



GOVERNMENT OF MALTA
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIAT
FOR REFORMS AND EQUALITY



Political Rights

TURNING THE TABLES

Facilitated by African Media Association Malta
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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 presents outputs and key points raised during the pre-conference and conference on political rights 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 address the difficulties encountered by migrants in accessing political rights. The sections below lay out the key findings specific to the barriers to political participation and the effect this has on access to specific rights and services.

Political participation is a key component of integration for migrant communities into their host country's society. Despite this, political participation for migrants is the weakest area of integration policy in the world, with an average Migrant Integration Policy

Index (MIPEX 2020) score of 25/100¹. Civic and cultural participation in society includes dialogue between different groups of Third-Country Nationals (TCNs), the government and civil society. This may be facilitated through participation in advisory platforms set up at local, regional or national levels, participation in mainstream organisations, participation in migrant's organisations and voting rights in local, regional and national elections. Unlike other areas of integration policy, there is no current European Union (EU) legislation that affords any political rights to TCNs in the EU, despite the increase in EU support for Member States to promote TCNs political participation. Access to these rights in many EU states is heavily restricted and largely dependent on a migrant's residence and citizenship status. The barriers to political participation and voting rights for TCNs in Malta are

¹ Migrant Integration Policy Index Website: <https://www.mipex.eu/political-participation> accessed 21 March 2022.

exacerbated by the problematic process to acquire citizenship by naturalisation².

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, and the provision of funding or in-kind support for migrant organisations supports their integration and political participation. Active information policies are an overlooked aspect of political participation, and states have a responsibility to provide information to migrant groups concerning their political rights and obligations. This report aims to identify the existing barriers to migrant political participation in the EU and Malta and discuss the possible solutions to such issues, namely through the extension of local voting rights to TCNs and creating a more accessible pathway to citizenship through naturalisation.



Civic and cultural participation in society includes dialogue between different groups of Third-Country Nationals (TCNs), the government and civil society

² Migrant Integration Policy Index Website: <https://www.mipex.eu/malta> accessed 21 March 2022.

A colorful illustration of diverse people of various ethnicities and ages, shown from the chest up, looking in different directions. The background is a mix of warm and cool tones like orange, blue, and yellow.

Contents

Summary	2
1 Political Participation and Integration	5
2 The European Perspective	7
2.1 European Union Law and Policy	7
2.1.1 Common Basic Principles on Integration	8
2.1.2 Common Immigration Policy for Europe	9
2.1.3 Framework: Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027	9
2.2 Voting Rights across the European Union	9
3 The Maltese Situation	13
3.1 Maltese Legislation	16
3.2 Maltese Policy	16
4 Problems Identified	19
4.1 Social and Economic Integration: No Taxation without Representation	19
4.2 Barriers to Naturalisation	21
4.3 Lack of Consultation with Migrant Communities and Organisations	22
4.4 Lack of Information Available and Directed Toward Migrant Population	22
4.5 Lack of Funding/Support for Immigrant Organisations	23
4.6 Negative Public Opinion	24
5 Conclusion & Recommendations	25
5.1 Recommendations Relating to Political Participation	27
5.2 General Recommendations effecting Political Participation	27

1. Political Participation and Integration

Political rights represent significant steps in integration for migrants into society, granting them the right to have their voices heard and participate in public life, without fear of discrimination or repression. Persons who vote, who contact politicians and who voice their opinions in demonstration have much better chances of being represented in political processes, compared to those who do not or who cannot participate.³

Political participation for migrants can be seen in the right to vote and stand in elections, access to political parties, consultation with migrant organisations at national level, information services, and funding/support for migrant-led organisations. Despite this, migration and integration policy is weakest in the area of political participation, scoring a global average of just 25/100 on the MIPEX scale⁴.

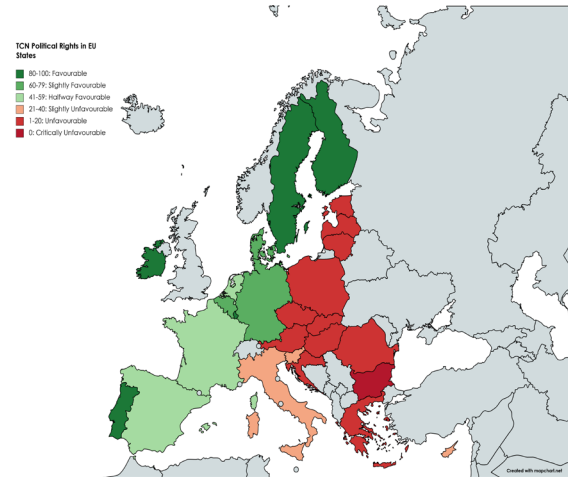



Figure 1: Map of EU Political Rights for TCNs
Source: Migrant Integration Policy Index, 2020

3 Katia Pilati, Migrants' Political Participation in Exclusionary Contexts: From Subcultures to Radicalization, *Journal of Identity and Migration Studies*, Volume 11, No.2, 2016.

4 Migrant Integration Policy Index Website: <https://www.mipex.eu/political-participation> accessed 21 March 2022.



**The EU is home to
approximately 21.6 million
TCNs that account for 4.2%
of the total EU-28 population**

2. The European Perspective

While there are standards upheld by various EU instruments outlining other areas of integration and immigration policy, EU law does not oblige Member States to grant political rights to TCNs, ensuring only the political participation of EU nationals at a local and European level⁵. Whilst the EU has introduced a number of migration and asylum-related integration measures, such as family reunification and long-term residence (LTR), it remains largely silent on the political and democratic rights of non-EU nationals residing within its borders.

The exclusion of TCNs in political processes raises some serious concerns relating to the quality of democracy, especially when one takes into consideration the demographics across the EU. The EU is home to approximately 21.6 million TCNs that account for 4.2% of the total EU-28 population⁶. More importantly, 49% of these TCNs have been living in their host country for 10 years or longer⁷. The lack of an EU-wide inclusive policy on the voting rights of TCNs is a major challenge to achieving the aim of a cohesive society in Europe.

The recent discourse on migration, following the so-called “refugee crisis”, has depicted migrants and refugees as not only a source for concern but also as

passive entities and recipients of the political choices of others⁸.

Besides direct voting rights, frequent interaction between immigrants and Member State citizens is a fundamental mechanism for integration. Shared forums, intercultural dialogue, education about migrants and migrant cultures, and stimulating living conditions in urban environments enhance the interactions between migrants and Member State citizens. These principles draw on the European Convention on Human Rights⁹, which all Member States are party to. Article 10¹⁰ and 11¹¹ guarantee the right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly and freedom of association with others, respectively. These freedoms are to be afforded to citizens and non-citizens alike, and Article 14 affirms that everyone should be able to enjoy these rights, free of discrimination on any basis¹².

2.1 European Union Law and Policy

Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union states that the Union “*is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons*

5 See Article 22 of the *Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union* and Articles 39 and 40 of the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union*.

