



# Country profile – MALTA

<b>NAME:</b>	<i>conventional long form:</i> Republic of Malta/ Repubblika ta' Malta <i>conventional short form:</i> Malta/ Malta
<b>CAPITAL CITY:</b>	Valletta (Population: 9 210 (est))
<b>POPULATION:</b>	382 525 (end of 2000, est.)
<b>AREA:</b>	total: 316 km <sup>2</sup> (Malta 246 km <sup>2</sup> , Gozo 67 km <sup>2</sup> , Comino 2.7 km <sup>2</sup> )
<b>BOUNDARIES:</b>	<i>Land boundaries:</i> 0 km <i>Coastline:</i> 137 km
<b>REGIONS/ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS:</b>	3 regions, 68 local councils
<b>ETHNIC GROUPS:</b>	Maltese

## GOVERNMENT

### FORM OF GOVERNMENT

Republic - parliamentary democracy. The present Constitution was adopted in 1964 and was substantially amended on 13 December 1974 to introduce a republican constitution .

### HEAD OF STATE

President: Prof. Guido DE MARCO (since 4 April 1999). The President is appointed by the Resolution of the House of Representatives, for a term of five years. The role of the President is largely ceremonial, however, he has the right to appoint a member of the House of Representatives as Prime Minister, and also another member as the Leader of the Opposition. If the House of Representatives passes a no confidence resolution in the government, the President has the right to remove the Prime Minister from office.

### PRIME MINISTER

Eddie FENECH ADAMI (since 1998). Members of the Cabinet are appointed by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister and they have a collective responsibility towards the Parliament.

### LEGISLATURE

Unicameral. The 65 members of the House of Representatives (Il-Kamra Tad Deputati) are elected by a popular vote on the basis of proportional representation, using the single transferable vote method, for a five-year term.

### GOVERNMENT - ELECTIONS

Last elections took place on 12 April 2003. The largest number of votes was obtained by the Nationalist party (PN), which forms the present government.

## PARLIAMENT COMPOSITION (APRIL 2003 ELECTIONS)

Party	% of votes	No of Seats
Nationalist Party (PN)	51.79	35
Malta Labour Party (MLP)	47.51	30
Alternativa Demokratika (Greens)	0.68	-
Independent	0.01	-

## ECONOMY

Main Indicators of Economic Structure in 2001		
Population (average)	Thousand	394,5 <sup>c</sup>
GDP per head <sup>a</sup>	PPS	:
	per cent of EU average	:
Share of agriculture <sup>b</sup> in:		
- gross value added	per cent	2.4
- employment	per cent	2.2
Gross fixed capital formation/GDP	per cent	23.2
Gross foreign debt of the whole economy/GDP <sup>d</sup>	per cent	179.2
Exports of goods & services/GDP	per cent	87.8
Stock of foreign direct investment	Million €	:
	€ per head <sup>a</sup>	:
Long term unemployment rate	per cent of labour force	2.8

<sup>a</sup> Figures have been calculated using the population figures from National Accounts, which may differ from those used in demographic statistics.

<sup>b</sup> Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing.

<sup>c</sup> Total Population (Maltese & Foreigners).

<sup>d</sup> Data refer to 2000.

Source: European Commission, Progress report, October 2002

## **EU RELATIONS**

### **ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT**

Signed on 5 December 1970, entered into force on 1 April 1971.

### **EU MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION DATE**

16 July 1990. After the general elections on 26 October 1996, which brought the victory of the Labour Party (MLP), the government froze Malta's application for EU membership in February 1998. Following early elections in September 1998, in which the Nationalist Party (PN) regained power, Malta's application was reactivated, followed by the updating of the Commission's opinion on the application - COM (1999) 69, 15.04.1999 (A4-0165/1999).

### **EUROPEAN COMMISSION REGULAR REPORTS**

[COM \(2002\) 700](#)

[COM \(2001\) 700](#)

[COM \(2000\) 708](#)

[COM \(1999\) 508](#)

### **EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTIONS ON EC REPORTS**

[20.11.2002 \(A5-0371/2002\)](#)

[13.06.2002 \(A5-0190/2002\)](#)

[5.09.2001 \(A5-0262/2001\)](#)

[4.10.2000 \(A5-0243/2000\)](#)

### **ACCESSION NEGOTIATIONS**

Opened 15 February 2000. All 31 chapters closed (December 2002). The Treaty of Accession was signed on 16 April 2003

### **PRE-ACCESSION AID**

For the period 2000-2004, € 38 million is available for Malta in the form of pre-accession aid.

