Gulf has become the third most popular winter cruising destination with one million cruise passenger visits expected in GCC countries during the 2015-2016 season.

Chris Hayman, Chairman of Seatrade, organisers of the Forum, said: “Over the two days of the Forum, we have repeatedly heard from tourism and ports authorities across the region that the cruise industry has been identified as a crucial area for growth in the coming years and that many see this sector as an engine for sustainable development of their economies, and as an important pillar that supports efforts to limit dependence on natural energy resources as a driver of GDP.”

To achieve this, Mr Hayman highlighted the significance of the Cruise Arabia alliance which is committed to its members working together with the common goal of growing cruise tourism and tackling the challenges faced, whilst taking advantage of the opportunities that will arise in the coming years.

Amongst the challenges discussed is the importance of each destination to create shore excursions that are diverse and offer unique onshore opportunities for cruise line passengers. The question of obtaining visas was also flagged as a challenge but was felt that each destination was developing wider flexibility and this had been well addressed since the last Forum in 2015. Security was also highlighted as a potential challenge as the perception of passengers who have not been to the region was influenced by some negative international media coverage. However, passengers who have visited and seen that the Arabian Gulf is a safe area with tight security can be ambassadors in promoting the region.

Attending cruise line executives applauded the exceptional progress that has been made to date, highlighting the opportunities represented in the significant growth of the ports that have been built or are at planning stage. The cruise lines were also keen to emphasise the significance of the Cruise Arabia alliance and the communications between destinations and key stakeholders.

About Qatar Tourism Authority

As the Qatari government’s tourism planning and promotion arm, Qatar Tourism Authority (QTA) works in partnership with stakeholders to plan, regulate and promote the development of a sustainable and mature tourism sector that contributes to Qatar’s future and positions the country as a leading tourism destination.

Chaired by H.E. Mr. Issa Bin Mohammed Al Mohannadi, QTA works on showcasing all that Qatar has to offer, reinforcing the country’s position on the world tourism map as a premium destination for authentic experiences, business facilitation, and family-focused recreation.

www.qatartourism.gov.qa

@Qtourism

About Seatrade Middle East Cruise Forum

Seatrade Middle East Cruise Forum forms part of the series of global Seatrade events, websites and publications that covers every aspect of the cruise and maritime industries, bringing together key people to encourage innovation and to produce powerful learning, networking and promotional platforms. Founded in 1970, Seatrade was acquired recently in 2014 by UBM, the world's second largest media and event organiser.

Seatrade

Emma Howell

+44 1206 545121 Ext. 252

ehowell@seatrade-global.com

Duty Officer
QTA Press Office
+974 33180096
email us here

This press release can be viewed online at: <http://www.einpresswire.com>

Disclaimer: If you have any questions regarding information in this press release please contact the company listed in the press release. Please do not contact EIN Presswire. We will be unable to assist you with your inquiry. EIN Presswire disclaims any content contained in these releases.

© 1995-2015 IPD Group, Inc. All Right Reserved.