



Visite de l'AAD à Valletta dans le contexte de la présidence maltaise 2 - 4 avril 2017

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II. Présidence maltaise de l'UE 2017

1. Dossiers prioritaires sous la présidence maltaise du Conseil de l'UE

2. Priorités de la présidence maltaise discutées au sein des commissions parlementaires

3. Contributions de la COSAC LVI



MALTA EU 2017

Les priorités de la Présidence
maltaise du Conseil de l'Union
européenne



Les priorités de la Présidence maltaise du Conseil de l'Union européenne

1. Migration

Nos objectifs consistent à plaider en faveur de la mise en œuvre rapide des mesures déjà arrêtées d'un commun accord, et de garantir que la question demeure en tête de l'agenda politique. Nos citoyens sont demandeurs de mesures concrètes et nous ne pouvons nous permettre d'avoir une UE complaisante qui ne traite pas ce sujet avec l'urgence et l'importance qu'il mérite.

Objectifs Établis

- Renforcer et rationaliser le système européen commun d'asile sera important pour distribuer la charge migratoire entre les États membres (EM) d'une manière plus équitable;
- Par rapport à la migration, les tentatives de révision du règlement de Dublin qui définit les responsabilités des États membres dans le traitement des applications seront d'une importance clé;
- Transformer le bureau européen d'appui à l'asile en une Agence européenne à part entière, est un élément important de la réforme du système européen commun d'asile;
- Étant donné que la période de deux ans pour la redistribution géographique de 160,000 personnes ayant besoin d'une protection à l'intérieur du pays se rapproche, nous sommes conscients de la nécessité de veiller à une meilleure mise en œuvre;
- Malte souhaite atteindre une approche holistique à la migration tant dans son aspect interne et externe. Dans cet esprit nous allons poursuivre ce qui a été convenu au Sommet de la Valette sur la migration. Nous travaillerons pour compléter le travail par rapport au plan d'investissement externe européen pour promouvoir un investissement durable en Afrique et le voisinage et pour confronter les origines de la migration.

2. Le Marché Unique

Il s'agit du plus grand atout de l'Europe. Si, collectivement, nous parvenons à tirer pleinement parti du marché unique et développons le marché unique numérique, nous apporterons des avantages concrets à nos économies, nos entreprises et nos familles en supprimant les entraves aux échanges, et l'amélioration de la protection et de l'accès aux services pour les consommateurs. Nous nous efforçons d'atteindre autant de mesures que possible dans ce domaine en améliorant et concluant les propositions législatives clés qui sont dans le stade de négociations. Le marché des capitaux de l'Union européenne sera aussi accordé l'attention qu'il mérite.

Objectifs Établis

- La fin des frais d'itinérance dans l'ensemble de l'Europe, de sorte que les citoyens puissent rester en contact lorsqu'ils voyagent;
- Faire des progrès pour s'assurer que les consommateurs cherchant à acheter des produits ou services en ligne ou en personne, ne souffrent pas de discrimination selon leur nationalité ou pays de résidence par rapport à l'accès aux prix, ventes ou termes de paiement (blocage géographique);
- Assurer une mise au point plus pointue sur la législation de l'UE pour adresser les problèmes confrontés par les PME comme pour permettre le développement d'un éventail de sources de financement à travers l'Union par les actions de l'Union des marchés de capitaux;
- La croissance et l'emploi demeurent une priorité essentielle pour tous les États membres et pour l'UE dans son ensemble. Le prolongement en temps et ressources financières du fonds européen d'investissement et du mandat de prêt externe EIB sera des dossiers prioritaires au cours de la Présidence maltaise pour aider l'investissement privé tout en faisant bon usage des faibles ressources disponibles à l'intérieur et à l'extérieur de l'UE;
- Revue du rapport d'efficacité énergétique qui vise à réduire la consommation d'énergie dans les immeubles résidentiels et industriels à travers l'utilisation de l'énergie de manière plus efficace.
- Renforçant la sécurisation de la provision d'énergie pour tous les citoyens de l'UE en particulier dans les moments de crise;
- Permettre aux consommateurs européens de continuer à bénéficier de leur abonnement « domicile » sur le contenu audiovisuel en ligne quand ils voyagent dans un autre État membre;



- Réassigner la fréquence haute vitesse 700MHz (694-790MHz) utilisée à présent pour la diffusion de télévision numérique et les micros sans fil, permettant ainsi à cette bande de fréquences d'être utilisée pour le 5G;
- Œuvrer en faveur du WiFi gratuit dans toutes les villes et villages de l'Union européenne.

3. Sécurité

À la suite des attentats terroristes atroces au cours des 12 derniers mois, nous nous devons en tant qu'Union de rester vigilants afin d'assurer la sécurité de nos citoyens. Dans le contexte d'un paysage international de plus en plus volatil, la Présidence maltaise contribuera à des propositions concrètes qui s'attaquent aux problèmes régionaux et mondiaux, tout en respectant les valeurs qui sous-tendent l'existence même de l'Union. Le premier axe de travail dans ce domaine reste une diplomatie efficace, et, à cet égard, nous travaillerons en étroite collaboration avec le service européen pour l'action extérieure dans le cadre de la stratégie globale de l'Union européenne afin de gérer les défis complexes de la migration, du terrorisme et des menaces hybrides.

Objectifs Établis

- Poursuivre la lutte contre le terrorisme en faisant avancer la lutte contre la criminalité organisée à travers le cycle politique de l'Union européenne; le suivi de la feuille de route de l'UE pour améliorer l'échange et la gestion de l'information, y compris des solutions d'interopérabilité pour les bases de données utilisées par les autorités nationales responsables des lois et de la gestion des frontières ; la poursuite de l'action en matière de lutte contre le financement du terrorisme par le biais de divers dossiers législatifs, y compris un accord politique sur la quatrième directive contre le blanchiment des capitaux;
- Réaliser des progrès sensibles sur les initiatives actuelles visant à améliorer la gestion des frontières extérieures de l'Union, y compris la mise en place d'un système communautaire pour l'enregistrement des entrées et sorties des ressortissants de pays tiers, et la création d'un système européen d'autorisation et d'information concernant les voyages (ETIAS), Ces propositions aideront à renforcer la sécurité interne;
- Prendre les premières étapes sur la voie de la création du parquet européen, qui examinera et poursuivra les personnes et sociétés qui agissent à l'encontre des intérêts financiers des l'UE;
- Améliorer la gouvernance d'Eurojust, pour garantir une approche plus coordonnée par-delà les frontières ainsi que garantir la coopération judiciaire en matière pénale et ainsi, mieux protéger les citoyens contre des activités criminelles telles que le trafic international, le terrorisme et le blanchiment d'argent.

4. Inclusion Sociale

La politique sociale est un domaine auquel le gouvernement maltais tient beaucoup. C'est un secteur où nous espérons faire bénéficier nos partenaires européens de notre expérience. Les travaux dans ce domaine seront guidés par une concertation étroite avec les partenaires sociaux, la société civile et les citoyens afin de promouvoir l'égalité des sexes et les droits des minorités et des groupes vulnérables.

Objectifs Établis

- Améliorant la participation des femmes au sein du marché de l'emploi. La Présidence maltaise visera à faire du progrès sur les problèmes relatifs à l'équilibre entre les hommes et les femmes y compris la proposition pour une directive sur l'amélioration de l'équilibre entre les hommes et les femmes parmi les directeurs d'entreprises énumérées à la bourse;
- Malte continuera à lutter contre la violence à caractère sexiste, notamment en promouvant le partage des meilleures pratiques et l'échange d'informations sur la législation existante, les politiques et stratégies, ainsi que les données statistiques et les études;
- Malte organisera une conférence ministérielle sur les questions LGBTIQ afin d'étudier de manière plus approfondie la feuille de route de la Commission en la matière, qui a été présentée dans le cadre de la Présidence néerlandaise.

5. Le Voisinage Européen

La sécurité et la prospérité de l'Europe sont liées à celles de leurs voisins. Les pays bordant la rive sud de la Méditerranée sont confrontés à de graves difficultés, allant du conflit au terrorisme, à l'extrémisme et à la radicalisation. Consciente des répercussions potentielles d'instabilité au-delà des frontières de l'Europe, la Présidence maltaise mettra l'accent sur l'engagement de l'UE sur la voie de la stabilisation de notre voisinage. La stratégie globale de l'UE constituera une référence importante pour guider l'action de l'Union et déterminer son rôle en tant qu'acteur pertinent et efficace.

Objectifs Établis

- Une attention particulière sera accordée aux pays du voisinage méridional de l'UE, avec la stabilisation de la Libye et la contribution de l'Union à une transition pacifique, sont des priorités majeures;
- La Présidence maltaise soutiendra les efforts européens et internationaux en faveur de la reprise du processus de paix au Proche-Orient entre Israël et la Palestine;
- Faire en sorte que la transition démocratique en Tunisie reste sur la bonne voie et maintenir la dynamique de la poursuite des négociations commerciales;
- Contribuer à l'UE et aux efforts internationaux pour adresser le conflit en Syrie;
- L'approfondissement des relations entre l'Union européenne et la Ligue des États arabes sera mis en avant, dans le but de mieux affronter les défis partagés et les responsabilités communes. La Présidence s'efforcera également de revitaliser les relations avec le Conseil de coopération du Golfe;
- La coopération avec les pays du voisinage oriental restera importante, notamment en vue de soutenir l'Ukraine et de veiller à la coopération avec la Russie sur des questions d'intérêt mondial ou régional.

6. Maritime

L'UE sera de plus en plus dépendante de la mer et des océans ; alors que la viabilité et le développement continu du secteur maritime, dans le cadre de la politique maritime intégrée de l'UE, s'insère tout naturellement dans les priorités législatives d'une nation insulaire ouverte au sud de la Méditerranée. En outre, le secteur maritime fournit un large spectre d'activités de recherche innovantes qui pourraient être exploitées et développées dans des emplois à haute valeur ajoutée, conformément à l'initiative « croissance bleue » dédiée à la croissance et à la compétitivité.

Objectifs Établis

- La gouvernance internationale des océans sera également lancée formellement dans l'agenda de Malte, dans le but d'assurer une approbation politique sur la voie à suivre d'une manière plus cohérente, compréhensive et efficace, la politique de l'UE visant à améliorer la gouvernance internationale des océans et la viabilité de nos océans;
- L'initiative spécifique pour le bassin de la Méditerranée occidentale devrait être lancée au début de l'année 2017, visant un secteur géographique déterminé présentant un intérêt pour les États membres et les pays voisins. Cette initiative s'appuiera sur des structures existantes, dans le cadre de l'économie bleue pour améliorer la gouvernance maritime (l'objectif étant de parvenir à des conditions de concurrence équitables dans la région), d'exploiter les points forts et combler les lacunes, tout en garantissant une approche durable.

Les priorités de la Présidence Maltaise débattues en commissions¹

Les priorités de la présidence maltaise du Conseil des ministres de l'UE seront présentées en commissions parlementaires par les ministres maltais lors d'une série de réunions prévues en janvier.

Affaires constitutionnelles: Brexit, lobbyistes, partis politiques

Les conséquences du Brexit, la transparence et les défis à venir pour l'Europe figurent parmi les principaux sujets dont Louis Grech, vice-premier ministre maltais, et Ian Borg, secrétaire parlementaire maltais aux financements européens, ont débattu en commission des affaires constitutionnelles le 31 janvier. Les députés ont interrogé la présidence sur la préparation des différents scénarios qui pourraient survenir après le lancement des négociations entre le Royaume-Uni et l'UE et sur la nécessité d'accélérer les travaux relatifs au renforcement de la transparence au sein du Conseil.

MM. Grech et Borg ont fait remarquer qu'il était trop tôt pour analyser tous les scénarios possibles entre le Royaume-Uni et l'UE. Cependant, ils ont souligné que les priorités de l'Union ne devaient pas être "torpillées" par le Brexit, s'engageant à tenir leurs promesses sur les questions de sécurité, de migration et d'économie. Ils ont ajouté que le Conseil était disposé à prendre de mesures importantes concernant la proposition sur le registre obligatoire des lobbyistes couvrant les trois institutions de l'UE et s'engageait à progresser sur les règles relatives au financement européen des partis politiques.

Environnement et santé publique: changement climatique, économie circulaire, accès aux médicaments

"Nous avons le devoir de protéger ce que nous avons accompli jusqu'ici", a déclaré José Herrera, ministre du développement durable, de l'environnement et du changement climatique, le 31 janvier. Parmi les priorités, il a mentionné le changement climatique (en particulier les

¹<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/fr/news-room/20170110IPR57653/les-priorit%C3%A9s-de-la-pr%C3%A9sidence-maltaise-d%C3%A9battues-en-commissions>

dossiers SEQE et non-SEQE), l'économie circulaire (avec le paquet déchets), l'agenda 2030 pour le développement durable, et la résistance antimicrobienne. "Nous voulons être des courtiers honnêtes, sans intention cachée, sans prétention", a-t-il dit.

Chris Fearne, ministre de la santé, a affirmé que les dossiers à l'ordre du jour ces derniers mois devraient rester dans le programme de travail de la présidence maltaise. Il a néanmoins proposé d'ajouter "de nouveaux concepts, de nouvelles idées". Les travaux visant à prévenir les maladies non transmissibles, comme l'obésité, seront une priorité, tout comme la coopération transfrontalière des services aux patients souffrant de maladies rares. L'accès aux médicaments est un sujet sur lequel les États membres devraient partager davantage d'informations, en particulier la passation conjointe de médicaments, a-t-il ajouté.

Agriculture et développement rural : produits bio, "omnibus", PAC après 2020

La présidence souhaite faire avancer les négociations avec le Conseil et la Commission sur la nouvelle législation européenne concernant le bio, progresser sur les éléments agricoles de la proposition législative dite "omnibus" et lancer un débat en profondeur sur la politique agricole commune (PAC) après 2020, a souligné Roderick Galdes, secrétaire parlementaire pour l'agriculture, en commission de l'agriculture le 26 janvier.

Les députés ont salué les intentions de la présidence de lancer un débat sur la prochaine réforme de la PAC qui, selon eux, devra apporter des solutions raisonnables et simplifier la vie des agriculteurs. Par ailleurs, ils ont appelé le Conseil à faire preuve de plus de flexibilité dans les pourparlers sur la législation relative au bio et à aider le Parlement à garantir les intérêts des agriculteurs européens dans les négociations commerciales en cours et à venir, notamment avec le Mercosur et le Japon.

Emploi et affaires sociales: droits et détachement des travailleurs, acte européen sur l'accessibilité

Mettre à jour les règles de l'UE et protéger les droits des travailleurs sans entraver le marché intérieur seront les principaux points d'intérêt de la présidence, a affirmé Helena Dalli, ministre

du dialogue social, de la protection des consommateurs et des libertés civiles, en commission de l'emploi et des affaires sociales le 25 janvier. Elle s'est dit en faveur d'un compromis sur la législation relative au détachement des travailleurs et s'est engagée à œuvrer pour un concept moderne de l'équilibre entre la vie professionnelle et privée, afin de permettre un taux d'emploi plus important chez les femmes.

Les députés ont demandé à la présidence d'accorder une plus grande attention au chômage persistant des jeunes et à l'avancement de l'adoption de l'acte européen sur l'accessibilité - des règles communes qui devraient supprimer les obstacles pour les citoyens handicapés ou plus âgés qui souhaitent accéder à des produits, services et emplois partout dans l'UE.

Marché intérieur: e-commerce, services, réception des véhicules

Le marché unique, le "plus grand atout de l'UE", est une priorité clé. C'est ce qu'a dit Christian Cardona, ministre de l'économie, de l'investissement et des petites entreprises, en commission du marché intérieur le 25 janvier. Les initiatives du marché unique devraient contribuer à améliorer la confiance des consommateurs, a-t-il poursuivi.

Supprimer les obstacles au commerce, donner davantage de choix aux consommateurs, améliorer l'accès des PME au financement, et mettre en œuvre la stratégie pour le marché unique figuraient parmi les sujets abordés avec les députés, tout comme les projets relatifs au marché numérique unique, la proposition sur le système de réception par type de véhicule, et le paquet services récemment présenté. Concernant le marché numérique unique, la présidence donnera la priorité au paquet e-commerce, en particulier à la proposition sur le blocage géographique, et cherchera à progresser rapidement sur le règlement relatif à la protection des consommateurs, a conclu M. Cardona.

Industrie, énergie, recherche: numérisation complète et connectivité, PRIMA, approvisionnement en énergie

Conclure les négociations sur les services d'itinérance de gros et promouvoir la connectivité à Internet dans les communautés locales sont les priorités de la présidence, a affirmé Emmanuel

Mallia, ministre maltais de la compétitivité et de l'économie numérique, maritime et des services, en commission de l'industrie, de la recherche et de l'énergie le 25 janvier. PRIMA, le partenariat en matière de recherche et d'innovation dans la zone méditerranéenne, et des obligations plus strictes sur les rapports et contrôles en termes de recherche figurent également parmi les priorités dans le domaine de la recherche, a déclaré Chris Agius, secrétaire d'État à la recherche, l'innovation, la jeunesse et les sports.

Le ministre de l'économie et de l'investissement, Chris Cardona, a précisé que la numérisation de l'industrie sera à l'ordre du jour, tandis que Konrad Mizzi, ministre au sein du cabinet du Premier ministre, a souligné que la clôture des dossiers sur la sécurité de l'approvisionnement en énergie et sur l'étiquetage de l'efficacité énergétique était également une priorité.

Développement: nouvelle politique de développement, migration, réfugiés

La présidence souhaite suivre de près les engagements pris par les États membres au sommet mondial humanitaire à Istanbul l'année dernière, mettre le nouveau consensus européen pour le développement sur les rails, et améliorer les réponses coordonnées aux crises prolongées, a expliqué George Vella, ministre des affaires étrangères, en commission du développement le 25 janvier. La migration est une question clé pour Malte, qui est en première ligne de la crise des réfugiés en Méditerranée.

Plusieurs députés ont exprimé leurs craintes quant au sort des réfugiés bloqués dans le froid en Europe et ont appelé à des mesures rapides pour alléger leurs souffrances. D'autres ont insisté sur le fait qu'une vision à long terme était malheureusement absente de la politique européenne sur les déplacements forcés et ont exhorté les pays de l'UE à mieux utiliser les connaissances locales pour analyser et résoudre les problèmes.

Transports et tourisme: sécurité maritime et aérienne, numérisation de la mobilité

La présidence a l'intention de faire des transports maritimes sa première priorité. Elle espère conclure les négociations sur la mise à jour des règles de sécurité pour les navires à passagers et progresser sur la directive relative aux installations portuaires pour les déchets d'exploitation

des navires, a déclaré Joe Mizzi, ministre des transports et des infrastructures, en commission des transports et du tourisme le 25 janvier. Selon le ministre du tourisme, Edward Zammit Lewis, la présidence est impatiente de débiter les négociations avec le Parlement sur la sécurité aérienne et l'Agence européenne de la sécurité aérienne, et a appelé à l'achèvement du marché unique, au bénéfice du secteur du tourisme.

Les députés ont interrogé les ministres sur la vision de la présidence concernant les initiatives routières à venir, sur les façons de mettre en lumière les possibilités de la numérisation pour la mobilité, et sur les moyens d'encourager le développement d'un transport maritime respectueux de l'environnement. Finalement, ils ont demandé comment la présidence allait veiller à une concurrence équitable entre les transports ferroviaire et routier.

Commerce international: accord de libre-échange, TTIP, anti-dumping

La présidence souhaite relancer les accords de libre-échange de l'UE, mais pas au détriment des normes, a affirmé le ministre de l'économie, de l'investissement et des petites entreprises, M. Cardona, en commission du commerce international le 24 janvier. "Il n'y aura pas de nivellement par le bas", a-t-il précisé. Concernant le TTIP, le ministre a déclaré que l'UE était prête à reprendre les négociations si les États-Unis faisaient preuve de volonté en la matière. La présidence est déterminée à avancer sur les outils de défense commerciale de l'UE, attendus de longue date, et sur sa législation anti-dumping.

Selon plusieurs députés, le temps est venu pour l'Europe d'aller de l'avant et de "prendre l'initiative" en matière de commerce international, au moment même où l'administration américaine choisit une voie différente.

Développement régional: visibilité de la politique de cohésion, "omnibus"

L'importance de la politique européenne de cohésion, qui est de plus en plus considérée comme une politique d'investissement, ainsi que la nécessité de simplifier les procédures et d'accroître la visibilité des résultats des projets financés par l'UE ont été soulignés par le secrétaire d'État à la présidence de l'UE et aux fonds de l'UE, Ian Borg, lundi 23 janvier lors d'un débat en

commission du développement régional. M. Borg a affirmé que les deux principaux objectifs de la présidence maltaise concernant la politique de cohésion étaient d'avancer sur la proposition législative "omnibus" et de se concentrer sur le débat politique visant à rendre les résultats de la politique de cohésion plus visibles pour les citoyens.

Culture, éducation et sport: éducation de haute qualité, services audiovisuels et année du patrimoine culturel

Une éducation de haute qualité pour tous ainsi qu'un système éducatif qui puisse lutter contre le chômage des jeunes et l'inadéquation des compétences sont les principales priorités de la présidence maltaise du Conseil, a affirmé le ministre de l'éducation, Evarist Bartolo, en commission de la culture et de l'éducation mardi 24 janvier.

Dans le domaine culturel, l'avancement du patrimoine culturel européen, les services de médias audiovisuels et les dossiers sur la diplomatie culturelle seront les priorités clés, a déclaré le ministre de la culture, Owen Bonnici. Il s'est dit en faveur d'une protection contre les discours de haine, d'une protection des mineurs dans le cadre des médias en ligne, du fonctionnement du principe du pays d'origine, et de l'indépendance et d'un rôle plus clair pour les mécanismes de contrôle et des autorités de régulation des services de médias audiovisuels.

Affaires étrangères: négociations d'adhésion de la Turquie, politique de voisinage et situation en Libye

Les négociations du processus d'élargissement et la politique de voisinage seront au cœur de la présidence maltaise, a déclaré le ministre des affaires étrangères, George Vella, en commission des affaires étrangères mardi 24 janvier. Plusieurs députés ont fait part de leurs préoccupations quant à la situation en Turquie, certains demandant de geler les négociations d'adhésion avec le pays. "La Turquie n'est pas seulement un pays candidat, c'est un aussi un partenaire clé pour l'UE", a souligné M. Vella. "Maintenir un dialogue ouvert est capital, afin de ne pas brûler les ponts", a-t-il ajouté.

Interrogé sur l'avenir des relations entre l'UE et les États-Unis suite à la récente élection de Donald Trump comme Président, M. Vella a précisé que les relations transatlantiques devaient être maintenues et renforcées.

Commission des libertés civiles, de la justice et des affaires intérieures: migration et terrorisme

Faire face à la migration et lutter contre le terrorisme et la radicalisation seront les principales priorités de la présidence, ont déclaré Carmelo Abela et Owen Bonnici, respectivement ministre des affaires intérieures et de la sécurité nationale et ministre de la justice, de la culture et de l'administration locale, aux députés de la commission des libertés civiles le 12 janvier. La présidence travaillera pour résoudre les divergences entre les gouvernements nationaux en vue d'une solidarité et d'une responsabilité accrues sur la question des flux migratoires. M. Abela a également précisé que l'accord entre la Turquie et l'UE devait être respecté.

Plusieurs députés ont demandé quelles mesures pouvaient être prises pour garantir le respect par les États membres de leurs obligations en matière de réfugiés. Les deux ministres ont reconnu que le système de Dublin devait être réformé et que les engagements des États membres devaient être respectés. Concernant la législation "frontières intelligentes", la présidence espère trouver un accord sur le nouveau système d'entrée et de sortie d'ici juin 2017.

Commission des affaires juridiques: droit d'auteur, fiscalité et droit de la famille

La présidence œuvrera au Conseil pour trouver un accord, d'ici la fin du mois de juin, sur les contrats couvrant du contenu numérique, et pour trouver le juste équilibre entre le flux gratuit d'informations et les droits des créateurs de contenu (droit d'auteur). C'est ce qu'ont affirmé le ministre de la justice, de la culture et de l'administration locale, Owen Bonnici, et le ministre de l'économie, des investissements et des petites entreprises, Christian Cardona, en commission des affaires juridiques le 12 janvier.

Les députés ont demandé quelles étaient les intentions de la présidence concernant les propositions liées aux déclarations "pays par pays" à des fins fiscales pour les multinationales et concernant la révision du règlement Bruxelles II bis sur le droit de la famille. Les ministres ont assuré que la présidence ferait tout son possible pour progresser sur l'ensemble des dossiers en cours.

IV

*(Informations)*INFORMATIONS PROVENANT DES INSTITUTIONS, ORGANES ET
ORGANISMES DE L'UNION EUROPÉENNE

PARLEMENT EUROPÉEN

SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE DE LA LVI^e CONFÉRENCE DES ORGANES PARLEMENTAIRES SPÉCIALISÉS DANS LES
AFFAIRES DE L'UNION DES PARLEMENTS DE L'UNION EUROPÉENNE (COSAC)

13, 14 et 15 novembre 2016, Bratislava

Contribution de la LVI^e COSAC

(2016/C 486/01)

1. Renforcement du rôle des parlements nationaux dans l'Union européenne

- 1.1. La COSAC se félicite de l'action accomplie par l'actuelle Commission, depuis son entrée en fonctions en 2014, pour améliorer les relations avec les parlements nationaux, dont rend compte le vingt-sixième rapport semestriel de la COSAC et dont témoigne notamment l'augmentation du nombre des visites effectuées par les commissaires auprès des chambres et parlements nationaux, et encourage la Commission européenne à poursuivre l'effort engagé afin d'instaurer les modalités d'un dialogue durable avec les parlements nationaux. Ce dialogue vient conforter les compétences permettant aux parlements nationaux de s'assurer que les gouvernements nationaux rendent compte de leur action et de contrôler les politiques nationales et européennes menées par ceux-ci.
- 1.2. En ce qui concerne le dialogue politique entre la Commission européenne et les parlements nationaux, la COSAC estime que les réponses données aux avis motivés des parlements nationaux sont susceptibles d'améliorations et propose donc que la Commission examine avec plus d'attention les préoccupations particulières exprimées par les parlements nationaux, dans un délai maximal de huit semaines, et qu'elle analyse tout l'éventail des points de vue lors de l'élaboration de ses réponses, en particulier lorsque la procédure dite du «carton jaune» a été déclenchée. La COSAC met également l'accent sur l'importance que revêtent les débats et les échanges de vues dans le cadre de la procédure de contrôle de la subsidiarité entre les parlements nationaux.
- 1.3. La COSAC, forte du dialogue politique engagé avec la Commission européenne, invite le Parlement européen à améliorer, lui aussi, l'examen dont les avis des parlements nationaux font l'objet dans le cadre du dialogue politique au sein des commissions parlementaires compétentes.
- 1.4. La COSAC voit dans la procédure du «carton vert» un moyen privilégié de renforcer le rôle joué par les parlements nationaux et encourage donc ceux-ci à continuer d'étudier les possibilités de recourir, dans l'avenir, aux initiatives permises par cette procédure.
- 1.5. La COSAC relève qu'une bonne communication sur les enjeux de l'Union européenne dans le contexte actuel se révèle essentielle pour rapprocher l'Union européenne de ses citoyens, et mesure toute l'utilité des parlements nationaux pour nouer le dialogue avec les citoyens, leur apporter des informations impartiales et sensibiliser le grand public aux questions européennes. Il importe à cet égard de mettre l'accent sur le mandat démocratique dont les parlements nationaux sont investis par les électeurs qu'ils représentent. Devant l'issue du référendum britannique, la COSAC mesure le rôle capital que jouent les parlements nationaux, institutions investies d'un mandat et d'une responsabilité démocratiques directes, de par leur concours au fonctionnement et à l'avenir du projet sans équivalent qu'est l'Union européenne.

- 1.6. La COSAC invite tous les parlements à jouer un rôle plus actif dans la communication sur les enjeux européens et, à cette fin, encourage les parlements nationaux et le Parlement européen à échanger entre eux leurs expériences et leurs bonnes pratiques en matière de communication. En outre, la COSAC observe qu'il peut être utile de cibler et d'adapter le contenu des messages communiqués sur les enjeux européens lorsqu'il s'agit de s'adresser à des publics particuliers, telles les universités, les écoles, etc.
- 1.7. Dans le souci de tirer tout le parti possible des technologies disponibles, la COSAC invite les parlements à étudier toutes les possibilités qu'offre le recours aux médias sociaux, lesquels peuvent servir à faire mieux connaître les enjeux européens mais aussi les lieux de débat privilégiés que sont les parlements, notamment auprès de la jeunesse européenne.

2. Partenariat transatlantique de commerce et d'investissement (PTCI): accord commercial entre l'Union européenne et les États-Unis (défis, opportunités et risques)

- 2.1. La COSAC constate que la politique commerciale de l'Union est primordiale, sur les plans géopolitique et économique, pour permettre à l'Europe d'orienter la mondialisation, de renforcer les normes internationales et d'améliorer l'accès aux marchés étrangers. La COSAC estime que les accords commerciaux de portée globale avec des pays tiers, fruits de négociations loyales, transparents et largement diffusés, et conclus dans le souci de dégager des avantages réciproques, peuvent être des instruments utiles à l'Union européenne pour lui permettre d'augmenter la part qu'elle occupe dans le commercial mondial. La COSAC fait observer que, si l'Union européenne ne passe pas à l'action aujourd'hui, d'autres se chargeront de définir les règles internationales.
- 2.2. La COSAC considère qu'équilibrés, les accords commerciaux constituent un moyen de favoriser la croissance et la création d'emplois, mais aussi de renforcer le développement durable, de faire prévaloir les droits de l'homme, les normes du travail et les normes sociales et la viabilité écologique au niveau mondial, mais aussi de garantir la prestation de services, communaux en particulier. La COSAC demande instamment que l'Union européenne défende mieux ses intérêts dans les négociations et insiste sur l'application du principe de réciprocité.
- 2.3. La COSAC entend les nombreux Européens qui expriment leurs différences d'opinion et leur scepticisme quant au contenu de ces accords de commerce et invite instamment les institutions européennes, les parlements nationaux et les gouvernements à répondre aux préoccupations exprimées, à expliquer avec clarté les effets des accords de commerce et à veiller à la transparence des négociations.
- 2.4. La COSAC salue les dispositions prises par la Commission pour accroître la transparence des négociations du partenariat transatlantique, mais souligne qu'il est indispensable de renforcer davantage encore cette transparence pour l'ensemble des accords commerciaux de façon à répondre aux préoccupations des citoyens et des parlementaires européens.
- 2.5. La COSAC est convaincue que les négociations et leurs résultats doivent respecter intégralement les principes de liberté, de démocratie, d'état de droit, de dignité et de cohésion sociale sur lesquels repose l'Union européenne, et ainsi offrir la garantie solide que les dispositions et normes en vigueur dans l'Union ne sortiront pas affaiblies, mais au contraire renforcées, de la conclusion et de la signature du partenariat transatlantique.
- 2.6. La COSAC souligne que les parlements nationaux, de même que le Parlement européen, doivent être en mesure de contrôler les négociations du partenariat transatlantique conformément aux dispositions du traité sur le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne, et à celles de l'article 218 en particulier. La COSAC estime que le partenariat transatlantique ne saurait être appliqué provisoirement qu'après approbation par le Parlement européen de l'accord définitif conclu par le Conseil. Elle demande donc instamment à la Commission et aux gouvernements des États membres d'entretenir sans discontinuer une communication intense avec les parlements nationaux et le Parlement européen. Elle rappelle également que le partenariat transatlantique a vocation à constituer un accord mixte, et que son entrée en vigueur finale est donc subordonnée à l'issue des procédures de ratification nationale appropriées dans tous les États membres.

3. 2016: année de l'aboutissement de l'union de l'énergie

- 3.1. La COSAC salue le projet d'union de l'énergie et les objectifs qu'il poursuit afin de doter l'Union européenne d'une politique plus sûre et plus durable en matière d'énergie, et de la propulser à la pointe de la production d'énergies de source renouvelable et de la lutte contre le changement climatique. L'action intergouvernementale ne suffisant pas, seule, à y parvenir, il est indispensable de dégager des solutions européennes communes.

- 3.2. La COSAC constate que l'Union européenne est le premier importateur mondial d'énergie et que la dépendance de plusieurs de ses États membres à l'égard d'un seul fournisseur la met dans une position d'extrême vulnérabilité. Elle constate avec préoccupation que les prix de l'énergie dans l'Union européenne sont élevés par rapport aux prix en vigueur chez ses concurrents. Aussi la COSAC préconise-t-elle de renforcer les droits des consommateurs, y voyant un moyen, parmi d'autres, de lutter efficacement contre la précarité énergétique. La COSAC rappelle donc que l'union de l'énergie a pour objet d'assurer aux consommateurs européens une énergie non seulement sûre, durable et écologique, mais aussi concurrentielle et économiquement plus abordable. Pour parvenir à cet objectif, il est impératif de respecter les choix souverains des États membres tout en concourant aux solutions susceptibles d'être mieux réalisées au niveau de l'Union.
- 3.3. La COSAC souligne que la sécurité énergétique dans l'Union européenne passe par la solidarité et la confiance entre les États membres, lesquels ont tout intérêt à adopter une démarche commune vis-à-vis des pays tiers. À cet égard, la COSAC voit avec inquiétude les projets jugés dépourvus de fondement technique, environnemental, économique ou géopolitique et contre-productifs sur le plan de la sécurité énergétique. En revanche, soucieuse du renforcement du marché unique et de la sécurité énergétique, la COSAC est favorable aux initiatives visant à développer au maximum le recours de l'Union à ses sources d'énergie locales, notamment à celles visant à parvenir à une production stable et sûre d'électricité et à une diversification optimale des voies d'approvisionnement énergétique, tout en insistant sur l'importance du resserrement de la coopération régionale.
- 3.4. La COSAC rappelle que douze États membres de l'Union n'ont toujours pas atteint l'objectif de 10 % d'interconnexion dans le secteur de l'électricité et restent donc largement à l'écart du marché intérieur de l'électricité. Elle préconise que le Fonds européen pour les investissements stratégiques voue une attention particulière aux projets dont l'objet est de remédier aux plus importantes défaillances en matière d'interconnexion.
- 3.5. La COSAC salue l'accord de Paris, y voyant un tournant de la lutte contre le changement climatique et un engagement déterminé en faveur de l'environnement et des générations à venir. Elle se félicite également de la ratification rapide de cet accord par l'Union et demande qu'il soit appliqué sans aucune réserve. La COSAC estime que le projet d'union de l'énergie peut contribuer grandement à la réalisation des objectifs de l'accord de Paris et concourir, dans la durée, à l'accomplissement des objectifs que l'Union s'est fixés en matière de climat et d'énergie pour 2020, 2030 et 2050.
- 3.6. La COSAC souligne l'importance des investissements dans la recherche et le développement pour l'union de l'énergie, car ils sont des atouts pour bâtir une union de l'énergie solide, efficace et écologique et pour réduire les coûts de production énergétique, incontestable priorité dans le prolongement de l'accord de Paris sur les énergies renouvelables. La COSAC salue également, à cet égard, le travail d'amélioration du système d'échange de quotas d'émission (SEQE), qui contribuera à la modernisation de l'union de l'énergie.
- 3.7. La COSAC estime que les efforts destinés à mettre au point des technologies et des solutions innovantes, à faibles émissions, ainsi que les progrès réalisés sur la voie des innovations rentables sont irremplaçables pour renforcer la compétitivité de l'Union.
- 3.8. Dans la perspective de la réalisation d'économies d'énergie aussi fortes que possible, la COSAC soutient les mesures prises au niveau local dans le domaine de la rénovation des bâtiments et pour encourager l'utilisation des transports publics.

4. La sécurisation des frontières extérieures de l'Union face aux migrations clandestines

- 4.1. La COSAC insiste sur la nécessité humanitaire de résoudre la crise des migrations et des réfugiés, de même que sur l'importance de trouver des voies de migration sûres et légales pour les demandeurs d'asile et les réfugiés admis à entrer sur le territoire de l'Union européenne. Elle se félicite de la coopération de l'Union avec les pays de transit et d'origine des flux migratoires, et souligne que la protection des droits de l'homme des migrants, des demandeurs d'asile et des réfugiés doit être au cœur de toutes les initiatives de l'Union destinées à résoudre la crise migratoire. Elle ajoute que la sécurisation des frontières extérieures de l'Union est une priorité immédiate pour maîtriser, dès aujourd'hui et durablement, les flux migratoires clandestins.
- 4.2. La COSAC réaffirme l'importance de la solidarité, de la responsabilité et de la répartition équitable de l'accueil des réfugiés entre les États membres, car il est nécessaire de trouver une solution acceptable au problème de la migration clandestine, en application de l'article 80 du traité sur le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne et dans le respect des droits de l'homme et de l'ensemble des conventions et traités internationaux. Elle encourage l'Union à s'atteler à éliminer les causes profondes des migrations et invite la présidence slovaque et celles qui lui succéderont à rechercher activement des solutions efficaces et acceptables à ce problème et à celui de la mise en place de structures d'accueil faciles d'accès, ainsi qu'à présenter des propositions consensuelles dans ce sens, dans le souci constant de la défense des droits de l'homme, de la solidarité et de l'humanité.

- 4.3. La COSAC souligne également que les pays européens et les pays tiers doivent faire preuve de solidarité avec des États tels que l'Italie et la Grèce dans l'accueil et la prise en charge des réfugiés, en mettant en place des programmes efficaces de relocalisation.
 - 4.4. Pour ce qui est du maintien et du renforcement des contrôles le long de la route de la Méditerranée orientale, la COSAC demande la mise en œuvre immédiate de la déclaration UE-Turquie et rappelle à tous les États membres de l'Union qu'elle doit être appliquée intégralement et uniformément.
 - 4.5. La COSAC se rallie au constat posé par le Conseil européen, lors de sa réunion d'octobre, de «l'importante contribution, notamment financière, apportée ces dernières années par les États membres situés en première ligne». Elle invite les institutions de l'Union à mesurer à leur juste valeur les efforts que ces pays entreprennent pour remplir leur devoir humanitaire de sauver les vies du nombre grandissant de demandeurs d'asile qui se massent aux frontières extérieures de l'Union, de mettre en place des opérations de secours et des mesures d'identification des réfugiés, de leur fournir une assistance sanitaire, des logements, des vêtements et de la nourriture, et de faciliter leur insertion sociale. Les dépenses exposées à cette fin devraient être comptabilisées dans le calcul de l'équilibre budgétaire structurel des États.
 - 4.6. La COSAC souligne que l'Union européenne, espace de libre circulation sans frontières, doit appliquer une politique commune de la migration qui mette l'accent sur la protection et la sécurité de ses citoyens et de ses frontières extérieures, mais également sur la solidarité avec les réfugiés, les demandeurs d'asile et les migrants, dans le respect des droits de l'homme et de l'ensemble des conventions et traités internationaux. Elle souscrit sans réserve à toutes les initiatives destinées à protéger les frontières extérieures et à rétablir la légitimité de l'espace Schengen et ne peut que se féliciter de la création du corps européen de garde-frontières et de garde-côtes. Elle insiste sur l'importance de la prompte mise en œuvre du règlement qui institue ce corps, dont le mandat devra permettre d'accélérer les retours, trop lents actuellement. Elle rappelle à cet égard la nécessité de doter ce corps d'effectifs et d'équipements suffisants afin qu'il puisse fonctionner à sa pleine capacité.
 - 4.7. La COSAC salue les travaux en cours sur le projet consistant à lier le système d'information Schengen (SIS) au système automatisé d'identification des empreintes digitales (AFIS), qui permettra de rechercher les personnes signalées comme disparues sur la base de leurs empreintes. Elle salue également l'étude de faisabilité et la proposition législative, qui devrait être publiée prochainement, sur la mise en place d'un système européen d'information et d'autorisation concernant les voyages (ETIAS), qui contribuera à sécuriser les frontières extérieures de l'Union en vérifiant si les personnes qui les franchissent n'ont pas dépassé la durée de leur séjour autorisé sur le territoire européen. La mise en œuvre efficace de ces nouveaux outils dans les plus brefs délais est un chantier important.
 - 4.8. Toujours sur le plan de la sécurité et du contrôle des frontières extérieures de l'Union, la COSAC demande l'achèvement rapide des discussions au sein du Parlement européen sur le déploiement du système d'entrée/sortie, qui enregistrera les arrivées de ressortissants de pays tiers dans l'Union et leur sortie de l'Union, ainsi que de celles sur le programme d'enregistrement des voyageurs (RTP), sans que soient pour autant négligés les aspects des coûts, de la proportionnalité et de la protection des données.
 - 4.9. Enfin, la COSAC souligne l'importance des échanges de bonnes pratiques pour faciliter l'intégration des jeunes migrants et de leurs familles dans la société européenne par l'accès à l'enseignement et à la formation ainsi qu'à des emplois décents.
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III. Politique à Malte

4. Structure politique

5. Rapport final de l'OSCE / BIDDH sur l'évaluation des élections (EN)

Structure Politique¹

Le régime parlementaire est inspiré du modèle britannique, la réalité du pouvoir revenant au Premier ministre, leader du parti qui détient la majorité au sein du parlement monocaméral (Chambre des Représentants de 65 membres élus pour 5 ans maximum).

Le Président de la République, élu pour 5 ans par les Représentants, est le garant de la Constitution. Si deux grands partis, Nationaliste (PN) et Travailleiste (Malta Labour Party - MLP) dominent la vie politique, une troisième formation politique, Alternattiva Demokratika, très minoritaire et non représentée au Parlement, a milité en faveur de l'adhésion de Malte à l'Union européenne. Enfin, le parti d'extrême-droite Azzjoni nazzjonali (AN) a été créé le 9 juin 2007, mais ne bénéficie que d'une audience confidentielle.

Présidence de Malte

Mrs Marie-Louise Coleiro Precal

Présidente de la République de Malte² :

Détails personnels :

Prénom: Marie-Louise

Nom de famille: Coleiro Precal

Date de naissance: 7 décembre 1958

Lieu de naissance: Qormi, Malte

Nationalité: Maltais



Carrière :

Mrs Marie-Louise Coleiro Precal, est une femme politique maltaise, membre du Parti travailliste et présidente de la République depuis le 4 avril 2014.

¹ <http://www.ambafrance-mt.org/Politique>

² https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marie-Louise_Coleiro_Precal

Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca est diplômée de l'Université de Malte en Droit et Relations Internationales ainsi qu'en notariat public. Membre du Parti travailliste, Marie Louise Coleiro Preca est membre de la Chambre des députés à partir de 1998. Elle est ministre de la Famille et de la Solidarité sociale en 2013 dans le gouvernement de Joseph Muscat.

Le 1er avril 2014, elle est élue présidente de la République par le Parlement à l'unanimité et entre en fonction le 4 avril

Chambre des députés (Malte)³

La Chambre des députés (en maltais Kamra tad-Deputati, en anglais House of Representatives) est la législature monocamérale de la république de Malte et un composant du Parlement de Malte (avec le président de Malte). La Chambre, présidée par le Speaker (président de la Chambre), élit le président de Malte pour un mandat de 5 ans.

La Chambre est composée d'un nombre impair de représentants (actuellement 69) élus pour une durée de 5 ans. Normalement, cinq représentants sont élus par vote unique transférable dans chacun des 13 districts électoraux de Malte (soit un total de 65 représentants). Cependant, des membres supplémentaires sont élus en cas de problème de proportionnalité, lorsqu'un parti ayant une majorité de voix ne parvient pas à obtenir une majorité de sièges par exemple.

La Chambre, organisée selon le système de Westminster, se réunit actuellement dans le Palais du Grand Maître à La Valette. Cependant, un nouveau bâtiment destiné à accueillir la Chambre est en construction depuis 2010. La proposition originale du gouvernement prévoyait de construire le nouveau parlement sur le site de l'ancien opéra de la Valette. Cette idée a été abandonnée pour des raisons de taille, et le nouveau parlement sera finalement construit sur la place de la Liberté

³ [https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chambre_des_d%C3%A9put%C3%A9s_\(Malte\)](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chambre_des_d%C3%A9put%C3%A9s_(Malte))

Hon. Anġlu Farrugia

Président de la Chambre des représentants



Détails personnels :

Prénom: Anġlu

Nom de famille: Farrugia

Date de naissance: 29 décembre 1955

Lieu de naissance: Mosta, Malte

Nationalité: Maltais

Hon Anġlu Farrugia a une fille et il est marié à Carmen née Zammit.

