



GOVERNMENT OF MALTA
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIAT
FOR REFORMS AND EQUALITY



Compendium of Recommendations

TURNING THE TABLES

Facilitated by: African Media Association Malta

Prepared by: Neil Falzon (ADITUS)

2022



Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund 2014-2020

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Sustainable Management of Migration Flows





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Summary

This research is aimed at supporting the empowerment of migrants to directly tackle integration-related matters through the Turning the Tables initiative, a migrant-led process funded through the Learning-Exchanging-Integrating project. This project is co-financed by EU Funds under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund 2014-2020, and in collaboration with the Human Rights Directorate (National Funds). The content of the publications does not necessarily represent the views of the European Commission or the Human Rights Directorate.

This report collects all the recommendations that emerged during the pre-conferences and conferences on a number of selected topics as part of the migrant-led project, Turning the Tables, coordinated by African Media Association Malta (AMAM). AMAM brought together relevant stakeholders, migrant communities and the general public to brainstorm and debate selected topics, amongst them education; employment; documentation; detention; and political rights. The main aim of the project is to facilitate dialogue and learning, and in this report, we set out the recommendations that have been identified as key to building on a new integration policy post *Integration = Belonging - Migrant Integration Strategy & Action Plan (Vision 2020)*.

This paper should be read in conjunction with the reports covering:

- Detention;
- Documentation;
- Education;
- Employment;
- Political Rights;

- Migrant-Led Initiatives; and
- A Way Forward for Integration Governance

that were published by the Ministry for Home Affairs, Security, Reforms and Equality, within the ambit of the Turning the Tables project. These reports give an in-depth analysis of each of the topics, an analysis of the points that emerged during the discussions at the pre-conferences and conferences organised by AMAM, and also recommendations. Furthermore, four other reports were published by the same Ministry within the ambit of the Integration Mapping Research Project, which covered: Mental Health, Citizenship, Socialisation and Family Reunification. These four reports also contain an analysis of the status quo in Malta in relation to those sectors and an identification of existing gaps and challenges in terms of migration.

This report contains sections which lay out the key findings specific to migrant education; employment; documentation; detention; political rights and the development of an integration policy.



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1. Detention

Through the detention of migrants, including vulnerable persons and children, integration is being impeded, and the long-lasting trauma of such detention affects long term migrant integration.

Migrant detention acts as the most significant barrier to migrant integration through the physical and social isolation from all other members of Maltese society. The following are the recommendations to reform the policies regulating detention and to improve the reception conditions in detention settings.

1.1 Systematic Reform

- Malta must immediately address the grave issues with the immigration detention system as highlighted by the CPT report.
- Alternatives to detention must be used before relying on detention, which if at all used, must be used as a last resort.
- Public Health authorities must immediately desist from using public health grounds as a ground for the detention of migrants.
- Any restriction of liberty on public health grounds must be exceptional, individualised, specific, time-limited and regulated by clear procedural safeguards.
- Proper records of all migrants in IRCs and Detention Centres must be kept, and periodic reviews must be undertaken, in order to review the lawfulness of their detention in accordance with the procedures stipulated in Maltese law.
- Unaccompanied children should not be held in IRCs or Detention Centres. In line with the best interests of the child principle, they should be accommodated in specialised (semi-) open facilities for juveniles with appropriately trained staff, where their living quarters are suitable for children, and constructive activities are offered, including the continuation of their education.
- Pregnant or breast-feeding persons, mothers with infants and young children should, in principle, not be deprived of their liberty, and should be transferred to an open or semi-open facility that offers privacy and support from health care and psycho-social professionals.
- Avoid detaining women, children and vulnerable persons, and if exceptionally they are detained for a very short period of time (hours), they should be separated from unrelated men.
- Persons waiting for age and vulnerability assessment results should be treated as children and/or vulnerable and accommodated separately from unrelated men, in the exceptional event of the deprivation of their liberty until they can be transferred to an open centre.
- Less coercive measures, such as accommodation in open centres, should be explored as a viable option before resorting to detention.
- Allow non-government organisations (NGOs), social workers, psychologists and other support staff full access to Detention Centres, including to the living quarters.
- Adopt a centralised system where all actors in asylum and migration have necessary information to aid those in detention.



