Cyprus Market Overview by AGTA Chairman, Noel Josephides

Well, there is no doubt that there has been a seismic change in the mix of tourist arrivals into Cyprus. The Russians, in spite of the economic problems on the island have, to the end of September, increased their arrivals by 27.1% to 521,921 persons while the British market continues its decline; down 8.4% to 738,620 arrivals. I would also think that there are a fair number of visitors from the UK that come into Larnaka but actually holiday in the occupied areas.

All the traditional Western European markets are down and the increases are coming from the Ukraine, Slovakia, Israel, the United Arab Emirates and, rather surprisingly, from Belgium. The numbers from these countries are still small and total about 100,000 across all five.

In total, arrivals to the island are down by 3.3% so the total decline still continues but, when you think what Cyprus has gone through this year, everyone should be congratulated for maintaining numbers very close to what they were in 2012.

For me, the interesting fact is that the Ryanair and other 'no-frills' scheduled airlines from European countries have not generated any increases. Italy, for instance, is still down. So what exactly is happening? Are these cheap flights enabling Cypriots to holiday abroad rather than encouraging overseas holidaymakers to visit the island?

The Russians are increasing their numbers because their tourism is based on charter flights. The increase is tour operator led and it has nothing to do with increased scheduled flights to the island. When a tour operator has committed flight seats, then the only option is to work hard in order to fill the seats, otherwise the operator would collapse. However, I understand that in order to reach the numbers that the Russian tour operators are generating for the island they have to sell late and at very low prices. There is no doubt that this is having a marked effect on the quality of the arrivals.

The main problem that the smaller tour operators to Cyprus had this year was the limited availability of flight seats at logical prices. Other than TUI, Thomas Cook, Jet2 and Olympic Holidays, all other operators buy seats on an ad hoc basis on so called ‘no-frills’ carriers. However, between July and September of this year, it was almost impossible to buy seats at less than £450 return and often these seats were on sale at over £700 return. Clients were not prepared to pay such high prices and my feeling is that they just stayed away. The hot weather in the UK did not help either, so the late booking market never materialised, as many in the UK just stayed at home and enjoyed their gardens.

It will be interesting to see what will happen in 2014. There is no doubt that confidence is returning to the UK consumer. The UK economy is definitely moving out of recession and the general sentiment for 2014 is optimistic across all markets.

This would be the time for the CTO to spend more money in the UK in order to ride this optimistic wave. I am not sure if this will happen. I am not aware that any more flight capacity to the island is planned from the UK. I know that Norwegian airlines are putting on a weekly flight from Gatwick to Larnaka, but there are rumours that Cyprus Airways will reduce capacity still further. My belief is that the numbers from the UK will remain static. Cyprus will become a destination for Eastern Europeans and Russians.

Driving force for Anemone’s success through the last ¼ century has been its Managing Director, Angelos Agathangelou. Angelos has a wealth of expertise and knowledge of the Travel & Tourism Industries having worked for Amathus for over 12 years and having managed Libra Travel for over 3 years before this latter company was taken over by PriceRight and turned into a huge brand, as Libra Holidays. Angelos has been ably assisted for years by his three sisters, Maria, Toula and Popi and among others currently by Chryso, Marios and for a number of years by Michael Pourmpouris and Athos Kyriacou, both ex Amathus men. Mr. Marios Minaides, a well-known Greek Cypriot Solicitor, is Anemone’s Company Secretary.

Anemone operates as Specialists Cyprus & Greece Tour Operators and World Travel Agents with ABTA, CAA / ATOL, and IATA licenses. The company annually produces a dedicated Cyprus brochure which also includes some out of the beaten-track destination resorts in Greece, like Spetsae and Santorini. Anemone Travel & Holidays has been a member of AGTA since the Association was founded in 1989 and Angelos has been a member of the AGTA council for many years. He currently serves as the Association’s Treasurer.

For more information go to www.anemoneholidays.co.uk or telephone Anemone Travel: 0208 889 9207

Taste of Cyprus evening
The Cyprus Tourism Organisation and the Association of Greek Cypriot Travel Agents are organizing a themed evening of ‘Cypriot Gastronomic Experience–Taste of Cyprus’ for British Travel Agents who work closely with AGTA Member tour Operators. The event will be held on Thursday, 21st November, 2013 between 18:30-2200 hours. Event Venue: L’Atelier des Chefs, 19 Wigmore Street, London W1U 1PH, www.atelierdeschefs.co.uk Attendees would have the chance to meet with specialist Cypriot operators and to be involved with cooking Cypriot specialities (some traditional, some with a modern twist) together with our chefs, eating, drinking and networking.

