



**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE
FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE
PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES**



ACFC/SR/VI(2024)006

Sixth Report submitted by Malta

**Pursuant to Article 25, paragraph 2 of the Framework
Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
– received on 3 June 2024**

Malta's State Report on the Implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

1. Introduction

It is to be recalled, in the first place, that upon its ratification of the convention Malta made the following declaration:

'The Government of Malta declares that Articles 24 and 25, in particular, of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of 1 February 1995 are to be understood having regard to the fact that no national minorities in the sense of the Framework Convention exist in the territory of the Government of Malta. The Government of Malta considers its ratification of the Framework Convention as an act of solidarity in the view of the objectives of the Convention.'

In view of this declaration, the Government of Malta considers that it is not bound to provide a full report on the implementation of the convention. However, Government recognises that the convention aims to combat discrimination, foster diversity, and to ensure equitable treatment of all persons. For this reason, Government is hereby providing an overview of developments relevant to Article 6 of the convention, which applies to all persons living in signatory states.

2. Integration measures

Over the last five years, Government has undertaken various initiatives aimed at fostering integration within the country, including the launch of the *'Integration = Belonging': Migrant Integration Strategy & Action Plan* in 2017. This initiative contributed to Government's efforts to achieve the targets outlined in the Migration Integration Strategy & Action Plan (Vision 2020), and it was co-financed by the European Union through the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (AMIF) for 2014-2020.

One of the key outcomes of this project is the establishment of the *'I BELONG' Programme*, an integration introduction programme designed to equip migrants with essential skills required to effectively integrate into Maltese society. The programme covers both language tuition and cultural orientation. The linguistic aspect focuses on public and work situations where migrants may require knowledge of Maltese and English. The cultural orientation aspect informs participants of social values like equality.

The programme is split into two stages. The first stage leads to the award of a Pre-Integration Certificate, which consists of basic cultural and social orientation, as well as Maltese and English languages at MQF Level 1 provided by MCAST, a Maltese educational institution. The second stage of the programme enables candidates to meet some of the criteria required to qualify for long-term residence in Malta. This second stage is made up of two modules, namely Maltese language at MQF Level 2, and a 100-hour course focusing on the social,

economic, cultural, and democratic history and environment of Malta. The course is being provided by the University of Malta.

Another important element of Malta's integration-oriented strategy is the *Turning the Tables* project, which focused on various aspects of integration, with a view to informing policy change. This forum addressed education, employment, and political rights. Its objective was to empower and foster a sense of belonging among migrants in Maltese society.

Furthermore, in June 2023, a public consultation was conducted to prepare for a second National Integration Policy and Action plan. Throughout this process, extensive discussions were held with relevant stakeholders, entities, and organisations. Presently, all relevant ideas and recommendations are being consolidated to formulate a new integration strategy for the coming five years.

3. Discrimination and Racism Initiatives

The Human Rights Directorate, which falls under the responsibility of the Office of the Prime Minister, has taken proactive measures to tackle the underreporting of discrimination based on race and / or ethnic origin and religion, or belief, through the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC)-funded project '*Equality for All in Malta*', and the implementation of the Anti-Racism Strategy 2021-2023.

a. 'Equality for All in Malta' project

'Equality for All in Malta' aims to counter discrimination based on race, ethnic origin, religion, or belief, by way of the initiatives listed hereunder...

- Empowerment through training: Racial, ethnic, and religious minority members receive training to empower them to assert their rights and utilise legal remedies effectively.
- Grassroots engagement: an outreach model targets local councils to engage them in the fight against discrimination and promote awareness within communities.
- Awareness campaign: An extensive public awareness campaign utilises infrastructure and avenues such as bus shelters, social media, videos, and posts to promote non-discrimination and equality.
- Hate Speech Awareness: the Malta Police Force contributes by regularly sharing hate speech awareness posts on social media platforms.

b. Implementation of the Anti-Racism Strategy 2021-2023

Malta introduced its national action plan against racism and xenophobia, the Anti-Racism Strategy 2021-23, in alignment with the EU's Anti-Racism Action Plan 2021-25. This comprehensive strategy aims to eliminate racism in its various forms and to promote

intercultural inclusion. The strategy's execution is supported by the 'Towards the implementation of an Anti-Racism Strategy for Malta' (END-RACISM-MT) project, co-funded by the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme.

c. The END-RACISM-MT Project

The END-RACISM-MT project is pivotal in achieving the objectives of the Anti-Racism Strategy. This two-year project focuses on enhancing public authorities' responses to discrimination, racism, and xenophobia through various measures...

