



# Malta

## National Reform Programme

### Annex Table 3

Reporting on the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights: Description of Main Measures and their Estimated impact

**Ministry for Finance and Employment**  
**April 2023**



Pillar principle	List of main contributing measures	Estimated impact of the measures (qualitative and/or quantitative)
1. Education, training and lifelong learning	<p>Delivery of educational courses under the <i>I Belong</i> Programme</p> <p>Stage 1: Beginner's course in Maltese, English and Maltese Culture. Stage 2: Further learning in Maltese language and Culture. Foundation Course: Basic courses in Maltese, English, and digital literacy for students with literacy difficulties. Completion of these Foundation Courses allows students to be prepared for entry into Stage 1 of the <i>I Belong</i> programme.</p> <p>This measure also contributes to Principle 3 - Equal Opportunities.</p>	<p>Malta continued to promote the integration of migrants living in Malta by encouraging them to attend the education courses offered under the <i>I Belong</i> programme. Learning the mother tongue and national culture are vital for migrants' full integration within Maltese society and national efforts to combat social segregation based on nationality, race and ethnicity.</p> <p>Upon completion, students are awarded a recognised certificate for each subject. These certificates can be used to enter the labour market and are requirements for applying for Specific Residence Authorisation (SRA) and Long-Term Residence (LTR) status.</p> <p>The programme is delivered by the University of Malta, the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), and the Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability - educational institutions among the best in the country.</p> <p>Key figures related to the <i>I Belong</i> Programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over 7,000 individuals have applied under the Programme since its inception in 2018</li> <li>• Over 900 graduates have successfully completed both Stages</li> <li>• Over 2,300 students have successfully completed Stage 1</li> <li>• 26 persons have successfully completed the Foundation Course</li> <li>• In 2022, the Human Rights Directorate received around 2,304 new applications, of which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ 125 persons were allocated in the Foundation Course</li> <li>◦ 1,016 persons were allocated in Stage 1 courses</li> <li>◦ 350 persons were allocated in Stage 2 courses</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<p>Training on anti-discrimination laws and remedial avenues</p>	<p>Under the <i>Equality for All in Malta</i> project, training sessions on Malta's anti-discrimination laws and remedial avenues were developed and given to representatives of religious beliefs, race and ethnic minorities, to empower them to enjoy their rights established in law. This sought to address the underreporting of cases of discrimination based on race, ethnic origin, religion or belief.</p> <p>Three rounds of training were held in 2021 and 2022, which sessions took place online on Zoom in English, with interpretation in French and Arabic available. The training material was also translated into French, Arabic, and Serbian. The last training session took place virtually in February 2022 in which more than 60 participants attended. A total of 111 participants were reached.</p> <p>This project was co-financed by the EU under Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Fund in partnership with Aditus Foundation and the European Network Against Racism (ENAR).</p>
	<p>Diploma in Education for Cultural Mediation</p>	<p>In the framework of the <i>Learning - Exchanging - Integrating</i> project, the Human Rights Directorate continued to implement the Diploma in Education for Cultural Mediation, after its launch by the University of Malta in 2021. This course trains professionals to facilitate harmonious relations between migrants and citizens in the host country, promoting a mutual exchange of knowledge, and the establishment of positive relations between individuals of diverse cultural backgrounds and ethnic origins.</p> <p>The graduation of the first cohort took place in November 2022 with a total of 11 graduates.</p>
	<p>Training to employees of public and private entities on LGBTIQ sensitisation and inclusion. This measure also contributes to Principle 3 - Equal Opportunities.</p>	<p>Training was given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80 public officials at various entities (ARMS, Identity Malta, IPS)</li> <li>• 2 students reading for qualifications in Public Administration at the University of Malta</li> <li>• 50 care workers in elderly care settings</li> <li>• 150 staff at the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers</li> <li>• 275 educators in public, private, and Church schools</li> </ul> <p>178 Malta Police Force Officers.</p>
	<p>Intercept</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project is aiming to motivate, mobilise and support persons not in employment, education or training (NEETs) through a Green Career Pathway which will lead to 300 trained youths in green skills in three countries, of which 100 participants will be trained in Malta. The pilot scheme in Malta was launched in September 2022 and training developed for NEETs is being delivered to the first group of participants. As the greening of the economy will increase in importance, the scheme will boost the pipeline of specialised skills needed for the new green sectors, as well as for modified roles in other key economic sectors. As a result, the initial research phase on NEETs trends, needs and challenges together with the relevant stakeholders' perspective on competences related to green jobs have been finalised. The research results contributed to the development of a training programme aimed to motivate and equip NEETs with skills on green jobs. Apart from that, the research served as a basis on the areas in which Public Employment Services staff will be trained to motivate youths to shape their green career pathways.</li> </ul>

Smartly	The priority of the programme is to adapt vocational education and training to labour market needs while strengthening the employability of young people in a changing world of work. The scheme works towards increasing Malta's supply of required skills while at the same time increasing youth employability in key sectors. The first phase of the project, which included a Survey and Needs Analysis, has been completed. The programme included the administration of surveys in different partner countries to gain insight into the local situation in relation to NEETs and the green and digital sectors. The main trends have been extracted through a thorough data analyses and findings have been presented to the partners. At the moment, a comparative analysis of profiling tools in order to develop new profiling methods to acquire information about the competences and skills relevant to green and digital skills is underway.
Skills Development Scheme. This measure also contributes to Principle 4 - Active Support to Employment.	Supports business undertakings to provide training to upgrade skills of employees, address skills shortages, facilitate re-skilling, tackle skills mismatches and work towards developing a knowledge-based workforce. In 2022, Malta Enterprise has supported 299 training applications amounting to circa €2.5 million in aid.
Get Qualified Scheme. This measure also contributes to Principle 4 - Active Support to Employment.	This incentive is mainly intended to support persons who have completed formal education and who are seeking to further their education in areas that are relevant to Maltese industries. Under the Get Qualified Scheme, in 2022, 1,529 applications were processed, amounting to around €2.4 million in awarded tax credits.
The National Literacy Agency promotes literacy in the community across all ages by means of nationwide campaigns and reading programmes.	While on the immediate level the impact of this measure is palpable when parents and/or educators report increased interest in books, in reading and/or in writing, in the long-term these measures are expected to contribute, together with other variables like ongoing family support and school input, towards the improvement of literacy levels that enable participation in society and enhance job prospects.
The National Literacy Agency promotes literacy through the production and/or distribution of literacy resources.	Children who have reading books and materials that are readily available are more likely to become good readers and writers as adults.
The National Literacy Agency provides/ supports the provision of professional development courses for educators in literacy development and/or intervention strategies.  It also provides information sessions for parents/guardians on early literacy.	The provision of quality professional development opportunities is envisaged to result in improved student outcomes.  Increasing awareness and helping parents/guardians gain skills that promote literacy learning are expected to promote better outcomes for their children.
Support and widen the integration of language learning across the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology.	Over the past 2 years an effort has been made to increase the take-up of foreign language courses within MCAST students and staff. Approximately 100 students/staff per year are applying for these courses. As from the academic year 2022/2023, the foreign language courses being offered are: German, French, Italian, Spanish and Arabic (new).
Identify pedagogical and programme changes to embed better the development of key skills within MCAST programmes.	This measure is expected to enrich further the curricula of all MQF levels 1-5 students. A current review of key skills units is underway that will have an impact on how key skills are delivered, thus enabling them to be more relevant to current vocational courses and industry requirements.
Widen the online MCAST part-time options available to the public.	Widening the study options and accessibility to adult mature workers and introducing new ways to address the particular needs of shift workers in the health, hospitality, manufacturing and disciplined corps at all levels.
The Institute for Education (IfE) offers part-time courses which are blended or completely online to increase flexibility and accessibility.	In the next three years it is estimated that over 350 persons would have benefitted from these courses to become qualified teachers or heads of school. The IfE started offering accredited full qualifications for those interested in becoming qualified teachers or heads of school, in 2018. Up until November 2022, 182 graduates gained the necessary qualification to become a qualified teacher or head of school.
The Institute for Education (IfE) has included a micro placement module in industry in its initial teacher training courses. Course participants are required to spend a number of hours working in industry and reflect on the competencies learnt in order to transfer them to their own students. Micro placement offers the possibility to experience competencies that cannot be learnt at school or during a lecture and therefore it is important to equip those who have the role of preparing our future generations for the world of work and to become active citizens.	All those undergoing an initial teacher training course with the Institute for Education (IfE) will benefit from this. Consequently, it will have a cascading effect on the students who will be taught by these future qualified teachers.  Presently, over 60 contributors from different industries collaborate with the Institute for Education (IfE) to provide the work placements where such competencies can be acquired.
In December 2021, the Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability (DRLLE) launched learningbox.edu.mt - an asynchronous adult learning online platform.	The platform offers an opportunity to adult learners to follow learning programmes at their own pace. It is estimated that during the first year it will attract about 400 unique learners.

		The eLearning College will encompass the synchronous and asynchronous courses offered by the Directorate, giving online learning greater visibility and pooling support resources for learners.
Online hub in the Msida Adult Learning Centre, for persons who either do not know how to access online courses or do not have the technology or cannot afford it.  This measure also contributes to Principle 20 - Access to essential services.		The internet hub was created as a consequence to the pandemic, in order to lessen the digital divide since all the academic courses offered by the Centre went online. It was a necessity as some students did not have access to a personal computer. Number of students who accessed the online hub:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2020/21 - 60 students</li> <li>- 2021/22 - 120 students.</li> </ul> The online hub's popularity has decreased as a physical class is once again available for most of the courses. However, there were still about 40 learners who, despite not using the Msida Adult Learning Centre to follow their online lesson, referred to the Centre to sort out technical problems or to set up their account at the beginning of the academic year.
Revision of craft course programmes to include the skills necessary for young learners to be able to turn their craft into an enterprise.		This initiative is targeted to reach around seventy-five young people per year.
At the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS), some programmes are offered on a part-time and full-time basis, which allows more flexibility. Some of the courses are also offered online only or blended.		This aims to increase the number of students and attract foreign students, whilst encouraging distance learning. Moreover, the ITS Training School has been set up and was launched in February 2023 in order to: (i) further address the need of lifelong-learning, upskill and re-skill workers; and (ii) to offer a more flexible mode of study to prospective students who did not have the opportunity to take up formal education and training earlier in their lives.
Different languages, including English and Maltese for foreign workers, are incorporated within all the programmes offered at ITS from Foundation to Degree level.		This reduces the language barrier of locals and foreigners and increases in communication skills when working within the industry. Moreover, specific programmes offered by the ITS Training School aim at providing a level-playing field among all workers, both in terms of knowledge and skill uptake and also with regard to social mobility and integration.
The Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools is currently in the process of: (i) constructing a new Primary School and Middle School in Victoria, Gozo; (ii) constructing new Primary Schools in Msida and Rabat (Malta); and (iii) carrying out the full refurbishment of the Primary Schools at Hal Ghaxaq and Nadur.		This initiative is underpinned by the belief that the quality of the environment impacts teaching and learning. Once completed, the measure will benefit all the students attending these schools. During academic year 2022/23, the number of students attending these schools totalled 2,010 students, distributed as follows (data as at 01.02.2023): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nadur Primary School: 195</li> <li>• Victoria Primary School: 324</li> <li>• Victoria Middle School: 360</li> <li>• Ghaxaq Primary School: 374</li> <li>• Rabat (Malta) Primary School: 414</li> </ul> Msida Primary School: 343
Increased support for vulnerable students within compulsory education		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each school will benefit from a €10,000 annual grant for the basic needs of vulnerable students to be met. Moreover, Government will design programmes aimed at addressing the challenges that children face. Furthermore, the schools with the largest intake of students coming from a difficult environment will receive additional resources. Scheme 9 will also be extended so that children can benefit from all the categories of support that they need.</li> </ul>
A new laptop for each seventh-year student		Laptop will be given to students in Year 7 in scholastic year 2023/24. The laptop will include digital learning content. The One Tablet per Child Initiative will remain for students in Years 4 to 6.
Strengthening the existing scholarship and tax credit programmes for Master and Doctorate levels.		Increased budget for the scholarships and for each student, thus enabling more students to benefit from a scholarship and opening up more learning opportunities for prospective scholarship applicants.
Fellowship scheme for educators to participate in a fellowship for Master's in Education (Poverty and Social Exclusion).		9 educators from diverse colleges in Malta and Gozo are benefitting from this fellowship.
Catch-up Educational Sessions, for students who may need extra help with their studies to catch up with their peers.		Summer Catch-up classes 2022 - 783 students attending Saturday Catch-up classes scholastic year 2022/23 - 414 students attending
Continuous Assessment introduced in SEC exams, whereby they will include a continuous assessment and controlled assessment. The weighting of each component differs by subject.		Students in Year 9 during scholastic year 2022/23 will be the first cohort whose school results will contribute towards their SEC/SEAC results. The new SEC syllabi are written using learning outcomes and assessment criteria, which clarify learning goals for both students and teachers. Moreover, the new SEC syllabi are divided into three levels and allow for progression, hence widening the range of abilities which are assessed by the MATSEC Examinations Board.  Coursework, which is work set and assessed by teachers as per instructions in the relevant syllabus, contributes to a percentage of the global mark in all subjects. The implementation of the new SEC syllabi will consist of a number of assignments (coursework) that will be conducted during Years 9, 10 and 11. The assignments may be done during lessons in schools or assigned as homework. Teachers will conduct 3 to 5 assignments throughout Years 9, 10 and 11, as per syllabus of each SEC subject. A final controlled assessment will take place at the end of Year 11, set and marked by the MATSEC Examination Board. The final SEC mark for each subject will be based on a combination of the mark of the final controlled assessment and the coursework.