## **HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND**

### **EARLY HISTORY**

Malta has been inhabited for some seven thousand years. In the 9th century B.C., Phoenician seafarers colonised the Maltese islands. A succession of other rulers followed, notably Carthaginians, Romans, Byzantines and Arabs. After a series of different feudal rulers in the Middle ages, Malta and Gozo were ceded by the Emperor Charles V to the Order of St. John in 1530. After the departure of the Order in 1798, French forces briefly occupied Malta. At the request of the Maltese, the islands were placed under British protection in 1799 and formally became part of the British Empire from 1814 under the Treaty of Paris.

### **19TH CENTURY**

Throughout the century, the British authorities continued to strengthen the islands' defences and to develop the naval dockyard.

- 1849: A new constitution provided for a Council of Government consisting of nominated and elected members.
- 1887: A new constitution provided for a majority of members of the Council of Government to be elected.

### **20TH CENTURY**

- 1903: The 1887 constitution was revoked after difficulties arose over the 'language question' and was replaced by a constitution similar to that of 1849.
- 1919: Amid political and social discontent, a National Assembly was convened in Valetta in February to obtain constitutional concessions. In June, riots broke out.
- 1921: The Amery-Miller Constitution ensured autonomy in internal affairs under a dual system of Maltese and Imperial government. A bi-cameral legislature was introduced with a limited franchise.
- 1930s: The constitution was suspended on a number of occasions and amended, notably in 1939
- 1942: In recognition of their heroic wartime resistance, the islanders were awarded the George Cross.
- 1947: A new constitution ensured self-government for internal affairs with a unicameral legislature. The Nationalist and Labour parties emerged as the two main political forces.

- 1950s: Power alternated between the two main political forces and the issue of possible integration with the UK was brought to the fore by the Labour Party after the 1955 elections. A referendum on the issue was inconclusive.
- 1962-1964: A new constitution led to the formation of the 'State of Malta' in March 1962. A majority of electors supported pro-independence parties in the 1962 elections. An independence conference started work in July 1963. Malta gained independence in September 1964, after a referendum held in May 1964, and became a democratic constitutional monarchy.
- 1966: In the elections the Nationalist Party leader, Dr. George Borg Oliver, Prime Minister since 1962, was returned to power.
- 1971: The Labour Party gained a majority in the elections and the Defence Treaty and Financial Agreement with the UK was revised.
- 1974: The Constitution was substantially amended on 13 December, and Malta became a republic. Sir Anthony Mamo was its first president.
- 1979: The Defence Treaty came to an end and British forces left the Island.
- 1987: The Nationalist Party, led by Dr. Eddie Fenech Adami, gained power. In January 1987, it was unanimously agreed in parliament that the party gaining a majority of votes was to have a majority of seats in parliament. Malta was declared as a neutral state and non-aligned, without a military base or foreign interference.

#### **RECENT DEVELOPMENTS**

- 1992: The Nationalist Party held its majority in the parliamentary elections.
- 1996: The Labour Party won a parliamentary majority on a platform which included abolition of VAT and withdrawal of Malta's application for EU membership. The Labour government, led by Alfred Sant, introduced a number of austerity measures, aimed at reducing the public deficit. Malta also withdrew from the Nato's Partnership for Peace (PfP) Programme.
- 1998: Early elections were held on 5 September. The Nationalist Party won after a campaign on the benefits of EU membership to Malta as well as domestic policy issues .
- 2003: Following the majority 'yes' vote in the referendum on EU membership, early elections were held on 12 April and the Nationalist Party was re-elected. The EU Accession Treaty was signed on 16 April.

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#### **Useful links**

European Commission DG Enlargement - Malta webpage  
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/malta/index.htm>

Government of Malta Webpages (index)  
<http://www.magnet.mt/info/general.html>

Maltese parliament (House of Representatives)  
<http://parliament.magnet.mt/>

Malta - Search engines  
<http://www.searchmalta.com/>  
<http://www.maltanetworkresources.com/>  
<http://www.exploremalta.com/explore.asp?cat=88>

Media  
 Maltese media online - index of a number of sites (English and Maltese)  
<http://www.foreign.gov.mt/nb/maltimedia/default.htm>