6 OECD/European Union (2018), *Settling In 2018: Indicators of Immigrant Integration*, OECD Publishing, 2018.

7 Ibid.

8 Livia Elisa Ortensi, Veronica Riniolo, Do Migrants Get Involved in Politics? Levels, Forms and Drivers of Migrant Political Participation in Italy, *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 2019.

9 *European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* (European Convention on Human Rights, as amended) (ECHR)

10 ECHR (n9) art 10.

11 ECHR (n9) art 11.

12 ECHR (n9) art 14.



The integration of TCNs living and working in the EU has gained increasing importance within the European agenda in recent years

belonging to minorities”¹³. Whilst the Treaties reiterate that the Union is founded on democratic principles and representative democracy¹⁴, it falls short of stating that such principles are extended to TCNs residing within EU Member States.

2.1.1 Common Basic Principles on Integration

The integration of TCNs living and working in the EU has gained increasing importance within the European agenda in recent years. In 2005, the *Common Agenda for Integration* from the European Commission outlined the importance of participation of migrants in the democratic process, particularly at the local level, as it enhances their role as residents and as participants in society and affords both a means of expression and responsibilities¹⁵.

The Common Agenda focuses on strengthening the implementation of the Common Basic Principles

(CBPs)¹⁶, agreed upon by the European Council in 2004, as a European framework on the integration of TCNs. The CBPs state that incompatibility of the basic values of the EU can hinder the successful integration of migrants into their new host society and adversely influence society as a whole¹⁷.

The CBPs underline that integration is a dynamic process that implies respect for the basic values of the EU¹⁸, and that Member States should ensure that all residents, including migrants, understand, respect, benefit from, and are protected on an equal basis by the full scope of values, rights, responsibilities, and privileges established by EU law. Amongst these basic EU values is the value of democracy and the freedom to participate in the democratic process of voting. Successful integration of migrants, specifically in their political participation,

13 C 326/13 Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:2bf140bf-a3f8-4ab2-b506-fd71826e6da6.0023.02/DOC_1&format=PDF

14 Title II- Provisions on Democratic Principles, Treaty on the European Union.

15 Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, *A Common Agenda for Integration - Framework for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in the European Union*, COM/2005/0389 final, 2005.

16 *Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the European Union*, established by the 2618th Council Meeting, Justice and Home Affairs, 2004, 14615/04 (Presse 321)

17 Ibid.

18 Common Basic Principle Nr. 2, *Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the European Union*, established by the 2618th Council Meeting, Justice and Home Affairs, 2004, 14615/04 (Presse 321).

will enhance the fulfilment of respect for common European values.¹⁹

Common Basic Principle 9 is central to migrant political participation and states that “[t]he participation of immigrants in the democratic process and in the formulation of integration policies and measures, especially at the local level, supports their integration”²⁰. In implementing this principle, Member States are encouraged to increase civic, cultural and political participation of TCNs by, amongst others:

- Increasing TCNs’ participation in the democratic process;
- Minimizing obstacles to the use of voting rights, e.g. fees or bureaucratic requirements; and
- Elaborating national preparatory citizenship and naturalisation programmes.

2.1.2 Common Immigration Policy for Europe

In 2009, the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE Committee)²¹ released a report on a Common Immigration Policy for Europe, which was later adopted in the European Parliament. The report urged EU states to encourage the political participation of migrants through the extension of local voting rights to all resident migrants, including TCNs²².

19 Common Basic Principle Nr. 9, *Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the European Union*, established by the 2618th Council Meeting, Justice and Home Affairs, 2004, 14615/04 (Presse 321).

20 Common Basic Principle Nr. 9, *Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the European Union*, established by the 2618th Council Meeting, Justice and Home Affairs, 2004, 14615/04 (Presse 321).

21 Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Website: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/libe/home/highlights> accessed 21 March 2022.

22 European Parliament Report on a Common Immigration Policy for Europe: Principles, action and tools (2008/2331(INI)), 2009.

The report called on Member States to facilitate systems for the support of civil society in the integration process through enabling migrants’ presence in the host society’s civil and political life, enabling participation in political parties and trade unions, and granting the opportunity to vote in local elections.

2.1.3 Framework: Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027

In 2020, the European Commission presented a framework on the action plan on integration and inclusion for the period between 2017 to 2021²³ as an essential part of an effective migration and asylum policy across the EU. In this document, the Commission recognised that integration also involves the host society which should create the opportunities for immigrants’ full economic, social, cultural and political participation.

The Commission pledged to support local and regional authorities to start a political dialogue and promote learning and exchanges on integration for local and regional authorities.

2.2 Voting Rights across the European Union

According to current EU legislation, any EU citizen who lives in a host Member State has the automatic right to vote or stand in local council elections and in European Parliamentary elections on that host Member State²⁴. However, this right is not extended to non-EU immigrants

23 European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027, COM(2020) 758 final, 2020

24 See Article 22 of the *Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union* and Articles 39 and 40 of the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union*.

who are legally residing in a host Member State, and the regulation of such remains a national competence.

Malta is one of 13 EU Member States that does not grant any electoral rights to TCNs residing in the territory²⁵. Other EU states that do not grant voting rights to TCNs are Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Poland and Romania.

A majority of 14 of the 27 EU Member States grant some sort of electoral rights to certain TCNs. Of the states that grant such rights, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania and Slovenia do not allow TCNs to stand as candidates in local elections. Denmark, Hungary, Portugal, Slovakia and Sweden extend these voting rights to regional elections. In countries that grant TCNs electoral rights, there are

often restrictive criteria to become eligible to vote and stand in local elections. Such criteria include a minimum duration of legal residence, having a permanent residence permit or LTR status²⁶. Ireland is the only EU state that allows any legal resident to vote in local elections with no further conditions to satisfy²⁷. Portugal and Spain are the only EU states that allow TCNs to vote exclusively on the basis of reciprocity, where TCNs can vote in local elections only if Portuguese and Spanish nationals also have the right to vote in their country of origin.

The table below gives an overview of the voting rights granted to TCNs across EU Member States in national, regional and municipal elections, where applicable.

Figure 2: Voting Rights of TCNs in the EU

	National Elections	Regional Elections	Municipal Elections
Luxembourg	No	n/a	Yes, after 6 months residence in the municipality and 5 years residence in Luxembourg
Malta	No	n/a	No
Netherlands	No	No: Provincial Councils. Yes: Water Boards	Yes, after 5 years of legal residence
Poland	No	No	No

²⁵ Migrant Integration Policy Index Website: <https://www.mipex.eu/malta> accessed 21 March 2022.

²⁶ Migrant Integration Policy Index Website: <https://www.mipex.eu/political-participation> accessed 21 March 2022.

²⁷ Migrant Integration Policy Index Website: <https://www.mipex.eu/ireland> accessed 21 March 2022.

