



International Organization for Migration (IOM)

# Integration of Immigrant Spouses and Children



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# Integration of Immigrant Spouses and Children

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Legal Analysis and Good Practices in Family Integration in Europe

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## **List of Acronyms**

DIER - Department for Industrial and Employment Relations

EET - Enhancing Employability through Training

ETC - Employment and Training Corporation

EU – European Union

IF – European Integration Fund for Third-Country Nationals

IOM – International Organization for Migration

MFA – Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MHAS – Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security

MIIIP – Malta Individual Investor Programme

MSDC – Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties

NGO – Non Governmental Organization

TCN – Third-Country National

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# I. Introduction

This report presents the findings of a three-part research commissioned by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) office in Malta and undertaken by the People for Change Foundation and SOS Malta. The research is part of a project undertaken by IOM on the integration of Third-Country Nationals (TCNs)<sup>1</sup> titled 'Pan-European Conference: Integration of Immigrant Spouses and Children' supported by the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals and the Maltese Ministry for Social Dialogue, Civil Liberties and Consumer Affairs. The project, which was implemented between 1 July 2014 and 30 June 2015, aimed to facilitate the integration of family members, especially spouses and children in pursuance of the Common Basic Principles on migrant Integration. The objective of the project was to facilitate the socio-economic integration of TCNs, especially spouses and children, by conducting an in-depth participatory assessment of the Maltese context against the backdrop of experiences in other European Union Member States. The partner organizations worked together to map and address the gaps in the field of TCNs' spouses and children integration and propose a response to address any shortcomings. The initiative aims at supporting the Maltese Government in fulfilling the Common Basic Principles for the EU Integration Policy, in particular points 4, 5, 6 and 7:

CBP 4 'Basic knowledge of the host society's language, history, and institutions is indispensable to integration; enabling immigrants to acquire this basic knowledge is essential to successful integration'

CBP 5 'Efforts in education are critical to preparing immigrants, and particularly their descendants, to be more successful and more active participants in society'

CBP 6 'Access for immigrants to institutions, as well as to public and private goods and services, on a basis equal to national citizens and in a non-discriminatory way is a critical foundation for better integration'

CBP 7 'Frequent interaction between immigrants and Member State citizens is a fundamental mechanism for integration. Shared forums, intercultural dialogue, education about immigrants and immigrant cultures, and stimulating living conditions in urban environments enhance the interactions between immigrants and Member State citizens'

The inter-relation between family unity and integration is widely accepted. The right to family life is well established in international human rights law and yet migration restrictions often impose

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<sup>1</sup> The term third-country national refers to a national of a State that is not a Member of the European Union.

various hurdles to the effective exercise of that right by limiting the rights of family members to migrate together or to be re-united. However, this research is not focused on a critique of migration restrictions or even restrictions on family reunification but rather focuses on the integration of TCNs' family members being reunited with their family members or living as a family in Malta. Literature identifies ways in which family reunification supports successful integration, through, for example, supporting self-esteem, helping individuals work towards ambitions, and supporting one's position within the community. Research has also demonstrated that non-possibility or severe delays in family reunification has detrimental effects of migrants' ability to integrate.<sup>2</sup>

The discourse on the integration of TCN family members may encompass three broad categories of beneficiaries of family reunification: namely those who are family members of EU citizens, those who are TCN family members of EU Nationals and TCN family members of other TCNs already based in Malta. The legal and policy framework, as well as the opportunities and challenges, vary depending on the group being discussed.

Malta transposed *Council Directive 2003/86/EC* into national legislation with *Subsidiary Legislation 217.06 Family Reunification Regulations*.<sup>3</sup> Although these conditions allow family members to enter Malta, integration measures for the family members are sparse. This is partially due to the fact that the integration policy in Malta is still in the draft stage and is yet to be implemented. Various ministries address specific areas of integration, based on their portfolios and foci. However, the majority of the integration measures that are in place in Malta do not specifically address the family unit. This creates more difficult challenges for spouses and children to integrate into Maltese society, not only as individuals, but also as a family.

This report is divided into three parts. Part A sets out an analysis of the legal framework for family migration and the integration of family members in Malta. The legal framework discusses mechanisms for family re-unification and family members' access to various social services (education, the labour market, social benefits, long-term residency, and citizenship). Under Maltese law, entry into Malta and access to services are based on the status of the family member who sponsored the reunification. TCN family members of EU citizens who sponsor reunification enjoy more advantageous rights than those who are sponsored by TCNs residing in Malta. Such advantages include eligibility for family reunification and better access to the labour market, social services, and residency for people who are legally considered to be family members. These conditions have

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<sup>2</sup> See for instance: Aire Centre; *Impact of Family Reunification Policies*; Aire Centre 2013

<sup>3</sup> *Subsidiary Legislation 217.06, Family Reunification Regulations*



created many areas for improvement from both the Maltese government and civil society to better facilitate the integration of family members and to preserve the family unit for migrants.

Part B presents the results of interviews with 55 migrants in Malta on the basis of family reunification about their experiences with integration in Malta. The survey was divided into eight sections: employment; education; health; family life; access to information; discrimination and equal rights; life satisfaction and social benefits; and political and civic participation. Respondents were encouraged to include additional information and comments which they thought were relevant. 45 face-to-face interviews were carried out by SOS Malta and teachers of St. Paul's Bay Primary School who were engaged in the research with the assistance of the Maltese Ministry for Education and Employment. We also uploaded the same questionnaire on the Internet where it was taken on by 15 respondents. Overall, the answers vary from one respondent to another. Some respondents are very satisfied and content with their life in Malta, however a significant number of respondents feel rejected by the society and experience difficulties when trying to find a job or navigating through various public services.

Part C presents a number of practices from seven EU member states that could support the integration of family members in Malta. These practices were selected partly in response to the challenges identified through the interviews presented in part B above. The selected member states are Germany, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK, whilst the identified practices include legislative measures regarding access to family reunification as well as measures relating to employment and self-employment, education, social support and political empowerment.

## II. Legal Framework<sup>4</sup>

### Introduction

The right and respect for private family life is guaranteed under Maltese and European law, however, TCNs face various challenges in preserving their family lives while attempting to integrate into Maltese society. The Maltese constitution considers respect for private and family life to be a fundamental right and freedom of an individual.<sup>5</sup> This right is further emphasized in the *European Convention Act*, which, in line with the text of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, provides that “Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.”<sup>6</sup> Specific legislation surrounding integration of TCN family members of those residing in Malta, whether they are Maltese citizens, EU nationals, or other TCNs living in Malta, provides various rights and restrictions in terms of the right of entry and residence, access to education and training, access to social benefits, access to long term residency, and access to citizenship. The legislative framework concerning integration of family members includes the *Immigration Act*<sup>7</sup> and its subsidiary legislation, such as the *Family Reunification Regulations*<sup>8</sup>, *Status of Long Term Residents*<sup>9</sup>, *Conditions of Entry and Residence of Third-Country Nationals for the Purpose of Highly Qualified Employment Regulations*<sup>10</sup>, the *Citizenship Act*<sup>11</sup>, the *Marriage Act*<sup>12</sup>, and *Free Movement of European Union Nationals and their Family Members Order*.<sup>13</sup>

### Defining Family Members

Various instruments provide different definitions of “family members” which must be considered when assessing the integration measures for TCN family members. Under *Subsidiary Legislation 460.17* concerning *Free Movement of European Union Nationals and Their Family Members*, family members include direct descendants of the EU citizen or their spouse under the

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<sup>4</sup> This section was prepared by The People for Change Foundation [www.pfcmalta.org](http://www.pfcmalta.org)

<sup>5</sup> The Constitution of Malta, Chapter IV of the Laws of Malta

<sup>6</sup> Chapter 319 of the Laws of Malta

<sup>7</sup> Chapter 217 of the Laws of Malta

<sup>8</sup> Subsidiary Legislation 217.06

<sup>9</sup> Subsidiary Legislation 217.05

<sup>10</sup> Subsidiary Legislation 217.15

<sup>11</sup> Chapter 188 of the Laws of Malta

<sup>12</sup> Chapter 255 of the Laws of Malta

<sup>13</sup> Subsidiary Legislation 460.17

age of twenty-one, and dependent direct relatives in the ascending line of the family and those of the spouse. Furthermore, this legislation includes “other family members” which include any person “irrespective of his nationality who, in the country from which he has come, is a dependent on a member of the household of the Union citizen having the primary right of residence, or a person who, for serious health reasons, strictly requires personal care by the Union citizen.”<sup>14</sup> The *Family Reunification Regulations*, which address the situation of Third-Country Nationals being reunited with other Third-Country Nationals, provides a similar definition for family members as *Subsidiary Legislation 460.17* for EU Nationals. This definition includes a spouse who is twenty-one years of age or over, unmarried minor children of the sponsor or of the spouse where one (or both) has custody and the children are dependent upon him.<sup>15</sup> However, the *Family Reunification Regulations* do not include “other family members” or dependents in the ascending line of the family. For TCNs who reside in Malta based on an EU Blue Card, family members follow the same definition as the *Family Reunification Regulations*.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, if a TCN is residing in Malta for Scientific Research, only a spouse and unmarried minor children of the researcher and of his spouse (including adopted children) are defined as family members.<sup>17</sup>

Table 1 below shows how each piece of legislation defines family members of non-Maltese residents.

		Free Movement of EU Nationals and Their Family Members	Family Reunification Regulations	Highly Qualified Employment Regulations	Scientific Research Regulations
Spouse	Any Age	X			X
	Over 21		X	X	
Children	Unmarried minor (and of spouse)	X	X	X	X
	Direct descendants under 21 (and of spouse)	X			
Parents	Direct relatives in ascending line	X			

<sup>14</sup> Subsidiary Legislation 460.17, Article 2

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, Article 2(2)

<sup>16</sup> Subsidiary Legislation 217.15, Article 2

<sup>17</sup> Legal Notice 102 of 2008

	(and of spouse)				
Other Family Members	Person who strictly requires care from sponsor	X			
	Any dependent on a member of household	X			

## **Arrival/Right of Entry and Residence**

The process of integration for family members begins with the rights of TCN family members to enter and reside in Malta. The *Immigration Act* states that “dependents shall, even if they are third-country nationals, have the right to install themselves with the worker.”<sup>18</sup> The conditions relate primarily to whether the TCN family member is uniting with someone who is a Maltese citizen, an EU national or another TCN (family reunification, Blue Card, or for Scientific Research). The initial right of entry and type of residence permit issued to TCNs’ family members influence important aspects of their future integration into Malta, including access to the labour market, access to social benefits, and the potential for long-term resident status. The application procedure varies depending on whether the sponsor is an EU national or a TCN, and the particular kind of family reunification being sought.

### **TCN Family Members of EU Nationals**

TCN family members of EU nationals are entitled to the same rights of movement within the Union as the EU citizen. The rights accorded to EU nationals and their TCN family members include entry in Malta for three months without any conditions or formalities.<sup>19</sup> Upon the expiry of three months, EU nationals are required to report their presence and that of TCN family members to the Principal Immigration Officer, and failure to do so may result in a fine.<sup>20</sup>

After TCN family members of EU nationals have resided in Malta for three months, they shall apply for a ‘Residence card of a family member of a Union citizen’ to the Director of Citizenship and

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<sup>18</sup> Subsidiary Legislation 217.06, Article 5(3)

<sup>19</sup> Subsidiary Legislation 460.17, Article 3(3)

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, Article 4(7)

Expatriate Affairs and it must be provided within six months of the submission of the application.<sup>21</sup> This residency will be valid for five years or for the envisaged period of residence if it is less than five years.<sup>22</sup>

## TCN Family Members of TCNs Legally Residing in Malta

Maltese law further allows TCNs residing in Malta to apply for reunification with TCN family members. The *EU Directive 2003/86/EC* was transposed into Maltese law by the *Family Reunification Regulations* that establishes the procedures for family reunification.<sup>23</sup> The TCN residing in Malta is considered to be a “sponsor” and must have a residence permit for at least a year and have reasonable prospects of obtaining permanent residency.<sup>24</sup> The sponsor must also provide evidence that he/she has stayed lawfully in Malta for a period of two years.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, a TCN in Malta is ineligible to apply for family reunification if he/she is an asylum-seeker, or if he/she is only granted temporary protection or a subsidiary form of protection.<sup>26</sup>

For TCNs applying for family reunification, the sponsor must submit an application to the Director for Citizenship and Expatriate Affairs while the family members are residing outside Malta.<sup>27</sup> The sponsor must provide documentary evidence of the familial relationship to the Director, who may choose to conduct interviews or other investigations into the relationships.<sup>28</sup> The sponsor must also provide evidence that there is adequate accommodation for the family members, that he/she possesses health insurance for himself/herself and all members of the family, and of stable and regular resources that are sufficient to maintain all members of the family without recourse to social assistance.<sup>29</sup> The Director must provide a decision within nine months of when the application was submitted and if the application is rejected, reasons must be provided.<sup>30</sup> Upon approval of the application, the Director shall authorize entry of the family members and they will be granted a first residence permit for at least one year, which shall be renewable.<sup>31</sup>

After TCN family members have lived in Malta for a period of five years through family reunification, they are eligible to apply for an autonomous residence permit, which is valid for one

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, Article 7(4)

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, Article 7(7)

<sup>23</sup> Subsidiary Legislation 217.06

<sup>24</sup> Subsidiary Legislation 217.06, Article 3(1)

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, Article 13

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, Article 3(2)

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, Article 6

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, Article 7

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, Article 12

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, Article 9

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 14(2)

year and shall be renewable.<sup>32</sup> If the marital relationship that was the basis of the family unification breaks down, the Director may “limit the granting of such permit to the (sponsor’s) spouse only.”<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, if a person is found to be in a particularly difficult circumstance following the breakdown of a marriage, the Director may issue a residence permit.<sup>34</sup>

*Subsidiary Legislation 217.15 concerning “Conditions of Entry and Residence of Third-Country Nationals for the Purpose of Highly Qualified Employment”* further provides methods for family unification of TCNs in Malta.<sup>35</sup> To attain a Blue Card, a TCN must provide a contract of employment that shows the gross annual salary, present a document proving they are qualified for the employment by EU standards, and show evidence of health insurance.<sup>36</sup> The EU Blue Card will be valid for at least one year. Family members of TCNs who receive a Blue Card are entitled to provisions of the *Family Reunification Regulations*; however it is not dependent upon the EU Blue Card holder having reasonable prospects of obtaining the right of permanent residence and having a minimum period of residence.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, residence permits for family members of Blue Card holders shall be granted within six months<sup>38</sup> from the submission of the application, compared to nine months for general family reunification.<sup>39</sup>

## **Access to Education and Training**

### **TCN Family Members of EU Nationals**

TCN family members of EU nationals have the right to follow a course of education, including vocational training.<sup>40</sup> The only condition is that the individual must have a registration certificate or residence card, which shall be provided under this condition upon presenting a valid passport, proof of health insurance, and proof of sufficient resources so as to avoid recourse to social assistance.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 16(1)

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, Article 17(2)

<sup>35</sup> Subsidiary Legislation 217.15

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, Article 4

<sup>37</sup> Subsidiary Legislation 217.06, Article 9(1)

<sup>38</sup> Subsidiary Legislation 217.15, Article 14(1)

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, Article 14(3)

<sup>40</sup> Subsidiary Legislation 460.17, Article 4(1), Article 10

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, Article 10(b)

## TCN Family Members of TCNs Legally Residing in Malta

Family members who arrived in Malta through the *Family Reunification Regulations* are entitled, in the same way as their sponsor, to access education, vocational guidance, and initial and further training.<sup>42</sup> This includes access to the Maltese school system for minors, and access to employment training and integration classes offered by the government for spouses. It is the duty of the State to take appropriate measures to ensure that free tuition is given to children of migrant workers in a State school in order to facilitate their initial reception in the educational environment and the school system of Malta.<sup>43</sup> The State must also take measures to facilitate the eventual re-integration of the children of migrant workers into their Agreement States of origin, by promoting the teaching of both the mother tongue and the culture of the country of origin.<sup>44</sup>

The Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) offers training under the Enhancing Employability through Training (EET) Programme which is available to all actively employed, inactive or registered unemployed individuals eligible to work, including TCNs. Certain courses through EET specifically target TCNs including '*Integrating TCNs in the Maltese Society*,' '*Living and Working in Malta*,' and Basic English and Maltese language courses. Although these courses are not specifically designed for family members of TCNs, they are allowed access to these classes as well.

Furthermore, the right to education and vocational training is provided for TCN family members of EU Blue Card Holders.<sup>45</sup> However, there are no specific guarantees for access to education of TCN family members who are residing in Malta based on the *Scientific Research Regulations*.<sup>46</sup>

## Access to the Labour Market

Access to the Maltese labour market for TCN family members is directly related to the type of residence permit attained, and varies among family members of Maltese citizens, EU nationals, and those who came to Malta through family reunification. Access to the labour market is important when considering employment is required before one is allowed access to social benefits that help facilitate integration, especially for measures to help the integration of families.