Communication must be improved through the provision of basic internet services, the installation of pay phones and distribution of phone cards to detainees

1.2 Reception and Detention Conditions

- Adequate information services must be provided without delay to asylum seekers and third-country nationals (TCNs) in detention, in a language fully understood by the detainees.
- Regular updates must be provided to migrants detained, in a language fully understood, on the status of their stay.
- Information and training for authorities and detention staff, to improve their knowledge of the system and abilities to interact with detainees, remove biases and give a culturally sensitive service.
- All detainees should be offered access to a lawyer, including legal aid where necessary, to allow the lawfulness of their detention to be periodically reviewed effectively.
- The quality of medical screening upon arrival at each centre must be improved to detect illness, disabilities and mental disorders.
- All centres and facilities must be regularly maintained, cleaned and sanitised.
- Ensure official occupancy rates are revised to allow a minimum of 4 m² of living space per detained person in the multiple occupancy accommodation, dividing up rooms into smaller living units.
- All dormitories should have adequate access to natural and sufficient artificial lighting, ventilation, heating and cooling.
- Communication must be improved through the provision of basic internet services, the installation of pay phones and distribution of phone cards to detainees, and allowing migrants to keep, or regularly, access personal phones.
- Provide detainees with a clean bed, mattress and blanket, and at least one set of additional clean, adequate and weather appropriate clothing, footwear and bedding at one time.
- Each detainee should be provided with lockable storage to keep personal belongings.
- Call bells should be installed in Detention Centres in areas where staff are not continuously present.
- Ensure there are separate showering and toilet areas for men, women and children in the IRCs.
- Showers and toilets should be properly functioning and maintained with access to hot water, and designed to allow for privacy while using facilities in detention.
- Ensure the grouping of cultures and languages where possible.
- Detainees should be offered unrestricted access to

outdoor exercise throughout the day, to an outdoor space that is proportionate to the number of migrants detained and consisting of adequate shelter and areas to rest.

- Educational, recreational and vocational activities should be developed within detention centres.
- At least one common association room equipped with books, television and games and one multi-faith room should be set up in each detention block.
- Detainees must be entitled to confidential access to an appropriate complaints' authority, and be informed of these possibilities from the outset of their deprivation of liberty.



Each detainee should be provided with lockable storage to keep personal belongings



Provide and promptly update information at all stages of the migration path: pre-departure, application, arrival, residency and end of stay

2. Documentation

Access to employment, social services, education and other services essential to a dignified life is largely dependent on an individual being in possession of personal documents that correctly display the person's information and that attests to the person's residence status in a country.

The ultimate result of the inability to obtain documents is an increased risk of poverty and social exclusion born of the inability to secure regular and stable employment. In addition, individuals without documents are more likely to be the victims of abuse, discrimination and exploitation and risk remaining socially excluded and marginalised. The following are the recommendations to reduce the risk of individuals becoming undocumented and to protect those that do.

2.1 Provision of Updated Information

- Provide and promptly update information on all applicable websites on matters relating to documentation of migrants.
- Provide and promptly update information at all stages of the migration path: pre-departure, application, arrival, residency and end of stay.
- Provide clear and public information on: documents that should be submitted, the costs relating to residence permits, the right of appeal, the rights of applicants and processing timelines.
- Provide clear information for asylum seekers, and persons with international protection on the asylum process, the appeal and the rights they are entitled to after the procedure.

- Provide clear information for persons with international protection on the procedures to apply for residence documents for themselves and their families, including birth certificates.
- Create a migrant-friendly information hub that would provide information in simple language translated into multiple languages.
- Amend current legislation in order for it to be more comprehensive and clearer.
- Draft and publish guidelines for each type of residence document.
- Training Identity Malta staff on the requirements of each residence document and required documents in order for there to be uniformity in the application of rules.

