



Malta

“Feeding in” and “Feeding out”, and Integrating Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities

A Study of National Policies

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or the Member States.*

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Executive Summary

In the 2006 Annual Report on the Malta NRP, the main focus is how Malta can achieve the five strategic objectives it chose to implement the Lisbon Agenda. The pre-occupation to bring about structural changes in the economy, together with a cultural change that is advantageous to any entrepreneurial activity is predominant in the report. It is boldly stated that for Malta to be able to sustain the standard of living that it has enjoyed thus far in an increasingly difficult environment, both local and global, the economy must perform well, and register improvement.

In this context reference to the Social Inclusion and Social Protection dimension of planning are not extensive. Some specific references do exist, and the Integrated Guidelines Analysis clearly shows that there is a strong, albeit latent in the document itself, thrust to improve the conditions of those who are at risk of poverty, or who are already suffering from relative deprivation. The feeding in and feeding out dynamic in respect of social inclusion and social protection is heavily present, even if not always explicit. To some extent, the report is already dated because some of the measures envisaged in it have actually been implemented already in the budget for 2007, launched just a few days after the publication of the NRP report.

The document is well written, targets are clearly spelled out and financial tags are to be found in all its parts. Reading it on its own however, does not provide one with the full picture to be able to understand what is happening in the field of social inclusion and social protection in Malta. What is missing however can easily be added with accurate cross-references to other documents produced in Malta in the recent months.

In respect of migration, which occupies the second chapter of the present document, the problems facing Malta are atypical because they do not concern how legal immigrants are being integrated within the Maltese way of life and protected to avoid marginalisation and the attendant poverty. Legal immigrants in Malta enjoy full security and the few ethnic communities that exist are fully integrated and benefit from all that is available to the Maltese.

But Malta is currently facing a huge problem with illegal immigration. Thousands of persons are arriving every year by sea on their way to Europe, pursuing a dream for a better life. The fact that Malta is not their true destination does not help much because once they land they have to be assisted and grouped in various categories. Those deserving asylum are given full protection, others are dealt with in accordance with EU legislation. Despite this, they are draining the island's resources because of their massive demands on a small island economy.

Malta is aware of its international and especially its humanitarian responsibilities in this regard, but is expecting the larger member states of the EU to recognise their responsibility to shoulder this problem by policing the sea on the one hand, and, on the other, by providing concrete assistance as an expression of the inter-state solidarity that is fundamental to EU politics.

1. Feeding In and Feeding Out Analysis

1.1 Background

The Lisbon Agenda was launched in March 2000 with the aim for Europe to become, by 2010, 'the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, and respect for the environment'. The Malta National Reform Programme, based on a three-year cycle, commenced in 2005 and was aimed to set out a comprehensive strategy to deliver growth and jobs in line with the refocus of the Lisbon Agenda agreed to in the Spring European Council.

Malta's economic growth and international competitiveness, and therefore the island's employment growth potential is heavily influenced by both internal and external factors, and predominantly by its changing demographic profile (an ageing population, increasing life expectancy, lower fertility) and increasing oil prices, terrorism and competition from low cost nations.

In its first NRP, Malta opted for the following five strategic themes:

- sustainability of public finances;
- competitiveness;
- employment;
- education and training; and
- protection of the environment.

In addressing these strategic themes, Guidelines 12, 19 and 22 were not tackled in Malta's NRP in favour of the remaining Guidelines, which were deemed to demand a higher priority from Malta. The Spring European Council Conclusions identified areas for priority action, namely:

- investment in knowledge and innovation;
- unlocking business potential , especially SMEs;
- employment; and
- energy policy for Europe.

An important aspect of Malta's strategy was to ensure that both the quality of life and the provisions for social inclusion are improved. Malta needed to secure its citizens against a deterioration of the quality of life at the expense of economic and competitive regeneration. The Maltese government professes strict adherence to high social standards, good healthcare and the social protection systems that have been attained over the past years. Cognizant of the fact that changing conditions require that social systems also adapt and are sustainable, Malta's first NRP reflected the full commitment to secure an inclusive society and to improve the quality of life of all Maltese people.

The 2006 Annual Report seeks to document the progress that has been registered by Malta a year after the publication of its NRP and to demonstrate the harmony between the NRP and the Spring European Council Conclusions. This document can best be described as one which examines the progress made in Malta's efforts to reach its chosen objectives, and is primarily focused on the economic parameters for it to do so. Its primary stated objective is not meant to be an appraisal of Malta's social agenda as such, but to address the five strategic objectives and to do so primarily from an economic point of view. The annual report specifically claims that 'the context of the NRP is also being harmonised to link appropriately with the principles of sustainable development, particularly in the light of the recently revised EU SDS which enshrines three main pillars – Social, Economic and Environmental, the three of which are amply reflected within Malta's NRP.' But at no point does it address social inclusion

specifically on its own. This does not of course mean that the country's social agenda is disregarded, but information on it has got to be gleaned from different sections of the document.

It also needs to be added that not all the initiatives currently being undertaken by Malta to secure social inclusion are referred to in Malta's annual report on the NRP. A multiplicity of initiatives and programmes exist, and the writers of the annual report did not feel the need even to refer to them within the space constraints of the 2006 report. Both these remarks need to be constantly kept in mind in what follows.

In the two forthcoming sections on Feeding in and Feeding out, this report closely follows the guideline questions provided by the Commission.

1.2 Feeding in

Stakeholders' involvement/consultation in the Lisbon National Reform Programme (NRP)

All the Maltese ministries were involved in preparing NRP. The Ministry for Family and Social Solidarity (MFSS) was involved since the initial stages of the NRP. The Ministry put forward specific measures to be inputted in the NRP (M01.6, M01.7, M01.9, M03.4 (Gender Mainstreaming & Childcare parts, as per Appendix I). Additionally, the Ministry for Education, Youth and Employment also proposed measures targeted at social inclusion.

Other ministries, such as Ministry of Health, the Elderly and Community Care (MHEC) have indicated measures for inclusion under the Macro Economic policies of the report. The Ministry for Gozo was also involved from a social and regional point of view.

Social Services providers in Malta fall under the umbrella of the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity. Thus the feedback provided from the said Ministry also covers the perspective of social service providers. During the drafting of the NRP, NGOs and civil society were invited to attend a consultative conference, for which several NGOs and civil society participated. Additionally, a draft NRP document was issued for public consultation and concurrently meetings were organised with the major NGOs in Malta. Meetings with the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD) were also held. The MCESD is Malta's Consultative and advisory body to Government on issues relating to sustainable economic and social development of Malta, whilst providing a forum for consultation and social dialogue between social partners and, where necessary, with Civil Society organizations.

The MFSS and the MCESD were also involved in the first annual progress report of the NRP. They even had the opportunity to express their opinions about the latter even during the Commission's visit to Malta.

Apart from discussing the NRP proper, discussions with the above stake-holders also focused on specific issues, e.g., communicating the Lisbon Strategy.

Social Inclusion /Social Protection challenges

The linkage between the social protection and social inclusion process is made explicit in the NRP, as highlighted in the introduction to the NRP wherein Government commits itself to the promotion of social inclusion.

However, it needs to be repeated that the NRP does not constitute an exhaustive programme either for competitiveness or for social inclusion. It is an integrated programme of activity over the years 2005-

2008 focusing on economic growth and employment in Malta. It represents Malta's contribution to the Lisbon Strategy. One would have to refer to Pre Budget Documents 2006, 2007; Budget Speech 2006, 2007; the National Strategic Reference Document and to the Operational Programmes I and II to get a full appreciation of the plethora of Government initiatives under both competitiveness and social agendas.

Reference to the SI/SP challenges

The Maltese NRP recognises the challenges of socio-demographic change within the macroeconomic context, and expresses the need to ensure sustainability of public finances. These issues are also highlighted under the sections that deal with the pensions reform and with healthcare measures. Moreover, as people are the country's primary resource, the challenges of economic growth and job creation are also addressed under the sections dealing with education/training and employment. The NRP puts forward a cultural change: from 'a job for life' mindset to an 'employability' mindset. Hence, the emphasis on education and training so that people are better equipped to meet potential opportunities during the course of their lifetime. Training and education incentives and instruments are available to both employed and unemployed persons. In the latter case, offerings are segmented by target groups, e.g., youths, older workers, returning mothers to work, etc.

Therefore, in response to the above questions, it can be safely stated that the challenges are fully recognised, consistent between strategies, and that they referred to directly.