		<p>Vocational subjects will be assessed through two assignments and a controlled assessment annually. The controlled assessment is set by the MATSEC Examinations Board. The assessments are internally and externally verified.</p> <p>This change will enable students to be assessed at MQF 1-3, rather than solely MQF3 (which was the case in the previous SEC system).</p>
	New Lifelong Learning courses in 21st century skills	<p>In 2022/23 these courses have attracted the following applicants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal Finance - Managing your Money: 73</li> <li>• Digital skills - Learn to use your Smartphone and/or Tablet: 87</li> <li>• Digital Skills - Getting started with social media and online communication: 16</li> <li>• Digital Skills - Learn to use the Internet and email: 78</li> </ul> <p>Digital Skills - Getting started with online shopping: 9</p>
	Increased guidelines for further and higher education providers to improve the quality of service provision.	<p>In 2022, the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority published the following steering documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guidelines For Quality Assurance - For Online Learning Providers in Malta;</li> <li>- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) - Definitions, Principles and Guidelines;</li> <li>- Guidelines for ethical practice and research integrity; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• - Draft National Strategic Action Plan for Further and Higher Education 2022-2030.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	Establishment of an education Data Warehouse to systemically store data from various educational data sources within the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation, enabling historical and predictive analysis.	<p>The “Malta the Ultimate AI Launchpad - A Strategy and Vision for Artificial Intelligence in Malta 2030” refers to a pilot project to construct a rich dataset and use AI to assist in driving insights and actions to enhance the education system. The initial project will focus on delivering predictive insights to assist in identifying early school-leavers to help educators take preventative actions to drive better outcomes.</p>
	Development of inclusive spaces within schools: (i) Autism Units within two of Malta's Middle Schools (Handaq and Ta' Paris); and (ii) multi-sensory learning in Qawra Primary and St Joachim Marsascala Primary School.	<p>A maximum of 16 students may benefit from the first two Autism Units set up. Teachers and Learning Support Educators shall receive additional training in inclusive pedagogy and in the delivery of a functional curriculum.</p>
	Gender Corrective Mechanism to ensure gender parity in Parliament	<p>Under this Mechanism, if the under-represented sex comprises less than 40% of all seats after the election outcome is known, the mechanism kicks in to elect a maximum of 12 additional MPs - six on either side of the House. It will only kick in if two parties are elected to Parliament and will remain in force for 20 years.</p> <p>This Mechanism was first put to the test during the 2022 general election in March, which more than doubled the percentage of female Members of Parliament from 13% in 2020 to 28% in 2022.</p>
2. Gender equality	Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2027	<p>In November 2022, Malta launched its first Gender Equality &amp; Mainstreaming Strategy and Action Plan, covering the period 2022-2027 (GEMSAP). This Strategy aims to strengthen gender equality and gender mainstreaming at all stages and in all areas of policymaking by committing the Government to direct targeted and comprehensive measures to achieve full gender equality. The Action Plan addresses various sectors including education, equal access to employment and ensuring equal pay for work of equal value, economic independence, justice, healthcare, co-responsibility and balance of work, private and family life.</p>
	GEMSAP Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC)	<p>Preparations for the implementation of the Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Strategy and Action Plan (GEMSAP) got underway with the establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) which is composed of focal points from all ministries. This Committee aims to mainstream the gender perspective across all policy fields and public services, as well as monitor and evaluate the implementation of GEMSAP. The first Inter-Ministerial Committee was held on 5 January 2023.</p>
	Events and awareness raising campaigns to promote gender equality	<p>The Human Rights Directorate (HRD) organised and participated in events and rolled out several social media campaigns to commemorate the significance of a number of International Days aimed at promoting gender equality and raising public awareness on specific issues in this sector. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• employment and the empowerment of women</li> <li>• shifting the Gender Balance in STEM (International Day of Women &amp; Girls in Science)</li> <li>• addressing Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence</li> <li>• equal Pay</li> <li>• girls and women in ICT</li> <li>• menstrual Hygiene</li> <li>• co-sharing of family and care responsibilities</li> <li>• the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the work and family responsibilities of women and men.</li> </ul>
	Gender Mainstreaming Strategy as per Government policy, is an ongoing measure. OPM Circular No. 15/2012 ensures that policies and practices are gender mainstreamed, as well as to obtain a consolidated	<p>In 2022, the NCPE received 146 reports.</p>

	yearly report on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in governmental departments and entities.	
	Equality Mark Certification for companies that foster gender equality in their policies and practices.	There were 129 certified companies employing around 30,600 employees by 2022.
	Development of an Equal Pay Tool as part of an EU co-funded project <i>Preparing the Ground for Economic Independence (2018 - 2020)</i>	The NCPE developed an Equal Pay Tool (EPT) in 2020 through the Prepare the Ground for Economic Independence (PGEI) EU co-funded project. This is currently being finalised for easier interpretation of results. The EPT allows for the identification of gender pay gap or unequal pay between women and men within an entity, which can produce comparisons of salaries between genders (filtered by qualification, job designation, etc.) and which can show potential cases of gender discrimination based on work value.
	Awareness campaign in 2022 to mark Equal Pay Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Discussions on two TV programmes to create more awareness on the gender pay gap</li> <li>o Distributed information booklets on equal pay (1 English, 1 Maltese) to the NCPE's mailing list</li> <li>o Published an article in a local newspaper on the gender pay gap and equal pay for work of equal value</li> <li>o Created 4 social media posts (in both English and Maltese) on the topic.</li> </ul>
	Directory of Professional Women to enhance their visibility and opportunities for appointment on boards and committees	There are currently 274 women registered in the Directory. The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) carries out regular updates to the profiles and disseminates the Directory through the Government Intranet.
	Equal Treatment in Employment Regulations S.L. 452.95	Ensures the right to equal pay for work of equal value for women and men.
	Launch the Equality Policy, the Anti-Harassment Policy, and the Gender Equality Plan at MCAST	The documents were launched in 2022.
	The NCPE developed and disseminated 2 posters on sexual harassment in 2022.	The first poster emphasised the importance to 'Take Action to End Sexual Harassment at the Workplace' and the second poster sought to be more inclusive and appealing to everyone, irrespective of gender or other characteristics, explaining that everyone can be a victim of sexual harassment.
	<p>The <a href="#">Anti-Racism Strategy 2021-2023</a>, Malta's first national action plan against racism and xenophobia, was adopted by Cabinet on 28 July 2021.</p> <p>Outreach and awareness-raising activities will take place throughout and across all levels of society, particularly the grassroots. The document incorporates 22 measures. It makes anti-racism and anti-discrimination both individual and collective responsibilities across all sectors of society - the Government and the public sector, democratic and political institutions, the media, but also the private sector, civil society, and the general population.</p>	In 2022, the Directorate and its partners (ENAR, Diversit, Kopin, University of Malta, and NCPE as beneficiaries, as well as NSO as Associate Partner) began to implement <i>Towards the Implementation of the Anti-Racism Strategy (END-RACISM-MT)</i> , a project co-financed by the EU under the CERV fund. This project, which will be implemented over a period of two and a half years, will support the implementation of key measures in the Strategy. Actions taken under the framework of the project in 2022 to implement various measures of the Strategy can be found below.
3. Equal opportunities	Anti-Racism Inter-Ministerial Committee	<p>Work continued with representatives of each Government Ministry, nominated by their respective Permanent Secretary, in the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) established in 2021. This IMC aims to ensure a whole of Government approach to anti-racism and intercultural inclusion to reach all policy areas and public services. This includes the integration of anti-racism in all areas of policy and public services, allowing peer support, mutual exchange, and stimulus for best practice.</p> <p>The Committee met four times in 2022, where representatives from the NCPE and civil society representatives who are also members of the Anti-Racism Platform also attended.</p>
	Anti-Racism Platform	<p>The Anti-Racism Platform was established in July 2021 in collaboration between the Directorate and the United States Embassy in Malta and is now led by civil society. The Platform is made up of representatives from minority groups, civil society organisations, international organisations, local councils, academics, and social partners, reflecting the whole-of-society approach of the Anti-Racism Strategy. The Platform is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Strategy and formulating recommendations, when necessary, to ensure that the Strategy's objectives are met.</p> <p>In 2022, the Directorate handed over the responsibility for running the Platform to Kopin, a local NGO. This was done to: (i) enable shared leadership for the implementation of the Strategy in all sectors; (ii) foster a continuous dialogue with key partners on the content; (iii) provide reports with direction and impact of the Strategy; and (iv) enable critical reflection on its implementation.</p>
	Intra-ministerial action	The Anti-Racism Strategy envisages the creation of Intra-ministerial action plans against racism (IMARAP). Through the Anti-Racism Inter-Ministerial Committee, the Human Rights Directorate (HRD) is collaborating with each Ministry to design an intra-ministerial anti-racism action plan to address the policymaking, employment and service provision functions relevant to the Ministry and their contribution under each of these functions to achieve intercultural inclusion.

