

Two guide dogs arrive from Bratislava

Two guide dogs, acquired by the Malta Guide Dogs Foundation (MGDF), arrived this week accompanied by two mobility and guide dog instructors who they will be handing over to their new owners in the coming days.

The first guide dog, Glen, arrived on Wednesday and the second, Golem, arrived on Friday on two separate Air Malta flights from Vienna. Both dogs are a year and ten months old and come from the same litter.

Leone Sciberras, Chairman of the MGDF, was present at Malta International Airport on both occasions to greet the dogs, accompanied by their new owners who now will undergo a process of bonding and further training to be able to take ownership of the dogs.

“Today is a new beginning for these two new guide dog handlers, who have obtained their independence and will be able to roam more freely thanks to these guide dogs,” Mr Sciberras said. “They can look forward to several years of service from these highly trained dogs and I am confident that these two guide dogs will make a big difference in their lives.”

Bratislava is one centre where the MGDF sources dogs for members of the local community in Malta and Gozo who apply for a guide dog. The other centre is in nearby Messina, Sicily, the Helen Keller Regional Centre Guide Dog School of the Italian Blind Union.

“We have excellent relations with both centres and we urge those who are blind and would like to apply for a guide dog to come forward and undergo the assessment and necessary training before they can be allotted a dog,” Mr Sciberras said.

“I take the opportunity to thank both guide dog schools for their excellent work and the various sponsors of the MGDF, most notably the Malta Community Chest Fund, with whose funds we acquired the dogs and the Sovereign Military Order of Malta (SMOM), who are sponsoring the costs to enable one of the dogs to bond with its new owner.”

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Leone Sciberras, Chairman of the Malta Guide Dogs Foundation (centre), greeting the newly arrived guide dogs, Golem (on right) and Glen (on left), at the airport on Friday. With them are the two mobility and guide dog instructors, Emmelie Reinson (on left) and Lucia Hrtanova with the two new Maltese guide dog handlers, Natalino Cristiano and Denise Spiteri (on right)