Carrière :

Dr Anġlu Farrugia, LL.D. M.Jur. (Magna cum laude), a pris ses fonctions après avoir été élu président de la Chambre des représentants du Parlement de Malte, lors de la première séance de la douzième législature le 6 avril 2013. Le Dr Farrugia est entré au Parlement en 1996 et il a été réélu en 1998, 2003 et 2008. Entre 1998 et 2008, le Dr Farrugia a été ministre de la Justice. En juin 2008, il a été élu chef adjoint du Parti travailliste responsable des affaires parlementaires et il a été pendant cinq ans ministre de l'opposition sur l'emploi et les droits des travailleurs. Le Dr Farrugia a été président du Comité permanent de la Chambre pour l'étude des projets de loi entre 1996 et 1998 et membre ad hoc entre 1998 et 2013 au sein de la même commission. Entre 1996 et 2008, il a été également membre du Comité des privilèges de la Chambre des représentants. Le Dr Farrugia a dirigé la délégation du Parlement maltais à l'Assemblée parlementaire de l'Organisation pour la sécurité et la coopération en Europe (OSCE) entre 1996 et 1998 et il a été membre de la délégation depuis 2008. Il a voyagé à l'étranger à bord d'un certain nombre de missions de l'UE et de l'OSCE en tant qu'observateur international lors de diverses élections, comprenant ceux de la Géorgie (1999), des élections présidentielles en Palestine (2004), des élections présidentielles américaines en 2004, du référendum sur l'indépendance du Monténégro (2006) et des élections présidentielles et parlementaires en Zambie (2006). Le Dr Farrugia a également été membre du Comité permanent des droits de l'homme de l'Assemblée parlementaire de l'OSCE. Avant d'entrer en politique, le Dr Farrugia a progressé dans les

rangs de la Police de Malte de 1977 à 1996, laissant la Force au rang de surintendant de police. Pendant cette période, il a obtenu son diplôme d'avocat de l'Université de Malte.

Gouvernement de Malte

Le Gouvernement de Malte représente le pouvoir exécutif de la république de Malte. Il est constitué du Chef du gouvernement et des ministres constituant le cabinet. Le Gouvernement de Malte est composé de 16 ministères :

- Ministre du Cabinet du Premier ministre ;
- Ministère des Affaires européennes et la mise en œuvre du Manifeste électoral ;
- Ministère des Affaires étrangères ;
- Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Emploi ;
- Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et Changement Climatique ;
- Ministère des Transports et de l'Infrastructure ;
- Ministère pour Gozo ;
- Ministère pour le dialogue social, de la consommation et des libertés civiles ;
- Ministère de l'économie, l'investissement et les petites entreprises ;
- Ministère des Finances ;
- Ministère de la Santé ;
- Ministère de la Famille et de la Solidarité sociale ;
- Ministère de la Justice, de la Culture et des Gouvernements locaux ;
- Ministère du Tourisme ;
- Ministère de l'Intérieur et de la sécurité nationale ;
- Ministère de la Compétitivité et de l'économie Digitale, Maritime et des Services.

Dr Joseph Muscat

Le Première Ministre de Malte⁴ :

Détails personnels :

Prénom: Joseph

Nom de famille: Muscat

Date de naissance: 22 janvier 1974

Lieu de naissance: Pietà, Malte

Nationalité: Maltais



Carrière :

Dr Joseph Muscat, est un homme d'État maltais, membre du Parti travailliste (LP).

Diplômé de l'université de Malte, il est également journaliste, commençant sa carrière dans deux médias détenus par le Parti travailliste.

Il occupe en 1997 la présidence par intérim des Jeunes travaillistes, puis devient au début des années 2000 le responsable de l'éducation au sein de la direction du LP. En 2004, il est élu député européen lors des premières élections européennes maltaises.

Il démissionne du Parlement européen en 2008, après avoir été élu chef du Parti travailliste, et rejoint alors le Parlement maltais en tant que chef de l'opposition. À la suite de la nette victoire des travaillistes aux élections législatives de 2013, Joseph Muscat est assermenté Premier ministre à 39 ans

Pour les élections législatives du 9 mars 2013, il se présente dans le deuxième district, au sud de l'île de Malte. Lors du scrutin, le PL remporte 54 % des voix, soit son meilleur score historique.

Le 11 mars, Joseph Muscat est nommé à 39 ans Premier ministre de Malte. Il est alors le deuxième plus jeune titulaire de cette fonction. Il constitue deux jours plus tard son gouvernement, qui compte quatorze ministres, dont deux femmes. Il réalise un remaniement ministériel le 29 mars 2014, deux jours avant que sa ministre de la Famille Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca ne soit élue présidente de la République

⁴ https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Muscat

Partis Politiques Maltais ⁵:

Le paysage politique de Malte est dominé depuis plusieurs décennies par deux partis politiques: le Parti nationaliste, de tendance conservatrice, et le Parti travailliste, de tendance sociale-démocrate. Il n'y a plus eu d'autres partis politiques représentés au parlement maltais depuis les élections législatives de 1962. Les dernières élections législatives maltaises ont eu lieu au début du mois de mars 2013.

Partis politiques maltais représentés au parlement :

Parti nationaliste (PN)



Le Parti nationaliste (PN) est un parti politique maltais fondé en 1880. Il est, avec le Parti travailliste, l'un des deux seuls partis politiques à être représenté au parlement maltais. Le Parti nationaliste est un parti politique conservateur et pro-européen, membre du Parti populaire européen. Historiquement pro-italien, le Parti nationaliste a failli disparaître de la scène politique maltaise pendant et juste après la Seconde guerre mondiale. Le parti a toutefois effectué un retour dès la fin des années 1940, à la faveur d'une scission affaiblissant le Parti travailliste. Dans les années 1950, le parti s'est opposé à la proposition travailliste d'intégrer le pays au Royaume-Uni et a au contraire suivi une ligne indépendantiste. Le Parti nationaliste a été au pouvoir sans interruption de 1998 à 2013, avant de le céder au Parti travailliste.

Parti travailliste (PL)



Le Parti travailliste (PL) est un parti politique maltais fondé en 1920. Il est, avec le Parti nationaliste, l'un des deux seuls partis politiques à être représenté au parlement maltais. Le Parti travailliste est un parti politique social-démocrate membre du Parti socialiste européen. Alors que le Parti nationaliste a suivi traditionnellement une ligne politique pro-italienne et

⁵ <http://elections-en-europe.net/partis-politiques/partis-politiques-maltais>

pro-européenne, le Parti travailliste a souhaité, en vain, une intégration de l'île au Royaume-Uni, puis s'est opposé, à nouveau en vain, à l'adhésion de Malte à l'Union européenne lors du référendum qui s'est tenu en 2003. Le Parti travailliste maltais a connu une longue cure d'opposition de 1998 à 2013, avant de revenir au pouvoir. Son président, Joseph Muscat, est Premier ministre de Malte.

Autres partis politiques maltais :

Alternative démocratique (AD)



L'Alternative démocratique (AD) est un parti politique maltais écologiste, fondé en 1989 par Toni Abela, un ancien président du Parti travailliste. Alternative démocratique est membre du Parti vert européen. Il n'a jamais obtenu de sièges au parlement maltais, à l'exception de Wenzu Mintoff, élu sous la bannière travailliste et siégeant pour l'AD de 1989 à 1992. L'Alternative démocratique détient en revanche quelques sièges dans les conseils locaux.

Parti Démocrate (PD)



Le parti démocrate est un parti politique de centre-gauche à Malte. La PD a été fondée en 2016 par la députée Marlene Farrugia, qui avait été initialement élue députée pour le Parti travailliste. Le parti affirme qu'il s'agit d'une nouvelle alternative aux partis traditionnels dominants à Malte, le parti travailliste et le parti nationaliste. Le 21 octobre 2016, Marlene Farrugia a été formellement élue chef du PD à l'occasion d'une AGA, tout en confirmant l'exécutif du parti. La durée du mandat de l'exécutif est fixée à deux ans. Le parti vise à contester la prochaine élection générale maltaise prévue pour avoir lieu en 2018.



Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

REPUBLIC OF MALTA

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

9 March 2013

OSCE/ODIHR ELECTION ASSESSMENT MISSION FINAL REPORT



Warsaw
31 May 2013

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REPUBLIC OF MALTA
PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS
9 March 2013

OSCE/ODIHR Election Assessment Mission Final Report

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following an invitation by the Permanent Mission of Malta to the OSCE, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) deployed an Election Assessment Mission (EAM) to observe the parliamentary elections scheduled for 9 March 2013.

The entire electoral process commanded a high level of public confidence. The campaign took place in an open and peaceful environment with no restrictions on freedoms of association or expression. However, the lack of comprehensive and effective campaign finance regulations raised certain concerns among many OSCE/ODIHR EAM interlocutors about transparency, particularly for non-parliamentary parties.

Malta is a parliamentary republic with legislative power vested in the House of Representatives, a unicameral parliament elected for a five-year term under a single transferable vote system. The political landscape is dominated by the Nationalist Party and the Labour Party, the only parliamentary parties since Malta's independence in 1964.

The legal framework, primarily regulated by the Constitution and General Elections Act, provides a sound basis for holding democratic elections. Legal amendments in 2012 refined voter registration regulations and introduced procedures for voting in hospitals and retirement homes. Certain aspects of the legislation could benefit from further review, particularly limitations on voting and candidacy rights, the absence of comprehensive campaign finance regulations, legal provisions for citizen and international election observation.

Voter registration is passive and 333,072 voters were eligible to vote in these elections. Citizens serving a prison sentence of more than 12 months are deprived of their voting right, raising concerns about the proportionality of this restriction. The voter register is open for public scrutiny within five days of elections being announced. All OSCE/ODIHR EAM interlocutors expressed confidence in the accuracy and inclusiveness of the voter register.

Candidates may stand as representatives of a political party or independently, in line with paragraph 7.5 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document. However, restrictions on candidacy rights, based on residency and incompatibility with certain official functions, could benefit from further review. Overall, the candidate registration process was inclusive and provided voters with a diverse choice.

Women are under-represented in politics. Only 15 per cent of all candidates were women and there are no legal requirements to promote their participation. Several women candidates informed the OSCE/ODIHR EAM of the persistence of negative attitudes towards women's political participation. There were no women represented on the Electoral Commission.

Elections were administered by the Electoral Commission with voting taking place in 609 polling stations. Overall, elections were administered in a professional and efficient manner that enjoyed a high degree of public trust.

The media environment is pluralistic and diverse and provided voters with a wide range of

information on candidates and campaign issues. The composition of the regulatory Broadcasting Authority was criticized by many OSCE/ODIHR EAM interlocutors as being biased in favour of the two dominant parties. Contrary to international good practice, defamation is criminalized.

The legal framework generally provides for effective redress of electoral complaints and appeals and the electoral dispute resolution system enjoyed widespread confidence among OSCE/ODIHR EAM interlocutors. However, the law does not always specify deadlines for resolving complaints, which could potentially undermine timely remedy.

According to the OSCE/ODIHR's election observation methodology, the EAM did not undertake a comprehensive and systematic observation of election day. However, mission members visited a limited number of polling stations during early voting and on election day. Voting appeared to be well organized and orderly. All polling stations visited provided access for voters with disabilities, although at times this compromised the secrecy of their vote. Counting took place in a central counting centre and was conducted efficiently and transparently.

II. INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Following an invitation from the Permanent Mission of Malta to the OSCE to observe the 9 March 2013 parliamentary elections, and based on the recommendation of a Needs Assessment Mission conducted from 15 to 17 January, the OSCE/ODIHR deployed an Election Assessment Mission (EAM) from 26 February to 12 March.¹

The OSCE/ODIHR EAM was led by Nikolai Vulchanov and consisted of five election experts from as many OSCE participating States. In line with the OSCE/ODIHR's methodology, the EAM did not observe election day proceedings in a systematic or comprehensive manner. However, mission members visited a limited number of polling stations and observed the counting of ballots in the central counting centre. Although there were concurrent local elections in a number of localities, the OSCE/ODIHR EAM only followed them to the extent that they might have impacted upon the parliamentary elections.

The OSCE/ODIHR EAM wishes to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Electoral Commission for their assistance and co-operation. The OSCE/ODIHR would also like to thank other state institutions, political parties, media and civil society organizations who took the time to meet with the mission.

The OSCE/ODIHR had not previously observed or assessed national elections in Malta, although it did visit the country in the context of the June 2009 elections to the European Parliament.

III. BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

Malta is a parliamentary republic. Legislative power is vested with the House of Representatives, a unicameral parliament elected for a five-year-term. Executive power is shared between the cabinet of ministers and the president. The latter is elected by a simple majority of the parliament and performs mostly ceremonial functions.

¹ All previous OSCE/ODIHR reports on Malta are available at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/malta>.

The political landscape is dominated by two political parties; the Christian-democratic Nationalist Party (NP) and the social-democratic Labour Party (LP). The two have been the only parliamentary parties since Malta's independence in 1964. Although other parties and independent candidates have contested elections, none have succeeded in attaining a seat in parliament. While the NP has formed the majority of governments since independence, support between the two political powers is widely perceived as being evenly split. In 2008, less than 0.5 per cent of votes separated the two parties.² The Democratic Alternative – Green Party (DA) is the next most popular party, though it has never gained a seat in parliament.³

The NP enjoyed a one-seat majority in the outgoing parliament. This slim advantage over the opposition LP proved fragile and on 30 May 2012, a NP member of parliament put forward a motion of no confidence against the Minister of Justice, which was voted through with the support of the LP. Since then the NP members of parliament refrained from holding votes on any important issue for fear of losing their majority. On 10 December 2012, the NP failed to secure a majority of votes to pass the draft budget for 2013. As a result, President George Abela confirmed the dissolution of parliament on 7 January and announced elections for 9 March 2013.

IV. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

A. GENERAL OVERVIEW

The legal framework provides a generally sound basis for the conduct of democratic elections and is primarily regulated by the Constitution, the General Elections Act and the Electoral Polling Ordinance. Further provisions relating to elections include the Broadcasting Act, the Public Meetings Ordinance, and the House of Representatives (Privileges and Powers) Ordinance.

The Constitution, which was adopted in 1964 and has since undergone a series of amendments, includes the basic principles of the electoral system, guarantees protecting fundamental freedoms, and civil and political rights including the right to elect and be elected.

The General Elections Act was initially adopted in 1991 and was most recently amended in July 2012. The last amendments included provisions for revising the voter register and introduced procedures for voting in retirement homes and hospitals. It now requires a list of hospital patients and retirement home residents, together with the medical reason for their stay, to be sent to the Electoral Commission (EC) within three days of the official announcement of elections and to be updated on a daily basis until the day before polling. On 12 December 2012, the DA challenged this provision before the Information and Data Protection Commissioner (IDPC) as not conforming to the Data Protection Act. On 21 January, the IDPC recommended that these lists should not be collected by the EC earlier than five days before the election. The EC partly followed the IDPC's recommendation and did not share the lists with political parties until five days before polling.

In line with the IDPC recommendation, and given the sensitive nature of information on patients currently contained in the lists, consideration could be given to ensuring that these lists are submitted to the Electoral Commission no earlier than five days before the election.

The Constitution enshrines equal rights between men and women and commits to the elimination of

² In the 2008 parliamentary elections the NP won by 0.5 per cent (a total of 1,580 votes).

³ In the 2008 and 2013 elections, the DA came third, securing 1.31 and 1.78 per cent of the votes, respectively.

all forms of discrimination on the basis of gender.⁴ However, many OSCE/ODIHR EAM interlocutors stated that the majority of society maintains a conservative family model, in which the men are the sole breadwinners. At the same time, a number of OSCE/ODIHR EAM interlocutors spoke about positive changes in perception with regard to the role of women in public life over recent years.⁵ Only seven per cent of the outgoing parliament was women.

B. RIGHT TO VOTE

The Constitution and the General Elections Act grant active suffrage rights to citizens aged 18 years or older on election day, but withhold the right to vote from people who have been declared legally incapacitated “for any mental infirmity” by a court decision or are “otherwise determined in Malta to be of unsound mind”.⁶ On this issue the General Elections Act stipulates that the EC may not refuse to register a voter or remove their name from the register, without a unanimous decision from the Medical Board.⁷

Article 58(b) of the Constitution states that citizens serving a term of imprisonment of more than 12 months or serving a sentence on which execution has been suspended are deprived of the right to vote. In addition to the aforementioned requirements, a voter must be a resident of Malta for a period amounting to 6 months during the 18 months preceding their registration. The residency requirement was challenged several times before the courts. In March 2003, the Constitutional Court decided that residence does not require a continuous presence in the country.⁸ This requirement is also not in line with international good practice.⁹

C. RIGHT TO STAND

Citizens with active suffrage rights are entitled to stand as candidates in parliamentary elections. Article 54 of the Constitution, however, establishes a series of incompatibilities with the office of a member of parliament: the electoral contestant should not be a citizen of another country, a public servant, a member of the armed forces, holding a leading role in a body contracted by the government, be bankrupt, or hold or act in an office related with the elections to parliament.

These restrictions on the right to stand are not fully compatible with paragraph 7.5 of the 1990 OSCE

⁴ Malta is also a signatory of the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, both of which commit to equal rights (including to political participation) regardless of gender.

⁵ According to the Eurostat data, Malta has the lowest female employment rate in EU. See: Eurostat, http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Employment_statistics. The latest data of the Malta National Statistic Office show that only 44 per cent of women are professionally active in Malta. See Labour Survey from 2012, available at: http://www.nso.gov.mt/statdoc/document_file.aspx?id=3547.

⁶ See Articles 57 and 58 of the Constitution and Article 15 of the General Elections Act.

⁷ Under Article 14(2), the Medical Board consists of a doctor appointed by the EC who acts as the chairperson, and a doctor appointed by each of the parliamentary political parties. Article 27(2) states that the decision of the Medical Board is final and binding on the EC and the voter. Decisions deeming a voter is of unsound mind must be unanimous.

⁸ Decision No. 6/2003/1, Civil Courts, Judge Tonio Mallia, Sitting of 21/03/2003, *Prof. Arnold Cassola v. Electoral Commission and Jimmy Magro – Labour Party*.

⁹ See the Venice Commission “Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters” CDL-AD(2002)023rev, I.1.1 c. iii and iv, a length of residence requirement may be imposed on nationals solely for local or regional elections; and the requisite period of residence should not exceed six months except in order to protect national minorities. Available at [http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/CDL-AD\(2002\)023rev-e.aspx](http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/CDL-AD(2002)023rev-e.aspx).

Copenhagen Document.¹⁰ Furthermore, paragraph 16 of General Comment No. 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) states that “if there are reasonable grounds for regarding certain elective offices as incompatible with tenure of specific positions (e.g. the judiciary, high-ranking military office, public service), measures to avoid any conflicts of interest should not unduly limit the rights protected”.¹¹

Limitations on the right to stand for office could be reviewed to further enhance full compliance with OSCE commitments and international obligations.

V. ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Members of parliament are elected for a five-year term through a single transferable vote (STV) system, modified to ensure that the number of seats allocated to parties is in proportion to the first preference votes obtained by their candidates.¹² Initially, the number of members of parliament is set at 65, but based on results it can be increased to achieve this proportionality objective.¹³ For these elections, Malta was divided into 13 multi-mandate electoral districts, each generally returning 5 elected members.¹⁴

Under the STV system, voters indicate their preferences by ranking, in numerical order, as many candidates on the ballot as they wish.¹⁵ In order to win seats, candidates must attain a quota of votes in their electoral district. The quota is determined by dividing the total number of valid ballots in each electoral division by the number of seats plus one. The allocation of seats proceeds as a series of counts. At the end of each count, there is either an elected candidate(s) or an excluded candidate(s).

During the first count, if a candidate received first preference votes equal or greater than the electoral quota, they are deemed elected. If the votes received by the elected candidate exceed the quota, the difference between the votes received and the quota is called a surplus, which is then distributed to the next candidates.¹⁶ If no candidate is elected during the count and therefore no surplus remains to

¹⁰ Paragraph 7.5 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document states that “participating States will [...] respect the right of citizens to seek political or public office, individually or as representatives of political parties or organizations, without discrimination.”

¹¹ Also, in *Ahmed and Others v. The United Kingdom* (65/1997/849/1056), the ECtHR noted that “the restrictions imposed on the applicants’ right to contest seats at elections must [...] secure their political impartiality. That aim must be considered legitimate for the purposes of restricting the exercise of the applicants’ subjective right to stand for election under Article 3 of Protocol No. 1 [...] any of the applicants wishing to run for elected office is at liberty to resign from his post.”

¹² A constitutional crisis ensued in 1981 when the NP obtained a majority of first preference votes but not a legislative majority. In 1987, the Constitution was amended so that the party which attains more than 50 per cent of valid first preference votes is guaranteed a majority by allocating extra seats, if necessary. Amendments in 1996 and 2007 were passed to further proportionality, but only in situations when just two parties obtain seats. These ensured a parliamentary majority when only a relative majority is achieved and, when an absolute majority is achieved, bonus seats would be provided to the party in the minority when the proportion of candidates that the minority party elects is less than the proportion of first preference votes obtained by its candidates.

¹³ In accordance with Articles 52(1) and 56(1) of the Constitution, the parliament shall contain an odd number of members divisible by the number of electoral districts, as the parliament shall determine by law, as long as each electoral district elects no less than five and no more than seven members and there be no less than 9 and no more than 15 electoral districts.

¹⁴ The electoral boundaries were most recently reviewed in 2012.

¹⁵ Voters may rank candidates from different political parties; however, past election results and OSCE/ODIHR EAM interlocutors indicate that voters rarely vote for candidates not affiliated with their chosen party.

¹⁶ The surplus is transferred at a ratio found by taking the elected candidates surplus ballots divided by the total number of votes the elected candidate received.

distribute, the candidate with the least number of votes is excluded and their ballots' second preferences are distributed to the remaining candidates. Further counts are conducted until all vacant seats are allocated to candidates on the basis of second, third and further preferences. A ballot paper only becomes non-transferable when no second or subsequent preference is indicated or if it is not clear which candidate the next preference should be allocated to. On the last count, a candidate may potentially be elected without reaching the quota.

The aforementioned regulation to establish proportionality was triggered during these elections and the NP was awarded four additional seats so that the difference in seats between the NP and the LP would be proportional to the first preference votes they obtained. This increased the number of members of parliament to 69.

VI. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

Parliamentary elections are administered by the EC. It is a permanent body with eight members and a Chief Electoral Commissioner, with three-year terms in office. Members are appointed by the president based on proposals by the prime minister after consultations with the leader of the opposition. Generally, the commissioners are equally appointed from the two parliamentary parties. The Chief Electoral Commissioner is a public servant who is appointed by the prime minister. In addition to the EC members, each parliamentary party may nominate two party delegates to represent them at the EC.

The EC is responsible for the oversight of the entire electoral process as well as for most of the technical preparations for the elections and has direct oversight of the counting process. It also reviews the boundaries of electoral divisions every five years and, if necessary, proposes alterations. On election day, the EC operates a hotline where they directly answer questions from any electoral official in the country.

The EC is assisted by a secretariat consisting of some 50 staff which produce and organize the distribution of materials such as the voter lists, ballots, voting documents and special ballot templates for visually impaired voters. It also creates and distributes written instructions for trainings and hosts a website with voter and candidate information. Voter education is not provided by the EC as it is assumed that political parties provide sufficient information to voters.

During the electoral period, the EC generally meets once per week. Meetings are held behind closed doors and decisions are only provided to those involved in the decision. No minutes or decisions are published except press releases and government notices pertinent to the public.

Notwithstanding the overall confidence in the performance of the election administration, with a view to further enhancing transparency, the Electoral Commission should consider having open meetings and publishing all decisions in a timely manner.

There are no intermediary commissions between the EC and polling stations. On election day, polling is conducted by 609 polling station commissions, in 110 polling locations, composed of Assistant Commissioners (ACs) appointed directly by the EC. Each polling station is staffed by a minimum of three ACs, at least two of whom are hired directly by the EC. All ACs are trained by EC representatives. The political parties could nominate one AC per station as well, however by law, the EC randomly assigns all ACs, ensuring that they are not stationed in a district they normally reside or

work in. In addition to being an AC, the law allows for party nominees to simultaneously act in the capacity of a party agent.¹⁷

Consideration could be given to reviewing the current arrangement for the simultaneous appointment of people as party agents and Assistant Commissioners, with a view to avoid perceptions of potential conflict of interests.

A special EC sub-committee was established for organizing voting in hospitals and retirement homes. As elections in these facilities were conducted in advance of election day, members of the EC directly administered these elections with a representative from each of the political parties.

While the gender balance seemed to be well distributed among the ACs observed, the EC itself was an entirely male team. The absence of women in senior positions within the election administration is at odds with obligations outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).¹⁸

Consideration could be given to introducing mechanisms that would ensure greater participation of women in senior decision-making roles within the election administration.

Overall, the election administration organised and administered the elections in a professional, efficient, and well-organized manner. All electoral deadlines were respected. The election administration enjoyed a high degree of public confidence, in part created by providing the parties full access to the electoral process.

VII. VOTER REGISTRATION

Voter registration is passive and voters are automatically included in voter lists extracted from a voter register that is maintained and updated by the EC. Voters must be registered in the electoral district they habitually reside in and may only cast their ballot in this same area. The register is a single database with records updated on the basis of data supplied monthly by civil institutions, primarily the Public Registries of Malta and Gozo. An update of the voter register is published for public scrutiny biannually. In addition, following recent amendments to the General Elections Act, the EC must publish a further update of the register within five days of elections being announced. All OSCE/ODIHR EAM interlocutors expressed a high level of confidence in the accuracy and inclusiveness of the voter register.

The voter register was published on 12 January and voters could apply for corrections until 4 February. In total, 333,072 citizens were included on the register for these elections, including some 23,850 first time voters.¹⁹ The voter register was published in the government's official gazette. In

¹⁷ As per Article 61(1) "Every political party shall have the right to nominate as its agents such number of persons as is equal to the number of ballot boxes and such persons are in this Act referred to as party agents. A political party may designate as a party agent, a person already nominated by it as Assistant Commissioner in which case such person may act both as Assistant Commissioner and party agent".

¹⁸ Article 7(b) of CEDAW. Paragraph 26 of General Recommendation 23 on CEDAW by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women provides that "states parties have a responsibility, where it is within their control [...] to appoint women to senior decision-making roles".

¹⁹ Recent amendments to the General Elections Act, allow those who reached the age of 18 prior to election day to be added to the voter register, while in the past only those aged 18 at the time of the October publication of the voter register were included.

addition, both parliamentary parties provided applications on their website in which voters could enter their national identification numbers to confirm their voter registration details.

Citizens could request the EC to correct the voter register should they not be found on the register or if their or other citizens' details are incorrect. Any decision the EC takes on registration matters can be appeal to a Revising Officer. If an application is filed on the grounds of a voter's mental incapacity, the case must be referred to the Medical Board. While any registered voter or citizen who believes they should be on the voter register may apply for changes to the register, most cases regarding voter registration issues are brought by political parties. Many cases stem from the question of whether a voter meets the six-month residency requirement to be eligible to vote. The majority of OSCE/ODIHR EAM interlocutors acknowledge that this provision is difficult to prove, especially since Malta signed the Schengen Agreement and borders within the Schengen area are no longer monitored. Subsequently, relatively few cases were brought forward and the EC approved a total of 65 additions to the register, 2 deletions and 8 entries to be corrected.

Voters can only vote with a personalized voting card, which includes the personal data and photo that would appear on the voters' national identification document, as well as information on where and when they may vote. Voting cards were prepared by the EC and distributed door-to-door by police officers, accompanied by political party representatives. If the registered voter was not at home at the time of delivery, the documents could be left with anyone in the home over the age of 18. Lists of voters whose voting cards could not be delivered were published in the official gazette and these individuals could collect their voting card in person until 7 March by showing their national identification document.²⁰ If an individual did not obtain their voting card by 7 March or lost it after this date, they could not vote.²¹ The OSCE/ODIHR EAM was informed that the production and distribution of the voting cards consumed approximately 10 per cent of the electoral budget.

Following the planned update of national identification cards, the authorities could consider reviewing the need for voting cards in order to bring down election expenditures and ensure voters are not disenfranchised for losing their voting document prior to election day.

Voter registration in hospitals occurred separately, as any eligible citizen registered as a patient in hospital on 5 March was automatically registered to vote in early voting at that hospital on 8 March, regardless of whether that voter was released before voting commenced. The relevant data on patients was transferred to the EC, which shared the list with the political parties.

VIII. POLITICAL PARTY AND CANDIDATE REGISTRATION

Candidates can be nominated independently or as a political party representative, in line with paragraph 7.5 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document. Candidate nominations require signatures of a minimum of four voters registered in the electoral district for which the candidate is nominated. Nominations were to be submitted to the EC along with a EUR 90 deposit. The legal framework does not include any provisions for the registration of political parties and the only definition of a "political party" is in Article 2 of the General Elections Act, according to which a political party is defined as "any person or group of persons contesting the election as one group bearing the same name."

²⁰ Voting cards were available at local police stations from 23 February to 2 March and from 4 to 7 March at the EC in Valletta or the Identity Card Office in Gozo.

²¹ In total, 6,523 voting cards remained uncollected after 7 March.

The candidate registration process for these elections was inclusive. A total of 168 candidates, the majority of whom represented the two parliamentary political parties, were registered. The NP put forward 70 candidates, while the LP nominated 86. The DA contested the elections with nine candidates, and single candidates were registered by both the Democratic Liberal Alliance and the Eagle's Party. One candidate ran as an independent.

There are no legal requirements to promote women candidates, although party representatives informed the OSCE/ODIHR EAM that they apply self-imposed voluntary measures to promote gender balance in their internal party structures. Of the 168 candidates, 26 were women, representing some 15 per cent of all candidates.²² The NP, LP and DA stated that despite their best efforts it was difficult to convince women to contest elections. In addition, the current wording of the General Elections Act implies only male participation.

Consideration could be given to introducing measures to promote women candidates. The General Elections Act could be updated to apply gender sensitive language. Political parties could also consider nominating a minimum number of candidates of each gender.

IX. ELECTION CAMPAIGN

The election campaign began on 7 January following the announcement of elections and ended 24 hours before election day. The campaign environment was generally peaceful, and marked by strong competition both between the parliamentary parties and inter-party competition between candidates in their respective electoral districts. In order to minimize tensions during the campaign, the leadership of NP and LP, in conjunction with the police, co-ordinated the locations of their respective rallies.

The campaigns by NP and LP were far more visible than the ones launched by other electoral contestants. These two parties benefitted from well-developed networks, including party-owned businesses. In contrast, DA and other candidates had substantially less political and financial strength and their campaigns were less visible.

The main topics of the campaign included the economy and employment issues, with a particular emphasis on energy sources and costs, as well as education and healthcare services. The key electoral contestants, NP, LP and DA, presented comprehensive electoral platforms in which they addressed a variety of issues and targeted different electorates. The parties' leaders tried to pace their campaigns by dedicating each week to a different portion of their platforms. Although the official electoral campaign lasted nine weeks, the OSCE/ODIHR EAM interlocutors indicated that party leaders started campaigning as early as May 2012, when it became apparent that the NP parliamentary majority appeared fragile.

Individual candidate campaigns were framed by the overarching campaigns of their parties. Candidates utilized door-to-door campaigning, small gatherings, and mailing leaflets directly to voters. On a larger scale, parties embarked on billboard campaigns, TV spots, print and online advertisements, and rallies. While the OSCE/ODIHR EAM interlocutors confirmed that posters were excluded in order to keep the streets clean, the DA asserted that this necessitated the use of costly billboards that limited the campaign for smaller electoral contestants. The parties also sought direct contact with voters through canvassing, as well as mail, email and text messages.

²² NP – 13 out of 70 candidates were women; LP - 12 out of 86; and DA - 1 out of 9. There were no female independent candidates. In comparison with the 2008 and 2003 elections this represented an increase, when the number of women candidates amounted to 10.7 per cent and 10.5 per cent respectively.

The few women candidates were visible during the campaign, while at the same time civil society and the media fostered discussion on women's participation in politics and potential gender quotas for candidate nominations. However, several women candidates informed the OSCE/ODIHR EAM that during door-to-door campaigning they were often faced with voters who questioned their place in politics rather than dedicating themselves to a more traditional role of taking care of the family. During the campaign, a few instances were observed of electoral contestants being presented in advertisements in a negative manner without the source being published. Such practices undermine campaign transparency.

Consideration could be given to requiring all electoral advertisements to clearly state which party, group, or individual procured the advertisement, so that voters can make informed choices.

X. PARTY AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE

A. OVERVIEW

There are no political finance laws except a few provisions in the General Elections Act that regulate candidate campaign expenses. Political party and campaign financing, however, has been the subject of parliamentary debate for some time. Some OSCE/ODIHR EAM interlocutors referred to a 1995 report prepared by a government commission, which proposed limitations on donations and measures of transparency for such donations.²³ As the parliament could not come to an agreement on proposed limitations to donations, the report's recommendations were never implemented. In 2009 the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) issued an Evaluation Report on Malta on Transparency of Party Funding in which it highlighted the lack of regulations or transparency mechanisms, and recommended potential areas for improvement.²⁴

In 2011, the government proposed the Political Parties Act, a draft law to address the GRECO recommendations, but the act was not adopted by parliament. Since then the authorities have not undertaken any legislative measures to regulate political party or campaign financing.²⁵ All OSCE/ODIHR EAM interlocutors underlined the need to develop such legislation and expressed their support for greater transparency, anticipating that this would increase public trust in political parties.

The legal framework would benefit from enacting a comprehensive system for regulating party and campaign financing.

The two parliamentary political parties own a number of companies and properties, the revenues of which can be used for any purpose. Furthermore, these parties maintain their own television and radio stations, newspapers and news portals. Such resources are not enjoyed by non-parliamentary parties,

undermining the ability of candidates to campaign on a level playing field.²⁶

²³ The report was prepared by the Commission for the Finance of the Political Parties and Candidates for General Elections in the Office of the Cabinet.

²⁴ See, [www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/greco/evaluations/round3/GrecoEval3\(2009\)2_Malta_Two_EN.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/greco/evaluations/round3/GrecoEval3(2009)2_Malta_Two_EN.pdf), and the 2011 report, [www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/greco/evaluations/round3/GrecoRC3\(2011\)11_Malta_EN.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/greco/evaluations/round3/GrecoRC3(2011)11_Malta_EN.pdf).

²⁵ Paragraph 59 of the OSCE/ODIHR and Venice Commission Guidelines on Political Party Regulations provide that "The regulation of political party funding is essential to guarantee parties independence from undue influence created by donors, to ensure parties the opportunity to compete in accordance with the principle of equal opportunity, and to provide for transparency in political financing." Available at <http://www.osce.org/odihr/77812>.

²⁶ Paragraph 7.6 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document requires participating States to provide "political parties

In order to provide for a more level playing field during election campaigns, it is important that campaign finance provisions are clearly defined and separated from regular party operations.

B. PARTY AND CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

Political parties and their campaigns are funded primarily through individual and company donations. Parties and candidates can receive unlimited funds from any source, and have no requirements to disclose the source or amount of such donations. There is no regulation of in-kind donations. All OSCE/ODIHR EAM interlocutors regarded the transparency of donations as one of the main issues that need to be addressed, in order for voters to be properly informed and avoid and to minimize perceptions of businesses purchasing political influence.

Authorities could consider introducing requirements for political parties and candidates to disclose donation amounts and the identity of all individuals who donate above a certain minimum threshold, while also prohibiting donations from anonymous donors. To further enhance the transparency of campaign finance, it is recommended that in-kind donations and loans are disclosed.

Consideration could also be given to the introduction of limits for individual and company donations to political parties and candidates in order to minimize possibilities for corruption or the ability of particular groups to gain undue political influence through financial advantage.

The law does not provide for direct public funding of parties or electoral contestants, however, some indirect public funding is foreseen through the Income Tax Act, which provides for a tax exemption on political party income, including income from party affiliated clubs.²⁷ In addition, the supply of services by “non-profit organizations of political nature” to their members is exempt from the Value Added Tax.²⁸ Similarly, a deduction of expenses incurred by an elected candidate to support his/her campaign is given, as long as these do not exceed the ceiling stipulated in the General Elections Act.

C. CAMPAIGN EXPENDITURES

Total campaign expenditures per candidate must not exceed EUR 1,400. This limit was criticized by all OSCE/ODIHR EAM interlocutors as being unreasonably low to conduct an effective campaign that encompasses all campaign-related expenditures.²⁹

Consideration could be given to adjusting campaign expenditure limits for individual candidates to a more realistic and appropriate level. Consideration could be given to basing the legal limit on a form of indexation rather than an absolute amount in order to take account of inflation.

While legal limits on campaign expenses for individual candidates exist, there are no such ceilings on party expenditures. Several OSCE/ODIHR EAM interlocutors argued that this led to a distorted electoral campaign that disproportionately favored the two well-resourced parliamentary parties.

or other organizations with the necessary legal guarantees to enable them to compete with each other on a basis of equal treatment before the law and by the authorities”.

²⁷ Article 12(1)(f) of the Income Tax Act (Chapter 123 of the Laws of Malta).

²⁸ Article 8 of Part 2 of the Value Added Tax (Chapter 406 of the Laws of Malta).

²⁹ According to paragraphs 193-197 of the OSCE/ODIHR and Venice Commission Guidelines Political Party Regulations “This requires that spending limits be carefully constructed so that they are not overly burdensome” and “Limits should be realistic, to ensure that all parties are able to run an effective campaign, recognizing the high expense of modern electoral campaigns.”

D. REPORTING AND OVERSIGHT REQUIREMENTS

The law does not require political parties to report campaign contributions and expenditures. Likewise, there is no special authority mandated to oversee campaign finance or mechanisms for their effective control. The only regulations applicable refer to claims against a candidate or their agent, which should be submitted within 14 days after the day the candidate is elected. The agent is then required to report candidate expenses to the EC within 31 days after the announcement of election results. However, the EC does not have the legal authority to verify the accuracy of these financial reports or effective means to apply sanctions. Furthermore, the law does not require the EC to publish its conclusions on candidate reports, nor does it establish a deadline for the publication of these reports for public inspection. These factors undermine the effectiveness of any reporting mechanism and potentially decrease the electorate's trust in the way election campaigns are financed.

Consideration could be given to establishing an independent body with a mandate and resources to undertake full campaign finance audits. Candidates and parties could be subject to effective and proportionate sanctions should they violate campaign finance laws.

Consideration could also be given to requiring parties and candidates to open dedicated bank accounts for campaign financing, through which all campaign transactions should be made.

Consideration could be given to requiring both candidates and political parties to provide regular detailed reports on their campaign income and expenses, within an acceptable time limit. These could be made public, in a timely manner, in order to improve transparency and accountability.

XI. MEDIA

A. MEDIA LANDSCAPE

The media environment is pluralistic and diverse. Public and private television channels, radio stations and newspapers offer a wide variety of sources for news and the internet is fast becoming an important source of information for voters.³⁰

There are nine television channels in Malta. The state-owned Public Broadcasting Services (PBS) operates *TVM* and *TVM2*, and both of the parliamentary political parties operate a television channel.³¹ The state-run *TVM* is the most viewed television channel, followed by the LP channel, *ONE TV*, and the PN channel, *NET TV* third.³² In addition, PBS operates three radio stations,³³ and there are about 13 FM/AM analogue radio stations in addition to numerous local radio stations with limited range. The most listened radio station is the private *Bay Radio*, followed by the LP station, *ONE Radio*. The PBS station, *Radio Malta* is the third most popular.

³⁰ The National Statistics Office (NSO) reported that 78 per cent of homes were connected to the internet in 2012. Of young people (16 to 24 years old), 98 per cent have internet access. Of internet users, 40 per cent have smart phones and 28 per cent of these use their phones to read news and 28 per cent to access social networks such as Facebook or Twitter.

³¹ The NP owns *NET TV* and the LP owns *ONE TV*. Other, independent commercial stations include *SMASH TV* and *Favourite TV*, but these have limited viewership.

³² "TVM Continues to Lead TV Ratings," *TheTimesofMalta.com*, February 6, 2012. See.

³³ <http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20120206/local/tvm-continues-to-lead-tv-ratings.405605>.

³³ Magic Malta 91.7, Radio Malta (93.7), and 106.6.

Some 27 per cent of citizens read a daily newspaper, and there are numerous newspapers published.³⁴ Both parties have newspapers that serve as conduits for their partisan messages.³⁵ Several OSCE/ODIHR EAM interlocutors agreed that *The Times* is the most read paper and *L-orizzont* is thought to be a distant second.

State-owned media have a special responsibility to provide balanced and neutral information on elections and on candidates and parties. A number of OSCE/ODIHR EAM interlocutors, however, expressed strong feelings that the state media are heavily biased in favor of the NP. In addition, while there were no concerns that media faced any interference in gathering and imparting information freely without intimidation, obstruction or censorship, one independent paper alleged that they are subject to a *de facto* advertiser boycott because of their opposition to the outgoing government.

While parliamentary parties had ample access to the media, independent candidates and non-parliamentary parties complained to the OSCE/ODIHR EAM that they did not receive adequate coverage. Nevertheless, few concerns were raised that voters had insufficient access to diverse information to enable them to make well-informed choices.

B. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Many principles important to free speech and a free press are enshrined in the law, including freedom of expression, impartial and accurate broadcasting of politics and public policy; fair access for political parties; and media pluralism.³⁶ While these principles are generally respected, a number of OSCE/ODIHR EAM interlocutors criticized defamation laws, both civil and criminal, as creating obstacles to professional and effective journalism

Consideration should be given to decriminalize defamation, in line with international good practice on freedom of expression.

The Constitution delegates responsibility for regulating broadcast media to the Broadcasting Authority (BA), which consists of four members appointed by the president after consulting the prime minister and the leader of the opposition. In practice, two members are chosen to represent the interests of the NP and two to represent the LP. The chairperson is then selected among the members, but if they cannot agree, then the prime minister appoints. This system was criticized by the smaller parties as biased toward the two parliamentary parties. The Chairperson of the BA indicated support for reforming the way the BA is comprised so as to insulate it from partisan considerations.³⁷

Consideration could be given to reviewing the manner of selecting the members of the Broadcasting Authority with a view to protect the body from possible political interference.

³⁴ Circulation data are difficult to obtain and widely considered unreliable. One study cited a Media Warehouse figure of 27 per cent in 2008. Other interlocutors considered this figure to be high. See, http://ejc.net/media_landscapes/malta.

³⁵ The NP operates *In Nazzjon*. The newspaper often associated with the LP, *l-orizzont*, is actually the official paper of the General Workers' Union. The LP maintains that they have no control over the paper, but they acknowledge that its editorial policies favour the LP.

³⁶ Article 32(b) of the Constitution. The Broadcasting Act restates many of these principles and imposes an obligation on the Broadcast Authority to ensure their realization.

³⁷ There are a number of proposals that have been raised and debated. The Today Public Policy Institute released a document in 2012, "A Strategy for Addressing the Nation's Priorities," that included specific recommendations for reforming broadcasting laws. Last year the President also convened a forum of scholars that discussed Constitutional reform that reportedly included some reforms of the BA.

For these elections, the BA issued several directives aimed at providing guidance to broadcasters on the rules for covering the elections.³⁸ These rules provided detailed instructions regarding televised debates; press conferences, political spots and productions; and the allocation of free time to the LP, NP, and DA on all broadcast stations during the campaign period. While the DA complained that media coverage and the media laws are biased in favour of the two parliamentary parties, they also noted that the amount of time allocated to them under the BA directive was more than they would likely get if such allocations were based on popular support. Independent candidates expressed discontent with their lack of coverage in the media.

The BA focuses its regulatory mandate on PBS, acknowledging that the two party stations do not offer balanced coverage individually, but that their partisan leanings balance each other out. While the legal framework does appear to allow this interpretation, many OSCE/ODIHR EAM interlocutors noted that the Constitution and the Broadcasting Act could allow the BA to demand impartiality on each and every broadcast outlet if it chose to do so.³⁹

The print media are not regulated, except by provisions of the General Elections Act that restricts what may be printed during the campaign silence period. Self-regulation is provided through a voluntary association, the Institute of Maltese Journalists (IGM), which established a Code of Ethics and an Ethics Board. While the Code of Ethics aims at achieving high standards of journalism, the board is widely regarded as ineffective and several OSCE/ODIHR EAM interlocutors suggested ways to enhance self-regulation.

C. MEDIA COVERAGE OF ELECTIONS

There were three televised debates and numerous discussion programmes that provided opportunities for party representatives to discuss campaign issues. While some OSCE/ODIHR EAM interlocutors thought the BA regulations for these programmes were overly restrictive, no concerns were voiced in respect of the provision of information needed for voters to make informed decisions.

The campaign silence period was largely followed by the media, although criticized by several media outlets as an infringement of their right to free expression. Police, however reacted to violations of this rule and questioned people concerning comments made on the internet. It was not clear at the time of this report whether any sanctions would be imposed against alleged infractions.

The BA received three complaints against broadcasting stations. One of these was filed by the DA and one by a newspaper editor; both were settled amicably. The third case was filed by the LP, arguing the lack of impartiality and hostility towards its representative during a *TVM* programme by the presenter. This was decided in favor of the complainant.

³⁸ “Directive by the Broadcasting Authority in Terms of Article 15 of the Broadcasting Act, 16 January 2013. Rules for Debates between Political Leaders”. Available at: <http://www.ba-malta.org/prdetails?id=245>.

³⁹ Article 13(2) of the Broadcasting Act explicitly allows the BA to consider the output of the various broadcasting outlets as a whole when considering impartiality.

XII. ELECTION OBSERVATION

Political parties have full access to all stages of the electoral process through party agents who may at the same time act as ACs on election day. Also, in line with its OSCE commitments, the authorities invited the OSCE/ODIHR to observe the elections and provided the mission unimpeded access to all stages of the electoral process. The OSCE/ODIHR EAM observers were welcomed by all election stakeholders, including in the polling stations on election day and in the counting centre on the following days. However, the legal framework does not explicitly provide for citizen or international election observation, falling short of compliance with paragraph 8 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document.⁴⁰

Consideration should be given to amending the legal framework to explicitly provide full access to the electoral process to international and citizen observers, in order to comply with paragraph 8 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document.