	National Elections	Regional Elections	Municipal Elections
Austria	No	No	No
Belgium	No	No	Yes, after 5 years of continuous residency and is registered on electoral roll
Bulgaria	No	n/a	No
Croatia	No	n/a	No
Cyprus	No	n/a	No
Czech Republic	No	No	No
Denmark	No	Yes, after 3 years of legal residence	Yes, after 3 years of legal residence
Estonia	No	n/a	Yes, after 5 years of residence within the municipality
Finland	No	n/a	Yes, after 2 years of residence
France	No	No	No
Germany	No	No	No
Greece	No	No	No
Hungary	No	Yes, for LTR permit holder	Yes, for LTR permit holder
Ireland	No	n/a	Yes, for any legal resident
Italy	No	No	No
Latvia	No	n/a	No
Lithuania	No	n/a	Yes, TCNs with an unrestricted right of residence



A majority of 14 of the 27 EU Member States grant some sort of electoral rights to certain TCNs

	National Elections	Regional Elections	Municipal Elections
Portugal	No, except for Brazilians with special statutory political rights equality	No, except for Brazilians with special statutory political rights equality	Yes, but only on the basis of reciprocity and after 3 years (2 years for Cape Verde and Brazil) of residence
Romania	No	No	No
Slovenia	No	n/a	Yes, TCNs with an unrestricted right of residence
Slovakia	Yes, TCNs with an unrestricted right of residence	Yes, TCNs with an unrestricted right of residence	Yes, TCNs with an unrestricted right of residence
Spain	No	No	Yes, but only on the basis of reciprocity
Sweden	No	Yes, after 3 years of residence	Yes, after 3 years of residence

Source: Migrant Integration Policy Index, 2020

3. The Maltese Situation

Malta scores slightly below average on the overall MIPEX scale, scoring 48/100, just one point below the MIPEX average of 49/100²⁸. Malta has only recently begun to address migrant integration through a minimal but comprehensive policy approach, where migrants face as many obstacles as there are opportunities in integration.

In relation to the MIPEX area of political participation, Malta's integration policy is rated as slightly unfavourable, scoring 35/100²⁹. The halfway comprehensive approach to integration of not fully guaranteeing equal rights, opportunities, and security for immigrants has resulted in greater obstacles to basic rights opportunities and security in Malta than in other EU states with comprehensive policies³⁰. These policies and government treatment of immigrants significantly impacts how well immigrants and the public interact, and their perception of one another. Malta's current policies do not encourage the public to see immigrants as their neighbours, equals or fellow citizens.³¹

With a population of over 500,000 people, Malta has one of the largest foreign populations in the EU per capita, where the number of TCNs accounted for 3.6% of the Maltese population in 2009³², and has only increased in the past decade. Yet national policies in the area of migration and integration of

TCNs has not progressed accordingly³³. In 2020, Malta had one of the highest foreign populations in the EU, with 20% of the Maltese population being non-Maltese nationals³⁴.

With regard to racism and related discriminatory practices in political participation in Malta that face this foreign population, the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) report found that *“the general consensus amongst the research participants was that ethnic and religious minorities in Malta are excluded from mainstream politics. For these groups participation in public discourse and political processes, combined with representation in civic and political institutions is essentially non-existent”*³⁵. There has been very limited support for migrant political participation in Maltese government. Attempts have been made to encourage the right to vote for TCNs at a local level, but were quickly shut down³⁶. Although TCNs have the right to join political parties and form associations, their political participation is significantly hindered through the denial of electoral rights, information services, regular consultation and funding for migrant organisations³⁷.

28 Migrant Integration Policy Index Website: <https://www.mipex.eu/malta> accessed 21 March 2022.

29 Ibid.

30 Migrant Integration Policy Index Website: <https://www.mipex.eu/political-participation> accessed 21 March 2022.

31 Migrant Integration Policy Index Website: <https://www.mipex.eu/malta> accessed 21 March 2022.

32 Migrant Integration Policy Index (2011), Huddleston T., et al., 2011, pg. 135

33 Carla Camilleri, Neil Falzon, *Malta Integration Network : a way forward for a National Integration Policy in Malta*, 2014.

34 Eurostat Website: Migration and migrant population statistics accessed 21 March 2022.

35 Jean-Pierre Gauci and Maria Pisani, *Shadow Report: Racism and related discriminatory practices in Malta*, ENAR, 2013.

36 Paul Cocks, Labour Ministers shot down voting rights proposal for non-EU nationals, *Malta Today*, 2018. Labour ministers shoot down voting rights proposal for non-EU nationals.

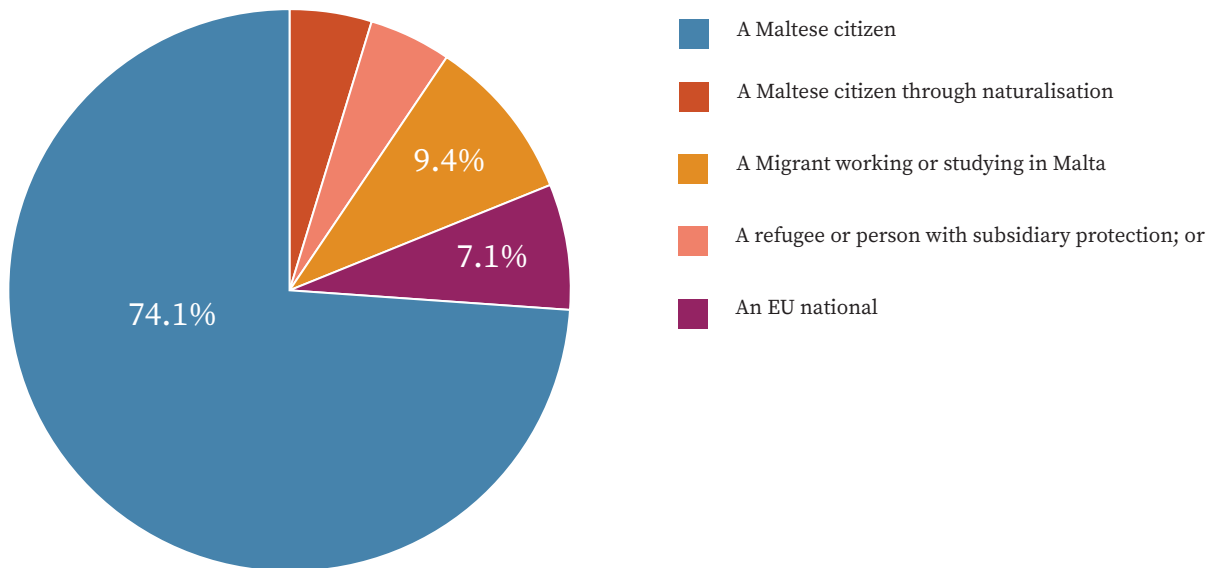
37 *Migrant Integration Policy Index* (2011), Huddleston T., et al., 2011, pg. 137.



A study carried out on immigration and housing noted that those 14% of respondents who were not in possession of a written rental agreement all originated from Sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa and the Middle East

Through an online questionnaire carried out in the first quarter of 2022, the author of this paper gathered the opinion of 85 persons on the political rights of migrants in Malta. The questionnaire was open to the general public to give their thoughts on the political participation of migrants in Malta.