1.3 Feeding out

The writers of the annual report on the NRP very obviously did not have the social inclusion /social protection agenda as their main focus and the vocabulary normally associated with it, as listed in the guidelines for the section of the evaluation report, do not feature very prominently. The main thrust of this document is very obviously economic, narrowly linked with the strategic themes Malta decided to target to meet the Lisbon Agenda. Reference to micro-terms like long-term unemployed, single parents, large families, young persons, immigrants are sparse, but it is very obvious that the targets and the programmes are aimed at these sub-groups even if this is not overtly spelled out in this document. To a superficial reader, the impression might be given that this document is devoid of the social inclusion agenda and is pursuing purely capitalist economic policies. This is not the case.

It is not the case because in reality the beneficiaries of the main objectives will address the needs of the persons that require social inclusion, but who are at present suffering from lack of resources because in view of their unemployment, they cannot enjoy a good standard of living, and live below the average Maltese way of life.

To cater for the ills of these subgroups, a number of initiatives are provided for in the NRP. Most important of all is the effort to skill or re-skill these persons. Through the Employment and Training Corporation, training is given paramount importance in the NRP. The document also provides for regular monitoring 'to review progress and recommend changes'. The appropriateness and effectiveness of the delivery is determined by comparing the levels of participants on entry with those on exit and eventually by the number of trainees finding employment on course completion or else seeking to further their skills. The provision of traineeships in the form of occupational skill development programmes targeted at new labour market entrants, unemployed or employees involved in restructuring exercise, mainly to supplement skills shortages is given importance in the NRP report.

The NRP also addresses, though minimally referring to it, the varying needs arising from regional disparities. Malta is a small country, but two areas specifically distinguish themselves and require special attention. One is the Cottonera region, which, despite the fact that it is sited on top of a wealth of historical sites and has for some time marked Malta's entry into the industrial world through the existence of naval repair and construction facilities, and the other is Gozo, the second inhabited island in the Maltese archipelago access to which however is only by sea.

In respect of the Cottonera region, the NRP makes reference to a Leonardo da Vinci Audio Visual Project. The project includes training youths in the production of audio-visual TV programmes. Following a preparatory training programme in Malta, these youngsters were sent to a three week training placement at the BBC studios in Birmingham, UK. This project has helped ten Cottonera youths to get valuable experience in audio visual techniques.

The specific needs of Gozo are also recognised and addressed as Strategic Objective 4: 'Addressing Gozo's Regional distinctiveness'. Efforts are made to increase the sister island's tourist attraction and to transfer as many back-office services as possible to ensure that Gozitan workers are spared the hassle to have to cross the channel by ferry every day to get to work.

The expected effect of these policies on the female component of the population to increase the female participation rate is given importance even in the Introduction of the report. Measures such as tax benefits to women returning to employment had already been included in the Budget for 2006 and were extended in the 2007 Budget for persons, generally females, who take up part-time work as their sole employment. Other measures such as, the introduction of family friendly measures and the facilitation and promotion of the use of child care centres are also in progress. Such measures promote the reintegration of mothers into the world of work where they can contribute towards Malta's socio-economic progress whilst still ensuring that the fundamental concept of Maltese family life is maintained.

In addition, the following measures are listed in the NRP report:

- generous leave benefits for working parents could help reduce the need for costly infant provision and promote more equitable sharing of responsibilities;
- tax rebates, funding and/or subsidies for accredited day-care centres and small, private Kindergarten. The guarantee of affordable, quality provision is of paramount importance especially for low and middle-income parents;
- establishments responsible for young children ought to publish literature to promote their practices. This would result in a better-informed public;
- parents should be encouraged to visit different centres/to shop around and see what is available. Parents should be invited to spend time at centres when there are children;
- introduction of family-friendly benefits at place of work. Employers should be partners in child-care provision;
- ratios of adult to children need to be addressed. There should be a maximum of 15 three and four-year-old children with 1 qualified adult + 1 assistant. In child-care centres, there should be a maximum of two or three babies (under 12 months) with 1 trained/qualified adult; four children aged 12 to 24 months with one trained adult and a maximum of 8 children aged 24 to 36 months with one trained adult;

The fiscal system is used a tool to bring about change. The NRP states that

'A review of the current taxation framework has been carried out and the Pre-Budget Document 2007 – Securing our Future, contains a number of options for the taxation reform both in the short and medium term, which are subject to the overall performance of the elements of the fiscal budget and to the continuation of economic growth performance along the present and expected path.. A reform of the taxation system in Malta presents a number of opportunities to be reaped in the context of fostering employment and social cohesion by making work pay, encouraging saving and investment, minimise the excess burden of taxation, enhance equitability and compliance by all categories of tax-payers and contributing to the country's performance in the various aspects of sustainable development including the economic, social and environmental dimensions. These reforms are being contemplated during the preparations for the next Budget, and their implementation will not undermine the fiscal consolidation targets and medium term sustainability of fiscal consolidation, thus allowing Malta to still achieve the desired target of adopting the euro on 1 January 2008.'

In effect these objectives were reflected in policy decisions just a few days after the publication of Annual Report of the NRP when the budget for 2007 was presented to Parliament on the 23 October 2006.

1.4 Integrated Guidelines Analysis

GL14 To create a more competitive business environment and encourage private initiative through better regulation

Is there any sign in the NRP of an awareness of corporate social responsibility of business? What measures are proposed?

In the Malta report there is no explicit reference to the corporate social responsibility of business. The main concern of the Maltese NRP is to create an environment which can sustain economic growth through a more competitive business environment competitiveness and more entrepreneurship so that new jobs can be created. Issues like this do not attract specific attention.

GL17 Implement employment policies aiming at achieving full employment, improving quality and productivity at work, and strengthening social and territorial cohesion

What is the attention given to social cohesion in terms of balance among the three overarching objectives?

In order to achieve full employment, improving quality and productivity at work, and strengthening social and territorial cohesion, Malta has embarked on various measures under the Employment and Education & Training sections of the NRP to achieve the three overarching objectives. These measures focus on training persons considered to make part of the disadvantaged group such as youth, females, older workers and persons with special needs. Additionally, specific measures to assist them in finding employment are implemented.

Are there specific targets set that are relevant for SI/SP?

The specific targets are set for the year 2010 and include the following:

- Raise the overall employment rate by 3%
- Raise the female employment rate by 7%
- Raise the older workers' employment rate by 2.4%

GL18 Promoting a lifecycle approach to work

⇒ *GL 2 To safeguard economic and fiscal sustainability as a basis for increased employment*

How clear and consistent is the cross-reference to the SI/SP process, if any?

The cross-reference to the SI/SP process is not explicitly clear and consistent. The lack of specific cross-reference is probably the result of constraints on the length of the document.

Are measures to promote modern social protection systems, including pensions and healthcare, sufficient to meet challenges identified in the SI/SP process? Are these measures consistent with the SI/SP National Strategy Reports?

Within the context of cultural change, the limits imposed by the need to sustain public finances and the timing involved, the answer to this question is 'yes'. The process has been thorough and intensive with the full participation of stakeholders and backed by professional studies and impact analyses. This does not of course mean that there is no controversy about the subject in Malta. In effect the Malta Labour Party, currently in Opposition, is currently putting forward the view that pension reform is not urgent and can be undertaken later on.

Are these measures socially adequate and accessible? In what way?

All social protection systems in Malta are open to all. In respect of some benefits, specific criteria apply. A main issue is how to ensure that only those who really need social protection will actually receive it, thus eliminate as much as possible abuse of the social protection systems. It is at times suggested that improved means-testing instruments are required as an important step to implement social justice and social inclusion.

In respect of health care other issues need closer examination. Malta has an excellent record in medical care, a natural consequence of the excellent medical tradition and the training of Maltese doctors. In Malta public and private medicine co-exist but at times hidden inequalities exist when patients do not first recur to private medicine. At times it is alleged that specialists openly direct patients from the public service to private medicine to provide 'a quicker service'. The work conditions of most specialists working in public medicine are considered poor by many and private practice is considered a must. The consequences of this structural characteristic for persons at the lower end of the social and economic spectrum might be serious and need close scrutiny because although theoretically access is universal and equal, financial barriers are not uncommon.

Is there a good interaction between the social protection system and the labour market?

A specific measure in the Maltese NRP states that the Government will be commencing incremental measures in the pension reform. The aim of this measure is to protect pensions in such a way to ensure sustainability of the latter in the future.

Does the NRP refer specifically to older workers and pensions?

One of the main targets established in the NRP is to raise the participation rate of older workers. This is being done by organising various schemes to help the unemployed who are over 40 to find work. These schemes provide financial assistance to both employers and employees and also training and work exposure to the unemployed. This is covered in Measure M03.5 in the NRP.

How is reconciliation of work and family life addressed?