XIII. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

The Constitution and the General Elections Act provide various administrative and judicial procedures for addressing election-related disputes. In general, few election-related complaints and appeals were filed during these elections. OSCE/ODIHR EAM interlocutors did not express concerns with regard to the election dispute resolution system.

Objections to candidate nominations should be filed with the EC within two days of the expiration of the deadline for receipt of nominations and the Court of Appeal examines appeals against EC decisions that uphold objections against candidate nominations. Revising Officers are mandated to review requests for amending the voter register and appeals against these decisions may be filed with the Court of Appeal.

While such requests must be filed within 21 days from the date the voter is informed of the decision by the EC, there are no specified deadlines for considering these cases. However, the law does provide that the Revising Officers and the Court of Appeal should consider all election-related disputes 14 days before election day. Additionally, the law does not provide a deadline for the Constitutional Court to adjudicate petitions referred to it. Although it is commendable that the Constitutional Court examined and ruled on the two petitions filed by the NP in a timely manner, the guarantee of a timely remedy in election-related disputes is integral to the principle of effective means of redress set out in paragraph 5.10 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document and should be explicitly stipulated in the law.⁴¹

Consideration should be given to set specific time limits for the adjudication and publication of election-related complaints and appeals by the Electoral Commission and the courts in order to be fully consistent with paragraph 5.10 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document.

⁴⁰ Paragraph 8 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document provides that “the participating States consider that the presence of observers, both foreign and domestic, can enhance the electoral process for States in which elections are taking place. They therefore invite observers from any other [O]SCE participating States...”.

⁴¹ Paragraph 5.10 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document states: “Everyone will have an effective means of redress against administrative decision, so as to guarantee respect for fundamental rights and ensure legal integrity”. The Venice Commission’s Code of Good Practice, paragraph 95, stipulates: “A time limit of three to five days at first instance (both lodging appeals and making rulings) seems reasonable for decisions to be taken before the elections. It is however, permissible to grant a little more time to Supreme and Constitutional Courts for their rulings”.

One appeal was submitted to the Court of Appeal regarding the registration of a candidate and another was submitted regarding voter registration.⁴²

The Constitutional Court is mandated to adjudicate other election-related complaints, including election results. Upon submission of a petition, it can order a re-count of all or part of the ballots, or annul the elections in all or some of the electoral districts if irregularities might have affected the final results. During the counting process, NP contestants filed two petitions with the Constitutional Court requesting recounts of two electoral districts on the grounds of errors committed during count.⁴³ The Court rejected the petitions reasoning that the NP candidates would be elected in any case based on the principle of proportionality invoked in these elections.⁴⁴

In addition to the DA complaint noted above regarding the lists of voters from retirement homes and hospitals that was to be submitted to the EC and shared with parties daily from the date that elections were announced until election day, the IDPC received some 60-100 election related complaints regarding unsolicited messages and emails sent by parties and candidates to voters. The IDPC requested that parties provide documented evidence that the emails addresses of the complainants had been obtained with their consent. In case of failure to do so it issued warnings and informed the parties that an administrative fine would be imposed if the act was repeated.

XIV. VOTING, COUNTING AND TABULATION OF RESULTS

In line with the OSCE/ODIHR's methodology, the EAM did not observe election day proceedings in a systematic or comprehensive manner. However, mission members visited a limited number of polling stations in Valletta and Rabat and early voting in Naxxar.

A. EARLY VOTING

Early voting commenced on 2 March at a single polling station for voters that provided a sworn declaration that they would be outside of Malta on 9 March.⁴⁵ As voters could come from any electoral district, ballots for all districts were available to the 2,269 voters that used this opportunity to vote.⁴⁶

ACs were provided with the opportunity to vote on 8 March at the same polling place utilized on 2 March. A total of 4,519 ACs took this opportunity to vote. For the first time in Malta, special voting was available in hospitals and retirement homes.⁴⁷ Voters residing in these facilities were served by a special sub-committee for each facility that provided ballots for every district. Voting in these facilities proved popular as 1,453 citizens voted and in some facilities queues remained after the 22:00 closing

⁴² In one case a candidate challenged the denial to print her name on the ballot without her former husband's surname. The EC held that a candidate's name on the ballot appear as it is on the electoral register; the Court of Appeal upheld this decision. In a second case the Court of Appeal accepted the appeal and ordered the EC to register the complainant as a voter.

⁴³ Civil Appeal Number 525/2013/1, *Frederick Azzopardi and Dr. Justyne Caruana v. EC*, and Civil Appeal Number 526/2013/1, *Claudette Buttigieg v. EC*, hearings of 13 March 2013.

⁴⁴ The two NP candidates affected filed another petition against the EC with the Constitutional Court on 20 March, arguing that the electoral results "do not reflect the will of the people". The first sitting was held on 15 April and the case has been adjourned until 17 June.

⁴⁵ Voters were required to complete this declaration in person between 25 February and 1 March.

⁴⁶ Each district had its own ballot box and was stored in a secure room until counting began on 9 March.

⁴⁷ As per Article 80 of the General Elections Act, only retirement homes with at least 50 voters were eligible.

time. As per the legal requirement, voting continued until all those within the polling place had cast their vote.

Out-of-country voting is not available for citizens living abroad. However, the government provided subsidized flights on Air Malta for registered voters and their dependents to return to Malta to cast their ballots in person.⁴⁸ For these elections, flights cost EUR 35 per person and 4,598 passengers were provided such flights, of which approximately 20 per cent were dependents of voters. Political parties were invited to obtain daily updates of the passenger lists and availability of space on all eligible flights to alleviate concerns of misappropriating seats. Several OSCE/ODIHR EAM interlocutors suggested that the flights provided by Air Malta were less effective and more costly than other potential methods of providing expatriates with voting possibilities.⁴⁹

B. ELECTION DAY VOTING

Polls were open from 07:00 until 22:00. In some districts, turnout was heavy in the morning and voters were faced with long queues. In all locations visited by the OSCE/ODIHR EAM, the voting process was professionally administered and took place in a peaceful manner. Police officers were present at all polling places, generally controlling the lines of voters waiting to cast their vote. Public interest on election day was very high and some citizens were observed spending long periods of time just outside the required 50-metre zone within which loitering was prohibited.

In the limited number of polling stations visited by the OSCE/ODIHR EAM, the ACs were well-prepared and acquainted with their responsibilities. In general, voters were processed quickly and efficiently, especially given the preferential ballot and that many districts concurrently held local elections. Voters were required to identify themselves with their voting card, which they exchanged for a ballot.

The OSCE/ODIHR EAM noted that election day enjoyed a high level of trust from voters and political parties. Furthermore, safeguards were implemented at every stage, including the right for parties to affix their own seals on ballot boxes and to stamp ballots along with those of the EC.⁵⁰

C. VOTERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

All polling stations visited by the OSCE/ODIHR EAM were wheelchair accessible. While braille templates and audio recordings were provided for visually impaired voters, most voters did not use these facilities. It would appear that only a fraction of such voters knew how to use braille and were comfortable using the templates provided.⁵¹

Visually impaired voters or other voters with special needs, such as the illiterate or physically incapacitated, had to request assistance from the ACs rather than assistance by another voter of their

⁴⁸ Voters were required to fly into Malta from 27 February to 9 March and had to use the return portion by 17 March. No date changes were permitted for these subsidized fares.

⁴⁹ A petition calling for out-of-country voting in embassies for these elections garnered some 1,300 support signatures. See: www.change.org/petitions/make-an-absentee-ballot-system-a-key-part-of-the-2013-election-campaign.

⁵⁰ However, only the seals and stamps of the EC are legally required. If a party stamp or seal is missing, it has no bearing on the validity of a ballot or whether the EC shall raise concern on the security of the ballot box.

⁵¹ According to the EC, in 2008 only three voters used Braille templates available for visually impaired voters while over 1,000 sought the assistance of ACs.

own choice.⁵² When such a request was made, the polling station was closed to other voters and the voter with special needs had to verbally confirm their voting preferences to the chief AC in the view of the other ACs. This seemingly puts political party concerns of undue influence on the voter ahead of the right to vote in secrecy.⁵³ In addition, in the polling stations visited by the OSCE/ODIHR EAM, it seemed that some capable elderly voters were encouraged to use the assistance of the ACs when they appeared to be able to vote independently. This contributed to the formation of long lines of voters waiting to cast their ballots as it considerably slowed the process.

Further efforts should be made to ensure the secrecy of the vote for all voters with special needs. This could include allowing such voters to select a person of their own choice to assist them in casting their vote.

D. COUNTING, TABULATION AND THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULTS

At the close of polls, materials were reconciled in the polling stations with the ballot boxes remaining sealed. All polling materials were brought to the national counting centre in Naxxar. Counting began at 11:00 on the day after the elections, with each district being counted at a separate counting station. All proceedings at the count centre were conducted with full transparency, including the presence of candidate and party agents and the entire proceeding being broadcast on national television. Party agents had full view of the counting process from behind transparent plastic barriers from where they were able to question particular ballots and at the same time tabulate samples to determine a winner prior to official results being announced.

The counting process was conducted efficiently and transparently. Although unofficial overall results were acknowledged early in the process, counting continued for nearly 24 hours, with 8 hour counting staff shifts. Over 20 rounds of counting to transfer surplus ballots and allocate seats were required in 4 districts.⁵⁴

After preliminary results were announced, the NP requested recounts in two districts based on concerns that there were mistakes made transferring a few ballots to the incorrect candidate; however, the EC ruled that the law provides it no authority to conduct a recount after a particular count is completed and any request for a recount had to be made to the Constitutional Court. The Constitutional Court rejected the recount request and final results were announced on 13 March, with a traditionally high turnout of 93 per cent.

As the General Elections Act allows for candidates to run in two districts simultaneously, if a candidate was elected in both districts, they were required to resign from one. The vacated seat was filled by conducting a 'casual election', which means taking the ballots attributed to the candidate that resigned and utilizing the subsequent choices on those ballots to fill the vacancy. Casual elections were held to fill 11 such vacated seats and only candidates originally on that ballot and later nominated for the casual election were eligible.⁵⁵

Of the 69 seats allocated from these elections, 10 women won seats, corresponding to some 14 per

⁵² Article 29(a.iii) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities require States Parties to allow persons with disabilities "assistance in voting by a person of their own choice." While Malta is a signatory to this convention, it placed a reservation on this particular article.

⁵³ Paragraph 7.4 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document stipulates that participating States should "ensure that votes are cast by secret ballot or by equivalent free voting procedure".

⁵⁴ Districts 1, 9 and 11 required 22 rounds of counting, while District 13 required the least at just 10 rounds.

⁵⁵ Casual elections were held on 28 March and 3 April to replace five LP seats and six NP seats.

cent of all members of parliament, which is a substantial increase in comparison with the previous elections.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the current representation of women is significantly below what is considered the current OSCE average of 23.6 per cent.⁵⁷

XV. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations, as contained throughout the text, are offered for consideration by the authorities, political parties, and civil society with a view to supporting efforts to conduct elections fully in line with OSCE commitments and other international standards for democratic elections. The OSCE/ODIHR stands ready to assist the authorities of Malta to further improve the electoral process and in following up on the recommendations contained in this report.

A. PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Consideration should be given to decriminalize defamation, in line with international good practice on freedom of expression.
2. Further efforts should be made to ensure the secrecy of the vote for all voters with special needs. This could include allowing such voters to select a person of their own choice to assist them in casting their vote.
3. The legal framework would benefit from enacting a comprehensive system for regulating party and campaign financing.
4. Consideration could be given to requiring both candidates and political parties to provide regular detailed reports on their campaign income and expenses, within an acceptable time limit. These could be made public, in a timely manner, in order to improve transparency and accountability.
5. Consideration should be given to amending the legal framework to explicitly provide full access to the electoral process to international and citizen observers, in order to comply with paragraph 8 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document.
6. Limitations on the right to stand for office could be reviewed to further enhance full compliance with OSCE commitments and international obligations.

B. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Legal Framework

7. In line with the IDPC recommendation, and given the sensitive nature of information on patients currently contained in the lists, consideration could be given to ensuring that these lists are submitted to the Electoral Commission no earlier than five days before the election.

⁵⁶ In the 2008 parliament, some 7 per cent of members of parliament were female.

⁵⁷ See compiled data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union 'Women in Parliament' database, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm>.

Election Administration

8. Notwithstanding the overall confidence in the performance of the election administration, with a view to further enhancing transparency, the Electoral Commission should consider having open meetings and publishing all decisions in a timely manner.
9. Consideration could be given to reviewing the current arrangement for the simultaneous appointment of people as party agents and Assistant Commissioners, with a view to avoid perceptions of potential conflict of interests.
10. Consideration could be given to introducing mechanisms that would ensure greater participation of women in senior decision-making roles within the election administration.

Voter Registration

11. Following the planned update of national identification cards, the authorities could consider reviewing the need for voting cards in order to bring down election expenditures and ensure voters are not disenfranchised for losing their voting document prior to election day.

Political Party and Candidate Registration

12. Consideration could be given to introducing measures to promote women candidates. The General Elections Act could be updated to apply gender sensitive language. Political parties could also consider nominating a minimum number of candidates of each gender.

Election Campaign

13. Consideration could be given to requiring all electoral advertisements to clearly state which party, group, or individual procured the advertisement, so that voters can make informed choices.

Party and Campaign Financing

14. In order to provide for a more level playing field during election campaigns, it is important that campaign finance provisions are clearly defined and separated from regular party operations.
15. Authorities could consider introducing requirements for political parties and candidates to disclose donation amounts and the identity of all individuals who donate above a certain minimum threshold, while also prohibiting donations from anonymous donors. To further enhance the transparency of campaign finance, it is recommended that in-kind donations and loans are disclosed.
16. Consideration could also be given to the introduction of limits for individual and company donations to political parties and candidates in order to minimize possibilities for corruption or the ability of particular groups to gain undue political influence through financial advantage.
17. Consideration could be given to adjusting campaign expenditure limits for individual candidates to a more realistic and appropriate level. Consideration could be given to basing

the legal limit on a form of indexation rather than an absolute amount in order to take account of inflation.

18. Consideration could be given to establishing an independent body with a mandate and resources to undertake full campaign finance audits. Candidates and parties could be subject to effective and proportionate sanctions should they violate campaign finance laws.
19. Consideration could also be given to requiring parties and candidates to open dedicated bank accounts for campaign financing, through which all campaign transactions should be made.

Media

20. Consideration could be given to reviewing the manner of selecting the members of the Broadcasting Authority with a view to protect the body from possible political interference.

Complaints and Appeals

21. Consideration should be given to set specific time limits for the adjudication and publication of election-related complaints and appeals by the Electoral Commission and the courts in order to be fully consistent with paragraph 5.10 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document.

ANNEX: FINAL RESULTS

	FIRST PREFERENCE VOTES						TOTAL VALID	Invalid	% Invalid of Cast	Total Cast	Registered Voters	Turnout
	Liberal Alliance	Democratic Alternative	Party Ajkla	Labour	Nationalist	Ind.						
District 1	0	267	0	12,462	9,957	0	22,686	238	1.04%	22,924	24,727	93%
District 2	5	218	47	16,312	6,373	7	22,962	235	1.01%	23,197	24,607	94%
District 3	0	343	0	16,050	7,025	0	23,418	273	1.15%	23,691	25,189	94%
District 4	0	254	0	15,323	7,354	0	22,931	264	1.14%	23,195	24,546	94%
District 5	0	315	0	16,201	7,689	0	24,205	343	1.40%	24,548	26,129	94%
District 6	7	219	0	13,934	9,330	0	23,490	269	1.13%	23,759	25,357	94%
District 7	0	375	0	13,805	10,269	0	24,449	350	1.41%	24,799	26,303	94%
District 8	0	596	0	11,350	11,738	0	23,684	292	1.22%	23,976	25,625	94%
District 9	0	714	0	9,854	12,409	25	23,002	276	1.19%	23,278	25,268	92%
District 10	0	741	0	8,665	12,662	0	22,068	309	1.38%	22,377	24,813	90%
District 11	0	717	0	10,404	13,459	0	24,580	328	1.32%	24,908	26,763	93%
District 12	0	537	0	10,862	11,610	0	23,009	416	1.78%	23,425	26,015	90%
District 13	0	210	0	12,311	12,551	0	25,072	451	1.77%	25,523	27,730	92%
TOTAL	12	5,506	47	167,533	132,426	32	305,556	4,044		309,600	333,072	93%
%	0.00%	1.78%	0.02%	54.11%	42.77%	0.01%	98.69%	1.31%				

	Seats Allocated	Constitutional Bonus *	Total Seats
Labour	39	0	39
Nationalist	26	4	30

* Bonus seats distributed based on Article 52(1) of the Constitution

Source: Election Commission Website: <http://www.electoral.gov.mt>

ABOUT THE OSCE/ODIHR

The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) is the OSCE's principal institution to assist participating States "to ensure full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, to abide by the rule of law, to promote principles of democracy and (...) to build, strengthen and protect democratic institutions, as well as promote tolerance throughout society" (1992 Helsinki Summit Document). This is referred to as the OSCE human dimension.

The OSCE/ODIHR, based in Warsaw (Poland) was created as the Office for Free Elections at the 1990 Paris Summit and started operating in May 1991. One year later, the name of the Office was changed to reflect an expanded mandate to include human rights and democratization. Today it employs over 130 staff.

The OSCE/ODIHR is the lead agency in Europe in the field of **election observation**. Every year, it co-ordinates and organizes the deployment of thousands of observers to assess whether elections in the OSCE region are conducted in line with OSCE Commitments, other international standards for democratic elections and national legislation. Its unique methodology provides an in-depth insight into the electoral process in its entirety. Through assistance projects, the OSCE/ODIHR helps participating States to improve their electoral framework.

The Office's **democratization** activities include: rule of law, legislative support, democratic governance, migration and freedom of movement, and gender equality. The OSCE/ODIHR implements a number of targeted assistance programmes annually, seeking to develop democratic structures.

The OSCE/ODIHR also assists participating States in fulfilling their obligations to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms consistent with OSCE human dimension commitments. This is achieved by working with a variety of partners to foster collaboration, build capacity and provide expertise in thematic areas including human rights in the fight against terrorism, enhancing the human rights protection of trafficked persons, human rights education and training, human rights monitoring and reporting, and women's human rights and security.

Within the field of **tolerance and non-discrimination**, the OSCE/ODIHR provides support to the participating States in strengthening their response to hate crimes and incidents of racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance. The OSCE/ODIHR's activities related to tolerance and non-discrimination are focused on the following areas: legislation; law enforcement training; monitoring, reporting on, and following up on responses to hate-motivated crimes and incidents; as well as educational activities to promote tolerance, respect, and mutual understanding.

The OSCE/ODIHR provides advice to participating States on their policies on **Roma and Sinti**. It promotes capacity-building and networking among Roma and Sinti communities, and encourages the participation of Roma and Sinti representatives in policy-making bodies.

All ODIHR activities are carried out in close co-ordination and co-operation with OSCE participating States, OSCE institutions and field operations, as well as with other international organizations.

More information is available on the ODIHR website (www.osce.org/odihr).

IV. Institutions à Malte

6. Bureau européen d'appui en matière d'asile

6.1 EASO - Document unique de programmation (EN)

7. Quartier général de la base maritime des forces armées de Malte



EASO Single Programming Document

Multiannual
Programming 2017-2019

Work Programme 2017

December 2016

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SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

1 Foreword by the Executive Director

Since the beginning of the migration crisis in the EU, several Member States have experienced major challenges in dealing with hundreds of thousands of migrants and asylum seekers, most of whom come from war-torn countries and regions through the Mediterranean routes. In response to this, a wide range of measures have been put in place, both at national and EU level to ensure that those who qualify for protection are given a fair opportunity to make their claim, whereas those who do not qualify for international protection are subjected to return. The temporary crisis relocation schemes agreed in September 2015 and the EU-Turkey statement of March 2016 are just two of these measures.

Besides putting several Member States under significant pressure, this extraordinary situation has also exposed several weaknesses in the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), compelling EU leaders to re-consider the current system and start a process aimed at overhauling the current system, making it fairer and more apt in time of migration crisis. Consequently, in 2016, the Commission proposed a revised EU asylum legal framework and the transformation of the European Asylum Support Office into a fully-fledged European Union Asylum Agency with significant new competencies both in terms of operational support but also in monitoring the implementation of the CEAS.

This Single Programming Document was drafted against this background of great dynamism and change in the field of migration in the EU, which directly affects the work of EASO. Within this framework, over the past year, EASO has been taking bold steps to increase its emergency operational and technical capacity, which made the deployment of hundreds of experts and interpreters together with the contracting of ancillary services possible in the hotspots in Greece and Italy. This has exponentially increased the operational expenditures of the agency, well above any previous budget estimates. In fact, EASO started the year 2016 with a budget of 15.89M€ and is approaching the end of the year with a budget of 63.20M€. This four-fold increase in budget in a single year bears witness to the value that the European Union and its Member States place on the work of EASO, in particular, but not exclusively, that related to operational and technical support in the hotspots.

Sometime during the period 2017-2019, the co-legislator is expected to adopt the founding Regulation of the European Union Asylum Agency (EUAA). Consequently, during 2017, the agency will consolidate its core activities, further develop its operational and technical capability, and as soon as possible start engaging in a number of preparatory actions to lay down the foundations for activities that will be foreseen in the new founding Regulation of the agency. EASO shall maintain a flexible approach and it will focus on certain activities depending on the final content of the EUAA Regulation. This is specifically the case for actions related to supporting a sustainable and fair distribution of applications for international protection, country of origin information and country guidance, monitoring and assessing the implementation of the CEAS and capacity of asylum and reception systems in Member States, and enabling convergence in the assessment of applications for international protection across the European Union. Moreover, the agency will also take concrete measures to step up recruitment of staff, which is expected to reach 500 by the year 2020 and expedite budget absorption, which should reach 114M€ by the year 2020.

As an instrument of solidarity, EASO relies heavily on the Member States to support those states subject to pressure on their asylum and reception systems, primarily through the availability of experts provided for the required timeframe and with the requested profiles. I am confident that the agency will continue receiving the support of the Member States by stepping up the availability of their experts to be deployed in the hotspots. With a reinforced mandate and the right level of resources, EASO will play a major role both in supporting the Member States and in addressing the structural weaknesses of the CEAS, thereby contributing in concrete terms to making the system fairer, of higher quality and at the same time more efficient and effective.

2 Mission Statement

2.1. EASO's mission

EASO's mission is to contribute to the implementation and development of the CEAS by providing support and facilitating, coordinating and strengthening practical cooperation among EU+ countries as an independent centre of expertise on asylum.

2.2. EASO's principles

In fulfilling its mission, EASO observes the following principles:

- providing comprehensive and timely support, including operational support, to requesting Member States;
- stimulating quality and efficiency of the asylum and reception systems of Member States;
- acting as an independent and impartial centre of expertise;
- providing accurate and up-to-date data, analysis and assessments on asylum-related matters;
- supporting Member States in taking up their responsibilities in the field of asylum and in showing solidarity with Member States whose asylum systems are under pressure;
- providing support to Third Countries' asylum and reception systems, as well as support related to resettlement, in close cooperation with the relevant EU institutions and international organisations;
- facilitating and stimulating joint and common practical cooperation measures in the field of asylum, thereby fostering mutual trust among Member States;
- providing evidence-based input to EU policymakers on asylum;
- cooperating with EU institutions, EU agencies and bodies, international organisations and civil society.

2.3. EASO's founding act

EASO was founded by Regulation 439/2010¹. Article 1 of the Regulation stipulates that:

“A European Asylum Support Office (the Support Office) is hereby established in order to help to improve the implementation of the Common European Asylum System (the CEAS), to strengthen practical cooperation among Member States on asylum and to provide and/or coordinate the provision of operational support to Member States subject to particular pressure on their asylum and reception systems”.

According to the Regulation the duties of EASO are to support practical cooperation on asylum, including identification and exchange of best practices, information on countries of origin, supporting relocation, supporting training, supporting the external dimension of CEAS; to support Member States subject to particular pressure, including through gathering and analysing information and implementing support actions; and to contribute to the implementation of CEAS through gathering and exchanging information and drafting reports and technical documents.

EASO's internal governance comprises a Management Board and an Executive Director. The Management Board is the governing and planning body of EASO, which aims to ensure that EASO performs effectively its duties. The Executive Director is independent in the performance of his tasks and is the legal representative of EASO. The Executive Director is responsible, inter alia, for the

¹ Regulation (EU) 439/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 May 2010 establishing a European Asylum Support Office, OJ L 132, 29.5.2010, p. 11.

administrative management of EASO and for the implementation of the Work Programme and the decisions of the Management Board.

The Executive Director is supported by Heads of Department, Heads of Unit and Liaison Officers. EASO's Organisation chart is included as Annex X to this document.

3 List of acronyms

AEAJ	Association of European Administrative Judges
AIP	Asylum Intervention Pool
APD	Asylum Procedures Directive
AST	Asylum Support Team
CEAS	Common European Asylum System
CEPOL	European Police College
COI	Country of Origin Information
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
EMCDDA	European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction
EMN	European Migration Network
ENPI	European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument
EPRA	European Platform of Reception Agencies
EPS	Early warning and Preparedness System
EU	European Union
eu-LISA	European Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice
EUROJUST	The European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit
Europol	European Police Office
FRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
Frontex	European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union
GDISC	General Directors of Immigration Service Conference
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Group for the Provision of Statistics
IALN	Inter-Agency Legal Network
IARLJ	International Association of Refugee Law Judges
IDS	Information Documentation System
IGC	Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs
MedCOI	Medical Country of Origin Information
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
MSPP	Multiannual Staff Policy Plan
NCP	National Contact Point
OLAF	European Anti-Fraud Office
RDPPs	Regional Development and Protection Programmes
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound
SP	Support Plan
THB	Trafficking of Human Beings
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VHAS	Voluntary humanitarian admission scheme
WB	Western Balkans

SECTION II. GENERAL CONTEXT

The Multiannual Single Programming Document 2017-2019 is drawn up during a period of rapid change and evolution in the field of migration characterised by unprecedented number of claims for international protection in the EU, reaching around 630 000 asylum applications lodged between January and June 2016, representing a 41 % increase over the same period the year before. This situation is exerting extraordinary pressure on the asylum and reception systems of an increasing number of Member States and has also led to the triggering of Article 78(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU), which provides a specific legal basis to deal with emergency situations. These factors have pushed migration to the top of the EU political agenda, with a direct impact on EASO and the nature of its activities.

The past years have been dedicated to the elaboration of the recast EU asylum acquis, which came into force on 21 July 2015 and which puts more rigorous demands on the asylum and reception systems of Member States than the previous legal framework. Yet, in view of the escalating migration situation, the need for reform was widely acknowledged, including by the European Parliament² and the European Council.³ Consequently, on 6 April 2016, the Commission adopted a Communication entitled "Towards a reform of the Common European Asylum System and enhancing legal avenues to Europe",⁴ in which it set out its priorities for improving the CEAS. On 4 May 2016, the proposal for a new EASO Regulation, the proposal of the reform of the Dublin system and proposal amending the Eurodac system were presented as part of a first package of reform of the CEAS. A second stage of legislative proposals reforming the Asylum Procedures and Qualification Directives, as well as the Reception Conditions Directive followed on 13 July 2016, ensuring the full reform of all parts of the EU asylum system, including to avoid the disruption of the Dublin mechanism by abuses and asylum shopping by applicants for and beneficiaries of international protection.

EASO was established as a tangible instrument of solidarity which plays a decisive role in underpinning the legislative implementation of the EU asylum acquis with several practical cooperation measures and tools. EASO fosters closer cooperation among Member States on all aspects of asylum and trust building, both of which are central to the success of the CEAS. During its first five years of operations, EASO has evolved from a start-up agency into a key stakeholder in supporting the implementation and further development of the CEAS.

The draft proposal for a new EASO Regulation, aims to strengthen the role of EASO and to transform it into a fully-fledged Agency which is capable of providing the necessary operational and technical assistance to Member States, increasing practical cooperation and information exchange among Member States, supporting a sustainable and fair distribution of applications for international protection, monitoring and assessing the implementation of the CEAS and the capacity of asylum and reception systems in Member States, and enabling convergence in the assessment of applications for international protection across the Union.

The proposals comprising the revised EU asylum package reaffirm the role of EASO in providing support to Member States' efforts in implementing the standards that characterised the reformed CEAS.

Resulting from an initiative from the Dutch Presidency, Council Conclusions on Asylum Decision Practices were adopted on 21 April 2016. According to these Conclusions, EASO is invited, inter alia to set up a structure for a senior-level policy network aimed at jointly interpreting COI and developing country guidance. Moreover, in cooperation with the policy network, EASO is invited to start a pilot exercise on common policy development based on an elaborated common COI report on Afghanistan.

² See for example European Parliament resolutions of 12 April 2016 on the situation in the Mediterranean and the need for a holistic EU approach to migration (2015/2095(INI)); of 10 September 2015 on migration and refugees in Europe (2015/2833(RSP)).

³ EUCO 19.02.2016, SN 16/16.

⁴ COM(2016) 197 final.

Over the past years, EASO developed its capacity to become an important operational partner for Member States that require additional practical support, whilst strengthening its regular support to Member States. The Commission Communication on the work of the Task Force Mediterranean, issued in December 2013, identified a number of tasks and objectives for EASO, including a feasibility study on possible joint processing of protection claims outside of the EU, the strengthening of EASO's role in the field of identification and screening of asylum seekers in mixed flows and a coordination role in intra-EU relocation. The mission letter of the European Commission President, sent on 1 November 2014 to the new Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, stressed that “to ensure the full and consistent implementation of the Common European Asylum System” [...] the Commission should “develop a strategy for improving our response to emergency situations” and “look at an extended role for the European Asylum Support Office, with a particular focus on working with and in third countries”.

In the wake of the tragic incidents in the Mediterranean, on 20 April 2015, at the joint meeting of Foreign and Interior Ministers, Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Commissioner Avramopoulos presented a 10-point plan outlining immediate actions to be taken in response to the crisis in the Mediterranean. The European Council, on 23 April 2015, issued a statement⁵ outlining various measures — several of them involving EASO — aimed at preventing further loss of life at sea and at tackling the root causes of the human emergency that the EU is facing. This was followed by a European Parliament Resolution on 29 April 2015⁶. Following the European Council Conclusions of 25 and 26 June 2015⁷, at the 8 and 9 July 2015 informal JHA Council Member States in principle supported the European Commission’s proposal to use the emergency response mechanism under Article 78(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to relocate eligible applicants for international protection from Italy and Greece. On 14 September 2015 and 22 September 2015, the Council adopted Decision (EU) 2015/1523⁸ and (EU) 2015/1601⁹ respectively, establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and Greece.

On 18 March 2016, the EU-Turkey Statement was signed. EASO was mandated to support its implementation in Greece by supporting the Greek Asylum Service in carrying out specific steps of the procedure. EASO experts conduct interviews and draft opinions to ensure systematic individual assessment within the context of the EU-Turkey Statement. Furthermore, EASO was called upon to support the implementation of the 1:1 scheme established to substitute irregular and dangerous migrant crossings from Turkey to the Greek islands with the legal channel of resettlement from Turkey to the EU. For every Syrian being returned to Turkey, another Syrian will be resettled from Turkey to the EU.

The 17-point Action Plan published after the Leaders Meeting on the Western Balkans Route of 25 October 2015 and the 11 November 2015 Valletta Summit Action Plan also set out a number of measures, a number of which are earmarked for EASO. In 2016, a number of policy documents were issued together with a Commission Communication on establishing a new Partnership Framework with Third Countries under the European Agenda on Migration and the a Commission proposal for a regulation for a Union Resettlement System. The EU response to the migration crisis will continue to be complemented with additional measures, both at political and legislative level. The implementation

⁵ Special meeting of the European Council, 23 April 2015 — statement:

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/04/23-special-euco-statement/>

This part of the European Agenda on Migration incorporates and further develops the initiatives included in the Roadmap that the Commission presented as a follow up to the Statement of the European Council of 23 April 2015.

⁶ P8_TA-PROV(2015)0176

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+TA+P8-TA-2015-0176+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>

⁷ EUCO 22/15

⁸ Council Decision (EU) 2015/1523 of 14 September 2015 establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and of Greece, OJ L 239, 15.9.2015, p. 146–156.

⁹ Council Decision (EU) 2015/1601 of 22 September 2015 establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and Greece, OJ L 248, 24.9.2015, p. 80–94.

of such measures will extend into the coming years, translated into practical actions which will mark and guide EASO's work for this planning period. EASO's multiannual programme focuses on consolidating in its activities all tasks already allocated to it by its founding Regulation and other legal and policy documents, notably the European Agenda on Migration. In addition it remains flexible to incorporate additional tasks that may emerge within the rapidly developing framework in the area of migration.

The developments outlined above have significant implications on EASO activities and called for a change in the nature of EASO's output with a shift to **more tailor-made practical operational support** and tools to EU+ countries with specific needs on their asylum and reception systems. In this context, EASO will continue playing an important role in the so-called '**hotspots' approach** in Italy and Greece, in particular on registration of applications for international protection, joint processing of asylum applications, referral of potential outgoing Dublin take-charge requests, and assistance with the relocation of applicants for international protection from Italy and Greece. In Greece, EASO will continue supporting the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement by examining requests for international protection, in particular specific parts of the procedure such as admissibility.

Over the coming years, EASO will continue its efforts to collect information to provide a **comprehensive, accurate and up to date situational picture** of the situation of asylum in the EU and the state of implementation of the CEAS. EASO will continue supporting capacity building in Member States through generation of knowledge and a wide range of permanent support tools such as **delivery of training and development of training material, expertise, provision of information, statistical analysis, country of origin information, and development of practical cooperation tools**.

Furthermore, in line with the June 2015 European Council Conclusions, EASO will continue to produce information relevant for the possible designation of safe countries of origin.

As requested in the April 2016 Council Conclusions, EASO will significantly increase its COI production capacity, establish a senior-level policy expert network (Country Guidance Network), and develop Country Guidance Notes aimed at increasing the level of convergence of national asylum decision practices on particular countries of origin, taking into account an analysis of the relevant COI, but also EASO horizontal guidance and tools on relevant elements of the CEAS.

EASO will have an enhanced role in the area of reception (the **new dedicated network of reception authorities, pilot project on shared reception**, and development of **quality criteria for reception centres** in cooperation with the Commission). It is clear that adequate reception is crucial for a functioning CEAS.

Integration and return form an integral part of well-functioning asylum and migration policies. Introducing such measures earlier on in the asylum and reception process can enhance their effectiveness. EASO will continue to foster practical cooperation in the areas of integration and return within the asylum and reception system. EASO will facilitate exchange of information and best practices to mainstream elements of return and integration at various stages of the asylum process and reception systems.

EASO is also asked to support the European Commission in developing **guidelines for maximising legislative provisions against abuses**, allowing swift processing of unfounded asylum applications and eventually streamlining MS work for the assessment of asylum applications. EASO will enhance cooperation and information sharing among the **national Dublin units** in the 32 Member States of the Dublin III Regulation through the dedicated network of Dublin units.

Monitoring of the implementation of the new EU asylum acquis takes on a new dimension in this phase in order to ensure that the CEAS caters for the constantly changing circumstances in the asylum and migration field. This will require data provision on all key aspects of the CEAS, requiring efforts at national level to ensure each body tasked with a part of the system is effectively communicating at national level and that Member States provide needed data at EU level to ensure reliability and comparability. Through its Early warning and Preparedness System (EPS) and the EASO mapping exercise of asylum processes in Member States, EASO will be in a position to provide a picture of the situation, which could help Member States and the EU to take the necessary steps to address

weaknesses in their systems, which could include tailor made capacity building measures coordinated by EASO and also measures financed through the Asylum and Migration Fund (AMIF).

The **external dimension of the CEAS** has gained renewed attention, in particular the Western Balkan countries, Turkey and North Africa. In line with the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility, the European Agenda on Migration, the 2016 Commission Communication on establishing a new Partnership Framework with Third Countries under the European Agenda on Migration and the EASO External Action Strategy, EASO will provide increased support to the Western Balkan region and Turkey including through the implementation of a Programme funded under the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) as well in relation to the implementation of the Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP) in North Africa. Furthermore, as appropriate, EASO will follow up on the Valletta Summit Action Plan of November 2015 by providing training and improve quality of asylum processes in the relevant Third Countries. Any EASO support will be targeted and limited to priority countries and coordinated with the Commission and EEAS.

EASO will also support the implementation of the **European resettlement scheme** and other resettlement actions of EU+ countries, also through capacity building measures in Member States that have little or no experience of resettlement through a pilot project in a strategic third country. EASO will support the Commission proposal for a Regulation for a Union Resettlement Framework.

Finally EASO will continue fostering dialogue on the practical implementation of the EU asylum acquis and provide **evidence based policy input**, thereby providing the basis for assessing the legislative framework.

In the implementation of its work, EASO will work in close cooperation with other actors in the field, in particular the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the Commission. EASO will build on its excellent working relationship with the UNHCR and IOM and will continue promoting strong cooperation amongst EU agencies, in particular the JHA agencies network and activities organised within this framework. EASO will increase cooperation with Frontex, eu-LISA and FRA in particular in operations in order to ensure a coordinated approach. EASO will also continue its cooperation with the European Migration Network and its different Expert Groups, IGC, GDISC and other players.

EASO will further develop its positive relationship with the members of Courts and Tribunals and will engage civil society through more targeted consultations, transparency, and outreach activities.

SECTION III. MULTI-ANNUAL PROGRAMMING 2017-2019

1 Multi-annual objectives

1.1. EASO's Key Performance Indicator

EASO's overall Key Performance Indicator represents the agency's ability to meet the objectives set out in the annual work programme.

Consequently, EASO's Key Performance Indicator is represented by a qualitative indicator aiming at demonstrating the impact of EASO's support in the coherent implementation of the CEAS, taking into account:

- the tasks laid down in the EASO Regulation, the recast EU asylum acquis and other related EU documents and the progress of EASO in implementing activities to fulfil these tasks;
- the requests made by the EU+ countries, the European Commission, the Council of the EU, the European Parliament and other EU institutions, agencies and bodies to develop and execute additional EASO activities in order to support the implementation of the CEAS;
- the evaluative opinions given by the EU+ countries, the European Commission, the Council of the EU, the European Parliament, other EU institutions, agencies and bodies and other EASO partners on EASO's work.

The work programme identifies a number of specific objectives which are structured according to SMART ('specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound') principles. In order to measure EASO's performance, indicators are developed for each objective, together with the expected output and timeframe.

1.2. EASO's Multiannual objectives

EASO will continue to contribute to the coherent implementation of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and help strengthen practical cooperation among EU+ countries. In order to achieve this, the following multi-annual objectives will be pursued by the Agency.

EASO Multi-annual objectives	When	Indicators
Contribute to the exchange and analysis of information on the implementation of the CEAS	2017-2019	Number of topics for which information will be collected and analysed
Provide and enhance practical cooperation and support asylum processes	2017-2019	Number of support projects/activities ongoing and/or implemented
Contribute to improved capacity of EU Member States to implement the CEAS and manage fluctuating migration flows through providing operational support	2017-2019	Number of support plans/projects ongoing and/or implemented.
Enhance, and simplify the presentation of, EASO's knowledge on countries of origin, on the preparedness of national asylum systems and on the current and likely future asylum situation, in line with its role as an independent centre of expertise.	2017-2019	Extent of awareness and understanding of the functioning of the CEAS in the current migration situation that can be directly derived from EASO's information and knowledge-provision activities.
Contribute towards the development of knowledge, skills and competences of asylum practitioners	2017-2019	Number of trainers who have completed EASO's train-the training modules;

		Number of national trainings organised in EU+countries; Number of participants who have completed national trainings.
Contribute to the better identification of and adequate support to vulnerable applicants in asylum processes	2017-2019	Number of activities/practical tools ongoing and/or implemented
Stimulate judicial dialogue in the field of international protection	2017-2019	Number of stakeholders participating in the EASO network of members of courts and tribunals Number of practical cooperation activities organised for members of courts and tribunals
Provide and enhance capacity building of Third Countries in the field of asylum	2017-2019	Number of support projects/activities ongoing and/or implemented
Contribute to constructive dialogue in the field of asylum with relevant stakeholders, including civil society	2017-2019	Number of consultations held

2 Multi-annual programme

2.1 Operational support

EASO will continue to **enhance its operational support** to EU Member States based on emerging needs to fully implement the EU Asylum Acquis and to respond to particular pressure on EU Member States' asylum and reception systems.

EASO will tailor its operational support to the specific arising needs, as well as to requests from EU Member States. EASO will continue providing support to the implementation of relocation measures and to the implementation of the EU-Turkey Agreement. Specific focus will therefore be provided to EU front-line Member States, in particular to Italy and Greece as per the European Agenda on Migration and the 'Hotspot' approach, including with respect to relocation and the implementation of the EU-Turkey Agreement. This will include the implementation of Support Plans and/or Hotspot (including Relocation) Operating Plans. EASO will support requesting EU Member States to provide information to potential relocation candidates, refer them to the national asylum authorities, register applications for international protection and relocation and match these applicants to the most appropriate Member State, as well as preparing for their transfer.

EASO will continue to deliver tailor-made training within the framework of emergency and/or special support to EU+ countries facing unexpected migratory pressure, including within the context of the 'hotspot' approach. Such training will continue to address the specific situation of vulnerable applicants, including unaccompanied children.

EASO will also further develop and make use of a number of tools to implement its operational activities and relocation related activities, including the updated pool of experts and the Asylum Intervention Pool (AIP), the List of Available Languages and the electronic/ICT deployment system. In addition, EASO will explore technical solutions that will help to enhance operational support and joint processing carried out by Asylum Support Teams. Furthermore, improved coordination with stakeholders in the requesting Member State will be pursued to enhance the quality and speed with which support can be delivered. Mobile teams, including facilities and personnel, who can be deployed even more rapidly when required to address emergency situations on the ground will continue to be delivered. Whenever possible, EASO will aim to have a permanent presence in the country requesting support in order to allow for dedicated and continuous support, liaison, and coordination.

In order to continuously enhance its operational support, EASO will fully implement its results-based monitoring and evaluation system, allowing for constant review and improvement of its performance. Given the increase in operational activity, which EASO is leading on the ground in Greece and Italy, further needs to plan, monitor, and evaluate operations are apparent. EASO has consequently put in place, as part of its new structure, an operational unit which is dedicated to the planning and evaluation of operational activities in the field.

2.2 Information, analysis and knowledge development

EASO will continue to **enhance its knowledge** in the following main areas:

- On country of origin information (COI), EASO will expand its production of joint COI reports on key countries of origin at EU level via the network approach, through increased outsourcing of the drafting of such reports, but also through a significant increase of its in-house COI production capacity, as requested in the April 2016 Council Conclusions. It will also expand its focus on specialised guides to aid COI researchers on specific topics (e.g. on vulnerable groups). In order to perform the 'clearing-house' function as noted in the European Agenda on Migration, EASO will seek to further harmonise COI production via increased and more regular sharing of national COI production planning documents, by 'Europeanising' selected national COI reports after a review of their quality against EASO standards outlined in the EASO COI Report Methodology, and by making COI publicly accessible via the EASO COI Portal. EASO will also further expand its COI-related expert meetings on main countries of origin via increased use of public events with invited expert speakers catering to all key stakeholders.

It will seek to promote more harmonised use of COI in decision-making through organisation of practical cooperation meetings aimed at developing common country-related policy based on its joint COI reports. To achieve a higher level of convergence of national asylum decision practices for particular countries of origin, the April 2016 Council Conclusions foresee in the establishment of a senior-level policy network (Country Guidance Network), which will develop Country Guidance Notes based on a joint analysis of EASO COI and EASO horizontal guidance/tools on elements of the CEAS. EASO will continue producing information relevant for the possible designation of safe countries of origin, and will gradually integrate all key activities of the MedCOI project, providing COI on the availability and accessibility of medical treatment in countries of origin.

- On Early warning and Preparedness, EASO will expand its data collection system (EPS) to include indicators on all major aspects of the CEAS (including appeal and review) and will seek to improve the quality of its analytical deliverables with recent and accurate qualitative information from countries of origin and transit, such as open-source intelligence and outsourced reports.
- EASO will seek to overhaul its Information and Documentation System (IDS), an IT-based tool providing up-to-date, validated information on all major aspects of the asylum systems of all 30 EU+ countries to increase accessibility and usability, and to significantly expand the IDS tool with information on national and European case law, legislation and asylum policy.
- EASO will continue and complete its research programme on push and pull factors in asylum-related migration with the eventual aim of creating an empirically-validated migration model for typical types of flows.

EASO will **simplify the presentation of this enhanced knowledge** by further developing and integrating its different Asylum Information Systems in the areas of Country of Origin Information (COI Portal), Early warning and Preparedness (EPS, statistical and GIS software) and Information and Documentation System (IDS). This will necessitate concentration on IT project management over a number of years and focus on developing and testing better data visualisations in order to raise awareness and facilitate understanding of asylum flows and preparedness of Member States to deal with them. This integration Asylum Information System will provide key input for the future monitoring role of EASO.