		Until the end of December 2022, 10 Ministries had submitted their IMARAPs, which the NCPE reviewed.
	Research on racial hate speech in Malta	Under the ambit of the Anti-Racism Strategy, the University of Malta (UM) is carrying out a research study with the aim of deepening the Maltese Government's understanding of racial hate speech in Malta. UM is in the process of obtaining the approval of the Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC) so that the research can begin. The research will be published by the end of 2023.
	Initiative by law enforcement services and immigration services	Also in fulfilment of the Anti-Racism Strategy, training for Community Police officers within the Malta Police Force has begun. Training for officers of the Civil Protection Department and District Police is scheduled to start in 2023. This initiative aims to train law enforcement and immigration officers on human rights and equality standards, to create a culture where racist abuse or failure to meet these standards is regarded as having no place within law enforcement agencies or immigration services and where racism is actively prevented and combatted under all circumstances.
	The EU project 'Equality for all in Malta', funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme, is tackling the issue of underreporting of cases of discrimination based on the grounds of race/ethnic origin and belief/religion.	<p>In 2022, the Directorate concluded a two-year project, <i>Equality for All in Malta</i>, which addressed the underreporting of cases of discrimination based on race, ethnic origin, religion or belief. This project targeted racial, ethnic and religious minority organisations and communities as well as the general public through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• training provided to 111 members of racial, ethnic and religious minorities to empower them to effectively enjoy their rights and the new remedies laid down in the law. Three rounds of training were held in 2021 and 2022, which sessions took place online on Zoom in English, with interpretation in French and Arabic available, while the training material was also translated into French, Arabic, and Serbian.</li> <li>• a campaign targeting the general public raised awareness on non-discrimination and equality. This campaign included sponsored content on social media, including: (i) two 30-second videos; (ii) A3 and A4 posters were distributed, printed and advertised on three online news portals (TVM, Lovin' Malta and Newsbook); and (iii) advertisements on bus shelters around Malta and Gozo.</li> </ul> <p>the development of an awareness model aimed at the level of citizens, through local councils. The Local Integration Charter and the related Action Plan, agreed between the Human Rights Directorate and the Local Councils Association, sought to bring the 68 Local Councils in Malta on board in the fight against discrimination.</p>
	<i>Turning the Tables</i> migrant-led conferences	<p>In 2022, the last five of eight conferences of <i>Turning the Tables</i> took place, a migrant-led initiative that involved the organisation of conferences and the publication of research based on integration-related topics, created in collaboration with UNHCR and the African Media Association Malta (AMAM).</p> <p>This initiative sought to empower migrant and refugee communities to strengthen their capacity to participate in the policy-making and legislative processes by participating and submitting their policy proposals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After the end of the conferences, eight thematic reports were issued that summarise the findings and recommendations that emerged from the conferences: Education, Employment, Documentation, Political Rights, Detention, Integration Governance: The Way Forward, Migrant-Led Initiatives, and a Compendium of Recommendations.</li> </ul>
	Integration Mapping Research	Four <a href="#">Integration Mapping Research</a> reports were created and published by Aditus Foundation in 2022 in collaboration with the Human Rights Directorate. Through this research on the situation in Malta regarding certain aspects of integration, the Directorate sought to understand the existing activities that allow the interaction of migrants and local people as well as the integration services offered to migrants, to identify existing gaps and challenges in terms of migration, and to assess the needs for future services and policies. Research publications have been issued on these areas: <a href="#">Migrants and Citizenship</a> , <a href="#">Migrants and Mental Health</a> , <a href="#">Socialisation and Family Reunification</a> .
	Delivery of courses under the <i>I Belong</i> Programme	Please refer to Principle 1 - Education, Training and Life-long Learning above.
	Diploma in Education for Cultural Mediation	Please refer to Principle 1 - Education, Training and Life-long Learning above.
	Training to employees of public and private entities on LGBTIQ sensitisation and inclusion	Please refer to Principle 1 - Education, Training and Life-long Learning above.
	Training to public officers on Malta Government Guidelines on the Recognition of Sex, Sexuality and Gender	Training to public officers in various entities took place in 2022. These Guidelines provide direction to the public administration regarding the collection, use, and amendment of names, sex, or gender terminology in individuals' personal records or when communicating with service users. This training aims to ensure that existing legal protection frameworks are adequately reflected in public service provision.
	Amending the lifetime ban on men who have sex with men previously enforced by the Blood Donation Unit within the National Health Service	In September 2022, it was announced that all persons wishing to donate blood, irrespective of their sexual orientation, shall be able to do so as long as they have had just one sexual partner in the previous four months. This addresses the lifetime ban on men who have sex with men previously enforced by the Blood Donation Unit within the National Health Service.
	Launch of website aimed at health practitioners providing information on trans health care	The website is available on: <a href="http://www.transhealth.gov.mt">www.transhealth.gov.mt</a> .
	A set of initiatives in relation to sexual orientation, gender identity, sex characteristics and gender expression: (i) study on LGBTIQ+ discrimination; (ii) workshops with LGBTIQ+ community; (iii) capacity	(i) <i>Study on LGBTIQ+ discrimination</i> : The NCPE conducted a qualitative research study to analyse the discrimination faced by LGBTIQ+ persons in Malta, in various sectors of life, such as education, employment and in the access to and supply of goods and services. The objective of this study was to identify the extent of the discrimination experienced by LGBTIQ+ individuals and to increase NCPE's knowledge and expertise in the field of LGBTIQ+.



	<p>building for NCPE staff; (iv) awareness raising as part of the EU co-funded project <i>Empowerment for Diversity (2020-2022)</i>; (v) Final Conference.</p>	<p>The research study was subsequently printed and published online:  <a href="https://ncpe.gov.mt/en/Documents/Projects_and_Specific_Initiatives/Empower%20for%20Diversity/E4D_Research_report.pdf">https://ncpe.gov.mt/en/Documents/Projects_and_Specific_Initiatives/Empower%20for%20Diversity/E4D_Research_report.pdf</a></p> <p>(ii) <i>Workshops with LGBTQ+ Community</i>: Two workshops were hosted with members of the LGBTQ+ community with the aim of discussing the issues being faced by the community, identifying the needs to be addressed, and the current deterrents resulting in underreporting. A total of 10 people participated.</p> <p>An analysis of these workshops was drawn up and published on the NCPE's website:  <a href="https://ncpe.gov.mt/en/Documents/Projects_and_Specific_Initiatives/Empower%20for%20Diversity/E4D_Workshops_report.pdf">https://ncpe.gov.mt/en/Documents/Projects_and_Specific_Initiatives/Empower%20for%20Diversity/E4D_Workshops_report.pdf</a></p> <p>(iii) <i>Capacity Building for NCPE Staff</i>: 13 NCPE staff members attended 4 capacity building sessions in 2021</p> <p>(iv) <i>Awareness raising</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 Facebook stream adverts were produced: (i) Advert on NCPE's remit; (ii) Advert on NCPE's services on LGBTI; (iii) Advert promoting NCPE's complaints and investigation services; (iv) Advert highlighting the benefits of reporting discriminatory incidents; (v) Advert on NCPE's participation in Malta Pride Week 2021; (vi) Advert on NCPE's participation in Malta Pride March 2021.</li> <li>• 1 newspaper advert (1 in English &amp; 1 in Maltese) was published on 7 local Sunday newspapers.</li> </ul> <p>(v) <i>Final Conference</i>: The final conference was held on 24 November 2022 and served to present the overall findings, outcomes and recommendations of the project as well as the evaluation study. 93 participants attended.</p>
	Facilitating Work Life for Individuals with Disability Scheme	Employers and self-employed people can apply for this grant towards the cost of adapting or making the workplace more accessible for employees with disabilities. The aid under this scheme will be awarded in the form of a cash grant and will cover 90% of incurred eligible costs up to a maximum grant of €10,000 for every project.
	The NCPE organised 2 Conferences addressing intersectional discrimination in 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conference 'Women and Intersecting Identities' to mark International Women's Day providing information on the topic, a panel discussion and workshops. 94 participants.</li> </ul> <p>During a session of the NCPE's Annual Conference 2022, experiences of intersectional discrimination were shared by persons who lived or witnessed such discrimination, followed by a discussion. 114 participants.</p>
	Newsletter 'Equality in Sport', published in January 2022	This edition of 'Equality Matters' delineated the benefits of sport participation; discrimination in sports on the basis of gender, race and ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics; recommendations on how to achieve equality in sports; and the NCPE's role as a national equality body.
	In Malta, all registered unemployed receive a Personal Action Plan (PAP) within one month of registration. Personal Action Plans (PAP) are multi-level programmes which offer jobseekers step-by-step practical support aimed at empowering and preparing them for employment.	Increasing the number of employed persons by providing personal assistance to jobseekers in order to ensure targeted and effective response.
	On becoming long-term unemployed (LTU), registered unemployed undergo an individualised in-depth reassessment and are provided with an Intensified Action Plan (IAP) tailored to the specific needs of LTU. Moreover, since 2021, the training and assistance offered through the VASTE Programme have been expanded to include long-term unemployed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The IAP sets short-term and long-term goals which are realistic and reachable. The IAP is updated regularly during subsequent meetings with the Employment Advisor. This update is recorded through the outcome sheet which includes the description of the task/s and its/their aim. The VASTE Programme aims at bringing persons with disability and vulnerable persons closer to the labour market through vocational assessment, support, various training options and job exposure opportunities, which could lead to employment in the open market or self-employment.</li> </ul>
	The Youth Guarantee includes a number of schemes which are designed to help young people under the age of 30 years to continue their education or increase their chances of finding satisfaction and success in the world of work. Measures include the NEET Activation Scheme, ICT courses, SEC Revision Classes, and MCAST Preventive Classes.	The Youth Guarantee (YG) aims at increasing the sustainable integration of youths into the labour market or education. The scheme aims at reducing the rate of early school leavers and, over the longer time, the number of unskilled and low-skilled workers in the workforce. Through targeted measures which match opportunities with industry needs, the supply of specialised skills is improved, narrowing the skills gaps. The scheme also aims at increasing the rate of quality employment which enhances the earning and spending power of participants. Since the coming into force of the Youth Guarantee, the Maltese Government aimed to provide an offer to 6,220 individuals. Nonetheless, according to the latest administrative data, Jobsplus has extended an offer to 8,513 individuals who have completed the YG. Results from 2014 till December 2022 showed that 8,513 individuals participated in the Youth Guarantee of which, 6,220 have completed the scheme.
4. Active support to employment	Skills Development Scheme	Please refer to Pillar 1 - Education, Training and Life-long Learning above.
	Get Qualified Scheme	Please refer to Principle 1 - Education, Training and Life-long Learning above.

	<p>Introduced a package of active labour market initiatives aimed at making work pay. The package comprised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the In-Work Benefit scheme provides additional income for working parents with children under the age of 23.</li> <li>- Beneficiaries who were in receipt of Social Assistance for at least one year who enter into a gainful occupation are eligible for the Tapering of Benefits Scheme. The beneficiary is paid 65% of the social benefit for the first year, 45% of the social benefit for the second year and 25% of the social benefit for the third. The employer is paid 25% of the social benefit for the duration of the three years.</li> </ul> <p>This measure also contributes to Principle 5 - Secure and adaptable employment and Principle 14 - Minimum income.</p>	<p>These measures had a positive impact leading to a decline in the dependency on social benefits. As at 31 December 2021, Malta has recorded 56% less beneficiaries of Social Assistance when compared to December 2013.</p> <p>As at December 2013 the number of social assistance beneficiaries stood at 13,949, whereas at December 2021, the figure stood at 6,191 beneficiaries.</p>
	<p>Liaise with employers and employer representatives to offer training opportunities for MCAST staff to keep abreast of developments in industry.</p>	<p>A set of guidelines are being discussed for formal learning in courses and informal learning through industry experience to occur.</p> <p>MCAST is working on a draft policy document to address mutual training opportunities with industry - industry professionals coming to MCAST to be trained in pedagogy and MCAST professionals learning on-site in industry. MCAST staff members who are interested in furthering their learning are encouraged and supported to do so (for example through the opportunity to apply for a sabbatical year).</p>
	<p>MCAST to offer part-time pedagogy training opportunities for participants who are not serving as teachers (including industry professionals) to contribute to the teaching and learning process within the College.</p>	<p>This measure is intended to increase the number of non-teaching professionals following MCAST teacher education courses and other training opportunities. To date, only one student was not a practitioner in the education sector at all. She took the exit route Postgraduate Certificate in Vocational Education Applied Research. Another student was not an educator but had a part-time lecturing load at MCAST. There were also 3 individuals who were in vocational educational senior leadership roles - deputy directors. Other than those, all participants were either lecturers at MCAST, lecturers at Institute of Community Services or supply teachers in compulsory schooling. A new Masters in Vocational Education Applied Research intake occurred in February 2023. MCAST is working on a draft policy document to address mutual training opportunities with industry - industry professionals coming to MCAST to be trained in pedagogy and MCAST professionals learning on-site in industry.</p>
	<p>The MCAST Apprenticeship Recovery Plan allowed MCAST to encourage more companies to recruit students in apprenticeship programmes.</p>	<p>This measure impacted around 1,700 students.</p>
	<p>Malta Enterprise is supporting entrepreneurship with different schemes targeted at start-ups in different stages for example Micro Invest, Start-up Finance or Business Start</p>	<p>The Micro Invest scheme: during 2022, 3,534 certificates have been issued, with a total value of around €36.5 million.</p> <p>Under the B.Start scheme, during 2022, 18 beneficiaries have been supported, with total disbursements amounting to €975,000.</p> <p>The Start-up Finance scheme: provisional data show that during 2022, Malta Enterprise approved around €7 million in assistance in favour of 17 beneficiaries.</p>
	<p>Active labour market initiatives: Tapering of Benefits and In-work benefit scheme This measure also contributes to Principle 4: Active Support to Employment above and Principle 14: Minimum income.</p>	<p>Please refer to Principle 4 - Active Support to Employment above.</p>
	<p>The Maltese social protection scheme already provides a sound degree of coverage following a short period of employment.</p> <p>Malta has embarked on a national study to determine the level of access to social protection and its adequacy available to workers in different benefits. The study is expected to be completed in 2024.</p>	<p>Workers are provided with coverage following the completion of a short period of employment.</p>

