

My name is Dr. John Ebejer. I am Senior lecturer in the Department of Tourism Management at the University of Malta. I regret that I am unable to be with you at this important meeting. I am sending this short presentation as an introduction of our Department.



The fortified city of Valletta located at the upper end of the peninsula that separates the Grand Harbour and Marsamxett Harbour.

Malta is the smallest member state of the EU with a population of half a million.

It was governed by the Knights of St. John for two and half centuries (1530 – 1798).

Because of its strategic position at the centre of the Mediterranean, Malta played a vital role in the defence of the southern flank of Christian Europe against the Ottoman threat. The Great Siege of 1565 was the culmination of the struggle between the two powers in the Mediterranean.

All images in this presentation are of Valletta's fortifications and urban spaces.



Presentation of the Department of Tourism Management at the University of Malta

The Knights of St. John left a rich legacy of fortifications. The most notable is the fortified town of Valletta, the capital of Malta. Also notable are Fort St. Elmo in Valletta, Fort St. Angelo in Birgu and the Cottonera fortifications on the south side of the Grand Harbour.

Mdina and the Citadel in Gozo are medieval hilltop towns. These were already in existence prior to the arrival of the Knights in Malta in 1530.

Malta was occupied by the British until 1964 when Malta gained its independence.

The British colonial powers also left a legacy of military buildings and fortifications. In the latter case it was mostly extensions and adaptations of the fortifications that were built by the Knights of St. John.



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The University of Malta saw its beginnings way back in 1769 with a campus in Valletta. In the late 1960s a new campus was built at Msida which is now the University's main campus.

The University of Malta is composed of fourteen faculties and various interdisciplinary institutes and centres. Well over 3,500 students graduate in various disciplines annually. The language of instruction is English.

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The Department of Tourism Management signed the FORTE CULTURA membership application in February 2025. This is a relatively small but very active department in the Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy of the University of Malta.

Malta's urban heritage is a vital part of Malta's tourism product and therefore it is inevitable the Department has a keen interest in military heritage.

The Department is eager to develop strong cooperation with FORTE CULTURA for the benefit of both sides.

We hope to host a FORTE CULTURA symposium in September 2026.



The Department has very good relations with the Malta Tourism Authority and Heritage Malta. The latter is a national agency that has the responsibility of several visitor attractions including the various fortified heritage sites. The Department hopes to further develop these relationships to achieve better value for tourism from Malta's military heritage. Apart from myself, there are others in the Department with an interest in military heritage, most notably the Head of Department Dr. Noel Buttigieg.

Some background about myself. Before becoming a full-time academic, I worked professionally as an urban planner and project coordinator for twenty years. My most notable project was the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of Fort St. Elmo.

Amongst my many publications, I also wrote several articles about the interrelationship between tourism and fortified heritage in Malta.

My more important writings are available at my website www.johnebejer.com .



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Fort St. Elmo, Valletta