Figure 3: Summary of Status of Respondents



Of those who agreed with granting migrants voting rights, 90% thought that migrants should have the right to vote and stand in general elections. The reasons for allowing TCNs to vote range from the recognition of their contribution to society and paying taxes, to an acknowledgement that they are part of society and that they should have a voice on policies that impact their and their children's lives. Other reasons included the

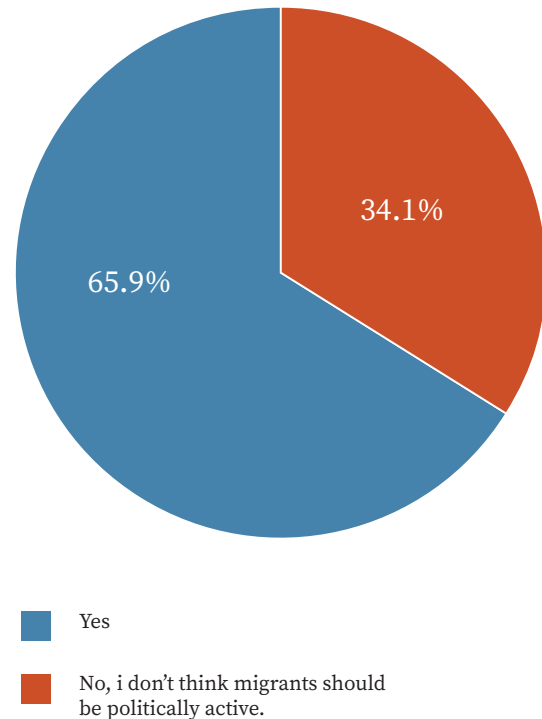
reduction of racism, increased dignity and protection of refugees, and simply because they are “*human like others*”. There were a significant number of respondents who agreed with granting voting rights to TCNs only after a specific residence period (5-6 years), and if they have worked and paid tax in that period.

On the other hand, for those who did not agree with granting voting rights to migrants, the main reason is that voting rights should only be extended to citizens of a country that have the knowledge of how that country works and its history. There was also a feeling of the need to preserve Maltese culture and lifestyle and to protect from foreign influence. Interestingly, a majority of this cohort also agreed with the removal of the right to vote of Maltese citizens if have they not resided in Malta for a long period of time.

As can be seen below, a significant number of respondents were against all forms of political participation of migrants, even if it does not involve the granting of electoral rights. However, of those who acknowledged that there existed other forms of participating politically in society, there was a wide range of what this participation could look like.

Interestingly, a majority of this cohort also agreed with the removal of the right to vote of Maltese citizens if have they not resided in Malta for a long period of time

Figure 4: Respondents on Other Forms of Political Participation



In answer to the question of what activities can migrants engage in to be politically active, the majority said through civil society organisations, NGOs and through consultation at national and community level. One respondent stated that “[u]ltimately it is them who know what is needed to change to allow Malta to be more inclusive. It should be them speaking up and not us middle class white Maltese citizens that have no idea what it means to be a migrant in Malta.”

However, many responded that migrants can and should be involved in the structure of political parties

and political movements, and also in consultation frameworks setup within party structures. Some suggested that migrants can be employed within the public administration and with presence on government boards. Furthermore, some respondents believed that migrants can be active politically through mainstream media, and also education.

However, there needs to be the acknowledgement that voting and politics is deeply entrenched in Maltese culture³⁸. Maltese elections are typified by high-voter turnout, intense competition between the two-main parties and strong loyalty, many times rooted in family backgrounds. This is a result of the “*extremely high stakes at general elections*”³⁹. It is therefore unsurprising that the idea of granting voting rights to migrants is not generally looked on positively.

3.1 Maltese Legislation

Article 57 of the Constitution of Malta⁴⁰ and Article 15 the General Elections Act⁴¹ limits the right to vote in national elections to those who are citizens of Malta, over 16 years of age and resident in Malta for a minimum period of time prior to elections. In addition, Articles 53 and 54 of the Constitution allows only citizens of Malta to stand for general elections.

In line with EU law, Article 10 of the European Parliament Elections Act⁴² outlines that any non-Maltese,

38 DeBono, D., Access to electoral rights: Malta. Access to Electoral Rights Report, EUDO Citizenship, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, Florence: European University Institute, 2013

39 Cini, Michelle, ‘Party politics and the European question: The case of Malta’ - Unpublished paper presented at ECSA-US Conference, Madison, Wisconsin, 2001.

40 Constitution of Malta, 1964.

41 General Elections Act, Chapter 354 of the Laws of Malta.

42 European Parliament Elections Act, Chapter 467 of the Laws of Malta.

EU National over the age of 16 may vote in the European Parliament elections in Malta. Furthermore, Article 5(2) of the Local Councils Act⁴³ grants local electoral rights to any EU citizen residing in Malta who is registered as a voter on the electoral register in accordance with the General Elections Act and the European Union Electoral Register.

It should be noted however that persons between the age of 16 and 18 are not allowed to stand for General Elections, Local Council nor European Parliament elections, irrespective of nationality. Furthermore, a person is disqualified from voting if they are interdicted or incapacitated by a court, if they are under a death sentence or a sentence of imprisonment for over 12 months, or if they are convicted of any offence connected with elections⁴⁴.

There is nothing in Maltese law or policy that allows for or anticipates the extension of voting rights to TCNs in local or national elections. This denial of TCNs’ electoral rights has resulted in a MIPEX score of 0/100 in the first area of political participation⁴⁵.

Currently, the only method in which a non-EU national can acquire electoral rights in Malta is through acquisition of citizenship, naturalisation, registration based on ascendancy or marriage.

3.2 Maltese Policy

Maltese policy on the electoral rights of individuals is extremely controlled, and works on the assumption that persons who are entitled to vote are only Maltese who reside on the Maltese Islands. Although the Maltese

43 Local Councils Act, Chapter 363 of the Laws of Malta.

44 Constitution of Malta, 1964.

45 Migrant Integration Policy Index Website: <https://www.mipex.eu/malta> accessed 21 March 2022.

Constitution states that the State shall facilitate the participation of Maltese citizens who live abroad in the political, social, economic and cultural life of Malta, Maltese citizens cannot vote from embassies overseas and can only vote in the district in which they official reside according to their identification documents. In order for a person to be considered resident in Malta, they would need to have been residing in Malta for a period of 6 months during the 18 months before being registered as a voter in the electoral register⁴⁶.

In 2014, aditus foundation, a local human rights NGO, recommended in its Malta Integration Network report that TCNs should be given the right to vote and stand at local elections and to explore the possibility for certain groups of migrants to vote at national level⁴⁷. However, the reaction from the local political classes was harsh, with the Minister for Social Dialogue and Civil Liberties, Hon. Helena Dalli, stating that it was not a priority⁴⁸, whilst the then President of the Republic stated that granting electoral rights was jumping the gun as “[m]any people in Maltese society have not yet accepted multiculturalism. We are not ready. This would be like deciding to bake a dish of potatoes and then eating them before they are cooked”⁴⁹.