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<sup>42</sup> Subsidiary Legislation 217.06, Article 15 (a) and (c)

<sup>43</sup> Subsidiary Legislation 327.220, Article 3

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Subsidiary Legislation 217.15, Article 13(c)

<sup>46</sup> Legal Notice 102 of 2008

## TCN Family Members of EU Nationals

Dependents and family members of EU nationals are entitled to the right of employment. The *Immigration Regulations*<sup>47</sup> stipulate: “Where a citizen of the Union is a worker pursuing an activity as an employed person in Malta, his dependents shall, even if they are third-country nationals, have the right to install themselves with the worker including the right to take up an activity as an employed person in Malta provided that the worker shall have available for his dependents, accommodation considered as normal for Maltese workers.”<sup>48</sup> If the EU family member is pursuing self-employment in Malta, the TCN family member may be involved in the EU citizen’s self-employment and also has the right to self-employment. However, neither EU citizens nor their family members can pursue self-employment unless they are “a *bona fide* self-employed person” and they operate from a registered address and satisfy all requirements required from a Maltese national, including registration and taxation.<sup>49</sup>

## TCN Family Members of TCNs Legally Residing in Malta

All TCNs who do not have familial relations to a Maltese or EU national are subjected to a Labour Market Test, which is a three-part process. First, there is an assessment to see whether there is a Maltese or EU National to fill the post. Next, the suitability of the TCN is assessed, followed by another assessment of the employer’s suitability. However, asylum-seekers and those whose asylum applications were rejected are not subject to the labour market test. A TCN who wishes to sponsor their family in Malta through the *Family Reunification Regulations* must first access the labour market himself/herself to meet the application requirements, as they must provide proof to sufficient resources, accommodation, and health insurance for all family members. In 2014, Malta created a single application procedure for TCNs to apply for an employment and resident permit simultaneously.<sup>50</sup> Although this new legislation is intended to facilitate the process for TCNs to access the labour market (and subsequently the conditions that will allow family reunification), the burden of the application and acquisition of health insurance is placed on the employer, which could deter employers from hiring TCNs. Furthermore, the *Single Application Procedure* only applies to

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<sup>47</sup> Subsidiary Legislation 217.05

<sup>48</sup> Subsidiary Legislation 217.05, Article 5(3)

<sup>49</sup> Subsidiary Legislation 460.17, Article 9(7)

<sup>50</sup> Subsidiary Legislation 460.17, Article 8(5)



TCNs who do not have familial ties to Maltese or EU nationals and who have access to the labour market through other means.<sup>51</sup>

Once the TCN is approved for family reunification, their family members are not entitled to the same access to the labour market as their sponsor. Even if the sponsor was not subjected to a labour market assessment (due to international protection status), “the said family members shall not be entitled to access in the same way as the sponsor for the first twelve months following their arrival in Malta and for such period of twelve months after their arrival, their access to employment or self-employment shall be subject to an assessment of the situation of the labour market in Malta and the requirement of an employment license.”<sup>52</sup>

TCNs who have an EU Blue Card are confined to work for the employer with whom they logged their initial application. However, family members of Blue Card holders are allowed to access the labour market and are not confined to the twelve-month time limit provided in the *Family Reunification Regulations*.<sup>53</sup> Under the *Scientific Research Regulations*, only the spouse and not the children are provided access to employment. However, spouses are allowed access to employment during the validity of the residence permit, without prejudice to any other provisions.<sup>54</sup>

## **Access to Social Benefits**

The Maltese welfare state provides two basic schemes: the Contributory Scheme and the Non-Contributory Scheme. Depending on the type of residence permit held by the TCN and their family members, they are entitled to different benefits under the *Social Security Act*. This is often related to the nature of the family member’s access to the labour market and whether they are in employment that allows them to pay into the Contributory Scheme. Maltese legislation and service providers do not specify access to benefits for TCN family members, so their access must be based off their resident status and access to employment and whether they are paying contributions. Furthermore, it must be noted that minors do not have direct access to social benefits; therefore TCN dependents are reliant upon their parents’ access to social benefits. It is also important to stress that accessing social benefits can affect a TCN’s possibility of attaining a long-term residence status, as they must prove they are not a burden on social assistance in Malta.

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid, Article 4(a)

<sup>52</sup> Subsidiary Legislation 217.06, Article 15(b)

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, Article 14(5)

<sup>54</sup> Subsidiary Legislation 217.10, Article 10(2)

## Health Insurance and Access to Care

Under all of the legislation concerning family integration in Malta, the sponsoring family member, whether they are an EU national or a TCN, are required to submit proof of health insurance for all family members. If an EU national has a European Health Insurance Card, the family members are entitled to free health-care access. Each family member must have their own card, and TCN family members are eligible to apply if they are legally residing in the EU and are covered by a state social security scheme.<sup>55</sup> Certain groups of TCNs have free access to all state healthcare including: a person that holds an employment license and is paying social security contributions, a citizen of a country which has a reciprocal health-care agreement in force with Malta, a person who enjoys freedom of movement in terms of Article 44 of the *Constitution of Malta*, a person studying at the University of Malta, the Malta College of Arts, Science & Technology and the Institute of Tourism Studies, and a person who is in Malta in an advisory or consultative capacity to the Government.<sup>56</sup> Although Malta does have a public health insurance system, access to the system is based on employment. In terms of family integration, unemployed dependents (children and spouses) are covered by public health insurance if their sponsoring family member qualifies.

## Contributory Social Benefits

The main types of contributory social benefits are sickness benefits, injury benefits, maternity benefits, invalidity pensions, and retirement pensions. Maternity leave in Malta is an uninterrupted period of 18 weeks. During the first 14 weeks of maternity leave, the employee shall receive her full salary; for the remaining 4 weeks she shall receive a special allowance equivalent to the rate of sickness allowance payable as stipulated in the *Social Security Act*.<sup>57</sup> However, access to maternity benefits is only available to certain groups of TCNs including spouses of Maltese citizens who are insured under the social security system and ordinarily resident in Malta, those who are nationals of countries under the European Social Charter, long-term residents, EU Blue Card Holders, and Researchers under *Council Directive 2005/71/EC*.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> European Commission, Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion

<sup>56</sup> Subsidiary Legislation 35.28, Article 2

<sup>57</sup> ETC, 2014 b

<sup>58</sup> Council Directive 2005/71/EC of 12 October 2005 on a specific procedure for admitting third-country nationals for the purposes of scientific research

## Family Members of EU nationals

EU nationals and subsequently their family members are not entitled to social assistance during the first three months of residence.<sup>59</sup> Upon application of a residence permit for TCN family members of EU nationals, the EU sponsor must provide proof of sufficient resources as to not qualify for means-tested benefits. However, access to residence and the labour market is easier for family members of EU Nationals, which allows them to contribute to the system and access the contributory social benefits, than for family members of TCN nationals.

## TCN Family Members of TCNs Legally Residing in Malta

TCNs qualify for Contributory benefits if they are contributing to social security either as an employed or as a self-employed person and are meeting the contribution requirements for each benefit. However, certain TCNs and their family members may be entitled to certain contributory benefits, such as maternity leave, if their home country is a signatory member of the European Social Charter. As previously mentioned, access to contributory benefits is related to access to employment. Since TCN family members in Malta under the *Family Reunification Regulations* do not qualify for an employment license until they have resided in Malta for a year, they have a more difficult time accessing contributory social benefits.

## Non-Contributory Social Benefits

The Non-Contributory social benefits are designed to cater for those living below the poverty line and are based on a financial means-test of the person claiming the benefit. The main forms of non-contributory social benefits are family benefits, including the Children's Allowance, the Disabled Children's Allowance, and the Foster Care Allowance. However, only limited categories of TCNs (and subsequently their family members) have access to family benefits. TCNs that are citizens of states that have signed the European Social Charter have access to family benefits.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, long-term residents, a spouse of a Maltese citizen, an EU Blue Card Holder, and Researchers under *Council Directive 2005/71/EC* are entitled to family benefits.<sup>61</sup> However, it is highly unlikely that Blue Card Holders and Researchers would qualify for these contributions, as their applications require proof of sufficient resources as to not qualify for social benefits.

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<sup>59</sup> Subsidiary Legislation 460.14, Article 3(1)

<sup>60</sup> Integration Portal- [www.integration.gov.mt](http://www.integration.gov.mt)

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

However, this scheme neglects families that are in the process of applying for long-term residency. Without access to family benefits, it could be more difficult for TCN parents to balance their family-work life and to frequent classes required to attain long-term residency and subsequently have legitimate access to non-contributory benefits.

## Access to Long-Term Residency

### TCN Family Members of EU Nationals

After a TCN family member of an EU national has been living in Malta for three months under the initial entrance and residency guidelines, they are entitled to take up a residence permit for a longer period of time, provided that the EU citizen continues to fulfil the required conditions.<sup>62</sup> The TCN family members retain this right if the EU citizen dies, as long as the family members would have been residing in Malta for at least one year before the death.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, TCN family members will retain their right to reside in Malta in the case of divorce, provided that the marriage would have lasted for at least three years or if there were particularly difficult circumstances.<sup>64</sup> EU nationals and their family members may have permanent residence in Malta if they have legally lived in Malta for a continuous period of five years.<sup>65</sup>

### TCN Family Members of TCNs Legally Residing in Malta

Malta's legislation *Status of Long-Term Residents (Third-Country Nationals) Regulations* transposes the provisions of *Council Directive 2003/109/EC* and *2011/51/EU*. In order for a TCN to apply for long-term residency, they must have resided legally and continuously in Malta for five years immediately before submitting their application.<sup>66</sup> To be eligible to apply, TCNs must have attended a course about the social, economic, cultural and democratic history and environment of Malta for at least one hundred hours in the twelve months immediately prior to their application.<sup>67</sup> The course is organized at the Hal Far ETC centre and is entitled "Living and Working in Malta." It consists of five modules; Social Aspects of Malta; Malta and the Environment; Malta and the European Union; Maltese history and culture; and the Maltese Economy. Each module consists of

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<sup>62</sup> Subsidiary Legislation 460.16, Article 4

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, Article 5(2)

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, Article 5(3)

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, Article 6

<sup>66</sup> Subsidiary Legislation 217.05, Article 4(1)

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, Article 5(3(a))

twenty-seven hours and has a one-hour exam. Participants must score at least seventy five per cent on each final exam to be eligible for a long-term residency permit. Furthermore, TCNs must be assessed as having at least a Malta Qualifications Framework Level 2 ability to speak in Maltese.<sup>68</sup> TCNs must also provide proof of stable and regular resources for the two years preceding the application to support him/herself and his/her family without utilizing any assistance from the social system in Malta.<sup>69</sup> Evidence of appropriate accommodation, sickness insurance, and a valid travel document must be further provided when applying for long-term resident status.<sup>70</sup>

A decision concerning a long-term resident application must be decided by the Director for Citizenship and Expatriate Affairs (the Director) within six months of when the application was submitted.<sup>71</sup> If the application has exceptional circumstances, the time limit may be extended by another six months, but the applicant must be notified about the reasons why and shall be informed of their rights.

If a TCN is granted a long-term residence status in Malta, they are entitled to equal treatment as Maltese nationals concerning access to employment and self-employed activity, conditions of employment and working conditions, education and vocational training, recognition of professional diplomas, social security and core benefits, tax benefits, access to goods and services, freedom of association, and free access to the territory of Malta.<sup>72</sup> The permit is valid for five-years and is automatically renewable upon application.<sup>73</sup>

When a TCN is denied long-term residence status, the Director must inform the applicant about the reasons for the decision and about the redress procedures available.<sup>74</sup> Refusals may be granted based on failure to provide the required evidence, or based on grounds of public policy or public security.<sup>75</sup> However, when an application for a long-term residence status is rejected, the TCN has the right to appeal to the Immigration Appeals Board.<sup>76</sup>

Maltese law provides measures for TCN family members to have their long-term residency status recognized in Malta if they were first provided long-term residency in another EU Member State.<sup>77</sup> However, there is no explicit policy or procedure for the acquisition of long-term residency for family members who are reunited with a TCN when Malta is the first EU Member State where they have applied for this status. The *Family Reunification Regulation* mandates for family members

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<sup>68</sup> Subsidiary Legislation 217.05, Article 5(b)

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, Article 5 (2)

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, Article 7 (1)

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, Article 11 (1)

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, Article 8 (2)

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, Article 10 (1)

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, Article 6(1)

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, Article 10(2)

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, Part III

to be granted a first residence permit of at least one year, but there are no specific regulations for family members to attain a long-term residency status (assuming their sponsor has a long-term residency status).<sup>78</sup> Although long-term residents are entitled to family reunification under the *Family Reunification Regulations*, there are no clear measures for the family members of long-term residents to also acquire a long-term residency status.

## Access to Citizenship

A TCN is eligible to apply for citizenship through marriage to a Maltese national, naturalization or the Malta Individual Investor Programme (MIIP). Furthermore, TCNs who were born abroad to Maltese parents or are of Maltese descent are also eligible to register for citizenship.<sup>79</sup> In 2013, 945 TCNs were registered as citizens under these guidelines, the most prevalent being persons of Maltese descent (256 persons).<sup>80</sup> However, TCNs residing in Malta who cannot prove Maltese descent are subject to other procedures to acquire citizenship.

### Marriage

Maltese citizenship may be acquired by marriage to a Maltese citizen, provided that the applicant is married to the Maltese citizen for at least five years.<sup>81</sup> The *Marriage Act* criminalizes “marriages of convenience” when those contracting in a marriage have the sole purpose of obtaining Maltese citizenship, freedom of movement in Malta, a work or residence permit in Malta, the right to enter Malta, or the right to obtain medical care in Malta.<sup>82</sup> Marriage is the second most common method for TCNs to attain citizenship. Between 2008 and 2013, 1065 TCNs were granted Maltese citizenship through marriage.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid, Article 14(2)

<sup>79</sup> Maltese Citizenship Act, Chapter 188, Article 5(3)

<sup>80</sup> Ministry of Home Affairs and National Security, Annual Report 2013

<sup>81</sup> Maltese Citizenship Act, Chapter 188, Article 6(1)

<sup>82</sup> The Marriage Act, Chapter 255, Article 28(1)

<sup>83</sup> Ministry of Home Affairs and National Security, Annual Report 2013

## Naturalization

The naturalization process in Malta requires the TCN to have resided in Malta for twelve months prior to the date of application, to have resided in Malta for a total of four years within the six years preceding the said twelve month period, an adequate knowledge of the Maltese or English language, and must be a good character that would be a suitable citizen of Malta.<sup>84</sup> However, the application is at the complete discretion of the Minister of Home Affairs. The Minister further may grant a certificate of naturalization to a minor child of any citizen of Malta or to any minor who has special circumstances.<sup>85</sup> Naturalization is the least common method for acquiring citizenship in Malta. In 2013, only 130 TCNs were naturalized through this process.<sup>86</sup>

## Malta Individual Investor Programme

In 2014, Malta established the Individual Investment Programme (MIIP) that allows affluent TCNs and their family members to attain citizenship.<sup>87</sup> The applicant must contribute a minimum of 650,000 Euros that goes towards the National Development and Social Fund.<sup>88</sup> The applicant must make further contributions for their spouse and each dependent. For the spouse and each child below 18 years of age, the contribution must be at a minimum of 25,000 euro each.<sup>89</sup> In the case of a dependent parent above 55 years of age, the contribution must be 50,000 euro. Applications for MIIP are submitted through Identity Malta and, if approved, a naturalization certificate will be administered within two years.<sup>90</sup> Although MIIP has provisions for family members its availability is restricted by the financial requirements.

## Political Participation

TCNs and their TCN family members are not eligible to vote or stand for elections at any level in Malta.<sup>91</sup> The only way to be able to participate in elections is to acquire Maltese citizenship.

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<sup>84</sup> Maltese Citizenship Act, Chapter 188, Article 10(1)

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, Article 11

<sup>86</sup> Ministry of Home Affairs and National Security, Annual Report 2013

<sup>87</sup> Legal Notice 160, 2014

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, Article 13(1)

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, Schedule, Article 1

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, Article 7(8)

<sup>91</sup> Constitution of Malta, Article 57

However, all TCN employees have the right and option to be represented by a workers union. The responsibilities, privileges and obligations of the unions are regulated in the *Employment and Industrial Relations Act*.<sup>92</sup> According to this act, all nationals, including TCNs and subsequently their family members, have equal access to membership and participation in trade union associations and work-related negotiation bodies.<sup>93</sup>

Moreover, all foreigners in Malta are free to create organizations without restriction to the individuals of such organizations, whether they are associations, foundations or trusts.<sup>94</sup> Organizations are not bound to register as legal persons by law and are still recognized by the *Civil Code* which states all persons have the right to “assemble freely and associate with other persons and in particular to form or belong to trade or other unions or associations for the protection of his interests.”<sup>95</sup> Organizations are eligible to apply for funding through the Voluntary Organizations Fund within the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector (MCVS). This is project-based funding called the *Small Initiatives Support Scheme* which is available to any voluntary organization that is registered with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organizations and that has an annual turnover of less than €200,000.<sup>96</sup>

## **Anti-discrimination and Equal Rights**

The Maltese Constitution upholds the principles of equality of treatment and non-discrimination, providing protection from discrimination on the basis of race, place of origin, political opinion, colour, creed or sex and further states that no law shall make any provision that is discriminatory either in it or in its effect.<sup>97</sup> Maltese legislation has developed various safeguards against discrimination both at the workplace and in social life in general. However, many of these laws do not protect against discrimination on grounds of nationality, meaning that from a legal perspective, Maltese legislation is not clear to what extent it protects against discrimination against TCNs (and subsequently their family members) on grounds of nationality, whether in employment or in other areas of social life.

Malta has introduced a number of specific legislative acts to implement EU Directives, in particular the *Employment and Industrial Relations Act*,<sup>98</sup> which only applies to the TCN family

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<sup>92</sup> Chapter 452, Laws of Malta

<sup>93</sup> Integration Portal

<sup>94</sup> Integration Portal

<sup>95</sup> Constitution of Malta, Article 42

<sup>96</sup> Malta Council for Voluntary Sector (MCVS)- Small Initiatives Support Scheme Guidelines

<sup>97</sup> Constitution of Malta, Article 45

<sup>98</sup> Chapter 452, Laws of Malta



members who have access to employment; the *Equality for Men and Women Act*,<sup>99</sup> and the *Criminal Code*<sup>100</sup> which criminalizes incitement to racial hatred. There are two current avenues for complaints for discrimination, handled either through the NCPE or the Department for Industrial and Employment Relations (DIER), which allows the complainant to sue for redress before the Industrial Tribunal.<sup>101</sup> Malta has also created a draft National Action Plan against Racism and Xenophobia<sup>102</sup>, which addresses a number of cross cutting issues such as raising awareness and training, promoting the reporting of discriminatory incidents, and implementing measures in specific areas related to racist violence and crime.

Furthermore, as previously mentioned, if a TCN is granted a long-term residence status in Malta, they are entitled to equal treatment as Maltese nationals as regards to access to employment and self-employed activity, conditions of employment and working conditions, education and vocational training, recognition of professional diplomas, social security and core benefits, tax benefits, access to goods and services, freedom of association, and free access to the territory of Malta.<sup>103</sup> However, this clearly does not apply to family members who do not qualify for a long-term residence status.

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<sup>99</sup> Chapter 356, Laws of Malta

<sup>100</sup> Chapter 9, Laws of Malta

<sup>101</sup> Policy Assessment- National Commission for the Promotion of Equality

<sup>102</sup> National Action Plan against Racism and Xenophobia 2010

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, Article 11 (1)

## II. Survey Analysis<sup>104</sup>

### Introduction

In order to obtain information about the experiences of TCNs in Malta as regards to integration, 55 TCNs participated in a survey consisting of 72 questions, asked face-to-face.

SOS Malta and as well as teachers from the St Paul's Bay Primary School, who cooperated in this exercise with the assistance of the Maltese Ministry for Education and Employment, conducted 40 face-to-face interviews with TCNs. The same questionnaire was published online in order to collect additional responses from persons, who might wish to remain anonymous or were not available to be approached by the researchers, consequently contributing to 15 additional respondents. The survey focused only on TCNs residing in Malta who were married or with a partner, divorced and / or had children in order to focus specifically on the conditions and challenges of family migration. Different methods were used to reach the interviewees, namely, the SOS Malta contact list, contacts of other Maltese NGOs and Facebook groups, engaging with persons who came to SOS Malta office or were reached through the aforementioned school.

The survey was divided in eight sections. The sections included questions about life satisfaction; family life; employment and education; political and civic participation; access to information; discrimination and equal rights, as well as questions about plans and expectations regarding life in Malta. There were no right or wrong, desirable or undesirable answers. Respondents were asked to feel free to include additional information and comments which they thought were relevant to the research.