EASO will **further utilise the knowledge** gained through its data collection and analysis activities by ensuring that its operational planning is in all cases based on an accurate and up to date situational picture of MS' asylum systems and their preparedness to deal with the flows being experienced. It will also utilise its situational knowledge to evaluate the efficiency and effective outcome of EASO's operational activities through regular monitoring, feeding back this information into planning, to allow for timely and effective adjustment of operational activities.

2.3 Permanent support

During these three years, EASO will continue to provide permanent support to EU+ countries with the aim of enhancing their capacities to implement the CEAS.

Training

During the period 2017-2019 EASO will continue to solidify and further develop its **Training Curriculum** by keeping its existing training material updated with any new developments, such as changes in the EU acquis and the asylum situation in the EU, as well as by analysing and addressing the general needs of EU+ countries. EASO will continue to invest in the quality assurance of its Training Curriculum particularly by means of its cooperation with the Reference Group. Furthermore, EASO will continue its actions for the certification and accreditation of its Training Curriculum aiming to achieve an International Sectoral Qualification for asylum officials.

EASO will also aim to further its **e-learning opportunities** in light of possible significant IT developments and strengthen the link between the didactic and content elements in each module to reinforce the train-the-trainer methodology.

EASO is committed to strengthen its direct contact with EU+ countries and their training units within their national administrations. To this end, EASO will start providing individual consultations to EU+ countries in analysing their individual training needs and designing their training plans. In this approach EASO will further adhere to methods that support practical cooperation and will facilitate the sharing of good practices amongst EU+ countries. EASO is also willing to explore and support the possibility of exchange programmes.

EASO will also develop **thematic training as well as training for particular target groups** who have specific needs such as interpreters.

EASO will continue to organise **network meetings for trainers** to enhance their knowledge, skills and competencies and facilitate the exchange of experience from train-the-trainers' and national training sessions.

Asylum processes

EASO will further support Member States in achieving common standards and high-quality processes within the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). To that end, EASO will:

Continue and enhance practical cooperation activities in view of collecting and exchanging information on Member States' current practices and policies in relation to the CEAS, including mapping activities and thematic meetings Member States where experts discuss best practices and current challenges and share information and expertise.

Continue to develop common practical tools and guides to support the implementation of the CEAS based on identified needs and best practices. The EASO practical tools are meant to translate the requirements of the common legal instruments into user-friendly practical instruments to be used by the Member States officials across the EU and beyond in their daily work. EASO will also actively promote the practical tools in the national administrations and evaluate their use of by targeted surveys.

Further support Member States in the quality management of the national asylum processes through the organisation of specific activities and/or the development of targeted products.

EASO activities on asylum processes will form the basis for the development of operational standards and indicators and as well as monitoring frameworks to further support the consistent implementation of the CEAS.

Cooperation with members of the courts and tribunals

EASO will continue to further strengthen the cooperation with EU+ countries' courts and tribunals in line with the objective of contributing to the coherent implementation of the CEAS and advancing practical cooperation among EU+ countries on asylum. EASO's practical cooperation activities will be undertaken in line with the established framework and with full respect for the independence of courts and tribunals.

The materials to be developed are intended to provide members of courts and tribunals with a European understanding of the asylum acquis in light of the case-law of the CJEU. This will, in turn, lead to an increased harmonisation of the interpretation European asylum law within the wider framework of international protection.

EASO activities on vulnerable groups

EASO will continue its activities in view of the better identification and adequate support afforded to vulnerable applicants in asylum processes, including in the context of Hotspots and when implementing relocation. Such activities comprise the facilitation of expert networks and workshops, information exchange and the development of common tools and guides.

Other areas of practical cooperation and support to asylum processes

In addition to the abovementioned areas, EASO will implement activities of practical cooperation in other specific areas. Through meetings, setting up of networks and promoting the exchange of best practices EASO will foster cooperation and improved capacities in the EU+ countries.

In order to support the Member States in the full application of the Dublin system, EASO will continue to facilitate its **dedicated network of national Dublin Units** in line with the European Agenda on Migration. The network aims at enhancing cooperation and information sharing among the 32 national Dublin Units participating in the network. Its activities will progressively be developed and expanded during these years.

In the area of **reception**, EASO will further develop the dedicated network of reception authorities in line with the European Agenda on Migration, through which EASO fosters the exchange of information and best practices on reception systems within the framework of the CEAS. EASO will implement a number of activities to this end, including practical cooperation workshops, development of improved tools used by EU+ national authorities on reception, the development of additional operational standards and indicators and the reception training module.

EASO will endeavour to develop and support the link between the asylum and reception procedure to the procedures, which follow after the decision on an asylum application, i.e. **integration or return**. Furthermore, EASO will also promote the **use of other tools**, such as the use of EASO queries, the List of Available Languages and more technical solutions with the aim to support various steps in the asylum procedure.

2.4 External dimension

EASO will support the external dimension of the CEAS in agreement with the European Commission and within the framework of the EU external relations policy. This will be done, as appropriate, through the implementation of regional programmes mainly aimed at capacity building support to Third Countries with the geographical priorities lying in the Western Balkans (WB) region, Turkey, and North Africa, as well as further outlines in the 2016 Commission Communication on establishing a new Partnership Framework with Third Countries under the European Agenda on Migration, through the ‘compacts’ approach. Activities will include advice, training, provision of seminars/workshops, study visits, Technical Assistance and on-the-job training etc. More direct operational support will also be explored as and when appropriate, in particular to support the WB countries with identification, registration, reception and referral, in cooperation with Frontex, UNHCR and IOM. Modalities and tools for providing appropriate and rapid operational support will be explored together with relevant stakeholders in Third Countries and the European Commission, in line with the broader EU external relations policy.

Furthermore, as announced in the EU-Turkey Statement agreed between the Member States and Turkey on 18 March 2016, a mechanism is established to substitute irregular and dangerous migrant crossings from Turkey to the Greek islands with the legal channel of resettlement from Turkey to the EU. For every Syrian being returned to Turkey, another Syrian will be resettled from Turkey to the EU, known as the ‘1:1 scheme’. In parallel, work is underway amongst Member States to put in place the Voluntary humanitarian admission scheme for Syrian refugees currently in Turkey (VHAS). Once irregular crossings between Turkey and the EU are significantly reduced, this scheme will be activated and EU Member States will contribute on a voluntary basis. EASO will support the implementation of the European resettlement schemes.

Training will continue to be used in the framework of the external dimension to support Third Countries by developing knowledge, skills and competences of the staff of asylum authorities and improve the quality of the asylum process in countries of origin, transit and destination as highlighted in the Valletta Summit Action Plan of November 2015.

2.5 Horizontal activities

Cooperation with the European Commission, the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament

As a decentralised EU regulatory agency having its own governance structure, EASO acts within the policies and institutional framework of the EU.

In this context, the political responsibility for the area of asylum lies with the European Commissioner responsible for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, and thus strong cooperation links exist with the European Commission on all EASO activities. The European Commission will be invited to give its opinion on specific documents to be adopted by the EASO Management Board in line with the relevant provisions of the EASO Regulation. Furthermore, close cooperation and coordination will take place, in particular through regular meetings and videoconferences, through coordinated drafting or reports, through organising joint Contact Committee meetings and practical workshops and participation and exchange of information within the framework of the European Migration Network (EMN).

EASO will also maintain close relations and exchange of information with the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament. In line with the EASO Regulation, EASO will send its annual work programme and annual activity report to the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission. The Executive Director is regularly invited to report to the Justice and Home Affairs Council with regard to the CEAS. Moreover, the Executive Director is invited to present the EASO work programme, as well as specific topics related to EASO's work, to the European Parliament.

Cooperation with the UNHCR and other international organisations

In fulfilling its tasks, EASO acts in close cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and with other relevant international and intergovernmental organisations.

With regard to the UNHCR, EASO cooperates closely with and involves the UNHCR in all areas covered by the EASO Regulation. The UNHCR participates in the EASO Management Board as a non-voting member and has a permanent liaison office to EASO based in Malta. In 2013, EASO and the UNCHR signed a working arrangement. On that basis, EASO will build on the strengthened cooperation which will continue in all fields, in particular in the areas of training, quality processes, unaccompanied children, resettlement, the external dimension of the CEAS and in the field of special and emergency support, including cooperation in the hotspots.

EASO will also be in close contact with other relevant international and intergovernmental organisations working in areas of asylum, such as the Council of Europe, the General Directors of Immigration Services Conference (GDISC), the Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (IGC) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). EASO will regularly exchange views, participate in meetings and conferences and will actively contribute to their work to ensure complementarity and avoid duplication of work.

Cooperation with EU agencies

EASO promotes strong cooperation with other EU agencies. It is a member of both the EU Agencies' network and of the JHA agencies' network. EASO will continue participating actively in the relevant activities organised in the context of these networks and of their working structures. Furthermore, EASO will continue having mutual contacts and relations on a bilateral level with the JHA agencies, in particular via the channels of the JHA inter-agency cooperation.

On the basis of the working arrangement signed by Frontex and EASO in September 2012, the two Agencies will maintain their existing cooperation and will enhance it in the light of joint actions foreseen in the European Agenda on Migration. EASO and Frontex will continue their coordinated efforts when providing support to EU+ countries and will explore further synergies in border management and identification of international protection needs, in particular in the Hotspots. Furthermore, they will maintain their sustainable cooperation on data and analysis sharing in the context of the Early warning and Preparedness System and Country of Origin Information, as well as

their cooperation on training programmes, quality initiatives, in the field of the external dimension and on activities vis-à-vis civil society and their consultative fora.

FRA and EASO will build upon the existing cooperation in line with the working arrangement signed by both agencies in June 2013. FRA and EASO will continue sharing information, providing input to research activities and sharing research and data collection methodologies. Both organisations will continue their cooperation in the field of training, furthering the exchange of best practices, information and expertise in regards to fundamental rights. Additionally, the cooperation with regard to each other's consultative activities will continue.

EASO and eu-LISA will continue implementing the activities detailed in the working arrangement signed by both agencies in November 2014, also in the light of joint actions foreseen in the European Agenda on Migration.

Cooperation with civil society

Civil Society can offer diversified expertise and knowledge in the field of international protection and reception, which can be synergetic to the work of EASO. In order to enhance multidimensional cooperation between EASO and civil society, EASO will further promote the participation of representatives from the civil society to relevant meetings and activities. The quality and effectiveness of the consultations with civil society on key documents will be strengthened, ensuring continuity in the dialogue with the responding organisations. Direct involvement of civil society organisations in EASO's support activities will be explored.

The new proposal of Regulation of EASO foresees a revision of the composition and working methods of the EASO Consultative Forum. To this end, EASO will evaluate the lessons learnt from the functioning of the Consultative Forum since its establishment and will make a proposal for the set up of the revised Consultative Forum.

EASO will actively participate in civil society networks in the field of asylum, at EU and national levels, identifying developments relevant for EASO, reviewing and channelling inputs, providing contributions where appropriate. Furthermore, EASO will contribute to the activities of the Consultative Forum of other JHA Agencies, of the European Migration Forum and other similar bodies.

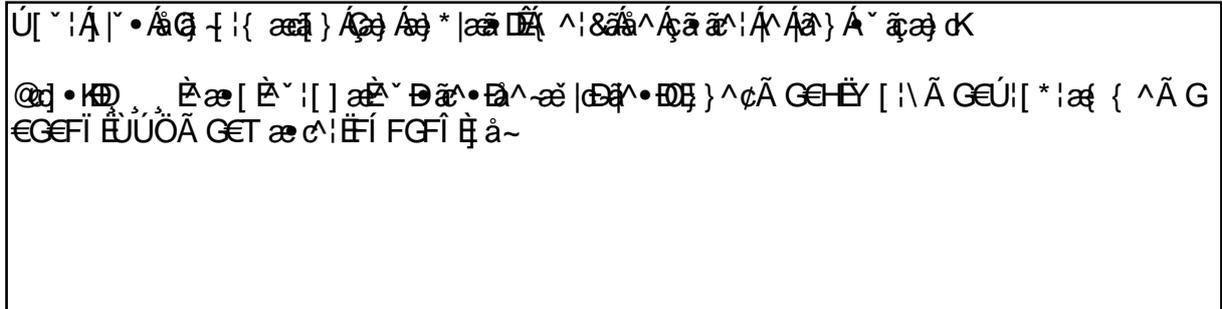
Press, Communication and Stakeholders Relations

EASO Press, Communication and Stakeholders Relations shall continue to ensure the visibility of the Agency's role, tools, values and work. EASO Press, Communication and Stakeholders Relations will continue to contribute to the goal of communicating in a consistent, efficient, transparent and accurate manner through the flow of easily intelligible messages. It will also continue to promote the achievements of the Agency and transmit information in a timely manner to EASO target groups. One of the main challenges will be to ensure that EASO is portrayed as an operational agency, which provides real added value to Member States under particular pressure on their asylum and reception system.

In order to reach this objective EASO Press, Communication and Stakeholders Relations will continue to send clear messages, communicate through the right channels and also strive to be proactive and advanced via modern communication tools. EASO will be active on the web and social media channels. EASO will strive to ensure quality in all publications, and progressively shift to more modern, interactive, publication tools. Moreover, the network of journalists and the communication multipliers network in the Member States will be strengthened. Relationship and coordination with the European Commission and other JHA agencies will be further strengthened. EASO will also contribute to the creation of EU public sphere by engaging with the public, contributing to and stimulating discussion on the EU asylum policy.

The efforts of EASO Press, Communication and Stakeholders Relations will be aligned to the core objectives highlighted in the EASO Communication Strategy. In 2017 EASO will make an evaluation of its communication efforts and based on the results the Agency's Communication Strategy will be revised and a new visual identity will be proposed. In 2018 the main communication objective will be that of consolidating EASO's reputation as a centre of expertise on asylum. EASO Press,

Communication and Stakeholders Relations efforts shall go more in depth in the subject area of the agency and to target a wider range of audiences. In 2019 EASO Press, Communication and Stakeholders Relations will continue to specialise in the core areas and the objective is to become a reference point within our stakeholders for information on the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and the actual asylum situation. Aiming to strengthen the message that EASO is an operational agency and provided that sufficient resources are available, EASO Press, Communication and Stakeholders Relations team will aim to be present on the ground and follow EASO operations closely.



Forces Armées de Malte¹

Les Forces armées de Malte - Forzi Armati ta' Malta en maltais, Armed Forces of Malta en anglais et AFM en abrégé - est le nom donné à l'ensemble des forces militaires de Malte. Les AFM sont constituées d'une brigade composée d'un quartier général et trois bataillons avec de petites forces aériennes et navales. Le poste de ministre de la défense est actuellement occupé par le ministre Hon. Carmelo Abela

Quartier général :

Le quartier général des AFM est le principal centre de commandement des troupes maltaises. Il est divisé en quatre sections principales. Voici les différentes sections du quartier-général ainsi que les cellules plus petites :

- Section opérations et entraînement ;
- Section administration et personnel ;
- Section logistique ;
- Section Politique de défense et de sécurité européenne ;
- Cellule de l'information publique ;
- Cellule de renseignement ;
- Office légal ;
- Section de l'audit et de l'inspection

Forces Terrestres :

1er Régiment des forces maltaises :

- Compagnie A : Elle est responsable de la sécurité des aéroports.
- Compagnie B : Elle assure la sécurité de différentes zones du territoire maltais. Elle est amenée à mettre en œuvre des patrouilles et à mettre en place des checkpoints sur les différentes voies de communication pour dresser des contraventions, appréhender les immigrants illégaux et lutter contre le narcotrafic. Elle travaille en collaboration étroite avec la police maltaise pour plusieurs de ses activités. De surcroît, c'est une compagnie

¹ https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forces_arm%C3%A9es_de_Malte

de sécurité interne chargée de protéger les bâtiments gouvernements sensibles. Elle est basée à Hal-Far.

- Compagnie C (opérations spéciales) : C'est la force de réaction rapide des FAM. Elle a pour mission d'intervenir dans les missions à haut-risques que ce soit sur le territoire maltais ou dans le cadre d'une mission de l'Union européenne. Elle sert aussi d'unité d'entraînement pour l'infanterie et est basée à Hal-Far.
- Compagnie de soutien et de défense antiaérienne : elle est l'unité de base de la lutte antiaérienne maltaise et est armée de canons Bofors de 40 mm L70 (actuellement en remplacement) et de ZPU-4 14,5 mm AAMG ainsi que de mortiers de 81 mm, de RPG Type 69 et de Browning .50 HMG pour le soutien terrestre. Sa mission principale est la défense antiaérienne légère de l'aéroport de Luqa et d'autres points vulnérables des îles maltaises. L'entraînement à l'utilisation des canons se déroule régulièrement au camp Pembroke Rangers à Saint-Andrews.
- Compagnie de commandement : elle exerce le commandement et le contrôle sur les autres unités.

3e régiment des forces maltaises :

Le 3e régiment est l'unité principale de soutien des AFM et est composée de trois sections opérationnelles :

- Section du génie qui fournit un soutien dans les domaines du génie ;
- Compagnie de munitions et d'explosifs : elle est chargée du stockage de tous les types de munitions utilisées par les AFM aussi bien que du stockage des matériels explosifs utilisés par les entrepreneurs civils pour l'exploitation des carrières par exemple. Elle est composée d'une section de déminage chargée de la détection et de l'élimination des bombes et autres engins explosifs. Elle est aussi responsable de l'inspection des bagages et des appareils au sein des aéroports et des postes de sécurité de la Chambre des Représentants.

- La section du génie électrique et mécanique est responsable de la réparation et de la maintenance de tous les véhicules des AFM, des générateurs, des usines et de tous les autres équipements.

4e régiment des forces maltaises :

Ce régiment est créé le 30 octobre 2006. Il comprend :

- La musique des AFM qui prend part aux engagements officiels et joue durant les parades. En plus de leurs fonctions de musiciens, le personnel de cette section est aussi engagée dans des missions militaires ;
- La compagnie de sécurité fiscale : elle assiste le gouvernement dans la prévention de la contrebande, la lutte contre la corruption et si nécessaire, elle peut enquêter sur des infractions fiscales et monétaires. Cette compagnie est aussi responsable de la sécurité du transport de l'argent liquide des banques commerciales.
- L'école d'entraînement des forces armées maltaises.
- La compagnie d'approvisionnement chargée de l'approvisionnement en nourritures des différentes unités de l'armée.
- La compagnie chargée des systèmes d'information et de communication.
- La compagnie de commandement.

V. Économie à Malte

**8. Rapport de la Commission sur Malte 2016
(EN)**

9. Eurobaromètre Standard 84 - Malte (EN)

Économie à Malte¹

Malte a été relativement épargnée par la crise. Le niveau de chômage y relativement limité par rapport au reste de la zone euro (5,3% en 2015, soit le troisième plus faible en Europe, mais avec, un taux d'emploi des femmes bien inférieur à la moyenne européenne, en augmentation régulièrement depuis quelques années).

La croissance est soutenue par la vigueur de la demande interne, qui s'appuie à la fois sur la consommation des ménages et l'investissement public et privé. L'économie maltaise apparaît particulièrement résiliente et le secteur touristique (30% du PIB) s'est montré très performant en 2015, avec de nouveaux records de fréquentation (plus 1,5 million de touristes par an grâce notamment au tourisme de croisière)), de même que celui des services financiers et des jeux en ligne.

L'expansion de ces secteurs compense, le déficit chronique des échanges de marchandises, qui a atteint en 2014-2,9 milliards d'euros. En 2015, le taux de croissance de Malte a été de 6,3%. Les résultats exceptionnels de la croissance maltaise en 2015 (+6,3%) s'expliquent notamment par l'accélération des investissements liée à la fin du cycle de programmation des fonds européens pour 2007-2013. La croissance devrait ralentir dans les prochaines années, mais demeurer robuste car portée par la demande interne. Le Malta Fiscal Advisory Council (équivalent du HCFP) a validé les prévisions de croissance du Gouvernement, à 4,2% en 2016.

Grâce au dynamisme de sa croissance, Malte est sortie de la procédure pour déficit excessif en mai 2015, parvenant à maîtriser son déficit public à 1,5% du PIB en 2015, d'après la Commission européenne. La réduction devrait se poursuivre dans les prochaines années ; la Commission prévoit un déficit public à hauteur de 0,9% en 2016 et 0,8% en 2017. La dette publique s'établissait à 63,9% fin 2015 et devrait passer sous la barre des 60% en 2017. Cette perspective d'endettement n'inquiète d'ailleurs pas les agences de notation qui continuent d'attribuer un triple A à l'archipel maltais.

¹ <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/dossiers-pays/malte/presentation-de-malte/>

Une situation bancaire relativement saine :

Le secteur bancaire maltais représente près de huit fois le PIB du pays. Il compte trois types de banques : les banques domestiques « core », qui comprennent notamment HSBC et Bank of Valetta, représentant 80% du marché maltais ; les banques domestiques « non core », qui ont également des activités internationales, les banques internationales sans lien avec l'économie locale. Malte n'a pas été affectée par la crise bancaire car les banques domestiques « core » poursuivent uniquement des activités traditionnelles à destination des déposants locaux, gèrent leurs actifs de manière prudente et sont bien capitalisées. La fiscalité attractive mais aussi l'accessibilité, la réactivité et la réputation de sérieux de l'autorité maltaise de régulation des marchés financiers (MFSA), expliquent ce développement des fonds de placement à Malte, qui figure, par ailleurs, sur la liste blanche de l'OCDE (le pays a signé 65 accords d'échanges d'informations en matière fiscale).



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Country Report Malta 2016

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This country report assesses Malta's economy in light of the Commission's Annual Growth Survey published on 26 November 2015. The survey recommends three priorities for the EU's economic and social policy in 2016: re-launching investment, pursuing structural reforms to modernise Member States' economies, and responsible fiscal policies.

Economic performance has been robust over the recent years. The economy has demonstrated notable resilience in a challenging macroeconomic environment over the past several years. Real GDP growth recovered relatively quickly following the 2009 recession and in 2015 it exceeded the pre-crisis peak. Household consumption and net exports have been the main engines of growth. One-off large-scale projects in the energy sector and the finalisation of EU-funded projects boosted investment in 2014-2015, thus also contributing strongly to the expansion of the economy. Real GDP growth is projected to moderate somewhat after 2015, but to remain higher than the long-term average. As a result of the robust economic performance, Malta's GDP per capita is projected to reach 97% of the EU average in 2017. Risks to the medium-term macroeconomic outlook are broadly balanced. Downside risks related to trade shocks are mitigated by competitiveness gains from the successful completion of ongoing structural reforms.

Growth has been job-rich and broad-based. Economic growth has been underpinned by the improved competitiveness of some traditional sectors as well as the emergence of new labour-intensive, export-oriented activities. As a result, the amount of new jobs generated in the post-crisis period is significantly higher than during the boom until 2008. This has been supported by policies targeted in particular towards attracting more women to the labour market. The process of diversification of the economy has reduced its capital and import intensity, contributing to a significant improvement in the external trade balance.

The favourable macroeconomic conditions have contributed to an improvement in public finances, although faster correction would reduce risks from the inherent vulnerabilities. The general government budget deficit has decreased in recent years thanks to strong revenue growth. However, current expenditure has been

growing faster than potential growth, which could create problems in case of shocks to tax revenues. Primary budgetary surpluses and strong economic growth helped the general government debt-to-GDP ratio to fall. However, moderation in economic growth would make further debt reduction more challenging. Sustainability challenges remain in view of the projected increase in age-related budgetary costs. The limited investor base for the government somehow shields it from volatility on international financial markets. However it also implies a lack of diversification and significant spillover risks between different domestic sectors.

Maintaining competitiveness to support the current growth momentum is a continuous challenge. The potential of human capital to contribute to economic growth remains to be fully tapped. Notwithstanding significant progress in recent years, labour market activity remains low, in particular among women. Education and training outcomes are still below targets, affecting the quality of labour supply. Furthermore, inefficiencies in network industries, the public administration and the judicial system hinder the business environment. Declining investment reflects the changing structure of the economy but also a still nascent research and innovation framework as well as limited access to finance for some parts of the economy.

Overall, some progress has been made in addressing the 2015 country-specific recommendations. The authorities have taken steps to improve the professional development of teachers. This is expected to contribute to raising basic skills levels and to reducing early-school leaving in the long-run, but it is too early to assess the results. A number of initiatives for access to finance have been offered to small and medium-sized enterprises, but access to non-bank instruments generally remains limited. While the authorities have recognised the need to ensure the long-term sustainability of the pensions system and indicated intentions to introduce measures to that effect, concrete steps have not yet been proposed.

Regarding the progress in reaching the national targets under the Europe 2020 Strategy, Malta has made good progress towards its targets on employment, reducing greenhouse gases, while more effort is needed on R&D expenditure,

increasing renewable energy, improve energy efficiency, reduce early school leaving, increasing the tertiary education, and reducing poverty.

The main findings of the analysis in this report, and the related policy challenges, are as follows:

- **External sustainability has improved benefitting from the restructuring of the economy.** The emergence of export-oriented services has boosted net external trade, resulting in a surplus in the current account balance. The net international investment position remains positive. Cost competitiveness developments have also been favourable on the back of growing productivity and moderate wage growth.
- **The public debt ratio is lower than the euro area average and it is approaching the 60 %-of-GDP threshold, but the sustainability of public finances remains a challenge in the long run.** The public debt ratio has been on a decreasing path since 2011 on the back of fiscal consolidation and high nominal GDP growth. There appear to be no significant risks in the short and medium term. Yet, long-term sustainability remains a challenge reflecting the budgetary impact of ageing costs, in particular pensions. The efforts by the authorities in containing the long-term expenditure growth in the pension and healthcare systems so far do not appear sufficient to address this risk. The growth of primary current expenditure, exceeding the increases in potential GDP, and the still high level of contingent liabilities present additional challenges to the sustainability of public finances.
- **There is still untapped potential in the labour market to foster economic growth.** With one of the lowest unemployment rates in Europe, the Maltese labour market continues to perform strongly. However, in spite of the gains over the past years, activity rates continue to be among the lowest in the EU, particularly among women. The supply of skills has not fully adjusted to labour market requirements. To offset this, reliance on supply of skills through foreign labour has increased in recent years. The authorities have been investing significantly in the education and training system in recent years. This notwithstanding, education and training outcomes are still below targets, perpetuating the low skills levels in the population.
- **Malta is still away from its 2020 poverty-reduction target.** The risk of poverty and social exclusion increased from 2008 to 2013, most notably for children and the low skilled. Material deprivation has been on the rise and has contributed to the poverty and exclusion risks. New measures have been introduced in recent years to correct these trends.
- **Access to alternative sources of finance for SMEs is still limited.** SMEs rely heavily on debt financing, with implications for the firm indebtedness in the economy. The availability of alternative sources of finance such as crowdfunding, venture capital, business angels is not developed. Since the beginning of 2014, the government put forward policies geared to the provision of equity and venture capital, but these measures appear to be relatively limited, concentrating on tax credits and small amounts for seed funding. Nevertheless, on the whole, SMEs benefit from a better financing environment than many EU peers.
- **Competitiveness could further benefit from the removal of structural bottlenecks in network industries and the public administration.** The authorities aim to diversify the energy mix and bring an end to oil dependency in electricity generation. The reform, however, has yet to be finalised. Import dependency will remain a challenge in the absence of more focused efforts on boosting domestic production of renewable energy and raising energy efficiency. The transport system continues to be characterised by high economic costs caused by significant road traffic congestion. The authorities have yet to present their strategy to tackle the issue. The low efficiency of government administration and of the judicial system continues to pose challenges to Malta's attractiveness to investors. A relatively young and underdeveloped framework for research and innovation constrains the potential for knowledge-driven growth.

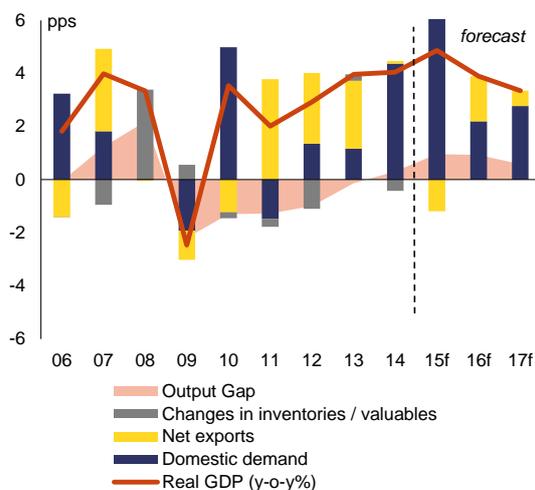
- **Apart from one-off projects, investment has been muted reflecting structural changes in the economy and bottlenecks.** Ongoing large-scale projects result in a significant boost to investment over the underlying trend. The increasing importance of less capital-intensive services sectors, however, lowers the investment needs of the economy going forward. Nevertheless, bottlenecks in the public administration, insufficient capacity to innovate and skills mismatches lower Malta's attractiveness to foreign investors and hamper the ability of businesses to investment.

1. SCENE SETTER: ECONOMIC SITUATION AND OUTLOOK

Economic growth and inflation

Economic growth is expected to accelerate further in 2015. After the rebound in 2010, real GDP growth has picked up in recent years. It rose from 2.1 % in 2011 to 3.5 % in 2014 and is projected to have increased further in 2015. The main drivers of growth are the strong upturn in machinery and equipment investment on the back of a number of large-scale projects, and investment in EU-funded projects. As a share of GDP, investment bounced back strongly in 2015 but is forecast to resume its downward trend thereafter and fall below its long-term average. Compared to the pre-crisis period, real growth increased from an average 2.7 % in the period 2004-2008 to 3.3 % in 2010-2014, and it is projected to pick up further to 4 % in 2015-2017.

Graph 1.1: Contributions to real GDP growth

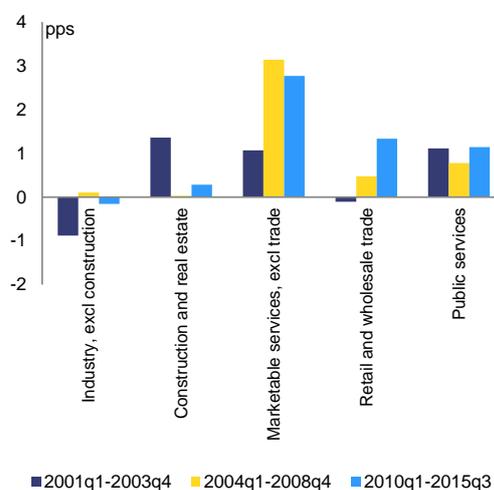


Source: European Commission

Economic activity is increasingly reliant on the services sector. The share of industry in the gross value added has shrunk by around half since Malta joined the EU. The importance of construction activities has also declined considerably. These sectors have been replaced by activities such as gaming, financial services and legal and accounting services. These activities have become the new engine of growth in the Maltese economy, supported by the traditionally strong tourism and retail and wholesale trade sectors as well as public services (see Graph 1.2).

Potential growth has exceeded the levels of the period before the crisis, when potential output growth averaged 2.5 % between 2004 and 2008. According to the most recent estimate, based on the Commission's 2016 winter forecast, potential growth is projected to exceed 4 % in 2015 and to average 3.9 % in 2015-2017, pushed by gains in total factor productivity and sustained increases in employment.

Graph 1.2: Sectoral contributions to growth of gross value added, 4-quarter moving sums



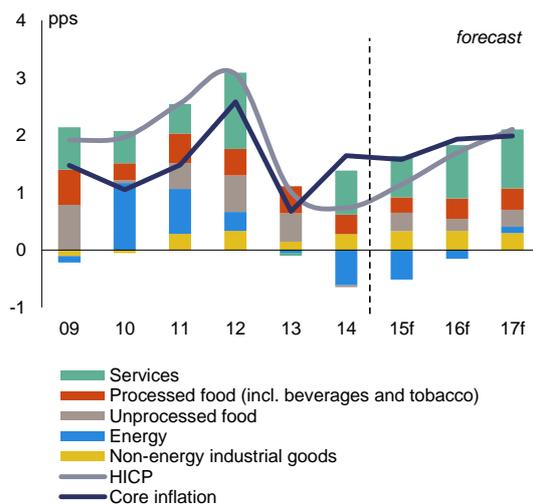
Source: European Commission

The macroeconomic risks are balanced in the medium-term. Being a very small and very open economy, Malta is naturally exposed to disruptions in the global macroeconomic and, in particular, the trade outlook. These inherent risks are to some extent mitigated by the increased reliance on exports of services, the demand for which has proven relatively resilient. The risk outlook is balanced by upside risks related to competitiveness gains that could result from the ongoing structural reforms, such as those in the energy sector (see Section 2.3), the labour market (section 2.2) and the judicial system (section 2.3). This underscores the importance of avoiding delays in the implementation of reforms in order to bolster the resilience of the domestic economy. Risks from tensions in international financial markets appear limited due to the relative insulation of the domestic financial system. The institutions that have international market exposure have limited links with the domestic economy. Nevertheless,

ensuring the stability of the domestic financial system is crucial given that it is the main source of financing for the government and domestic businesses.

Deflationary pressures are not as pronounced as in the rest of the EU. Price inflation bottomed out at 0.8 % in 2014, reflecting the reduction in electricity tariffs, and has been gradually increasing since (see Graph 1.3). The harmonised index of consumer prices (HICP) in Malta outpaced that in the euro area in 2015 mainly due to higher growth in food prices. Overall inflation in Malta is projected to remain faster than in the rest of the euro area and reach 2.1 % in 2017, still below its long-term average.

Graph 1.3: Contributions to HICP inflation



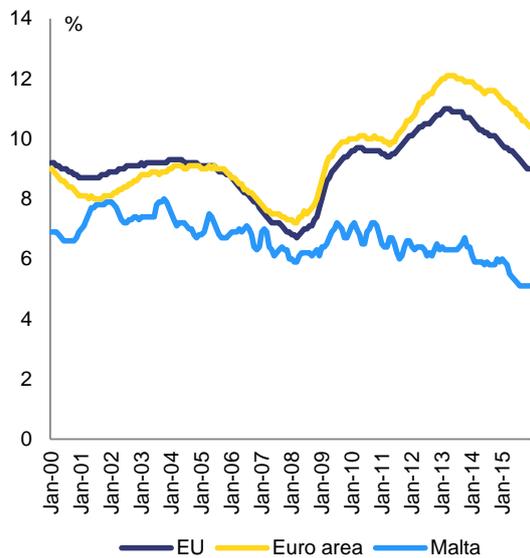
Source: European Commission

Labour market

The labour market has shown remarkable resilience throughout the crisis and is among the most dynamic in the EU. The pace of job creation remained sustained between 2010 and 2014 and reached 4.5 % in 2014, the highest in the Union. Employment expanded by 1.9 % year-on-year during the third quarter of 2015, following a 1.3 % increase in the previous quarter. The employment rate reached 69.2 % in the third quarter of 2015. The active population continues to grow steadily mainly thanks to increased female activity, but also reflecting the impact of foreign labour (see Section 2.2). In the third quarter of

2015 the activity rate of women was at 57.8 %, which means an increase by 1 percentage point from the previous quarter and a 1.5 percentage points increase compared with the third quarter a year earlier. The resilience of the Maltese labour market during the European economic downturn can be attributed to a combination of economic and labour market policies and a prudent approach to wage-bargaining at company level, which helped to keep wage pressures contained and the employment rate growing. Moreover, social dialogue is well established with the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development facilitating discussion between the government, social partners and civil society on strategic documents, draft legislation and key issues related to policies and employment conditions. The outlook for employment growth over the coming years remains positive, though a slowdown in the pace of job creation is expected, in line with GDP projections.

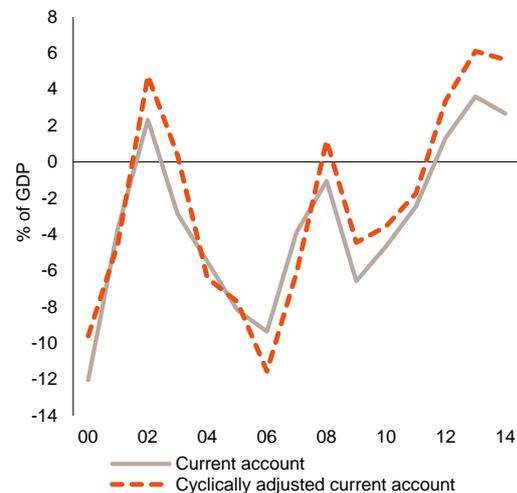
The unemployment rate dropped to 5.1 % at the end of 2015, but low labour market participation and skills supply remain important issues. An increasing number of unemployed persons have made the transition to employment. Combined with a rising labour force, reflecting also an influx of foreign labour, this implies a job-rich growth pattern. As a result, the unemployment rate fell to record-low levels in 2015 (see Graph 1.4) and is expected to remain broadly unchanged in the coming years. Furthermore, the unemployment rate in Malta has remained notably lower and more stable than the euro-area average. Still, the overall activity rate remains low in a comparative perspective. The main reason is the low labour market participation of women which, despite continuous increases, remains far below the EU average. Moreover, the Maltese population is considerably less qualified than the EU average, which can result in skill shortages. In turn, this could present an obstacle to economic growth going forward. Low participation of women and low skills attainment are important factors of the risk of poverty in Malta. The risk of poverty of single earner households (medium work intensity) has increased from 14 % in 2008 to 20 % in 2014, while it remained stable for working households overall at around 5.5 %. The at-risk of poverty and social exclusion rate of the low skilled increased from 23.6 % to 30.1 % during the same period.

Graph 1.4: **Harmonised unemployment rate, seasonally-adjusted**

Age 15 and over
Source: European Commission

Sustainability of the external position

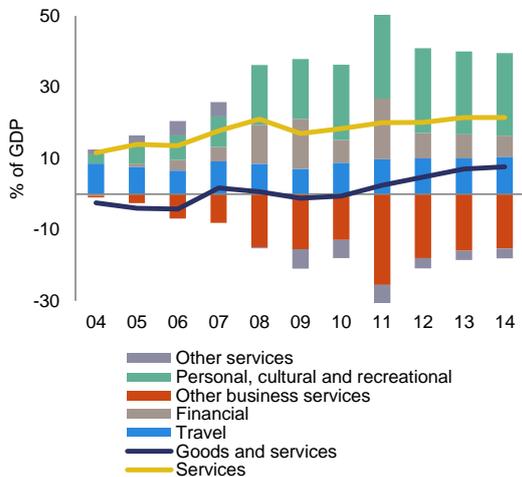
The current account balance has corrected sharply to a position of sizeable surplus. Following a period of persistent deficits, the current account balance has corrected sharply since 2011 to reach a surplus position of over 8 % of GDP for the 12 months ending in the third quarter of 2015. This sharp improvement is the result of significant gains in the services account, thanks in particular to positive developments in the gaming and tourism sectors. After adjusting for the effects of the cycle, Malta's current account surplus is even higher (see Graph 1.5). The economy's external balance was also positively affected by a significant retrenchment in primary income outflows in 2015. As a result, the net international investment position improved further and now stands at around 40 % of GDP, thus providing a buffer against adverse developments. The Commission estimates show that the fundamentals of the economy are more than sufficient to at least maintain the net international investment position ratio at its current level in the medium term unless any unexpected shocks affect economic growth or external trade.

Graph 1.5: **Underlying current account balance**

Source: European Commission

Malta's trade balance improved significantly to reach one of the largest surpluses in the EU, relative to the country's GDP. The surplus in Malta's trade of goods and services reached 8 % of GDP in 2014, the fourth-largest in the EU. The remarkable turnaround from a small deficit in the trade balance in 2010 reflected both a retrenchment in the goods trade deficit as well as an increase in the surplus in the trade of services. The slowdown in investment after 2007 resulted in a significant decline in capital goods imports (from some 30 % of GDP on average in 2002-2007 to just over 23 % of GDP in 2008-2014), which has benefited the merchandise trade balance. Moreover, the services balance has improved remarkably over the past ten years in line with the restructuring of the economy and the emergence of new services, alongside the development of the tourism sector (see Graph 1.6). The growing external trade surplus points to increased savings among Maltese firms and households. Higher savings can be used to offset the still relatively high private sector indebtedness. The government's fiscal stance also contributed positively, as the headline budget balance is projected to improve from an average of 3.6 % of GDP in 2008-2010 to 1.2 % of GDP in 2015-2017.

Graph 1.6: Trade balance, selected items



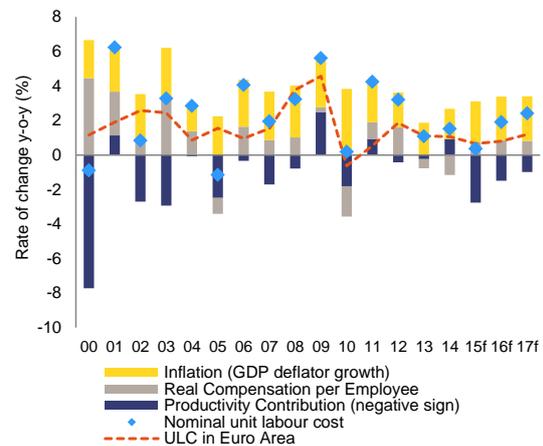
Source: National Statistical Office

Competitiveness

Cost competitiveness developments have been favourable. Wage growth was flat in 2013 and 2014, following several years of considerable growth. Thus, the wage level remains substantially lower than in the EU average. Growth in nominal unit labour costs has moderated and has moved in line with the euro area average in recent years (see Graph 1.7). Unit labour costs are projected to accelerate in 2016-2017 as productivity growth moderates, while the labour market tightness puts some upward pressure on wage developments. The ongoing shift and diversification of economic activities towards more labour-intensive activities increased the share of labour in total costs ⁽¹⁾. This makes growth in unit labour costs more sensitive to wage developments rather than productivity. This has helped to offset the risks associated with the observed productivity slowdown in recent years. In line with this, overall the competitive strength of the Maltese economy has improved with a projected continuation of job growth, particularly in knowledge intensive sectors such as health, ICT and finance.

⁽¹⁾ Micallef, B. (2015), Unit Labour Costs, Wages and Productivity in Malta: A Sectoral and Cross-Country Analysis. Central Bank of Malta, Policy Note: August 2015.

Graph 1.7: Breakdown of the rate of change of nominal unit labour costs



Source: European Commission

While economic activity has been strong, persistent structural weaknesses continue to hinder Malta's growth potential. Significant traffic congestion increases the cost of doing businesses. The energy system was for a long time a drag on competitiveness arising from Malta's isolation from mainland Europe. The near-full dependence on imported oil and network inefficiencies resulted in high electricity tariffs for the industry, while not fully reflecting costs and thus leading to the accumulation of significant debts at the state power utility company. Recent policy measures, however, have aimed to remedy these shortcomings. EY's attractiveness survey ⁽²⁾ and the Global Competitiveness Report ⁽³⁾ both indicate excessive or inefficient public administration as the most problematic factor for doing business and investing. The inefficiency of the judicial system, particularly as regards insolvency procedures, is among the parts of the administration that warrant particular attention. These structural issues are explored in detail in Section 2.3.

Financial sector

The Maltese economy is characterised by the presence of a very large, mainly internationally-oriented financial sector. A defining

⁽²⁾ See <http://www.ey.com/MT/en/Home/EY-2015-malta-attractiveness-survey-malta-as-an-fdi-destination>

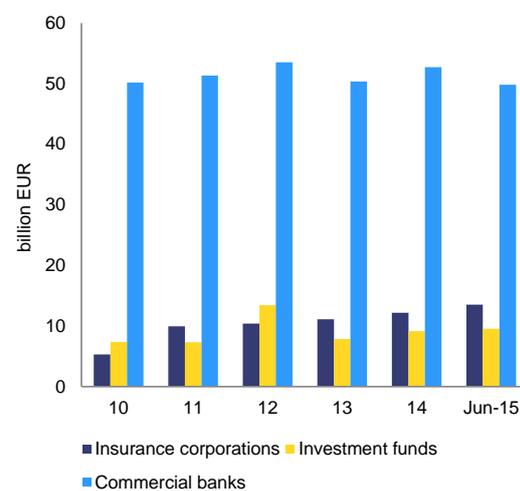
⁽³⁾ See <http://reports.weforum.org/global-competitiveness-report-2015-2016/>

characteristic of the Maltese financial sector is that only a small portion of its relatively large size provides services to resident economic agents, while the internationally-oriented institutions have minimal or no links with the domestic economy. The total assets held by commercial banks, insurance companies and investment funds peaked at 1 074 % of GDP in 2012 and have declined thereafter to EUR 73 billion, i.e. 861 % of GDP in June 2015 (see Graph 1.8). This mainly reflected developments in the banking sector, where the internationally-oriented banks have started to contract their balance sheets. Moreover, due to the negative developments on the international stock markets, investment funds' assets have declined from 186 % of GDP in 2012 to 113 % in June 2015. These developments have been partly offset by growth in insurance corporations, which have increased in size, their assets reaching 160 % of GDP in mid-2015, in comparison to 144 % in 2012 (see Graph 1.8). Preparation for the entry into force of the Solvency II regime ⁽⁴⁾ in January 2016 has been a challenge for the industry, but the supervisor and market participants have indicated confidence in the general readiness of the sector ⁽⁵⁾.