	This measure also contributes to Principle 11: Childcare and support to children.	
5. Secure and adaptable employment	The Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions Regulations	<p>The Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions Regulations, which transpose EU Directive 2019/1152, entered into force on 21 October 2022. By virtue of these Regulations, the employer should ensure that where a workers' work pattern is entirely or mostly unpredictable, the worker shall not be required to work unless the work takes place within predetermined reference hours and days and that the worker is informed by his or her employer of a work assignment within a reasonable time established in accordance with national law, collective agreements or practice.</p> <p>After six months service with the same employer and after completing the probationary period, the worker may request to be given employment which is more predictable and has more secure working conditions. The employer is obliged to provide a written reply within one month (within three months in cases of small and medium enterprises) with a justification if the request of the worker cannot be entertained.</p> <p>Zero-hour contracts are prohibited except for the following cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) where the nature of the activity concerned requires the availability of replacement workers on short notice; and as long as the zero-hour contract is not the whole-time employment of the workers;</li> <li>b) where the worker is a full-time student, subject to any applicable laws, regulations and administrative or statutory provisions.</li> </ul>
	The Digital Platform Delivery Wages Council Wage Regulation Order	<p>On 21 October 2022, the Digital Platform Delivery Wages Council Wage Regulation Order was published. It entered into force on 21 January 2023.</p> <p>By virtue of this Wage Regulation Order, platform workers are entitled to all rights and benefits to all workers such as the various leave entitlements, statutory bonuses and allowances and overtime entitlement.</p> <p>Moreover, the employer would be obliged to provide, at its expense, appropriate vehicles that are properly equipped and maintained in good running order, all equipment and insurance, licence fees and fuel.</p>
	The National Agreement of the Minimum Wage, 2017, allowed for the setting up of a Low Wage Commission (LWC)	<p>The LWC is tasked with establishing an effective mechanism for determining whether the minimum wage will need reviewing. The LWC is made up of equal representations of Trade Unions and employers represented on the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD) together with government representatives.</p> <p>Terms of Reference for the engagement of technical experts will be issued to provide recommendations to the LWC, in this regard.</p> <p>Steps will be taken in 2023 so that Directive (EU) 2022/2041 on Adequate Minimum Wages in the European Union will be transposed into Maltese legislation.</p>
	An online portal will be launched in 2022 with sample templates of work contracts	<p>The online portal with sample templates of work contracts was launched in November 2022. This portal is meant to assist employers in providing correct contracts to workers, while workers will be better informed as to what information needs to be included in their work contract.</p> <p>The information on the website of the Department for Industrial and Employment Relations (DIER) with regard to posted workers was also enhanced: <a href="https://postedworkersmalta.gov.mt">https://postedworkersmalta.gov.mt</a>.</p>
	<p>The Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD) as a tripartite advisory body providing a forum for consultation and social dialogue between social partners and where necessary with organisations of civil society, allows for negotiation, consultation and information exchange between and among Government, Employers' and Workers' organisations.</p> <p>Regular MCESD meetings are held to discuss issues relating to the sustainable economic and social development of Malta. Government, through the Minister of Social Dialogue, may forward specific requests for discussion or requests may be proposed by the social partners themselves.</p>	<p>Leading researchers delved into four thematic subjects according to their field of expertise. The four research themes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enhancing female participation in social dialogue</li> <li>• improving the technical capacity of social partners</li> <li>• expanding investments in R&amp;D and in the new economy</li> <li>• reduction of greenhouse gases</li> </ul> <p>The outcome of the research was disseminated to stakeholders.</p> <p>With regard to the focus area 'Improving the technical capacity of social partners', the research carried out involved both the review of existing studies and first-hand feedback which was obtained from the social partners themselves.</p> <p>Throughout the study, it was noted that technical capacity by itself cannot be as effective when applied to social dialogue as when it is accompanied by adequate management and leadership skills and attitudes (core capacities) and an enabling environment which has the required resources and systems in place.</p>

	<p>The MCESD has concluded an ESF funded project titled <i>Enhancing the positive contribution of social dialogue through evidence-based research</i>, which has a total budget of €111,250. It targeted research and training activities to promote the capacity-building of the MCESD in the field of social dialogue.</p>	<p>A number of gaps in technical capacities were identified and there was the impression that not enough training opportunities were available. Amongst the primary reasons why social partners believe that technical capacity building is inhibited are lack of resources (human, financial and time), limited mandates, insufficient recognition, and a lack of investment to improve internal systems.</p> <p>A number of recommendations were presented in the report designed to improve the technical capacities of social partners on the basis of the research undertaken.</p> <p>Such recommendations include (i) undertaking of training initiatives and information sharing (technical capacity); (ii) flexible and convenient delivery of training or information sessions and sharing specialised knowledge (core capacity); (iii) creating a pool of specialists available to stakeholders; and (iv) social dialogue process improvements and planning provisions (enabling environment).</p>
6. Wages	Study to determine the number of workers who are covered by collective agreements	In 2023, a study will be conducted by the Department for Industrial and Employment Relations (DIER) to determine the number of workers who are covered by collective agreements.
7. Information about employment conditions and protection in case of dismissals	The Work-Life Balance for Parents and Carers Regulations 2022	On 12 July 2022, the Work-life Balance for Parents and Carers Regulations 2022 were published. The Regulations entered into force on 2 August 2022. By virtue of these Regulations: (i) paid paternity leave was increased to 10 days; (ii) two months of parental leave against payment plus a further two months of unpaid parental leave were introduced; (iii) five days leave for carers were also introduced, one of which is paid for the public sector employees; and (iv) workers with children up to eight years of age were granted the right for flexible working arrangements.
8. Social dialogue and involvement of workers	<p>The Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA) published a number of guidance documents and organised several webinars to disseminate information and raise awareness about the benefits of adequate standards of occupational health and safety. These initiatives also targeted foreign workers, who are considered as a vulnerable group.</p> <p>On average, each year, the OHSA carries out around 4,700 workplace inspections, and OHS Officers issue around 600 orders to stop work activities where unaddressed high risks are observed. In addition, each year the OHSA also issues around 1,250 improvement notices, sends 550 letters of intimation to parties deemed in breach of OHS legislation, resulting in an average of €212,000 fines being imposed annually. Around 120 judicial proceedings are also initiated annually by OHSA.</p> <p>(*figures based on OHSA activities for the period 2020 - 2022).</p>	<p>A well-informed industry, where those having a duty under the OHS legislation (employers, clients, self-employed, project supervisors as well as workers) are aware of their rights and duties with regard to occupational health and safety.</p> <p>Decrease in trends for injury and fatality rates for all workers in all occupations.</p>
	The Strategic Plan for Occupational Health and Safety 2022-2027 was published during 2022, following consultation with the social partners in the OHSA Board.	The Strategic Plan for Occupational Health and Safety gives a sense of direction and establishes the priorities for action, taking into account both the EU framework and the national context.
9. Work-life balance	Through its dedicated Data Protection and Information Coordination Directorate, the Ministry for Justice keeps ongoing communication with Public Administration Data Protection Officers (DPOs) in order to ensure proper implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the upholding of its principles. An information campaign was prepared during 2022 to be launched in 2023 toward information and awareness targeted to all employees.	To inform public employees of their rights as data subjects while also consolidating awareness toward the provisions of the GDPR in general.

10. Healthy, safe and well-adapted work environment and data protection	The Free Childcare Scheme assists parents/guardians in finding a better work-life balance whilst promoting female participation in the labour market by providing free childcare services for children aged up to 2 years and 11 months to those families where both parents/guardians work and to single parents/guardians who were engaged in employment. In subsequent Budgets, the scheme was further widened to include parents who were in education, as well as extended to workers working in the evening, during weekends or organised in shifts.	Since the start-up of the Free Childcare Scheme in April 2014 until December 2022, over 29,854 children have benefitted from the service at one point in time. In 2022, 4,029 children started making use of the Free Childcare Scheme.	
	Children and young people are listed as one of the four main target groups in Malta's National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion 2014-2024. Numerous measures have been implemented with the aim to reduce the at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rates for children, targeting each of the dimensions of well-being stipulated in the Strategy (Income and Social Benefits, Health and Environment, Social Welfare Services, Education, Employment, and Culture).	The Implementation and Evaluation reports aim to provide comprehensive evaluations of the effectiveness of the policy.  Implementation and Evaluation Report 2014-2016 - <a href="https://family.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Implementation-and-Evaluation-Report-2014-2016.pdf">https://family.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Implementation-and-Evaluation-Report-2014-2016.pdf</a> Implementation and Evaluation Report 2017-2019 - <a href="https://family.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/NSP-Web.pdf">https://family.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/NSP-Web.pdf</a>	
	<p>The Maltese Social Protection Scheme provides for a number of benefit measures intended for children, namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An income-related child allowance whereby low-income families are paid the highest rate of benefits whilst still guaranteeing a fixed rate of payment for high earning families as well as a flat rate child allowance supplement based on the same parameters;</li> <li>2. A flat rate disabled child allowance;</li> <li>3. A foster care allowance is awarded to authorised foster carers providing a foster care service to a child, until the child reaches 21 years of age;</li> <li>4. A childbirth bonus for each new born or adopted child in order to cater for the initial financial expenses brought about by a new child in the family;</li> <li>5. An orphan allowance for orphans under the age of 16 years and an orphan's supplementary allowance for orphans between the age of 16 and 21 years which remains payable even if the orphan is in employment;</li> </ol> <p>A pension supplement for widow/ers' pension recipients when raising under age children.</p>	<p>Almost 43,500 persons benefitted from children's allowance between January and September 2021.</p> <p>1,731 persons benefitted from disabled children's allowance between January and September 2021.</p> <p>190 persons benefitted from foster care allowance between January and September 2021.</p> <p>2,365 persons benefitted from child and adoption bonus between January and September 2021.</p> <p>8 persons benefitted from orphan's allowance between January and September 2021.</p> <p>No data is yet available.</p>	
11. Childcare and support to children	In 2021, a new healthcare service for children in alternative care was set up aiming to provide a holistic medical plan, ensuring all are properly vaccinated,	Initial Health Assessment (IHA) - where LAC minors were reviewed for the first time by looked after children healthcare service (LACHS)	278

<p>have proper dental care and the children's emotional wellbeing is being adhered to.</p> <p>Minors living in alternative care often come from disadvantaged backgrounds and are known to be at a greater risk for health problems than the average minor. This measure is aimed to provide adequate and ongoing healthcare.</p> <p>The objectives of the initial health assessments and review health assessments that follow are mainly to improve the health needs and outcomes of Looked After Children (LAC).</p>	<p>Review Health assessment (RHA) of the initial health assessment takes place around six months later unless acute problems are identified earlier</p>	73	
	<p>ADHOC reviews includes assessment of minors seen for other reasons apart from IHA or RHA e.g. Administration of vaccines; new onset health complaint, children to be adopted etc.</p> <p>Total</p>	213 564	
<p>The Directorate for Child Protection Services focuses on investigating reports of child abuse and taking any necessary action so as to ensure the protection of minors.</p> <p>Through a highly specialised forensic system, this multi-disciplinary team engages children and their families to determine the difficulties that hinder the well-being of the minors.</p>	<p>Between January and June 2021, Child Protection Services (CPS) worked with 2,053 cases between 0-17 years of age.</p>		
<p>6. In accordance with the Minors' Protection (Alternative Care) Act, Chapter 602 of the Laws of Malta, all children in alternative care have to be so declared by Court decree, whereby they then become the responsibility, as per the same Act, of the Director for Alternative Care.</p>	<p>Better quality of care and personalised care, in line with Malta's constant commitment to address de-institutionalisation. Between January and December 2021, 473 children benefitted from the service for alternative care.</p>		
<p>Strengthening the foster care system for children who cannot stay with their families by ensuring that all foster placements are given all the necessary support, in a drive to attract more foster families. Malta has also increased the benefit given to foster carers, for the second time round, in an attempt to further aid these families. In 2021, the helpline for foster carers - 1778 - was launched.</p>	<p>In 2021, the Fostering Services worked with 234 minors and 41 individuals who were over 18 years of age.</p>		
<p>Support to individuals or families who are considering adoption, are in the process of adopting, and those who have adopted a child or children. The service provides training as a form of preparation for families who wish to adopt. Sessions include information on children, biological parents, inter-country adoptions, and trauma.</p> <p>Every inter-country adoption benefits from a maximum of €10,000 on presentation of the original receipts. Local adoptions benefit up to €1,000 for those children adopted.</p>	<p>Between January and June 2021, the Adoption Service worked with 196 cases between 0 and 17 years of age.</p>		
<p>The professionals who work within the LAC Service work with minors who reside in out-of-home care placements within the Children's Directorate (Alternative Care). Ages vary from babies to adolescents, who receive the necessary care and attention from the foster care or residential placements.</p>	<p>In 2021, the LAC Services worked with 480 children.</p>		