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<sup>104</sup> This section was prepared by Solidarity Overseas Malta [www.sosmalta.org](http://www.sosmalta.org)

## Section I: Profile of the Interviewees

The first part of the questionnaire aimed at collecting the demographic data of the 55 TCNs who participated in the survey. The respondents were asked questions about their gender, age, nationality, legal status, and family composition. The profiles of the interviewees were diverse: the participants had 14 different nationalities and there was a diversity of ages and backgrounds. Out of the 55 participants, 39 (70.91%) were female and 16 (29.09%) were male. This disparity is mainly due to the high availability of the female migrant community - especially the Filipino community - and their interest to participate in the survey.

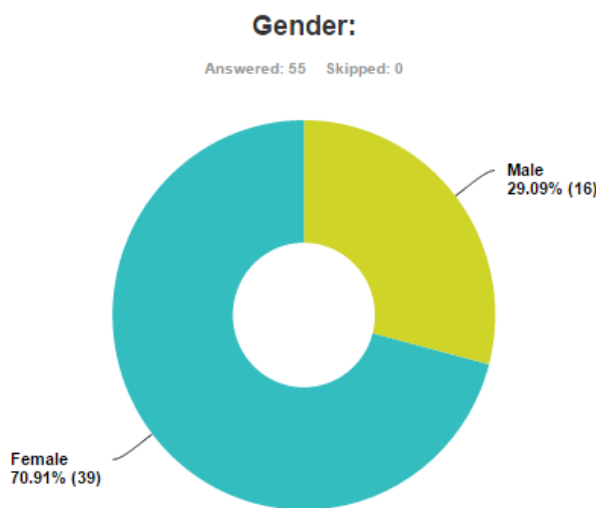


Figure 1 Gender

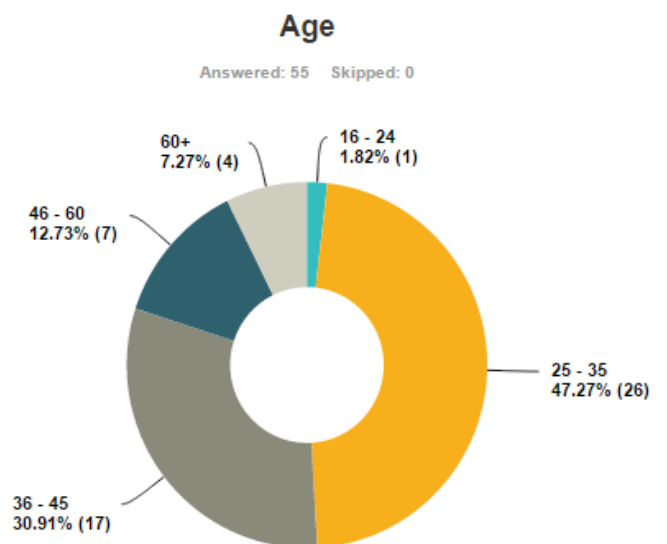


Figure 2 Age

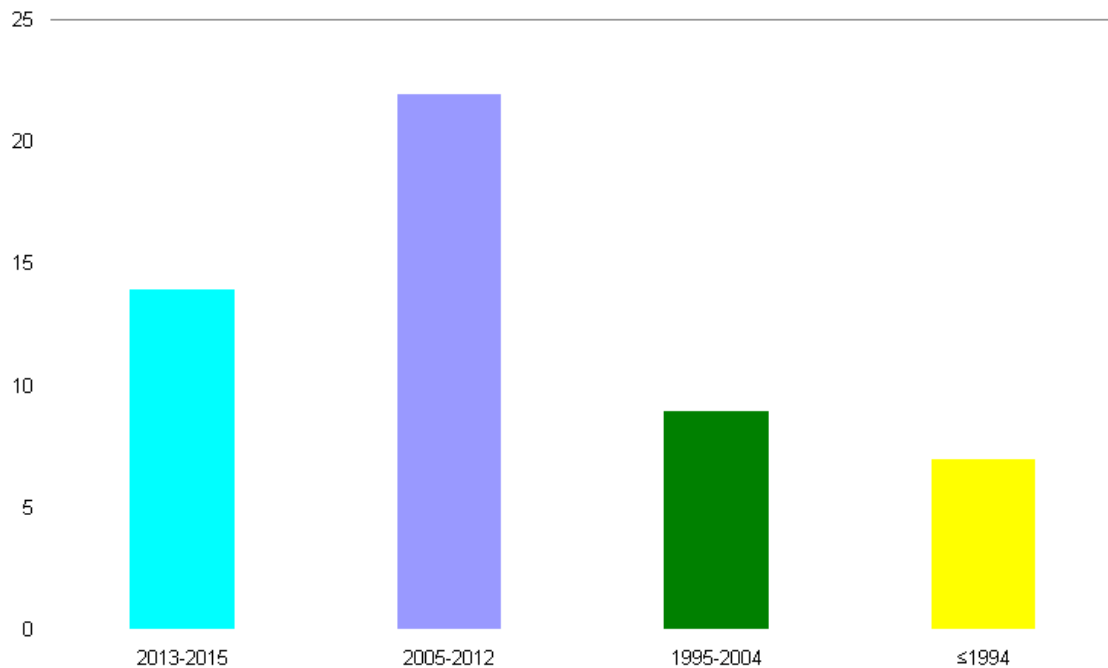
Most of the individuals (42.27%) were between the ages of 25 and 35, followed by 30.91 per cent of the individuals between the ages of 36 and 45. 1.82 per cent of the interviewees were between the age of 16 and 24 years old, 12.73 per cent between 46 and 60 years of age and finally 7.67 per cent of the individuals interviewed were older than 60 years old.

Regarding the country of origin of the participants in the research, an attempt was made to ensure that the sample of TCNs interviewed was representative, in ethnic and national terms of the principal national categories of TCNs in Malta which formed the object of this study. Most of the individuals interviewed were from Philippines; 6 were Serbians; 5 Brazilians; 4 Nigerians;

3 Americans, 3 Ukrainians, 3 Moroccans; and; 2 Libyans, 2 Albanians, 2 Chinese, 2 Russians, 2 Venezuelans and 1 participant from each of the following countries: India, Sri Lanka, Gambia, Ghana, Sudan and Iraq.

After a comparison between the nationalities at birth and their nationality today, it is notable that 15 of the participants obtained Maltese citizenship whilst 16 of the participants had double citizenship. This means that in total 56.36 per cent of the individuals interviewed were able to acquire another nationality than the one of their country of origin. Participants with dual nationality were still included within the research as their opinions and experience of having been a TCN and the process of obtaining dual citizenship would allow them to give a valid insight into the challenges faced during this process.

The above data is particularly interesting when examined in comparison to the year that most of the participants arrived in Malta, with 69.23 per cent of the participants having arrived during the past 10 years, as shown below in Figure 3.



**Figure 3 Year of Arrival to Malta**

Residence permits are granted for a variety of reasons, as shown below in Figure 4, with one of the principal grounds being for work related purposes or as an entrepreneur (34.00%).

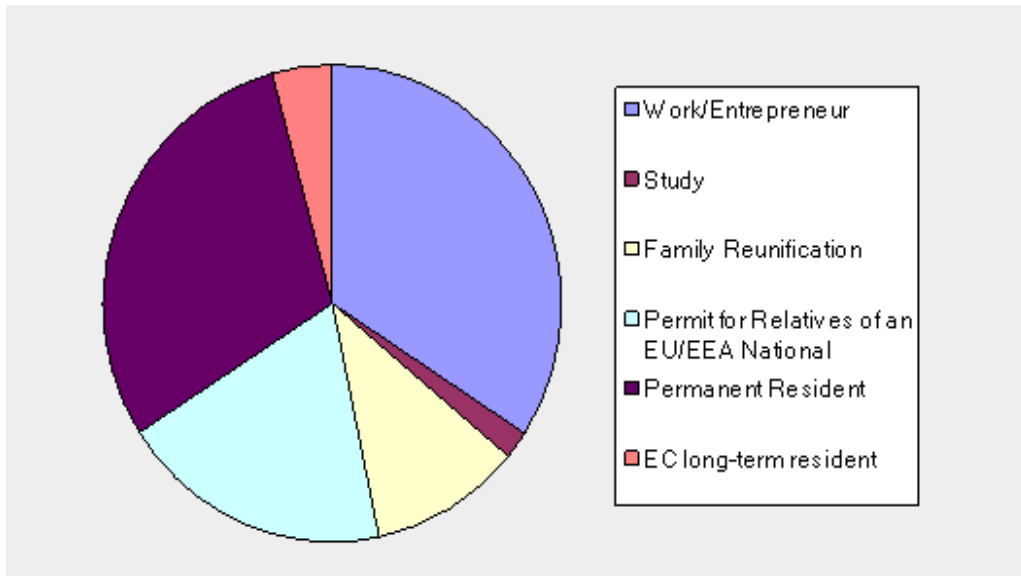


Figure 4 Grounds for Acquiring a Residence Permit

### Did you encounter any difficulties when trying to access residence permits?

Answered: 54 Skipped: 1

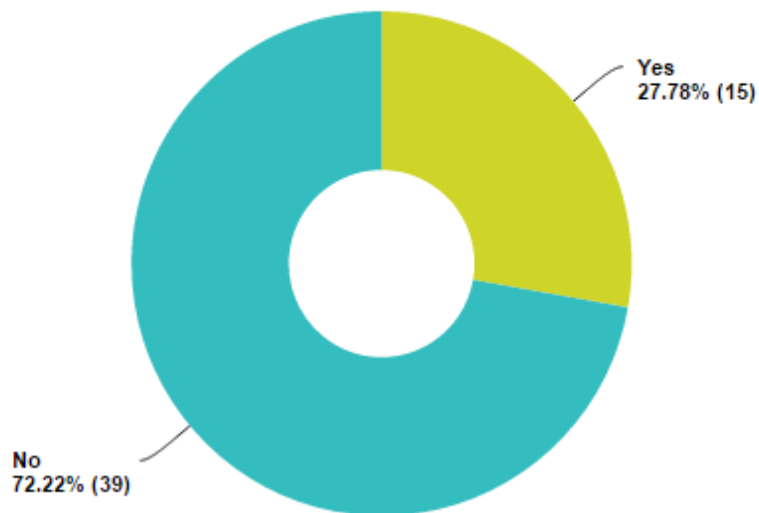


Figure 5

A noteworthy aspect is that 72.22 per cent of the interviewees claimed they did not encounter any difficulties when trying to access residency permits, while only 27.78 per cent of the respondents mentioned difficulties due to the lengthy procedures, lack of responsiveness

from the authorities, lack of information received from the administration, and while obtaining the required documentation to submit their applications. Some individuals expressed the feeling that they had been discriminated against, during the application procedure. In particular, the lengthy procedures in order to obtain a residence permit were identified as problematic, as during this time the situation of the applicant remains uncertain. Some of the respondents mentioned the following:

"I was refused several times without an explanation, money is not returned to the applicant, I waited for a work permit for a year, I got a work permit without an identity card ...."

"The process is too long and bureaucratic. Also at the Evans building the officers are not the best at giving information"

"My visa was not done properly so I was treated as a criminal even though it wasn't my fault and I had proof of that"

"Yes, due to the fact that we do not have a Nigerian Embassy here in Malta and the mechanisms are not put in place to help us communicate with one in a nearby country."

"The time in between appointments is often long; during this time most documents required from us expire, even before the dates of appointments. Most of the times there is a lack of will on the part of the administration."

"I am still waiting for it since August. My husband has it. I still don't. The eldest son got it. I can't get through on phone."

"Long time to get a permit card and long queues as well"

"It was difficult in general, access to administration, no response to applications, the treatment in the migration service was below standard"

"It was hard for my employers to obtain my permit because they hadn't processed it yet. I was not happy as I wanted to work legally"

"It was very difficult. I was meant to get a residence permit earlier but the officer at the expat centre denied me this 3 years. I think he was discriminatory."

"...because of the system itself. The system changed and officers might have had difficulties adapting. There were too many people applying and sometimes I could feel like "mistreated". It was a hard experience"

Although, the research specifically targeted persons whose marital status is not single, in order to focus on family migration, single parents were eligible to respond. However, no single parents were reached by the research. Therefore, from a total of 55 individuals, 87 per

cent were married or in a civil union and 9.3 per cent were cohabiting, as shown below in Figure 6. Most of the respondents' partners are also from their country of origin and 28 individuals' partners are Maltese. Furthermore, 63.64 per cent of the individuals have children, while 36.36 per cent do not. 66.67 per cent of the families had children under the age of 7 which can be explained by the fact that several families were reached through St. Paul's Bay Primary School.

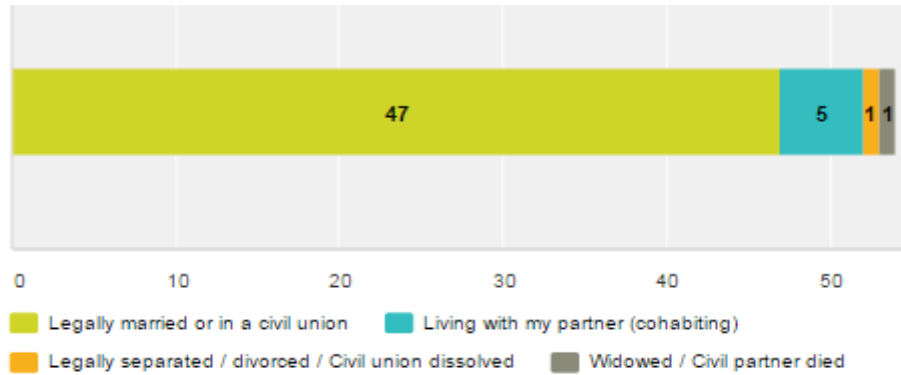


Figure 6 Marital status

## Section 2: Employment and Education

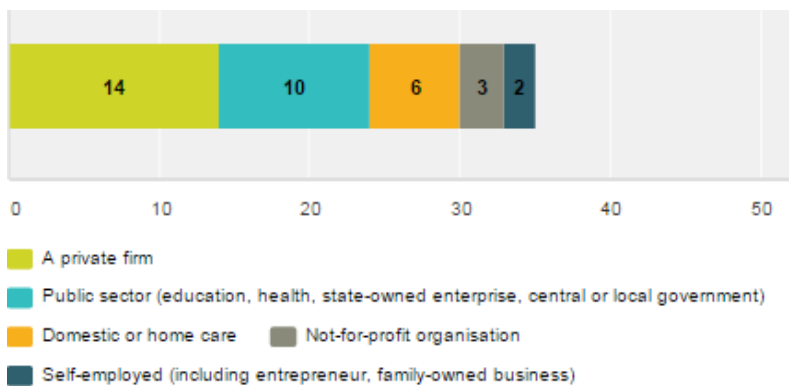
This section deals with the employment situation of the participants, their level of education, as well as with problems encountered when enrolling in educational courses, searching for employment or applying for the recognition of foreign qualifications.



Figure 7 Employment Situation

Employment is a key part of the integration process and is central to the participation of migrants, to the contributions migrants make to the host society, and to making such contributions visible. The analysis of the conducted surveys shows that in

Malta, 55.6 per cent of the individuals surveyed were currently in paid work, 18.5 per cent were unemployed and actively looking for a job, 7.4 per cent were engaged in housework or looking after children, 5.6 per cent



**Figure 8 Type of Employment**

were unemployed but not looking for a job, 5.6 per cent were unemployed, wanting a job but not actively seeking employment, 5.6 per cent were retired and 1.9 per cent were in education. Most of the respondents

were therefore either employed or looking for employment.

The TCNs who were employed at the time of the survey were mostly working in the private and public sectors, while a small number of them were self-employed. 40 per cent of the interviewees worked for a private company, 28.6 per cent in the public sector, specifically in the sector of health and education, 17.1 per cent were working in domestic/homecare, 8.6 per cent were working for the civil society and only 5.7 per cent as self-employed.

Regarding the satisfaction expressed in relation with their skills and whether they applied them in their

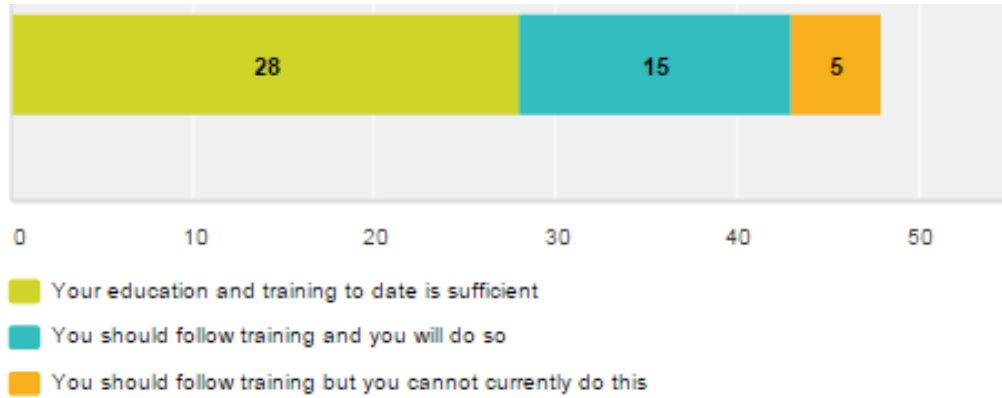
current job, 56.8 per cent of the individuals thought that their work matches their skills and training; 29.7 per cent said that their job does not match their skills and training, and 13.5 per cent of the individuals said that their



**Figure 9 Job - Education Satisfaction**

job matches their skills but not in the area of their training. 29.7 per cent of the respondents were not satisfied with their job and expressed that their employment did not match their skills and training. This is a quite considerable number, which indicates that it may be somewhat difficult for TCNs to find a job that is up to their skill-level.





**Figure 10 Need for additional training**

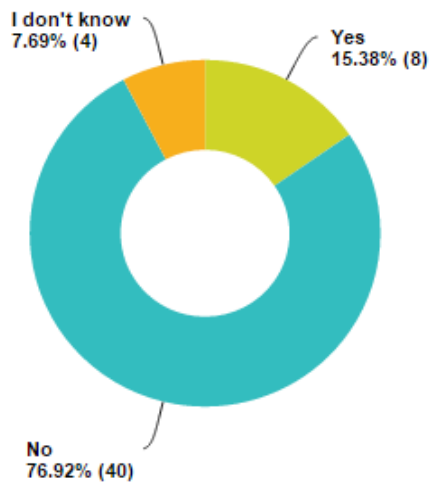
When asked to give their personal opinion on whether further training and education would increase their chances of getting a new job or keeping their current one, 58.3 per cent of the individuals said that their education to date is sufficient, 10.4 per cent said that they need to follow training and that they will do so and 31.3 per cent said that they would need to follow training but they are currently unable to do so.

The following comments of the participants provide an insight into the difficulties encountered by persons wishing to follow training:

“I applied for many ETC courses and they were always cancelled”

“I cannot because I have to attend to my children, most especially the younger one.”