2.2 Reducing Processing Times and Bureaucracy

- Standardise procedures and requirements for applications of residence permit.
- Include an automatic appeal when the set timeline for the processing of a residence permit lapses.
- Disallow desk clerks from refusing applications, unless manifestly incomplete by allowing applicants to submit further information during the process.
- Facilitate the communication of applicants or their legal advisor with Identity Malta staff.
- Increase the duration of the validity of single work permits, family reunification, study and research permits to two or three years.
- Decrease the costs for processing applications and in particular for renewal applications.



The Maltese State should enter into bilateral agreements in order to facilitate movement of workers

- Institute fast-track procedures for approval from the respective regulatory bodies, e.g. MQRIC for regulated professionals for TCNs in a single work permit process.
- Use the National Commission for Further Higher Education (NCFHE) or establish a body to assess the skills of migrants who do not possess any form of recognised qualification.
- Fast-track health screening procedures at the Infectious Disease Prevention and Control Unit (IDPCU) for TCNs in a single work permit process.
- Remove the requirement for repeated vetting with every renewal when this is not necessary.
- Allow for migrants who do not have a rental agreement to either use an alternative address, such as a hotel, for those who are still abroad, or for them to show other evidence to prove residence at a certain location, such as utility bills.

2.3 International Protection Agency

- Speed up procedures for registering asylum seekers and the provision of documentation.
- Increase competent staff that is specifically trained in asylum procedures.
- Allow for asylum seekers and persons with protection to renew their documentation in a timely fashion when they

fail to renew their documents on time, especially for those who could not renew due to circumstances beyond their control.

- Ensure that IPA staff visit asylum seekers at Corradino Correctional Facility and Young Persons Offenders Unit in order for them to lodge an application.
- Draft and publish an anti-Racism and anti-Discrimination Strategy for the staff at the IPA.

2.4 Provision of Support

- The Maltese State should enter into bilateral agreements in order to facilitate movement of workers.
- Facilitate the issuance of Visas for persons with an employment contract or a single work permit, and their family members.
- Facilitate the issuance of Visas for family members of refugees who were granted a family reunification permit.

2.5 Anti-Racism Strategy and Cultural Mediators

- Provide means of overcome the language barrier and communication problems with the use of cultural mediators.
- Information provided to migrants should also cover practical issues, job ethic, etc. in languages they can understand.

- Draft and publish an anti-Racism and anti-Discrimination Strategy for the staff at Identity Malta.
- Train Identity Malta staff, including desk clerks and security staff in anti-racism and intercultural competence.
- Introduce an efficient and effective complaints procedure in relation to Identity Malta offices.

2.6 Long-term Solutions

- Reinstate the Specific Residence Authorisation or similar permit.
- Facilitate the requirements for the Long-Term Residency permit but loosening the requirements for the language courses and number of hours for the cultural integration course.
- Publish guidelines for the application for citizenship.
- Reduce the fee for citizenship applications.
- Amend the law to include the obligation of the Minister to give reasons for the refusal of citizenship applications.
- Amend the law to include the right of appeal for refused citizenship applications.



Collaboration between government and NGOs is needed where government could fund and/or subcontract services to these NGOs

3. Education

Migrant learners face a context and a system that are not only unprepared, but also ill-equipped to deal with their diverse and heterogeneous needs and demands. The barriers are rife, including language barriers and lack of services to address these; insufficient measures to tackle illiteracy; legal and bureaucratic issues and delays in the asylum and residency processes; delays in recognition of certificates; inadequately trained teachers especially in cultural sensitivity and other skills required for inclusion and integration (e.g. to address diversity in class); lack of effective teaching resources and adaptation to the needs of migrant learners; non-inclusive curricula in schools; informational barriers; and racism to name but a few of these obstacles.

The below recommendations push the envelope of what migrant learners should be entitled to and even expect. In particular, they press for a quasi-total redesigning of the formal education system and strategy into one requiring flexibility and adaptability.

3.1 Change in Discourse and Policy

- Any educational policy should start from a premise that most migrant learners do want an education and want to learn, but it is the system that does not allow for it, and this requires change in discourse in the way migrants are perceived in Maltese society.
- Policies need to change in order for migrant learners to be able to access services like everyone else.
- Policies need to be informed and in place to cater for future migrant learners in the country. This

includes finding ways to counteract the tardiness in processing asylum applications and the unnecessary psychological stress it causes. Include migrants in the higher levels of decision- and policy-making to foster change in perceptions of migrants.

