

## **Signing Ceremony for the Share Sale Agreement in Tug Malta Ltd (MIIT)**

The acquisition of Tug Malta will provide the Rimorchiatori Group with an excellent opportunity to come back to a market that we had abandoned several years ago. This was said by Giovanni Delle Piane, President of Rimorchiatori Riuniti S.P.A during the signing ceremony of the Share Sale Agreement in Tug Malta Ltd. between the company and the Government. “It is our aim is to have another success story here in Malta”, he added.

The ceremony was presided by Minister Austin Gatt, who in his speech said that looking back over the past 4 years, Government moved out completely from the maritime sector. Four years ago Government controlled most of the maritime sector as it owned the Freeport, Sea Malta and Tug Malta. Because we believe that these are areas where there should be space for the private sector today we are out of all these sectors. This is essential if we want to have a competitive economy.

Minister Austin Gatt said that we believe that Malta’s strategic position gives us a natural advantage in logistics and maritime sectors. We should leverage on this fact and we can only do this by attracting an international player to invest in Malta because they share our beliefs.

In the meantime, in his concluding marks, Minister Austin Gatt said that as the documents related to the privatisation which, will be tabled in Parliament will show, the company scored excellent in all categories. The speech by Delle Piane showed the commitment of the company and the vision for the future.

Mr Delle Piane, in his speech said that the company is strongly committed to invest and develop the three sectors of harbour towage, offshore towage and international shipping and we have a sound financial situation that will enable us to do this. He added that in fact, acquiring Tug Malta shall enable us to develop two of the three sectors where we are present the harbour activity and the offshore activity.

Delle Piane emphasised that due to the central position of Malta in the Mediterranean Sea, the outlook for the off-port towage, including salvage emergency and anti pollution activities on the route between Gibraltar and the Suez Channel is also very encouraging due to the increasingly growing traffic. He added that as far as the offshore activities are concerned. These activities include assistance to oil rigs and sub sea construction on the Northern African countries, these show a great deal of potential.

This is due to the fact that according to recent studies, the demand for specialized vessels like AHTS and PSV from local and international oil companies will increase rapidly. In this respect the ideal position of Malta is such that it will be able to provide vessels at a very competitive price, having the advantage of cost savings for mobilization and demobilization, as compared to a relative remote location such as Genoa.

As regards the plans for the company he said that Rimorchiatori Riuniti shall invest over 22 million euros in two new tugs, and shall also purchase equipment in order to upgrade some of the existing tugs in order to make them more versatile. Apart from the investment in Tug Malta, Rimorchiatori Riuniti shall also update and train existing seafarers of Tug Malta in order to achieve the necessary qualifications to perform the new activities outside of the Maltese coast. The company will also develop local commercial functions within the network of the group to acquire new orders and it shall also develop the offshore activity by means of two high sea vessels that will be chartered from the parent company and that shall be employed in assistance to oil rigs located off the coasts of North African countries such as Libya and Tunisia.

Mr Delle Piane also announced that the holding company Rimorchiatori Malta Ltd. that we recently incorporated for the purpose of acquiring the shares of Tug Malta is willing to invest even further, beyond the commitments and undertakings we have made with the Maltese government. In fact he said that “we intend to form a subsidiary that will acquire a new built off-shore vessel, for a value of approximately 40 million Euros that will become the flag ship of the whole group. In fact this vessel is currently one of the most powerful vessels ever seen in the Mediterranean, and is currently being built by a Spanish yard “Armon S.A.”. This is proof of our willingness to develop and invest further in your beautiful island, Malta.

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