- Establishment of an Anti-Racism Platform: Civil society-led efforts foster trust between communities and public authorities.
- In-depth research: Research efforts deepen the Government's understanding of the experiences of minority groups.
- Mainstreaming anti-racism: Intra-ministerial action plans are formulated to embed anti-racism in governmental actions and policies
- Capacity building: Public officers in key sectors undergo training to address discrimination effectively.
- Improved data collection: Collaboration among stakeholders enhances data collection on hate speech and hate crime.
- National Anti-Rumours Strategy: A strategy is being developed to counter misinformation.
- Awareness raising: A comprehensive campaign to boost public awareness of anti-racism efforts.

d. Additional Measures Associated with the Anti-Racism Strategy:

The Anti-Racism Strategy encompasses several measures to combat discrimination and racism...

- Media Code of Practice: Media organisations adopt codes promoting intercultural standards and condemning racist language and stereotypes.
- 'Patriotism = Anti-Racism' Project: Events reframe patriotism, emphasising Malta's commitment to equality and an intercultural society.
- Second National Action Plan Against Racism (NAPAR): Preparations and discussions are underway for the upcoming NAPAR.

4. Community Policing in Malta

Community policing promotes social cohesiveness among varied communities by establishing robust, trust-oriented connections between law enforcement and individuals from different backgrounds. This strategy prioritises cooperation, openness, and cooperative relationships to inclusively tackle local issues. Officers actively interact with community people through frequent meetings, patrols in neighbourhoods, and culturally appropriate community events,

fostering an atmosphere of mutual respect and comprehension. Community policing facilitates the reduction of crime and fear, fosters social cohesion, and improves the general quality of life by actively engaging individuals from diverse backgrounds in decision-making processes and valuing their participation.

An essential aspect of this method is the recognition and appreciation of cultural disparities. Police personnel undergo cultural competence training to enhance their ability to effectively communicate and engage with individuals from various ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds. This comprehension aids in reducing possible disputes and promotes an environment where all members of the community feel appreciated and listened to. Initiatives such as youth outreach, community advisory boards, and local liaisons guarantee the inclusion of diverse groups and their perspectives.

Community policing also includes proactive strategies to actively interact with marginalised populations that may historically have a lack of faith in law enforcement. Through proactive engagement and attentively addressing their individual apprehensions, law enforcement may establish connections and foster confidence. This strategy entails collaborating with local organisations, schools, and businesses to establish a network of assistance and collective accountability for the purpose of ensuring public safety.

In addition, community policing promotes the implementation of restorative justice methods, which prioritise the restoration of the damage caused by criminal actions through inclusive procedures that engage victims, offenders, and the community. This not only resolves the current problems but also enhances social bonds and cultivates a feeling of shared accountability.

Community policing fundamentally shifts the function of law enforcement from being a responsive entity to becoming an active collaborator within the community. This comprehensive approach guarantees that law enforcement is adaptable to the distinct requirements of every community demographic, thus enhancing social connections and collective effectiveness among various communities. Community policing establishes a solid basis for a safer and more unified society by fostering trust and promoting active engagement, ensuring that all individuals feel integrated into the community fabric.

a. Initiatives undertaken by the Marsa Community Police

The Marsa Community Police Unit has proactively engaged with various institutions and NGOs within the community of Marsa with a view to fostering inclusion and cultural understanding. These initiatives include:

- Neighbourhood Clean-Up: Collaborating with the Marsa Scouting group and the Chad Community for a clean-up event, promoting fairness, environmental respect, and peaceful coexistence among diverse groups.
- Supporting Individuals with Disabilities: Partnering with the Down Syndrome Association Malta, the Malta Police Force participated in World Down Syndrome Day activities, advocating for inclusivity and awareness through social media.

- Diverse representation: Recruitment of a police officer who speaks Arabic and practices Islam to facilitate cultural understanding and promote a welcoming environment for diverse populations.
- Cultural Education: Attending an Islamic traditions and culture lecture at the Raħal Ġdid Mosque to enhance understanding and respect for Muslim communities, fostering positive relations.
- Refugee Week Participation: Collaborating with 'Dancing without Borders' for Refugee Week, engaging in events that celebrate diversity through art, stories, and cultural exchange.
- Multilingual Communication: Translating garbage collection schedules into various languages, ensuring inclusivity and community cleanliness.

b. Community Policing Collaborations

The Marsa Community Policing team established strong relationships with stakeholders to assist the community at Marsa and to achieve a better and a safer environment. In this regard, the Community Policing team collaborates with NGOs and other organisations to support various aspects of community development and protection.

5. Conclusion

While the Government of Malta has not submitted a full report in view of the declaration it submitted upon ratification of the convention, it hereby highlights progress achieved in relation to Article 6 of the Convention, which applies to all persons living in Malta. The present document thereby demonstrates Malta's commitment towards the objective of the convention.