3.2 Comprehensive National Strategy & Curriculum

- A comprehensive national (or regional) strategy is needed, one incorporating the different sectors of education and training, to facilitate coordination and assign roles and responsibilities with clear signposting for students, families and caregivers.
- A multi-stakeholder task force would be extremely helpful and important in revisiting the curriculum for cultural sensitivity and adaptedness, inclusivity, responsiveness, comprehensiveness, and also to place students adequately in spaces that would benefit them and with all the required support.
- Collaboration between government and NGOs is needed where government could fund and/or subcontract services to these NGOs, who over the years have developed specialisation and experience and are strongly positioned to deliver.
- Revisit the curriculum, teaching resources and modes of delivery and practice in primary and secondary education: at various junctures, participants stressed that curricula across the board need to be revisited together with critical input from migrant learners, to include and account for cultural diversity and inclusivity among others. Participants stressed the

need to also have a curriculum that teaches children for example about mixed marriages, about African cultures, how bilingual families negotiate languages and cultures etc.

- Adapt learning materials to include simple structures using diagrams and drawings to address a range of cultural issues as well as different ways and approaches to learning, especially with children. Participants also mentioned the need for more multimedia tools for educators.
- Promote cultural activities within schools to promote awareness of cultural diversity: this is of benefit not only to children but also teachers themselves, who can learn more about the children they have in their class every day.
- Tackle racism head on: participants were firm in the idea that racism needs to be nipped in the bud at schools and higher education institutions. It does exist and it is rife. While many of the measures outlined above do contribute to tackling the problem, participants agreed that more concrete measures are also needed, including policies addressing cases of racial discrimination by teachers within schools, and a strategy on how to tackle these within educational institutions.
- Equip educational stakeholders with skills and financial resources to create adequate and responsive educational policies: this can only be done with adequate contact and information directly from diverse migrant communities, to learn about their needs, the contexts and problems they face, and importantly to listen and learn from their own solutions.

3.3 Migrant Learners Unit

- The Migrant Learners Unit needs to have a clearer definition of roles, and these need to be known by schools in order to know if, how and when they can seek support.
- There is also a need for a liaison officer between the Unit and the schools.
- The Unit needs more human and financial resources to be able to service all the schools.

3.4 Information Giving

- Provide concise, adapted, sensitive information through a coherent and accessible portal: information is required on a range of things, including courses, support and scholarships, processes of application and so on.
- Set up a 'one-stop shop' portal of information would be very helpful in a context where information is often as scarce as it is fragmented, and consequently taxing and costly to obtain in entirety. This information would also need to be available in all languages, needs to be culturally adapted and sensitive, and clearly signposted especially for newly arrived migrants.

3.5 Support for Migrant Students

- Setting up an initial assessment procedure where migrants, refugees and asylum seekers as assessed early as possible (ideally upon arrival) to check for literacy, language skills etc. An initial assessment would speed the process of assessing needs, devising literacy and language programmes that are adapted and responsive, while providing for material support to attend these courses, hence expediting the process of integration.

- Introduce psychological support for those students fleeing harsh situations of war, conflict and poverty, and who face trauma and/or the consequences of hardship and upheaval.
- Increase the availability of literacy classes, with the time availability of migrant learners to be kept in mind, and which need be adapted to their immediate needs.
- Increase resources, both human and financial, which are needed to tackle language barriers and cover the demand when it comes to learning English, and also Maltese.
- Make available training on using technological tools, such as Google and email.
- Introduce financial support for youth over the age of compulsory education and young adults who wish to develop their skills and/or pursue higher education. This can be done through a fund to assist migrant students including soft loans for higher education; work-study programmes to support with paying tuition fees; or sponsorships.
- Allow for flexibility in modality of courses to accommodate different working hours and routines of different migrants. This would ease a major barrier, that is time constraints bound to the persistent need to work to survive.
- Create favourable working conditions for educated migrants. Migrants, notably refugees and asylum seekers, need to see education as a means to an end

as well, alongside developing relationships, contacts, inclusion and so much more.