“If I have to get trained I'm afraid I will not get the same payment I am getting now. Anything less than what I am currently receiving would create a lot of difficulties for me. Then there is not a variety of training opportunity available henceforth, information about availability of trainings is limited. Finally, there is segregation on who does or does not fit into such programmes.”



**Figure 11 Problems with enrolment in education**

The questionnaire goes on focusing on education and the challenges encountered on this area by TCNs in Malta. Generally, efforts in education

are critical to preparing migrants, and particularly their descendants, to be more successful and more active participants in the receiving society. As regards education, 76.92 per cent of the TCNs interviewed said they did not have problems enrolling in educational courses. Nevertheless, many of the interviewees may have said they did not have problem enrolling in Education Courses, because they have never tried to enrol in an educational course. 15.38 per cent of the respondents experienced difficulties when they attempted to enrol in educational courses. A number of interviewees expressed frustration when dealing with the educational departments of different institutions. Financial issues, discriminatory practices and a lack of information on the available educational opportunities were mentioned as the main challenges.

“The costs are higher for TCNs”

“Employees in the university do not advise what to do”

“When trying to bring my sister and enrol her in the University to continue her studies here, I had difficulties ”

“My children are paying fees now”

“Enrolling my 7-years old into a Primary School was an absolute nightmare, running from department to department and gathering all the required documents”

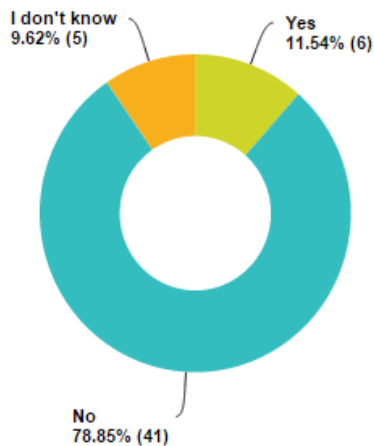
“Yes, at a time I was interested in getting a degree but I was given conditions that were inadmissible due to my financial situation”

“Personally I have been a victim of such a procedure - and many people I know as well, when one has to respond financially. Knowing and considering what someone like me earns, it is quite impossible.”

“When distinctions are made between Europeans and non-Europeans this becomes a great difficulty for those of us who are non-Europeans.”

“There are very limited information centres, and lack of will on the part of the authority”

“I applied for the Maltese language course, level 2, but they told me there were too many people applying for this course. Most of the students dropped the class and they never told me to come back, even if I had asked them regarding that. I felt discriminated”



**Figure 12 Have you ever felt excluded in the educational setting?**

Furthermore, when asked if they have ever felt excluded in the educational setting 78.85 per cent of the TCNs interviewed said that they had not felt excluded in any way while 11.54 per cent said they had. As mentioned above, many respondents that answered negatively may have not attempted to take any educational course and therefore had never been exposed to the Maltese educational system.

Some experiences shared by TCNs are the following:

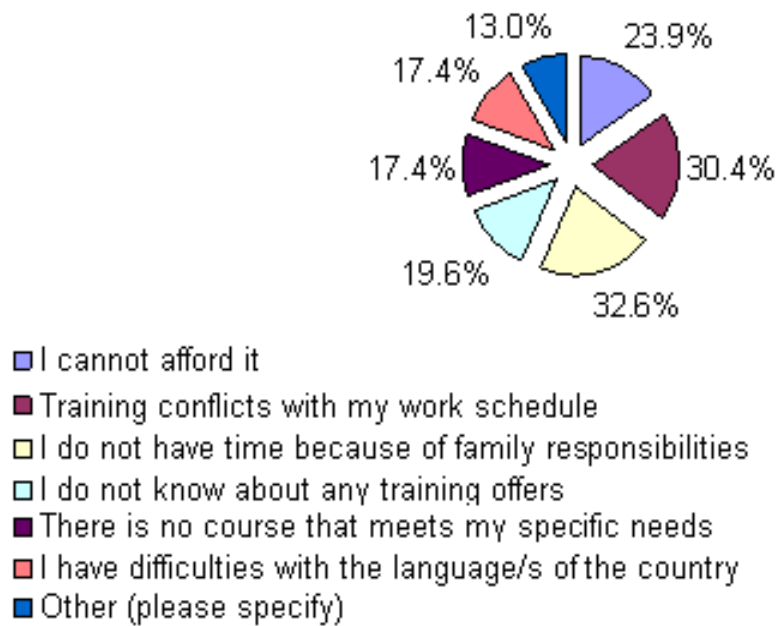
“I didn't finish school back home and I'm looked at as if I'm dumb”

“If we could get free education it would be so helpful for us”

“Yes of course, it is not fair knowing I have worked and paid taxes which is a way of contributing to the development of the country. Even if I have to pay to get certain knowledge, I sincerely expect the government to assist people in my situation.”

“Of course I feel so. If education is said to be a basic and fundamental human right, I do not see any justifiable reason why someone should not be given access to it. There are lots of stumbling blocks created to frustrate, discourage and make education looks unattractive for the majority of us living in Malta”

“Individuals did not expect much from me, with no prior experience and that everything is completely new to me.”



**Figure 13 Main reasons for not taking part in a training course**

The main stated reason preventing TCNs from taking training courses is lack of time due to family responsibilities (32.6%), followed by conflicts with their work schedule (30.4%), financial limitations (23.9%), lack of information on available trainings (19.6%), lack of courses to meet the actual needs (17.4%) and language barriers (17.4%).

58.82 per cent of the TCNs surveyed reported that they encountered problems while trying to access the job market in Malta.



**Figure 14 Difficulties on finding a job in Malta**

The most commonly mentioned were: difficulties with the Maltese language (35.3%); lack of acceptance of their qualifications or experience (29.4%); discrimination (25.5%), temporary or short term job contract (15.7%), a limited right to work (13.7%), employment offers without a legal contract (9.8%), personal or financial constraints (9.8%). It should also be noted that 6 individuals said that they had never looked for a job in Malta.

“Although as a spouse of an EU citizen I have the right to work freely without a work permit, employers are seen to be unaware of these rules which is hampering my attempts to find employment”

“They asked for an evaluation of qualifications”

“It has been very difficult”

“I have difficulties with English”

“Low salary is offered”

“Because of my nationality I cannot apply for a job”

“I have difficulties looking for job since I have a court case in process, it does not allow me to find another job”

As we can see on graph 15, 50 per cent of the respondents have a tertiary level of

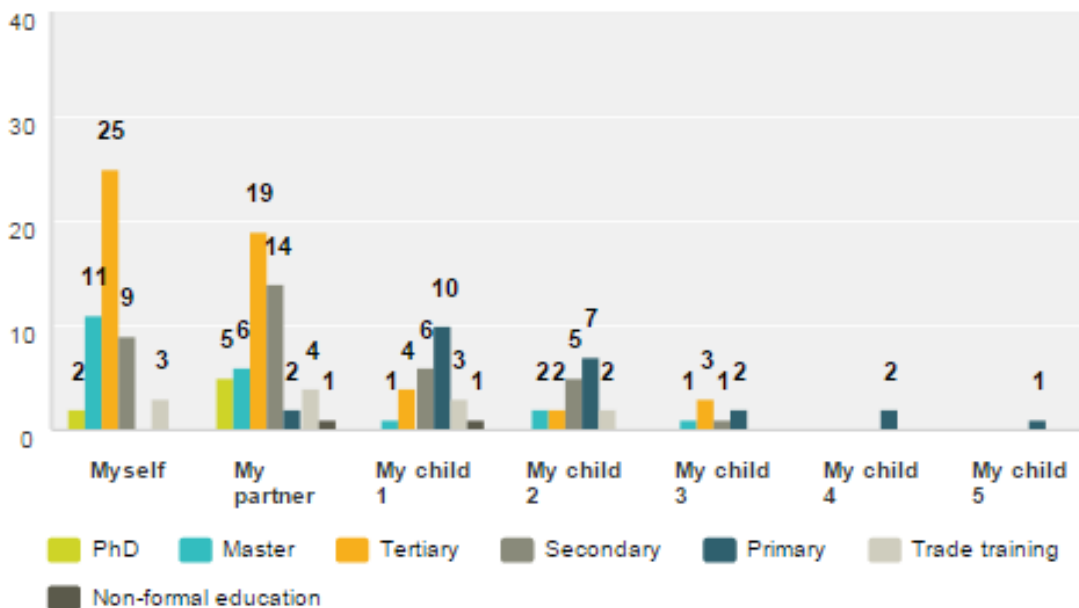


Figure 15 Highest level of education among family members

education; 22 per cent have obtained a Masters’ degree, 18 per cent have a secondary level of education; 6 per cent have completed vocational training and 4 per cent have a PhD. In most cases, their partner has an equal level of education, with 18 per cent having a tertiary level of education, 28 per cent a secondary level of education; 12 per cent having a Masters’ degree, 10 per cent having a PhD, 8 per cent having vocational training, 4 per cent have finished primary school and only 2 per cent have a non-formal education.



**Figure 16 Have you applied for your foreign educational qualifications to be formally recognized in Malta?**

The recognition of qualifications came out as a quite challenging topic as 57.41 per cent of the TCNs surveyed had not accessed the system. The main reasons cited being that they were not requested by their employers to do so or that they do not know the procedure in order to apply. Others responded that they have not tried to apply for qualifications’ recognition but they are planning to do so. Some of the

comments related to the qualifications’ recognition procedure were the following:

“Many Serbs are qualified and have a high school, but they have the opportunity to work as a cleaner at a construction site”

“The process takes a long time and they were unable to decide what level my qualifications were”

“My papers have not been accepted”

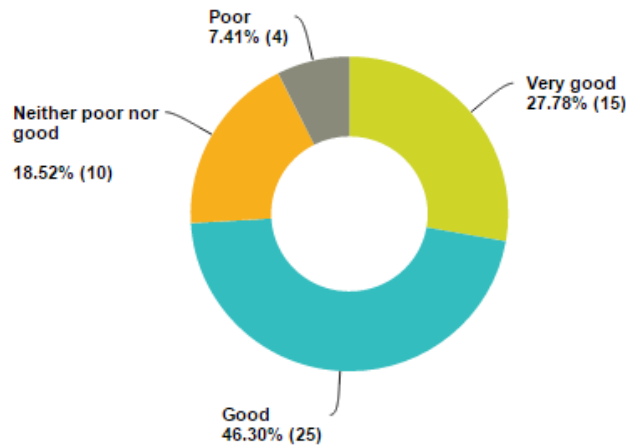
“Still awaiting feedback, after applying in October 2014”

“It took 2 years. Qualification does not add up to the Maltese system. The Filipino system does not have geriatric modules in their nursing courses, so it misses this element”

“The MQRIC had problems recognizing my qualification since the level of education in America does not match the one in Malta”

### Section 3: Health

This section deals with questions related to quality of life, safety, access to medical healthcare, and with information regarding health services.

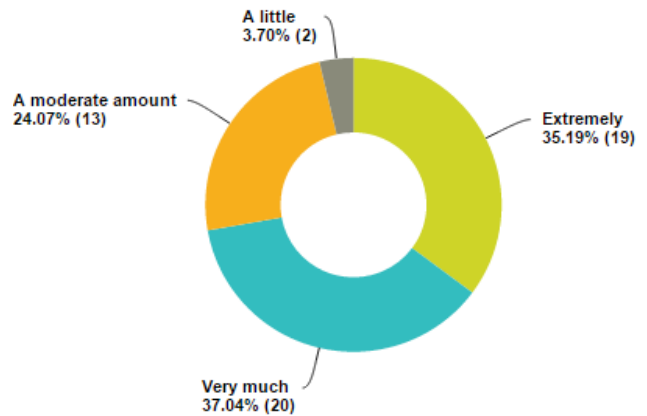


**Figure 17 Quality of life**

Particularly high among the TCNs surveyed is the feeling of safety in Malta, as 72.23 per cent feel either very or extremely safe. While only 3.70 per cent said that they feel only a little safe. No respondents opted to reply that they did not feel safe at all.

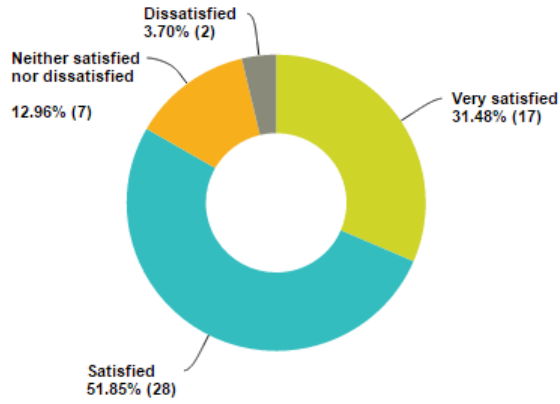
Regarding the level of their personal health 83.33 per cent of the individuals are satisfied or very satisfied with their health. As far as their physical environment is concerned, 68.25 per cent think that it is extremely or very healthy.

The majority of Third-Country Nationals are in general terms happy with their quality of life in Malta. 46.30 per cent of the TCNs surveyed think that their quality of life is good, 27.78 per cent think it is very good. Only 7.41 per cent considered their quality of life was poor while 18.52 per cent consider their quality of life to be neither poor nor good.

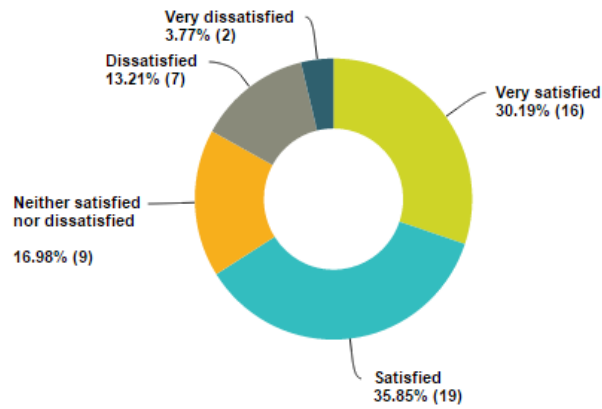
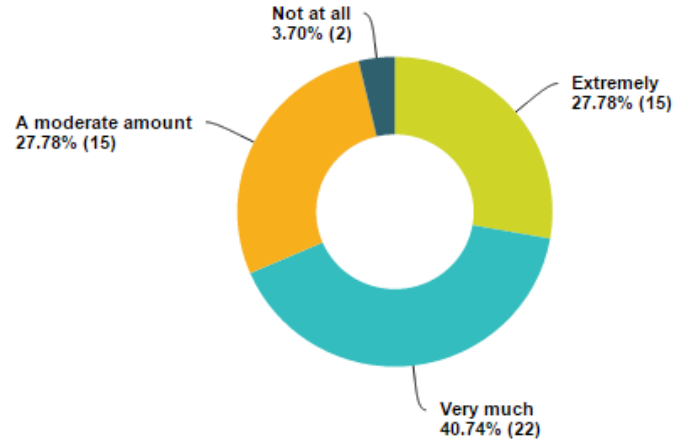


**Figure 18 Feeling of Safety**

**Figure 19 How satisfied are you with your personal health?**



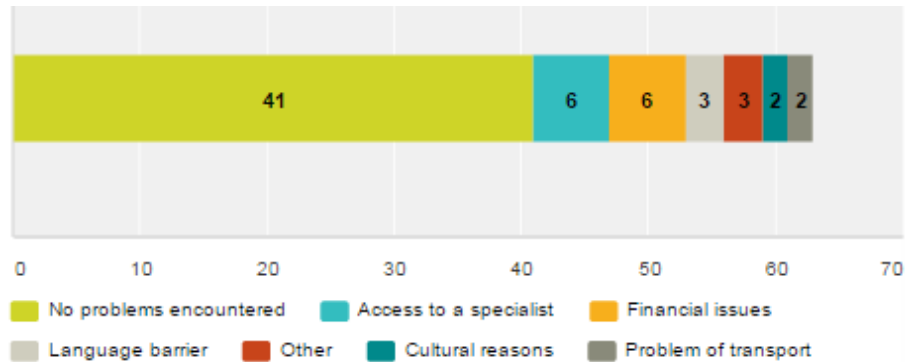
**Figure 20 How healthy is your physical environment?**



**Figure 21 How satisfied are you with the access to information regarding health services?**



The issue of access to information regarding health services is the next to be examined, with 66.04 per cent claiming to be satisfied or very satisfied and only 16.98 per cent claiming to be dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.



**Figure 22 Problems encountered when accessing healthcare in Malta**

75.9 per cent of the TCNs interviewed said they did not encounter any difficulty when trying to access medical healthcare whereas 11.1 per cent had financial issues; 5.6 per cent encountered language barriers, and 3.7 per cent encountered difficulties regarding cultural reasons. Some of TCNs’ comments were the following:

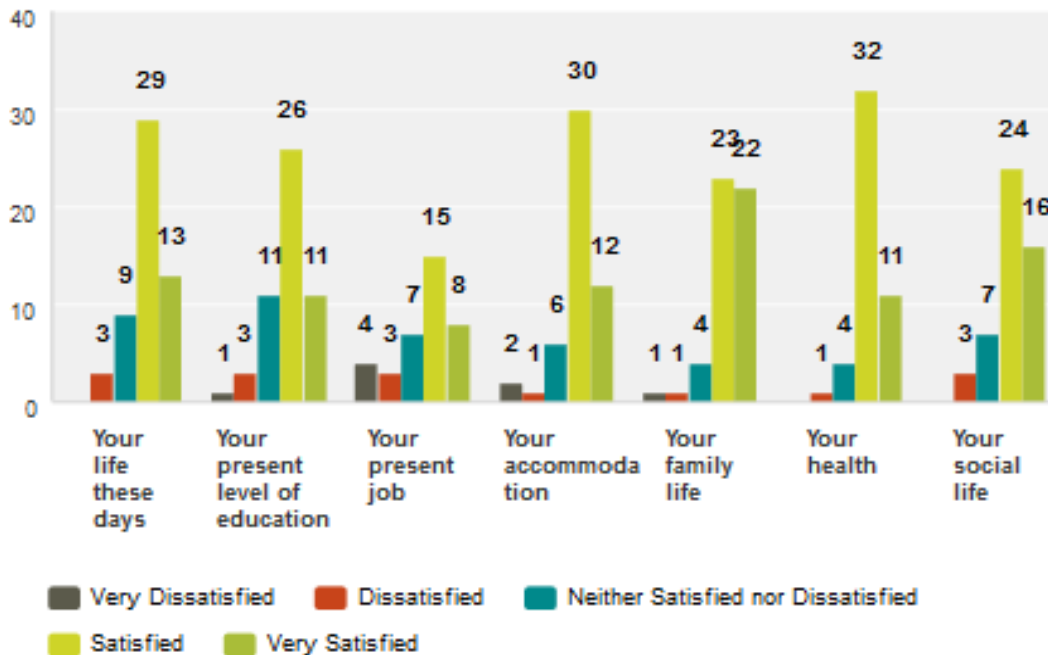
“I keep having to prove that I am entitled to state medical treatment when visiting the hospital”

“Long waiting time for a specialist at MDH”

“Lack of qualifications of the specialists in Malta”

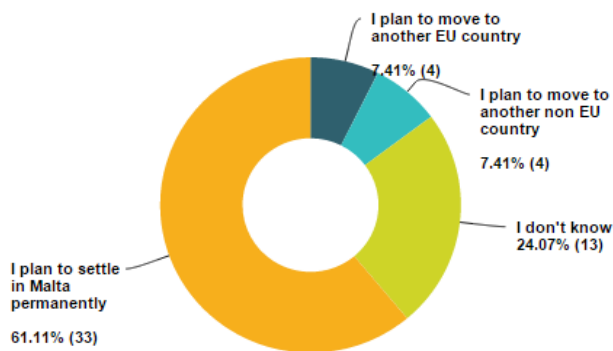
## Section 4: Life satisfaction and social benefits

This section examines the overall life satisfaction in Malta, activities, social contact, and accommodation, access to public services and access to social benefits.



