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PRESS RELEASE

United States Government Provides Border Security System to Malta

The Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System (PISCES) a state-of-the-art border security system provided by the United States Government to the Government of Malta was inaugurated today by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Justice and Home Affairs Dr Tonio Borg and United States Ambassador Anthony H. Gioia.

Speaking during the presentation of the system to the media, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Justice and Home Affairs Dr Tonio Borg thanked the Government of the United States for the donation of PISCES system. There exist a history of assistance, including the donation of patrol boats and customs monitoring equipment to counter contraband.

With Malta joining the European Union and becoming the southern frontier of Europe such a system will be invaluable in the fight against terrorism, organised crime and illegal immigration. The Deputy Prime Minister mentioned the continuous support given to Malta by the US Government, in various fields including specialised training to security personnel.

PISCES is an innovative border management tool that the United States is providing to strategic partners engaged in the global war against organised crime and terrorism, which

have no boundaries. The 11th September events was not an attack on the United States of America only, but against the whole world with victims from different countries and of different religions.

Although PISCES has been already deployed in about twenty countries around the world, Malta is the first European Union country to receive the system, which will be used by immigration officials at the Malta International Airport, Pinto Wharf Seaport, Ta' Xbiex Marina, and Gozo Ferries Terminal.

PISCES is a part of the US Department of State's Terrorist Interdiction Program, which promotes international cooperation by helping strategic partners restrict the movement of criminals and terrorists suspects across their borders. Malta was invited to participate in this strategic partnership based on three factors:

- the historically strong bilateral relationship between Malta and the United States of America;
- Malta's strategic location in the central Mediterranean and at the European Union's southern frontier and
- Malta's high volume of international travel.

PISCES is being provided by the United States at no cost to Malta, and assistance will include installation of the system, training of immigration officials on use of PISCES, and maintenance of the system. The overall U.S. assistance to Malta for this program is valued at approximately \$US 1.5 million, nearly Lm700,000.

PISCES will make it easier for border control officials to identify and intercept criminals and terrorist suspects. As a result, this enhancement of border security controls will not only increase Malta's safety, it will also provide a critical component in the global war against organised crime, human trafficking and terrorism.