- Introduce a mentorship programme through which mentors can act as solid points of reference and support, and also serve as key role models when these are from one's own or other migrant communities.

3.6 Educators

- Invest in migrant teachers: this can have a useful snowball effect, is resource-effective, and also culturally responsive and sensitive. It also translates into a strategic move to invest in the teaching of migrants.
- Hire teachers from migrant background: teachers that are representative of the changing ethnic make-up of Malta, that understand the student population, that serve as an example and encourage students to pursue their education while addressing racism and xenophobia.
- Educate teachers, teaching staff and other stakeholders about the needs of migrant students: this needs to be done through the degree course at university as well as other (ongoing) professional training. Teachers need much training in a range of areas, including cultural dimensions, what is happening in certain countries, wars, why people migrate, how to respond to the needs of migrant students with trauma, how to handle crises, and how to address racism in class.



Carry out public educational campaigns highlighting the importance of migrant workers as well as success stories

4. Employment

The presence of migrants within the workforce continues to grow and nowadays migrants constitute a substantial proportion of all workers in Malta. They are of critical importance in sustaining the growth of the Maltese economy, whilst also contributing to the socio-cultural landscape of modern Malta. Migrant workers are not fleeting, and many are here to stay. This situation, though, meets a context that still struggles to accommodate and make adaptations, to ensure fair and equitable treatment and working conditions, where rights are known, respected, monitored and enforced at all times.

While some positive changes have happened over the past years, multiple, complex and extensive barriers continue to be faced by migrants, in particular TCNs and asylum seekers, barriers affecting the process of seeking and maintaining employment alongside working conditions remain serious problems. These are the recommendations:

4.1 Advocacy and Policy Changes

- Advocacy must be sustained and increased to ensure the rights of migrant workers are respected, and to guarantee that these rights are equal to those of others.
- Pressure is needed to regularise the employment of refugees with protection in other countries but who are working in Malta in an irregular manner. These need to be afforded at the very least the same opportunities as other TCNs working in Malta. This is important for them to also pay taxes and contribute

and ultimately to eliminate the underground job market, ripe for abuses.

- Measures must be taken to prevent and act on any form of prejudice and discrimination: including on the basis of racist or xenophobic beliefs, from recruitment through to pay levels, rights and entitlements on the job and so on.
- Draw up policies that are shared with and known by all employees, and substantiated by monitoring, effective reporting mechanisms, and enforcement when there are discriminatory practices.
- Carry out public educational campaigns highlighting the importance of migrant workers as well as success stories.
- Introduce active inclusion measures such as quotas, that is, numbers that need to be migrant workers.
- Incorporate issues of discrimination in career guidance support, and importantly how to tackle any discrimination at work.
- Encourage job matching events.
- Use the media to work on changing perceptions and educating, including on the rights of all workers.

4.2 Training

- Train administrators and other stakeholders working in positions that interact with and impact migrants' lives, such as Identity Malta and Jobsplus staff, providing them with education and training on cultural sensitivity and respect, the value of migrants and their contributions among others, in the bid to



Conduct literacy and language assessment upon arrival and/or before referring migrants for jobs

not only change attitudes, but also enhance quality of service provided.

- Train local employees, employers and others in communication and culturally responsive practice with migrant workers placing the onus of adaptation and integration not only on the shoulders of migrant workers, it is a two-way process.

4.3 Information Provision

- One-stop shop for information and services where migrant workers can get all the information required about living and working in Malta as well as accessing services, as opposed to trying to figure out a complex system and going from one place to another. This can be online, or even a helpline, or a desk at Identity Malta.
- Information must be provided in a format that is culturally and linguistically accessible and sensitive, adapted and responsive. In particular, this information needs to be carefully translated into all required languages.
- Information must also be available to employers, including legal terms of employment, and their legal obligations, as well as tips and suggestions on culturally sensitive practices, and incentives offered

by Jobsplus for employers to hire migrants among others.