Cyprus Regional Tourism Companies lunch–meeting
The Cyprus Tourist Office London in association with AGTA (UK) hosted a lunch meeting for representatives of Cyprus Regional Tourism Companies and member tour operators in London [Poseidon Restaurant], on the 7th of October. The meeting was convened so that the regional representatives could inform AGTA Members on the greater potential of the Island’s Regional Resorts and exchange ideas for the promotions of the resorts.

Anemone Travel & Holidays
25 Years & Counting


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Cyplon Holidays Wins Prestigious Travel Bulletin Award

For the 5th time in 8 years, Cyplon Holidays, an established specialist tour operator for 43 years, based in north London wins the TB prestigious ‘Star Specialist Operator to the Mediterranean’ award at the Travel Bulletin Awards event held at The Landmark Hotel, London, on 7th October 2013.

Cyplon Holidays had previously won the award last year and on 3 separate successive occasions before, the "Specialist Independent Operator to Cyprus ". Tas Anastasi, Sales and Marketing Director for Cyplon Holidays, commented: "It was nerve racking waiting to find out if we had won and we are just over the moon to have done so. It’s a testament to the exceptional rapport we have built up over the last 43 years with the UK travel trade and their support of our excellent programmes to Cyprus & Greece." "We are now extending our range of our own holiday brochures, which will include Morocco, Tunisia, Malta, Sicily, Sardinia, Egypt.’ "We will continue to offer quality holidays at affordable prices, backed by a team of mature and specialised reservation staff, which we are very proud of” concludes Anastasi.

Over 6,000 travel agents voted for 32 categories in Travel Bulletin’s annual trade industry awards.

Aphrodite Hills Resort – 8th World Travel Awards 2013

In September 2013, the InterContinental Aphrodite Hills Resort Hotel won, yet again, the coveted award as best ‘Mediterranean Leading Family Resort. A press release from the resort said: 'The InterContinental Hotel part of Aphrodite Hills Resort is known as one of the finest fully integrated, luxury resort developments in the world. This extremely prestigious award, proven to substantially heighten the hotel’s international profile and provide a highly effective advantage in making our sales and marketing stand out from the rest of its competitors.'

Aphrodite Hills Resort – Travelife “Gold” certification – July 2013

This award places the resort among its peers within the Travelife Collection and the top 10 hotels in Cyprus. A press release from the resort stated: 'For those thinking about a holiday and want to stay somewhere that cares about the environment, people and the planet but not sure where to look, need only to consult the Travelife Collection. The Collection only features accommodations that have shown they are taking steps to manage their environmental and social impacts, such as reducing their energy consumption or supporting local initiatives that preserve the cultural heritage of a destination'
Mr. Andreas Agathou honoured at the 2013 AGTA AGM & Dinner

At the Annual General Meeting of AGTA on 11th July, 2013, the Cyprus Tourism Organisation and AGTA presented Andreas Agathou, ex-General Manager of Cyprus Airways in the UK since 2002 with a special award for his valuable contribution to Cyprus Tourism.

AGTA Chairman, Noel Josephides thanked Agathou for his fairness, efficiency and tireless efforts in developing tourism traffic from the UK to Cyprus, together with AGTA tour operators and independent travel agents. Likewise, CTO London Director, Orestis Rossides, praised Agathou for his honesty, hard work and professional integrity.

Mr. Agathou thanked all the specialist operators and travel agents present at the function for their co-operation adding: “I am honoured to receive this award from the CTO (UK) and AGTA (UK). I would like to thank the CTO and members of AGTA for the excellent co-operation we had throughout the period I worked with Cyprus Airways. I have always advocated that Cyprus needs Cyprus Airways. I do hope that the efforts of the new Board are successful and Cyprus Airways is transformed and becomes a healthy and strong organisation.

AGTA 2014 Cyprus brochure

The 2014 AGTA annual members’ brochure-directory will be launched during October / November 2013. The new brochure – complete with concise editorial covering Cyprus’s holiday resorts attractions / events / and news – is, as always, aimed at promoting the Island as a quality tourist destination at trade and consumer travel and holiday exhibitions beginning with the World Travel Market.

AGTA Website

Updates & upgrades to the AGTA website www.agta.co.uk are currently being processed by MintTwist.com

Improvements to the click through facility to members’ own websites and background page details have been completed. New work to the site is on-going subject to funding.

End Note:

AGTA NEWS is a quarterly produced newsletter distributed to members and industry networking tourism partners. We would welcome suggestions from members for important news (i.e. awards or out of the ordinary news) about their organisations /companies for inclusion

in future editions of the Newsletter. Comments on published items are also welcomed.

Please e-mail any of these to the AGTA (UK) Secretariat: Email: yannis@agta.co.uk

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