An NGO coalition proposed the same in a consultation submitted within the ambit of a consultation launched by the Ministry for Social Dialogue and Civil Liberties

in 2015⁵⁰. However, this suggestion was not taken on board and the *Integration = Belonging - Migrant Integration Strategy & Action Plan (Vision 2020)*⁵¹, approved and published in 2017, does not make any reference to the political participation of migrants, whether in elections or in civil society.

This recommendation was again reiterated in 2018 by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) in their report on Malta further to its 5th Monitoring Cycle as “it considers political participation and active involvement in community decision-making an important means of promoting inclusion”⁵².

In 2018, the new European Affairs and Equality Minister, Hon. Helena Dalli, proposed to cabinet to launch a study into the possibility of allowing TCNs to vote in local council elections, however this was also turned down by the cabinet of the time⁵³. It was reported that Dalli’s position paper presented to cabinet stated that “[p]romoting TCNs’ political participation is the sign of a confident country that is open to immigration, whereas restrictive policies disenfranchise those who contribute to the country’s development”.

46 Article 57(c) Constitution of Malta, 1964.

47 Camilleri C. & Falzon F., aditus foundation, Malta Integration Network: a way forward for a National Integration Policy in Malta, 2014

48 Tim Attard Montalto, Migrants’ political participation ‘not a priority’ says civil liberties minister, Malta Today, 2014. https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/40159/migrants_political_participation_not_a_priority_says_civil_liberties_minister#.YkMXsOdBxD8.

49 President: migrants’ voting idea jumps the gun, Times of Malta, 2014, <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/president-migrants-voting-idea-jumps-the-gun.523576>.

50 aditus foundation, Integra Foundation, JRS Malta, KOPIN & OFD, NGO Submissions to the Public Consultation on National Migrant Integration Strategy 2015 – 2020, 2015 https://aditus.org.mt/Publications/ngoinputintegrationstrategy_03062015.pdf.

51 Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties, Integration = Belonging. Migrant Integration Strategy & Action Plan (Vision 2020), 2017

52 European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, ECRI report on Malta (5th Monitoring Cycle), CRI(2018)19, 2018.

53 Paul Cocks, Labour Ministers shot down voting rights proposal for non-EU nationals, Malta Today, 2018. https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/91345/labour_ministers_shoot_down_voting_rights_proposal_for_non_eu_nationals#.YjSPdDXTXIU.



**The meaning has nowadays
expanded to also express
frustration at government
policy and politics**

4. Problems Identified

Although political participation is recognised as an integral area of migrant integration policy, EU and Maltese legislation and policy is somewhat reluctant to grant access to full political rights for TCNs. The absence of political rights for TCNs in Malta inhibits overall integration, widening the gap between TCNs and EU/Maltese nationals and the rights afforded to both groups⁵⁴.

As outlined above, the main barrier to the political participation of TCNs is the legal restriction on the right to vote and stand in elections. However, there are other barriers, such as the difficulties TCNs face during naturalisation procedures, which effect access to electoral rights directly. Furthermore, when it comes to being active participants in the political discourse in Malta, the lack of information and consultation, and limited funding or support for migrant organisations, constitute a real obstacle.

Some studies suggest that different migrant organisations have different strategies to cope with an exclusionary political context and that these may not be always rooted in the political structure of the host country but also rooted in the cultural patterns of one's country of origin⁵⁵. Therefore, there needs to be a recognition that a migrant's participation in politics is influenced by two

contexts: the experiences from one's country of origin and those from the host country⁵⁶.

4.1 Social and Economic Integration: No Taxation without Representation

The phrase “*no taxation without representation*” stems from the idea that no taxes should be imposed upon a person or group that have no say in the imposition of such taxes or charges. The meaning has nowadays expanded to also express frustration at government policy and politics. The phrase has gained traction in Malta in discourse surrounding migration, undocumented workers and naturalisation processes vis-à-vis the lack of say and of electoral rights of migrants themselves.

In spite of forming 55% of the foreign working force in Malta, TCNs are not represented politically⁵⁷. The trend of TCN migrant workers forming a larger portion of foreign workers in Malta has been on the rise since 2019, as can be seen in Figure 5 below. This means that an increasing proportion of workers have no say in the policies that affect their everyday lives, such as employment, education and immigration policy. Migrant workers residing, working and paying taxes are not given the opportunity to vote and effect change on policies and issues that affect their everyday lives. The call for ‘no taxation without representation’ has been echoed by

54 Migrant Integration Policy Index Website: <https://www.mipex.eu/political-participation> accessed 21 March 2022.

55 Katia Pilati, Migrants' Political Participation in Exclusionary Contexts: From Subcultures to Radicalization, *Journal of Identity and Migration Studies*, Volume 11, No.2, 2016.

56 Voicu, Bogdan, and Claudiu D. Tufiş, “Migrating trust: contextual determinants of international migrants’ confidence in political institutions.” *European Political Science Review* no. 9, 2017.

57 Jobsplus Website: Foreign Nationals Employment Trends accessed 21 March 2022.

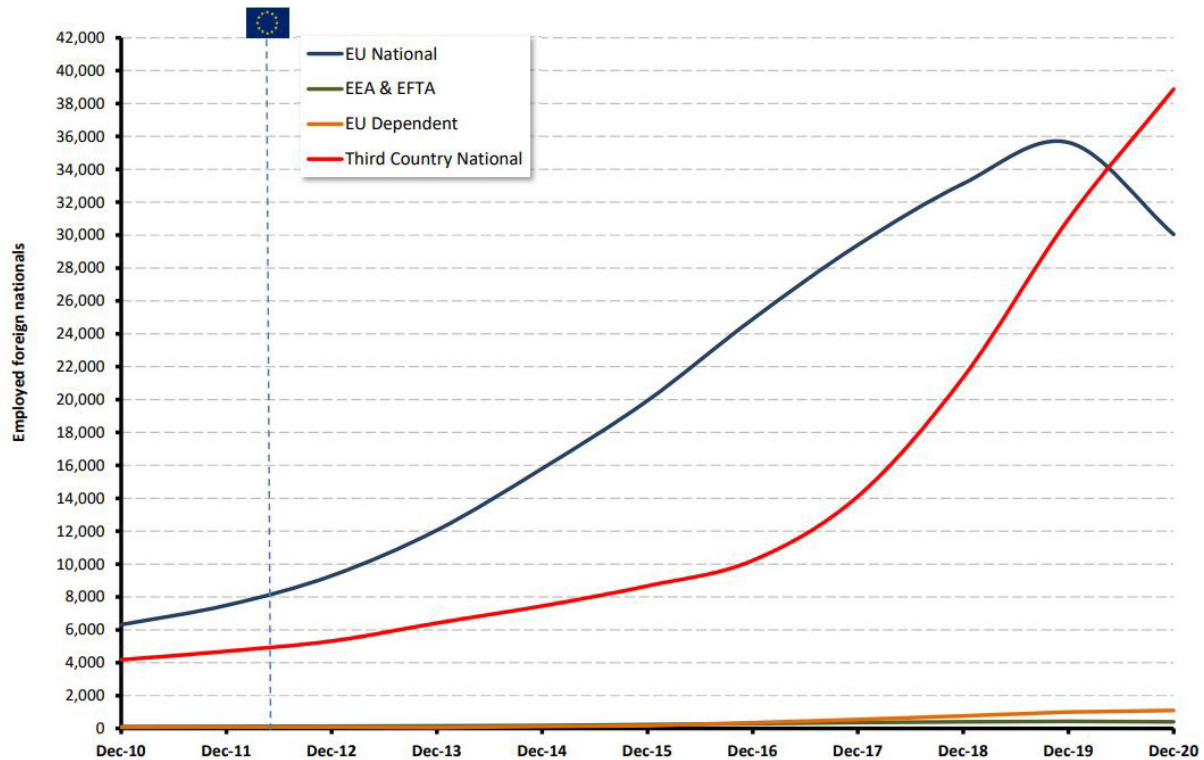


Figure 5: Trend of Employed Foreign Nationals (2010-2020)