- Information on hygiene, self-care and contextually adequate responses and behaviours should also be available, alongside information on cultural dimensions, such as adequate resolution of conflict on the workplace.
- Sensitize and impart information on legal dimensions including the legal landscape, rights and legislation (e.g. unfair dismissal, injury at work etc.), legal pro bono services available to seek redress and the legal options available.

4.4 Lessen bureaucracy: simplify and group procedures

- There is an urgent need for procedures and applications that are intelligible to be made simple to understand, and which are not unnecessarily taxing on time and resources.
- There is a need to: streamline services, such as one process for residence and work permit or employment licence; reduce the frequency of work permit renewals; reduce the costs of application for work permits; and provide support to employers and employees with applications.

- Simplify and instil a fair and equitable process of opening a simple bank account to receive one's salary by ensuring the correct application of the Credit Institutions and Financial Institutions (Payment Accounts) Regulations.
- Implement a system of temporary work licenses to address delays at Identity Malta until a full single permit can be issued. This would ensure there is the required labour force when needed, while enabling migrant workers to be gainfully employed, pay taxes etc. and tackle illegal work.

4.5 Literacy and Language

- Conduct literacy and language assessment upon arrival and/or before referring migrants for jobs. This can be done by NGOs assisting with such services and which would support with referrals for jobs that are more adapted to the individual. This service should be free to migrants.
- Make quick literacy and language tuition available upon arrival in order for migrants to be able to access work. Language training is critical and needs to be affordable, ideally free, and flexible when it comes to time to accommodate work patterns and time constraints of different people. People will always prioritise basic needs, and therefore any training needs to be designed around the satisfaction of these.

4.6. Courses, Training, and Information sharing

- Create and circulate booklets and/or deliver courses containing specific technical vocabulary for work purposes. This is advised especially for health and safety issues and health-related professions.
- Provision of courses in work practices, ethics and

cultural orientation at the reception stage using accessible venues such as local councils and/or LEAP centres.

- Make use of schools to disseminate information on available courses and also employment opportunities in order to reach parents.
- Introduce an induction programme explaining Maltese culture and practices. This could be extended to explain some services available in the Maltese system, since not many employees are knowledgeable about them or their rights under Maltese legislation.
- Carry out information sessions on employment laws, rights and obligations: including how to apply for work permits, what constitutes bullying, harassment and discrimination, seeking legal support, and courses of action.
- Create information booklets or leaflets providing both employers and employees with clear and concise information. Such booklets should be translated into the main languages and distributed to employers, local councils, LEAP centres, churches, police stations and health clinics among others.
- Facilitate access to vocational training, including for trades that traditionally pay, for example plumbing and electrical work, and importantly orienting towards needs and gaps in the job market, and which can translate into eventual concrete work. This training therefore needs to be flexible and worked around different times to account for work.

4.7 Support to migrant workers

- Ensure childcare facilities are available to step up migrant women's participation in employment.
- Encourage employer contributions to language and



Provide employees with the opportunity to learn about their colleagues and how to communicate with individuals who have limited English skills

other training, such as the provision of language as well as literacy classes at work. This initiative could be supported by government.

- Encourage employers to set up a peer support system, including a colleague acting as mentor, assistance with translation, and orientation.
- Encourage employers to reduce costs on the migrant worker and offer support: such as offering to subsidise medicals, work permit fees, vaccines etc., or offering a loan which would then be deducted progressively from the salary.
- Reduce the cost of translating certificates, for example by providing government subsidised services for translation.
- Assist to build communities of support that can intervene to support in times of hardship and crises, as well as being effective sources of information, mentorship, and allies. This could help communities get organised to combat abusive and exploitative migrant working conditions, to act as intermediaries with trade unions, and to tackle problems, for example rights violations.
- Encourage job placements, including internships, for migrant workers to both learn new skills as well as demonstrating what they are capable of doing.

4.8 Skills Assessment

- Expand the list of credible and accredited universities worldwide at NCFHE.
- Introduce alternative forms of skills assessment, recognition, and certification in order to assess the skills of those without formal certificates. Methods could include assessment and validation of skills on the job; promotion of vocational testing; and

evaluating of performance on the job.

