

MFEI No 5/2012 - Travel on Official Duty

MF 201/92/A

MFEI Circular No 5/2012

Ministry of Finance, the
Economy and Investment
South Street, Valletta.

12 April, 2012

To:

Permanent Secretaries

Directors General

Directors

Heads of Public Sector Organisations

TRAVEL ON OFFICIAL DUTY

Since the publication of MFIN Circular No 1/2001, wherein a review of the then current travel rules and regulations was undertaken and the rules, regulations and procedures of the travel policy were streamlined into a set of guidelines for application, various other updates and travel regulations were since then implemented through other circulars, namely Letter Circular dated 9 December 2008 and titled 'Travel Arrangements', MFEI Circular No 6/2009, MFEI Circular 4/2010, MFEI Circular No 12/2010, Letter Circular MF 201/92/A dated 10 January 2011, and MFEI Circular No 4/2011.

Consequently the Ministry has undertaken a review of such travel guidelines as outlined in MFIN Circular No 1/2001 with a view of updating and upgrading such guidelines in order to reflect the various changes effected through the circulation of the above mentioned

travel circulars.

The present regulatory framework is also being updated to facilitate compliance therewith and to better reflect present day realities. The changes being introduced are listed hereunder. It is to be noted that all the sections of the Public Service Management Code (PSMC) being referred to in this circular refer to those of the PSMC dated 7th March 2011.

- i. **Re the per diem allowance** – (1) The relative components of the subsistence allowance are being revised as follows – accommodation inclusive of breakfast 60%, accommodation excluding breakfast 50%; two meals 10% each and sundry expenses 20%. Such a revision in the component of the subsistence rate is being reflected in Sections 6(a) and 7(c) of the attached guidelines. (2) In instances where officers may be required to attend consecutive meetings abroad they are allowed an extension of an additional overnight stay abroad where it proves to be more economically feasible than returning back to Malta after the first meeting. When such is the case, and the Ministry/Department/EBU (Extra Budgetary Units)/Government Entity involved wishes to adopt such a procedure, prior approval from the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment through the Financial Policy and Management Division has to be sought. An email justifying such procedure is to be sent to fpmd.mfei@gov.mt. Such a prolonged stay would be considered as part of the duty abroad. Such a change is being enlisted as Section 6(f) of the attached guidelines.
- ii. **Re Class of Travel** – The following sentence is to be added to Section 8.7.1.2 of the PSMC. ‘However in the case of non-stop transcontinental flights involving durations of at least ten hours flights, officials who are entitled to travel on economy class basis will be allowed to travel on Business/Club Class basis on such type of flights.’ One can refer to such a change in the regulations by referring to Section 4(e) of the attached guidelines.
- iii. **Re Air Malta lodging services** – The second sentence of Section 8.8.2.5 of the Public Service Management Code (PSMC) namely ‘Air Malta will also provide reservations for accommodation at any four (4) hotels in Brussels (according to the option expressed by the government official) no longer applies and therefore it is going to be deleted from the PSMC with immediate effect from the date of circulation of this circular. One can refer to such a change in the regulations by referring to Section 6(h) of the attached guidelines.
- iv. **Re air travel tickets** – The first sentence of Section 8.7.1 of the PSMC which states that ‘All air travel tickets arrangements should be done through Air Malta via’ is going to be replaced by the wording ‘Air travel arrangements are to be normally made through Air Malta via’. One can refer to such a change in the regulations by referring to Section 5(b) of the attached guidelines.
- v. **Re changes in the exchange rate** – Section (ii) of MFEI Circular No 12/2010 highlights the fact that the per diem allowance, including the contingency money is to be always advanced to the delegate in Euro, irrespective of the currency of the country to which the delegate is travelling. Unused balances are to be also always effected in Euro. However it is also being made clear that in the case of contingency money expenses are to be calculated at the exchange rate used for the issue of the foreign currency by the delegate and the differences in the rates of exchange are to be supported by local and foreign bank exchange chits. One can refer to such a regulation by referring to Section 7(f) of the attached guidelines.
- vi. **Re travel insurance coverage** – The option of the choice of the travel insurance policy is henceforth being delegated to each Ministry/Department/EBU concerned. Therefore each Ministry/Department/EBU is to make its own arrangements to procure such a service and this according to the provisions of the Public Procurement Regulations. Hence Section 8.6.5.1 of the PSMC is going to be amended to reflect such a change in policy. Such a change in the regulations is being reflected in Section 11(a) of the attached guidelines.
- vii. **Re report following visits abroad** – A report on each visit is to be submitted by the delegate to the Director responsible for corporate services by not later than one month after the visit. The report (vide per attached specimen) shall include a short explanation about the purpose of the visit, including the aims/goals of the visit, the benefits achieved from such a visit, the delegate’s personal remarks, the officials to be alerted about the outcome of the visit, and the issues to be followed up in Malta. To this effect the first sentence of Section 8.10.1.1 of the PSMC shall be amended with immediate effect. Such a change in the regulations is being reflected in Section 15 (a) of the attached guidelines.
- viii. **Re Advancement of funds related to EU-travel** – In addition to the documents requested at Section 8.8.3.3 of the PSMC which are to be forwarded to the Director (EU Paying Authority) within the Ministry of Finance the hotel bills shall also be supplied. Such a change in the regulations is being reflected in Section 13 (d) of the attached guidelines.
- ix. **Re Cancelled Visits** – The following sentence is to be added to Section 8.9.1.11 of the PSMC. ‘In those instances where funds have already been credited into the corresponding officer’s account, a copy of the receipt showing that these funds have been refunded back by the officer is to be forwarded to Treasury.’ Such an addition in the regulations is being reflected in Section 14 (j) of the attached guidelines.
- x. **Re Immunisation of Officers** – Expenses related to the administration of obligatory vaccines for the immunisation of officers in correspondence with the country being visited are reimbursable against receipts. Thus Section 8.6.2.2 of the PSMC is being amended to include such expenses under paragraph (c). Such an addition in the regulations is being reflected in Section 6 (e) of the

attached guidelines.

xi. Re Subsistence allowance given by the host organiser directly to the participating officer – Instances may arise where the host organiser/s of the meeting give/s an allowance to cover the hotel, meals and all other sundry expenses incurred during such a meeting directly to the participating officer, despite the fact that such an officer has already been given the subsistence allowance by his/her department/entity/Ministry. Such an allowance is to be reimbursed by the officer concerned to his/her department/entity/Ministry. Section 8.6.3 of the PSMC is going to be amended accordingly to include such a provision. Such an addition in the regulations is being reflected in Section 7 (g) of the attached guidelines.

xii. Re Form GA 27 – The declaration made by the travelling officer in section A of the Form GA 27 is to include the following sentence after the first sentence:- *'This excludes free meals and free lodging offered by friends, relatives and the lodging in one's own residence'*. Thus Form GA 27 is to be amended accordingly.

The changes introduced by virtue of this circular shall take effect as from 1 May 2012.

Alfred Camilleri

Permanent Secretary.

Attachments:

Regulations relating to Official Travelling

Template re Report following visit abroad