	The service aims to formulate regular care plans that develop according to the needs of the children and young persons in concern. The care plan is discussed and confirmed by a Review Board. The LAC professionals ensure that the minors have stability in their placements by conducting regular visits, and also by maintaining frequent contact with the biological parents and other professionals involved in the case.	
	More support to persons leaving care to facilitate their independent living and ensure a good quality of life. This support is offered whilst children are still in care, in order to monitor them during their transition into adulthood.	The service started in July 2021. Since July 2021, the service worked with 74 persons.
	Supervised Access Visits (SAVs) are supervised meetings between children and the non-custodial parents or other family members when access is not possible otherwise.	In January-June 2021, SAVs worked with 283 cases, out of which 36 cases were between 0 and 17 years of age.
	Courts Services: In situations deemed appropriate by the Judge of the Family Court, a social worker is appointed to prepare a court report. Following an assessment, the social worker submits recommendations relating to care and custody of minors or on other issues. In cases of separation, Court Services may be appointed by the Family Court to investigate allegations of abuse of minors. As part of the investigation, Court Experts interview the parents and children, as well as other professionals who are or were in contact with the family. The Court Expert draws up recommendations, taking into consideration the feedback from all the involved parties.	This initiative supports, or influences, 90 to 100 families per year. In total, this would amount to approximately 200 children and more.
	BeSmartOnline! is the internet helpline where the general public can reach out for support on online-related issues, especially issues relating to cyberbullying, sexting and grooming.	Between January and June 2021, there were:  - 172 reports to the hotline. These refer to URLs containing child sexual abuse material which are reported through the online reporting platform: <a href="http://childwebalert.gov.mt">childwebalert.gov.mt</a> .  536 reports to the helpline. These cases are received through the support line (179) or through referrals from schools, other professionals, parents or caregivers, or children themselves who would need help and support regarding internet-related risks such as cyberbullying, grooming, sexting or over-exposure online.
	Services aimed at informing the general public as well as helping people to lead healthy lifestyles away from addictions are also offered.	Between January and June 2021, 9,848 children were reached through the different initiatives.
	Support services within the health sector offer a range of services for children and adolescents and their families who are facing some sort of difficulties with the involvement of the children themselves as well as their family members.	Between January and June 2021, the Children and Young Person's Support (CYPS) worked with 375 cases that are between 0 and 17 years of age.
	The Support line 179 is the Maltese National Helpline. The Support line is a free phone number which is accessible on a 24/7 basis, and which offers support, information about local social welfare services and other agencies. It is also a referral system to callers who require support and a service for those who are in times of difficulty and crisis.	- A total of 7,145 calls were received between January and June 2021 from all ages. 99 calls were identified as minors.
	'Youth in Focus' provides social work intervention to adolescents and young persons, aged between 13 and 18.	Between January and June 2021, 'Youth in Focus' worked with 179 cases between 0 and 17 years of age. In total, the service worked with 225 clients.



<p>The Adolescent Day Programme (ADP) addresses the needs of young people who are at risk of poverty and social exclusion. The service caters for young people between the ages of 14 and 18 who exhibit challenging behaviour.</p>	<p>Between January and June 2021, the Adolescent Day Programme (ADP) worked with 9 cases between 0 and 17 years of age. In total, the service worked with 10 clients.</p>														
<p>'Embark for Life' addresses the needs of young people who are at risk of social exclusion. These include youth between the ages of 15 and 25, who, for various reasons and life situations, face difficulties in finding or maintaining employment.</p>	<p>Between January and June 2021, the 'Embark for Life' (E4L) worked with 417 cases between 15 and 25 years of age.</p>														
<p>'Opportunity Knocks' (OK) project works with youth to learn and enhance skills, boost their employment possibilities and other opportunities to help them reach their goals and advance in their career.</p>	<p>2,129 youths were reached through the prevention campaigns held in different settings such as schools, scout groups, youth groups and football centres, amongst others.</p> <p>The multi-disciplinary team of professionals offered integrated services to a total of 456 youths, whilst 154 of these benefitted from an opportunity and 55 youths benefitted from therapeutic workshops. A total of 22 youths resided in a safe house and benefitted from the OK project.</p> <p>In the meantime, the Project Promoter (PP) also focused upon augmenting its collaboration with other stakeholders involved in the field of children and youth. Various meetings (a total of 110 formal meetings) are being held with the Department of Education, the Department of Health and other similar entities in order to promote the project and its objectives whilst building bridges for further collaboration. A Memorandum of Understanding was also signed between the FSWS and the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) to facilitate educational opportunities targeting the shared cohort.</p> <p>Moreover, 12 training modules were offered to professionals in various subjects such as youth mental health first aid, management of actual or potential aggression, suicidal and non-suicidal self-injuries risk assessment, emotional intelligence, positive parenting for parents of teenagers, and influencing behaviour.</p>														
<p>Provision of Community Services, whereby services of social work and mentoring are offered in the following communities: Qawra, Mosta, Msida, Birkirkara, Valletta, Cottonera and Żabbar.</p>	<p>There were 1,185 one-to-one interventions/family interventions who benefitted from the Community Services, out of which 53 were children between 0- 17 years of age.</p> <p>Every community service carries out group interventions, such as the Dawra Durella Club in Qawra. These amount to 203 which are disaggregated as follows:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1222 1142 1798 1625"> <tr> <td>Qawra</td> <td>28 participants</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Valletta</td> <td>11 participants</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cottonera</td> <td>73 participants</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Xgħajra/Żabbar</td> <td>16 participants</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Southern Community Services</td> <td>58 participants</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Msida and Birkirkara</td> <td>17 participants</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>203 participants</td> </tr> </table>	Qawra	28 participants	Valletta	11 participants	Cottonera	73 participants	Xgħajra/Żabbar	16 participants	Southern Community Services	58 participants	Msida and Birkirkara	17 participants	TOTAL	203 participants
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Msida and Birkirkara	17 participants														
TOTAL	203 participants														
<p>The Home-Based Therapeutic Services (HBTS) is composed of a multi-disciplinary team of professionals, providing therapeutic support to families, children, and individuals around Malta and Gozo.</p> <p>The Incredible Years® Parent and Children Programmes form one of the pillars falling under Home-Based Therapeutic Services. It works on the prevention and</p>	<p>Between January and June 2021, the HBTS worked with 531 cases, out of which 219 were children between 0 and 17 years of age.</p> <p>Between January and June 2021, the Incredible Years® worked with 233 cases.</p>														



<p>treatment of behavioural problems among children and parenting difficulties. Home-Based Parenting Programme can be provided for parents, in their family home setting, on a one-to-one basis.</p>	
<p>Intake and Family Support Service (IFSS) provides social work interventions and assistance to children and their families. This service has sub-teams working on homelessness and human trafficking.</p>	<p>Between January and June 2021, the IFSS worked with 894 cases, out of which 118 were children between 0 and 17 years of age.</p>
<p>Out of Hours Emergency Service: A team of social workers who are on call after office hours to intervene in special situations requiring immediate assistance, primarily cases related to child protection, domestic violence and children in care.</p>	<p>The Out of Hours Emergency Service dealt with 176 interventions of minors aged between 0 and 17 years for the period January to June 2021.</p>
<p>The Children's Fund is a collective voluntary effort to raise funds to support children in need who currently use the services provided by the FSWS. The Fund assists children to provide them with equal opportunities in life as their peers. It tries its best to provide basic amenities for each child, and the help provided varies according to the different needs which are identified by the social workers, and which are presented in the application.</p>	<p>250 kids benefitted from the Children's Fund in 2021.</p>
<p>Home Start Service (Malta and Gozo): Home Start provides one-to-one and other support for parents. Typically, trained volunteers visit the family's home for a couple of hours every week. Volunteers adapt their support to the needs of the parents and children.</p>	<p>Between January and June 2021, Home Start Malta worked with 55 cases whilst Home Start Gozo worked with 66 cases.</p>
<p>The Government provides food packages aimed at assisting families at risk of poverty and social exclusion through the Fund for the European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) as well as the State Funded Food Distribution (SFFD)</p>	<p>SFFD: There were two distributions in 2021 where 15,088 and 14,342 boxes were collected. FEAD: There were three distributions where 2,503, 2,062, and 2,106 boxes were collected. TOTAL: 36,101 boxes</p>
<p>The FSWS branch in Gozo provides the following children's services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- generic social work service;</li> <li>- Home Start Gozo;</li> <li>- fostering;</li> <li>- LAC;</li> <li>- HBTS;</li> <li>- social work service provided at the Gozo General Hospital;</li> <li>- SAVs;</li> <li>- Emergency On-Call Service;</li> <li>- generic social work within the community of Marsalforn;</li> <li>- psychotherapist services;</li> </ul> <p>TFAL 3 and TFAL 5 Preventive Programmes.</p>	<p>The FSWS has set up the Gozo Directorate to ensure that its services to vulnerable persons are extended to Gozo without any compromise in quality. This obviously improves accessibility.</p> <p>The following is a brief overview of the figures between January and June 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- generic social work service: 159 cases (all cases, not only minors);</li> <li>- Home Start Gozo: 66 cases;</li> <li>- social work service provided at the Gozo General Hospital: 377 (all cases, not only minors);</li> </ul> <p>generic social work within the community of Marsalforn: 79 cases (all cases, not only minors).</p>
<p>The Psychological Services offer a generic service and host an interdisciplinary team made up of psychologists, family therapists, psychotherapists and counsellors.</p> <p>The service also offers positive parenting courses and courses for parenting when separated.</p>	<p>Between January and June 2021, the Psychological Services worked with 721 cases, out of which 198 were children between 0 and 17 years of age.</p>
<p>The Foundation for Educational Services (FES) employs a Programme Coordinator (Inclusion) who supports those children that have disabilities and/or</p>	<p>The FES is striving to support those children with disabilities and/or medical conditions so that they would have equal access to early childhood education and care as those children without disabilities and/or medical conditions.</p>

	have been diagnosed with medical conditions. The FES also accepts such children on a reduced adult-to-child ratio so that a more personalised service is provided.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The FES has its own Social Board which vets social cases transferred by the Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS). Depending on the availability of the childcare centre, the FES Social Board accepts such social cases by giving priority to attendance and exemption of fees (even if such social cases do not benefit from the Free Childcare Scheme).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The FES Social Board is giving access to those parents who are striving to find employment and/or follow a course of studies so that their children, hailing from such disadvantaged backgrounds, would have a measure of protection from poverty.</li> </ul>
	Implementation of National Standards for Early Childhood Education and Care Services (0 to 3 years of age) published in October 2021.	The new Standards were published together with the Registration Criteria for Childcare Settings, whereby education quality and environmental quality work together. An implementation plan was also developed for the gradual implementation of the Standards. According to the implementation plan, this will lead to improved quality of service in relation to the physical environment and to improved quality of educational services through the upskilling of the workforce. This measure impacts all childcare services (165 childcare centres in January 2023) and all children who attend them. The share of children aged between 0 and 2 attending childcare: 37.5% (2017), 32.1% (2018), 37.8% (2019), 29.7% (2020) and 24.0% (2021) (source: NSO).
	Implementation of the policy on Childhood Education and Care National Policy Framework for Malta and Gozo.	Progress on the implementation of the five goals detailed in the policy, i.e. (i) Accessibility; (ii) Upskilling of the workforce; (iii) Curriculum; (iv) Monitoring and Evaluation; and (v) Governance and Funding, is being monitored and evaluated through external quality assurance mechanisms. These work hand in hand with the National Standards for Early Education.
	Implementation of the emergent curriculum as part of the Learning Outcomes Framework.	<p>The Learning Outcomes Framework was launched in 2015 and its gradual roll-out in schools started in 2018. Progress is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2018/19 - Kindergarten 1 and Years 3 &amp; 7</li> <li>- 2019/20 - Kindergarten 2 and Years 4 &amp; 8</li> <li>- 2022/23 - Years 1, 5 and 9.</li> </ul> <p>The Learning Outcomes Framework will be implemented gradually in other school years (2023/24: Years 2, 6 and 10; 2024/25: Year 11).</p> <p>Complementing the Learning Outcomes Framework, focus on the emergent curriculum will enable educators to encourage students' natural curiosity and imagination to build upon students' existing knowledge and skills. This has the potential to improve the education of all students attending early years education in Malta (i.e. childcare, kindergarten, and Years 1 and 2) and also have a lasting effect on these students throughout their lifelong educational journey as it can kindle a thirst for learning and for being independent learners.</p>
	<p>The Maltese Social Protection scheme already provides a sound degree of coverage following a short period of employment, in the form of social assistance.</p> <p>This measure also contributes to Pillar 5: Secure and adaptable employment.</p>	Please refer to Pillar 5: Secure and adaptable employment above.
	The sickness benefit provides income security in case of illness. It furthers the fulfilment of the human rights with regard to health and social security, while supporting public health and the prevention of poverty. For the period covered by the sickness benefit, the insured person will be awarded Social Security Contributions credits provided no part wages or salaries are being paid.	Provisional figures for 2021 indicate that 19,468 persons benefitted from this measure.
	An Invalidity Pension is awarded to an eligible person below retirement age who is certified as being incapable for suitable full-time or part-time employment or self-employment due to a serious disease or physical or mental impairment.	Between January and September 2021, there were 2,988 persons in receipt of an Invalidity Pension.