**Figure 23 Level of Satisfaction**

Most of the TCNs surveyed were satisfied with their life, present level of education, present job, accommodation, family life, health and social life.



**Figure 24 Are you in Malta for the long-term or do you plan to move to another country?**

61.11 per cent of respondents said that their plan is to settle in Malta permanently, as some of them already considered Malta as their home while 14.82 per cent of respondents planned to move to another country, either EU

or non-EU, either due to their wish to return to their home country or due to

unfavourable circumstances in Malta.

The participants commented the following:

“I would like to stay in Malta, but I don't want to waste my time looking for a job”

“Planning to leave Malta with family for better future for our children”

“Due to employment difficulties we are now searching for work in another EU country”

“I would prefer to end this journey of searching for a better life. But with the standard of living, and with very little or no help on the part of the government, and lack of attention to migrant communities, one wonders if the journey has ended or will it continue... so for now the possibilities are there if nothing changes.”

“Actually, if I had a fair treatment, and felt a part of the society I wouldn't mind settling down here. But considering the circumstances it will be extremely difficult to realise one's dream here in Malta. It is sad though!”

“We recently bought a house in Malta so the plans for now is staying in Malta”

“Malta is my second home now”

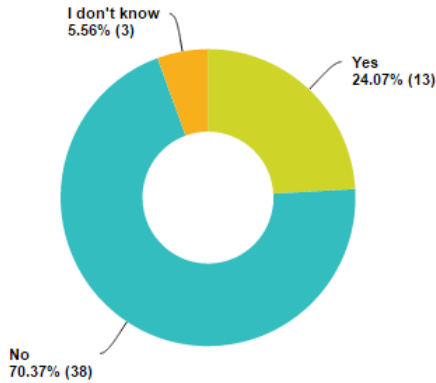
“If Libya gets back to its original situation, we would like to have the chance to go back”

“My wife does not want to move to another country”

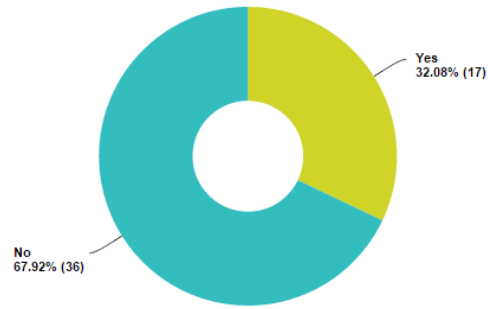
“I want my kids to finish their education here”

“I plan to get back home eventually”

“I wish to go back to Morocco”



**Figure 25 Did you experience any difficulties accessing public services?**



**Figure 26 Do you receive any social benefits?**

As far as social benefits are concerned, the vast majority of TCNs (67.92%) claim they do not receive any allowance from the Maltese government. Most of the respondents who said that they do receive allowances are benefiting from childcare or retirement allowances.

Regarding the access to public services, the majority of the respondents (70.37%) said they did not have any difficulty accessing public services. The TCNs who stated that they did encounter difficulties reported frustration over the inefficiency of the health-care centres, poor public services, inappropriate attitudes of service providers and long procedures. Some of their comments are:

“Officers involved would discriminate me”

“During summer all the buses are full”

“The bus service is not efficient, long queues in hospitals”

“When I go they give me a hard time, when my wife (Maltese) goes, in front of her I get respect”

“The health-care system is not designed to be accessible for non-Maltese or non-European. The medicines are extremely expensive, the waiting hours are frustrating. A social programme simply does not exist. Sometimes we lack alimentation / clothes for the children and no place or nobody we can turn to except from friends. It’s a shame!”

“The health-care system for us is unacceptable. Though I know for the locals it is almost unacceptable as well. There is no social programme. Sometimes I had to go to bed hungry and for those with kids it is horrible.”

“Government departments have difficult attitudes. If I need something, I do it through my lawyer as I prefer to avoid frustration”

“As a working class person if we decide to have kids tomorrow knowing that we can't afford day care to look after our kids while working how do we go about things? One would have to quit his job.”

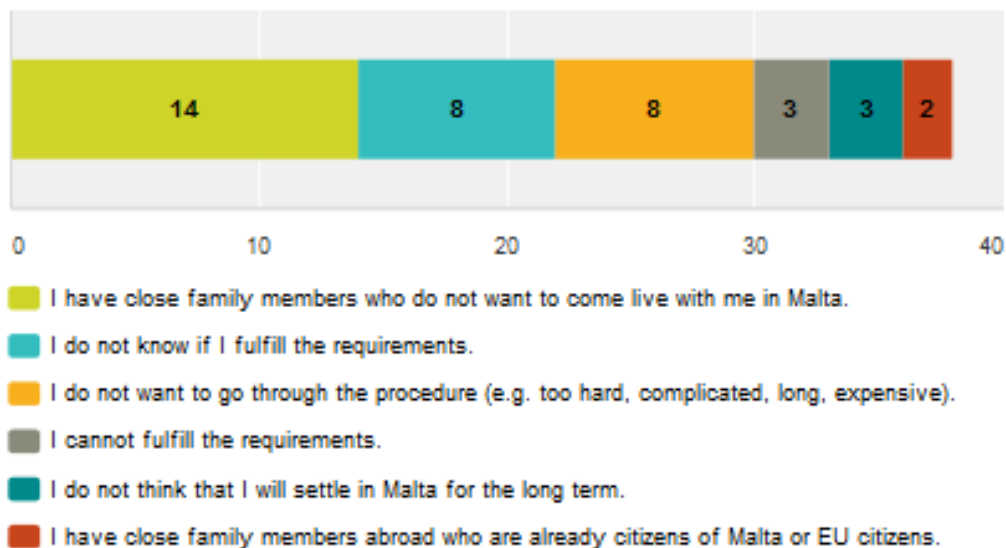
Regarding life satisfaction and access to social benefits the majority of the respondents seemed quite happy. Only a very few said they were dissatisfied with their level of education, their job, their family life or their social life. Most of the interviewees have contacts outside the family circle - friends, co-workers, members of NGOs or church communities - and also participate in activities during their free time. However, some of the participants said that they did not feel very included in the society. More than half of the interviewees plan to settle in Malta. A few respondents said that due to their living conditions and the employment situation they wish to leave Malta. Respondents also mentioned many difficulties which they encountered when trying to access public services or allowances; for instance, they spoke about bad public transport, discrimination against foreigners, financial difficulties and poor assistance from the government.

## Section 5: Family Life

This section of the survey analysis focuses mainly on the family life of TCNs in Malta and other issues, such as family reunification and the difficulties or fears encountered during the procedure.

Most of the TCNS surveyed lived with their family in a household composed of 2, 3 or 4 individuals. Most of the respondents replied that their family or part of their family lived outside Malta. On their arrival to Malta, 6 of the respondents' partners lived outside Malta and 10 individuals had their children abroad. Of these, only 2 TCNs said that they had applied for family

reunification for their partner, and another 2 had their husband apply for them to come in Malta. Furthermore, 3 TCNs applied for their children to move to Malta and 6 people applied for family reunification with other members of their family, such as parents and siblings. The TCNs interviewed applied for family reunification in various years, between the 1990's and 2014. From the replies given what one can note is that TCNs that followed this procedure said it was much easier in the 1990's than it is nowadays. From all the cases that are reported in this analysis only one application for family reunification of a TCN with his spouse was successful at the appeal stage. Similarly, the majority of the applications for reunification of TCNs with their children were unsuccessful, with only 1 case reported as accepted. Most of the participants expressed their wish to apply for family reunification in the future, 18 individuals answered that they wanted to apply or retry but not at the present and 7 said they do not wish to apply at all.



**Figure 27 Reasons for not applying for family reunification**

As illustrated in Figure 27, the main reasons why individuals do not attempt to apply for family reunification are that their family does not want to move to Malta, they do not know if they fulfil the requirements, they do not want to go through the complicated procedure or they are not planning to settle in Malta permanently. Furthermore, there were two respondents who reported that they do not want their family to move to Malta due to the poor quality of their life.

Some of the TCNs surveyed stated the following, regarding the family reunification procedure:

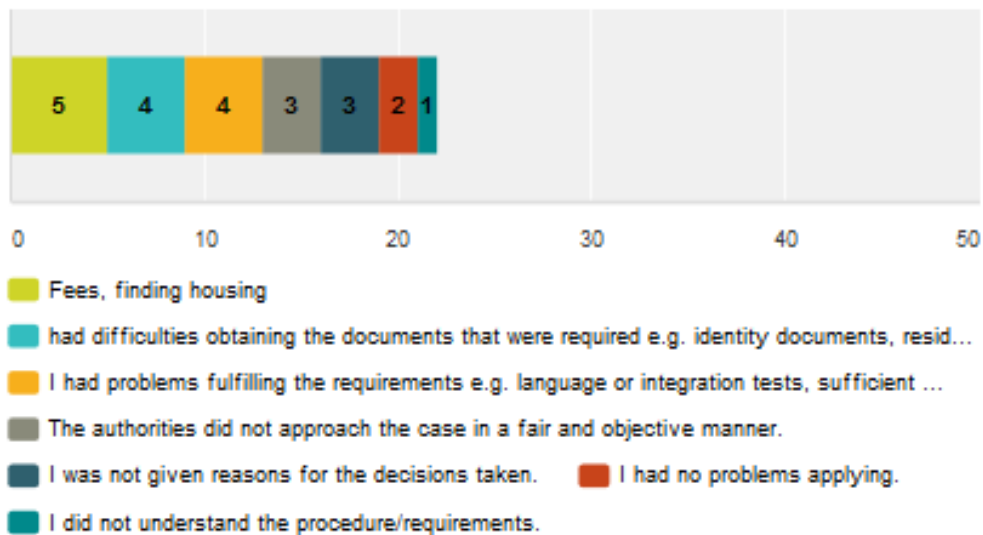
“I cannot invite my loved one to live in a system in which I am not content. I just do not see it possible to realise one’s dream here. Sorry if I am a little bit rude, but that’s my thought.”

“Living here as an individual I find it difficult to cope financially, and the society is not liberal and it seems nobody takes note of it locally because almost nothing is being done. The little changes that have been made were following external pressures. I would not want my children to go through the racial discrimination that I am already subjected to.”

“ I would need to have a bigger home, need to find other reasons for them to come, need to earn more money”

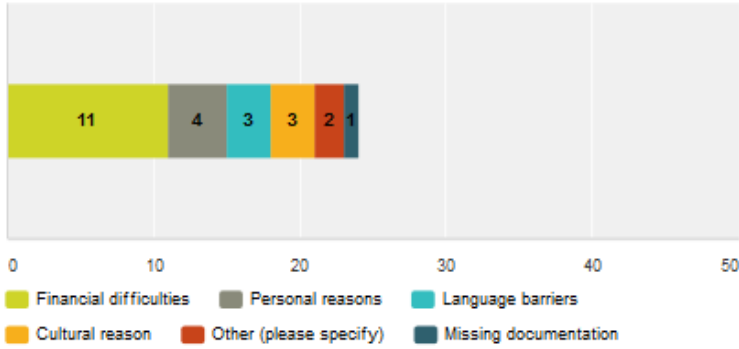
” There is no place for them here”

“ I don't have enough money to afford supporting them now”



**Figure 28 Problems encountered during family reunification**

When asked about the challenges they encountered during the family reunification procedure the respondents replied that the main issues were related to the fees or finding housing to fulfil the requirements. Other issues mentioned included difficulties obtaining the required documents, claims about the authorities not approaching the case in a fair and objective manner, not receiving a justified explanation for the decision taken or that they did not at all understand the procedure. Only two TCNs interviewed replied that they did not have any problems with the procedure for family reunification.



**Figure 29 Other challenges encountered regarding family reunification**

Apart from issues related to the procedure and the application, the family reunification is a complex process during which various different challenges may occur. As shown in Figure 29,

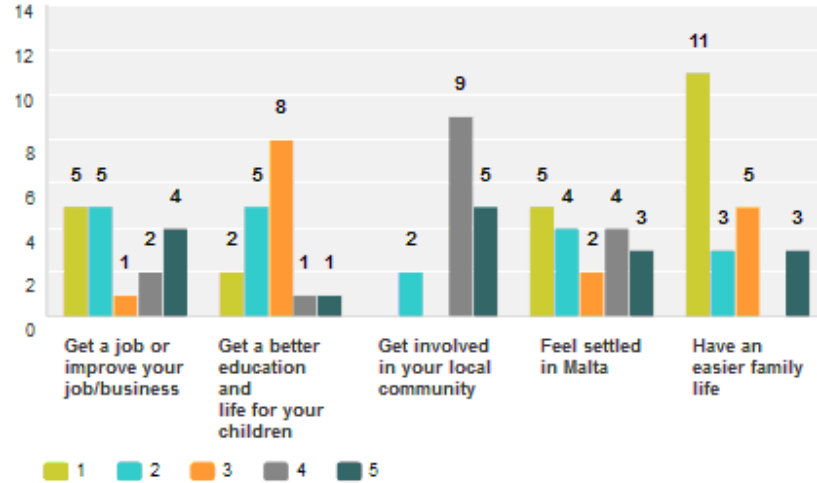
the experiences of the TCNs surveyed included financial difficulties, personal challenges, language barriers, cultural differences and missing documents.

One respondent stated

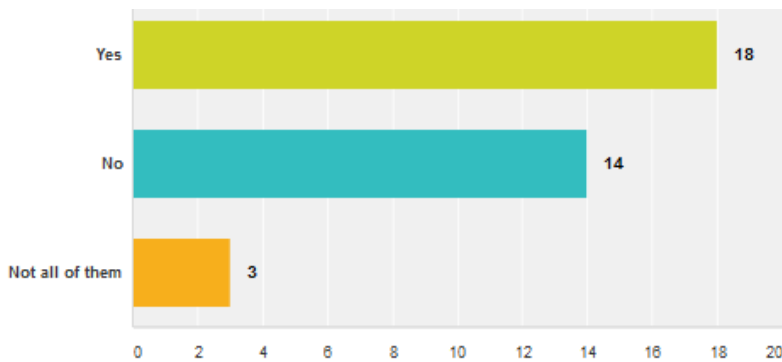
that “one of the reasons [for rejection] they gave me was that I did not buy the plane ticket for them before applying”.

Finally one respondent cited problems with “process and bureaucracy”.

Therefore, it should be noted that generally



**Figure 30 Expectations regarding family reunification**



**Figure 31 Were your children born in Malta?**

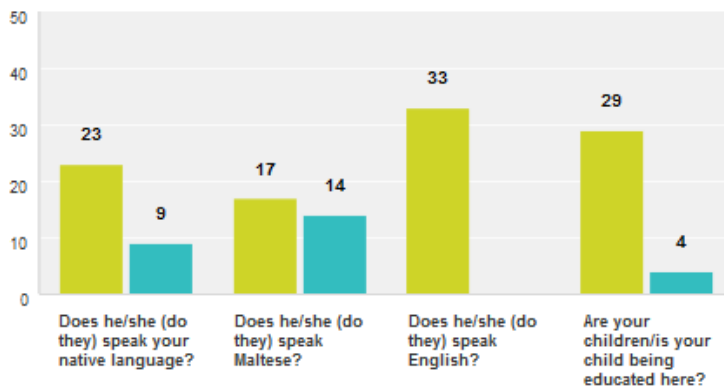
the procedure of family reunification appears to be very bureaucratic and run on a case-by-case basis.

It is very important for the issues reported above to be addressed as the family unit is a very



important aspect in the life of any individual. As reflected in Figure 30, the TCNs surveyed consider that a successful family reunification will contribute to an easier family life and to feeling settled in Malta.

A very important aspect of TCNs' life is the level of integration of TCNs' children in the Maltese society and they quality of life that they have in Malta. As we can see in Figure 31 most of the TCNs interviewed had children after their arrival in Malta. As a consequence most of the children speak at least their native language and English and some of them speak Maltese (see Figure 32).

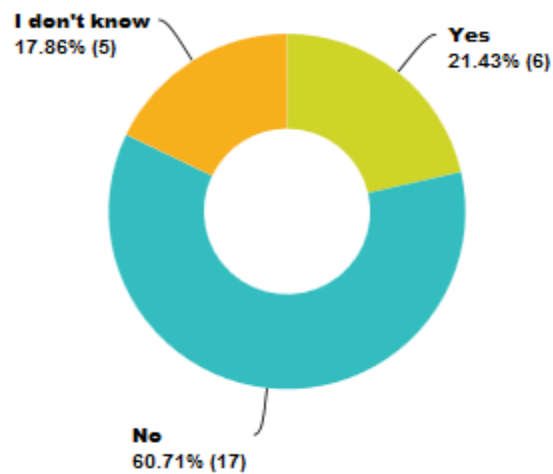


**Figure 32 Children's' language skills**

The children of most of the respondents are undertaking education in Malta. More specifically, the largest number of children attends a local State School, followed by private schools, Church schools and childcare. Most of the parents were satisfied with their children's

education. Another aspect of children's school life that was examined in relation to their origin is the cases of bullying experienced due to their nationality. Although most of the parents stated that as far as they know their child had not been a victim of bullying, 6 cases of bullying were reported, an amount that is quite high for such a small sample. On this aspect some TCNs surveyed commented the following:

"She was ostracized in the playground by her classmates who made fun of her skin colour. The situation was not serious but my daughter now feels different to the



**Figure 33 Cases of bullying due to children's' nationality**

local children”

“Though it is not yet proved, but I have the impression that something strange is happening and according to other children of friends who are older with better understanding and communication they have confirmed such things. Moreover, he is most of the time sad during school hours. He hardly talks about friends in school.”

“Lately because of the current situation, but he is capable of handling it”

“Not in my case but many children do have problems. Is it the parents’ responsibility...When you give respect, you get respect.”