4.9 Workplace Culture

- Encourage changes in workplaces and work culture towards a multicultural approach to account for cultural, ideological and other specificities and differences while promoting diversity of the workforce as a strength alongside active actions as recruiting migrants, especially refugees and asylum seekers.
- Promote intercultural dialogue in the workplace, for example, intercultural and diversity training for staff, organising cultural events, etc.
- Provide employees with the opportunity to learn about their colleagues and how to communicate with individuals who have limited English skills.
- Providing spaces for intercultural communication and learning about cultural and contextual dimensions, for example learning about the importance of punctuality for meetings, while offering a genuine sharing of one's own cultural practices and habits, without problematising either side.
- Allow and provide opportunities for expression, including complaints and feedback as to how things can be improved, through anonymous means.
- Allow for flexibility, for example for time off during religious holidays, and/or time for prayers during Ramadan time, which can be then made up for.
- Introduce a system of mentoring and coaching, where a mentor would be responsible for coaching, especially in the initial stages, to explain work ethics and practices (e.g. punctuality), assist with language acquisition and also with developing relationships and friendships at work.



Include an obligation on Ministries and relevant government agencies to consult migrants, either through the consultative council or other migrant-led organisations

5. Political Participation

Granting political rights to migrants in Malta and other EU Member States is a public commitment to the inclusion, integration, and equal treatment of migrants. In States that have introduced inclusive integration policies and extended political rights to TCNs, migrants and nationals are seen to have comparable levels of political engagement and satisfaction. There is a clear correlation between inclusive integration policies, a public sense of trust and shared sentiments of civic identity, and lower feelings of economic insecurity. Aside from the right to vote and stand in elections, consultation with migrant-led organisations at a national level is an effective way to allow migrant voices to be heard.

In order to address the existing barriers to migrant political participation in Malta and to find possible solutions to such issues, the following recommendations are set out below.

5.1 Recommendations relating to Political Participation

- Grant the right to vote and stand in local elections to all migrant residents, including TCNs. There are a number of possible conditions for the granting of voting rights, for example:
 - Granting the right to vote in local elections based on the number of years residing in Malta; or
 - Granting all long-term residents the right to vote.
- Explore the prospect of extending national voting rights to select groups of migrants, such as long-term residents and refugees.
- Engage in consultations at a national level with migrant-led organisations, ensuring TCNs are consulted on relevant issues.
- Create a consultative council of migrants with clear membership criteria and operating rules.
- Include an obligation on Ministries and relevant government agencies to consult migrants, either through the consultative council or other migrant-led organisations, on migration and integration legislation through a formalised consultation procedure.
- Allow the *Kunsill Nazzjonali Zgħazagħ* (KNŻ) and *Kunsill Studenti Universitarji* (KSU) to be representative of youth and student population on any migrant councils.
- Increase TCNs' participation in the democratic process through awareness raising and information campaigns.
- Increase TCNs' participation through the creation of a one-stop shop for migrant political rights and responsibilities.
- Increase TCNs' participation through capacity-building, funding and in-kind support for migrant-led organisations and associations, especially for those engaged in consultations at a national level.
- Facilitate TCNs' participation in mainstream organisations, such as political parties, trade unions

and pressure groups.

- Encourage media coverage of migrant-related issues by highlighting integration, interculturalism and diversity.

5.2 General Recommendations effecting Political Participation

- Evaluate the current *Integration Strategy and Action Plan*, and include political participation as an effective tool for integration.
- Ensure the sustainability of existing programmes and measures, such as the *I Belong* programme.
- Include a mainstreaming programme which would oblige national stakeholders to consult with migrant councils or migrant-led NGOs on legislative and policy reforms.
- Reduce the fee for citizenship by naturalisation applications.
- Amend the law to include the obligation of the Minister to give reasons for the refusal of citizenship applications.
- Amend the law to include the right of appeal for refused citizenship applications.
- Amend the law to introduce a facilitated naturalisation process for children who have been residing in Malta long-term.

6. Migrant-Led Initiatives

The following are recommendations that would assist migrant-led and refugee-led organisations overcome the challenges identified above, whilst also making the best of the opportunities presented by these organisations.