Customer confidence in the core domestic banks remained strong, which has translated into increased levels of liquidity. Resident deposits have increased persistently over the last years and reached EUR 15.9 billion in October 2015, up from EUR 12 billion in December 2012. During the same period, the stock of loans to residents has remained practically flat. As a result, the loan-to-deposit ratio of the core domestic banks fell to below 60 %, well below the euro area average. The lack of credit expansion does not mean that credit to the private sector is constrained. In fact, flows of new credit are available, as otherwise the natural loan amortisation would have led to credit contraction. Nevertheless, increased risk perception and still-tight credit standards, in a context of low interest rates as a result of monetary policy, result in banks preferring not to lock their liquidity inflows to risky and longer-term projects. Asset quality presents a challenge, as the ratio of

non-performing loans remains high, resulting in high provisioning costs ⁽⁶⁾. As a result, banks' profitability has gone down compared to 2011-2012. Nevertheless, the return on equity remains quite high, indicating that the core banks are still capable of generating robust profits (see Table 1.1). Banks' profit generation capacity and their regulatory Tier 1 capital ratio provide a safety cushion against adverse developments, even if the ratio is not particularly high by international standards.

Graph 1.8: Total assets of financial intermediaries



Source: Central Bank of Malta

Table 1.1: Selected financial stability indicators for core domestic banks

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015H1
Return on assets	0.98	1.05	1.11	0.71	0.85
Return on equity	15.08	15.46	15.27	9.83	11.99
Non-performing loans to gross loans	7.10	7.75	8.95	9.05	8.61
Tier I capital ratio	11.82	12.12	12.88	11.55	11.53

Source: Central Bank of Malta

⁽⁶⁾ Nevertheless, the improvement in Malta's macroeconomic conditions caused the level of non-performing loans to decline in 2015.

⁽⁴⁾ Directive 2009/138/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2009 on the taking-up and pursuit of the business of Insurance and Reinsurance (Solvency II).

⁽⁵⁾ Malta Risk & Insurance Report 2015, Commercial Risk Europe.

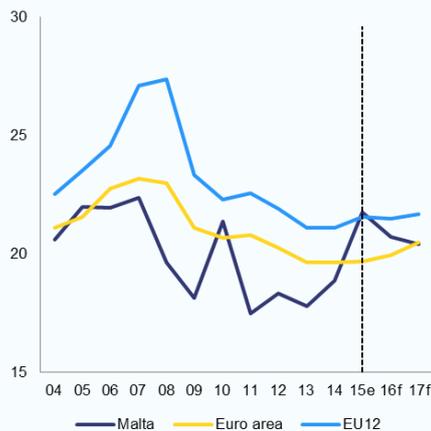
Box 1.1: Investment challenges

Macroeconomic perspective

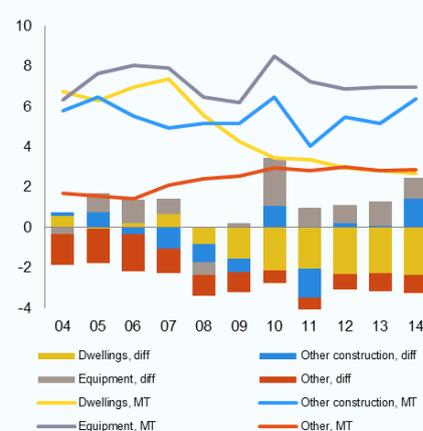
Total investment generally has been following a declining trend since 2007. Private investment declined more strongly than in the rest of the euro area, while government investment remained relatively stable. Private investment is projected to recover in 2015-2017 as the result of improving economic conditions in the euro area. A number of large one-off projects in the energy sector, as well as the finalisation of projects funded by the 2007-2013 EU financial framework give an additional boost to investment, in particular in 2015.

The decline in investment after 2008 reflected the slowdown of the residential construction sector, following a period of rapid growth. Moreover, the sector is still struggling with the legacy of elevated indebtedness and bad investments. In turn, the recovery in recent years has been driven by non-residential investment, in particular large-scale infrastructure projects by both the public and the private sectors. Historically, the share of construction investment in GDP has been lower than the euro-area average, reflecting the limited physical space on the Maltese islands. Investment in intellectual property products is also lower than in the rest of the euro area, although some convergence has been observed in recent years. At the same time, following a dip in 2008-2009, equipment investment remained resilient, exceeding the euro-area average.

Graph 1: Public and private investment as % of GDP, Malta and the euro area



Graph 2: Investment by component as a % of GDP, Malta and the euro area



Source: European Commission 2016 winter forecast

Investment activity in the Maltese economy is affected by structural changes in the economy. Market services have been gradually gaining importance over the past ten years at the expense of the industry and construction sectors. In particular, nearly half of the increase in gross value added since 2004 is accounted for by financial and insurance activities; professional, scientific and technical activities; administrative and support service activities; and arts entertainment and recreation (circled in Graph 3), which are among the least capital-intensive sectors in the economy.

Assessment of barriers to investment and ongoing reforms ⁽¹⁾

Despite improvements in recent years, certain barriers to investment persist ⁽²⁾. The friendliness of the business environment receives a mediocre score in the World Bank's Doing Business indicators, particularly

⁽¹⁾ http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/2016/ags2016_challenges_ms_investment_environments_en.pdf

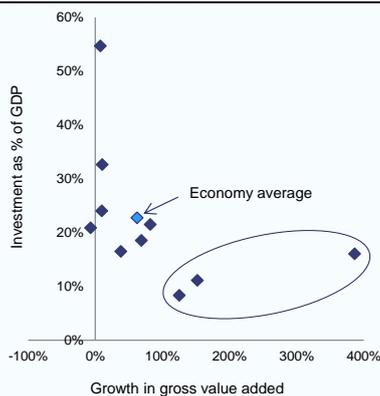
⁽²⁾ http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/2016/ags2016_challenges_malta_en.pdf

(Continued on the next page)

Box (continued)

in the areas of starting a business, registering property, resolving insolvency and dealing with construction permits. Additional problems include difficulties in obtaining financing for research, development and innovation as well as skills bottlenecks. These barriers are explored in more detail in sections 2.2 and 2.3.

Graph 3: Public and private investment as % of GDP, Malta and the euro area



Source: European Commission

The public administration still harbours inefficiencies. Particular problems include the costs of enforcing contracts and the licensing and permit systems, government administration and lengthy insolvency procedures. In many areas the authorities have initiated measures to address inefficiencies, but they have still to be brought to fruition and their impact remains to be seen. In the area of construction, excessively long administrative procedures and difficult access to financing hinders investment in renewing the building stock.

The insufficient capacity to innovate is seen as one of the most problematic factors in doing business and attracting investment. Key challenges to be tackled include a weak human resources base in science and technologies and the lack of critical mass in specific research areas. Strengthening linkages between the academic and the private sector for effective knowledge transfer is essential, as well as investing more in academic research. Another challenge is the lack of research and innovation investments to develop marketable products and services, and the need to improve the product market regulation⁽³⁾. Intellectual property is recognised as key to innovation and reforms are currently ongoing in this area. The government has also approved amendments to patent legislation. Evidence from a recent study⁽⁴⁾ suggests that there is some scope to reduce the fragmentation and overlap of R&D tax instruments. The capacity to innovate is hindered by lack of alternative forms of financing.

Vacancy bottlenecks have been identified across the entire skills spectrum. The inability to match certain job vacancies with available labour supply is particularly visible within the highly-skilled occupations, namely in the health care, the financial and the information, communication and technologies sectors. Within lower-skilled occupations, the hospitality and tourism sectors are the most affected. A substantial inflow of foreign workers is helping to fill in the gap. Malta is also introducing relevant measures to overcome the challenge and they may have a positive impact in a longer term. Work on establishing a Skills Council is ongoing and a more centralised comprehensive approach to skills forecasting is being developed. The provision of vocational education and training and the apprenticeship scheme are being strengthened.

⁽³⁾ Doing business. Measuring Regulatory Quality and Efficiency 2016, World Bank

⁽⁴⁾ CPB (2014) A Study on R&D Tax Incentives, Taxation Papers, Working Paper No 52 – 2014 European Commission

Box 1.2: Contribution of the EU Budget to structural change

Malta is an important beneficiary of European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) with EUR 828 million available for the period 2014-2020. This is equivalent to 1.3% of GDP (on an annual basis) and 34.7% of the expected national public investment in areas supported by the ESIF.

A number of reforms had to be implemented to satisfy ex-ante conditionalities and ensure that the Cohesion policy contributes to an effective delivery of the Europe 2020 objectives and targets. Reforms in the transport sector are still pending, for which an action plan scheduled to be completed during 2015 is delayed and is now expected to be completed in 2016. Where ex-ante conditionalities are not fulfilled by end 2016, the Commission may suspend interim payment to the priorities of the programme concerned.

The programming of the Funds was based on priorities and challenges identified in recent years in the context of the European Semester, for instance in relation to CSRs on addressing the labour-market relevance of education and training, improving the labour-market participation of women and diversifying the energy mix by increasing the share of energy produced from renewable sources. Regular monitoring of implementation includes reporting in mid-2017 on the contribution of the funds to Europe 2020 objectives and progress in addressing relevant structural reforms to maximise the use of EU financing (notably in R&DI, climate change, labour market, education and social areas).

Financing under the new European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), Horizon 2020, the Connecting Europe Facility and other directly managed EU funds would be additional to the ESIF. Following the first rounds of calls for projects under the Connecting Europe Facility, Malta has signed agreements for EUR 39 million for transport projects. For more information on the use of ESIF in Malta, see: <https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/countries/MT>.

Table 1.2: Key economic, financial and social indicators

	2003-2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	forecast		
									2015	2016	2017
Real GDP (y-o-y)	2.5	3.3	-2.5	3.5	2.0	2.9	4.0	4.1	4.9	3.9	3.4
Private consumption (y-o-y)	3.5	-0.2	1.8	-0.2	3.0	-0.2	2.0	2.8	4.0	3.4	2.6
Public consumption (y-o-y)	1.4	12.3	-3.3	1.6	3.8	6.3	0.2	7.8	2.5	4.9	6.3
Gross fixed capital formation (y-o-y)	11.7	-9.2	-11.8	26.4	-18.3	1.4	-0.2	7.6	19.1	-2.6	1.0
Exports of goods and services (y-o-y)	6.0	19.4	-0.4	6.9	2.3	6.7	0.8	0.0	2.7	4.5	4.8
Imports of goods and services (y-o-y)	7.2	19.5	0.3	7.6	-0.2	5.2	-0.8	-0.1	3.7	3.5	4.7
Output gap	0.5	2.2	-2.2	-1.3	-1.3	-1.0	-0.1	0.3	1.0	0.9	0.6
Potential growth (y-o-y)	2.5	2.4	1.9	2.6	2.0	2.6	3.1	3.6	4.2	3.9	3.7
Contribution to GDP growth:											
Domestic demand (y-o-y)	4.0	0.0	-1.9	5.0	-1.5	1.4	1.2	4.4	6.1	2.2	2.8
Inventories (y-o-y)	-0.2	3.4	0.6	-0.2	-0.3	-1.1	0.2	-0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Net exports (y-o-y)	-1.3	0.0	-1.1	-1.2	3.8	2.7	2.6	0.1	-1.2	1.7	0.6
Contribution to potential GDP growth:											
Total Labour (hours) (y-o-y)	0.4	0.9	0.8	0.5	0.4	0.9	1.2	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.2
Capital accumulation (y-o-y)	1.3	1.1	0.7	1.3	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.7	1.2	1.0	1.0
Total factor productivity (y-o-y)	0.8	0.4	0.5	0.8	1.0	1.2	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.5
Current account balance (% of GDP), balance of payments	-4.7	-1.1	-6.6	-4.7	-2.4	1.3	3.6	3.0	.	.	.
Trade balance (% of GDP), balance of payments	-1.7	0.7	-1.2	-0.6	2.5	4.8	7.1	7.1	.	.	.
Terms of trade of goods and services (y-o-y)	0.4	-0.5	-0.1	1.1	-0.1	-0.3	0.4	0.7	0.0	0.3	0.2
Capital account balance (% of GDP)	2.3	0.4	1.2	2.0	1.2	1.9	1.7	1.7	.	.	.
Net international investment position (% of GDP)	30.8	4.2	12.6	12.1	7.9	21.2	20.4	34.6	.	.	.
Net marketable external debt (% of GDP) ¹	76.5	45.4	70.5	202.4	199.3	247.5	208.7	208.1	.	.	.
Gross marketable external debt (% of GDP) ¹	454.0	724.3	717.9	679.0	701.8	690.9	665.6	706.1	.	.	.
Export performance vs. advanced countries (% change over 5 years)	.	23.4	58.1	49.1	27.7	24.6	6.2	-12.00	.	.	.
Export market share, goods and services (y-o-y)	-0.4	14.0	17.2	-11.0	-4.3	-1.7	-0.3	-1.3	.	.	.
Net FDI flows (% of GDP)	-155.4	14.4	-88.1	-68.3	-135.4	-126.6	-91.9	-84.4	.	.	.
Savings rate of households (net saving as percentage of net disposable income)	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Private credit flow (consolidated, % of GDP)	9.8	15.6	13.7	5.5	5.0	2.6	3.6	7.8	.	.	.
Private sector debt, consolidated (% of GDP)	136.9	152.8	167.6	161.9	158.4	154.4	148.3	146.4	.	.	.
of which household debt, consolidated (% of GDP)	46.8	54.2	59.9	59.0	59.5	60.0	60.0	60.6	.	.	.
of which non-financial corporate debt, consolidated (% of GDP)	90.1	98.6	107.7	102.9	98.9	94.4	88.3	85.8	.	.	.
Corporations, net lending (+) or net borrowing (-) (% of GDP)	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Corporations, gross operating surplus (% of GDP)	24.0	25.8	24.3	25.5	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Households, net lending (+) or net borrowing (-) (% of GDP)	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Deflated house price index (y-o-y)	13.9	7.2	-6.1	-1.1	-3.7	0.5	-1.5	2.6	.	.	.
Residential investment (% of GDP)	6.8	5.6	4.3	3.4	3.4	3.0	2.8	2.6	.	.	.
GDP deflator (y-o-y)	2.4	3.0	2.7	3.8	2.3	2.0	1.9	1.8	2.4	2.5	2.6
Harmonised index of consumer prices (HICP, y-o-y)	2.1	4.7	1.8	2.0	2.5	3.2	1.0	0.8	1.2	1.7	2.1
Nominal compensation per employee (y-o-y)	3.7	4.0	3.0	2.0	3.3	3.7	1.3	0.6	3.1	3.4	3.4
Labour productivity (real, person employed, y-o-y)	1.5	0.8	-2.5	1.8	-0.9	0.4	0.2	-0.9	.	.	.
Unit labour costs (ULC, whole economy, y-o-y)	2.2	3.2	5.6	0.2	4.2	3.2	1.1	1.5	0.4	1.9	2.4
Real unit labour costs (y-o-y)	-0.2	0.2	2.8	-3.5	1.9	1.2	-0.8	-0.2	-2.0	-0.6	-0.2
Real effective exchange rate (ULC, y-o-y)	2.6	2.7	1.3	-3.1	3.9	-0.6	2.5	1.0	-3.6	1.1	.
Real effective exchange rate (HICP, y-o-y)	1.6	3.7	0.8	-5.0	-0.8	-1.9	1.4	0.5	-2.6	2.0	-0.1
Tax wedge on labour for a single person earning the average wage (%)	17.9	16.9	16.5	16.9	18.1	19.2	19.8	19.1	.	.	.
Tax wedge on labour for a single person earning 50% of the average wage (%)	8.4*	8.0	7.7	8.4	9.4	9.8	10.2	9.8	.	.	.
Total Financial Sector Liabilities, non-consolidated (y-o-y)	50.9	13.5	3.8	13.0	10.9	5.8	2.1	6.3	.	.	.
Tier 1 ratio (%) ²	.	11.8	14.1	13.3	13.3	12.7	12.5	12.1	.	.	.
Return on equity (%) ³	.	6.3	11.7	12.1	5.8	14.1	9.8	4.6	.	.	.
Gross non-performing debt (% of total debt instruments and total loans and advances) (4)	.	1.3	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.7	2.0	3.2	.	.	.
Unemployment rate	7.0	6.0	6.9	6.9	6.4	6.3	6.4	5.8	5.4	5.3	5.3
Long-term unemployment rate (% of active population)	3.1	2.5	2.9	3.1	3.1	3.1	2.9	2.7	.	.	.
Youth unemployment rate (% of active population in the same age group)	15.8	11.7	14.5	13.2	13.3	14.1	13.0	11.7	12.1	.	.
Activity rate (15-64 year-olds)	58.2	59.1	59.4	60.4	61.8	63.1	65.0	66.3	.	.	.
People at-risk poverty or social exclusion (% total)	19.9	20.1	20.3	21.2	22.1	23.1	24.0	23.8	.	.	.
Persons living in households with very low work intensity (% of total population aged below 60)	9.6	8.6	9.2	9.2	8.9	9.0	9.0	9.8	.	.	.
General government balance (% of GDP)	-4.2	-4.2	-3.3	-3.2	-2.6	-3.6	-2.6	-2.1	-1.6	-1.1	-1.0
Tax-to-GDP ratio (%)	32.5	33.4	33.8	32.5	33.2	33.3	33.6	35.0	34.6	34.5	34.3
Structural budget balance (% of GDP)	.	.	.	-3.9	-2.5	-3.4	-2.6	-2.5	-2.2	-1.6	-1.3
General government gross debt (% of GDP)	67.6	62.7	67.8	67.6	69.8	67.4	68.5	66.9	64.0	61.2	58.7

(1) Sum of portfolio debt instruments, other investment and

(2,3) domestic banking groups and stand-alone banks.

(4) domestic banking groups and stand alone banks, foreign (EU and non-EU) controlled subsidiaries and foreign (EU and non-EU) controlled branches.

(*) Indicates BPM5 and/or ESA95

Source: European Commission, winter forecast 2015; ECB

Source: European Commission, 2016 winter forecast; ECB

2. STRUCTURAL ISSUES

This section provides an analysis of main structural economic and social challenges for Malta. Focusing on the policy areas covered in the 2015 country-specific recommendations, this section analyses issues related to taxation, the quality and sustainability of public finances, labour market, education and social policies, inefficiencies in network industries, the business-friendliness of public administration, the environment for access to finance for SMEs, the research and innovation framework and the justice system.

2.1. TAXATION, QUALITY OF PUBLIC FINANCES AND LONG-TERM FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY

Taxation

The Maltese tax system is efficient when it comes to certain aspects of providing services to taxpayers. In terms of the time it takes to prepare, file and pay taxes, Malta performs well, ranking tenth in the EU with an average of 139 hours per year compared with a EU average of 185.6 hours ⁽⁷⁾. Administrative costs, which can reflect the complexity of the tax system, are relatively low, representing 0.95 % of net revenue collections ⁽⁸⁾. Malta offers pre-filled tax returns and various e-services, and was also the first EU country to introduce a tax receipts lottery aimed at providing consumers with an incentive to ask for a receipt, thus making it easier for the tax authorities to check VAT compliance.

Despite recent progress, there is scope to further improve the quality of the tax administration. Efforts to improve tax compliance and tackle tax evasion are important for securing tax revenues, achieving greater efficiency in tax collection, and promoting fairness. In spite of measures to strengthen its tax system in order to enhance compliance, Malta still faces challenges in this area. Nevertheless, there are some encouraging signs. While still high, the level of undisputed debt in relation to net revenue collections decreased by 0.7 percentage points in 2013, reaching 23.2 % ⁽⁹⁾. The gross closing balance of tax arrears ⁽¹⁰⁾ stood at 28 % of GDP in 2014, of which 14 % and 7.5 % of GDP respectively related to value added tax

(VAT) and income tax arrears. Out of this balance, around 6.1 % of GDP was considered as collectable, with collectable VAT arrears representing only 0.9 % of GDP. While the VAT gap is relatively high in comparison with other Member States, a strong revenue performance helped to move it downwards in 2013. The gap, which represents the difference between the amount of VAT actually collected and the amount that is theoretically collectable based on VAT legislation, declined from 31 % of the total liability in 2012 to 26 % in 2013 due to a 9.3 % increase in VAT revenues (Graph 2.1.1) ⁽¹¹⁾. Between 2011 and 2013, the amount of revenue collected from tax verification activities (audit, controls, checks etc.) also increased, with the value of assessments rising from 0.7 % of total net revenue collections in 2011 to 1.6 % in 2013 ⁽¹²⁾.

⁽¹¹⁾ CASE/CPB, 'Study to Quantify and Analyse the VAT Gap in the EU Member States, 2015 Report'.

⁽¹²⁾ OECD (2015) op cit.

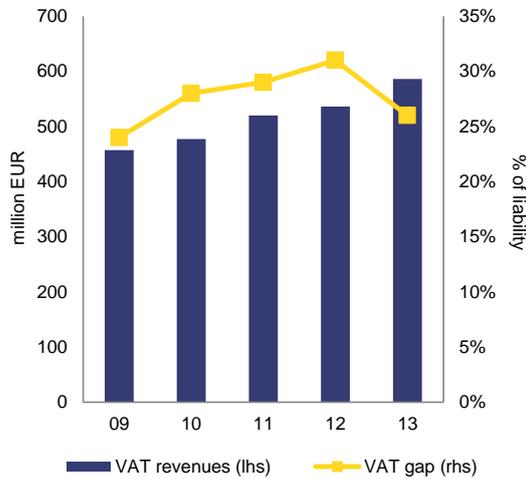
⁽⁷⁾ World Bank. 2016. Doing Business 2016: Measuring Regulatory Quality and Efficiency. Washington, DC: World Bank.

⁽⁸⁾ OECD (2015) op cit.

⁽⁹⁾ OECD (2015), Tax Administration 2015: Comparative Information on OECD and Other Advanced and Emerging Economies, OECD Publishing, Paris.

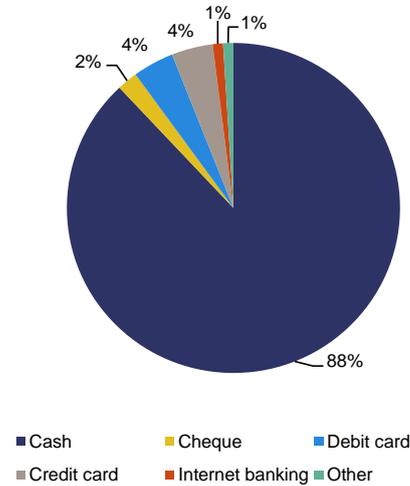
⁽¹⁰⁾ Based on data from the National Audit Office, 'Report by the Auditor General on the Public Accounts 2014'.

Graph 2.1.1: VAT gap



Source: Eurostat, 2013 Update Report to the Study to quantify and Analyse the VAT Gap in 26 EU Member States, CASE and CPB Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis, Warsaw, May 2015

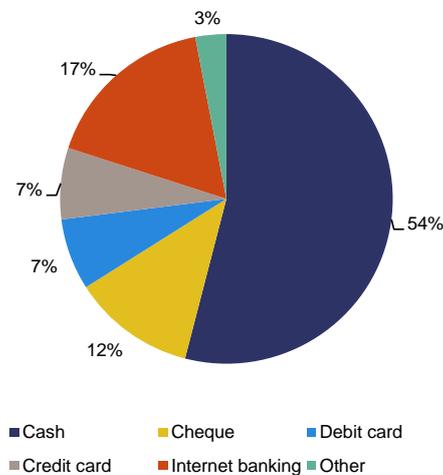
Graph 2.1.2: Use of payment instruments by volume



Source: Central Bank of Malta calculations

In addition, electronic payments remain under-used. Malta still lags behind in the use of electronic payment instruments. In 2014, such payments amounted to EUR 264 200 per capita compared with an EU average of EUR 484 720. Cash is the most popular medium in the country, representing 88 % of payments made in volume terms and 54 % in value terms⁽¹³⁾ (see Graphs 2.1.2 and 2.1.3) as there are no limits to cash payments in Malta. After cash, internet banking accounted for 17 % of transactions in terms of value but only 1.3 % in volume, implying that this medium tends to be used for higher value payments⁽¹⁴⁾. Promoting the wider use of electronic payments can reduce the opportunities for underreporting of income and tax evasion.

Graph 2.1.3: Use of payment instruments by value



Source: Central Bank of Malta calculations

⁽¹³⁾ Central Bank of Malta (2015), 'An Analysis of Maltese Payment Habits' (published in the Annual Report 2014, pp. 125-130).

⁽¹⁴⁾ Source: European Central Bank. Figures cover credit transfers, direct debits and card payments.

A number of relevant measures have been taken to improve tax compliance and tackle tax evasion. The government has launched a national strategy for electronic payments which aims at a smooth transition towards such means of payment. It has been announced that a steering committee has been tasked to make recommendations towards increasing electronic payments and is due to present its report in 2016. This work will include a study on the potential impact of introducing a limit to the use of cash. A survey of payment habits carried out by the Central Bank of Malta has also

been published⁽¹⁵⁾, and provides useful evidence which seems to support the government strategy to expand electronic payments and should help to feed into the design of future policy. Some property-related measures have also been introduced which aim to simplify the tax system and reduce tax avoidance and evasion. The previous capital gains tax system, which allowed those selling an immovable property to choose between paying 12 % on the value of the property or 35 % on the capital gain from the sale, was replaced in 2015 by a simplified final withholding tax based on the value of the property. In the 2016 budget it was announced that Malta is working on introducing the concept of fiscal consolidation for companies. This should allow groups of companies with the same owners to submit their revenue in an aggregate manner as if they were a single company, thus simplifying the computation of revenue and the declaration of income for the companies concerned and for the Department of Inland Revenue. Efforts have also been made to raise public awareness about the use of public funds, and hence improve taxpayers' compliance, through the launch of an educational campaign which shows how tax revenues collected are used for infrastructure, services, health, education, and social security. Other measures such as the automation of the debt collection process across tax types are planned to be implemented in the medium term.

The project to merge the various revenue departments into a single organisation is still ongoing. Such a merger aims to improve services to taxpayers, reduce bureaucracy, and collect revenues more efficiently and effectively. This complex project was launched in 2012 and is planned to be implemented over several years. Advice has also been obtained from IMF experts. The amalgamation will necessitate legislative, organisational, and logistical changes, including the redesign of information technology systems. It is currently planned that completion will be around 2017. However, as yet, little information is available on the impact of these changes so far.

Several features of the tax system can be used in structures of aggressive tax planning⁽¹⁶⁾. In

⁽¹⁵⁾ Central Bank of Malta (2015) op cit.

⁽¹⁶⁾ For an overview of the most common structures of aggressive tax planning and the provisions (or lack thereof)

particular, the absence of anti-abuse rules⁽¹⁷⁾ is relevant. Furthermore, the absence of deemed income from interest-free loans⁽¹⁸⁾ and the tax exemption for intellectual property income⁽¹⁹⁾ can prompt or facilitate aggressive tax planning in the absence of sufficient safeguards. In addition, while Malta's corporate income tax rate is one of the highest in the EU (35 %), its full imputation tax system and associated refunds can reduce the effective tax rate to as low as around 5 %. The level of inward and outward foreign direct investment stock amounted to approximately 1750 % and 750 % of GDP in 2014⁽²⁰⁾. Around 95 % of these positions was held by so-called special purpose entities⁽²¹⁾ suggesting that Malta is used by multinational companies to channel tax-driven financial flows to other jurisdictions.

Quality of public finances

Public expenditure as a share of GDP was below the euro-area average in 2014. In 2014, public expenditure net of one-offs stood at 43.9 % of GDP, well below the euro area and EU average of 48.9 % and 48.0 % of GDP respectively. This seems to be confirmed also when excluding the cost of servicing public debt, with Malta's primary expenditure at 41 % of GDP against an euro area

necessary for these structures to work, see Ramboll Management Consulting and Corit Advisory (2016), Study on Structures of Aggressive Tax Planning and Indicators, European Commission Taxation Paper n°61. It should be noted that country-specific information provided in the study gives the state of play at May/June 2015.

⁽¹⁷⁾ For example, the lack of controlled foreign companies rules, of thin capitalisation or interest-deduction-limitation rules, of rules whereby the deductibility of interest depends on the tax treatment in the creditor's state, or of rules to counter mismatches in tax qualification of domestic companies or partnerships and those of a foreign state.

⁽¹⁸⁾ The above-mentioned study refers to the fact that the deemed income on interest free loans is not taxable. This can give rise to aggressive tax planning structures if, meanwhile, the borrowing company is allowed to claim a tax deduction regardless of the fact that no such interest accrues or is paid. However, it is also reported that transactions should be executed on an arm's-length basis, and accordingly such a transaction may be challenged by the authorities.

⁽¹⁹⁾ It should be noted that it is reported that in practice, this exemption provision has not yet started to be implemented.

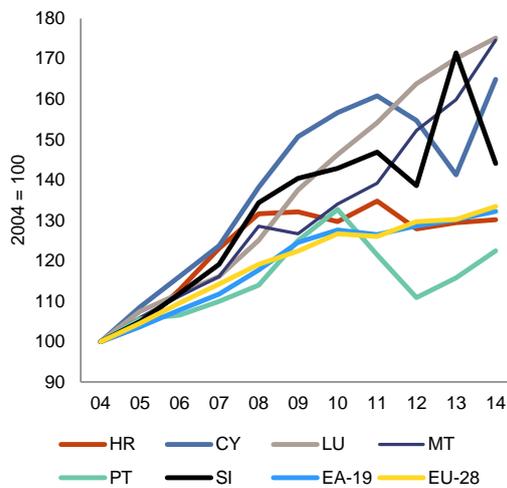
⁽²⁰⁾ Source: Eurostat

⁽²¹⁾ A special purpose entity is a legal entity that has little or no employment, operations or physical presence in the jurisdiction where it is located. It is related to another corporation, often as its subsidiary, and is typically located in another jurisdiction.

and EU average of 46.2 % and 45.5 % of GDP respectively. Malta was among the Member States that benefited from the reduction in nominal yields that followed the adoption of the euro (entailing an overall contraction in the cost of servicing debt by 2.5 % over 2004-2014). When comparing with small Member States (i.e. Croatia, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Portugal and Slovenia), primary expenditure in Malta seems to remain among the lowest.

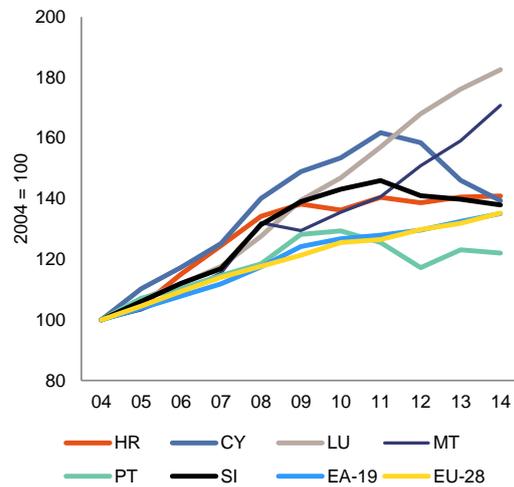
Primary expenditure has increased rapidly since joining the EU. Between 2004 and 2014, primary expenditure net of one-offs grew on average by 4.7 % at current prices and by 2.3 % in real terms, one of the highest increases among small Member States (see Graph 2.1.4). As a share of potential GDP, primary expenditure increased by 1.9 percentage points, reaching 41.2 % in 2014.

Graph 2.1.4: Total primary expenditure at current prices, selected EU countries



Source: European Commission

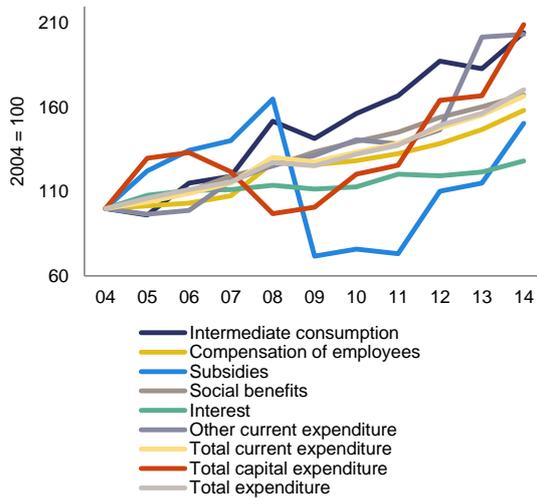
Graph 2.1.5: Current primary expenditure at current prices, selected EU countries



Source: European Commission

Primary current expenditure grew at a pace above potential GDP growth. During the pre-crisis years 2004-2007, current primary expenditure grew in nominal terms at 5.1 % per year on average, above the euro area and EU average (3.7 % and 4.5 % respectively). In the post-crisis period (2008-2014) primary current expenditure increased on average by 5.8 % (see Graph 2.1.5). In particular, in 2012-2014, despite the fiscal consolidation needed to correct the excessive deficit, primary current expenditure started growing at a pace of 6.7 % per year, well above both the euro area and EU average (1.8 % and 2.3 % respectively). Overall, as a share of potential GDP, primary current expenditure increased by 1.8 percentage points between 2004 and 2014, reaching 36.2 %. This reflects a rise at a pace above potential GDP growth, in particular in recent years.

Graph 2.1.6: Total expenditure at current prices by category



Source: European Commission

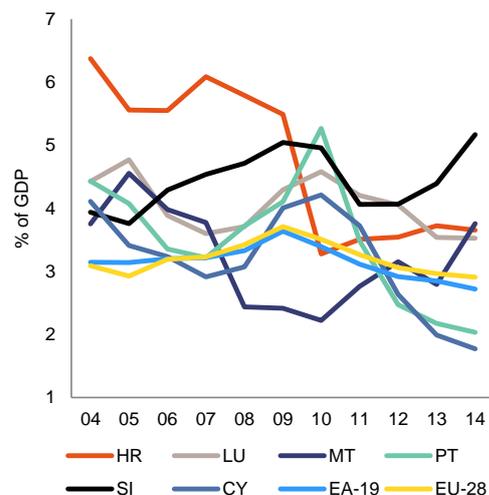
During the post-crisis years, the increase in some components of current expenditure has been particularly strong. Starting from 2012, some current expenditure items have grown strongly after a more moderate trend in the years following EU accession (see Graph 2.1.6). In particular, compensation of employees increased on average over 2012-2014 by 6.1 % due to both higher average wages and higher employment in both the health and education sector. This increase includes the impact of the sectoral and public service collective agreements which were finalised in 2012, and occurred despite the repeated commitment to restrain public wages. Despite the restraint in 2013, intermediate consumption increased on average by 7.2 % between 2012 and 2014 as the result of higher expenditure on medicines and on residential care for elderly people. The average increase of current subsidies was above 28 % due to increasing subsidies to the energy sector and subsidies to the public transport system, while other current expenditure grew on average by 14.8 %.

Primary expenditure dynamics have been impacted by a significant increase in capital expenditure in recent years. Public investment also contributed quite significantly to the fiscal restraint needed to correct the excessive deficit in 2004-2010 (see Graph 2.1.7). It was thus one of the few expenditure items to record a negative growth over that period. In the period 2011-2014,

public investment started speeding up, driven both by EU funds of the 2007-2013 programming period and higher investments by central government (namely the Extra Budgetary Units). Capital transfers exhibited a mixed trend, starting to increase in 2012 due to subsidies granted to Air Malta as part of the restructuring plan (see Graph 2.1.8).

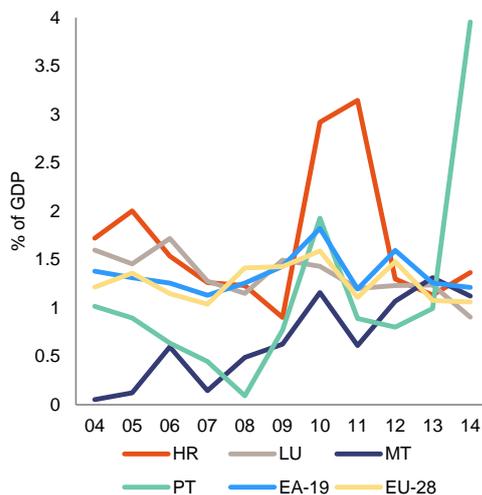
State-owned enterprises are a source of potential risks to the state budget. Overall, total subsidies (both current and capital) to the economy increased from 2.0 % of GDP in 2004 to 2.5 % of GDP in 2014. After some moderation in 2009-2011, when they averaged 1.7 % of GDP, subsidies increased again reaching 2.5 % of GDP in 2014. While Malta has been comparatively less affected by the tensions in financial markets and no government rescue operations took place following the financial crisis, the level of subsidies to state-owned enterprises has increased in recent years. The ongoing restructuring of state-owned enterprises (such as Enemalta and Air Malta) and the privatisation of the public transport service are critical to contain fiscal risks. The state is the largest employer and its involvement in the economy has had significant fiscal and economic implications. It is therefore important to manage risks to public finances from state-owned enterprises in a comprehensive manner.

Graph 2.1.7: Gross fixed capital formation, selected EU countries



Source: European Commission

Graph 2.1.8: **Other capital expenditure, including capital transfers, selected EU countries**



Source: European Commission

Fiscal framework

The Fiscal Responsibility Act was adopted by the Maltese Parliament in July 2014, with a view to transposing the requirements of Directive 85/2011/EU on budgetary frameworks and the Fiscal Compact. It introduced a balanced-budget rule in structural terms and a debt rule as well as a three-year rolling budgetary framework (National Medium-Term Fiscal Plan) which should improve the predictability of the budgetary planning. All three elements encompass the whole general government. Moreover, the Act provided for the establishment of the Malta Fiscal Advisory Council whose duties include endorsing the government's official macroeconomic and fiscal forecasts as well as *ex ante* and *ex post* monitoring of compliance with fiscal rules.

The Malta Fiscal Advisory Council has been operational since the beginning of 2015. The members of the Malta Fiscal Advisory Council were appointed in January 2015. According to the latest information reported in the Draft Budgetary Plan for 2016, the supporting bureau has been set up and the intended numbers of permanent staff have been recruited. While still relying on external consultants, the plan is to reduce their involvement in the Council's activities in 2016. The Council holds regular meetings with the main stakeholders (the Economic Policy Department and the Budgetary Affairs Office of the Ministry for

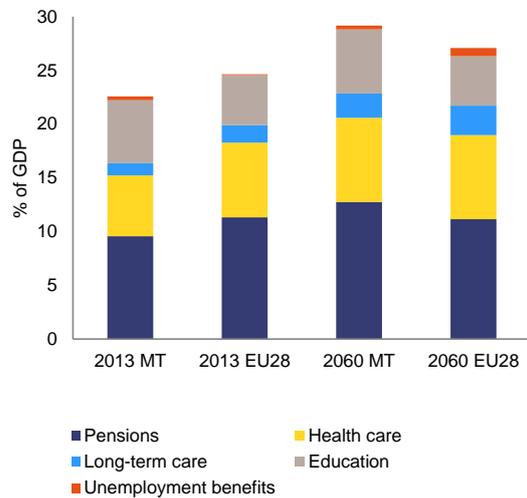
Finance, the National Statistics Office, the Treasury and the National Audit Office) and receives regular reports and data on fiscal issues. Since it started work, the Council has published three reports. In 2015, the Council carried out an assessment and an endorsement of the government's macroeconomic and fiscal projections as published in the Update of the Stability Programme and in the Draft Budgetary Plan for 2016, respectively. In September, the Council issued an Assessment of the Medium-Term Fiscal Strategy 2015-2018, Annual Report 2014 and Half-Yearly Report 2015 (previously published by the Ministry of Finance).

Long-term fiscal sustainability

Malta does not appear to face debt sustainability risks in the short and medium term. The government debt-to-GDP ratio is lower than the euro area average and it is rapidly approaching the 60 % of GDP threshold. Over the short term, Malta does not appear to face significant risks of stress arising from the fiscal side of the economy. Furthermore, the structure of public debt financing, in terms of maturity, creditor base (residents versus non-residents) and currency denomination, does not give rise to short-term risks. Looking to the medium term, public debt appears to decrease further. Under a normal fiscal policy scenario ⁽²²⁾, the debt-to-GDP ratio is projected to fall below the critical threshold of 60 % as early as in 2018 and to around 50 % in 2026. In addition, further improvements may be achieved if compliance with the preventive arm of the Stability and Growth Pact is achieved, since public debt would decrease more substantially than in the baseline projections, going below 40 % of GDP in 2026. Therefore, no significant sustainability risks appear over the medium term.

⁽²²⁾ Namely, under the hypothesis that the structural primary balance remains constant at 0.9 % of GDP as of the last Commission forecast year (2017) until 2026.

Graph 2.1.9: Components of total age-related expenditure



Source: European Commission, 2015 Ageing report

In the long term, however, sustainability risks do appear. Malta appears to be at medium risk due to a relatively high value of the required long-term fiscal adjustment (4.4 percentage points of GDP) needed to put its debt on a sustainable path over the long-term. The projections of implicit liabilities related to the cost of ageing reflect the long-term challenges in terms of an ageing population. The steep increase in projected age-related expenditure is related in particular to pension expenditure (3.2 percentage points of GDP) but also healthcare and long-term care expenditure (2.1 percentage points and 1.2 percentage points respectively) ⁽²³⁾.

Pension system

The pension system faces the double problem of achieving sustainability while ensuring adequate retirement incomes. Pension expenditure was lower than the EU average in 2013, at 9.6 % of GDP, but it is projected to increase to 12.8 % by 2060 ⁽²⁴⁾, one of the highest in the EU. The pay-as-you-go ‘two thirds pension’ is capped at a rather low level, while the guaranteed national minimum pension level currently stands at two thirds of the national minimum wage (four fifths for married couples). The relative income ratio of people aged over 65

compared to the working-age population is 0.78 (the EU average is 0.93).

Malta scores slightly worse on average than the rest of the EU in terms of poverty prevention, and important coverage gaps exist. The share of older people who are at risk of poverty is higher than the general population (17.2 % against 15.9 %), and 3.9 percentage points higher than the EU average (13.3 %). Women over 65 years of age are at a higher risk of poverty due to the fact that they are more likely to live longer, are less likely to receive their own pensions, and the level of their pension benefits is generally lower than that for men. The gender pension gap (for people aged 65-79) in Malta stands at 25.6 and is lower than the EU average of 40.2 ⁽²⁵⁾. However, the gender gap in the non-coverage rate ⁽²⁶⁾ is significantly higher at 36.5 compared to a much lower one of 6.8 for the EU average. This is because, despite recent progress in increasing female employment, Maltese women continue to have the shortest employment careers in the EU (25 years compared with 32.5). Due to insufficient contribution periods, women are often not entitled to their own contributory old-age benefits, and are more likely to depend on their spouses’ pensions or survivors’ benefits, or receive a non-contributory (means-tested) old-age pension.

The authorities plan to put forward several measures in the near future to address the sustainability of the pension system. These measures follow the proposals of the Pension Strategy Group ⁽²⁷⁾. The government is notably seeking to improve the balance between the years spent in work and those in retirement by extending the number of required contribution years from 40 to 41. In effect, this would require individuals to work one more year in order to get the full pension, and otherwise proportionally reduce the generosity of pension benefits. The relevant legislation has yet to be introduced and therefore the potential impact of this measure has not yet been quantified. It remains to be seen how this would work in practice if individuals were required to work beyond the statutory retirement age. To ensure this measure is effective, additional

⁽²³⁾ 2015 Ageing Report.

⁽²⁴⁾ 2015 Ageing Report.

⁽²⁵⁾ Survey on Income and Living Conditions 2012.

⁽²⁶⁾ Percentage point difference between women and men in the rate of those not covered by any pension (age 65-79).

⁽²⁷⁾ A Strategy for an Adequate and Sustainable Maltese Pension System presented on 17 June 2015.

policy efforts to safeguard the employability of the people affected may be useful. Nevertheless, measures concentrated on improving the activity rates of older workers are not expected to be sufficient to ensure the long-term sustainability of the pension system ⁽²⁸⁾.

The authorities plan to put forward measures to raise the adequacy of pensions. The contributory guaranteed national minimum pension continues to evolve in 2016 with a view to reach 60 % of the median income by 2020 and to extend the coverage. Moreover, the level of the non-contributory means-tested 'old-age' pension is also set to increase. In 2016, further care credits will be introduced, including for periods spent caring for children, which is expected to help improve pension coverage for women who often do not build up sufficient contributions because of breaks in their careers due to care for children. Credits will also be introduced for periods of education, with greater credits awarded for greater levels of educational attainment, in order to encourage human capital formation.

Malta has recently introduced a framework for voluntary third pillar private complementary pensions, which will be further developed and its incentives extended. However, information on the take-up of these measures is not yet available ⁽²⁹⁾. Though such a third pillar could help to promote the build-up of supplementary incomes for the future, it is not yet clear whether these will have wide coverage, especially for lower-income earners who have a reduced propensity to save. No measures have been taken so far to implement second-pillar occupational pensions, which could provide more uniform coverage of the labour force.