Source: Jobsplus, 2020

many within the movement to grant TCNs political rights, who feel it is unjust to require a certain population to pay taxes without mutually benefitting from such contributions⁵⁸.

This results in TCNs who have resided in Malta for years, who have continuously contributed to the local economy through taxes, insurance and other endeavours, being excluded from political life. This exclusion covers

⁵⁸ James Debono, Voting Rights for Migrant Workers: No taxation without representation, *Malta Today*, 2018, [ANALYSIS] Voting rights for migrant workers: No taxation without representation? accessed 21 March 2022.

also TCN business owners in Maltese localities that are also prohibited from voting in local council elections on issues that directly affect their livelihood. As Malta's population becomes increasingly diverse with various religions, ethnicities, and backgrounds, true democracy demands politics to be reflective of this diversity, and truly representative of Maltese society today.

It may be argued that TCNs who have been working in Malta have not "*earned the right*" to vote simply by residing and working, and that the right to vote should be earned through the acquisition of citizenship. However, as can

be seen in the next section, the process of naturalisation for TCNs is a complex and discretionary procedure with slim chances of success.

4.2 Barriers to Naturalisation

With naturalisation standing as the primary way for a TCN to acquire voting rights, the difficult and inaccessible process to acquire citizenship renders voting almost impossible for most TCNs. The extremely restrictive Maltese naturalisation process has been criticised accordingly by international monitoring bodies⁵⁹. Malta's citizenship policy is outdated and does not account for the fact that Malta has changed from a country of emigration to a country of immigration⁶⁰. In fact, it has been considered “grave questions of fairness and justice. Symbolically this is seen in the Minister's discretionary power which, by denying transparency or an appeal, serves to mark a distinction and a hierarchy between a citizen and a non-citizen. The lack of transparency in the decision-making process serves to deter criticism, as does the lack of data which does not permit conclusions to be drawn”⁶¹.

In order to be eligible for naturalisation, any applicant must have lived in Malta for 12 months before the date of application, and for 6 years immediately before the 12-month period and an aggregate of 4 years⁶². The applicant must have an adequate knowledge of the

Maltese or English language and be of good character, capable of being a suitable citizen of Malta⁶³. In addition to the vague and subjective latter criteria, internal policy has restricted the criteria further to make the process of naturalisation almost impossible.

According to the internal policy measures adopted by the Department of Citizenship and Expatriate Affairs (DCEA), applications from persons with refugee status will only be considered after 10 years of residence, and applications from those with subsidiary protections considered after 20 years of residence⁶⁴. Although the law does not differentiate between beneficiaries of international protection and other TCNs, subsidiary protection beneficiaries' applications are typically not considered⁶⁵. There is no time limit required for a decision and the law allows for ministerial discretion where the authorities are not required to provide a reason for rejected applications⁶⁶. Furthermore, the law does not allow for any appeal from the decision by the Minister rejecting naturalisation applications.

Another barrier to naturalisation is the application fee which recently increased from €43.70 to €450, and a successful application requires a further €50 upon collection of the certificate⁶⁷. In addition to the significant increase in price that most migrants and TCNs may not be able to afford, the lack of reasoning for

59 Human Rights Council Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review Thirty-first session, Summary of Stakeholders' submissions on Malta, A/HRC/WG.6/31/MLT/3, 2018 <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G18/257/06/PDF/G1825706.pdf?OpenElement>.

60 Migrant Integration Policy Index Website: <https://www.mipex.eu/malta> accessed 21 March 2022.

61 Naturalisation procedures for immigrants: Malta, EUDO Citizenship, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, Florence: European University Institute, 2013.

62 Maltese Citizenship Act, Chapter 188, September 1964 <https://legislation.mt/eli/cap/188/eng/pdf>

63 Article 10 of the Maltese Citizenship Act, Chapter 188, September 1964 <https://legislation.mt/eli/cap/188>.

64 Jesuit Refugee Service Malta, aditus foundation, Integra Foundation, *Long-Term Residence and Citizenship by Naturalisation: A Necessity for Integration*, Project Integrated Publication, 2018 https://aditus.org.mt/Publications/pipublicationltrcitizenship_2018.pdf.

65 Maltese Citizenship Act, Chapter 188, September 1964, available at: <http://bit.ly/2lz5z8H>.

66 Ibid.

67 Community Malta Agency Website: Acquisition of Citizenship - Agenzija Komunita' Malta accessed 21 March 2022.

a rejected application means they do not have the ability to appeal or enquire about the reason for rejection in the case of reapplying. Families are prohibited from applying for citizenship by naturalisation as a unit, and are required to apply separately and pay for each individual application fee⁶⁸. This results in minors having to rely on their naturalised parents to apply on their behalf⁶⁹. The specific problems relating to minors and children of migrants many times results in individuals who may have been born in Malta and have resided here for all of their lives but still cannot vote upon reaching legal voting age.

4.3 Lack of Consultation with Migrant Communities and Organisations

The lack of consultation with migrant groups and organisations at a national level presents a significant obstacle for TCN's political participation. In most EU Member States, including Malta, consultative bodies are weak, under-funded and dependent on government support, typically being government appointed or government-led bodies⁷⁰. This prevents such bodies from effecting significant change in integration policy and migrant political participation. Finland, Luxembourg and Spain allow for regular consultations with migrant populations and organisations, with such bodies having the right of initiative to make its own reports and recommendations regardless of when they are consulted. Furthermore, these consultative bodies have the right to

a response from national authorities to its advice and recommendations⁷¹.

Malta's integration policies for consultation with migrant groups at a national level are slightly unfavourable and score 25/100 on the MIPEX scale⁷², along with Sweden, Netherlands, France, Slovenia, Cyprus, Italy, Estonia and Romania, where there is ad hoc consultation of foreign residents at a national level. The Maltese *Migrant Integration Strategy & Action Plan, Vision 2020 (Integration = Belonging)*⁷³ established the Forum on Integration Affairs (FIA), which includes representatives from a range of migrant community organisations active in Malta. The FIA advises the Maltese government on solutions for migrant integration and recommends legislative and policy reform to improve relevant government services. These consultations are ad hoc, which means there is no requirement for the government to regularly consult the forum⁷⁴. The lack of governmental consultation with migrant groups and organisations at a national level only exacerbates the issues facing TCNs, where their voices remain unheard at a national level.

