

Memorandum for the Cabinet
by the Hon. the Prime Minister
and the Minister of Commonwealth and Foreign Affairs

Increase in facilities for movement of tourists
between Italy and Malta

Replacement of passports by identity cards for citizens of Italy travelling to Malta.

The Italian Embassy is seeking to facilitate the movement between Italy and Malta of citizens of the two countries. The Embassy has particularly in mind the replacement of passports by identity cards for tourists entering either country for a stay not exceeding three months.

2. Similar arrangements are in existence between member States of the Council of Europe and the Italian identity card is accepted by 16 other members of the Council of Europe including the United Kingdom.

3. From the point of view of promoting tourism, the proposal has much to commend it and is supported by the Chairman of the Malta Government Tourist Board. Easier formalities will undoubtedly make for an increase in the number of Italian tourists visiting Malta as it is much easier and cheaper for Italian citizens to obtain a "Carta d'Identita'" than it is to obtain a passport. With the increase in prosperity in Italy, the Italians are becoming more inclined to travel abroad. A specimen of the Italian "Carta d'Identita'" is with the Secretary to Cabinet.

4. Some misgivings about relaxing the present conditions of entry into Malta have been expressed by the Commissioner of Police. He fears that as an identity card is easier to obtain than a passport, there might be an increase in the number of Italians coming to Malta other than as bona fide tourists to "compete with Maltese citizens in various spheres even without breaking the Law". The Commissioner feels that if matters are made too easy for Italian citizens, "the complaints from Maltese citizens who consider such visits detrimental to them are likely to become such as to embarrass the Government".

5. This objection, although valid, is expected to be more than offset by the increase in the numbers of bona fide visitors. A person who is not a bona fide tourist and who intends to come here for purposes other than a mere visit is not likely to be dissuaded from carrying out his plan simply because he has to go to more expense and inconvenience to take out a passport. Moreover, the main object of the negotiations pending with the Italian Government on the "traghetto" is to increase tourism to Malta. Travel on such easier facilities would increase

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further the expected influx and would have a bearing on the friendly relations between the two countries.

6. The introduction of such travel facilities is usually on a reciprocal basis. It is not considered necessary or even desirable to introduce the system of identity cards in Malta. This Government would, however, request that Maltese citizens be allowed to enter Italy on a passport, valid or expired within the last five years as is done in the case of nationals of Austria, Belgium, France, Luxembourg and Netherlands entering Italy.

7. Hon. Ministers may wish to agree that a favourable reply should be given to the proposal. To recapitulate this would allow Italian citizens to enter Malta on the strength of a valid identity card, in lieu of a passport for a stay of up to three months. Maltese citizens would be allowed to enter Italy on a passport, valid or expired in the last five years for visits of not more than three months' duration. Valid passports and visas would continue to be required for visits of more than three months' duration and for entering for the purpose of gainful activity.

21st April, 1965.