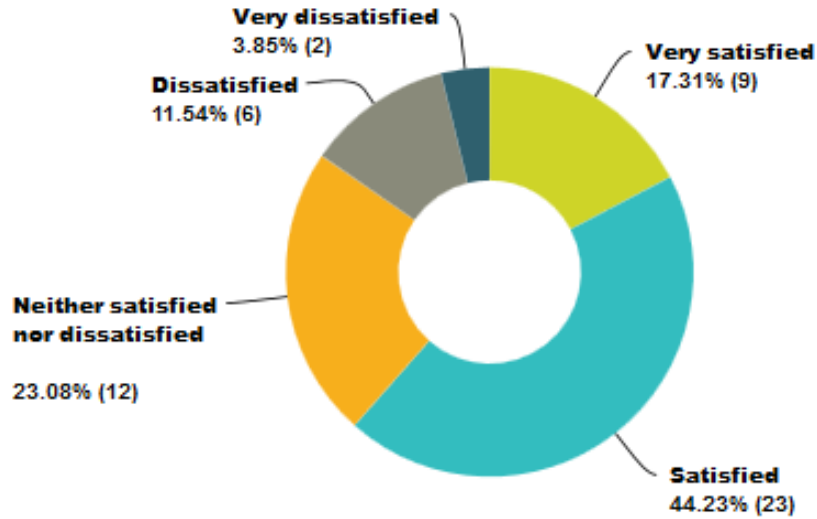
“My grandchildren yes”

“Their pronunciation was a problem. They got over it”

“A Maltese child pushed my son, and afterward he could not walk properly for 2 months. Also other children often tease them as "Chinese, Chinese".

## Section 6: Access to Information

This section deals with access to information concerning public services. In general terms, the TCNs surveyed were mainly happy with the information available; however, a few of them reported having difficulties in accessing the necessary information. Most of the time, information was provided through websites, word of mouth, personal research, social media and NGOs.



**Figure 34 Level of satisfaction regarding access to information**

“It sometimes happens that an official is not willing to waste time and talk to strangers”

“Government websites and letters are either difficult to navigate or not translated into English in some cases.”

“Don't know where to get information”

“How do one knows what to do if information are not made available? This is the 21st century. This is a basic and fundamental thing to individual and family making up the Communities and Societies. When there are lack of information this leads to a total collapse of the social structures”

## Section 7: Discrimination and Equal Rights

In this section participants were asked questions about experiencing discrimination in different situations in Malta. Several TCNs surveyed said they experienced discrimination in some form in their everyday life in Malta. The main problems appear when TCNs are looking for a job, where they are being subjected to the stereotypes related to their nationality or culture. For more information see Figure 35.

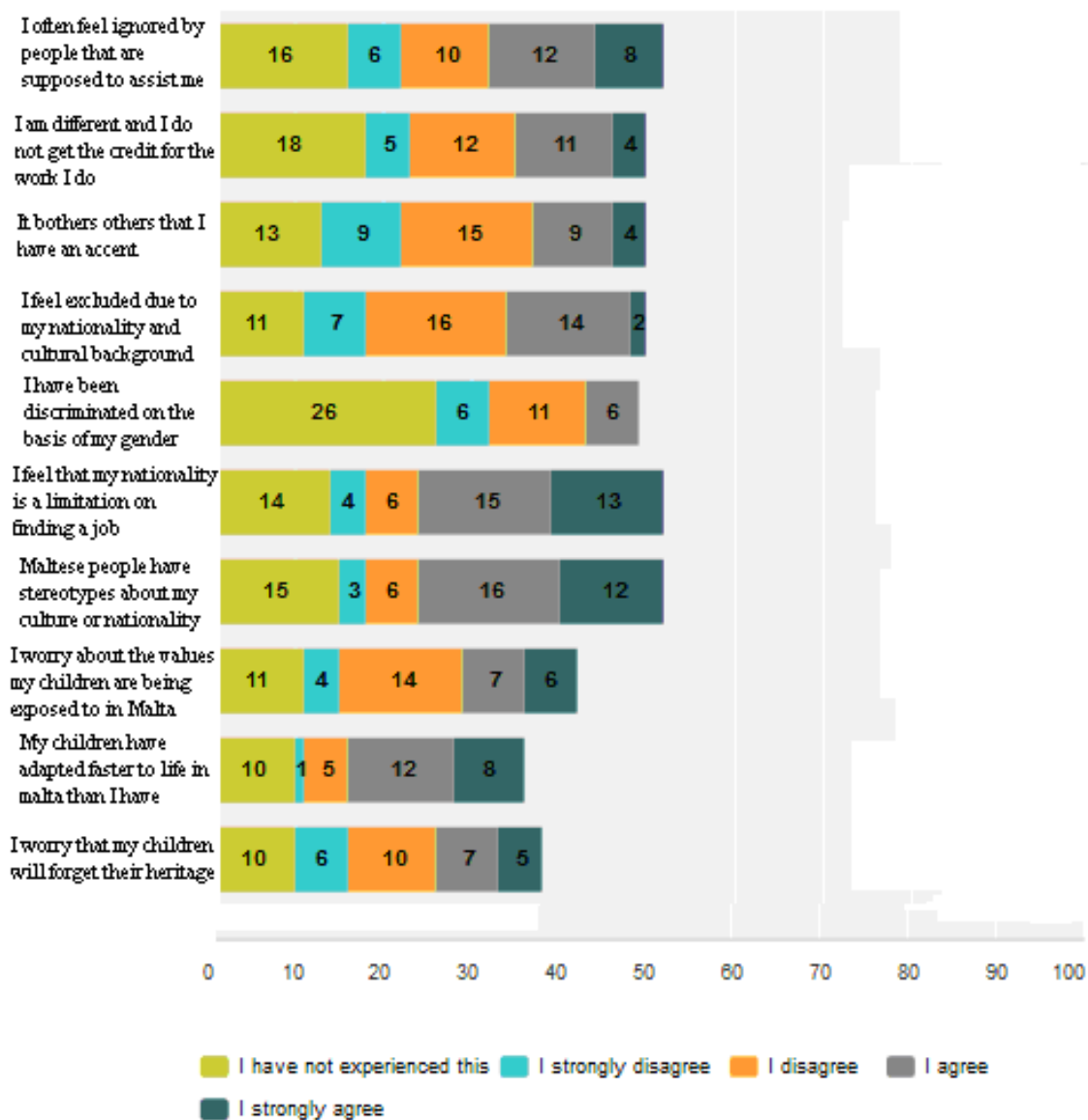


Figure 35 Equal Rights and Discrimination

## Section 8: Political and Civic Participation

This section deals with participation within civil society, membership to political groups and civil society, political participation and representation of TCNs in Maltese politics and access to citizenship.

Most of the respondents were a member of a migrant or ethnic group organization, a sport club, a cultural organization, a religious group, or a local group. Some were also members of trade unions, humanitarian groups, professional associations and environmental groups.

The surveys also enabled us to realize how difficult it can be to access Maltese citizenship. The comments below illustrate the difficulties respondents encountered when applying for Maltese citizenship.

“We have the right only after 18 years spent in Malta to apply for citizenship”

“The fees are too high, took us a month to reach them. Finally my wife went to see what we need, no one wanted to assist her because they wanted her to stay in a queue even though she needed five minutes’ assistance”

“But I know all who did, because of one reason or the other which are not in the line with the European laws, they were neglected of their rights.”

“They didn't want for no reason. They were saying it was a marriage of convenience”

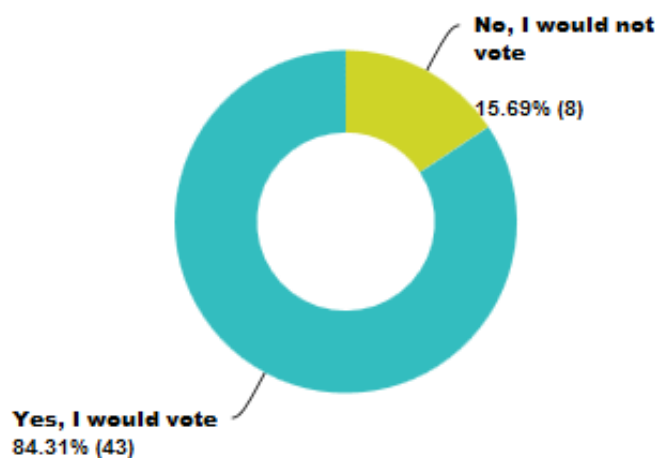


Figure 37 Interest in voting

Regarding the participation of TCNs in the Maltese political and electoral system, the majority of the TCNs surveyed stated that they would be interested in participating in future elections (see Figure 37); and most of them also agreed that more politicians with a migrant background are needed in Maltese politics. According to the participants, individuals with a migrant background would be

better placed to understand migrants, their needs and the challenges they face, than the local politicians.

Political and civic participation could be improved through better access to citizenship, through a simplified process or through extending the right to vote to permanent residents. Moreover, participation could be improved by TCNs' active involvement in the communities and schools.

## Section 9: TCNs' suggestions

The last part of the questionnaire was dedicated to the suggestions to the Maltese authorities proposed directly by TCNs who participated in the research, in an attempt to provide them with the opportunity to express their opinion and the challenges they are facing.

"They can influence the business sector to employ people based on their qualifications more than their country of origin."

"I think we are all the same and there is no need to experience so much trouble in obtaining permits to work and the most basic necessities in Malta."

"The government needs to be proactive in fighting racism and xenophobia. There needs to be more government sponsored culturally inclusive programmes for diverse communities to get to know each other."

"Recommendations for demographic representation: someone who will understand the needs and welfare of immigrants. To change the rules and requirements on family reunification, family is important in our lives."

"Create more institutions to respond to the general need of the migrants communities. The judicial system should be fairer to the migrants. Government needs to do more in fighting racism and discrimination. The authorities should do much more to educate the local population by transmitting positive information. The law has to be tougher on those who engage in racial violence whether government agents or individuals. Positive information has to be

disclosed to the general public in order to build an inclusive society. More protection has to be put in place. Judicial action has to be taken against those who are involved in racial violence.”

“Racial discrimination has to be kicked out from all institutions.”

“Creation of awareness amongst the citizens Politicians should desist from racial statement. Employing competent migrants in positions beneficial to the migrant communities. Creating cultural centres for exposure of the immigrant culture and also creating avenues for the migrants to integrate and feel the inclusiveness.”

“To introduce more phone lines through which they can reach the government departments...”

“Make the procedures easier - give background information, guide / CDs about Malta in the airport in different languages, not only Maltese or English.”

“The environment at the government departments needs to be made friendlier and individuals working there should extend their full support and help the visitors at their offices for any need. There is a huge need to make government departments friendlier, cooperative, helping and welcoming. That will definitely improve the bondage of respect and will lead to a better integration and understanding. More space and coverage should be given particularly on the state media (TVM) to the positive aspects of expatriate’s lives, cultures and their contribution to Malta. Expatriates should be consulted for legislation and their views should be given value, and their concerns should be addressed. Religious tolerance and harmony should be promoted and in state schools a comparative study of world religions should be introduced so that children from their very early age learn about each other, and seeds of tolerance, harmony and acceptance are sowed for the common good.”

“Faster ID cards process which are needed for services. I tried to donate my blood but was not accepted due to a lack of a Maltese ID. Some individuals are defensive against newcomers”

“Stop racism”

“Family reunification should not depend on salary.”

“Organize more multicultural events.”

“The government should make more effort to accept other immigrants and not put all immigrants in the same area. Prepare Maltese and make clear rules for immigrants to follow to meet halfway. Maltese should understand that migrants will always be here. It is a win-win situation. It is about respect and working together. Once when trying to find a flat, we were discriminated because of being Libyans.”

“They should not talk about immigration because Maltese people get annoyed then. Talk about it but in small doses. Here once you know the people they accept you.”

“Be more administratively compliant. Government should be friendlier.”

“I feel welcomed, as people in Malta are open minded and open to foreigners, so far, at least.”

“Some people mock me for being a Filipino... They think I am Chinese, so they ask for massages...”

“I would recommend to help us to access our rights as a worker so we know what to do if there will encounter a conflict.”

“I would recommend integration... I think access to ID, citizenship; hospitals and social care should not be so difficult.”

“I would like to help more Filipino nurses to be able to integrate into the system. We need to have more information on the rights of a domestic service like a forum or a seminar for TCNs.”

“Improve the procedure to apply for a visa and citizenship. Also, corruption is very bad there.”

“Terminology. A set programme policy for educating migrants when they come. Make they feel integrated, learn the language, most important (both Maltese and English)”



“Detach from your own interests and be more of a true citizen of the country. Detach from two-political-parties system. Create an environmental education (regarding urban planning; architecture/ green areas). Plan more cultural activities with Maltese as well, and introduce Maltese to migrant's culture “

## **Conclusion**

Almost all of the interviewees could speak English so it might have influenced the results in the sense that it might have been easier for them to integrate than it would be for TCNs who do not speak either of the official languages in Malta. During this phase, it was in fact much more challenging to reach those who do not speak English or Maltese. Only a few of the interviewees could speak Maltese and some pointed out that this was sometimes a barrier, for example at school, when trying to find a job or in their day-to-day life. All of the participants had partners and half of them had children, mainly under the age of 7.

Most of the respondents were happy with their life in Malta, as they stated that they generally enjoy good health, they feel safe, they are happy about their social life and about their family life. Furthermore, many people said they were satisfied about the educational system. However, not a lot of the respondents had enrolled in educational courses. Nevertheless, many respondents reported that, to their knowledge, integration had been a difficult process for other TCNs. A significant number of respondents experienced some difficulties living in Malta.

In this research, some of the main problems which emerged referred to issues encountered when dealing with government administration, especially when arranging visa matters or during the process of family reunification. Particularly for family reunification, applications were more often unsuccessful than successful. It is worth highlighting that many of the interviewees stated that the reasons why they were not applying for family reunification were mainly related to low wages and accommodation issues. Moreover, the main problems identified are lengthy procedures and the attitudes and behaviours of public service officers. One respondent highlighted this issue by mentioning that often, due to the time the procedure takes, the documents required expire in the process. This apparent government bureaucracy poses a hindrance for TCNs when seeking different public services and could be addressed through intercultural competence training of service providers and simplification of administrative procedures.

Several respondents said that at the arrival stage they would have appreciated more information about the Maltese culture, for example a guide on Maltese history. According to them, the main issue regarding integration was the need to learn English. Moreover, not speaking Maltese can at times be an issue. In this area more language courses need to be available for TCNs or those already available, for example through the Lifelong Learning programme, should be better promoted to TCNs.

Searching for employment can be a challenge for TCNs in Malta, since less than half of the respondents said that they did not encounter any difficulties finding a job.

It was mentioned by the respondents several times that the Maltese often have stereotypical views on migration and migrants themselves, however that this is often improved through personal one-to-one contacts when the local and migrant population get to know each other better. It has been suggested that cultural events organized between the Maltese and the migrants could be a good way to introduce both communities, which can subsequently contribute to a decrease in the stereotyping on the behalf of the Maltese. NGOs and cultural organizations should find ways to promote and improve cultural exchange.

Many respondents encountered discrimination and felt they were victims of stereotyping, mainly on the basis of their skin colour and ethnic origin. Respondents also expressed concern that discrimination will worsen as people fear recent developments in the Middle East and North African region. Respondents also commented there is a need to act against racism and reinforce laws against discrimination. The opinion that authorities do not wish to invest a lot of effort in improving the situation was frequently expressed.

Overall, the respondents were open and participative; they seemed willing to share certain personal experiences without the need for the interviewer to ask for further clarification. The survey reveals that a significant number of respondents face challenges and difficulties in different areas of living in Malta: they experience financial difficulties, discriminative practices, racism, and frustration when trying to access public services, as well as accessing health, education and immigration departments. However, it must be noted that the respondents may not be representative of the whole TCN population in Malta as due to the limited timeframe and the resources of the research the number of participants was limited (55). Moreover, all the interviewees could speak English and were living with a partner, which may make the integration process easier. It must therefore be noted that most vulnerable persons might have not been reached by the researchers.

### **III. Good Practices in Family Integration in Europe<sup>105</sup>**

#### **Introduction**

Promising practices from several EU Member States have been identified through a process of desk research and contact with various entities in the selected countries. Germany, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK were selected from a broader process of practice mapping. For the purposes of this research, a promising practice is defined as an action, initiative, project or law implemented and organized by an NGO, local administration or national government, in order to support the socio-economic integration of third-country nationals, directly focusing on children and spouses. The main criteria for identifying promising practices was the ability to adapt and transfer the practice to the Maltese context, whether the practice had a direct impact on family life, and whether the practice was efficient and successful.

Whilst relevance to the Maltese context was a criterion for selection, it is acknowledged that no two migration and integration contexts are the same and any measures would need to be adequately assessed and adapted in order to meet the specific local context and needs. The identified countries were selected to represent a variety of approaches that can serve as a model for the integration of family members in Malta. Portugal, Spain and Sweden were chosen as exemplary models as they are all consistently rated as having the best conditions for the integration of family members.<sup>106</sup> Italy was selected because it is a southern Mediterranean state whose migration reality and progress is relevant for Malta due to their geographical proximity. Germany and the UK were selected due to their wealth of experience with migrant integration. Slovenia is a new EU Member State similar to Malta that has only recently begun experiencing inflows of migrants, and yet has created several initiatives that help to support, as well as promote, integration including that of family members.

Integration measures have blossomed around the European Union, however it is noted that there is a lack of integration measures that target the family unit as whole, rather than specifically women or children (irrespective of the family migration context). Nevertheless, several initiatives

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<sup>105</sup> This section was prepared by The People for Chang Foundation [www.pfcmalta.org](http://www.pfcmalta.org)

<sup>106</sup> Migrant Integration Policy Index: [www.mipex.eu/family-reunion](http://www.mipex.eu/family-reunion). Disclaimer: The People for Change Foundation is the national implementing partner of MIPEX.

found in this compilation address similar issues faced in Malta such as the families access to language training, services support as well as the promotion of active participation in the new society.

The practices are divided into the types of measures: legislative/access to family reunification; employment; education; social support; and political empowerment.

## Access to family reunification

### Law 23/2007

**Organized by:** Portugal

**Location:** Throughout Portugal

**Website:** [www.refworld.org/docid/48e4910b2.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/48e4910b2.html) (text of the law)

**Description:** The Law 23/2007 transposed the EU Directive 2003/86/EC into Portuguese law, but it took further steps from the minimum standards set out in the directive with a view of further facilitating the integration of family members. The law does not specify a minimum time period of lawful residence for the sponsor before being able to request family reunification. Although the EU Directive 2003/86/EC suggests a minimum age for spouses with a view of deterring forced marriage, Portugal does not have a minimum age for spouses for family reunification, as they believe it only delays the reunification process and does not address the problem of forced marriage. In terms of children, Portugal goes beyond the EU definition and includes children who are over 18 and are dependent on the sponsor. This considers social changes such as a longer time in education and starting working life at an older age. Portugal also emphasizes how their recognition of same-sex couples transfers to the application of this law, which also allows family reunification in the context of *de facto* partnerships without discrimination between same-sex or mixed-sex partnerships. Portugal opposes integration measures as a pre-requirement for both immigrants and family members, as it makes integration more difficult and less accessible. However, it does support consolidated, holistic measures upon arrival, which can be considered promising practices. The Portuguese Law 23/2007 also maintains that residence permits for family members should always be for the same length as that of the sponsor. Moreover, persons enjoying subsidiary protection are eligible for family reunification. In order to assure efficiency and a timely decision, the Portuguese Aliens and Borders Department has a maximum period of six months to make a decision about family reunification, otherwise the application is granted by default.