6.1 Skills

- There needs to be a review of the existing skills gaps and a training plan for workers and volunteers from migrant-led NGOs to fill those gaps needs to be developed.
- Facilitate migrant preparedness to engage in strategizing and decision-making by providing a professional development fund and training and capacity building opportunities.
- Make training on migration, asylum and refugee policies and procedures freely available for migrant and refugee advocates.
- Support new migrant-NGOs with establishing a structure and registering with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations.

6.2 Funding and Logistical Support

- Migrant-led NGOs should be supported to make contact with key agencies, including councils, funders and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI).
- Support migrant advocates and NGOs by providing the logistical support needed to facilitate access and create safe spaces for engagement.
- Finance migrant participation and migrant-led initiatives by compensating migrants and refugees

for their time, expertise, and work and provide core funding for migrant-led initiatives.

- Facilitate and provide funding for the creation of inclusive, self-organised platforms for migrant participation.
- Make direct funding available to refugee-led and migrant-led organisations.
- Commission paid services via public calls or project calls, to refugee-led and/or migrant-led organisations.

6.3 Environment

- Local councils should promote the participation of migrant-led NGOs in the design and implementation of integration measures in a meaningful way.
- Ensuring that migrant-led NGOs participate actively in relevant public consultation processes and consultation bodies.
- Employ staff and fill a number of leadership and governance roles with migrants and refugees.
- Establish partnership structures with government agencies that promote equal access and that would include migrant-NGOs as equal partners.
- Facilitate collaboration, networking and access to media outlets and possibilities of association.
- Create an up-to-date overview of migrant-led and refugee-led organizations and advocates in order to identify opportunities for collaboration.
- Invest in the competences of policymakers in order to make room for advocates' perspective.



It needs to address lack of suitable accommodation, lack of access to legal employment, lack of family reunification and access to citizenship

7. Integration Governance – The Way Forward

7.1 Consider Feedback from International

Organisations

- Malta's policies do not encourage the public to see migrants as their neighbours, equals and fellow citizens.
- It is key to have continuous monitoring and assessing of integration strategies, and updating where necessary with the active participation of all stakeholders.
- There is a need to make any provision for gender equality and the particular vulnerabilities of migrant women.
- A multi-stakeholder forum should be established to monitor the implementation of the strategy, including migrants as ultimate beneficiaries.
- Data must be published on how many people have used the integration services, how many migrants have taken language lessons, and how many cultural mediators have been formed.
- There is a need to define a clear set of responsibilities for public mediators and officials working on migrant integration.
- The authorities need to define the target audience and set expectations of any public awareness campaigns.
- The integration model Malta feels would work best in the national context needs to be explained and a long-term approach should be adopted.

7.2 Content of an Integration Policy

- Any policy or strategy should ensure that the most basic needs are met, in addition to learning from different cultures and perspectives, and to empowering migrants to be able to live a dignified life.
- It needs to address lack of suitable accommodation, lack of access to legal employment, lack of family reunification and access to citizenship.
- Take into account the findings and recommendations of the Turning the Tables and the Integration Mapping Research project.

7.3 Building of an Integration Policy

- There needs to be active involvement of stakeholders, with a particular focus on migrant groups and communities.
- Furthermore, stronger representation of migrants and various migrant groups on consultative bodies, agencies and in the public sector across all sectors of the administration needs to be put in place.
- Key government ministries and stakeholders need to be involved and active in the development of a new integration policy.
- The responsibility of the implementation of any integration strategy should be that of the key ministries, together with the Intercultural and Anti-Racism Unit.

- In addition to the integration policy itself, include the integration of migrant perspective into every stage of the policy-making process: design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

7.4 Indicators

- Develop clear goals, indicators and evaluation mechanisms in order to adjust policy and evaluate progress on integration.
- Develop or update systems for monitoring integration to identify key challenges and track progress over time.
- Improve the availability of data on integration outcomes, including at regional and local levels.

Key government ministries and stakeholders need to be involved and active in the development of a new integration policy





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Sustainable Management of Migration Flows