Reconciliation of work and family life is strongly addressed in the NRP. Measure M03.4 specifically aims for this reconciliation and includes the following provisions:

- Carry out a feasibility study of teleworking in the local context by ETC;
- Offer a capped subsidy to parents pursuing ETC training and who require care services;
- Develop measures and incentives aimed at encouraging teleworking, flexitime and other flexible employment practices;
- Gender Mainstreaming;
- Regularise and facilitate the provision of childcare facilities.

GL19 Ensuring inclusive labour markets

Are there any measures promoting an inclusive labour market? Are they consistent with the SI/SP objectives?

Yes. Measures intended to increase female participation rates (e.g., through the introduction of Family Friendly Measures, Child Care provision, specific initiatives, fiscal and economic instruments) are aimed at promoting inclusive labour markets. Similar measures are in place for disadvantaged groups.

- Does the NRP focus specifically on the inclusion of those furthest away from the labour market? How and for which groups? Are clear pathways towards employment put in place?

Several measures in the NRP are aimed at making work pay. Such measures include:

- Review the existing taxation framework in order for taxation policy to encourage work and productivity;
- Develop a more aggressive plan against benefit fraud;
- Assess the role of means-testing instruments that determines eligibility for means tested benefits;
- And other schemes to assist those furthest away from the labour market to find employment through the ETC (Measures M03.1, M03.2, M03.3, M03.4, M03.5, M03.8, M04.3).

Following the publication of the NRP, the Budget for 2007 was presented. A number of these measures have been implemented through this budget. In particular the social security contributions of persons taking on part-time work as their sole employment have been radically revised. Similarly, money spent on child-minding up to a fixed amount, has been exempt from income tax.

How does the NRP plan to contribute to the eradication of poverty?

The main thrust of the Maltese NRP is to secure gainful employment, as a necessary condition for the eradication of poverty. Government's aim is to train and assist citizens to find employment. Therefore, there are programmes which will benefit those who are at most risk of poverty. Additionally, increased competitiveness in the country will contribute to attract more investors, thus more working opportunities for citizens.

Government is cognisant of the fact that no matter how much effort is injected into training/education programmes and employment opportunities, there will always be a cohort of people who would not be in a position to benefit from such measures. It is at this particular cohort of people that the social solidarity machinery is directed to ensure that the social needs of these people are taken care of in a fair manner.

GL21 Promote flexibility combined with employment security and reduce labour market segmentation, having due regard to the role of social partners

- ⇒ *GL 5 To promote greater coherence between macroeconomic, structural and employment policies*
- ⇒ *GL 9 To facilitate the spread and effective use of ICT and build a fully inclusive information society*

Does the NRP refer to tax- or benefit reforms to improve incentives and to make work pay? Are these measures in line with the SI objective of 'necessary resources to live in accordance with human dignity'?

The following provisions are envisaged as positive measures to meet this objectives.

- Review the existing taxation framework (M01.1);
- Develop a more aggressive plan against benefit fraud (M01.7)
- Assess the role of means testing instruments that determines eligibility for means-tested benefits (M01.8);
- Incremental measures in pensions reform (M01.9); and
- Launch a Foster Entrepreneurial Skills Scheme(M03.8)

Are there any plans made to increase adaptability of labour markets? Is employment flexibility combined with security? In what way? Which measures guarantee this?

The following measures are envisaged to increase the adaptability of labour markets:

- Intensify guidance services in order to enable the establishment of a comprehensive career pathway (M04.4)
- Setting up a higher education directorate (M04.2)

- Employment flexibility combined with security is more focused to the public sector as the public sector is being further reviewed to identify the core competencies and staff requirements to ensure redeployment in a more productive environment (M01.4)

Does the NRP refer to any measures to make ICT use, and the information society in general, fully inclusive?

This will be implemented through the following measures:

- Initiate training in basic computer skills for those registering for employment and establish Community Technology Learning Centres (M04.3)
- address skills requirements in the ICT Sector (M02.8.2)
- Financial and other assistance to foster ICT competencies (M02.8.3)

GLs23-24 Expand and improve investment in human capital, Adapt education and training systems

Are education and training policies inclusive? Is access to all ensured?

Education and training policies are inclusive. In fact, all education and training programmes offered by the Maltese Government are accessible to all. Students following tertiary education are provided with a stipend which, however, many claim is no longer sustainable. These measures envisaged in respect of education and training policies include:

- Free education at primary, secondary, post secondary, vocational and tertiary level; and
- All training offered through ETC is free to unemployed and at a minimal cost to those that are employed.

Is the policy response towards reducing significantly the number of early school leavers sufficient and in line with SI/SP National Strategy Reports?

Policy is focusing on improving the school infrastructure, the curriculum variety, the quality and method of teaching (even through ICT tools), and the provision of guidance services. Vocational training / institutions are also in place to capture drop outs and offer other chances. Significant progress has already been registered in this respect. The current reform of the primary and secondary educational system, which envisages the grouping of schools in colleges, should further contribute to reduce number of early school leavers by initially putting in place an institutional structure that will address disparate abilities at an early stage and provide adequate support to both students and their families.

1.5 Key trends since the previous 'assessment report'

No significant changes took place in between the two dates established for the previous report and this one. As indicated in the preceding sections of this report, a number of measures were expected to be implemented in the budget for 2007. It is unfortunate that the budget for 2007 was actually launched just a few days after the cut-off date established for the current report, because in effect a number of these measures discussed as 'envisaged' in preceding sections, have, in fact, been announced as new initiatives for the next fiscal year. A discussion of these measures is, therefore, not within the scope of the present report but will be included in future ones.

1.6 Conclusion

The Social Inclusion and Social Protection is not specifically the main objective of the Malta NRP report. The thrust of this report is to map the road how the strategic targets chosen by Malta could be secured. The concerns are primarily economic in nature, and aim at a radical transformation of the economy to ensure that opportunities for gainful employment exist for everybody despite the internal and external factors that militate against economic progress for a small island state with no natural resources except the skills of its people.

Despite this however, the subliminal existence of social consciousness in the minds of the economic planners cannot be missed. The concern for at risk groups can be said to be present in each section of this document. Perhaps the need to cater especially for these groups has been taken for granted by the authors, and more specific highlighting would have definitely improved the report. But their absence above the surface on the tip of the iceberg only hides their presence at the base of the iceberg, without which there would be no iceberg at all.

2. Immigration & Ethnic Minorities

2.1 Background

As on the 26th November 1995 when the last published¹ Population Census was taken, the Maltese population amounted to 370,919 and accounted for 98.1 per cent of the enumerated population. The gender structure of the Maltese population was well balanced with 183,735 males and 187,184 females.

The vast majority of the Maltese population, 362,652 or 97.8 per cent obtained their citizenship by birth. Another 1.2 per cent acquired Maltese citizenship by registration. Some 0.6 per cent of all Maltese nationals acquired their citizenship by naturalisation. There were 505 persons who acquired Maltese citizenship by marriage. The majority of these, 61 per cent, were women.

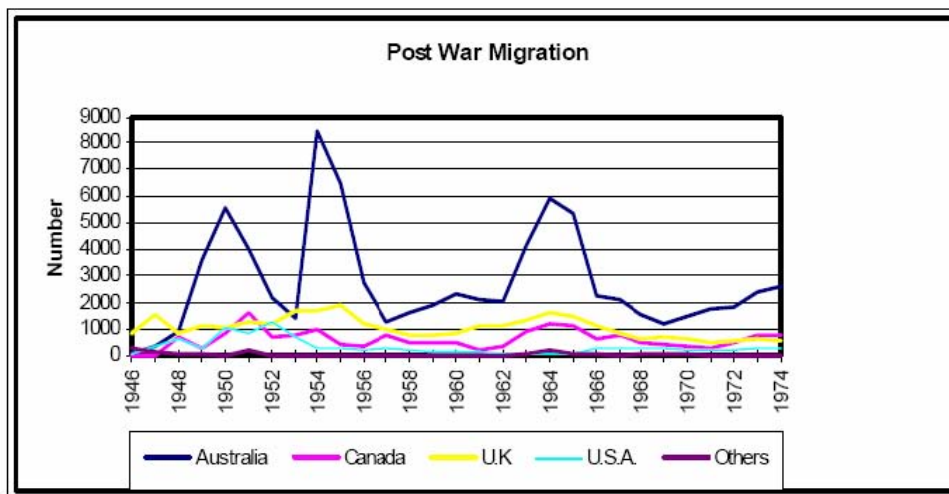
The second largest segment of the enumerated population was made up of British nationals who numbered 3,555 and accounted for 49.3 per cent of the non-Maltese element in the population. The non-Maltese element in the total population stood at 7,213. As on Census day, there were, amongst others, 556 Australians, 410 Italians, 297 Americans, 285 Libyans and 259 Canadians living in Malta. Another 128 persons were stateless.