Health care system

Health care expenditure is projected to increase significantly in the long term reflecting demographic trends. The Maltese population

enjoys one of the highest life expectancies in Europe, although there are areas where the health care services appear to underperform such as cardio/cerebro mortality and ischaemic heart disease. Public expenditure on health care in 2013 amounted to 5.7 % of GDP, which was below the EU average (6.9 % of GDP). In recent years the public share of total health expenditure followed a stable pattern, with inpatient expenditure absorbing the largest share of public health expenditure. However, public expenditure on health is projected to increase significantly to 7.8 % of GDP in 2060, reaching the projected EU average ⁽³⁰⁾. The projected increase is one of the highest in the EU, reflecting also demographic trends. When taking into account the impact of non-demographic drivers on future spending growth ⁽³¹⁾, health care expenditure is expected to increase by 4.2 percentage points of GDP between 2013 and 2060. In terms of the provision of adequate access to services, the authorities have made progress in reducing waiting times on various procedures and examinations.

The fiscal impact of the healthcare policy initiatives is still uncertain. Following the finalisation and launch in 2014 of the National Health Systems Strategy aimed at achieving sustainable healthcare, a detailed action plan and a cost-benefit analysis were completed in January 2015. A health systems performance assessment was also completed in 2015. The assessment demonstrates the baseline results and interpretation of the selected indicators and will be repeated every two years. It is, however, still uncertain whether the strategy is sufficient to cope with the challenge of future spending growth. In addition, currently there is no comprehensive system to monitor health service outcomes and quality of care.

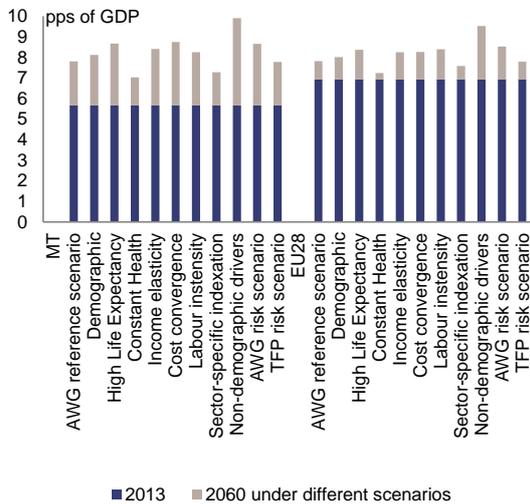
⁽²⁸⁾ According to simulations in the 2015 Ageing Report, linking the retirement age to changes in life expectancy is expected to reduce the projected increase in pension expenditure by more than one third (1.2% of GDP out of 3.2% of GDP). Achieving the same gains by targeting labour-market measures alone would require reaching a 24 pps. increase in the overall employment rate over the baseline.

⁽²⁹⁾ Country Reports 2014 and 2015.

⁽³⁰⁾ 2015 Ageing Report.

⁽³¹⁾ The "non-demographic determinants scenario" highlights the potential impact of non-demographic drivers on health care expenditure, such as innovations in medical technology, institutional settings and individual behaviour. Such upward risk on the future evolution of public expenditure on health care is not captured by the ageing factor. Ignoring the effect of non-demographic drivers on health care expenditure would imply making the assumption that past trends of health care expenditure related to these drivers will disappear in the future.

Graph 2.1.10: Health care expenditure under different scenarios, 2013-2060



Source: European Commission, 2015 Ageing report

Long-term care

The demand for long-term care has increased as a result of population ageing as well as the reduced role of extended family and the increased labour market participation of women. Public expenditure on long-term care, which amounted to 1.1 % of GDP in 2013 (against 1.6 % of GDP in the EU), is projected to increase to 2.1 % in 2060⁽³²⁾. Informal care still plays an important role in Maltese society due to the traditional strong role of the family. Most care givers are women aged between 40-59 years⁽³³⁾. Over the last few years, the government expanded residential care places and community-based services including day care centres. The government has set up contracts with private homes for providing long-term care services, but private care institutions are not always affordable for pensioners. A number of initiatives have been undertaken to encourage independent living and the 2016 budget has announced additional measures for at-home care. However, the long-term fiscal impact of these measures has not been estimated. Moreover, preventive strategies that target older people with the aim of preventing frailty and dependency are not fully in place. Enhancing the provision of formal long-term care services, in addition to

⁽³²⁾ 2015 Ageing Report.

⁽³³⁾ Social Protection Committee (2014) Long Term Care in Ageing Societies.

improving the availability of care to those who need it, could further complement recent work-life balance measures taken to reduce obstacles to women's participation in the labour market because of care responsibilities.

2.2. LABOUR MARKET, EDUCATION AND SKILLS AND SOCIAL ASPECTS

Labour market

Notwithstanding the favourable economic and labour market outlook significant challenges remain. The resilience of the economy is reflected in the continuously improving labour-market performance. Both activity rates and employment rates have been increasing, particularly due to the growing female participation and foreign labour force inflow. Nevertheless, the overall activity rate remains low (72.5 % for the group aged 20-64 vs the EU average of 77.2 % in the third quarter of 2015), reflecting one of the lowest female activity rate in the EU. Despite recent progress among younger cohorts, reconciliation of work and family life (especially in the private sector), the design of the benefits system, and the skill level of older women remain key factors inhibiting a further increase in female activity rates. The Maltese population is considerably less qualified than the EU average, but economic growth requires an adequate supply of labour which matches the labour market needs. Thus persons with low or outdated skills are likely to find it more difficult to integrate into the labour market. In addition, the low reported activity rate may be due to a high share of undeclared work.

Labour supply

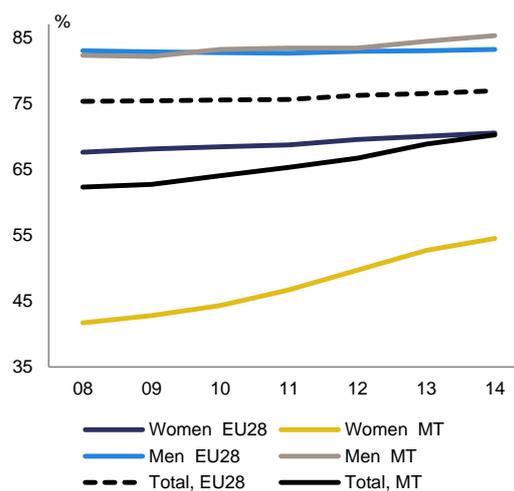
Overall, activity and employment rates increased but are still below the EU average, notably for women and older workers. The activity rate stood at 70.1 % in 2014 for the 20-64 age group; higher rates were observed throughout 2015. Increasing activity rate is associated with a strong increase in employment, with the exception of the elderly cohorts for which rising activity rates are associated with higher exits to unemployment. The employment rate has kept increasing (to 69.2% in the third quarter of 2015), but was still below the EU average, reflecting low employment rates for women (55.4%) and older workers (at 42.1% in the third quarter of 2015). In particular, the employment of older women was still very low, with 24.1% in the third quarter of 2015.

Female activity rates remain substantially lower than the EU average, reflecting a combination of factors i.e. traditional society's support to one and male earner households, insufficient work-life balance arrangements (i.e. flexible working

arrangements in the private sector) linked with care responsibilities, and a lack of necessary skills (i.e. a gap in educational and job acquired skills for older generations), which were referred to extensively in the 2015 country report.

The female activity rate (aged 20-64) has registered by far the highest increase in the EU since 2008. The gap with the EU in terms of activity rate has decreased and reached its narrowest level of about 16 percentage points in 2014 (see Graph 2.2.1). Activity rates among the youngest female cohorts (i.e. 15-24 years and 25-29 years) surpass the EU average and are on the rise, whereas no significant respective increases have been observed at EU level⁽³⁴⁾. Activity rates tend to fall below the EU average as of age 30, and substantially so for women 50-64 years old. Nevertheless, sharp and continuous increases have been noted for the 50+ cohorts too and have contributed to the observed increase in full-time employment as well as part-time employment. The share of women working part time is considerably higher in comparison with men (26.6% vs. 6.3% in the third quarter of 2015, aged 20-64).

Graph 2.2.1: Activity rates in Malta and EU, aged 20-64, by gender



Source: European Commission

Malta is currently implementing a number of making-work-pay measures that seek to

⁽³⁴⁾ The female participation rate in Malta increased by 11.7 percentage points between 2008 and 2014, by far the highest increase registered among EU countries.

increase the participation of women in the labour market. In particular, they include providing free childcare services, in-work benefits, tax rebates, establishing a maternity leave fund and promoting flexible and reduced-hours arrangements. In 2014 Malta introduced free childcare for children 0-3 years old for families where parents are in employment, in education or actively seeking a job, in order to remove barriers for parents, especially women, entering or remaining in employment⁽³⁵⁾. This reform has contributed to a significant increase in the number of children enrolled in childcare centres⁽³⁶⁾. Latest data (2014) shows that 21 % of children up to 3 years old are enrolled in formal childcare, but the take up is still below the Barcelona targets⁽³⁷⁾ for this age group as well as the EU average (27 %). Enrolment in childcare from 3 to mandatory school age is at 92 % (10 percentage points above the EU average and above the Barcelona target of 90 %), largely due to the availability of free pre-primary education for children from age 3. Nevertheless, from a longer-term perspective, efforts to retain older women in the labour market have so far been less successful when compared with developments in other EU economies partially due to their low overall skills levels. The current pension reform (see Section 2.1), in conjunction with additional targeted fiscal measures could, however, contribute to encouraging older women to remain active over the coming years. The package of 'make work pay' measures is being further extended under the 2016 Budget and is expected to contribute further to the rising activity of women.

Despite low levels of youth unemployment and an overall low level of young people neither in employment nor in education or training (NEETs) in Malta, the share of the inactive among people in this group is high. Among those people neither in employment nor in education or training, there is clearly a high proportion of the

low skilled and very young people (below 20 years old), in line with the high number of early school leavers. A breakdown of the group of people neither in employment nor in education or training reveals, inter alia, that the group is very heterogeneous with a high share of inactive. Among those inactive, the share of women is higher than men, with family responsibilities being the key driver of this difference⁽³⁸⁾. The efforts of the authorities under the Youth Guarantee have targeted potential school dropouts but also aimed to activate this population through a combined programme of mentoring and traineeships. The updated Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan puts emphasis on the issue of the quality of offers. However, there is still room for improving the scope of offers. A census carried out on people neither in employment nor in education or training⁽³⁹⁾ is expected to contribute to a better understanding of their needs and help define more tailored measures.

A large share of the unemployed does not receive unemployment benefits or are not registered in the Public Employment Services.

The coverage of unemployment benefits among the short-term unemployed was estimated to be 17 percentage points lower than the EU average at 20 % in 2014. This may reflect the limited duration of entitlements (156 days) as well as relatively strict eligibility conditions (such as in 2015 a qualifying period of around 50 weeks of which at least 20 in the last two years). In addition, net replacement rates are slightly lower than in most EU countries.

The lack of coverage could hamper the effectiveness of policy action, notably efforts to upgrade the skills of the unemployed.

The Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) has been undergoing a reorganisation in order to effectively adjust its capacity to the new challenges, including the challenge of skills matching, job-search assistance, training provision and individualised support. While sanctions (non-

⁽³⁵⁾ Though inactive parents are not eligible to benefit from this scheme, separate targeted support measures for these families exist.

⁽³⁶⁾ According to the national data, between April and December 2014, the number of children attending childcare increased from 1800 to 2917. Peer Review on 'Making work pay for mothers', 18-19 May 2015, Malta.

⁽³⁷⁾ In 2002, the Barcelona European Council set objectives in this area. See http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/71025.pdf. The Commission is monitoring the targets also after 2010.

⁽³⁸⁾ Eurofound (2016) – Exploring the diversity of NEETs – Publication Office of the European Union – Luxembourg – forthcoming.

⁽³⁹⁾ The results of the NEETs census carried out by the Maltese authorities confirm that the group is very heterogeneous and that a part considerable proportion of them might have engaged in undeclared work.

payment of benefits) are planned to be introduced for jobseekers who are not willing to participate in such schemes, increasing the coverage of Public Employment Services registration remains a challenge. Only 60% of the long-term unemployed are registered. A scheme to contract out private service provision (with a payment-by-results model) for placements to long-term unemployed⁽⁴⁰⁾ – the Work Programme – is being introduced. The results need to be seen in terms of effectiveness of job search support and in terms of coordination between employment services and social assistance, because a more effective partnership approach and possibly a single point of contact could help improve the services, in particular those provided to the long-term unemployed.

The inflow of foreigners - both EU citizens and third country nationals - taking up jobs in Malta has been increasing. The total registered number of foreign workers reached 22 000 people in 2014. Since 2008, the increase has been nearly three-fold. This flow⁽⁴¹⁾ is driven by the lack of sufficient supply of domestic labour force and skills to meet an increasing demand. About 70 % of the foreign labour force were EU citizens in 2014, pointing to an increased influx since 2008 when they constituted only about half of the foreign labour force. The influx of foreign workers is more pronounced in certain sectors, such as in entertainment & recreation (where they amount to nearly 29 % of the workforce), professional services & administrative support (23 %) and hotels & restaurants (21 %) in 2014⁽⁴²⁾. These have also been among the most dynamic sectors of the economy. At the same time, the labour force in industry is dominated by the Maltese population.

EU residents and third-country nationals are overall well integrated in the labour market. The employment rate of foreigners is at similar

levels as those of nationals with activity rates steadily increasing across age and gender dimensions (see Graph 2.2.2). The available survey data however allows capturing only major performance patterns of those in formal working arrangements. Given signs of informal employment, the Employment and Training Corporation is currently exploring measures to curb irregular and precarious employment in relation to parts of the foreign labour force, notably third-country nationals in low skilled professions.

Education and skills

Skills supply and governance

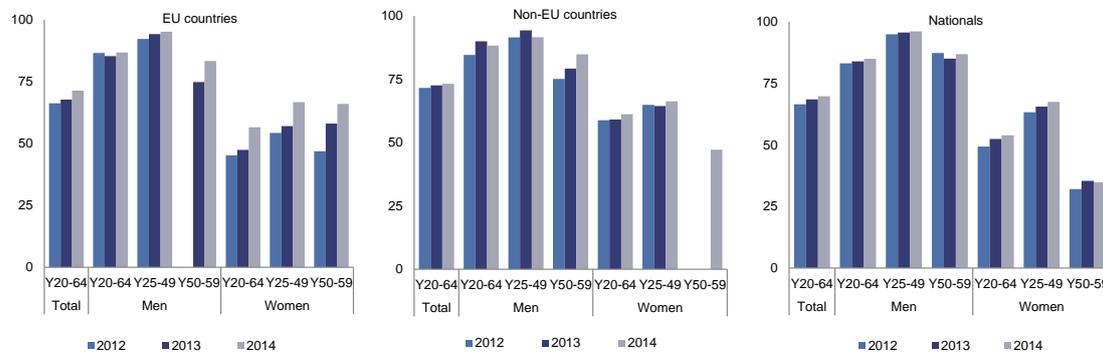
Malta's workforce remains relatively low-skilled, despite recent improvements. In terms of educational attainment Malta has the highest shares of low-skilled workers in the EU for almost all age brackets as 57.8 % of population aged between 25 and 64 has at best a level of education equivalent to lower secondary education ISCED 0-2 (see Graph 2.2.3). In addition, 22.7 % of the same population group has an upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary level of education in the EU (ISCED 3-4), while 19.5 % has a tertiary qualification (ISCED 5-8). However, these figures represent an improvement since 2000 when 81.9 % had at best an ISCED 0-2 qualification. The improvement in overall educational level is also partially driven by an increasing share of foreign population, which has a relatively higher share of people with tertiary qualifications and a smaller share of people with lower secondary education.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Whilst the long-term unemployment rate is low (2.4 percentage points lower than the EU average) and is seen to be declining, it appears that around 4000 out of a total of 5200 registered jobseekers were long-term unemployed in 2015. The very long-term unemployment rate decreased to 1.5% in 2014, 1.6 percentage points below the EU average.

⁽⁴¹⁾ In 2014, about 6 % of total population or close to 25 000 people were foreign citizens. Close to 10 % of total population or about 40 000 thousand people were born in a foreign country.

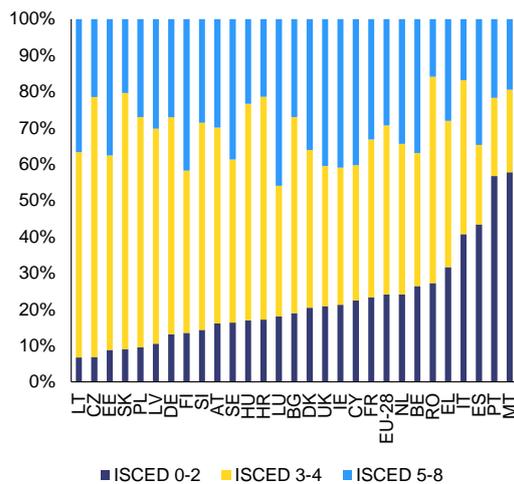
⁽⁴²⁾ Grech, A. (2015). *Understanding the Macroeconomic Impact of Migration in Malta*. Central Bank of Malta Policy note, December 2015.

Graph 2.2.2: Activity rates, % of population group



Nationals, Other EU28; Non-EU28; distinction by country of birth
Source: European Commission

Graph 2.2.3: Distribution of educational attainment among population aged 25-64, 2014



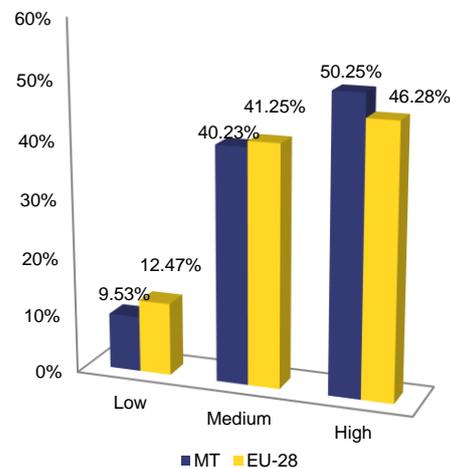
Source: European Commission

Vacancy bottlenecks have emerged and are identified across the entire skills spectrum. The greatest recruitment difficulties appear within the highly-skilled occupations, namely in the health care, financial and ICT sectors. With regards to unskilled occupations, the hospitality and tourism sector appears to be the most affected⁽⁴³⁾. In response, a substantial increase in foreign workers has been recorded. Future employment growth in Malta is forecast to concentrate in business services and the distribution and transport sectors, while, in the primary and manufacturing sectors it

⁽⁴³⁾ European Commission (2013), Mapping and analysing bottleneck vacancies on EU Labour Markets - Bottleneck vacancies in Malta.

would continue to fall. Most job opportunities (see Graph 2.2.4) are projected to require tertiary education, but there will also be significant proportions of job opportunities for medium-level qualifications⁽⁴⁴⁾.

Graph 2.2.4: Forecast job opportunities by level of qualification 2013-2015



Source: European Commission calculations based on Cedefop skills forecast (2015)

The existing instruments for skills forecasting and anticipation at national level are still not sufficient to assess labour market and skills needs. Several institutions produce statistics

⁽⁴⁴⁾ Cedefop (2015), *Country forecasts - Malta skills supply and demand up to 2025*. According to Cedefop's forecast, most job opportunities will be for professionals, service and sales workers in the business and other service sectors.

indicating trends in education and labour market but still do not give a comprehensive outlook. There also remains scope for strengthening governance and partnerships between providers and employers. Among a number of measures, the government plans to set up an agency, 'Education Malta', as part of the strategy to establish Malta as an international educational hub. A Skills Council will be set up in 2016 as a general national policy board to advise the government on adjusting skills policies.

The supply and quality of apprenticeships is still too limited. The minimum share of the on-the-job training in the overall apprenticeship programme is not set in the legislation. Apprenticeship programmes with separate provision of off-the-job and on-the-job learning has often resulted in learning experience disconnected one from another⁽⁴⁵⁾. An adequate supply of apprenticeships is an appropriate way to accelerate the adjustment of skills supply to specific labour market demand, thereby equipping graduates with relevant occupational skills. Malta has made efforts to reform and strengthen the apprenticeship governance⁽⁴⁶⁾ and to create a 'culture' for apprenticeships aimed at attracting large number of both students (including foreign students) and employers. The government acknowledges that there is scope to expand the supply as regards sectors and qualifications levels and to develop their quality and labour market relevance⁽⁴⁷⁾. The authorities intend to develop a harmonised legal framework on apprenticeships which would also define the employment status of apprentices. Further measures are announced in the 2016 budget, i.e. "Job Practice" to offer students a chance to increase their skills portfolio, but the extent to which they will meet the challenge remains to be assessed.

Education

Malta is among the worst EU performers as regards early school leaving and basic skills. After falling by almost 10 percentage points between 2007 and 2013, the early school leaving rate stagnated between 2013 (20.5 %) and 2014

(20.3 %). It is still the second highest in the EU and well above the 2020 national target. Earlier surveys showed that the basic skills attainment⁽⁴⁸⁾ was rather low⁽⁴⁹⁾. This was coupled with the largest gender gap among EU countries, with girls strongly outperforming boys in all fields tested, which highlights the potential that an increased female labour force participation would have for the economy.

Continuous professional development of Maltese teachers has been identified as a key policy area for further progress in early school leaving and basic skill attainment. Recent research underscores the central role of quality teaching in determining student outcomes⁽⁵⁰⁾. Some major changes have been introduced in the education system (i.e. the introduction of mixed ability classes, benchmarking examination and e-learning tools), which necessitates high-quality initial teacher education and continuous professional development so as to promote student-centred learning. A legal notice establishing an institute for continuous professional development of teachers (the Institute for Education) was approved in 2015. The main objectives of the Institute are to: (i) provide teachers with skills to be utilised in their daily professional activities; (ii) act as a hub for educators to meet and share common experiences; (iii) promote educational leadership. The Institute is now becoming operational and is expected to become the main driver in addressing teachers' professional development needs. The government also plans to reform initial teacher education by introducing a two-year Master's degree in Teaching and Learning⁽⁵¹⁾. Lasting commitment

⁽⁴⁸⁾ Basic skills attainment measures cognitive skills, not qualifications.

⁽⁴⁹⁾ See the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2009+ tests (<http://www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/pisa2009keyfindings.htm>). Malta did not participate in PISA 2012) where Malta was among the worst performers in the EU; the 2011 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS); and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) (<http://timssandpirls.bc.edu/>).

⁽⁵⁰⁾ See Chetty R., Friedman J. N. and Rockoff J. (2014), "Measuring the impacts of teachers II: Teacher value-added and student outcomes in adulthood", *American Economic Review*, vol.104, n.9, pp.2633-79; and Hanushek E. A. and Rivkin S. G. (2012), "The distribution of teacher quality and implications for policy", *Annual Review of Economics*, vol.4, pp.131-57.

⁽⁵¹⁾ The current initial teacher training involves a Bachelor of Education degree in Primary Education for primary

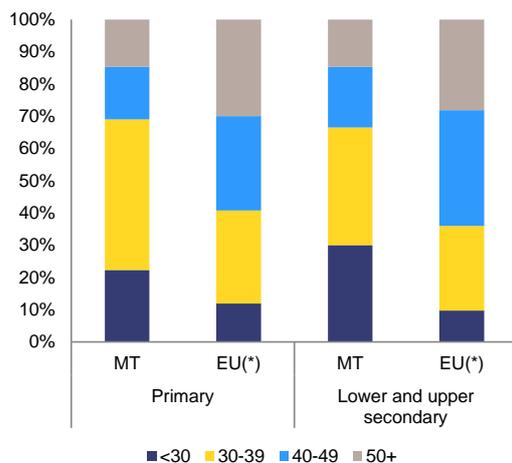
⁽⁴⁵⁾ Cedefop (2015), Apprenticeship Review – Malta.

⁽⁴⁶⁾ See the 2015 Country Report.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ National Commission for Further and Higher Education (2014), Apprenticeship-type schemes and structured work-based learning programmes – Malta.

and a strategic approach in the coming years will be important, as measures to improve the quality of teaching require a long-term policy perspective. The fact that the teaching force is quite young may facilitate the task (see Graph 2.2.5).

Graph 2.2.5: **Distribution of teachers by age group at different education levels, 2012**



(*) Un-weighted average

Source: European Commission calculations based on Eurostat data

The government has been making efforts to address bottlenecks in the education system by implementing strategic frameworks in the area of early school leaving and literacy. An innovative Alternative Learning Programme in operation since 2014 is providing students who are at risk of leaving education without qualifications, with work experience and literacy, numeracy and information technology skills. Bringing different initiatives under a single National Literacy Agency has been a positive move, as it helps to consolidate the work already done and makes the strategic approach more comprehensive.

Lifelong learning

Participation in lifelong programmes is still limited. Adult participation in lifelong learning is quite low (7.1 % compared to an EU average of

teachers. For secondary level teachers, there are currently two routes: a Bachelor of Education degree over four years or a one-year postgraduate Certificate in Education (still level 6 on the Malta Qualifications Framework) following a Bachelor's degree in the subject area.

10.7 % in 2014). This is due to the very low participation among people with low educational attainment (2.8 %), who still represent the majority of the Maltese adult population⁽⁵²⁾. Malta is making some efforts to increase second chance education to those with no formal secondary education certificate through the Foundation College of the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology but the course aimed at adults with low skills is still limited. Further upskilling of the adult population with low qualifications could boost Malta's labour force and respond to some of the skills shortages.

The delivery of adult learning courses is fragmented and the capacity of training providers is not sufficient. Evidence points to an overlap in the training offer by public and private providers. ICT, Business and Commerce and courses in Human Resources tend to be the most popular among local students⁽⁵³⁾. Adult career guidance to cater for the lifelong career needs of the population is not yet sufficiently developed within the Public Employment Services, particularly for low skilled and older persons. Although there are relevant policy responses within the Lifelong Learning Strategy, the results need to be seen over a longer perspective.

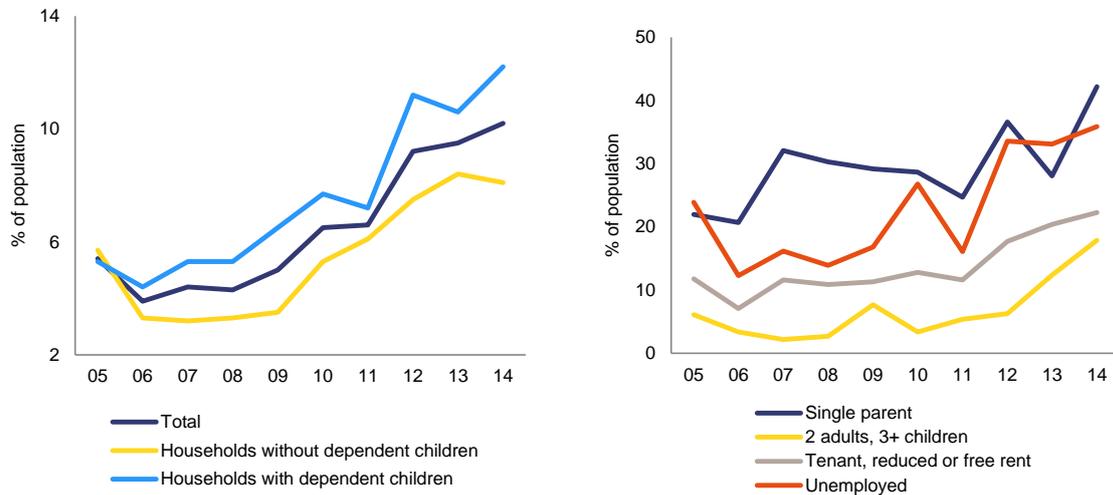
Social Policy

Despite positive economic outcomes, Malta is far from its 2020 poverty target. The number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion has been increasing over recent years, in particular for children and persons with low education attainment. It reached its peak in 2013 (24 % in the total population) and remained stable in 2014, with 90 000 people still at risk. The relative at-risk-of-poverty rate stood at 15.9 %, increasing marginally compared to 2013. It remains particularly high among children, standing at 24.1 %. The monetary poverty rate of the elderly increased by 2 percentage points in 2014, reaching 16.9 %, which exceeded the EU average (13.8 %). Among the adult population, the unemployed were most at risk of poverty (49.6 %), followed by inactive persons (22.2 %). Although decreasing, the at-risk-of-

⁽⁵²⁾ European Commission (2015), Education and training monitor 2015 – Malta.

⁽⁵³⁾ Ministry for Education and Employment - MCAST (2015), *The National Vocational Education and Training Policy*.

Graph 2.2.6: Material deprivation



Source: European Commission

poverty rate was considerably higher for households renting their accommodation (24.4 %) than those living in their own property (14.3 %).⁽⁵⁴⁾

Material deprivation has been on the rise over the ten years, which and has contributed to poverty and social exclusion outcome. In particular, material deprivation⁵⁵ increased by 0.7 pp to 10.2 % in 2014 (see Graph 2.2.6). This is particularly driven by some vulnerable groups, such as single-parent households, unemployed and households with low-work intensity. This highlights the increased financial difficulties among those with fragile labour market situations, especially at the presence of dependent children. Incomes of households, for which social transfers is an important source, did not increase at the same pace as those of other household types. Neither did they increase in line with changes in living costs, such as housing costs. Severe material deprivation is also strongly related to education attainment. It is markedly higher for persons with only basic educational attainment (18.6 % for persons with ISCED 0-2 level) in comparison to these with

tertiary attainment (3 %). Low skills also substantially contributes to the overall risk of poverty and social exclusion. The latter has been on the rise since 2008 and reached 30.1% for person with ISCED 0-2. Low skills are also important factors in the generational transmission of poverty. As a result, child poverty has particularly increased for children whose parents have only basic educational attainment (from 30.1% in 2008 to 43% in 2014). Work intensity is another important factor in the poverty outcome as the poverty risk is much higher for the single-earner households, pointing out the need to increase labour-market participation of the second earners.

Social protection

Malta has recently undertaken several reforms to step up activating and enabling social policies. These translated into additional budgetary efforts. In particular, expenditure has increased for child day care, education and, to a lesser extent, for primarily active unemployment measures⁽⁵⁶⁾. Malta also has a large provision of in-kind benefits and services including, health care, social housing and childcare. However, as the value of these

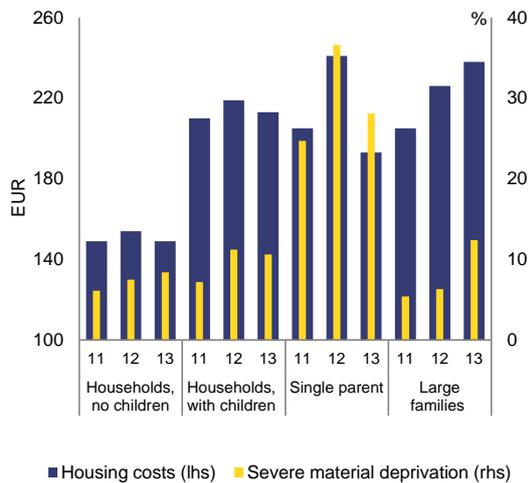
⁽⁵⁴⁾ Malta National Statistical Office data.

⁽⁵⁵⁾ Material deprivation is defined as the inability to afford a selection of items that are considered to be necessary or desirable. Data mentioned here are based on the latest available Eurostat statistics, namely the Survey of Living Conditions (SILC) 2014, which is based on reference data for 2013 and hence do not take account of the impact of measures introduced since then.

⁽⁵⁶⁾ Malta has several types of means-tested minimum income benefits, notably the Social Assistance Benefit as well as Unemployment Assistance, which is a means-tested benefit available to those whose contribution based unemployment benefit has been exhausted.

benefits is not taken into consideration when assessing income, this can potentially affect the cross-country comparability of these values. In order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of social protection, several measures are being introduced including the gradual tapering of benefits for those entering into employment as well as in-work benefits. These measures are expected to have a positive impact on reducing poverty and improving living standards for low income households, especially those with children. Facilitating beneficiaries' (re)entry into the labour market activation can be expected to have further positive outcomes in terms of poverty alleviation; however, special attention must be paid to the most vulnerable households. Nevertheless, it needs to be assessed whether housing subsidies that are delivered by social assistance in order to alleviate the budget constraints of people in need are sufficient. In the case of social housing, long waiting lists are reported ⁽⁵⁷⁾ and the reassessment system on whether the beneficiary still qualifies to receive it is not fully in place.

Graph 2.2.7: Average monthly housing costs and severe material deprivation



Source: European Commission calculations on National Statistics Office Malta data

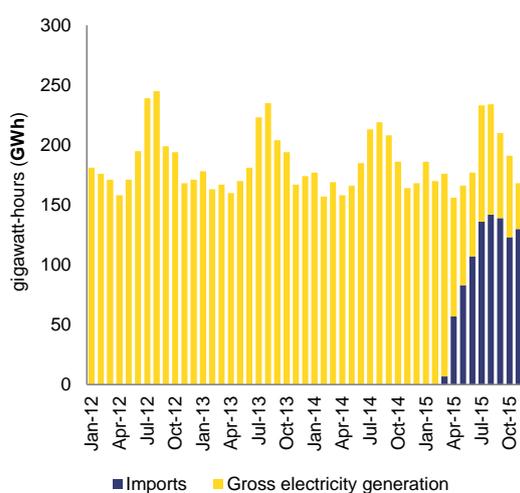
⁽⁵⁷⁾ According to the unofficial information, about 3000 applications still need to be processed. There is a priority list of about 500 people (such as those with a disability, domestic violence victims, former institutionalised people, and the homeless).

2.3. BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT AND COMPETITIVENESS

Energy

Ending the energy network’s isolation and the near-full reliance on oil imports has been a priority for the Maltese authorities. Establishing links to mainland Europe’s energy systems brings the benefits of increased energy security and providing access to potentially cheaper energy. The electricity interconnection with Italy was inaugurated in April 2015 and brought Malta’s level of interconnection from 0 % to approximately 35 % of the installed generation capacities. Available data indicates that imports through the interconnector already play an important role in the electricity supply in Malta (see Graph 2.3.1). At the same time, ongoing investments in a new gas-fired power plant, the conversion of an existing plant to run on natural gas and a liquefied natural gas terminal aim to further reduce the reliance on oil imports as a primary energy source and decrease pollution from electricity generation. Further in the same vein, the connection to the European Gas Network (gas pipeline with Italy at Gela and Floating LNG Storage and Regasification Unit/FSRU) received the status of Project of Common Interest in 2013 and has been included in the second list of Projects of Common Interest, adopted on 18 November 2015.

Graph 2.3.1: Electricity supply by source



Source: European Commission

Ongoing efforts need to be sustained in the coming years in order to meet the national 2020 target for renewable energy. The promotion of

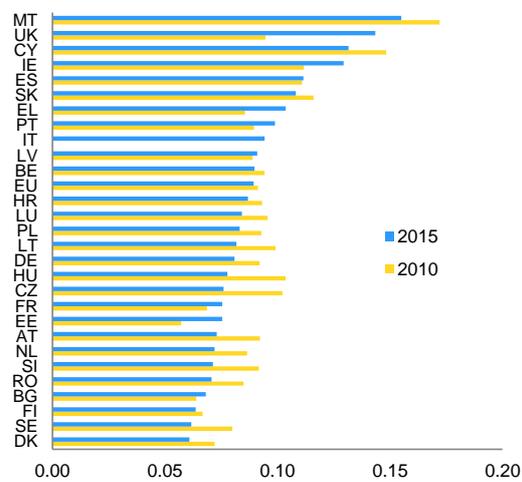
renewable energy is one of the few available options to exploit domestic energy sources. After focusing on wind energy projects, which were ultimately not implemented, emphasis has been put on the promotion of solar energy. Furthermore, heat pumps are used to cover heat demand in winter and alternative fuels are used in transport. Starting from a very low level, Malta thus succeeded in increasing its renewable energy share to 4.7 % in 2014. This is in line with the indicative trajectory towards the 2020 target but significant further deployment is needed to achieve the target. Analysis by the authorities has shown that the domestic potential for renewable energy is limited⁽⁵⁸⁾. Therefore, the use of cooperation mechanisms with other Member States (such as importing ‘green power’ through the interconnector) could be considered to help the country achieve its renewable energy target.

Despite the progress achieved, additional efforts would be needed to reach the energy efficiency target. In 2014 the authorities notified a new indicative 2020 target for energy consumption of 0.726 million tonnes of oil equivalent (Mtoe) expressed in terms of primary consumption. This target was more ambitious than the previous one. However, in terms of final energy consumption, the new target of 0.547 Mtoe was less ambitious than the previous one. Malta has made considerable efforts to improve its energy efficiency and to diversify its energy mix. Primary energy intensity has decreased since 2005 at a faster pace than for the EU as a whole, and is now lower than the EU average. Indeed, energy consumption in industry in terms of its ratio to the sector’s gross value added is lower than for the EU. However, this also reflects the absence of very energy-intensive, large industrial activities. At the same time, electricity tariffs for medium-sized industries remain the highest in the EU, despite the reduction introduced in 2015 (see Graph 2.3.2). High tariffs for medium-sized companies reflect a lack of competition on the retail markets. Moreover, regulated prices are set at levels that create electricity tariff deficits, resulting in the accumulation of debt in the state power company. Furthermore, the final energy consumption in the transport sector and the energy consumption per

⁽⁵⁸⁾ Preliminary technical and economic assessment of Malta’s effective renewable energy potential post 2020, Ministry for Energy and Health, August 2015.

capita increased on average in the period 2005-2013. These trends increase the economy's fuel imports bill and hamper its competitiveness. Current efforts would need to be stepped up in order to reach the 2020 target expressed in final energy consumption. This would help consumers to exploit the full benefits of energy efficiency and to lower their energy bills.

Graph 2.3.2: Electricity tariffs for medium-sized industries



Source: European Commission

Transport

Compared to the EU average, peak hour congestion constitutes a major problem. The authorities have not made sufficient progress in addressing this issue. The costs of congestion are significant (EU average estimated at 1-2 % of GDP, with indications that Malta is at the higher end), which at the same time causes high levels of air pollution, a major cause of environmental and health disbenefits (with consequences in term of worker sickness and increased healthcare costs, in addition to creating impacts on agriculture). Despite the severity of the problem, several issues remain to be further addressed. These include inducing better use of available infrastructure, addressing inefficiencies in public transport and developing of alternative modes of transport.

EU funded investments in the transport sector could provide a strong incentive. The transport and logistical infrastructure is the most unattractive element of the Maltese environment for foreign

investors⁽⁵⁹⁾. Tackling this element is crucial, as investors indicate it to be among the most important factors in choosing an investment destination⁽⁶⁰⁾. The development of the National Transport Strategy is an *ex ante* condition to accessing EU structural and innovation funds (2014-2020) in order to co-fund transport investments. Nevertheless, while the deadline for completion was set at September 2015, it is now not expected before June 2016.

Environment

The complete dependence on imported fossil fuel for transport has a negative impact on the environment. Concrete measures to reduce this dependency are too limited in scale and scope. This is particularly pressing in road transport, considering the high modal share of private cars, the aged car fleet, and the fact that transport is the largest greenhouse-gas emitting sector outside the Emissions Trading System. The authorities have yet to tackle those issues.

The potential of achieving a circular economy and improving resource efficiency remains to be tapped. In terms of resource productivity, Malta is around 30 % below the EU average (with 1.34 EUR/kg compared with an EU average of 1.95 in 2014)⁽⁶¹⁾. Moreover, Malta ranks only 17th within the EU (2013) on the eco-innovation scoreboard⁽⁶²⁾. While revenues from environmental taxes are relatively high (2.9 % of GDP compared to 2.5 % of GDP for the EU in 2014), energy taxes are comparatively low. Certain characteristics of the tax system hinder its potential fiscal and environmental impact, such as the subsidies on company cars and the lack of indexation for environmental taxes.

Public administration and business environment

Despite registering some progress, there is potential to further improve the efficiency of public administration. According to the World

⁽⁵⁹⁾ See EY's Attractiveness Survey: Malta 2015.

⁽⁶⁰⁾ Idem.

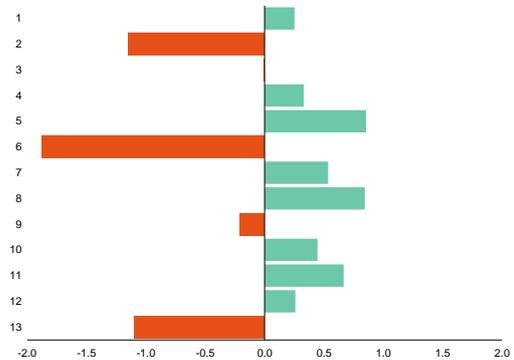
⁽⁶¹⁾ Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/europe-2020-indicators/resource-efficient-europe>

⁽⁶²⁾ Source: http://www.eco-innovation.eu/images/stories/Reports/EIO_Country_Brief_2013_Malta.pdf

Bank 2015 Worldwide Governance Indicators, Malta scores below EU average on the government effectiveness indicator, which captures the perceptions of the quality of public services, the capacity of the civil service and its independence from political pressures, and the quality of policy formulation. Data reveal that while the governance score for government effectiveness had increased from 0.83 in 2004 to 1.17 in 2009, it has worsened to 1.03 in 2014⁽⁶³⁾. The EU average scores were 1.23 (2004), 1.14 (2009) and 1.13 (2014).

Overall, Malta presents a mixed record regarding the environment for business. The World Bank's 2016 Doing Business survey ranks Malta 80 out of 189 economies in the ease of doing business. A detailed look in the different areas of the survey shows a mixed record: relative strengths in terms of paying taxes, protecting minority investors and trading across borders are offset by problems in starting a business in particular (see Graph 2.3.4). According to the 2015 Small Business Act Fact Sheet⁽⁶⁴⁾, time to start a business, the cost of enforcing contracts and the licences and permit systems score well below the EU average and remain major obstacles to doing business, especially for SMEs (see Graph 2.3.3).

Graph 2.3.3: **Responsiveness of the public administration to the needs of SMEs (standard deviations, EU average = 0)**



Data bars pointing right show better performance than the EU average; data bars pointing left show weaker performance.

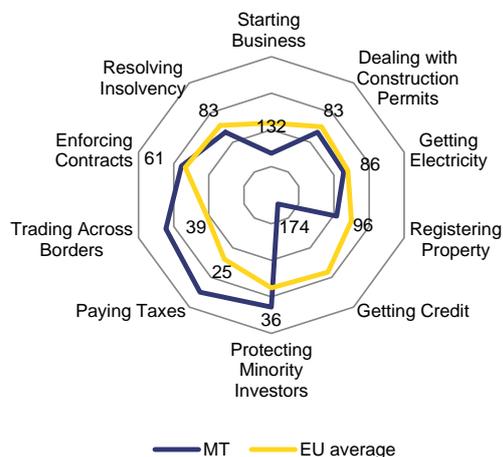
- 1 – Burden
- 2 – Licenses and permit systems
- 3 – SMEs interacting online with public authorities
- 4 – Complex administrative procedures are a problem
- 5 – Fast changing legislation and policies is a problem
- 6 – Cost of enforcing contracts
- 7 – Time it takes to pay taxes
- 8 – Number of tax payments
- 9 – Cost required to transfer property
- 10 – Time required to transfer property
- 11 – Paid-in minimum capital
- 12 – Cost of starting a business
- 13 – Time to start a business

Source: 2015 SBA Fact Sheet Malta

⁽⁶³⁾ The governance score denotes the estimate of governance measured on a scale from approximately -2.5 to 2.5. Higher values correspond to better governance. The percentile ranks of Malta among all 215 countries covered by the Worldwide Governance Indicators are 77.07 (2004), 84.21 (2009) and 80.77 (2014) respectively.

⁽⁶⁴⁾ 2015 SBA Fact Sheet for Malta available at: http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/performance-review/files/countries-sheets/2015/malta_en.pdf

Graph 2.3.4: Malta ranking in Doing Business report



Numbers show Malta's ranking out of 189 participants in each category

Source: World Bank 2016 Doing Business report

Policy action since 2008 has been in the right direction. Start-up times have been reduced by two days and costs have been cut. In the 2016 budget, the government committed to further simplifications. As regards the cost of enforcing contracts and the licencing and permit system, in 2014 the Malta Environment and Planning Authority launched a collection of measures aimed at improving service delivery to the private sector and addressing issues such as excessive costs, inefficiency, permit time and unnecessary bureaucracy. The government has recently appointed a group of professionals to address the shortcomings in the legislation on insolvency and bankruptcy. In an effort to reduce administrative red tape in Malta, the Commissioner for simplification has carried out a number of initiatives since March 2014. These include the organisation of stakeholder meetings so as to identify specific burden-reduction measures, a recent 'Repeal Day' on which the abolishment of a number of laws and regulations was announced, and the adoption of the 'one in — one out' principle in legislation. Around 200 pieces of legislation have been identified as possible target for simplification. Nevertheless, there remains significant room for improvement. In the 2015-2016 World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report, the inefficiency of government administration is still identified as the

most problematic factor for doing business in Malta ⁽⁶⁵⁾.

Malta has made good progress in implementing the Small Business Act (SBA). It now features a balanced SBA profile ⁽⁶⁶⁾. With the 2011 national SBA plan and the SBA Implementation Unit, it has created instruments that go a long way to ensuring a systematic application of the policy agenda. However, implementation frequently took longer than previously announced. As a result there are still a number of measures which await implementation.

SMEs' access to finance

SMEs appear to benefit from a better financing environment than many EU peers. SMEs rely heavily on debt financing, including bank lending, credit lines, overdrafts and trade credit ⁽⁶⁷⁾. In particular, bank lending remained the most important source of external financing for 74 % of Maltese SMEs in 2015. The share of SMEs that applied for a bank loan and received the whole amount has increased and is higher than the EU average. On the other hand, access to equity finance is still limited: only 4 % of SMEs consider it as their preferred option. Maltese SMEs report significantly higher confidence than EU peers in talking about financing with both banks and equity investors and that they will obtain the desired funding.