4.4 Lack of Information Available and Directed Toward Migrant Population

A commonly overlooked aspect of political participation includes active policy of information at a national level, or regional in federal states, on political participation

68 Ibid.

69 Article 11 of the Maltese Citizenship Act, Chapter 188, September 1964 <https://legislation.mt/eli/cap/188/eng/pdf>

70 Migrant Integration Policy Index Website: <https://www.mipex.eu/political-participation> accessed 21 March 2022.

71 Ibid.

72 Migrant Integration Policy Index Website: <https://www.mipex.eu/malta> accessed 21 March 2022.

73 Human Rights Directorate Website: Integration = Belonging accessed 21 March 2022.

74 Human Rights Directorate Website: Integration = Belonging accessed 21 March 2022; Migrant Integration Policy Index Website: <https://www.mipex.eu/malta> accessed 21 March 2022.

and political or related rights. 14 of the 27 EU Member States had no active policy of information according to MIPEX 2020⁷⁵. These states include France and Italy, major destination states for immigration and recording some of the highest total number of immigrants in 2019⁷⁶. Just 4 EU states had a policy of information by national authorities, targeted at migrants on an individual basis such as individual meetings or one-stop-shop information services. Malta is one of 9 EU states that scores 50/100 on MIPEX and has policies of information on a general basis, which often includes individual campaigns, brochures and updated websites⁷⁷.

This provision of information includes training, awareness raising and community building offered by the Intercultural and Anti-Racism Unit⁷⁸ on a general basis. Furthermore, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM)⁷⁹ works to develop information materials for migrants and manages a website with information pertaining to rights and obligations. The Intercultural and Anti-Racism Unit also offers Migrant Integration Information Sessions (MIIS)⁸⁰, which aim to facilitate integration for migrants. The lack of information available for migrants, pertaining to their political rights and obligation only exacerbates issues facing other areas of migrant integration.

75 Migrant Integration Policy Index Website: <https://www.mipex.eu/political-participation> accessed 21 March 2022.

76 Eurostat Website: Migration and migrant population statistics accessed 21 March 2022.

77 Migrant Integration Policy Index Website: <https://www.mipex.eu/political-participation> accessed 21 March 2022.

78 Human Rights Directorate Website: About the Intercultural and Anti-Racism Unit accessed 21 March 2022.

79 International Organisation for Migration Website: <https://malta.iom.int/> accessed 21 March 2022.

80 Human Rights Directorate Website: Integration = Belonging accessed 21 March 2022.

4.5 Lack of Funding/Support for Immigrant Organisations

Another neglected area of political participation is public funding or support of migrant organisations at a national level. Although many EU states offer funding or in-kind support to immigrant-led organisations that are involved in consultation at a national level, over half of EU states offer no such support⁸¹. Denmark, Slovenia, Estonia and the Czech Republic offer support to such organisations but it is dependent on criteria beyond engaging in consultation with the state, and differs from that of non-immigrant groups. 9 EU states offer funding or in-kind support for all immigrant organisations involved in national consultation with no further condition⁸².

The Intercultural and Anti-Racism Unit within the Human Rights Directorate acts as a governmental coordination body in this area and merely pledges to make the “*best use of existing sources of funding for the enhancement of services, provision of training, awareness raising and community building*”⁸³. Malta is one of 14 EU states that neglect to offer such funding and support to immigrant organisations involved in consultations⁸⁴, scoring 0/100 in this area of MIPEX⁸⁵. Migrant organisations in Malta are not supported by the Government, and their subsequent efforts to improve migrant integration policy and engage in consultations are limited.

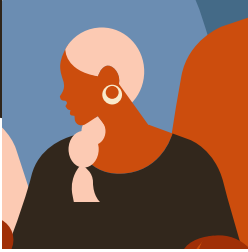
81 Migrant Integration Policy Index Website: <https://www.mipex.eu/political-participation> accessed 21 March 2022.

82 Ibid.

83 Human Rights Directorate Website: About the Intercultural and Anti-Racism Unit accessed 21 March 2022.

84 Migrant Integration Policy Index Website: <https://www.mipex.eu/political-participation> accessed 21 March 2022.

85 Migrant Integration Policy Index Website: <https://www.mipex.eu/malta> accessed 21 March 2022.



Local laws and policies affect migrants every day regardless of citizenship status

4.6 Negative Public Opinion

In every EU state, including Malta, opinions vary on how desirable the inclusion and integration of non-EU nationals is, and which values are essential to the state's identity. Many of these negative perceptions arise out of misinformation spread about the impact of immigration on host country's economies and societies. These perceptions are problematic to the integration of migrants into EU states and Malta alike. Examples of such views on migrant political participation, and relevant points in response, are as follows:

1. Political participation of migrants is not a priority, due to the various pressing issues facing the migrant population regarding employment, housing, education, healthcare, family reunification, residence, nationality and discrimination. This viewpoint dismisses the direct effect that political participation has on all areas of migration and integration policies, and how a comprehensive approach to integration policy means tackling multiple issues at once.
2. The right to vote is a privilege, rather than a right, and political decision-making should be exclusively granted to citizens. Furthermore, those who wish to access the same rights as EU or Maltese nationals

should simply naturalise in order to gain political rights in Malta. This ignores the bureaucratic and discretionary pathway to citizenship that renders it practically impossible to access Maltese citizenship through naturalisation, while high-income TCNs can access citizenship and political rights through the Golden Visa, citizenship through investment scheme. Local laws and policies affect migrants every day regardless of citizenship status, and those with shared interest and involvement in their locality, through residency, working and paying taxes, should have the opportunity to influence those laws.

3. Foreign governments of a migrant's country of origin might try to influence the political process through the establishment of new political parties, weakening the current political landscape. Since the establishment of several Maltese political parties, even they have struggled to make any impact on Maltese politics.
4. Granting local voting rights to TCNs will weaken the argument for withholding voting rights at a national level, and would ultimately result in no incentive to acquire Maltese citizenship. The removal of barriers to both local voting rights and to citizenship by naturalisation will not only increase migrant participation in public and political life, but also incentivise them to become EU and Maltese nationals to enjoy national voting rights and access to public-service jobs.

The exclusion of TCNs to participate in public and political life, and influence the laws and policies that affect their everyday lives, is a fundamental affront to their self-determination and some of their most basic rights.

5. Conclusion & Recommendations

Granting political rights to TCNs in Malta and other EU Member States is a public commitment to the inclusion, integration and equal treatment of immigrants. 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 engagement⁸⁶ and satisfaction⁸⁷. There is a clear correlation between inclusive integration policies, a public sense of public trust⁸⁸ and shared sentiments of civic identity⁸⁹, and lower feelings of economic insecurity⁹⁰. The equal treatment of all residents in Malta is important to foster a sense of community and the exclusion of TCNs from public and political life becomes unjustifiable the longer they are living in Malta. While these TCNs have chosen to live and work in Malta, they are not yet seen as permanent members of society. The extension of political rights, especially the right to vote,

reinforces the notion that TCNs and long-term residents are permanent members of society and encourages Maltese nationals to perceive them as neighbours and future citizens. Local voting rights may encourage TCNs to become citizens through naturalisation and access a wider range of political and civil rights, such as public-service jobs and voting in national elections.