Traditionally Malta has been a country of emigration especially over the last two centuries. Only since 2002, after the increasing inflow of immigrants, Malta has begun to realise that it is unwillingly moving to become a country of immigration. In view of the limitations of the country to cope with an expanding population, large scale emigration became a feature of Maltese life since the early years of the nineteenth century when, under British colonial rule, early efforts to encourage and assist Maltese to migrate began. The outflow started to develop on a more permanent basis during the two World Wars when the government established the Department of Emigration to manage the emigration flow².

¹ The last Population Census was conducted in 2005, but only very preliminary results have been published so far.

² National Statistics Office (NSO) Malta. 2003. Migration Results from the 1995 Malta Population and Housing Census: Comparison with other Data Sources Regarding Coverage and Reliability. Working Paper No. 8, 23 April 2003. Conference of European Statisticians Joint ECE-Eurostat Work Session on Migration Statistics organised in cooperation with the UN Statistics Division (Geneva, 28-30 April 2003).

After the Second World War, Maltese emigration reached its peak. Government's efforts to facilitate it were intensified and turned migration into one of the main political answers to the country post-war economic hardship. In fact, in the aftermath of the war the economic conditions of the country had begun to take a down-turn and, consequently, many Maltese lost their jobs (i.e. the dockyard, which used to employ about 11,000 people, began gradually to wind down). Furthermore, a baby boom in the immediate post-war period, led to a net population growth of about 8000 people/year thus leading to a density of 1,158 people per km² and a total population of nearly 350,000. As a consequence, in the late '40s and '50s, many Maltese began to leave the country and migrate abroad opening a new phase of massive and rapid migration. As a matter of fact, from 1945 to 1979 around 140,000 men, women and children left the Maltese Islands with Australia, the UK, Canada, and the US being the main destinations. Figure 1 below shows emigration movements from 1946 to 1974.



Source: NSO 2003

Figure 1: Post War Migration Flows

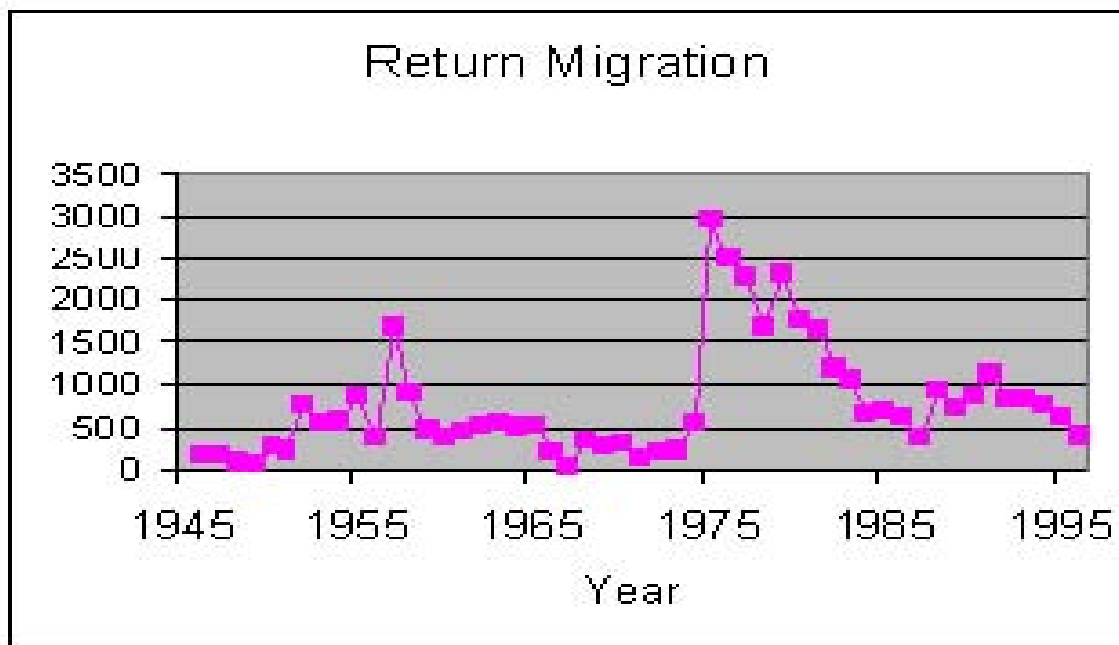
During the 1970s, outflow migration started to decrease and the country began to witness the first influx of returnees. Return had always been part of the general migration programme and, overall, one in four migrants came back, resulting in a total of 39,000 returnees between 1946 and 1996, with a peak in 1957 (when 1671 migrants returned), and another in 1975 (when the number of returnees suddenly rose to 2957). The factors which determine which migrants decided to return to Malta are two: firstly, many people who had left the country in the period between the second world war and the early seventies, returned to Malta either to retire or re-settle with their relatively young families; secondly, return was not seen as a risk for their future socio-economic prospects any longer when it was perceived that the economic conditions in Malta were improving. The 1995 Census provides data on return migrants by age and gender.

Table 1: Returned Migrants by Gender and Broad Age

Age Group	Males	Females	Total	%
0-4	54	31	85	0.38
5-9	139	108	247	1.10
10-14	229	239	468	2.09
15-19	364	372	736	3.28
20-24	424	421	845	3.77
25-29	415	464	879	3.92
30-34	658	650	1308	5.84
35-39	893	1034	1927	8.60
40-44	1372	1225	2597	11.59
45-49	1957	1545	3502	15.62
50-54	1732	1162	2894	12.91
55-59	1278	846	2124	9.48
60-64	1016	596	1612	7.19
65-69	774	471	1245	5.55
70-74	578	353	931	4.15
75-79	318	183	501	2.24
80-84	170	154	324	1.45
85-89	81	73	154	0.69
90-94	16	13	29	0.13
95+	5	1	6	0.03

Source: 1995 census, Vol. V

In turn, Figure 2 provides an overview of return migration flows between 1945 and 1995.



Source: Cauchi, 1999.

Figure 2: Return migration from 1945 to 1995.

Since the mid-80s up to present times outflows have been particularly low (731 Maltese emigrated in 1985, 160 left in 1990, 107 in 1995 and 121 in 1998). In the years following 1995 emigration was insignificant, and NSO declared it was very difficult to track it³. while in the last few years immigration to Malta has been on the increase (NSO 1999).

³ NSO, 71/2003.

Up to the year 2000 Malta received approximately 50-60 migrants per year, coming mostly through North Africa, who claimed asylum upon arrival. An exception was the arrival of a few hundreds of Iraqis (300-600) who arrived during the first Gulf War through the UNHCR but were later resettled in other countries, primarily in Canada, Sweden and Norway.

In 2002 and 2004, the number of immigrants arriving in Malta increased sharply. In 2001, 2,204 people were refused permission to enter the country and about 60 immigrants arrived in Malta irregularly. The following year, in 2002, a record of 21 boats landed in Malta bringing a total of 1,680 illegal immigrants, who had no personal documents or other means of identification. For the country this was a record number as it represents almost half its birth rate. Moreover, the government was caught unprepared to deal with the influx that put the existing infrastructure under considerable strain. In fact, many of the migrants were asylum seekers and had to be dealt with by the Refugee Commission (REFCOM) that had become operational just a few months before their arrival. When the commission was set up, no one had envisaged such a relatively huge caseload, on the basis of the previous years' experience. Therefore, coping with the arrival of so many asylum seekers in a relatively short period of time was no easy task. In 2003 the influx continued but numbers were quite small with 497 arrivals. As a matter of fact, at the beginning of 2004 only 100 immigrants had remained in the various detention centres in Malta. Unexpectedly, over the summer numbers increased again with an influx of over 1300 thus putting the issue of illegal immigration once more at the top of the public debate. In 2005 and 2006 the number of illegal migrants continued to soar.

2.2 Immigrant Communities in Malta

The main groups of immigrants who are somehow identifiable as distinct groups in Malta are involved in ethnic associations, self-help networks, religious groups and children's schools activities. The dearth in research on these issues does not allow for a deep understanding of the level of civic participation of the various groups and the dynamics of their engagement in Maltese life. The largest group of aliens living in Malta are Maltese emigrants or descendants of Maltese emigrants returning to Malta or citizens of other EU member states, with British expatriates being the main group. Other groups of interest are the historical Indian community, the 'Arab-Muslim' community, predominantly constituted by Libyans, and the smaller Nigerian and Albanian communities. A note on each group follows.

2.2.1 Maltese former emigrants or their descendants

Returnees often hold Maltese citizenship or have a background that allows them to follow the route of registration to obtain it, which would be the case for the vast majority of 556 Australians, 297 Americans, and 259 Canadians enumerated on Census day. Although these individuals often retain traits of behaviour, and nourish symbols linked to their previous country of residence as migrants especially in Gozo, they generally melt into the local population. It is very easy for them to re-integrate into the Maltese social fabric.