Nevertheless, some persistent problems suggest that the environment for start-ups is a concern. More than one fourth of Maltese SMEs consider that the high interest rates or price are the most important limiting factor to obtaining external financing, followed by insufficient availability of collateral or guarantee. A recent survey ⁽⁶⁸⁾ concluded that there is scope for simplifying and reducing bank charges relating to loans. In particular, there is a need for a review of charges for incoming and outgoing bank payments. Moreover, whereas there appears to be adequate

⁽⁶⁵⁾ World Economic Forum. Global Competitiveness Report 2015-2016, page 252.

⁽⁶⁶⁾ Idem.

⁽⁶⁷⁾ 2015 Survey on the Access to Finance of Enterprises (SAFE) conducted by the Commission and the European Central Bank.

⁽⁶⁸⁾ The survey was conducted by Malta Financial Services Authority and the Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority.

competition with respect of home loans, there is not enough in business loans. Few alternatives to traditional forms of financing are available for SMEs. Maltese enterprises are among the highest users of retained earnings and sale of assets as a source of internal equity financing. These features support a landscape of more well-established enterprises and fewer start-ups. At the same time the availability of alternatives, such as financial leasing, factoring and external equity financing, is not sufficient.

A number of financial instruments have been made available to help enterprises cover investments and operational expenses. These instruments, namely JEREMIE ⁽⁶⁹⁾, MicroInvest, MicroCredit, and European Regional Development Fund start-up grant schemes, provide SMEs with tax credits, grants or financial guarantees and are financed through a combination of local and EU funds. In particular, the JEREMIE ⁽⁷⁰⁾ scheme and the MicroGuarantee Scheme are widely considered as positive experiences. However, stakeholder feedback suggests that loans to SMEs in Malta still have a heavy interest mark-up. This seems to be the result of a still limited level of competition among financial intermediaries. There are also reports by stakeholders of continuing bureaucratic obstacles in applying for support. This instrument has been utilised to the benefit of most sectors of the Maltese economy: until 2014, the number of SMEs financed through JEREMIE amounted to 650. Major commercial banks have offered other tailor-made support schemes for SMEs.

Progress is underway to establish a Development Bank in Malta. A key element of the process will be the compatibility of the proposed draft Malta Development Bank Act with EU State aid rules. Moreover, it will be important to ensure that the new institution has sufficient risk management capacities to protect it from mopping up low-quality projects.

⁽⁶⁹⁾ Joint European Resources for Micro to Medium Enterprises.

⁽⁷⁰⁾ Under JEREMIE, the First Loss Portfolio Guarantee instrument helped SMEs to get a lower interest rate that they would have otherwise been subjected to, together with a reduced need for collateral. The programme has been an effective instrument in aiding access to finance by enterprise.

The authorities have undertaken initiatives to address the insufficient availability of alternative sources of finance. Since the beginning of 2014, the government has put forward policies geared to providing equity and venture capital, which had been identified as a bottleneck in recent years. However, these measures do not appear sufficient to bring about a lasting solution, concentrating on tax credits and limited amounts for seed funding. Some additional structural measures that are expected to come into force in the near future include the setting up of a central credit register and the launching by the Malta Stock Exchange of a platform designed specifically to help SMEs raise funds through the capital market. The central credit register aims to enhance transparency and to facilitate SMEs' access to funding from banks. It is planned that the register will go live in early 2016, conditional to the legislative proposals passing through Parliament and the success of the pilot run. The availability of alternative sources of finance such as crowdfunding, venture capital and business angels is still not developed in Malta.

Overall, some progress could be reported in the access to finance situation for SMEs in Malta. Together with the planned Malta Development Bank, the described start-up capita initiatives are useful measures in addressing Malta's issues in this area. It is important that they are swiftly implemented and flanked by other measures aimed at facilitating the start-up of businesses.

Services and professions

Malta experiences subdued market dynamics and low competition in important business services sectors. Market entry rates and churn rates stand significantly below EU averages. Removing barriers would create new opportunities for service providers to enter the market. Malta is among the Member States with the highest regulatory barriers in services. Particular problems in business services stem from restrictive authorisation requirements, compulsory chamber membership requirements, severe restrictions on legal form, shareholding and multidisciplinary activities; insurance requirements; and tariff restrictions. In spite of some progress towards eliminating discriminatory pricing in the transport, telecom and utilities sectors, some discriminatory practices in pricing and/or different treatment

towards non-Maltese nationals are still reported. In that respect, the Maltese authorities pledged to approve an Administrative Guide on non-discrimination of service recipients, drafted by the Competition Authority. A draft was presented to the Commission at the beginning 2015, but no developments have been reported since.

Research and innovation

Several structural challenges continue to hamper the country's growth potential as a very small open economy. Malta made some progress over the period 2007-2014 in terms of research and development (R&D) intensity, which increased from 0.55 % GDP in 2007 to 0.85 % of GDP in 2014, although the level remains rather low in EU terms and is still far away from its national target (2 %). Several bottlenecks continue to hamper the country's knowledge-driven growth potential, such as meagre public spending (0.34 % GDP in 2014 versus an EU average of 0.72 %), a low level of scientific excellence (linked to a lack of critical mass in specific research areas), a weak human resources base in sciences and technology, and the declining innovation performance of the private sector⁽⁷¹⁾, with the strongest relative weakness in patent applications. Declining performance is also observed for licence and patent revenues from abroad and the sales share of new innovations. Still, performance on some indicators has improved, in particular in non-R&D innovation expenditures; community designs and trademarks; linkages and entrepreneurship; and open, excellent and attractive research systems. In addition, business enterprise expenditure on research and development, at 0.51 % of GDP, constitutes more than half of Malta's R&D intensity. Finally, establishing adequate framework conditions for firms remains a key challenge for competitiveness as shown by the performance in the overall ease of doing business indicator⁽⁷²⁾, where Malta is ranked in the lowest EU performers with Greece and Luxembourg. Moreover, Malta remains in the 'moderate innovator' group⁽⁷³⁾, although its ranking has improved (from 22nd in 2014 to 18th in 2015) and overall innovation performance has recovered strongly, reaching

71 % of the EU average and up from 57 % in 2012.

Several instruments are in place to stimulate research and development and innovation projects. The National R&I Strategy for 2020 (adopted in February 2014) set the goal to stimulate knowledge-driven growth. This strategy complements the Smart Specialisation Strategy, which will help to guide investments to be made through the European Structural and Investment Funds, and the Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation (adopted in 2014) which contains tailor-made measures (i.e. actions, tools, platforms, incentives) in seven selected areas in order to develop the research and innovation ecosystem⁽⁷⁴⁾. Furthermore, Malta offers R&D tax incentives, targeting industrial projects aimed at developing innovative products and solutions, which have become an important tool for supporting private R&D. Evidence from a recent study⁽⁷⁵⁾ suggests that there is some scope for Malta to reduce the fragmentation and overlap of instruments. In addition, the evaluation of the impact of these measures could be usefully enhanced. Intellectual Property Right incentives in the form of tax exemptions on income from patents are also available⁽⁷⁶⁾ and, in the 2016 budget the government announced a tax credit to facilitate research and innovation for enterprises. A new scheme was launched in 2015 to improve the quality of the science base. Furthermore, several infrastructural projects are expected to have a positive impact on the science base as well as to support research and development in health (pharmaceuticals) and information and communication technologies. A number of new initiatives to improve access to finance by leveraging private sector investments in start-ups and SMEs were introduced in 2015. These aim to complement several existing, albeit not very successful, ones. Finally, in March 2015, the

⁽⁷¹⁾ Innovation Union Scoreboard 2015.

⁽⁷²⁾ Doing Business Report, World Bank, June 2015.

⁽⁷³⁾ Innovation Union Scoreboard 2015.

⁽⁷⁴⁾ Notably, tourism, maritime services, aviation & aero-space, healthy living & active ageing & e-health, resource-efficient buildings, high value-added manufacturing and aquaculture.

⁽⁷⁵⁾ CPB (2014) [A Study on R&D Tax Incentives, Taxation Papers, Working Paper No 52 - 2014 European Commission](#)

⁽⁷⁶⁾ Although there is evidence that such measures may prompt or facilitate aggressive tax planning in the absence of sufficient safeguards (see Ramboll Management Consulting and Corit Advisory (2016), Study on Structures of Aggressive Tax Planning and Indicators, European Commission Taxation Paper n°61).

Operational Programme I (2014-2020) under European Regional Development Fund and the Operational Programme II (2014-2015) under European Social Fund, which contains relevant measures to support research and innovation, were officially launched.

Justice system

The efficiency of the justice system continues to demonstrate shortcomings, but the implementation of the ongoing judicial reforms programme has prompted some positive trends.

While the time needed to resolve civil, commercial and administrative cases in first instance courts was the highest in the EU in 2013, there was notable improvement in 2014. The rate of resolving administrative cases also improved substantially in 2014, although there remains room for improvement as this rate was still the lowest in the EU in 2013 ⁽⁷⁷⁾. The tools in place to evaluate the judicial system are limited, since there is no regular evaluation system or performance and quality indicators of courts' activities. Targeted measures related to the reform of the judicial system started to be implemented in 2014. Their aim was to substantially improve the quality and the efficiency of the judicial system. Regarding the quality of the judicial system, a number of new technological and procedural systems have been introduced to reduce bureaucracy and delays in the civil courts, namely the extensive use of mobile telephone applications, e-filing and the online exchange of information. The recent appointments to the judiciary made by the government have also substantially increased female representation in the judiciary (with the representation increasing to 43 %). With respect to efficiency, in January 2016, Parliament approved a bill which implements another set of proposals from the Justice Reform Commission report focusing on simplifying civil procedures.

The judicial system still faces challenges in relation to insolvency procedures. It takes 3 years to resolve insolvency cases in Malta, compared to an EU average of 2.01 years. The government has recently appointed a group of professionals to address the shortcomings in Malta's legislation on insolvency and bankruptcy. The group is currently chaired by the Governor of

the Central Bank and is meeting regularly. It explores ways of streamlining the justice process. This includes contributing to the updating of insolvency legislation and to providing mechanisms to expedite insolvency and allow parties to receive a second chance. These are still at drafting stage with more detailed information is expected later this year. As regards training, Malta is one of the few Member States where there is currently no compulsory pre-service or in-service training for judges. Alternative dispute-resolution methods and mediation are still under-used in Malta. However, efforts to promote mediation by the Mediation Centre and the University of Malta, including by creating a Master's of Arts in Mediation which started in October 2015, are expected to produce positive effects.

⁽⁷⁷⁾ EU Justice Scoreboard 2016

Table 2.3.1: Key research and innovation intensity indicators

Malta	2014	Compound annual growth 2007-2014 ⁽¹⁾	EU average ⁽²⁾	Rank within EU
R&D Intensity (% of GDP)	0.85	6.4	2.03	22
Public expenditure on R&D (GOVERD + HERD) as % of GDP	0.38 ⁽¹⁰⁾	9.1	0.72	25
Business enterprise expenditure on R&D, % of GDP	0.51	4.9	1.30	20
Scientific publications within the top 10% most cited scientific publications worldwide as % of total scientific publications of the country	:	-0.1 ⁽³⁾	11.41	20
Share of population aged 30-34 who have successfully completed tertiary education (%)	26.0	2.8	37.9	26
Public-private scientific co-publications per million population	:	23.9	50.3	24
Public expenditure on R&D financed by business enterprise (national) as % of GDP	:	94.9	0.051	27
New graduates in science and engineering per thousand population aged 25-34	14.8 ⁽¹⁰⁾	12.6	16.3	17
Barriers to entrepreneurship	2.18 ⁽¹⁰⁾	:	1.69 ⁽⁴⁾	28 ⁽⁵⁾
Starting a business	75.67 ⁽¹⁰⁾	0.0	89.0 ⁽⁴⁾	28
Business enterprise expenditure on R&D (BERD) financed by the public sector (national and abroad) as % of GDP	:	134.6	0.099	23
Value added in high-tech manufacturing as % of total value added ⁽⁶⁾	2.0	-12.1	1.75 ⁽⁷⁾	3 ⁽⁷⁾
Value added in high-tech knowledge-intensive services as % of total value added	5.47	2.4	5.05 ⁽⁷⁾	6 ⁽⁷⁾
Share of employment in high-growth enterprises	:	-7.2	9.14 ⁽⁸⁾	15 ⁽⁸⁾
Innovative high-growth enterprises: DYN	16.94 ⁽¹⁰⁾	5.7	18.80	7

(1) Compound annual growth refers to growth between the earliest available year and the latest available year for which compatible data are available over the period 2007-14

(2) EU average for the latest available year.

(3) Compound annual growth refers to the period 2005-2010.

(4) EU average is the unweighted average of the Member States' scores.

(5) The values for this indicator were ranked from lowest to highest.

(6) MT: High-tech value added for MT was derived by DG RTD.

(7) Value added: EU does not include HR. HR was not included in the EU ranking.

(8) EU does not include EL. EL was not included in the EU ranking.

(9) Values in italics are estimated or provisional.

(10) Values refer to 2013 data

Source: European Commission

ANNEX A

Overview Table

Commitments

Summary assessment⁷⁸

2015 Country-specific recommendations	
<p>CSR 1:</p> <p>Following correction of the excessive deficit, achieve a fiscal adjustment of 0.6 % of GDP towards the medium-term budgetary objective in 2015 and 2016.</p>	<p>CSRs related to compliance with the Stability and Growth Pact will be assessed in spring once the final data will be available.</p>
<p>CSR 2:</p> <p>Take measures to improve basic skills and further reduce early school-leaving by promoting the continuous professional development of teachers.</p>	<p>Malta has made some progress in addressing CSR 2:</p> <p>Malta has made some progress in promoting the continuous professional development of teachers.</p> <p>An institute for continuous professional development of teachers was set up.</p>
<p>CSR 3:</p> <p>To ensure the long-term sustainability of public finances, continue the ongoing pension reform, such as by accelerating the already enacted increase in the statutory retirement age and by consecutively linking it to changes in life expectancy.</p>	<p>Malta has made limited progress in addressing CSR 3:</p> <p>Malta has made limited progress on the pensions system reform. Some new measures aiming to address both sustainability and adequacy concerns were proposed by the government in the 2016 Budget, following recommendations made by a Pension Strategy Group; however they haven't yet been reflected in the legislation.</p>
<p>CSR 4:</p> <p>Improve small and micro-enterprises' access to finance, in particular through non-bank instruments.</p>	<p>Malta has made some progress in addressing CSR 4:</p> <p>Malta has made some progress to improve SMEs and micro-enterprises' access to finance. Measures to support SMEs access to non-bank financing should be further encouraged, including through more co-investment schemes with venture capital and business angels, by encouraging market uptake of crowdfunding and by taking advantage of the</p>

⁷⁸ The following categories are used to assess progress in implementing the 2015 CSRs:

No progress: The Member State (MS) has neither announced nor adopted measures to address the CSR. This category also applies if the MS has commissioned a study group to evaluate possible measures.

Limited progress: The MS has announced some measures to address the CSR, but these appear insufficient and/or their adoption/implementation is at risk.

Some progress: The MS has announced or adopted measures to address the CSR. These are promising, but not all of them have been implemented and it is not certain that all will be.

Substantial progress: The MS has adopted measures, most of which have been implemented. They go a long way towards addressing the CSR.

Fully implemented: The MS has adopted and implemented measures that address the CSR appropriately

	opportunities offered by EU funding programmes.
Europe 2020 (national targets and progress)	
Policy field target	Progress achieved
National employment target (70 %)	With the employment rate growing from 66.4 % in 2014 to 67.8 % in the first three quarters of 2015, Malta is progressing towards the new national target.
National target for expenditure on research & development (2 % of GDP)	Malta's R&D intensity in 2014 stands at 0.85 % of GDP, which remains very low in comparison to the EU average of 2.03 %, and is still far away from the 2 % of GDP national target.
National target for reducing greenhouse-gas emissions falling under sectors outside the scope of the Emissions Trading Scheme (+5 % compared to 2005 level)	According to the latest national projections, and taking into account existing measures, it is expected that the target will be achieved. The level of emissions in 2020 is projected to decrease by 16% compared to the 2005 level (margin of 11 percentage points).
Renewable energy target (10%)	<p>Malta's renewable energy share has recently increased, reaching 4.7 % in 2014, above the indicative trajectory towards the 2020 target. However, significant renewables deployment is needed in view of the steep trajectory towards 2020. Use of cooperation mechanisms with other Member States could be considered to facilitate the achievement of the renewable energy target.</p> <p>With a 4.7 % share of renewable energy in transport in 2014, Malta has improved its performance but is still less than halfway in reaching the 10% renewable energy target in transport.</p>
National energy efficiency target (reducing primary energy consumption to 0.726 Mtoe and final consumption to 0.547 Mtoe)	The target for 2020 expressed in final energy consumption was increased from 0.493 Mtoe to 0.547 Mtoe due to economic growth, which means that the target became less ambitious. Malta would need to increase its current efforts to reach the 2020 target expressed in final energy consumption.
National early-school-leaving target (10 %)	22.7 % in 2011, 21.1 % in 2012, 20.8 % in 2013, 20.3 % in 2014.
National target for tertiary-education attainment	23.4 % in 2011, 24.9 % in 2012, 26 % in 2013,

(33 %)	26.5 % in 2014.
National poverty target (lifting 6,560 individuals from the risk of poverty or social exclusion)	Malta committed to reduce by 6,560 the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion. The number in 2014 stood at the same level as in 2013 – 99,000. There has been no progress towards achieving the target.

ANNEX B

MIP scoreboard

Table B.1: MIP scoreboard - Malta

			Thresholds	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
External imbalances and competitiveness	Current account balance, (% of GDP)	3 year average	-4%/6%	-3.1	-4.1	-4.5	-1.9	0.9	2.6	
	Net international investment position (% of GDP)			-35%	12.6	12.1	7.9	21.3	20.8	39.5
	Real effective exchange rate - 42 trading partners, HICP deflator	3 years % change	±5% & ±11%	5.8	-0.7	-5.0	-7.6	-1.3	0.0	
	Export market share - % of world exports	5 years % change	-6%	46.1	38.5	22.3	12.8	-2.2	-18.2	
	Nominal unit labour cost index (2010=100)	3 years % change	9% & 12%	11.2	9.2	10.2	8.2	10.1	7.0	
Deflated house prices (% y-o-y change)			6%	-6.2	-1.0	-3.7	0.5	-1.5	2.6	
Private sector credit flow as % of GDP, consolidated			14%	13.6	5.6	5.1	2.6	3.6	7.8	
Internal imbalances	Private sector debt as % of GDP, consolidated			133%	167.5	161.9	158.4	154.4	148.3	146.4
	General government sector debt as % of GDP			60%	67.8	67.6	69.8	67.6	69.6	68.3
	Unemployment rate	3 year average	10%	6.5	6.6	6.7	6.5	6.4	6.2	
Total financial sector liabilities (% y-o-y change)			16.5%	4.4	12.4	10.9	6.4	1.9	5.8	
Activity rate - % of total population aged 15-64 (3 years change in p.p)			-0.2%	1.5	1.6	2.7	3.7	4.6	4.5	
New employment indicators	Long-term unemployment rate - % of active population aged 15-74 (3 years change in p.p)			0.5%	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.2	-0.2	-0.4
	Youth unemployment rate - % of active population aged 15-24 (3 years change in p.p)			2%	-1.0	-0.3	1.6	-0.4	-0.2	-1.5

Note: Figures highlighted are those falling outside the threshold established in the European Commission's Alert Mechanism Report. For REER and ULC, the first threshold applies to euro area Member States.

Source: European Commission

ANNEX C

Standard Tables

Table C.1: **Financial market indicators**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total assets of the banking sector (% of GDP)	760.0	744.9	742.9	668.1	664.0	559.0
Share of assets of the five largest banks (% of total assets)	71.3	72.0	74.4	76.5	81.5	-
Foreign ownership of banking system (% of total assets)	34.9	33.1	30.9	24.3	17.6	-
Financial soundness indicators:						
- non-performing loans (% of total loans) ¹⁾	7.0	7.1	7.8	8.9	9.0	8.6
- capital adequacy ratio (%) ¹⁾	14.8	15.5	16.1	16.5	14.7	13.9
- return on equity (%) ¹⁾	19.8	17.9	18.7	18.4	14.6	18.1
Bank loans to the private sector (year-on-year % change)	2.9	3.0	3.5	-7.4	10.0	0.6
Lending for house purchase (year-on-year % change)	8.6	8.6	6.8	6.2	9.6	8.7
Loan to deposit ratio	103.8	94.5	89.8	73.7	66.4	63.0
Central Bank liquidity as % of liabilities	3.8	2.6	2.5	1.9	0.9	0.3
Private debt (% of GDP)	161.9	158.5	153.9	145.9	143.4	-
Gross external debt (% of GDP) ²⁾ - public	5.7	6.1	8.2	8.7	7.4	7.0
- private	650.9	698.0	707.9	719.1	726.2	722.5
Long-term interest rate spread versus Bund (basis points)*	144.4	188.1	263.1	179.3	144.8	99.2
Credit default swap spreads for sovereign securities (5-year)*	149.5	253.2	346.2	215.8	208.5	208.5

1) Latest data Q2 2015.

2) Latest data September 2015. Monetary authorities, monetary and financial institutions are not included.

* Measured in basis points.

Source: IMF (financial soundness indicators); European Commission (long-term interest rates); World Bank (gross external debt); Eurostat (private debt); ECB (all other indicators).

Table C.2: Labour market and social indicators

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015 ⁽⁴⁾
Employment rate (% of population aged 20-64)	60.1	61.6	63.1	64.8	66.4	67.8
Employment growth (% change from previous year)	1.7	3.0	2.5	3.7	5.0	2.5
Employment rate of women (% of female population aged 20-64)	41.6	43.8	46.6	49.8	52.0	53.7
Employment rate of men (% of male population aged 20-64)	78.2	79.0	79.2	79.4	80.4	81.4
Employment rate of older workers (% of population aged 55-64)	31.9	33.2	34.7	36.3	37.8	40.4
Part-time employment (% of total employment, aged 15 years and over)	12.4	13.4	14.1	15.2	16.6	15.7
Fixed term employment (% of employees with a fixed term contract, aged 15 years and over)	5.4	6.6	6.8	7.5	7.8	7.6
Transitions from temporary to permanent employment	10.0	67.2	2.2	25.4	10.6	-
Unemployment rate ⁽¹⁾ (% active population, age group 15-74)	6.9	6.4	6.3	6.4	5.8	5.5
Long-term unemployment rate ⁽²⁾ (% of labour force)	3.1	3.1	3.1	2.9	2.7	2.5
Youth unemployment rate (% active population aged 15-24)	13.2	13.3	14.1	13.0	11.7	12.1
Youth NEET ⁽³⁾ rate (% of population aged 15-24)	9.5	10.2	10.6	9.9	10.5	-
Early leavers from education and training (% of pop. aged 18-24 with at most lower sec. educ. and not in further education or training)	23.8	22.7	21.1	20.5	20.3	-
Tertiary educational attainment (% of population aged 30-34 having successfully completed tertiary education)	22.1	23.4	24.9	26.0	26.5	-
Formal childcare (30 hours or over; % of population aged less than 3 years)	3.0	4.0	1.0	3.0	-	-

1) Unemployed persons are all those who were not employed but had actively sought work and were ready to begin working immediately or within two weeks.

2) Long-term unemployed are peoples who have been unemployed for at least 12 months.

3) Not in Education Employment or Training.

4) Average of first three quarters of 2015. Data for total unemployment and youth unemployment rates are seasonally adjusted.

Source: European Commission (EU Labour Force Survey)

Table C.3: Labour market and social indicators (continued)

Expenditure on social protection benefits (% of GDP)	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Sickness/healthcare	5.8	5.4	5.3	5.4	5.7	-
Invalidity	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.7	-
Old age and survivors	9.8	10.2	9.8	10.1	9.9	-
Family/children	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.2	-
Unemployment	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	-
Housing and social exclusion n.e.c.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	-
Total	18.7	18.5	18.0	18.3	18.5	-
of which: means-tested benefits	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.4	-
Social inclusion indicators	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
People at risk of poverty or social exclusion ⁽¹⁾ (% of total population)	20.3	21.2	22.1	23.1	24.0	23.8
Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion (% of people aged 0-17)	26.5	26.7	27.8	31.0	32.0	31.3
At-risk-of-poverty rate ⁽²⁾ (% of total population)	14.9	15.5	15.6	15.1	15.7	15.9
Severe material deprivation rate ⁽³⁾ (% of total population)	5.0	6.5	6.6	9.2	9.5	10.2
Proportion of people living in low work intensity households ⁽⁴⁾ (% of people aged 0-59)	9.2	9.2	8.9	9.0	9.0	9.8
In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate (% of persons employed)	5.4	5.9	6.1	5.2	5.9	5.7
Impact of social transfers (excluding pensions) on reducing poverty	34.9	34.0	32.8	37.1	32.6	33.2
Poverty thresholds, expressed in national currency at constant prices ⁽⁵⁾	5979	5832	5949	6117	6260	6554
Gross disposable income (households; growth %)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Inequality of income distribution (S80/S20 income quintile share ratio)	4.0	4.3	4.0	3.9	4.1	4.0

1) People at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE): individuals who are at risk of poverty (AROP) and/or suffering from severe material deprivation (SMD) and/or living in households with zero or very low work intensity (LWI).

2) At-risk-of-poverty rate (AROP): proportion of people with an equivalised disposable income below 60 % of the national equivalised median income.

3) Proportion of people who experience at least four of the following forms of deprivation: not being able to afford to i) pay their rent or utility bills, ii) keep their home adequately warm, iii) face unexpected expenses, iv) eat meat, fish or a protein equivalent every second day, v) enjoy a week of holiday away from home once a year, vi) have a car, vii) have a washing machine, viii) have a colour TV, or ix) have a telephone.

4) People living in households with very low work intensity: proportion of people aged 0-59 living in households where the adults (excluding dependent children) worked less than 20 % of their total work-time potential in the previous 12 months.

5) For EE, CY, MT, SI and SK, thresholds in nominal values in euros; harmonised index of consumer prices (HICP) = 100 in 2006 (2007 survey refers to 2006 incomes)

Source: For expenditure for social protection benefits ESSPROS; for social inclusion EU-SILC.

Table C.4: Structural policy and business environment indicators

Performance indicators	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Labour productivity (real, per person employed, y-o-y)						
Labour productivity in industry	na	na	na	na	na	na
Labour productivity in construction	na	na	na	na	na	na
Labour productivity in market services	na	na	na	na	na	na
Unit labour costs (ULC) (whole economy, y-o-y)						
ULC in industry	na	na	na	na	na	na
ULC in construction	na	na	na	na	na	na
ULC in market services	na	na	na	na	na	na
Business environment	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Time needed to enforce contracts ⁽¹⁾ (days)	na	na	na	505	505	505
Time needed to start a business ⁽¹⁾ (days)	na	na	na	38.5	38.5	38.5
Outcome of applications by SMEs for bank loans ⁽²⁾	0.59	na	0.69	na	0.68	0.58
Research and innovation	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
R&D intensity	0.52	0.64	0.69	0.86	0.85	0.85
Total public expenditure on education as % of GDP, for all levels of education combined	5.32	6.74	7.96	6.76	na	na
Number of science & technology people employed as % of total employment	33	33	36	37	38	37
Population having completed tertiary education ⁽³⁾	13	14	15	16	17	18
Young people with upper secondary level education ⁽⁴⁾	70	73	74	76	77	76
Trade balance of high technology products as % of GDP	-0.94	0.64	0.03	1.81	-1.10	-3.63
Product and service markets and competition				2003	2008	2013
OECD product market regulation (PMR) ⁽⁵⁾ , overall				na	na	1.57
OECD PMR ⁽⁵⁾ , retail				na	na	1.09
OECD PMR ⁽⁵⁾ , professional services				na	na	1.66
OECD PMR ⁽⁵⁾ , network industries ⁽⁶⁾				na	na	2.28

1) The methodologies, including the assumptions, for this indicator are shown in detail here: <http://www.doingbusiness.org/methodology>.

2) Average of the answer to question Q7B_a. "[Bank loan]: If you applied and tried to negotiate for this type of financing over the past six months, what was the outcome?". Answers were codified as follows: zero if received everything, one if received most of it, two if only received a limited part of it, three if refused or rejected and treated as missing values if the application is still pending or don't know.

3) Percentage population aged 15-64 having completed tertiary education.

4) Percentage population aged 20-24 having attained at least upper secondary education.

5) Index: 0 = not regulated; 6 = most regulated. The methodologies of the OECD product market regulation indicators are shown in detail here: <http://www.oecd.org/competition/reform/indicatorsofproductmarketregulationhomepage.htm>

6) Aggregate OECD indicators of regulation in energy, transport and communications (ETCR).

Source: European Commission; World Bank — Doing Business (for enforcing contracts and time to start a business); OECD (for the product market regulation indicators); SAFE (for outcome of SMEs' applications for bank loans).

Table C.5: **Green growth**

Green growth performance		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Macroeconomic							
Energy intensity	kgoe / €	0.16	0.17	0.16	0.17	0.14	-
Carbon intensity	kg / €	0.55	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.46	-
Resource intensity (reciprocal of resource productivity)	kg / €	0.62	0.52	0.66	0.74	0.70	0.86
Waste intensity	kg / €	-	0.24	-	0.24	-	-
Energy balance of trade	% GDP	-0.1	1.1	-2.8	-12.1	-9.3	-15.8
Weighting of energy in HICP	%	6.48	6.28	6.65	7.31	7.57	8.05
Difference between energy price change and inflation	%	9.9	27.1	0.4	-2.0	-1.6	-17.0
Real unit of energy cost	% of value added	17.1	17.1	17.1	-	-	-
Ratio of labour taxes to environmental taxes	ratio	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.9	4.2	4.0
Environmental taxes	% GDP	3.2	2.9	3.0	2.8	2.7	2.5
Sectoral							
Industry energy intensity	kgoe / €	-	-	-	-	-	-
Real unit energy cost for manufacturing industry	% of value added	8.7	8.7	8.7	-	-	-
Share of energy-intensive industries in the economy	% GDP	-	-	-	-	-	-
Electricity prices for medium-sized industrial users	€ / kWh	0.14	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18
Gas prices for medium-sized industrial users	€ / kWh	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public R&D for energy	% GDP	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Public R&D for environment	% GDP	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Municipal waste recycling rate	%	3.4	5.2	12.7	12.6	10.8	-
Share of GHG emissions covered by ETS*	%	63.4	62.7	63.8	65.4	60.9	60.7
Transport energy intensity	kgoe / €	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transport carbon intensity	kg / €	-	-	-	-	-	-
Security of energy supply							
Energy import dependency	%	99.9	99.0	101.3	101.0	104.1	-
Aggregated supplier concentration index	HHI	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	-
Diversification of energy mix	HHI	1.00	0.99	0.98	0.98	-	-

General explanation of the table items:

All macro intensity indicators are expressed as a ratio of a physical quantity to GDP (in 2005 prices)

Energy intensity: gross inland energy consumption (in kgoe) divided by GDP (in EUR)

Carbon intensity: greenhouse gas emissions (in kg CO₂ equivalents) divided by GDP (in EUR)

Resource intensity: domestic material consumption (in kg) divided by GDP (in EUR)

Waste intensity: waste (in kg) divided by GDP (in EUR)

Energy balance of trade: the balance of energy exports and imports, expressed as % of GDP

Weighting of energy in HICP: the proportion of "energy" items in the consumption basket used for the construction of the HICP. Difference between energy price change and inflation: energy component of HICP, and total HICP inflation (annual % change). Real unit energy cost: real energy costs as a percentage of total value added for the economy

Environmental taxes over labour taxes and GDP: from European Commission's database, 'Taxation trends in the European Union'

Industry energy intensity: final energy consumption of industry (in kgoe) divided by gross value added of industry (in 2005 EUR)

Real unit energy costs for manufacturing industry: real costs as a percentage of value added for manufacturing sectors

Share of energy-intensive industries in the economy: share of gross value added of the energy-intensive industries in GDP

Electricity and gas prices for medium-sized industrial users: consumption band 500–20 000 MWh and 10 000–100 000 GJ; figures excl. VAT.

Municipal waste recycling rate: ratio of recycled municipal waste to total municipal waste

Public R&D for energy or for the environment: government spending on R&D (GBAORD) for these categories as % of GDP

Proportion of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions covered by EU Emission Trading System (ETS): based on greenhouse gas emissions (excl land use, land use change and forestry) as reported by Member States to the European Environment Agency)

Transport energy intensity: final energy consumption of transport activity (kgoe) divided by transport industry gross value added (in 2005 EUR)

Transport carbon intensity: greenhouse gas emissions in transport activity divided by gross value added of the transport sector

Energy import dependency: net energy imports divided by gross inland energy consumption incl. consumption of international bunker fuels

Aggregated supplier concentration index: covers oil, gas and coal. Smaller values indicate larger diversification and hence lower risk.

Diversification of the energy mix: Herfindahl index over natural gas, total petrol products, nuclear heat, renewable energies and solid fuels; * European Commission and European Environment Agency

Source: European Commission (Eurostat) unless indicated otherwise

27.681 interviews
07 > 17 / 11 / 2015

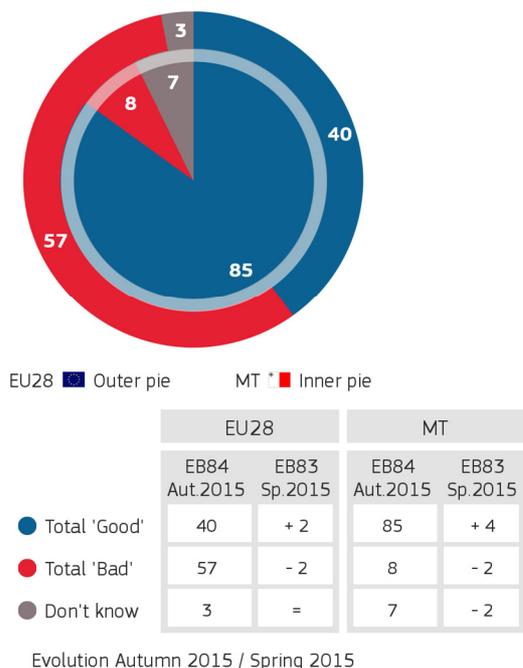
503 interviews
07 > 17 / 11 / 2015

Methodology: face-to-face

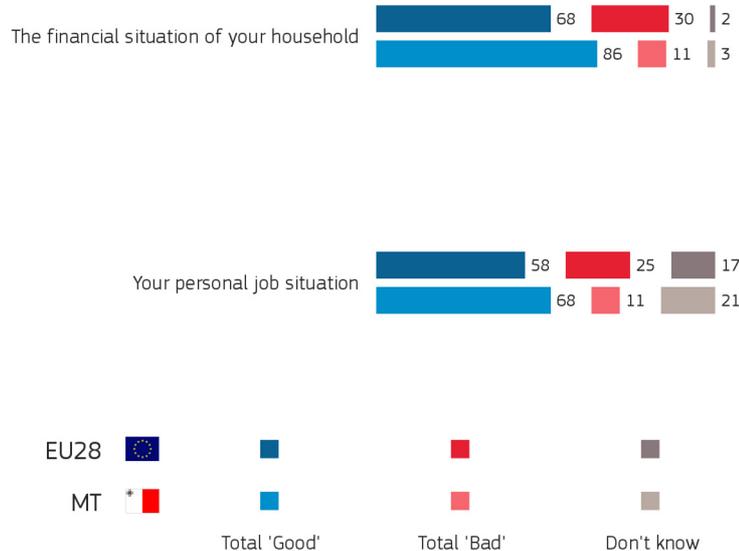
MALTA

1. LIFE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

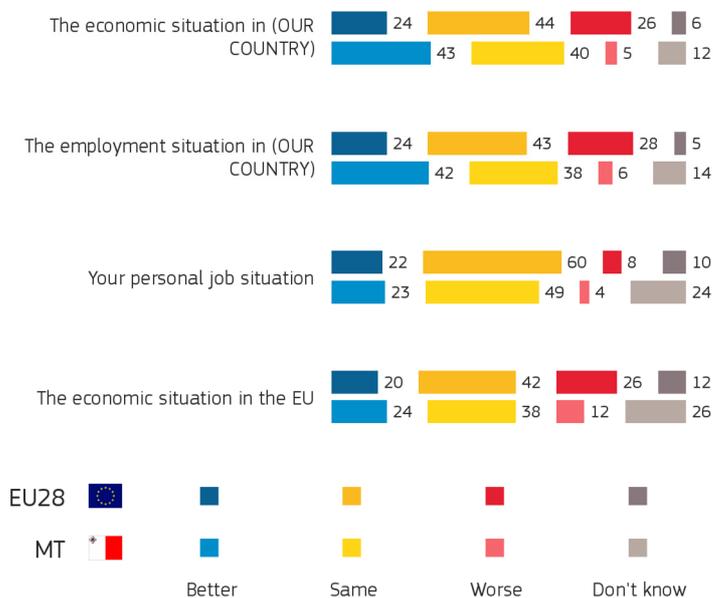
QA1a.1 How would you judge the current situation in each of the following?
The situation of the (NATIONALITY) economy (%)



QA1a How would you judge the current situation in each of the following?
(%)



QA2a What are your expectations for the next twelve months: will the next twelve months be better, worse or the same, when it comes to...?
(%)



Evolution Autumn 2015 / Spring 2015

QA2a.2 What are your expectations for the next twelve months: will the next twelve months be better, worse or the same, when it comes to...?
The economic situation in (OUR COUNTRY) (%)



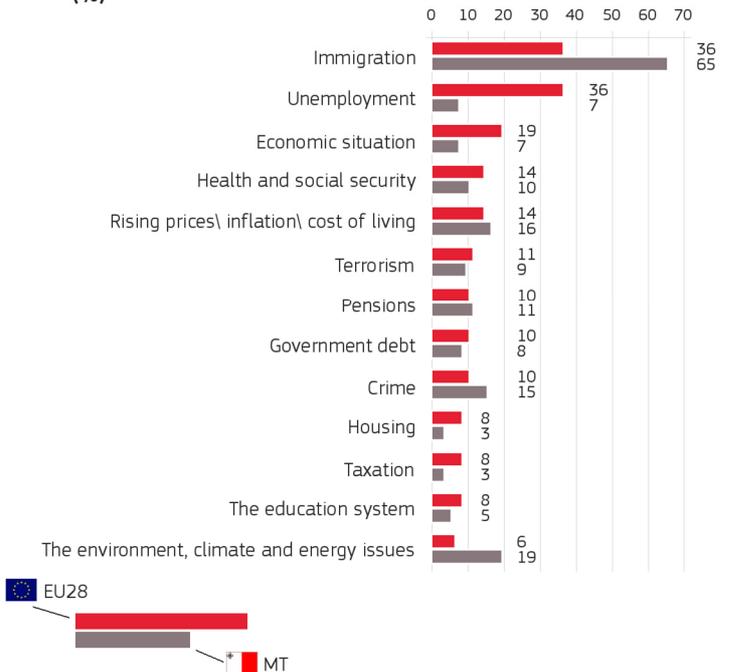
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503 interviews
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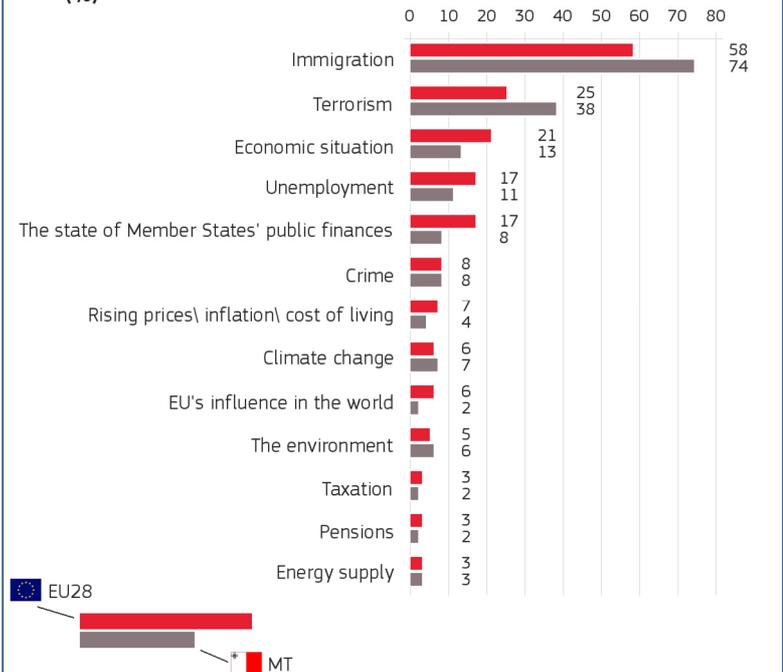
Methodology: face-to-face

1. LIFE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

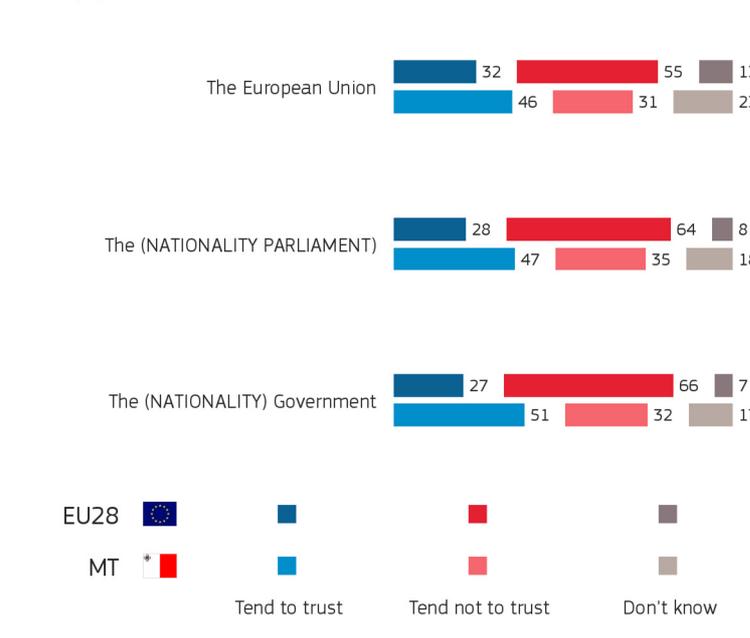
QA3a What do you think are the two most important issues facing (OUR COUNTRY) at the moment? (%)



QA5 What do you think are the two most important issues facing the EU at the moment? (%)



QA8a I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain media and institutions. For each of the following media and institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it. (%)



QA8a.10 Evolution Autumn 2015 / Spring 2015. I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain media and institutions. For each of the following media and institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it.

The European Union (%)

	EU28		MT	
	EB84	EB84-EB83	EB84	EB84-EB83
Tend to trust	32	- 8	46	- 16
Tend not to trust	55	+ 9	31	+ 8
Don't know	13	- 1	23	+ 8

27.681 interviews
07 > 17 / 11 / 2015

503 interviews
07 > 17 / 11 / 2015

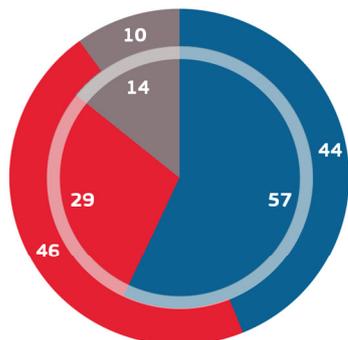
Methodology: face-to-face

MALTA

1. LIFE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

QC1 Some analysts say that the impact of the economic crisis on the job market has already reached its peak and things will recover little by little. Others, on the contrary, say that the worst is still to come. Which of the two statements is closer to your opinion?

(%)



EU28 Outer pie MT Inner pie

EU28		MT	
EB84 Aut.2015	EB83 Sp.2015	EB84 Aut.2015	EB83 Sp.2015
44	- 4	57	- 2
46	+ 4	29	+ 2
10	=	14	=

The impact of the crisis on jobs has already reached its peak

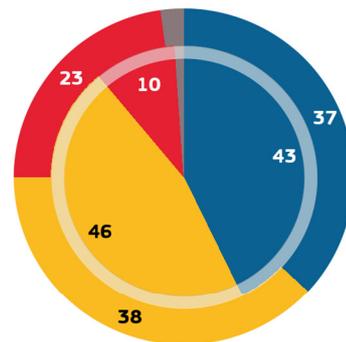
The worst is still to come

Don't know

Evolution Autumn 2015 / Spring 2015

QA9 In general, does the EU conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image?