## National Center for Immigrant Support Centres (CNAI)

**Organized by:** ACIDI, ACIME- High Commissioner for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities

**Location:** Lisbon and Porto, Portugal

**Website:** [www.acidi.gov.pt/es-imigrante/servicos/centros-nacionais-de-apoio-ao-imigrante---cnai](http://www.acidi.gov.pt/es-imigrante/servicos/centros-nacionais-de-apoio-ao-imigrante---cnai)

**Description:** Various public services related to integration are provided through a one-stop shop service, including Alien and Border Services, Social Security Authority for Working Conditions, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education. There are also services to help facilitate family reunification, legal aid, social support or employment support. Socio-cultural mediators are present, many of whom are also migrants, which mitigates the language and cultural barriers. This project was awarded with the 1 place prize of Best Practices in the Public Sector Category by Deloitte and the Economic Daily in 2005, and is still considered an example of good practice by the Directorate-General for Justice, Freedom and Security of the European Commission.

## Programme to Support Family Regrouping

**Organized by:** Barcelona City Council

**Location:** Barcelona, Spain

**Website:** [www.barcelona.cat/ca/](http://www.barcelona.cat/ca/) and [www.ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/index.cfm?action=furl.go&go=/intpract/programa-de-acompanamiento-a-la-reagrupacion-familiar---programme-to-support-family-regrouping](http://www.ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/index.cfm?action=furl.go&go=/intpract/programa-de-acompanamiento-a-la-reagrupacion-familiar---programme-to-support-family-regrouping)

**Description:** This programme was designed to facilitate the reception and integration of reunited families. Having been piloted in Horta-Guinardó, the programme is now active throughout Barcelona. The main goal is to provide technical assistance, but also social support from local volunteers and immigrants who have been living in Barcelona. Programme Coordinators analyse applicant information to support the start of the reunification process. Once a family is approved for reunification, they receive support to prepare for the arrival of their family member. This stage involves meetings with the applicant to provide information about legal aspects, the education system, languages, coexistence codes, job training, psychological assistance, and a discussion about women's role to prevent gender discrimination. Family support is provided during the reunification and integration process through a personalized orientation, special support for children and women, and group activities. The integration is monitored and evaluated to measure the integration of reunified families.

# Employment/Self-Employment Measures

## Introduction Plans

**Organized by:** Public Employment Agency

**Location:** Throughout Sweden

**Website:** [www.arbetsformedlingen.se/Globalmeny/Other-languages/Languages/English-engelska.html](http://www.arbetsformedlingen.se/Globalmeny/Other-languages/Languages/English-engelska.html)

**Description:** Immediately after migrants are granted a residence permit, the Public Employment Agency conducts an interview to assess their background and experience. Since they possess a residence permit, family members who arrive in Sweden through family re-unification are also entitled to this service. The Public Employment Agency also provides housing assistance within the first six months and housing recommendations are based on the immigrant's background and where they could find suitable employment with their skill set. The Agency then creates an individual "introduction plan" which considers previous educational background and work experience. The plan can last for a maximum of 24 months, but the length is determined on a case-by-case basis. Although participating in the introduction plan is not compulsory, participation is rewarded by an allowance. The benefit is the same for everyone and is not based on incomes of other household members, which creates an incentive for all family members to become involved in the programme. This in turn supports the family members' participation in the labour market more broadly.

## Women in business

**Organized by:** NyföretagerCentrum

**Location:** Stockholm, Sweden

**Website:** [www.chilenskariksforbundet.se/NyForetagarCentrum.html](http://www.chilenskariksforbundet.se/NyForetagarCentrum.html)

**Description:** The Chilean National Federation and the African Federation in Sweden collaborated to offer a course for women about business. All women, regardless of age or experience, are welcome to participate free of charge. The course takes place over two full days and participants receive practical information about how to start and manage a business. Topics covered include the writing of a business plan, budgeting, and contract drafting. This allows the women to connect with other women who are interested in starting a business and to share experiences with successful entrepreneurs. The project also provides classes for women who already have businesses and would like advice or support. Although NyföretagerCentrum cannot help with financing, they provide free

advice from their 28 offices throughout Stockholm. Projects such as this offer opportunities for self-employment and to enter into income earning businesses to uniting family members.

## Education Measures

### “Mom, come back to school with me!”

**Organized by:** CGIM Association and Cantieri dei Giovani Italo-Marocchini

**Location:** Rome, Frosinone, San Daniele (Udine), Italy

**Website:** [www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/esperienze-territorio/scuola/Pagine/mamma-torna-a-scuola-con-me0422-6063.aspx](http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/esperienze-territorio/scuola/Pagine/mamma-torna-a-scuola-con-me0422-6063.aspx)

**Description:** The project was specifically created for migrant communities coming from Arab speaking countries and was implemented between September 2013 and July 2014. The activities of the project included: Italian language courses for North-African women, often excluded from the traditional Italian language courses or victims of social exclusion; courses of Arabic language and culture for migrant children born in Italy or who arrived in Italy at a very young age in order to preserve their culture; after-school activities for minors; introductory civic education courses for women and children on the Italian Constitution and the principal rights and obligations of Italian society; orientation of local services; and cultural and linguistic mediators’ assistance. All these activities were free and took place at school from Monday to Friday (17-18:30) and also during the weekend, depending on the availability of the schools. The expected number of the participants was approximately 40 native Arab-speaking women and 80 migrant minors with North-African background. Whilst not specifically related to family reunification, this project addressed the integration of family members.

### Literacy and citizenship for non-EU women in Turin

**Organized by:** The city of Turin, in collaboration with Cooperativa Sociale progetto Tenda Onlus, Associazione Formazione 80, Movimento Ecclesiale di Impegno Culturale – Gruppo di Torino, Arcidiocesi di Torino – Ufficio pastorale Migranti, Cooperativa TerreMondo, Centro territoriale per l’Educazione permanente “A. Gabelli”

**Location:** Turin, Italy

**Website:** [www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/esperienze-territorio/pariopportunita/Pagine/Un-Po-di-mamme-vanno-a-scuola.aspx](http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/esperienze-territorio/pariopportunita/Pagine/Un-Po-di-mamme-vanno-a-scuola.aspx)

**Description:** This project provides civic and Italian language courses, with a priority, but not exclusively, to TCN mothers of children who attend kindergartens and nursery schools. There are a total of 300 places available, which are divided into 23 study groups according to language level. The participants visit social service providers for migrant women, with cultural mediators when necessary, covering areas such as school, health, and residence in Italy. They are taken on guided visits which will allow them to discover historical and cultural aspects of the city. Furthermore, they reflect on the challenges of being a woman and a mother in a new country in six meetings facilitated by experts.

### Acceptance, Integration, Inter-Culture

**Organized by:** Istituto comprensivo statale di Sigillo

**Location:** Istituto comprensivo statale di Sigillo, Perugia, Italy

**Website:** [www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/esperienze-territorio/scuola/Pagine/Accoglienza.aspx](http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/esperienze-territorio/scuola/Pagine/Accoglienza.aspx)

**Description:** The aim of this project was to promote the educational integration of migrant students and their families. The teacher, with the help of cultural mediators, collected the contacts of migrant parents and established personal relationships with them to stimulate their participation in their children's education. Language classes were offered to the students and utilized alternative languages, such as sign language and graphic language, to make teaching more interactive. Teachers were provided with materials for using appropriate techniques with the migrant students and a team to provide additional support. The programme also encouraged schools to teach about the reality of the countries of origin of the migrant children. The school provided specialized teachers in Italian language, linguistic mediators, and experts in facilitated communication, health-care professionals, and experts in various forms of therapy (psychotherapy, music therapy and hypnotherapy).

### In.Media.Res - Integration Mediation Responsibility in Piedmont

**Organized by:** Ires Piemonte in collaboration with the City of Turin (Direzione Servizi Educativi), Associazione di Animazione interculturale (ASAI), Associazione Multi-etnica Mediatori interculturali (AMMI), Associazione Studi Giuridici sull'immigrazione (ASGI), Comitato Collaborazione Medica (CCM), Società Cooperativa TerreMondo. The project was monitored by the Ufficio Scolastico Regionale del Piemonte (Regional School Office of Piedmont)

**Location:** Province of Turin, Italy

**Website:** [www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/esperienze-territorio/scuola/Pagine/progetto-inmediares.aspx](http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/esperienze-territorio/scuola/Pagine/progetto-inmediares.aspx)

**Description:** The main purpose of InMediaRes has been overcoming the difficulties related to school inclusion of TCN minors, who recently arrived in Italy or needed support for their education and



identity building process. The project was implemented in the scholastic year 2013/2014 in the province of Turin and targeted TCN minors between the ages of 6 and 18. The selection criteria included gender equality and the specific necessities of the minors without considering their country of origin. The nationalities experiencing the greatest integration challenges were: Egyptian, Chinese, Serbian and Bosnian as well as Roma communities. The intervention not only included the support of cultural mediators at school, but also ran meetings among teachers, parents and young migrants in order to plan specific measures on a case-by-case basis addressing individuals' needs. The activities included both education support and solutions to overcome the problems within the family context, which often represent an obstacle in the integration process, as well as the relationship with parents and difficulties related to the social, legislative and administrative sphere. This project also created professional development courses, including both frontal and on-line classes for administrative personnel and teachers, to broaden their knowledge and skills on legislative and administrative matters that are pertinent to their migrant students.

#### **A Scholarship for the Entire Family**

**Organized by:** Stiftung Polytechnische Gesellschaft

**Location:** Frankfurt, Germany

**Website:** [www.citiesofmigration.ca/good\\_idea/a-scholarship-for-the-entire-family/](http://www.citiesofmigration.ca/good_idea/a-scholarship-for-the-entire-family/)

**Description:** the Diesterweg-Stipendium is a two-year preparatory programme for students in the 4 and 5 grade. Fourth grade teachers recommend students and their families to participate with an emphasis on those who have a high potential for academic success but may need additional support due to lack of German fluency or parental understanding of the school system. During the summer holidays between fourth and fifth grade, the students also participate in DeutscheSommer, a three-week summer school focused on German language training. Participants came from a variety of backgrounds such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey, Ethiopia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Lithuania.

Although the primary emphasis is on the educational success of the children enrolled in the programme, there are also opportunities for family members to integrate into German society. Family field trips include visits to the public library or the state legislature as part of the syllabus. Building pride and belonging has become an important part of the project. The foundation holds a formal ceremony at the start of the programme for the families, which includes guests of honour from the city and state governments. At the end of the two years, all participants receive an official certificate to celebrate the completion of the Diesterweg Scholarship. Not only were students from the first round able to successfully make the transition to secondary school, the Diesterweg

Scholarship students participate with enthusiasm and gain self-confidence. The European Forum for Migration Studies observed that children in the Scholarship programme were able to attend and feel comfortable in 'higher' level secondary schools while parents gained a better understanding of the school system and had more confidence interacting with teachers. Parents also reported a greater connection to the community.

### **"School for Mama and Me!" - Language Lessons for Parents**

**Organized by:** Office of Multicultural Affairs of the City of Frankfurt

**Location:** Frankfurt, Germany

**Website:** [www.citiesofmigration.ca/good\\_idea/school-for-mama-and-me/](http://www.citiesofmigration.ca/good_idea/school-for-mama-and-me/)

**Description:** The city of Frankfurt developed, "Mama learns German – even Papa" programme with a view of supporting integration into the German school system and to encourage the involvement of new migrant parents. The programme first began in 1997 as a pilot in a Frankfurt suburb with the involvement of eight elementary schools. There are currently about 100 courses in Frankfurt as a result of cooperation between the Frankfurt Office of Multicultural Affairs and the city schools and nurseries.

Through the "Mama Learns German – even Papa" programme, immigrant parents of children in primary schools and kindergartens join their children in the classroom for two mornings a week. The parents learn German along with their children and receive real insight into the lives that their children will be leading in their new country. The contents of the languages classes are very much focused on the practical – the everyday words and expressions that the parents need to navigate their new life in Germany and to understand the activities of their children. It also forms the basis for a cooperative relationship between schools and parents. With lessons incorporated into the school day, parents are also relieved of the added burden of costly childcare.

The classroom provides a forum for the parents to connect and discuss challenges, solutions and find support and friends in an environment that is free from judgment and prejudice. All the schools that participated in the "Mama learns German – even Papa" programme found that their students had demonstrated a significant improvement in their language and vocabulary skills as a result of the increased use of German in their homes. Improved communication skills also enabled the children to participate more in school and on the playground – making both their education and social integration easier, more enjoyable and more successful.

After the success of the "Mama learns German – even Papa" programme, Frankfurt extended the programme into secondary schools, and explored variations on the programme to

broaden its accessibility. The programme has also been expanded nationally. One variation that has been developed is based on an Israeli home visit language programme called Hippy – “Home Instruction Programme for Preschool Youngsters”. This programme provides language training for both pre-schoolers and parents in the family home, reducing the isolation some new migrants experience and increasing the ability of parents with more than one child that requires supervision to participate. Parents are visited once a week by a trainer who also speaks their native language (which helps to mediate linguistic barriers) and plays games with them to reinforce vocabulary and local customs as well as to discuss parenting issues such as health and nutrition. The parents then try to spend at least 15 minutes a day interacting with their children and the material.

### **MOQA- Motivation, qualification, activation of parents of Turkish origin**

**Organized by:** Türkische Gemeinde in Deutschland

**Location:** Berlin, Germany

**Website:** [www.moqa-tgd.de](http://www.moqa-tgd.de)

**Description:** The project MOQA aims at activating, motivating and qualifying parents so that they stand up for the academic achievement of their children. Through seminars, interested parents are informed about the educational system of the respective federal state and about their rights and duties in schools. Parents that are particularly interested can participate in advanced trainings to become “Bildungsbotschafter” (“ambassadors of education”) that work as moderators between schools and the pupils' homes. In these trainings the parents are acquainted with diverse key competencies for reaching out to other parents. In order to assure the sustainability of the parents' motivation, the organization arranges congresses and exhibitions for parents. The content of these events are aligned with the everyday life of families with migration background and give the opportunity to exchange background knowledge and practical support. The parents' congress occurs once a year and there are five seminars annually. Training for the “Ambassadors of education” and the advanced trainings for parents' associations occur three times each year. Within the last two years the "Elternseminare" triggered great interest and strong demand. The access to the target group is ensured due to the structural and organizational conditions of the two umbrella organizations TGD (Türkische Gemeinde in Deutschland) und FÖTED (Förderung Türkischer Elternvereine in Deutschland). The analyses of the evaluation sheets show that the content is very well received by the participants. Within two years a total of 155 "Bildungsbotschafter/innen" were trained in Germany, among them 53 in Berlin, 23 in Essen, 53 in

Stuttgart and 26 within the TGD outside the Project "MOQA." Both Turkish and mainstream media in Germany gave coverage to the initiative.

### Early Integration of Migrants (EIM)

**Organized by:** Slovenian Institute for Adult Education

**Location:** Throughout Slovenia

**Website:** [www.acs.si/index.cgi?lang=4](http://www.acs.si/index.cgi?lang=4)

**Description:** In 2009 the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education developed a new programme, the Early Integration of Migrants (EIM), which combines the knowledge of the Slovene language with the knowledge on the Slovene culture, history and constitution and the knowledge of social and health issues, employment issues, and lifelong learning. This course targets migrants upon their arrival in Slovenia and consists of an educational programme of between 60 and 120 hours. There are ten modules designed to help facilitate integration, including; introduction to education, personal identity, family and home, labour market and workplace, health and social security, lifelong learning, public life, economics, environmental, and Slovenian society and constitution. The programme is free to migrants in Slovenia and their family members.

### When Abroad Becomes Home

**Organized by:** The Obalno-Kraška Lifelong Learning Center

**Location:** Obalno-Kraška region, Slovenia

**Website:** [www.stepin-grundtvig.org/fileadmin/stepin/Adult\\_Education\\_Providers\\_SI.pdf](http://www.stepin-grundtvig.org/fileadmin/stepin/Adult_Education_Providers_SI.pdf)

**Description:** The aim of this project is to help less educated female migrants from UNSC resolution 1244-administered Kosovo<sup>107</sup> to integrate into Slovene society, targeting specifically women who reunited with their husbands. The programme created individual learning plans for eleven women, in partnership with two Albanian women with higher education that served as cultural mediators. The main themes of the courses included; language, Slovene society, employment, children in school, and ICT literacy. In addition to learning about Slovene culture, the women presented aspects of their culture throughout the project. The participants also visited Koper Administrative unit and the Koper Social Work Center. The project was funded by the European Union, the Ministry of Labour, and the Ministry of Education and Sport.

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<sup>107</sup> Hereinafter referred to as Kosovo/UNSC 1244

# Social Support Measures

## One Stop Shop: Mainstreaming Integration

**Organized by:** ACIDI, funded by European Commission INTI programme

**Location:** Lisbon, Portugal

**Website:** [www.oss.inti.acidi.gov.pt/](http://www.oss.inti.acidi.gov.pt/)

**Description:** The One Stop Shop is a centre that provides centralized access to services to newcomers, to better improve coordination and overall services. Services include the social security and Inland Revenue offices, judicial services, banking services, information about how to connect to the local government offices, information about schools, information about the electricity and water board, and how to apply for a national health card. The One Stop Shop ensures maximum accessibility, as it has extended opening hours and is located close to urban parking and public transport. Language and cultural mediators are available to help provide better information on the rights and duties of migrants. Furthermore, with the aim to create a more integrated community for all, everyone has access to the One Stop Shops, including migrants who do not have an official status, as well as EU and Portuguese nationals. A major outcome of the One Stop Shop Project is the Handbook on 'How to Implement a One-Stop-Shop for Immigrant Integration.'