2.2.2 EU Citizens

EU citizens resident in Malta are not conspicuous except for the sizeable community of British who were attracted to Malta in the 1970s and thereafter. Most hold a resident permit or have become Maltese. On Census day in 1995, British nationals numbered 3,555 and accounted for 49.3 per cent of the non-Maltese element in the population at the time. There is a British Residents' Association that was founded in 1969 with the aim to provide help and support to its members and foster good relations

among them and, between them and Maltese citizens. The 410 Italians, also enumerated on Census day, are not readily identifiable as a group, but would be employed in both the manufacturing and servicing sectors. A sizeable group of Italians pertained to the Italian Military mission on the island.

2.2.3 Indian community

India and Malta have had cordial relations since the days of the British Empire of which they were both part. Currently, there are some 300 persons, of Indian origin, all of them from the town of Hyderabad in Sindh, who have adopted Maltese nationality.

The majority of 'I-Indiana' (the Indians), as the Maltese call them, belong to a well-established and respected business community which has been part of Malta's commercial life for the last 115 years and has integrated fully into Maltese society while retaining its roots. Falzon (2001) has published an interesting study of the history of the community from the time they first arrived in Malta to present times. The community started as outposts of Sindwork firms who had set up their business in Malta by the first decade of the twentieth century. The community was linked to the wider Diaspora whose main activities were trade of 'oriental' goods for tourists and visitors of the Mediterranean. According to Falzon (2001) during the first decade of the century most Sindwork firms in Malta were advertising themselves as commission agents and/or retailers of Maltese lace and it is also possible that some of them were actually contracting the manufacture of lace specifically for export. Since these early days, the business interests of the Indian community shifted, benefiting from the increased interest in fashion by the Maltese, mass tourism and more recently by an increased interest in traditional Indian furniture.

From a social point of view, this community initially lived a very isolated existence; employees were recruited in Hyderabad on a two-and-a-half or three year contract basis and were not allowed to bring their wives and dependents over. Moreover, they tended to keep to themselves and form little enclaves. The vast majority of Indians in Malta have been Maltese citizens for generations. There exists a, Maltese-Indian Community, named in a way to point to the fact that they do not perceived themselves as immigrants but as a fully integrated local ethnic minority group.

2.2.4 The Arab-Muslim community

The Arab-Muslim community in Malta is currently made of an estimated 3000 individuals, many of which are however Maltese citizens. On Census day in 1995 285 Libyans were counted, but their numbers have undoubtedly increased since then. The views of the Maltese in respect of this community verge on being xenophobic. Prejudice and racism are mostly directed at Libyans in Malta but often extended to all Arab looking people living or visiting the country. While on the one hand, at government level the two countries entertain good relations, the general attitudes of Maltese versus Libyans have degenerated over the past years. Under Mastiff's government in the late '70s and '80s, Malta and Libya developed a special political partnership, even at the time when Libya was in the international limelight for its alleged involvement in terrorist attacks and the numbers of Libyan visiting Malta increased drastically in 1992, when the United Nations imposed a number of sanctions on Libya. For the duration of these sanctions Libyans tended to consider Malta as a stepping stone to the world.

The general perception of Arabs in Malta is based on the typical stereotype of a male in his twenties who comes to Malta for a short stay and who is either a criminal or a potential criminal. The fact that some were and received extensive publicity does not help. As such, they are often discriminated against in places of entertainment. Arabs have a state recognized Muslim school and attend their own Mosque.

The Imam, recognized as the natural leader for this group of non-Maltese further states: 'The permanent residents are doing their best to integrate, to be part and parcel of Maltese society. More respect for this community would help them to integrate more. I'm happy because this will help Muslims settle and integrate in society, and enhance values of respect and tolerance. Many of our children come from Maltese families and some of them are even Christians, they mix, and we don't want them to be isolated. We do not want Muslims to live in ghettos; we want them to mix and to integrate in society while maintaining their own identity. We also want to promote a sense of belonging to the country, a sense of loyalty and citizenship.'⁴

2.2.5 Albanians

Albanians began to arrive in Malta as refugees in the early 1990s and in 1991 they established the association S.O.S. Albania. This is a voluntary organisation that was set up under the auspice of Emigrants' Commission and had the aim of assisting Albanian refugees through social and charitable projects. Over the years, some Albanians have settled, some have married Maltese citizens, others have moved to a third country or returned to Albania. New waves of Albanian refugees arrived in Malta during the Kosovo crisis in 1999 when the country accepted 110 refugees through the UNHCR evacuation programme ⁵(ECRE1999).

2.2.6 Nigerians

Nigerians in Malta are well known group of foreigners as they are mostly engaged in football, a sport loved by the whole country which has about fifty football clubs. Despite the lack of statistical data on their presence in the islands, one can safely claim that they are not one of the largest groups but simply one of the most visible ones. The field of their activity gives them notoriety and a privileged access to the media. The most well known Nigerian in Malta, is Damian Iwueke Chukwuemeka a FIFA licensed agent who arrived in Malta in 1989. Now a Maltese citizen, he actively promotes Nigerian interests and in 2004 even decided to run as an independent candidate for the EP elections with two slogans: 'Why Not?' and 'Adding colour to the EP elections'.

With any of these ethnic communities, Malta does not have any integration issues, and the different ethnic communities interact seamlessly with each other. The different aspects can be summarised as follows:

- Employment issues: members of the above communities do not find any formal or informal barriers to seek and find employment as long as they are qualified. There is no discrimination and they enjoy full rights especially because in their absolute majority they are Maltese nationals
- Education and training issues: as in the employment sphere, immigrants follow the standard educational programme of other Maltese, as is their right as Maltese nationals. During the period when citizenship has not been awarded, but freedom of movement has been awarded, equal rights exist. Ethnic minorities, like the Arabs, who prefer to have their own school, are allowed to do so as long as the national minimum curriculum is followed, allowing of course for due respect for variations in the teaching of foreign languages and religion.

⁴ Schembri, 2004a

⁵ ECRE1999.

- Housing and related issues: like any other Maltese national, members of the different ethnic groups have a right to access to housing, even to social housing, if they qualify in the same way that other Maltese nationals do.
- Social services: access to social services is also guaranteed. Access to free primary and secondary medical care does not discriminate along ethnic lines.
- Information, communication and culture issues: there is full freedom of association, and in fact a number of associations, some of which are promoted by the Church-run Migrants Commission, exist. These are free to exchange information, promote indigenous culture and facilitate contact between them and their culture of origin.

2.3 Legal framework

Maltese laws for immigration generally follow EU legislation. Therefore EU nationals require neither a visa nor a passport (an ID card or an unexpired passport are enough) to enter the country. Citizens of a number of other countries are also not required to apply for a visa and require only a valid passport when residing in Malta for up to three months. Visas for other nationalities are valid for one month. Immigrants are required to apply for a work permit. This exception to EU law was agreed upon before accession to safeguard the Maltese labour market, the growth of which is reaching saturation. In practice though, all work permits to EU nationals are granted, and currently this exercise is only used to monitor the labour market for any needed intervention.

Malta became a Member State of the EU in May 2004. Therefore, the past few years were marked by a wave of rapid and unprecedented changes in various sectors in order to bring laws and policies in line with the *acquis*. Within this general frame, the area of migration and asylum posed, without any doubt, one of the greatest challenges since it required significant changes to national laws and policies in view of EU membership, while at the same time, being challenged by the sudden surge in the number of irregular migrants arriving in Malta (Camilleri 2004)⁶.

In consideration of the fact that Malta has only recently begun to attract immigrants and that they are generally considered to be in transit towards Italy and the rest of Europe, the political debate on immigration is still focused on matter of border control and little has been done on immigrants' integration matters and civic participation. The main legislative instruments that regulate the life of immigrants are the Citizenship Act, the Immigration Act and the Asylum Act. The main provision of these legal instruments is discussed in turn below.

The Maltese Citizenship Act (1964) has undergone a number of amendments (the most recent in 2000 in order to introduce provisions for dual citizenship). The Act defines the two available processes to obtain Maltese citizenship which are, as we mentioned, registration and naturalization.

The registration process is targeted to former Maltese citizens or aliens who are related to Maltese citizens. In more details, this includes: a former citizen of Malta who does not qualify automatically for double citizenship or was previously a Maltese citizen; an alien married to Maltese citizen who can apply after five years of marriage; a widow/widower of a citizen of Malta who had been married with the deceased for at least five years; an adult son/daughter of a female Maltese citizen born outside of Malta on or after 21 September 1964 and before 1 August 1989.

⁶ Camilleri 2004.