	It may also be awarded to a person who had a claim for Injury Benefit accepted and was therefore certified to have suffered more than 90% disablement resulting from the same injury or a disease arising out of, or during, the course of his employment or self-employment.	
12. Social protection	In terms of unemployment benefits, the Maltese scheme provides criteria in order to include also self-employed workers under the scope of unemployment benefits.	Provisional figures for 2021 indicate that 1,882 persons benefitted from unemployment benefits.
	Special unemployment benefit may be awarded to an eligible person who also qualifies for the unemployment assistance and is the head of household. A higher rate of unemployment benefit is awarded if the registrant also qualifies for the means-tested unemployment assistance.	Provisional figures for 2021 suggest that 138 persons benefitted from the special unemployment benefits.
	Malta practices a minimum income scheme through the provisions of the Social Security Act (Cap. 318 of the Laws of Malta), with the objective to ensure that nobody falls behind. Coupled with the introduction of Active Labour Market Policies (ALMP) for persons who reintegrate in a working environment.  This measure also contributes to Principle 4: Active Support to Employment above and Principle 5: Secure and adaptable employment.	The Tapering of Benefits Scheme and the In- Work Benefit Scheme have had a positive impact leading to a decline in the dependency on social benefits. As at 31 December 2021, Malta has recorded 56 per cent less beneficiaries of Social Assistance when compared to December 2013.  The temporary COVID-19-related support measures were paid to almost 6,700 beneficiaries, thus safeguarding their employment status.
13. Unemployment benefits	Social Regulatory Standards for Residential Services for Senior Citizens Regulations  Legal Notice 322 of 2021 dated 6 <sup>th</sup> August 2021  This measure also contributes to Principle 18 - Long-term Care and Principle 20 - Access to Essential Services.	The aim of these Social Regulatory Standards is to ensure that senior citizens living in residential care homes receive the best possible care and achieve the best outcomes possible in their circumstances. The Social Regulatory Standards define the service providers' responsibilities towards their residents and ensure that service users and their families have information about what to expect when making use of these residential services.  Given the increase in such residential services for senior citizens, the Authority introduced these Social Regulatory Standards to ensure consistency in the quality of residential services offered by different service providers.  The estimated number of service users is 5,109.
	Social Regulatory Standards for High Dependency Chronic Care Services for Older Persons Regulations  Legal Notice 36 of 2020 dated 28 <sup>th</sup> February 2020  This measure also contributes to Principle 18 - Long-term Care and to Principle 20 - Access to Essential Services.	The aim of these Social Regulatory Standards is to set standards which ensure that persons in residential settings requiring high dependency chronic care services receive specialised assistance to meet their medical and psychological needs. In addition to physical health needs, these Social Regulatory Standards also consider residents' mental, social and personal health, and include Quality Indicators which uphold the basic principles of dignity, privacy, right of choice, security, achievement of personal potential, equality, individuality, and diversity.  Through the implementation of these Social Regulatory Standards, all service users in such settings will receive specialised geriatric care which supports their quality of life and will be supported to achieve their goals. For service providers, these Social Regulatory Standards will provide clear guidelines on how they should respect residents' dignity, and provide them with the proper healthcare, social care and personal care.  The estimated number of service users is 1,334.
14. Minimum income	The Maltese Protection Scheme addresses old-age income and pensions. The scheme has been reviewed in terms of equality of treatment between men and women whereby all gender-based differences in benefit rates have been addressed and amended accordingly. The pension mechanism is reviewed every five years in order to ensure the adequacy and sustainability of the system. The last review has been completed in 2020.	70,305 persons benefitted from the old-age pensions measure in 2020.  17,829 persons benefitted from increases introduced to pensions in relation to widowhood in 2020.

15. Old age income and pensions	Increase in the tax exemption cap on pensions in 2019, 2020 and 2021.	The number of pensioners who benefitted from tax reductions was 5,156 between 2019 and 2020.
	Recognition of social security contributions paid before reaching the age of 18 or 19 - implemented in 2021.	Provisional figures for 2021 indicate that 820 persons benefitted from this measure.
	Recognition as widow/widower for those in a civil union or cohabitation, thus enabling the survivor to be eligible for widows' pension - implemented in 2021.	Provisional figures for 2021 indicate that two persons benefitted from this measure.
	Adding free medicines and treatments by extending the Government Formulary List to include: (i) osteoporosis treatment; (ii) new medicines for the treatment of circulatory diseases; (iii) psychiatric medicines; (iv) treatment of anaphylaxis; (v) new medicines for the treatment of rare diseases; (vi) free medicines for IVF patients; (vii) the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination that will be given to all boys born in the year 2000 and after; (viii) the Pneumococcal Conjugate (PCV 20) vaccination for patients over 65 years; (ix) medicines for multiple sclerosis; (x) medicines in relation to dermatology; medicines for diabetes.	For 2023, the Government is allocating:  (i) €107,000 for osteoporosis treatment, which benefits around 1,220 patients; (ii) €20,000 for medicines for the treatment of circulatory diseases, which benefits around 1,400 patients; (iii) €4 million for 14 psychiatric medicines that will address the needs of around 33,000 patients and reduce the length of time a person has to spend in hospital on psychiatric care; (iv) €140,000 for the treatment of anaphylaxis, which is a severe allergic reaction that is also potentially life-threatening. This will benefit around 1,400 patients. The treatment will be provided in 325 schools to be administered to students in case of emergency; (v) €1.04 million for new medicines for the treatment of rare diseases, which benefit around 432 patients; (vi) €500,000 for free medicines for IVF patients, which benefit around 240 patients; (vii) €815,200 for HPV vaccines for boys aged 14-15 in 2023, benefitting around 4,000 individuals; (viii) €1,467,360 for HPV vaccines for boys aged 17 to 22 years during 2024, benefitting around 6,000 individuals; (ix) €5,880,000.00 for CPV 20 vaccine for those aged 65 and over, amounting to 98,000 doses; (x) €2.3 million for medicines for multiple sclerosis, benefitting around 60 patients; (xi) €550,000 for medicines in relation to dermatology, benefitting around 190 patients. €2,415,551 for diabetes medicines, benefitting 2,510 patients.
	Continue in the administration of the COVID-19 booster vaccine, according to the advice of the health authorities	It is expected that this measure will increase the coverage rate among the adult population.
	The Outpatients new building project at Mater Dei Hospital (MDH) will remain a priority	This new building is essential for the health sector in Malta to continue to meet the growing demand for outpatient-based specialist services. The new Outpatients will have the highest-level of smart building technology, so that the service given to the patient is the best possible. Through this investment in technology, the service will be more and more sustainable.
16. Health care	(xi) Work in various health centres will remain a priority	The expected outcomes of this project include:  • a reduction in morbidity and mortality as a result of the increase in the capacity of health centres and community clinics, and expansion of services to meet the increasing demand for primary healthcare services which reflects the growing and ageing population.  • avoidance of up to 37 amenable deaths per annum through prevention, early detection and timely intervention.  • annual cost savings of around €3.7 million owing to the transfer of up to around 116,640 patient visits per annum from MDH to Primary HealthCare. These are visits which correctly take place in MDH but following the holistic overhaul of the Primary HealthCare can take place in the latter setting. The cost saving is a result of the lower cost per consultation visit at the Health Centres when compared to that at MDH.  • better management of patients requiring urgent care as a result of the anticipated reduction in waiting time for accident and emergency (A&E) patients. This is by means of offloading from MDH the bottom two tiers of A&E patients, known as Triages 4 and 5, which deal with the least urgent of the medical emergencies.  • reduction in waiting lists for consultations as a result of either the provision of new or enhanced services by the Primary HealthCare or investment in medical equipment that enables correct diagnosis at this setting.  (xii) • reduction in socio-economic inequality through increased accessibility to the services offered by the Primary HealthCare in Health Centres and Community Clinics
	The introduction of GP Appointment Clinics in Health Centres	This service will support the reduction in patients waiting to be seen by a GP as walk-ins. This will consequently have a positive impact on the waiting time for service delivery as well as quality of care (the GP appointment clinic slots are scheduled at 20-minute slots dedicated to the holistic management of the patient).

An investment in the extension of the project to build a new blood bank, as well as a specialised centre for the collection of blood, processing and storage of tissues and stem cells	This measure is expected to provide up-to-date standards of the highest quality in healthcare, in order to ensure that the services offered to citizens is based on international quality criteria.
Investing in the infrastructure of the A&E Department <i>[Internal Note: This project has been put on hold.]</i>	The demand for Emergency Department services has continued to increase in line with the increase in the local population. Changes are also needed to operate safely in a pandemic situation. This project will also ensure that patients have a one-stop-shop service for the various emergency services offered by the hospital.
Investing in the infrastructure of the Medical Imaging Department	The demand for diagnostic services, as well as interventions using medical imaging is increasing rapidly. This requires an investment in additional equipment and infrastructure to operate in. Therefore, the footprint of this department needs to grow. The main aim of this project is to have a number of administration and non-clinical rooms that have to be relocated to make room for the installation of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> MRI and CT scan together with other facilities required to cater for the increase in demand at the Medical Imaging Department (MID).
Investment in the infrastructure of the Department of the third Cardiac Catherisation Suite	To date, MDH relies on two Cardiac Catherisation Suites that have been operational since 2007. Today, both the demand of the population and the medical guidelines for the treatment of heart emergencies require an investment in this discipline. This project benefits all those who are critically ill and delivers a vital service more promptly.
An investment will be made in MR Linac, which will enable physicians to “see” the tumor tissue more clearly and adjust the radiation dose during treatment according to the daily changes to the patient’s organs. This project is expected to be completed by end 2023.	Malta will have the currently most advanced technology in the world in the treatment of cancer when it comes to radiotherapy treatment.
At MDH, additional facilities will be rented to address the growing demand for acute and elective care services in the most efficient and effective way.	MDH’s facilities for operating theatres are no longer sufficient for the hospital to meet the demand for elective interventions. This facility will address, at least in part, this need.
There will be an investment in the digitalisation of the health sector, including the digitalisation of the Department of Pathology	This investment will benefit the entire population of the Maltese Islands and will result in more accurate cancer diagnoses for patients, thus improving patient cancer survival rates. It will also reduce the turnaround times, allowing patients to receive the diagnoses more quickly, resulting in reduced patient anxiety.
The project to build the new Acute Psychiatric Hospital, near MDH, continues. The land that has been earmarked for the project has been identified and the tender for the design and build of the hospital has been awarded.	More than 1,500 people are being admitted to Mount Carmel Hospital for acute psychiatric treatment, so the whole country is expected to benefit from this measure.
A facility for an acute psychiatric hospital will be rented until the new hospital is completed. The tender for this facility has been re-issued since no bidder was found to be compliant.	This measure will improve acute psychiatric facilities for patients currently admitted for mental health treatment, amounting to more than 1,500 people annually.
Increasing the capacity of the services offered by Mount Carmel Hospital is expected to translate into a number of initiatives that support assisted living in the community. Community Mental Health Services continued to be strengthened and expanded. In December 2021, the Crises Resolution Home Treatment service was launched and in November 2022 the Mental Health Services Helpline was launched. The Helpline is a 24/7 psychology-led service which provides immediate and free emotional support, advice and practical guidance for individuals who may feel unable to cope with the challenges in their lives or are passing through a personal crisis.	About 20,000 people benefit from Community Services.
The modernisation of the wards of Mount Carmel Hospital will continue. The refurbishment of the wards at Mount Carmel Hospital is ongoing. Sala Tabiba Maria Sciberras, a ward for women with both mental health and addiction problems, was opened in 2021. Dar Sebh Ġdid was opened in July 2022. This is a rehabilitation ward for patients who require a longer period of	Mount Carmel Hospital is the only acute psychiatric facility in Malta. More than 1,500 people are admitted to this hospital every year and therefore benefit from this measure. After the new Acute Psychiatric Hospital is operational, the refurbished wards at Mount Carmel Hospital will be used for chronic psychiatric patients and those patients who need longer periods of rehabilitation.