If the right to vote is granted to TCNs, all members of local communities who pay taxes and participate in the community can be represented in government authorities who control laws and policies of the locality. TCNs should be able to politically participate in decisions pertaining to local laws that are binding on all residents, or on public expenditure of taxpayers' money. Additionally, granting TCNs the right to vote gives migrants lobbying power, and would allow them to influence policy makers on areas such as citizenship and LTR. With regard to employment, TCNs could work with trade unions to engage in discourse with employers, employees and possibly government officials, to reform laws, practices and highlight the often abusive and exploitative working conditions that migrants face. With lobbying powers, TCNs will have more opportunities to raise awareness on discrimination faced by the community, and inform other migrants of their rights and means of justice, stimulating the political participation and overall integration of TCNs into Maltese society.

86 Antoine Bilodeau, *Just Ordinary Citizens?: Towards a Comparative Portrait of the Political Immigrant*, University of Toronto Press, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3138/j.ctv1005br1>.

87 Rebecca Welge (2015) Union citizenship as *demoi*-cratic institution: increasing the EU's subjective legitimacy through supranational citizenship?, *Journal of European Public Policy*, 22:1, 56-74, DOI: 10.1080/13501763.2014.881300.

88 Anna Zimdars and Gindo Tampubolon, Ethnic Diversity and European's Generalised Trust: How Inclusive Immigration Policy Can Aid a Positive Association, 2012, *Sociological Research Online*, 17 (3) 15 <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/17/3/15.html>

89 Sarrasin, O., Green, E.G.T. & Van Assche, J. Consensual Versus Heterogeneous Conceptions of Nationhood: The Role of Citizenship Regimes and Integration Policies Across 21 European Countries. *Soc Indic Res* 148, 987-1004 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-019-02222-9>.

90 Marie-Sophie Callens and Bart Meuleman, Do integration policies relate to economic and cultural threat perceptions? A comparative study in Europe, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020715216665437>

In 2015, the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties (MSDC)⁹¹ led the Mind D Gap project, and through public consultation produced a framework document *Towards a National Migrant Integration Strategy 2015-2020*⁹². Through collaboration with Maltese nationals, government authorities, civil society organisations, academic institutions and international organisations, proposals for a Maltese integration strategy were formulated. Consultation with relevant stakeholders consisted of a national telephone survey on perceptions of TCNs and immigration in Malta, aiming to gather as much feedback on migrant integration and possible changes. This survey found that a relative majority of the Maltese population supported the concept of integration, which was defined as “a process of dialogue to help foreign communities participate and contribute to Maltese society⁹³”. Those who opposed integration were generally unsure of the meaning of integration or had little no direct contact with migrants in Malta, while those who were familiar with the concept and had direct contact with migrants tended to be in favour of government endeavours to encourage integration⁹⁴.

Current Maltese and EU integration policies render TCNs to be pawns and passive actors in their own integration. There cannot be truly inclusive integration and migration policies until the involvement of migrant organisations and TCNs in the development and

implementation of such policies⁹⁵. Malta can look to other EU states’ successful and inclusive integration policies as models for reform for Maltese legislation.

In the area of inclusive electoral rights, Ireland grants the right to vote and stand in local elections to all migrants legally residing in the country, including to asylum seekers who are waiting on a decision with their application⁹⁶. Finland’s policies on migrant integration and political participation rank the highest of all EU states, and the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO)⁹⁷ serves as a good model for a national consultative body for authorities worldwide. Since 2015, ETNO has been under the Ministry of Justice and is regularly consulted, has the right of initiative to make its own reports or recommendations even when not consulted, and has a right to response from national authorities to all advice or recommendations⁹⁸. In the area of information policy, Sweden offers all refugees and their families civic orientation courses, and all new residents receive a welcome book with relevant civil and political information, which is available in a wide range of languages⁹⁹. In Portugal there are 3 National Immigration Support Centres (CNAIMs)¹⁰⁰, which includes the Offices of Specialised Support to Immigrants. There is a network of over 100 local centres to support migrant

91 Government of Malta Website: https://meae.gov.mt/en/public_consultations/msdc/Pages/Home.aspx accessed 21 March 2022.

92 Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties, Mind D Gap: *Towards a National Migrant Integration Strategy*, 2015, https://meae.gov.mt/en/Public_Consultations/MSDC/Documents/2015%20-%20Integration/MSD_Report%20booklet_JF_rev4.pdf.

93 Ibid.

94 Ibid.

95 Migrant Integration Policy Index Website: <https://www.mipex.eu/> accessed 21 March 2022.

96 Citizens Information Website: https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/government_in_ireland/elections_and_referenda/voting/right_to_vote.html#l3cc3e accessed 21 March 2022.

97 Ministry of Justice Website: <https://oikeusministerio.fi/en/national-level-etno> accessed 21 March 2022.

98 Ibid.

99 Migrant Integration Policy Index Website: <https://www.mipex.eu/sweden> accessed 21 March 2022.

100 National Immigrant Support Centre Website: <https://www.acm.gov.pt/-/cnaicentro-nacional-de-apoio-ao-imigrante> accessed 21 March 2022.

integration and the High Commission for Migration and the Migrant Support Line created 2 channels of communication to encourage use of relevant services for migrants and refugees¹⁰¹. In Belgium, immigrant organisations involved in consultation on a national level receive funding or in-kind support with no further conditions to fulfil¹⁰². Moreover, all ethnic organisations in Sweden can apply for state funding, are required only to support the principles of democracy and are not required to be involved in consultation with the state¹⁰³. The above-mentioned policies of integration promote migrant political participation through consultation, provision of electoral rights and adequate information services and reinforce the importance for TCNs' political participation.

5.1 Recommendations Relating to Political Participation

- Grant the right to vote and stand in local elections to all migrant residents, including TCNs. Possible conditions for voting:
 - I. Right to vote in local elections based on the number of years residing in Malta.
 - II. All long-term residents will be granted 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.

- Creation of a consultative council of migrants with clear membership criteria and operating rules.
- Include an obligation on Ministry and relevant government agencies to consult migrants, either through the consultative council or other migrant-led organisation, 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 immigrant-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.

101 Ibid.

102 Migrant Integration Policy Index Website: <https://www.mipex.eu/belgium> accessed 21 March 2022.

103 Migrant Integration Policy Index Website: <https://www.mipex.eu/sweden> accessed 21 March 2022.



There cannot be truly inclusive integration and migration policies until the involvement of migrant organisations and TCNs in the development and implementation of such policies

- 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.



Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund 2014-2020
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Sustainable Management of Migration Flows