Maltese citizenship can be acquired, instead, by naturalization by a foreigner who has resided in Malta for at least five years (the granting is discretionary), a person born abroad whose father was born abroad as well, but whose grandfather and great-grandparent were both born in Malta, and by a minor child of a Maltese citizen.

Obviously, once an individual becomes a Maltese citizen, he/she obtains all the rights of any other citizen including the right to vote in all elections, standing for office, adhere to political parties or other movements, etc.

The Immigration Act (Chapter 217 of the Laws of Malta) was first enacted in 1970 and, since then, has undergone several amendments in order to respond to changing national and international circumstances. Many of the most recent amendments (i.e. those brought in by Acts IV and IX of 2000 and Act XXIII of 2002,) were introduced to align Malta's immigration law with the EU *acquis* in view of accession. The Immigration Act regulates matters related to entry, visa regime and border control as well as the granting of temporary and permanent residence permits and the granting of permission for foreigners to work in Malta.

In general, the country has a rigid protectionist approach to labour immigration aimed at safeguarding the national labour force from external competition. A Work Permit Scheme that grants labour migrants permission to reside and work in the country for a definite period of time. The scheme is part of the immigration control strategy and has the aim of allowing for employment of foreigners, while at the same time protecting the long term interest of the resident work force.

Employment licenses are issued by the Department for Citizenship and Expatriates Affairs, for a determined period of time (usually a year) and for a specific purpose. In order to obtain a license, it is necessary to prove that efforts to engage a suitable Maltese citizen for the job were fruitless. In cases where a foreign investor in the manufacturing or financial sectors holds substantial shareholding, he/she may be granted a Work Permit on an indefinite basis.

The Refugee Act (2001) incorporates the obligations that Malta assumed when signing the 1951 Geneva Convention on asylum and the 1967 Protocol, and provides the framework for procedures and policies regarding refugees and asylum seeker in the Maltese Islands. For a long time, the Church-run Emigrants Commission, which had been originally set up to deal with emigration issues, was the body in charge of asylum procedures as an operational partner of the UNHCR and the country lacked a refugee law and asylum system.

Only in 2001, with the Refugee Act, Malta finally established national provisions and procedures with regard to refugees and asylum seekers. Individuals who have been recognized as refugees and those who are given humanitarian protection are granted a residence permit and a work permit when requested (Eurydice 2003/4).

With article 11, the act establishes the rights for an individual granted refugee status in Malta to remain in Malta, and to be granted personal documents, including a residence permit; to be given a Convention Travel Document entitling him to leave and return to Malta without the need of any visa unless he is in custody awaiting judicial proceedings for the commission of a criminal offence, or is serving a term of imprisonment; and to have access to state education and training in Malta, and to receive state medical care and services. Dependant members of the family of a person declared to be a refugee, if they are in Malta at the time of declaration or if they join him in Malta, enjoy the same rights and benefits as the refugee.

Persons who obtain a work permit or refugee status receive a resident permit. This permit is an indispensable prerequisite to acquire a certain degree of civil and political participation. In general, aliens have the right to vote at local elections if they have an identification card; are over eighteen years of age; are resident in Malta and have been residing in the country for at least six months before registering; are not interdicted or incapacitated for any mental infirmity by a Maltese court; and if they have registered as voters in the Special Register.

There is absolutely no problem in respect of housing, access to services specific to these communities. They are seamlessly integrated into the Maltese community and considered an integral part of it in all respects.

2.4 Illegal Immigrants

But Malta has a very serious problem of illegal migration. Illegal immigrants, commonly known as 'clandestines', enter a country illegally whether to seek employment, better economic opportunities or for other reasons. They should be distinguished from refugees who, on the other hand, are persons who have been forced to flee their country due to persecution and who therefore deserve protection. Refugees are usually threatened with their life and therefore they are protected even under international law. Refugee status is not automatic, and until each case is proven, persons are referred to as 'asylum seekers'. The EU has separate laws for illegal immigration and asylum seekers. Table 2 gives details of how many illegal migrants landed on Malta's shores over the last four years, by country of origin.

Table 2: Number of Illegal Migrants landed in Malta 2003-2006

Origin	2003	2004	2005	2006 (Jan-Sept)	TOTAL
Afghanistan	-	-	-	1	1
Algeria	-	2	1	9	12
Bangladesh	-	5	-	-	5
Benin	-	-	3	2	5
Burk. Faso	-	2	4	18	24
Burundi	-	-	1	-	1
Cameroon	2	2	-	3	7
Chad	2	1	16	13	32
Congo	47	109	3	7	166
Egypt	198	208	381	312	1099
Eritrea	1	199	372	316	888
Ethiopia	-	53	99	142	294
Gambia	-	-	-	1	1
Ghana	-	2	24	71	97
Guinea	-	-	-	4	4
Guinea Bissau	1	1	-	2	4
India	4	8	4	1	17
Iraq	-	9	36	7	52
Ivory Coast	28	53	75	58	214
Kurdistan	-	-	-	1	1
Lebanon	-	-	1	-	1
Liberia	4	10	29	5	48
Niger	-	1	41	40	82
Nigeria	-	4	45	53	102

Mali	1	1	2	40	44
Morocco	12	1	23	158	194
Mauritania	-	-	-	2	2
Pakistan	59	41	-	1	101
Palestine	4	67	44	4	119
Papua New Guinea	-	-	-	1	1
Polisaria	-	1	-		1
Senegal	1			2	3
Sierra Leone	-	3	11	15	29
Somalia	86	533	146	289	1054
South Africa	-			1	1
Sudan	42	64	420	66	592
Syria	-	-		1	1
Tanzania	-	-	-	1	1
Togo	-	2	18	22	42
Tunisia	10	6	23	17	56
Zimbabwe	-			1	1
Total Persons	502	1388	1822	1687	5399
Total No of Boats	NA	52	48	53	153

Given Malta's high population density, the impact of these figures on Malta is tremendous. For 2005, the arrivals would be equivalent to an arrival of 369,000 illegal immigrants in Germany and other large EU member states. The reasons for such high numbers are (a) since Malta is the southernmost tip of the European Union it is in the front line when dealing with the heavy northward migration of illegal immigrants from Africa; and (b) Malta has approximately 250,000 square kilometres of open sea search and rescue region.

Malta has historically been generous, just and humane in welcoming illegal immigrants. More than half the illegal immigrants landed in Malta have been granted refugee or protected humanitarian status, which is the highest rate of acceptance in the EU. A White Paper suggesting the granting of Maltese citizenship to refugees resident in Malta for over ten years was issued in 2005. Historically Malta gave refuge (and assisted in their resettlement) to just about eight hundred East African Asians who had been expelled from Uganda by Idi Amin and to just under a thousand Iraqis fleeing from Saddam Hussein's regime.

Having entered a country illegally, clandestines have no right to remain there. Those who can be repatriated are in fact sent back. Table 3 gives data of how many have been deported:

Table 3: No of Illegal Immigrants Deported 2004-2006

	2004	2005	2006 till end of Sep	TOTAL
Albania	4	0	0	4
Algeria	4	8	2	14
Australia	1	1	0	2
Belarus	3	0	0	3
Bosnia	1	1	0	2
Bulgaria	49	22	8	79
Cameroon	0	1	1	2
China	57	17	5	79
Columbia	1	2	0	3
Croatia	1	103	0	104
Ecuador	0	1	0	1
Egypt	212	426	307	945
Estonian	0	2	0	2
Georgia	0	3	9	12
Jordan	3	0	1	4
Kyrgyzstan	0	3	0	3
Libya	190	233	200	623
Moldovia	3	3	8	14
Morocco	4	22	118	144
Nigeria	7	5	3	15
Pakistan	0	1	0	1
Philippines	1	1	0	2
Portugal	0	0	0	0
Romania	5	15	2	22
Russia	15	20	2	37
Serbia	8	1	1	10
Singapore	0	1	0	1
Sudan	0	1	0	1
Syria	17	14	9	40
Thailand	1	0	0	1
Togo	0	1	0	1
Tunisia	5	27	13	45
Turkey	7	3	1	11
Ukraine	73	10	9	92
Uzbekistan	2	0	1	3
Yugoslavia	23	7	7	37
Zimbabwe	1	0	0	1
Total	704	955	707	2366

An asylum seeker is a person who, owing to a well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of *race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion* is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country, or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, as a result of such events is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. Asylum seekers have a right

to confidentiality, assistance of a lawyer, contact with UNHCR, the chance to present case fully, the obligation to cooperate, and the obligation to be truthful.