(%)



EU28 Outer pie MT Inner pie

EU28		MT	
EB84 Aut.2015	EB83 Sp.2015	EB84 Aut.2015	EB83 Sp.2015
37	- 4	43	- 8
38	=	46	+ 7
23	+ 4	10	+ 2
2	=	1	- 1

Total 'Positive'

Neutral

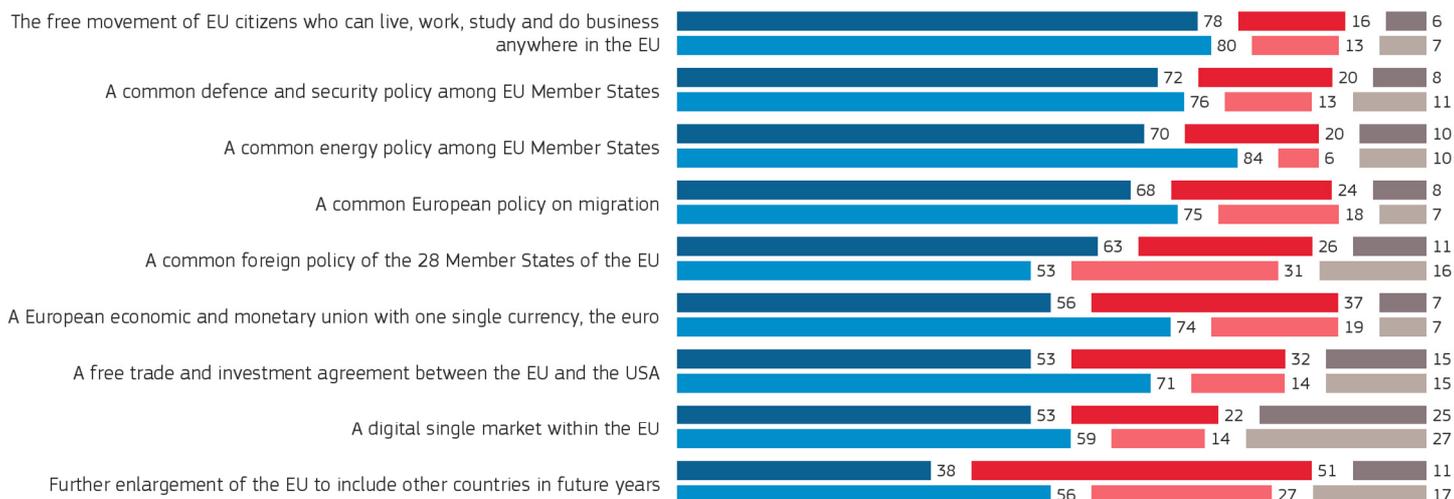
Total 'Negative'

Don't know

Evolution Autumn 2015 / Spring 2015

QA15 What is your opinion on each of the following statements? Please tell me for each statement, whether you are for it or against it.

(%)



EU28

MT

For

Against

Don't know

27.681 interviews
07 > 17 / 11 / 2015

503 interviews
07 > 17 / 11 / 2015

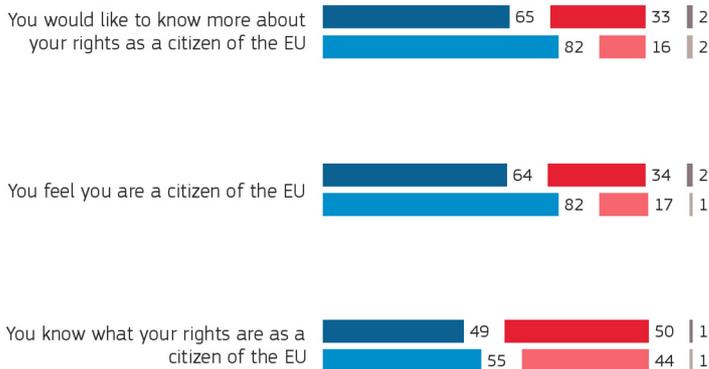
Methodology: face-to-face

MALTA

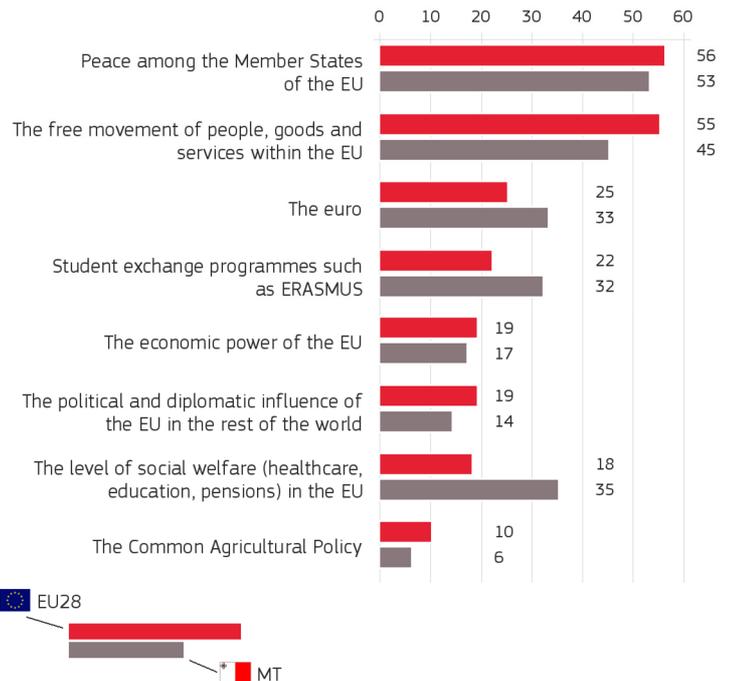
2. EUROPEAN UNION CITIZENSHIP

QD2 For each of the following statements, please tell me to what extent it corresponds or not to your own opinion.

(%)



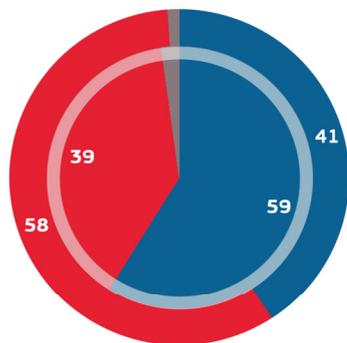
QD4T Which of the following do you think is the most positive result of the EU? (%)



3. INFORMATION ON EUROPEAN POLITICAL MATTERS

QE2 Overall, to what extent do you think that you are well informed or not about European matters? (%)

(%)



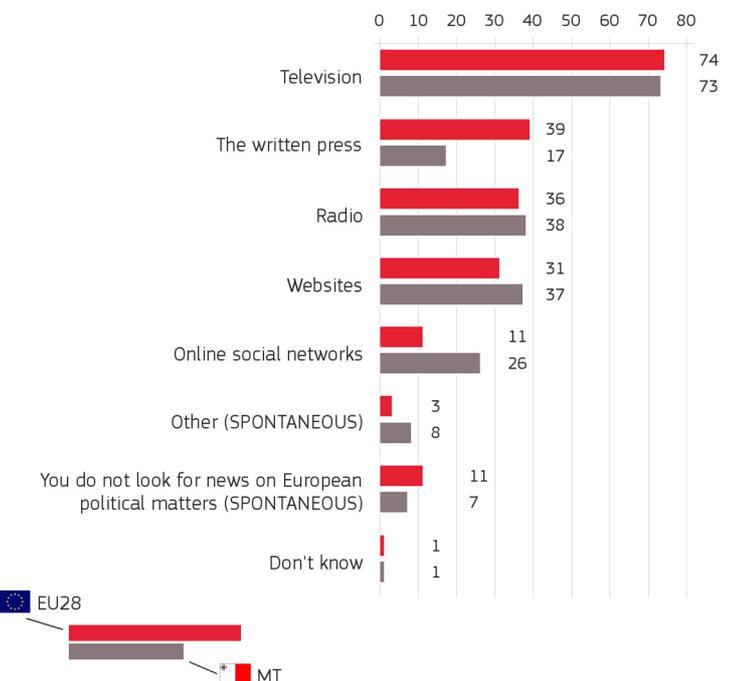
EU28 (Blue square) Outer pie, MT (Red square) Inner pie

	EU28		MT	
	EB84 Aut.2015	EB82 Aut.2014	EB84 Aut.2015	EB82 Aut.2014
Total 'Well informed'	41	+ 6	59	+ 16
Total 'Not well informed'	58	- 5	39	- 16
Don't know	1	- 1	2	=

Evolution Autumn 2015 / Autumn 2014

QE5T Where do you get most of your news on European political matters? (%)

(%)



VI. À la découverte de La Valette

10. Visite culturelle

- 10.1 Jardins « Upper Barrakka »
- 10.2 Monument commémoratif de guerre « Siege Bell »
- 10.3 The Malta Experience
- 10.4 Co-Cathédrale Saint John's
- 10.5 Musée national de la guerre
- 10.6 Casa Rocca Piccola

11. Informations Pratiques

12. Plan

Visite Culturelle

Jardins Supérieurs de Barrakka



Perché sur les hauteurs du Grand Port de La Valette, ce magnifique parc fourmillant de fleurs et de statues est, chaque jour, le théâtre d'un salut au canon.

Les sublimes jardins supérieurs de Barrakka dominent fièrement le Grand Port. Aménagé en 1661, ce

parc paysager était à l'origine un espace privé, réservé aux chevaliers italiens. Il n'a ouvert ses portes au public qu'au XIXe siècle. Profitez de la vue imprenable sur le port et les fortifications, puis assistez à la cérémonie séculaire du salut au canon.

Depuis le port, il vous suffira de grimper les escaliers ou de prendre l'ascenseur pour rejoindre les jardins. Ils trônent sur un bastion qui n'est autre que le point culminant de la ville. Marchez jusqu'à la colonnade et asseyez-vous sur un banc pour admirer le paysage grandiose. De ce point de vue exceptionnel, vous pourrez apercevoir les cités médiévales de Cospicua, Vittoriosa et Senglea.

Sous vos pieds se trouve la batterie de canons servant au salut. Pendant près de 500 ans, ces pièces d'artillerie ont protégé le port et tiré des salves lors de manifestations particulières, comme des fêtes religieuses et des anniversaires, ou pour célébrer l'arrivée de grands dignitaires. Au début du XIXe siècle, les canons ont commencé à retentir chaque jour à midi, une coutume qui perdure encore aujourd'hui. En arrivant sur place une heure avant les tirs, un guide vous proposera d'assister à une présentation de la batterie et au chargement des canons.

En flânant dans les jardins qui regorgent de palmiers et de plantes exotiques, prenez le temps de contempler les monuments et les statues, notamment celle de Winston Churchill. Vous trouverez également des plaques commémoratives dédiées à d'illustres marins.

Les jardins supérieurs de Barrakka sont ouverts tous les jours et leur entrée est gratuite. En revanche, la visite guidée de la batterie de canons est payante. Les jardins se trouvent dans la zone piétonne de la ville, à environ cinq minutes à pied du terminus des bus. Si vous êtes en voiture, des places de stationnement payant sont à votre disposition juste à l'extérieur de la « City Gate », la porte d'entrée principale de la capitale.

Si vous arrivez à Malte en navire de croisière, l'ascenseur et les escaliers menant aux jardins sont situés à quelques pas du quai.

Adresse: Triq Sant' Orsla, Il-Belt Valletta, Malta

Heures d'ouverture :

Mercredi 7am–10pm
Jeudi 7am–10pm
Vendredi 7am–10pm
Samedi 7am–10pm
Dimanche 7am–10pm
Lundi 7am–10pm
Mardi 7am–10pm

Plus d'information : <https://www.expedia.be/>

Siège Bell Mémorial (1992)



Surplombant le port de La Valette dit aussi le « Grand Harbour », le Siege Bell Mémorial est un édifice, constitué d'une tour de pierre calcaire contenant une cloche de 10 tonnes de bronze. Il a plus particulièrement été bâti en l'honneur des 7000 militaires en service et civils, ayant perdu la vie au cours de la Seconde guerre mondiale. Il commémore par ailleurs plus précisément la victoire des

forces alliées durant le deuxième siège de Malte de 1940 à 1943.

En effet, à cette époque, l'île est sévèrement et continuellement bombardée par les forces de l'Axe et subit plus de 1700 raids aériens, détruisant 75% des habitations. Ce n'est seulement en 1943, après le déclin de l'Italie et sa capitulation, que les Maltais ont l'honneur de voir la flotte italienne vaincue dans leurs ports.

Aussi, près de cinquante ans plus tard, le 29 mai 1992, le Siege Bell Mémorial est construit à l'initiative de la George Cross Association Island, et inauguré par la reine Elizabeth et le président de Malte, le Dr Censu Tabone. Une date qui correspond par ailleurs au 50ème anniversaire de l'attribution de la Croix-George à Malte, cette dernière récompensant les actes de courage et de bravoure des civils.

Aujourd'hui, le site, situé entre le Fort St Elme et les jardins de Basse Barrakka, est visité par de nombreux touristes, et sa cloche continue de sonner chaque jour à midi.

Plus d'information :

<http://www.bourse-des-voyages.com/malte/guide-culture-arts-siege-bell-memorial.php>

The Malta Expérience



L'expérience de Malte est un spectacle audiovisuel qui raconte l'histoire dramatique de l'histoire des îles de l'année 7000. Pour l'éducation, d'information et de divertissement, l'émission passe à travers l'histoire mouvementée d'une petite nation insulaire qui a surmonté une chance de survivre et de prospérer.

Situé dans un auditorium panoramique, le spectacle raconte l'histoire unique de Malte en seulement 45 minutes.

À voir le traitement audio-visuel, l'expérience de Malte vont enrichir votre compréhension de l'archipel, ses habitants et les endroits que vous verrez sur votre visite. Grâce à l'imagerie magnifique et agrémenté d'un commentaire, l'expérience de Malte, l'île spectacle audio-visuel a captivé plus de 4 millions de visiteurs.

Les prix :

Les adultes - 15 euros
Les étudiants - 11.50 euros
Enfants (5-12 ans) - 6 euros
Enfants (0-4 ans) - gratuit euros

Heures d'ouverture :

En semaine : salons commencent toutes les heures à partir de 11,00 - 16,00
Week-ends et jours fériés : de 11h00 départ montre - 14.00
Pas de montre le dimanche à 14:00 entre juillet et septembre.
Fermé pendant Noël et Nouvel An.

Website : <http://www.themaltaexperience.com/francais.html>

La Co-Cathédrale de Saint-Jean



La Co-Cathédrale de Saint-Jean est un bijou de l'art et de l'architecture baroque. Elle fut construite comme église conventuelle pour les Chevaliers de Saint-Jean. Les Grands Maîtres et plusieurs chevaliers firent des dons de grande valeur artistique et firent d'énormes contributions pour l'enrichir avec uniquement les meilleures œuvres

d'art. Cette église est encore aujourd'hui un important sanctuaire et un lieu de culte sacré. Elle est également un lieu pour les événements culturels.

Horaires d'ouverture

Lundi au Vendredi :

de 09h30 à 16h30 (la billetterie ferme à 16h)

Samedi :

de 09h30 à 12h30 (la billetterie ferme à 12h)

Fermé les Dimanche et jours fériés.

Services ecclésiastiques

Dimanche et Jours Fériés:

07h15
08h00
09h15
11h00
12h00 (Octobre à Juin)
17h30 (hiver)
18h00 (été)

En Semaine :

08h30

Les prix :

Tarifs

Le prix de l'entrée comprend un audio guide portable avec 24 arrêts qui sont disponibles aux visiteurs dans les langues suivantes : Maltais, Anglais, Italien, Français, Allemand, Espagnol, Japonais et Russe. Tous les visiteurs peuvent disposer des guides gratuits.

Pourquoi faisons-nous payer les visiteurs de Saint-Jean:

L'intérêt pour la Co-Cathédrale de Saint-Jean a pour conséquence un plus grand nombre de visiteurs, mais le matériau délicat de l'église n'a pas été conçu pour recevoir autant de visiteurs. Les frais généraux et les frais de maintenance sont très élevés. Pour nous aider à maintenir l'édifice et à le conserver avec toutes ses œuvres d'art, nous demandons un droit d'entrée. Les programmes de conservation sont coûteux et sont constamment réalisés selon les plus hautes exigences dans le but de préserver l'Église dans toute sa splendeur. Notre récompense est votre visite et votre reconnaissance.

Les prières sont gratuites.

Si vous souhaitez prier, veuillez en informer le personnel à l'entrée principale et vous serez guidé à la chapelle désignée.

- Adultes : 10,00€
- Seniors : 7,50€
- Étudiants : 7,50€
- Enfants de 12 ans : Gratuit moins (accompagné d'un adulte)
- Contenu de qualité : 2,99€

Website: <https://www.stjohnscocathedral.com/fr/>

Musée National de la Guerre



Le Musée National de la Guerre témoigne du rôle militaire important que Malte eut pendant le protectorat britannique, c'est-à-dire après 1800, et plus particulièrement au cours de la Seconde Guerre mondiale.

On retrouve l'une des caractéristiques-clés dans les panneaux de photographies qui retracent les dures conditions subies par la

population civile, ainsi que l'ampleur des dégâts causés par la guerre au cours des années cruciales de 1940 et 1943.

Plusieurs objets importants sont présentés dans le hall principal, tels que le torpilleur italien, le canon antiaérien Bofor, la jeep Willis « Husky », le Gloster Gladiator « Faith », la croix de George, le Livre du Souvenir et le Parchemin enluminé présenté par le Président Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Il ne faut certainement pas manquer les prestigieuses récompenses que reçurent les militaires et les civils pour leurs actes de bravoure et de sacrifice lors de la Seconde Guerre mondiale.

L'annexe de gauche est en grande partie consacrée à la Royal Navy. Elle présente divers uniformes, insignes, équipements, convois maltais, une partie d'un Spitfire, le réacteur d'un Junkers Juno, l'aile d'un Messerschmitt, des hélices, des armements, des instruments, ainsi que des reliques et supports en images des raids de l'Axe.

Adresse:

Fort St. Elmo, Valletta VLT1741

Jours d'ouverture :

Lundi, Mardi, Mercredi, Jeudi, Vendredi, Samedi, Dimanche

Heures d'ouverture :

Lundi à Dimanche : 0900hrs jusqu'à 1800hrs. Dernière admission : 17.30hrs. Fermé : 24, 25 & 31 Décembre, 1 Janvier, Good Friday.

Website: <http://www.visitmalta.com/fr/info/nationalwarmuseum>

Téléphone : +356 21233088

Email : info@heritagemalta.org

Casa Rocca Piccola



Plongez dans l'univers d'une famille aristocratique maltaise en visitant ce palais du XVI^e siècle.

Explorez les couloirs, la chapelle, les grandes pièces et les bunkers souterrains de la Casa Rocca Piccola. Cette résidence privée appartenant à une famille aristocratique maltaise est un

sublime palais du XVI^e siècle, ouvert au public. Admirez des œuvres d'art, des meubles et des vêtements vieux de plusieurs siècles.

Cette demeure somptueuse compte plus d'une cinquantaine de pièces dont la plupart sont accessibles dans le cadre d'une visite guidée proposée en anglais. Si vous maîtrisez mal la langue de Shakespeare, des traductions écrites en français sont à votre disposition.

Rendez-vous dans la pièce porphyre pour découvrir son plafond en bois d'époque et une grande collection de portraits de famille. Dans la pièce bleue sont exposés des instruments chirurgicaux en argent datant du XVIII^e siècle, ainsi que des pièces d'argenterie maltaises très anciennes. Traversez les deux superbes salles à manger, l'une utilisée l'été et l'autre l'hiver.

Visitez la chapelle qui abrite des calices, une statuette en argent offerte au pape Léon XIII et des portraits de saints datant du XVIII^e siècle. Dans le salon, laissez-vous émerveiller par l'un des trésors les plus précieux du palais : une chaise à porteurs dorée ayant appartenu à un chevalier français de l'ordre de Malte au XVIII^e siècle. Observez attentivement la chaise et vous pourrez distinguer les armoiries de ce chevalier.

En montant l'escalier, prenez le temps d'admirer les grandes fresques réalisées par l'artiste maltais Ramiro Calì. Entrez ensuite dans la chambre au lit à baldaquin qui abrite un lit ancien, ainsi qu'un plat à barbe et un pot de chambre datant du XVIII^e siècle.

Parmi les lieux les plus étonnants de la visite de la Casa Rocca Piccola, ne manquez pas les fameux bunkers souterrains qui servirent de refuge durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Déambulez dans le réseau de tunnels creusés dans la roche qui pouvaient accueillir plus d'une centaine de personnes.

Adresse:

74 Republic Street, Valletta, Malta

Heures d'ouverture :

- Lundi - Samedi de 10am à 4pm.
- Des visites guidées ont lieu à l'heure.
- Une visite à 12h00 le dimanche et jours fériés.

Les Prix : €9 adultes, €5 étudiants, gratuit pour les enfants de moins de 14 ans.

Téléphone : +356 21221499

Email : enquiries@casaroccapiccola.com

Website : www.casaroccapiccola.com

Informations pratiques

1. Comment arriver à l'hôtel depuis l'aéroport

Pour accéder de l'aéroport international de Malte à l'hôtel « Grand Hotel Excelsior », il est possible d'y arriver soit en taxi soit en bus.

- **En taxi :** Cela coûtera environ 15 euros et il est possible de le prendre directement en dehors de l'aéroport (pour plus d'information, veuillez consulter le site suivant : <https://www.maltairport.com/passenger/getting-here/taxi-service/>).
- **En bus :** Il faut marcher 3 minutes (250m) pour arriver à l'aéroport 1, où vous pouvez prendre le bus X4 à Publiju (22 minutes et le prix est d'environ 2 euros). Après cela, vous avez 5 minutes à pied jusqu'à l'hôtel « Grand Hotel Excelsior » (pour plus d'information, veuillez consulter le site suivant : <https://www.publictransport.com.mt/>).

Pour accéder de l'aéroport international de Malte à « Osborne Hotel » il est possible d'y arriver soit en taxi soit en bus.

- **En taxi :** Cela coûtera environ 17 euros et il est possible de le prendre directement en dehors de l'aéroport (pour plus d'information, veuillez consulter le site suivant : <https://www.maltairport.com/passenger/getting-here/taxi-service/>).
- **En bus :** Il faut marcher 9 minutes (700m) pour aller à Cintra. De là, vous pouvez prendre l'un des bus suivants: 71, 72 ou 73, ça sera un voyage de 19 minutes jusqu'à l'arrêt « Valette 18 ». Après cela, vous avez 7 minutes (500m) à pied pour rejoindre le « Osborne Hôtel » (pour plus d'information, veuillez consulter le site suivant : <https://www.publictransport.com.mt/>).

2. Hôtels:

The Grand Hotel Excelsior

Great Siege Road, Floriana, Malte

Tél: 00356 2125 0520

Email: info@excelsior.com.mt

Website: <http://www.excelsior.com.mt/>

Osborne Hotel

50, South Street, Valletta, Malte

Tel: 00356 2124 3656

Email: info@osbornehotel.com

Website: <http://www.osbornehotel.com/>

3. Transports:

Aéroport :

L'aéroport international de Malte est situé à 5 km au sud-ouest de la Valette, la capitale maltaise. L'aéroport sert de base principale pour Air Malta et pour Ryanair.

(<https://www.maltairport.com/>).

Transports publics:

L'aéroport international de Malte est également desservi par plusieurs autobus exploités par des groupes de transport privés et des transports publics exploités par Malte Public Transport.

La liste des itinéraires et des horaires peuvent être trouvées sur le lien suivant :

(<https://www.publictransport.com.mt/>).

4. Téléphone:

Code international de Malte: +356

5. Liste des contacts utiles:

Secrétariat de l'AAD

Bureau JAN 2 Q 73

Parlement européen

B-1047 Bruxelles

Tél: +322 2840703 Fax: +332 2840989

Email: formermembers@europarl.europa.eu

Elisabetta FONCK

GSM: +32 473 646746

Ambassades et Consulats à Malte:

- **Ambassade de l'Espagne à Malta:**
Whitehall Mansions, Ta' Xbiex
Seafront, Ta' Xbiex, Malte
+356 2131 7365
- **Haut-Commissariat Britannique**
Whitehall Mansions, Ta' Xbiex
Seafront, Ta' Xbiex, Malte
+356 2323 0000
- **Ambassade d'Italie à Malte:**
5, Vilhena Street, Floriana,
Malte
+356 2123 3157

- **Ambassade de France à Malta:**
130, Melita Street, La Valette,
Malte
+356 2248 0600
- **Ambassade des Pays Bas à Malta:**
Whitehall Mansions, 3ème étage,
Ta' Xbiex Seafront, Ta' Xbiex,
Malte
+356 2131 3980
- **Consulat de Luxembourg à Malta :**
90, Palazzo Pietro Stiges,
Strait Street, La Valette, Malte
+356 2138 3849
- **Ambassade d'Allemagne à Malta:**
Il-Piazzetta, Flat 45, Tower
Road, Sliema, Malte
+356 2132 0963

6. Climat à La Valette:

Le climat est doux et généralement chaud et tempéré. La pluie à La Valette tombe surtout en hiver, avec relativement peu de pluie en été. La température moyenne est de 18.7 ° C. Les précipitations moyennes sont de 525 mm.

7. Alimentation électrique:

Tension: 220 V -240 V

Fréquence: 50 Hz

Prises de courant: type G

8. Langages:

Malte a deux langues officielles: le maltais et l'anglais. Le maltais est aussi la langue nationale. Jusqu'à 1934, l'italien était aussi une langue officielle à Malte.

Ayant été gouvernée par beaucoup de différents pays dans le passé, la population maltaise portent des empreintes linguistiques de beaucoup d'endroits. Selon le sondage Eurobaromètre, 98% des Maltais parlent maltais, 88% parlent anglais, 66% parlent italien et plus de 17% parlent français.

9. Heure locale:

La Valette change de temps au cours de l'année. La Valette observe CET (GMT +1 heure) entre le 1er janvier 2017 et le 26 mars 2017, observe CEST (GMT + 2 heures) entre le 26 mars 2017 et le 29 octobre 2017, et observe CET (GMT +1 heure) entre le 29 octobre 2017 et le 31 décembre 2017.

10. Devise:

Malte utilise l'euro comme monnaie officielle. Les cartes bancaires internationales telles que Visa, American Express, Diner's Club et Mastercard sont acceptées comme les devises étrangères qui peuvent facilement être échangées dans les bureaux d'échange. Les banques, ainsi que les guichets automatiques et les bureaux d'échange peuvent être trouvés partout dans les îles, tandis que la majorité des magasins et restaurants acceptent le paiement dans certaines devises internationales. Cependant, presque tous les magasins de détail et de restaurant acceptent les cartes de crédit internationales.

11. Numéros d'urgence:

Le numéro de tous les services d'urgence à Malte est le 112 (ambulance, pompiers et police).

12. Fumer à Malte :

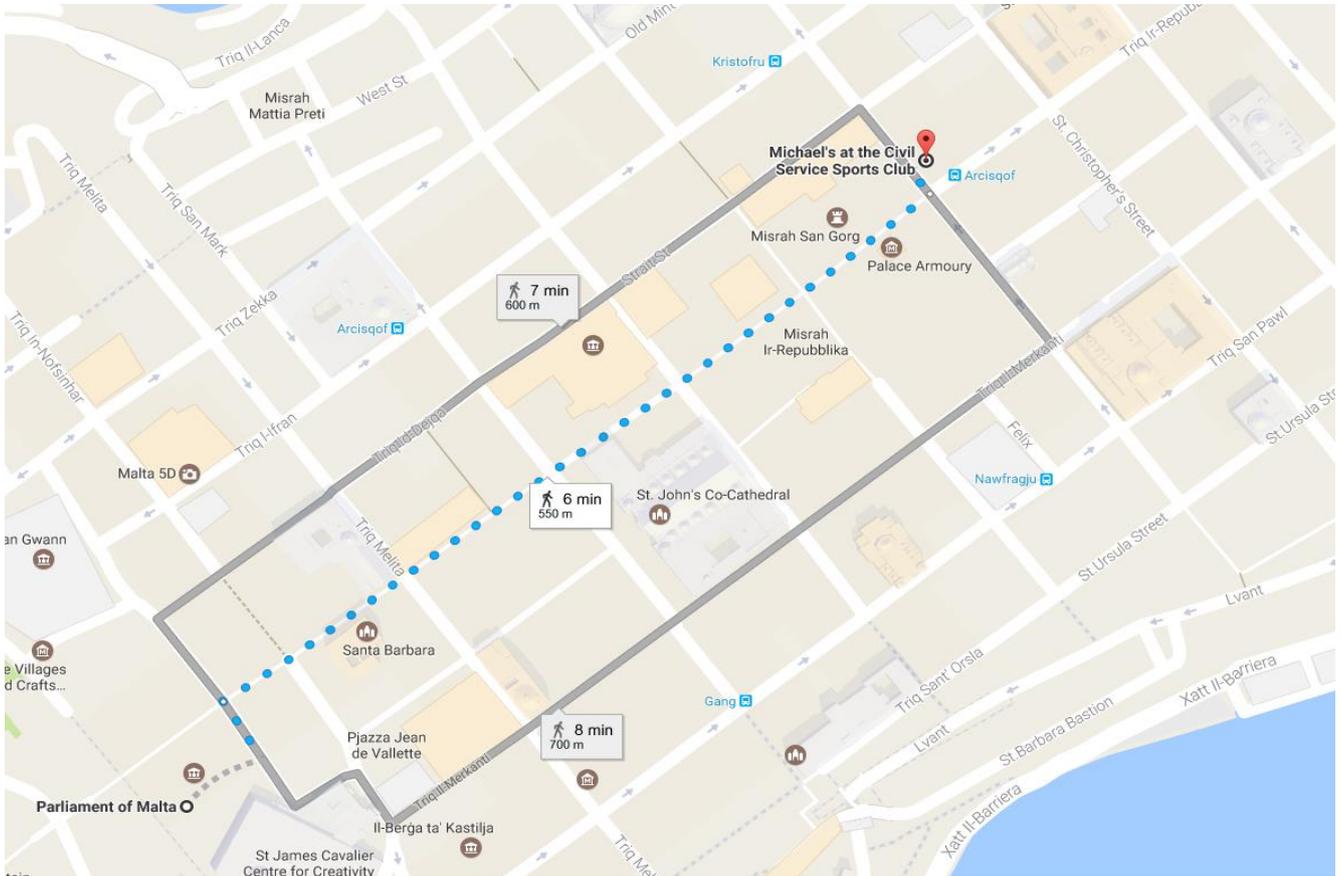
La Loi sur le contrôle du tabac et l'Avis juridique 414 stipulent que fumer est interdit dans tous les locaux fermés qui sont ouverts au public sauf dans la zone désignée pour fumer. Cela signifie que fumer n'est pas permis à l'intérieur dans les lieux publics, y compris les bars et les pubs, les cafés et les restaurants, les transports publics, les cinémas, les théâtres, les hôpitaux et les écoles sauf dans la zone désignée pour fumer. Cependant, de nombreux établissements proposent une option de sièges à l'extérieur pour les fumeurs, certains d'entre eux étant équipés de radiateurs pour les plus frileux. Il est également interdit de fumer dans les espaces communs des hôtels. Certains hôtels peuvent avoir un salon pour fumeurs, mais ce n'est pas obligatoire et est à la discrétion de la direction de l'hôtel.

13. Pourboire:

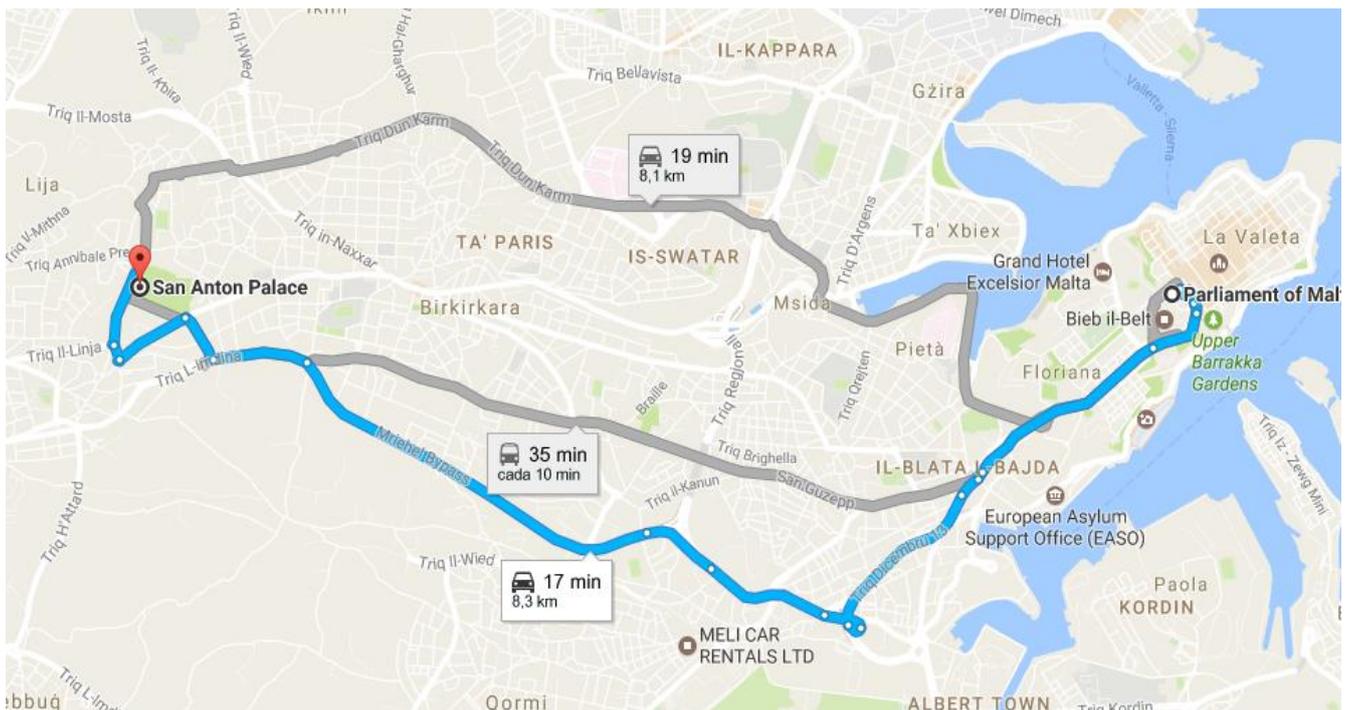
Dans les restaurants à Malte, il est habituel d'offrir un pourboire entre 5% - 10%. Cependant, si des frais de service sont déjà inclus, un pourboire n'est pas nécessaire. Si vous ne savez pas combien de pourboire, vous devez offrir, la meilleure option est de vérifier la politique de l'établissement. Si vous êtes extrêmement satisfait du service que vous avez reçu, vous pouvez toujours donner des pourboires supplémentaires à votre discrétion.

PLAN - Lundi, 3 avril 2017

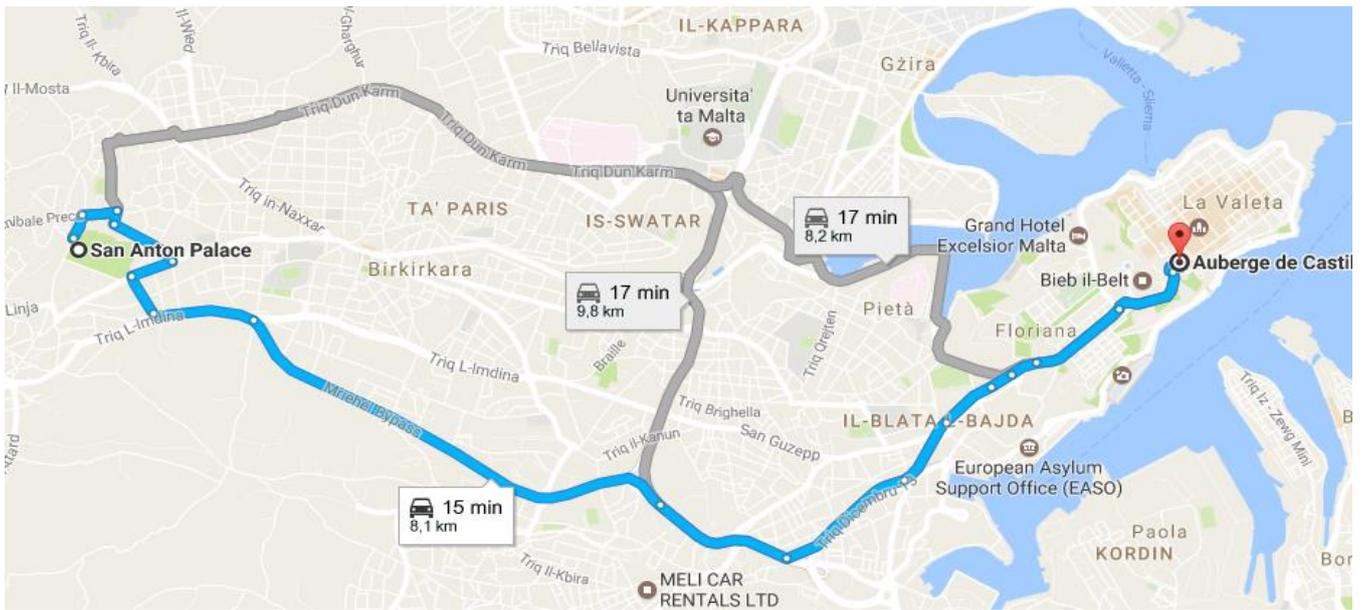
Parliament Building ==> Michael's Restaurant. Déjeuner offert par le Président de la Chambre des représentants, Parlement de Malte



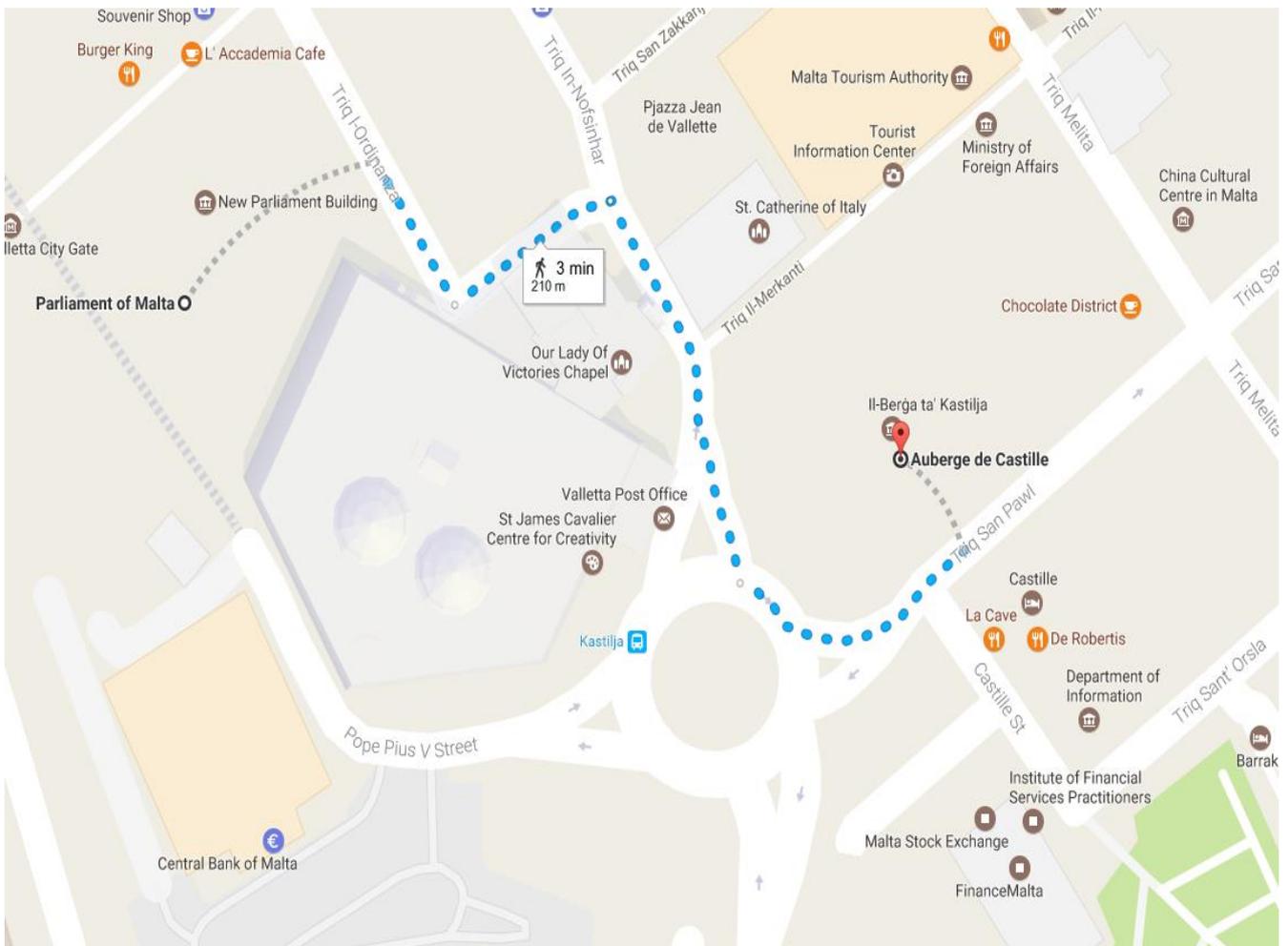
Parliament Building ==> San Anton Palace. Rencontre avec H.E le Président de Malte, Mme Marie Louise Coleiro Preca



San Anton Palace ==> Auberge de Castille. **Rencontre avec le Premier Ministre, M. Joseph Muscat**

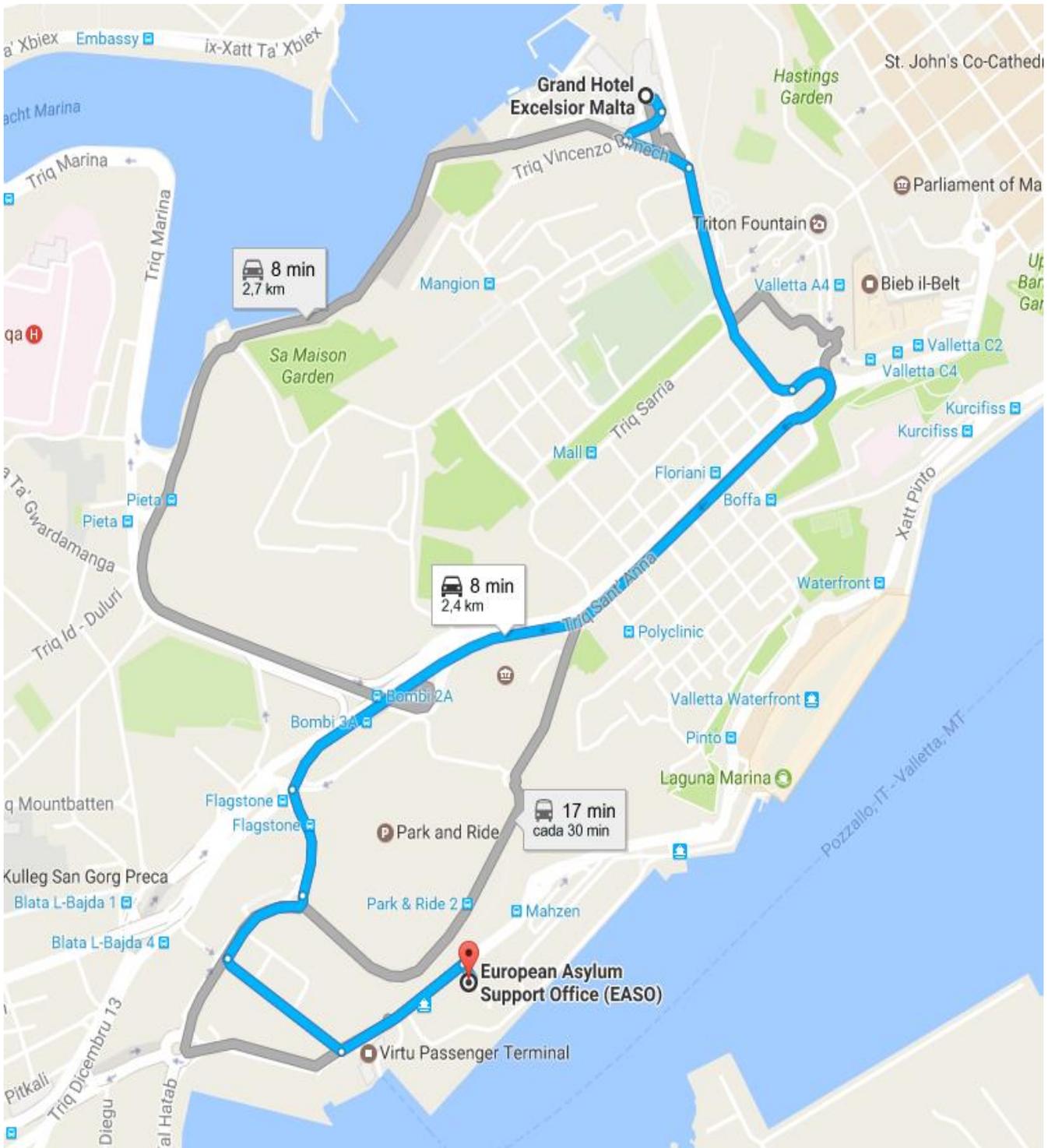


Auberge de Castille ==> Parliament Building. **Rencontre avec la commission des affaires étrangères et affaires européennes**



Mardi, 4 avril 2017

Hotel Excelsior==> EASO



EASO ==> Aéroport, par les Transports publics : 30 min environ

750 m (11 min environ) à pied et puis prendre le bus X4 à l'aéroport.