## Programa CaixaProinfancia

**Organized by:** La Caixa

**Location:** Madrid, Spain

**Website:** [www.madrid.org/cs/Satellite?cid=1354409552175&language=es&pageid=1158658352586&pagename=PortalInmigrante%2FCM\\_Actualidad\\_FA%2FINMI\\_fichaNoticia](http://www.madrid.org/cs/Satellite?cid=1354409552175&language=es&pageid=1158658352586&pagename=PortalInmigrante%2FCM_Actualidad_FA%2FINMI_fichaNoticia)

**Description:** The Spanish Bank La Caixa has made over half a million Euros available for a collaboration agreement with the community of Cañada Real to promote social intervention programmes for migrant families having children up to the age of 16. The programmes supports socio-educational initiatives for families with young children, promotion of intercultural harmony, and employment. The funds were used to provide information about breastfeeding and hygiene, providing glasses and hearing aids, creating day care centres and summer camps for minors, and providing psychological support. In 2014, 8,104 children and 4,523 families from Madrid and its metropolitan area benefitted from the programme.

### **Bizilagunak: La Familia de al Lado - Next Door Family**

**Organized by:** Slovo21

**Location:** International

**Website:** [www.nextdoorfamily.eu/index.html](http://www.nextdoorfamily.eu/index.html)

**Description:** This initiative aims to bring together native families with foreign families by meeting for meals in their private homes. The main objectives are to fight existing prejudices towards people of foreign origin, promote a normalized coexistence and strengthen the role of volunteering as an agent of social change. The coordinating organization puts together a one-day event where families are partnered and share a meal. Each of the family partnerships is also provided with a facilitator to ease conversation and to ensure the success of the project. The project is evaluated through questionnaires provided to the participants concerning the objectives.

### **Formation programme to promote social participation, human rights, health and integration of immigrant women and their families**

**Organized by:** Grups de Decerca i Actuació amb Minories Culturals (Groups of Research and Action with Cultural Minorities)

**Location:** Salta and Girona municipalities

**Website:** [www.ec.europa.eu/migrantintegration/index.cfm?action=furl.go&go=/intpract/formation-programme-to-promote-social-participation-human-rights-health-and-integration-of-immigrant-women-and-their-families](http://www.ec.europa.eu/migrantintegration/index.cfm?action=furl.go&go=/intpract/formation-programme-to-promote-social-participation-human-rights-health-and-integration-of-immigrant-women-and-their-families)

**Description:** This project targets immigrant women with children up to 3 years old in villages where there are not sufficient educational resources for adults. Information sessions are provided from Monday to Friday, for two hours each afternoon. The schedule is specifically designed to adapt to the time schedules of the participating women. The sessions are organized according to language and social participation, arrival period, personal interests and social environment knowledge. Each participant's individual background is also considered, especially those that come from rural areas. The courses cover basic language skills, information about social resources, psychological support to improve their self-esteem, and information about prevention and awareness of gender violence. External professionals also participate in the sessions and encourage the participants to reflect and share their experiences. In Salta municipality, the project includes a nursery to promote migrant women's attendance. Between 1999 and 2008, the programme reached over 400 women.

## Movement of families: pathways for Third-Country National parents and children

**Organized by:** Caritas

**Location:** Rome, Italy

**Website:** [www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/esperienze-territorio/scuola/Pagine/famiglie-in-movimento.aspx](http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/esperienze-territorio/scuola/Pagine/famiglie-in-movimento.aspx)

**Description:** The main activities of this project consist of training courses for parents on the conflicts teenagers may encounter, especially in relation to cultural diversity. Intercultural mediation is provided to migrant families to improve their understanding, establish better communication and to improve relationships amongst parents, teachers and students. Parents are encouraged to participate in various discussion groups, both among parents' associations and migrant communities to facilitate an exchange of experiences. Courses are also provided for second-generation migrant youth to rediscover their cultural roots and to reflect on their new identities in an intercultural society. This practice has inspired interactive and engaging projects, including an exhibition called *Gli altri siamo noi* (We are the others) on discrimination and prejudices and the documentary *Il futuro è troppo grande* (The future is so big).

## We Are Here - Migrant Minors

**Organized by:** Soletterre in collaboration with conComin, Centro Paolo Alberto Del Bue, Terrenuove e Codici and the City of Milan (Direzione Politiche Sociali e Cultura della Salute – Servizio per Adulti e Politiche per l'Immigrazione)

**Location:** Milan, Italy

**Website:** [www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/esperienze-territorio/altre-esperienze/Pagine/siamoqui.aspx](http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/esperienze-territorio/altre-esperienze/Pagine/siamoqui.aspx)

**Description:** Ten young boys and girls of different ages, living in Milan and all coming from different experiences of family reunification, were involved in creating a video. The purpose of this video was to document the life of young migrants in Milan in order to raise awareness on the issue of family reunification. By telling their stories, this project has allowed the participants to share their experiences and support other families that are also experiencing family reunification in a new environment. The documentary is now in the process of being disseminated in the migrant countries of origin and other contexts of migration. This video has become a public instrument that has opened the debate on family reunification directly involving the young audience.

The documentary is available here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z\\_FmSREAUi8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z_FmSREAUi8)

### Neighborhood Mothers Leading the Way in Neukölln

**Organized by:** District Office Neukölln

**Location:** Neukölln, Berlin

**Website:** [www.citiesofmigration.ca/good\\_idea/neighbourhood-mothers-leading-the-way-in-neukolln/](http://www.citiesofmigration.ca/good_idea/neighbourhood-mothers-leading-the-way-in-neukolln/)

**Description:** The premise of this award-winning programme, Stadtteilmütter (“Neighbourhood Mothers”) project is that the people best able to help immigrant mothers integrate into their new communities are those who have shared similar experiences in the past – other mothers. Mothers who have also immigrated and speak German are provided training and they meet with recently arrived, often isolated, families. They first meet in an informal setting and discuss the needs and challenges of everyday life in their new homes, especially as it relates to their children and families, their education, health and wellbeing. The women providing the service may encourage the newcomers to attend other women’s groups, to make use of the local childcare facilities, and to become actively involved in their children’s integration in the German school system. The programme cooperates closely with local childcare centres, “parent cafes,” school-based youth centres, school officials and teachers. These partnerships have contributed to the success of this work. Until 2009, the neighbourhood mothers worked exclusively with families who had children up to six years of age. Today it includes families with children up to age 12, and the neighbourhood mothers now receive further training on primary schooling and can connect parents with early education professionals and teachers. Although this project started with only twelve Turkish women receiving training, it has developed into a network of over 100 neighbourhood mothers from many nationalities. The real success of this project lies in how it empowers women on both sides of the relationship. Newcomers receive valuable advice, information and confidence, while neighbourhood mothers gain employment, income and status in the community.

### Strong for Children - Fathers in Intercultural Families

**Organized by:** Verband binationaler Familien und Partnerschaften iaf e.V.- Geschäftsstelle Leipzig

**Location:** Leipzig, Germany

**Website:** [www.verband-binationaler.de/index.php?id=leipzig](http://www.verband-binationaler.de/index.php?id=leipzig)

**Description:** This project sought to address the role of fathers in the context of migration including changing perceptions as to that role. It organizes various father-child activities, regular meetings and exchanges among fathers, and lectures and workshops to empower fathers. In the lectures and workshops, topics such as child development, conflict resolution, and the benefits of non-violence are addressed. The regular meetings among fathers provide a space for reflection and exchange and



promote open communication about cultural differences. The father-child activities are designed to create a paternal care situation and the fathers are encouraged to exchange views and have discussions with their children. This practice has been recognized as a good practice in the book “Fathers in intercultural families: Experience-Perspectives-Ways of appreciation” and has already reached about 800 people.

### **FAMILIENwerkSTADT**

**Organized by:** Integration Office of Offenbach District

**Location:** District Offenbach/Hessen, Germany

**Website:** [www.kreis-offenbach.de/](http://www.kreis-offenbach.de/)

**Description:** The project aims to develop selected day-care facilities that have high proportions of children with migrant backgrounds into local family centres or integration support centres. The most important elements of the project are socio-spatial-oriented concept development appropriate to the needs of the families at the respective facility, team training, practical support, parental education and parental involvement in the facilities as well as networking in the city district and beyond. The facilities were trained for the changes that occurred throughout the transition into a family centre. The project selects a few parents to become “Parent Pilots” who are trained to better reach and motivate other parents. They also created mother-child groups which made it possible to introduce children to the German language earlier and to considerably facilitate their admission and settling-in period at the facility. After the initial project, an additional 6 facilities have adopted the concept and are using the same model.

### **POMP-Psychosocial support to families of immigrants**

**Organized by:** Zavod MISS

**Location:** Ljubljana, Slovenia

**Website:** [www.misss.si/programi/preventivni-programi/pomp-psihsocialna-pomoc-druzinam-priseljencev](http://www.misss.si/programi/preventivni-programi/pomp-psihsocialna-pomoc-druzinam-priseljencev)

**Description:** The POMP programme is designed to provide for comprehensive socio-cultural integration of migrant families into the community. Migrant families who came to Slovenia within the last three years are eligible to participate. The activities are aimed at children, adolescents, their parents and others. The workshops are conducted at the MISSS institute in Ljubljana, elementary schools, and educational and cultural institutions. In selected primary schools, workshops are held once a week. Activities include education assistance for children, functional literacy for families,

developing interpersonal relationships within the family and society, intercultural learning about Slovenian culture and society, and advice from experts.

### **Women's World**

**Organized by:** Craigavon Intercultural Programme

**Location:** Craigavon, United Kingdom

**Website:** [www.cohesioninstitute.org.uk](http://www.cohesioninstitute.org.uk)

**Description:** The project 'Women's World' is one of the services that Craigavon Intercultural Programme offers ethnic communities and is unique in that it takes a holistic approach in offering support to ethnic minority women and their families. The programme specifically targets young mothers, expectant mothers, mothers on maternity leave, and women who face difficulty in the labour market. Understanding that women are key players in providing information to their family and friends, CIP believes that this approach is the best means in connecting with ethnic families, promoting better integration, reducing social isolation and linking individuals to support networks. The programme offers a bilingual ethnic women's support worker that organizes courses and training sessions concerning first aid, child minding, and duty to care out of the CIP community office and directs 2 support groups in neighbouring towns. Multicultural support services are offered at two locations on a weekly basis where users have the opportunity to develop skills, form relationships and be involved in collective activities such as training, advice, signposting, information sessions about local services, activity classes, educational trips and family events for migrant parents and their families. CIP also provides a drop-in service that provides women with information about filling out forms for job applications and child tax credit forms. The project also consists of a Befriending group that is composed of volunteers who identify new families in need and assist them as they settle in, providing information and linking them to a support network.

### **Lead to Inspire - Empowerment and Leadership**

**Organized by:** The Arbour

**Location:** London, United Kingdom

**Website:** [www.thearbour.org.uk/portfolio/lead-to-inspire/](http://www.thearbour.org.uk/portfolio/lead-to-inspire/)

**Description:** The Lead to Inspire - Empowerment & Leadership project guides newly arrived migrant women to become leaders and peer-mentors in the local community and shape change both in themselves and in the world around them. The women taking part moved to the UK with their husbands, mostly from Bangladesh, and the aim of the project is to help the women become more

than housewives. The project consists of an intensive 6 month course with 15 hours each week focusing on all areas of leadership development. It builds on the foundation of English language classes to develop the participants' skills in negotiating and debating as well as teach women ways to express their feelings and assert their opinions. Computer Information Technology classes are offered that cover basic computer skills demanded in the modern workplace. The course culminates with the women organizing a small-scale community event using the skills learned.

## Political Empowerment Measures

### Intercultural dialogue in Södertälje

**Organized by:** Södertälje municipality

**Location:** Södertälje, Sweden

**Website:** [www.ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/index.cfm?action=furl.go&go=/intpract/intercultural-dialogue-in-sodertalje](http://www.ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/index.cfm?action=furl.go&go=/intpract/intercultural-dialogue-in-sodertalje)

**Description:** This practice consisted of a dialogue between a group of women who came to Södertälje to be reunited with their families and representatives from the municipality to inform them of integration policies and practices. The women expressed frustration about difficulties in finding their place in the new society and their inability to create the same family and social bonds. After the discussion, the Södertälje municipality proposed five sub-projects to attain more information about challenges with integration and to begin addressing areas of concern. These were:

**Sub-project 1:** *Training of job coaches in intercultural dialogue and competence and training of female job coaches from third countries.*

**Sub-project 2:** *Better knowledge and competences on how family members view elder care, since one of their duties is to take care of elder family members.*

**Sub-project 3:** *Better knowledge about how youths view their path to "membership in society" and the creation of possibilities for intercultural dialogues between young people.*

**Sub-project 4:** *Ease and improve integration of children and young people through role play.*

**Sub-project 5:** *Create an intercultural calendar online, delineating our different traditions and their origins, through project activities at schools in Södertälje, and in that way create a knowledge bank (database) that is easily accessible and referable.*

## IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The integration of family members is a critical component of any nation's integration framework. Family reunification is both a requisite for the integration of the sponsoring migrant and creates opportunities for the integration of that migrant and his / her spouses and children. This research sought to examine and engage with that process in three ways: by conducting an analysis of the legal framework in the field of migrant integration in Malta, by implementing surveys with TCNs residing in Malta, and by showcasing of good practices which are in place in other EU Member States and may be transferrable to the local context.

The project set out to address the research gap as there is very limited research in the area of family migration as one of the migration channels to Malta. Existing research has tended to focus on integration generally and no specific attention was given to the integration of spouses and children migrating within a framework of family reunification. The exception to this is the Migrant Integration Policy Index that assesses the legal and policy framework on family reunification as part of the broader assessment of integration policies in Malta. Moreover, unlike existing work, the research did not only address TCNs sponsored by other TCNs but also discussed in some depth the situation of TCNs joining family members who are Maltese or EU nationals. This research attempts to fill the knowledge gap by both providing an overview and assessment of the legal framework and conducting primary research with persons with the relevant status. Some limitations remain, including the size of the sample surveyed.

European Union legislation in the area of family reunification has been transposed into national law; however Malta has opted for a restrictive implementation of the directive requirements. The Migrant Integration Policy Index found that non-EU citizens were least likely to reunite with their families in Malta than in nearly any other European country due to its long-delayed, restrictive and discretionary policy.<sup>108</sup> A TCN must be in Malta for a minimum of two years before he/she can be reunited with his family members. **Malta should reduce the residence requirement for sponsors before being able to apply for family reunification and reduce the permit duration required for the sponsor to be eligible for family reunification. Moreover, it should**

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<sup>108</sup> [www.mipex.eu/malta](http://www.mipex.eu/malta) . The People for Change Foundation is the national partner in the updating of the Migrant Integration Policy Index.

**ensure that all timeframes are clearly established and published, that potential beneficiaries are aware thereof and that arbitrariness is avoided.**

The entitlement to reunification for sponsoring TCNs is limited to the spouse and unmarried minor children of the sponsor and does not cover ascendants or adult children. **Malta should consider expanding the definition of family members for the purpose of family reunification eligibility to cover dependent adult children, dependent relatives in the ascending line and persons in a stable long-term relationship.** As regards conditions, in the first year, in cases when the sponsor is also a TCN, the uniting family member is also subjected to a labour market test meaning that he/she can only get a job if no Maltese or European national is found for the position in question. **Access to the labour market should be facilitated for re-uniting family members.**

In other areas, such as education, the framework is more advantageous allowing children relatively easy access to the school system. **This notwithstanding, more efforts are required to address the increasing diversity in Maltese classrooms and to ensure that migrant children are enjoying an equal level of education.** Some positive elements have already been developed in this regard, such as the induction courses offered to migrant children. The legal framework provides different options and opportunities depending on the sponsor's status; therefore TCNs who are married to a Maltese or EU National enjoy considerably greater rights in line with the relevant requirements of freedom of movement for EU Nationals and members of their family. For instance, the unity of the family in this context is not delayed, the definition of family member is expanded, and the individual being reunited is not subjected to a labour market test. This also impacts their integration prospects when in Malta.

The analysis of the conducted interviews provides an overview of the living conditions in Malta of third-country national spouses and children. It can be noted that the answers received demonstrate considerable differences in individual experiences. Living in Malta can be a difficult experience for some TCNs who encounter financial issues, experience obstacles in finding employment or are subjected to discriminatory practices. According to a significant number of respondents, there is also a lack of information about public services available and the attitudes of the personnel in the Third-Country Nationals Unit were often described as inappropriate and/or unhelpful. Certain improvements would need to be implemented to help vulnerable people integrate more easily and feel more included in the Maltese society. Nevertheless, most of the respondents enjoy living in Malta, which they consider to be a good place to raise their children and to settle whilst having a good quality of life.

The respondents had very diverse profiles and came from 17 different countries. Most of them were aged between 25 and 35 years of age and more than half of the respondents had

children, and a job or work permit. We noted that a significant number of respondents pointed out the difficulties they encounter when trying to access permits, mentioning the lack of response and lack of information regarding the administrative process. Discrimination is also experienced when dealing with the public sector, in fact 38.5 per cent respondents answered that they were victims of discriminatory practices. Concerns were also expressed regarding the values their children are adopting, fearing that they will forget their heritage and traditions.

Regarding employment and education, 69 per cent of the respondents had achieved tertiary level of education; however difficulties are often encountered with the recognition of their qualifications. **Procedures need to be simplified for a better understanding of foreign qualifications for employers for quicker employment accessibility.** Respondents all felt that access to health-care services is good, however once more information was said not to be readily available, especially when accessing specialist treatment and experiencing financial issues. **The availability and access to updated information should be improved.**

An area of concern for most interviewees was political and civic participation, especially the attainment of Maltese citizenship which they expressed was unattainable unless they were married to a Maltese citizen. Most of the respondents wish they could vote and expressed their wish to see politicians with a migrant background on the local scene. They all felt that **political and civic participation could be improved through better access to citizenship by simplifying the process or through opening the right to vote to permanent residents.** Moreover, the general feeling is that **civic participation could be improved by TCNs being involved in the life of the schools and localities they live in.**

Having identified some of the ongoing concerns, the report moves on to showcase selected good practices from several EU Member States. The practices were chosen due to their focus on the integration of family members or support for family units as a whole. They include legislative measures, such as the facilitation of family reunification in Portugal, projects implemented by educational institutions which provide joint integration classes for parents and children and practices relating to employment, social support and political empowerment. The selected practices cover: access to family reunification, employment and self-employment, education, social support and political empowerment. Whilst no two integration contexts are the same, this exercise was an attempt to identify, communicate and facilitate the possible transfer of practices that were successful elsewhere to the local context.

This project was conducted at a time when a number of important developments in Malta's integration system are underway, not least through the consultation regarding the development of an integration strategy for Malta, which is intended to result in the adoption of an integration

strategy for Malta. The consultation document was launched on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 2015 and interested parties were asked to make submissions by the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2015. It is worth noting that family reunification is not listed as one of the 'key policy areas' identified in the document.

Through this research we hope to assist in shaping these developments by providing an analysis of the current state of play, presenting the views of the parties directly impacted by these policies and presenting some ideas that could be developed within the Maltese context. **The situation of families should be specifically addressed as part of the process of developing the policy.** This report should therefore not be seen as an end in itself but rather as a contribution to a conversation that will hopefully result in effective integration of third-country nationals in Malta.



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***Sustainable Management of Migration Flows***