In line with EU policy Malta seeks to protect these people, not throw them out, since they face real danger if they return to their homeland. EU countries are parties to the 1951 Geneva Convention and its (1967) Protocol which outline the obligations of countries that receive applications from asylum seekers and the basic rights that should be granted to asylum seekers and refugees. Malta signed this Convention in 1970 and since then the Emigrants' Commission has acted as the body responsible for asylum seekers and refugees in Malta. Until recently Malta lacked a refugee law. This has now been enacted and Malta has also appointed its first Commissioner for Refugees. Malta also follows the Dublin Convention that determines which country is responsible for examining an application for asylum. This avoids situations of refugees being shuttled from one EU country to another with none accepting responsibility.

However, illegal immigrants, whether they are asylum seekers or economic migrants, have no right to civic or political participation in Malta. They are usually detained upon arrival in closed centres. Detention policies in Malta have been harshly criticised for the low standards of treatment of the migrants and, especially, for the duration of detention which lasted between one and two years. According to government officials, these conditions are due to the difficulties of coping with the unprecedented inflow of migrants and asylum seekers between 2001 and 2003. Lately some of the problems have been tackled by the government by opening more centres, improving general standards and reducing waiting times for processing asylum applications. The most relevant change is the introduction of a temporary limit to detention for asylum seekers, whereby they can be detained only for a maximum of 18 months while waiting for an answer on their application, if this period is exceeded they are moved to an open centre.

However, in reality, many of these immigrants, especially but not only those who have freedom of movement, are actually employed in various sectors, especially the construction and the catering industries. No reliable statistics exist on the extent of this practice, but it is quite pervasive.

2.5 Current Problems & Initiatives

Presently the problem of illegal immigration has increased, with severe strains on Malta's health, employment and social services, its internal security and public order, its social fabric and on the labour market. Detention costs for the first half of 2006 alone cost Lm320,423 (€746,385). In 2005, Malta sought EU aid in relation to reception of illegal immigrants, repatriation of those denied refugee status, resettlement of refugees into EU countries, and maritime security. In December 2005, the European Council adopted *The Global Approach to Migration: Priority Actions focusing on Africa and the Mediterranean*, but the deployment of said actions has been limited to the western Mediterranean, thus putting further pressure on the central Mediterranean route for illegal immigration which Malta forms part of. Political tension started developing as the EU persistently ignored Malta's precarious situation: member states party to the legally-binding Cotonou Agreement⁷ continued not to fulfil their obligations and East African countries, from which most central Mediterranean illegal immigration originates, were excluded from the Euro-African Conference on Migration and Development held 10-11 July 2006 in Tripoli⁸.

Currently, illegal immigration is the most relevant migration issue discussed in the country. The highest circulation newspapers, as well as the rest of the national media keep reporting news of immigrants

⁷ EU Official Journal L 317, 15/12/2000 P. 0003 - 0353

⁸ See <http://www.maec.gov.ma/migration/En/conference.htm>

landing illegally in the country. The main stories usually cover: vessels overcrowded with immigrants stuck outside the Maltese coast (between Malta and Sicily, or between Malta and Tunisia), and accidents with immigrants dying at sea.

The Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity (MFSS) is concentrating on the following areas of service provision and policy development. This constitutes the bulk of services falling under the generic remit of integration. That is, MFSS oversees and develops the integration processes which begin in open centres. Many initiatives, such as language training, are offered at the local (open centre) level. This is often done in collaboration with voluntary organizations.

The MFSS has managed and coordinated a huge increase in places offered at open accommodation centres. From the accommodation initially offered to 20 persons, today's six open accommodation centres currently accommodate over 1400 persons, and projections indicate that by the end of 2006 this figure will rise to around 2100. Today, the MFSS is directly involved in running *Dar is-Sliem* (for unaccompanied minors), *Dar il-Qawsalla*, (for families and pregnant women), Hal Far/Tents, and Hal Far/Apogg. The other centres are Marsal *Suret il-Briedem* centre, and Malta Emigrants' Commission residences. In a few weeks time, the MFSS will open another centre for unaccompanied minors and family units. The mission of each open centre is to provide a transition base to the next step in the person's journey, here or abroad. Mainly through legal employment residents of centres are encouraged to move on with their lives.

The MFSS set up the Refugee Service Area at *Agenzija Appogg*, providing social welfare services within closed accommodation centres, particularly with vulnerable adults and unaccompanied minors. It has also established a structure to network the provision of open centre accommodation (e.g. the Refugee Placement Leader), and has put in place procedures facilitating the running of the open centre network and a database of all residents.

The Ministry is also responsible to formulate and co-ordinate policies to fast track the release from closed centres of vulnerable categories of persons, particularly unaccompanied minors, families with minor children, and pregnant women. The Ministry runs an NGO Forum which acts as the focus for collaboration between itself and the NGOs working with asylum seekers. Jointly with the Dutch agency COA, the MFSS is developing 'integration/repatriation and service agreement' system.

Overall however, minor efforts have been made towards the integration of immigrants and refugees; Malta is still taking its first steps towards realising and accepting its new role of an immigration country and, at the moment, the accent is still on its role as a transit country towards the rest of Europe. Therefore, there is a predominant view that migrants are not there to stay. The public's and the political approach to immigration is generally quite protectionist and mostly based on the very same observation that led so many Maltese to emigrate in the past, that is the fact that Malta is a small densely populated country with limited resources and, therefore, no space for newcomers. So far, within the country, the issue of immigration is being perceived primarily as a question of border control.

Some important developments on this front are however, taking place. In December 2003, the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity took responsibility for refugees and asylum seekers in Malta and for developing an integration programme. In the first year of activities the Ministry has set the priority areas of intervention which are accommodation, health and education. New open centres for refugees and asylum seekers were set up and other activities were also organised such as English classes and training courses to improve employability.

Illegal immigration is extensively straining the resources of the Maltese community. Without any resources of their own, illegal migrants have to be provided with food and housing by the Maltese, who,

despite their traditional generosity, realise that the burden is excessive and is siphoning resources, both financial and human, that could be put to use to improve their own way of living. The NGOs active in the field are contributing extensively to this effort, but many Maltese realise that to service the illegal immigrant community, institutions like *Dar tal-Providenza*, a church-run complex for the severely disabled who cannot be kept at home is losing out because donations previously conceived to contribute to its budget (for example through a year-end fund-raising campaign by one of the most popular radio stations, RTK) are being shared with agencies catering for illegal migrants. As a matter of fact, persons who are averse to the surge of illegal migrants have stopped participating in the RTK fund-raising campaign. In respect of medical services, full services are provided, and these have to be carried comprehensively by the Maltese who, in consequence, see resources they are paying for through taxation, becoming limited, and queues becoming longer. The influx of illegal migrants with children is also having a negative effect on Maltese families who want to send their children to the Church-run school network since these are reserving places for children of illegal migrants, once again reducing the chances of Maltese children who have no special places reserved for them but depend on their names being drawn by lot.

In summary, it can be stated that irregular migration is a huge challenge for Malta and the Maltese in many areas. Increasingly the Maltese feel that the problems resulting from it need to be faced by Europe as a whole. This fact is being increasingly realised by other EU member states. The strains it is exerting on the fragile Maltese economy and the social fabric are far too great for the population living in such a small tract of land to sustain.

Appendix I: Grid provided by the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity for the NRP

<p>Develop a more aggressive plan against benefit fraud supported by the necessary legislative framework, especially with regards to invalidity benefits and unemployment assistance. (M1.7)</p>	<p>Encourage a more coherent distribution of social benefits whilst at the same time reinforcing the principle of 'Making work pay'.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>In November 2005, Government set up a Benefit Fraud and Investigation Directorate with the intention to develop a more aggressive strategy against benefit fraud. It is supported by the necessary legislative framework, especially with regards to invalidity benefits and unemployment assistance.</p>	<p>Completion by end 2008</p>	<p>917.774⁹</p>	<p>265,549</p> <p>(from 2007 financial allocation for the respective MFSS Cost Centre once this is approved)</p>	<p>265,549</p> <p>(from 2008 financial allocation for the respective MFSS Cost Centre once this is approved)</p>	
<p>Assess the role of means-testing instruments that determines eligibility for means-tested benefits (M1.8)</p>	<p>Encourage a more coherent distribution and redistribution of social benefits towards groups with greater needs</p> <p>Sustainability of public finances</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>A working group has been set up to review means-testing instruments and criteria for a uniform approach for the award of benefits across Government. Government's objective is to continue to modernise welfare systems through the restructuring of benefits to ensure equity, adequacy and sustainability, and to constantly improve the standards of social welfare services.</p>	<p>Completion by end 2006</p>	<p>4.44</p>			

⁹ Amount does not reflect the costs that would arise from a potential increase in staff and resources to strengthen the operations of this new directorate.