	rehabilitation to be able to live independently in the community.	
	Remote Patient Monitoring - a pilot project introduced to regularly and continuously monitor the level of sugar in children under the age of 16 with Type I Diabetes - has been finalised and the results were very satisfactory. In fact, a decision was taken to roll-out this service to include older age groups. Last year the service was extended to include patients up till the age of 21 years. This year the service will be extended to include patients up till the age of 23 years.	It is estimated that this measure will result in lower hospital admissions among patients participating in remote monitoring for Type I Diabetes.
	Improvements in the quality of life will also be seen by those adults who are born with hearing disabilities. Entitled adults will now have access to bilateral hearing aids, where indicated clinically.	It is estimated that around 300 patients suffering from hearing impairment can benefit from this measure each year.
	The collaboration with Hospice Malta will be maintained with a new palliative care centre - St. Michael Hospice Centre managed by Hospice Malta that will open to the public in the second half of 2023 with Government financial support. The centre will provide day services and inpatient services for persons with chronic conditions needing palliative care irrespective of the diagnosis.	Current inpatient palliative care services are provided by the Palliative Care Unit in Sir Anthony Mamo Oncology Centre (SAMOC) which offers services only for cancer patients. By means of the new St. Michael Hospice Centre, the total palliative care bed number in the country will double to 32 beds. Innovatively the centre will provide care to cancer and non-cancer patients needing palliative in-patient care. The service will remain free of charge at the point of care.
	Social Security Act (Chapter 318 of the Laws of Malta): <a href="https://legislation.mt/eli/cap/318/eng/pdf">https://legislation.mt/eli/cap/318/eng/pdf</a>  Provides for several non-contributory benefits payable in respect of both disabled minors and adults, with total possible benefits payable being commensurate to the national minimum wage.	7,173 disabled persons are currently in receipt of such payments, with total disbursements amounting to €32,590,677.13 for 2021.
	Freedom to Live: Malta's 2021-2030 National Strategy on the Rights of Disabled Persons (hereinafter 'National Disability Strategy'): Action 1.3: Disability Assessment and Programme Eligibility Reform: The Directorate for Disability Issues (DDI) will continue discussions with key stakeholders to ensure that different disability assessment systems operated by different entities are rolled into one holistic system, managed through a unit set up within Aġenzija Sapport.  In conducting relevant reforms, stakeholders should also develop a professional holistic assessment and prioritisation checklist and ensure that disabled persons and/or their family members and support networks are provided with a comprehensive list of services they could access upon conclusion of the assessment process.  Action 2.1: Collaboration on research on innovative assistive technologies for disabled persons. Discussions are to be undertaken between the relevant stakeholders concerning sharing of data and/or experiences and methods or equipment, including Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) methods, designs/prototypes of specialised equipment for disabled persons, and building on	The reformed system should be operated by Aġenzija Sapport using functional and social criteria reflecting all aspects of a person's life, to ensure that assessments focus on what support disabled persons require to realise their life plans, instead of strictly medicalised criteria and quantitative outcome methods presently prevalent, since the latter prioritise functional impairments and the opinions of family members, support networks and professionals over the wishes and aspirations of disabled persons. Currently, an Action Plan is close to being agreed between the implementing stakeholders.  As a result of the said ongoing discussions, the Directorate for Disability Issues (DDI) shall put forward to the Government suggestions as to new areas of investment with regard to assistive technologies. Aġenzija Sapport held focus groups in this respect, and the outcomes are now being processed by the University of Malta (Faculty of ICT), in order to extract concrete proposals going forward.  As a result of said ongoing discussions, the Directorate for Disability Issues (DDI) shall put forward to the Government suggestions reflecting exploration and outcomes, further to participatory action research having been conducted using key input from disabled minors, teenagers and young persons, carried out in an accessible manner, and with due provision of all necessary supports, towards this gap being addressed by finding solutions to create such activities.  With regard to Actions 4.1-4.8, discussions with relevant stakeholders have commenced bilaterally and multilaterally through the UNCRPD National Coordination Mechanism. Action 4.9 is being tackled through ENGAGE, the civil society participation mechanism of the Directorate for Disability Issues and will be completed by December 2023. Action 4.10, Outputs 1 and 2 are currently being tackled by the Commission for the rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD), while in respect of Output 3, the Personal Autonomy Bill is being finalised prior to being presented to Cabinet, with expected adoption by end 2023.

	<p>existing best practice initiatives, including training and provision of guide and service animals.</p> <p>Action 2.2: Collaboration on research on gaps in leisure activities for disabled minors, teenagers and young persons. Discussions are to be undertaken between relevant departments, institutes and faculties at MCAST, the University of Malta and other entities duly accredited by MFHEA, with representation from DDI, CRPD, the Office of the Commissioner for Children, <b>Aġenzija Żgħażaġh</b>, and the Officer of the Commissioner for Mental Health, concerning gaps in leisure activities which are accessible and age-appropriate for disabled minors between the ages of 9 to 12 years (tween groups), as well as teenagers and young persons.</p> <p>Objective 4: Accessibility. Specific services and areas such as leisure are targeted for better accessibility coverage and for appropriate enforcement, as are venues used for said activities, as part of the wider infrastructural landscape of the country.</p> <p>This measure also contributes to Principle 20 - Access to Essential Services.</p> <p>Objective 5: Participation in Culture, Leisure, Recreation and Sports. Accessing culture and leisure through the media requires conformity with certain processes, and the inclusion of elements such as closed captioning, also in light of EU legislation binding Malta such as the European Accessibility Act and the Audio-Visual Media Services Directive.</p> <p>Objective 6: Relationships, Family, Sexuality and Parenthood. Actions cover aspects such as the need for sexual education to be appropriate to a person's profile, but to be nonetheless never denied, and for national sexual health policies and strategies to also be disability-inclusive. They call for appropriate guidelines on the right to parenthood, including supported parenthood, to be made available, with the input of disabled persons at their core, and for wide dissemination of such through campaigns, events and the media. The setting up of a Family Unit within <b>Aġenzija Sapport</b> would also be a key step towards implementing the content of this Objective.</p> <p>Objective 7: Informal, Formal and Non-Formal Education. Transition planning is one of the key areas where more action is warranted under Objective 7, as are specific features such as ensuring strong frameworks for Individualised Education Plans (IEPs) for all disabled students. Additionally, ensuring that staff are continually trained to enable them to excel in their roles is as crucial to the sector as are specific initiatives, such as those ensuring the spread of and access to digitalisation within the education system.</p>	<p>With regard to the Actions under this Objective, discussions with relevant stakeholders have commenced bilaterally and multilaterally through the UNCRPD National Coordination Mechanism. Action 5.4 is being coordinated by CRPD and will be completed by December 2023.</p> <p>Actions 1, 3 and 5 are being led by <b>Aġenzija Sapport</b>, and work is ongoing. Action 4 is currently being coordinated through ENGAGE; Action 6 was led by CRPD and concluded in 2022, through relevant research, events and media outputs; while work on Action 2 will commence by engaging the Directorate for Health Information and Research within the Ministry for Health.</p> <p>Actions within this Objective are expected to be completed within two, five or nine years. A focal point person was appointed to engage with the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation regarding the setting up of a Working Group on Inclusive Education further to Action 7.8. Regarding Actions 7.1-7.7, internal Action Plans have been developed, and these will be discussed with a view to implementation work commencing through the said Working Group.</p> <p>Action 2 is already fulfilled by the CRPD, who are continuing work on this notwithstanding, on a continuing basis, together with other entities such as the Autism Advisory Council. Work on Action 4 has also commenced by the CRPD. Work on the other Actions is yet to commence.</p> <p>Action 1 is already fulfilled by the CRPD, who are continuing work on this notwithstanding, on a continuing basis. The Directorate for Disability Issues commenced work on Actions 2 and 3, together with other relevant stakeholders, while coordination with relevant entities bilaterally and multilaterally is taking place in relation to Action 7, which will be completed by December 2023. Work on the other Actions is yet to commence.</p> <p>Work on Actions 1 through 3 has commenced by <b>Aġenzija Sapport</b> - in respect of Action 2, this is being conducted in conjunction with disabled experts from the European Network on Independent Living (ENIL), as well as local stakeholders including the Malta Federation of Organisations for Persons with Disability (MFOPD) and the Directorate for Disability Issues. Action 5, which is being undertaken by the Directorate for Disability Issues and the Autism Advisory Council, will be completed by end 2023, and will be ongoing for a yearly basis thereafter. Work on Action 6 by the Directorate for Disability Issues (policy and stakeholder coordination), the CRPD (research) and <b>Aġenzija Sapport</b> (implementation and MoU with Housing Authority) has already commenced and is ongoing.</p>
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	<p>Objective 8: Healthcare. Objective 8 is a crucial yet delicate area. While healthcare is also of utmost importance to disabled persons, it is still a fundamental challenge to ensure that disability and health are not seen as interchangeable concepts. Rather, health conditions should be seen as a component of disability and, most importantly, access to healthcare in general for disabled persons, and not only in respect of their impairment, should be available to them on an equal basis with others.</p> <p>Objective 9: Work and Employment. An understanding of the social model of disability and of a person-centred approach is crucial towards both taking stock of the current situation and making necessary reforms and policy and practice additions. While a number of incentives were put into place over the past years, such as fiscal incentives for employers and a legislative framework ensuring general reasonable accommodation for disabled employees, together with awareness efforts and enforcement measures, action has to be taken in a number of areas.</p> <p>Objective 10: Living Independently and in the Community, and De-institutionalisation. Specific actions in this respect call for a gap analysis in the field of service provision to take stock of the current situation and address relevant gaps, a strategic plan to strengthen existing community living schemes, mechanisms for better coordination among local service providers, systems in place to curtail abuse against disabled persons that impede independent living, and, very importantly, a focus on training existing and new practitioners and creating multipliers.</p> <p>United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (Chapter 627 of the Laws of Malta):  <a href="https://legislation.mt/eli/cap/627/eng/pdf">https://legislation.mt/eli/cap/627/eng/pdf</a></p>	
17. Inclusion of people with disabilities	<p>Persons with Disability (Employment) Act (Chapter 210 of the Laws of Malta):  <a href="https://legislation.mt/eli/cap/210/eng/pdf">https://legislation.mt/eli/cap/210/eng/pdf</a> (Amended in 2021) Assessment system provided (to be revised further to Action 1.3 of the National Disability Strategy) feeds into the employment Register of Disabled Persons (RDP) maintained by Jobsplus, allowing better access to labour market for disabled persons, especially through partnership with the Lino Spiteri Foundation.</p> <p>In 2021, the Government has proposed a legislative amendment to Parliament to make it possible to enforce a law that makes it compulsory on employers of more than 20 people to include 2 per cent of disabled people in their workforce or pay a contribution. The amendment will ensure that action would be taken against those who do not abide by the</p>	<p>Provides the legal basis in respect of reasonable accommodation for disabled persons in employment, further to Article 27 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), and Directive 2000/78/EC.</p> <p>Increase the number of persons with disability in employment, thus contributing to inclusion in the labour market and society. The employment in 2014 of people with registered disabilities stood at 2,007 individuals. This has been on an increasing trend since 2015 and since the introduction of the 2 per cent quota. Latest Jobsplus' administrative data (July 2022) in fact shows that 4,630 persons with registered disabilities are engaged in full-time or part-time gainful employment.</p>