Commencement of incremental measures in pensions reform (M1.9)	Ensuring the sustainability of the future pension.	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>In October 2005, Government published the final report 'Pensions Adequate and Sustainable'. Following the submission of this report, Government announced the next steps with respect to pension reform in March 2006. In July 2006, Bill Number 76 'An Act to further amend the Social Security Act' was published and draft legislation has been submitted to Parliament for discussion.</p>	End 2008	Refer to footnote ¹⁰			
Promote family-friendly measures (M3.4)	<p>Increased participation of women in the labour market.</p> <p>Improved skills of women willing to re-enter the labour market.</p> <p>Increased provision of family friendly measures.</p> <p>Retained knowledge and</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>The Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) has carried out a study on teleworking in Malta and published the results of this study in a document entitled 'Telework- Is it for me?'</p> <p>The national Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) is actively working to encourage private sector employees to introduce work life policies to their employees. To this respect, ETC has published a manual for employers which will be disseminated together with training on best practices in work organisation particularly focusing on work life measures. Research also shows that work life policies are mostly taken up by women so the manual has also focused on this by promoting gender equality on the place of work.</p> <p>With respect to provision of childcare, the Employment and</p>		Please vide note below	Please vide note below		

¹⁰ The cost of this measure was absorbed by the Ministry of Finance.

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	<p>participation of women in the labour market</p> <p>Reducing further gender pay gap</p> <p>Better skilled workforce</p>	<p>Training Corporation is also offering a capped subsidy to parents pursuing ETC training who require care service.</p> <p>Since family friendly measures are mostly requested by parents of young children, several initiatives have been introduced to assist with child care provision. One milestone in this respect is the publishing of the policy document entitled 'Early Childhood Education and Care'. This document focuses on the quality of care centres pre-school services in Malta and provides recommendations and guidelines for improvement of these facilities.</p> <p>A gap analysis exercise of the existing centres has also been carried out in 2005. The Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA) has issued supplementary policy guidelines on childcare. In June 2006, Cabinet approved child care standards and the administrative scheme for the awarding of improvement grants to existing facilities. The improvement grant scheme is currently being implemented.</p>	<p>Completion of improvement grant scheme December 2007</p>		<p>85,000</p> <p>(from DSWS 2007 financial allocation once this is approved)</p>	<p>85,000</p> <p>(from DSWS 2008 financial allocation once this is approved)</p>	
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N.B. It is envisaged that costs relating to NRP Gender Mainstreaming measures undertaken by NCPE (through ESF funding) will be covered during 2006 and shall not be carried forward to 2007 and 2008.

Appendix II: Additional Tables re Illegal Migration provided through the MFSS

Institutional setting framing immigrant participation

Table 4: Refugee Commission - 1 January 2002 to 31 August 2006

TOTAL Applications processed : 3620 cases involving 4089 persons

	No. of Persons involved
Granted Refugee Status	175
Granted Humanitarian Protection	1839
Rejections	1759
Applications withdrawn	121
Applications still in process*	195
TOTAL Applications	4089
Awaiting start of procedure	698
Total current workload + awaiting cases	4787

Note: Humanitarian Protection cases are not included in Rejections

**72 cases involve unaccompanied minors. Procedure awaiting appointment of guardians*

Table 5: Hal-Far (Tents) Centre

Total population: 276; Gender: All males

Nationality	Number
Somalia	20
Sudan	115
Eritrea	97
Ethiopia	9
Nigeria	4
Ivory Coast	8
Liberia	6
Iraq	2
Niger	2
Sierra Leon	2
Togo	2
Chad	1
Palestine	3
Congo	3
Egypt	2

Table 6: Dar II-Qawsalla
Total population: 41(17 Families); Gender: Mixed

Nationality	Adults			Children		
	Male	Female	Pregnant	Boy	Girl	Pregnant
Somalia	1	2	1		4	
Sudan	1	1				
Eritrea		3		2	3	
Ethiopia	2	3			3	
Nigeria	1	2		1		
Liberia	1		1			
Togo	1	1			1	
Congo		2		2	1	
Cameroon						1

Table 7: Dar Is-Sliem – (Unaccompanied Minors*)

*Minor means under 18

Total population: 29; Gender: Mixed

Nationality	Male	Female
Liberia	1	1
Somalia	13	2
Eritrea	5	
Ethiopia	1	
Ivory Coast	2	
Nigeria	2	2

Table 8: Marsa Open Centre

Total population: 523; Gender: All males except for 1 women (Somali)

Nationality	Number
Somalia	165
Congo	32
Ivory Coast	29
Palestine	10
Eritrea	144
Liberia	8
Sudan	104
Ghana	1
Burkina Faso	1
Ethiopia	1
Niger	1
Nigeria	4
Togo	1
Iraq	3
Pakistan	18
Unidentified	1

of which status is as follows:

Humanitarian	Freedom of Movement	Refugee
399	122	2

Table 9: Emigrant's Commission

Total population: 320 (including children); Gender: Mixed

(a) Balzan: 139

Nationality	Male	Female	Single Mums	Couples	Children
Somalia	44	10	5	9	10
Eritreans	13	5	3	4	3
Ethiopian		1		2	3
Liberians	7				
Sudanese	3				
Cameroon	1				
Sri Lanka	1				

(b) Floriana: 31

Nationality	Female	Single Mums	Couples	Children
Somalia	6			
Eritreans	3		2	2
Ethiopian			3	3
Sierra Leone		1		2
Sri Lanka			1	2

Location	Adults	Children	Total
Guardamangia	18	38	56
Msida	13	11	24
Valletta 1	5	5	10
Valletta 2	6	5	11
Valletta 3	8	1	9
Valletta 4	5	1	6
Valletta 5	3		3
Valletta 6	1	5	6
Valletta 7	2	1	3
Valletta 8	2		2
St Venera	8	7	15
Marsa	2	3	5

Table 9: Hal-Far Appogg
 Total population: 140 (including children); Gender: Mixed

Nationality	Adults		Children	
	Male	Female	Boy	Girl
Burkina Faso	3			
Cameroon		1		
Chad	2	1	1	
Congo	10	7	1	3
Eritrea	17	10	1	
Ethiopia	3	1	1	3
Iraq	1			
Ivory Coast	30			
Liberia	10			
Mali	3			
Somalia	13	2	2	
Sudan	6			
Togo	2			
Unknown	6			

Table 10: Migration from and to Malta 1951-2001

Emigration						Year	Immigration					
Country of future permanent residence							Country of last permanent residence					
Australia	Canada	United Kingdom	U.S.A.	Other	Total		Australia	Canada	United Kingdom	U.S.A.	Other	Total
4,008	1,607	1,204	651	14	7,882	1951	332	135	40	63	-	470
2,161	680	1,200	1,293	11	5,345	1952	608	144	163	63	3	1,009
1,378	770	1,702	663	1	4,534	1953	439	117	261	132	-	949
8,470	663	1,660	269	25	11,447	1954	240	157	377	176	-	869
6,442	425	1,672	266	2	9,007	1955	267	169	215	110	-	661
2,724	383	1,611	27	7	4,752	1956	133	64	164	27	-	388
1,264	739	660	262	6	3,283	1957	1,097	119	408	47	-	1,671
1,643	605	605	196	3	3,152	1958	583	63	163	50	-	869
1,675	472	744	174	-	3,265	1959	361	39	56	6	-	462
2,304	609	678	142	6	3,841	1960	336	12	11	3	-	362
1,762	308	527	176	29	2,768	1971	11	6	123	3	-	143
1,653	467	567	213	23	3,163	1972	26	14	146	13	2	202
2,418	788	603	253	19	4,099	1973	21	39	154	12	4	230
2,596	755	561	252	6	4,189	1974	63	57	263	21	1	535
661	441	254	236	12	1,604	1975	558	517	1,572	269	41	2,667
619	322	113	162	11	1,107	1976	1,344	318	721	76	13	2,473
768	213	67	126	5	1,237	1977	1,263	238	615	113	6	2,268
969	269	100	246	3	1,577	1978	635	279	264	63	7	1,678
765	248	62	205	3	1,303	1979	1,177	247	566	158	6	2,269
661	213	48	129	3	1,374	1980	888	178	622	61	6	1,753
83	24	12	23	11	153	1982	366	67	166	65	54	620
31	6	10	12	5	66	1983	248	108	246	66	70	627
54	3	6	26	3	104	1984	282	108	233	76	60	781
55	3	10	26	3	107	1985	161	61	204	61	64	621
51	..	43	..	..	64	1986	127	52	124	44	52	369
16	..	63	..	..	73	1987	144	46	140	53	70	453
34	..	67	..	..	121	1988	66	33	100	73	47	349
13	..	54	..	..	67	1989	76	20	118	63	60	339
..	..	67	67	2000	69	19	147	61	134	450
..	..	73	73	2001	63	26	162	51	147	472

Source NSO 107/2002

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