	2 per cent quota and refused to pay a contribution to make up for this.	
	Persons who are considered as unfit for work due to their disability/invalidity are awarded a pension according to the number of social security contributions paid.	The number of beneficiaries during 2021 stood at a provisional figure of 3,391.
	Phlebotomy Service was extended to all those individuals who cannot leave their homes due to severe mobility problems.	13,647 phlebotomy interventions were made in 2022.
	Improvement of the Home Help Service - Older persons aged 75 and over, living alone, have been provided with an automatic two-hour-a-week service without the need to assess the application. Home visits were made, and service began for identified applicants. This will continue to be done as part of the operation of the Active Ageing and Community Care.	During 2021, 859 elderly aged 75 years and over have been provided with an automatic two-hour-a-week service. During 2022, 970 elderly aged 75+ have been provided with a two-hour weekly service.
	Improvement of the Telecare Service: Efforts have been made to make the official application accessible online to the public, thus facilitating the application process.	An average of 400 elderly living alone apply for this service annually. In 2022, a total of 6,190 clients benefited from this service.
18. Long-term care	Kartanzjan: Following the call for expressions of interest which was published for companies, businesses and organisations to submit proposals from which seniors over the age of 60 can benefit, such as percentage discounts on purchases, the said companies, businesses and organisations are continuously contacted to submit proposals to offer discounts from which elderly can benefit. The discounts do not expire unless a business informs three months before that it wishes to end its offer. A booklet with benefits has been published and is also available on the Active Aging website: <a href="#">VoucherBook.pdf (gov.mt)</a>	Estimated persons over 60: 128,778
	Increase the number of beds for the elderly in long-term care facilities in Government homes for the elderly and buying of beds from the private sector	In 2022, the number of long-term care beds were increased by 230 through various buying of beds agreements from the private sector.
	Increase the number of day centres and night shelters for the elderly especially those who have the condition of dementia	In 2022, 32 older adults were attending the Mtarfa Day Centre, whilst 30 were attending the Centre in Safi.  In 2022 extensive refurbishment was carried out at Dar Padova, Gozo's Dementia Day and Night Shelter.  In 2022, Active Ageing and Community Care collaborated with the <b>Haż-Żebbuġ</b> Local Council to provide an Active Ageing Centre. The Active Ageing Centre in Paola was reopened and the Centre in Marsaskala underwent a complete makeover to attract more persons from the community.  An Active Ageing centre was also opened in Qormi, in collaboration with Nanniet Malta. This centre opens in the evening. There are 65 members at the <b>Haż-Żebbuġ</b> , 113 members at the Paola and 116 at the Marsaskala Active Ageing Centres.
	During 2021 and January 2022, the Silver T service, which transports elderly people free of charge to their own locality, has expanded to another seven localities so that there are now 24 localities that offer this service.	509 elderly benefitted from this service in 2022 and a total of 11,759 trips were made.
	A training on Vulnerabilities in Older Adulthood was held for the Handyman and Home Help employees within the Active Ageing and Community Care. This training focused on how the employees can be more sensitive to certain aspects and to be able to refer elderly persons for professional help.	For academic year 2021-2022 45 students registered for "Enhancing Work with Older Adults using Applied Arts" and 31 students registered for "Continuous Professional Development on Vulnerabilities in Older Adulthood". For the ongoing academic year 2022-2023, 27 students registered for "Enhancing Work with Older Adults using Applied Arts".  32 employees participated in the Mental Health First Aid training during 2022.

	<p>Another specialised training was given to employees working in Active Ageing Centres and residential homes for the elderly, in collaboration with the University of Malta, about Enhancing Work with Older Adults using Applied Arts. Thus, employees in Active Ageing Centres and Residential Homes were trained on how to use the arts to keep the senior citizens active.</p> <p>In collaboration with the Richmond Foundation, training on Mental Health First Aid was provided to a number of employees working in direct contact with older persons - most of the employees work with the Dementia Intervention Team.</p>	
	<p>Increase the 'Carer at Home' scheme from €6,000 to €7,000 per year</p>	<p>As end of December 2022, 689 beneficiaries were benefitting from this measure.</p> <p>With effect from January 2023, around 689 beneficiaries employing full-time carers will be paid €583.33 monthly (€7,000 per year). This will also be reflected pro-rata for those beneficiaries who employ a carer for less than 40 hours per week.</p>
	<p>Social Regulatory Standards for Residential Services for Senior Citizens Regulations Legal Notice 322 of 2021 dated 6<sup>th</sup> August 2021</p>	<p>Please refer to Principle 15 - Old Age Income and Pensions above.</p>
	<p>Social Regulatory Standards for High Dependency Chronic Care Services for Older Persons Regulations  Legal Notice 36 of 2020 dated 28<sup>th</sup> February 2020</p>	<p>Please refer to Principle 15 - Old Age Income and Pensions above.</p>
	<p>Social Regulatory Standards for Community-Based and Outreach Services Regulations  Legal Notice 281 of 2020 dated 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2020</p> <p>This measure also contributes to Principle 20 - Access to Essential Services</p>	<p>These Social Regulatory Standards are intended to set guidelines for service providers which ensure that all persons making use of a community service receive high quality, timely and a client-centred service. Services offered in line with these Social Regulatory Standards will ensure that vulnerable persons are supported to achieve their goals and to progress in life, by assisting them to develop new abilities.</p> <p>For service providers, these Social Regulatory Standards set out indicators which need to be met in order to ensure efficient and accountable community-based and outreach services whilst ensuring the rights, protection and empowerment of community members in fulfilling their potential.</p> <p>Service users will have a better quality of life. This could also empower service users to be autonomous and have control over their own life with the intention of being able to move on from the service. Respect will make them more likely to engage with the service. A holistic, respectful and dignified approach to care will enable the self-respect of the person while recognising their capacity and ambitions in their life.</p>
	<p>Currently, there are three Public Social Partnerships agreements aimed at assisting the homeless. During 2021, the Government has invested the sum of circa €1 million.</p>	<p>482 persons benefitted as a result of these Public Social Partnerships.</p>
	<p>The construction of 1,700 new social accommodation units in 13 sites around Malta.</p> <p>The strengthening of the '<i>Nikru Biex Nassistu</i>' scheme which is a sub-leasing scheme operated by the Housing Authority in conjunction with private landlords, that rents out private rented accommodation to individuals and families on the waiting list for social accommodation for a period of not less than 10 years.</p>	<p>In 2017, which signals the commencement of the measures described herein, the waiting list for social accommodation stood at 3,288 applicants. By the end of 2021, this figure stood at 1,294 persons, which indicates an approximately 60 per cent reduction since the start of the programme.</p>
	<p>The development of specialised accommodation pathways, in collaboration with non-governmental organisations operating in the third sector, following international design competitions co-organised with the Chamber of Architects, for persons receiving specialised care from professionals.</p>	<p>Nine previously derelict public edifices were rehabilitated, housing around 50 persons receiving acute social care by professionals.</p>

19. Housing and assistance for the homeless	The reform of the various laws regulating private residential leases entered into prior to the 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1995, wherein tenants were in danger of eviction due to various European Court of Human Rights decisions nullifying the protection granted by these national laws. Following the reform, tenants were granted security of tenure provided that a reasonable increase in rent was paid to the landlord, with free legal assistance provided to vulnerable tenants by the Housing Authority.	Around 10,000 families were impacted by these reforms and the Housing Authority has already assisted vulnerable tenants involved in over 488 cases through the free legal aid provided by the same Authority, in the first eight months of the reform.
	Launch of a pilot project by the Central Bank of Malta (CBM) introducing a prepaid payment card for migrants under the responsibility of the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS) in lieu of receiving their benefit by cheque	The aim of the measure is to increase financial inclusiveness of migrants who do not fulfil all the requirements to open a basic payment account with a payment service provider. The card can be used to withdraw physical cash from ATMs or to purchase products online. It was planned that the initiative will reach its full potential in 2022 when all migrants under the responsibility of AWAS are expected to be on-boarded to the prepaid card project. However, since the number of migrants who are eligible for the AWAS benefit has decreased drastically, the onboarding did not progress as expected. Nevertheless, by Quarter 2 of 2023, it is expected that most of the AWAS beneficiaries will be paid by card. The situation will be reassessed in Quarter 3 of 2023 to determine whether it is still feasible to continue with this initiative.
	Consumer Education - During 2023, the MFSA will continue carrying out consumer education campaigns to raise awareness on financial services and to enhance consumer confidence in the banking, securities and insurance sectors. This strategy is in line with MFSA's strong commitment to promote the protection and education of consumers of financial services as well as with the European Supervisory Authorities (ESAs)' objectives to promote financial education. The Authority will also continue contributing to the joint initiative as chaired by the European Commission and the OECD, with the aim of developing the EU financial competence framework for children and youth.	MFSA has planned the following campaigns in 2023:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Q1: Campaign.</li> <li>- Q2: Crypto Assets.</li> <li>- Q3: Green Washing.</li> </ul> Q4: Scams.
	The Public Internet Access Point project  The Public Internet Access Point project involves the setting up of free Wi-Fi Internet points in locations frequented by the community.  Tech.mt is currently responsible for a number of Wi-Fi connections around Malta and Gozo, in collaboration with its various partners.	Having access to ICT is as important as having access to basic utilities and an indispensable tool for communication, work and learning purposes. The project therefore is intended to promote the usage of Internet by means of portable devices such as laptops, tablets and mobile phones, away from home or the office desk.  The Wi-Fi points enable users to connect to the Internet at any time of the day. All the Internet points are filtered against inappropriate and unlawful content so as to offer a safer Internet environment, particularly for minors.
20. Access to essential services	Free Public Transport	With effect from 1 October 2022, holders of a personalised Tallinja Card can travel for free on Day Routes, Night Routes and Special Services. This is expected to further enhance the use of collective transport and incentivise scheduled public transport usage.  With the introduction of the Free Public Transport measure, an increase in the number of passenger levels has been experienced whereby in November 2022 the number of passengers carried matched that of November 2019, and in December 2022 the number of passengers carried actually surpassed those of December 2019 (by over 2%). Thus, it is expected that the modal split in favour of scheduled public transport will increase. However, it is still early days and more time is required in order to be able to assess this (in order to see trends).
	Digital transformation of the Maltese Ship Register and its ancillary services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The digitalisation of the Malta Ship Register shall contribute towards the promotion and higher take-up of eGovernment services by making the Ship Register fully digital, thus making ship registration services more accessible, simple and transparent for citizens to make use of. The project shall also contribute towards making Government services accessible through mobile devices, allowing the re-use of public sector information, extending government transparency, as well as stimulating greater collaboration between international partners, Government, local enterprises and citizens. Through the digitalisation of the Ship Register, citizens and organisations will be able to transact securely with Government for any ship registration-related services through the introduction of online forms, e-payments and e-invoicing. The Ship Register Digital platform will adhere to Government policy for e-services including 'once-only-principle', 'one-login' and 'service-</li> </ul>

		personalisation'. Through the introduction of Maritime Analytics, the decision-making process shall be supported and facilitated through the easier identification of gaps and opportunities.
	As from January 2023, the subsidy rate of the 'Home Helper of Your Choice' scheme increased from a subsidy of €7.00 per hour to €8.00 per hour, thus incentivising older people to choose their helper	There are currently 217 beneficiaries receiving the 'Helper of your Choice' scheme grant.
	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (Chapter 627 of the Laws of Malta): <a href="https://legislation.mt/eli/cap/627/eng/pdf">https://legislation.mt/eli/cap/627/eng/pdf</a>	Provides the legal basis in respect of access to such services by disabled persons further to Articles 9, 11, 13, 19, 20, 21, 26, 28 and 30 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)
	Freedom to Live: Malta's 2021-2030 National Strategy on the Rights of Disabled Persons (hereinafter 'National Disability Strategy'): Objective 4: Accessibility	Refer to Principle 17 – Inclusion of People with Disabilities above.
	National Disability Strategy – Objective 12: Disaster Risk Management and Reduction While traditionally understood as preparing for and providing for contingency during phenomena such as natural disasters, this area equally covers any other kind of emergency, and was most recently felt during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the effect it had on disabled persons everywhere, including in Malta. In this respect, aside from Malta's obligations in terms of the Convention, cited in the text of the Objective, its obligations in terms of the UN's Sendai Framework are also cited and must also be adhered to.	Actions under this Objective are expected to be completed within 2 years. Discussions are underway with the Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD) and the Civil Protection Department (CPD) to complete the two referenced Actions (12.1 and 12.2) by end 2023. Action 12.3 is due to be completed by 2026 as per the Strategy, and work in this respect is ongoing.
	The NCPE investigates cases of alleged discrimination in the access to goods and services as part of its remit	The NCPE received six complaints with respect to goods and services in 2022: three on the ground of gender and another three on the ground of race and ethnic origin, respectively.
	The Energy Benefit to the most vulnerable in society. This entitlement consists of a direct deduction from the Water and Electricity bill.	In 2022, there were 16,004 beneficiaries who were awarded the Energy Benefit.
	Water fountains in all state schools	Water fountains have been introduced in all State Schools so that staff and students have good drinking water available all day.
	Free school transport to all students	All students have access to free school transport, irrespective of the school they attend.
	Online hub in the Msida Adult Learning Centre, for persons who either lack the technology or knowledge to access online courses.	Please refer to Principle 1 - Education, Training and Life-long Learning above.
	Fast Ferry service - Drawing up of a new schedule with predetermined prices that fast ferry service operators would have to comply with.	The fast ferry is an investment towards more efficient and cleaner mobility, which encourages the use of public transport by the public. Additionally, this service shall improve connectivity between the two islands.